

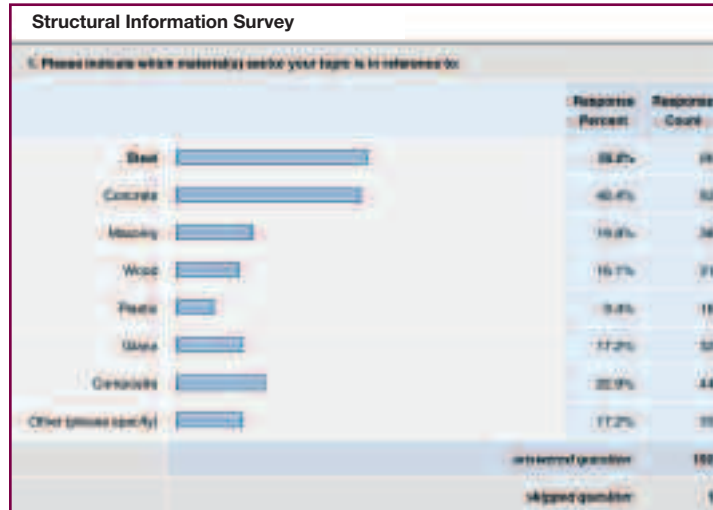
Structural information survey

Structural Engineering may be said to be a mature discipline, since the basic ideas have been known for many years. There is therefore a tendency in some quarters to think that research and innovation should not be a high priority. However, from time to time it is prudent to assess which areas within the profession could benefit from additional guidance or by the instigation of fundamental research. As a result, the Institution of Structural Engineers recently undertook a survey in which its members were asked to identify those areas of professional practice in which they had experienced (or anticipate) difficulty in obtaining sufficient information (guidance) to complete their task.

The survey was web based, asked only four main questions, and used a combination of tick boxes, drop down lists, key words and open responses in such a way as to maximise computer sorting of the answers. The four questions in order were:

- Please indicate which material your topic is in reference to. Tick boxes e.g. Steel, Concrete, Masonry etc.
- Please classify the topic by using progressively more specific keywords. Dropdown list.
- In which specific areas, either actual or anticipated, have you experienced difficulty in obtaining:
 - helpful information / guidance?
 - reliable data?
 - appropriate solution tools?
- How did you resolve this?

There were 179 responses to the questionnaire and the answers provided a reasonable



overview of the problems being encountered. Topics could be grouped under four headings: Eurocodes; Design for structural vibration; Structural materials; and Sustainability.

Within this grouping, there were many requests regarding topics that are currently receiving, or have recently received, considerable

attention. Omitting these left the following topics for attention:

- *Eurocodes* – A manual to accompany Eurocode 9, Aluminium
- *Design for structural vibration* – Tall buildings and light structures, Approximate analysis techniques
- *Structural materials* – New materials for constructional use e.g. Composites, High strength concrete
- *Sustainability* – Building over shallow mine workings and on contaminated land, Lime based mortars

The Research Panel of the Institution have now identified champions to take forward appropriate topics and assess what outcomes would be most appropriate.

For further information please contact Berenice Chan, Technical Officer, Institution of Structural Engineers (020 7201 9125; E-mail: berenice.chan@istructe.org).