

A web-based user guide for SMM SLS 573

The need for a Standard Method for Measurement (SMM) for building works has been identified for a considerable period. As a result many different SMMs have been developed around the world. The SMM provides a uniform basis for measurement, which allows proper itemization of work to be carried out. The estimator is therefore able to identify costs in a scientific and methodical manner so that pricing becomes less complex. SLS 573 of 1982 was the first SMM developed for the Sri Lankan construction industry. This was subsequently revised in 1999. But it is viewed that the SMM (Revised 1999) is not highly popular because of several issues within it. This research was aimed at identifying such issues and compiling a “Web-Based User Guide” (WBUG) as a solution to these problems and thereby to make it standardized. The objective of WBUG is to provide a platform to react to the changes in the environment and cater for the needs of the construction industry.

A questionnaire was used to obtain information and it was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with professionals from 10 consultancy organizations. This revealed that many people are reluctant to use the SLS573 because of the ambiguities and non-conformity to local practices. The problems found have been grouped under three headings. They are namely Measurement rules, which do not match to local needs, areas where further clarification is required, and omissions where no measurement rules have been given.

As a solution to these problems found, a Web-based user guide was developed. With the use of this new concept it is envisaged that there will be considerable improvement to the industry practice and thus process of standardization will be a success. Following are some of the facilities unique to a Web-Based User Guide; it will combine modern information technology and construction industry resulting standardized environment for SLS573, able to browse through the user guide along with the SMM and more knowledge and broad understanding can be achieved, user guide and the SMM are available in soft copy format, can obtain timely information and also all other benefits provided by the web site, users are able to forward their queries and comments regarding the SMM, frequent updates can be effectively communicated, wide variety of professional can be addressed through the process, site can be accessed regardless of time, location and other barriers, which in other circumstances would have existed.