

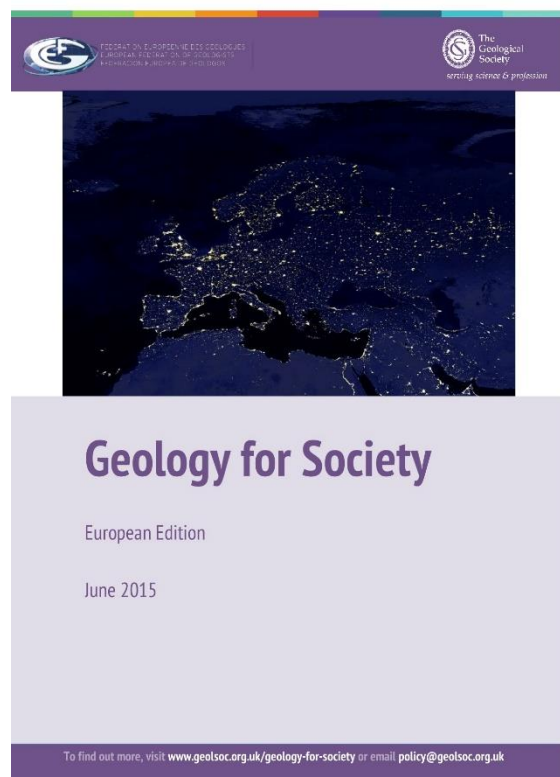
Paper Number: 3708

Geology for Society – engaging geoscientists, policy-makers and the public in meeting our future resource needs sustainably

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Over the past decade, the Geological Society of London has played an increasingly active role in communicating relevant geoscience to policy-makers across a wide range of policy areas, and has worked to engage the professional geoscience community in industry, academia and government in these activities. Doing so has inevitably drawn our Society and individual geoscientists into contested areas in which stakeholders and members of the public have strongly-held and sharply divergent views, such as shale gas, radioactive waste disposal, environmental protection, flooding and water supply. As our programme of ‘science for policy’ communications work has grown, we have had to address ethical questions and dilemmas, to consider the nature and extent of our authority and independence (as an institution and as a wider geoscience community), and to develop ethical behaviours and practices. A guiding principle has been the link between ethical principles and professional behaviours and structures.



In 2014 the Society published a major report, ‘Geology for Society’ [1], summarising our ‘science for policy’ work. This document is aimed at policy-makers, decision-makers and others interested in the geoscience relevant to meeting many of the great challenges facing humanity – many of them resource-related. It is a ‘shop window’ setting out how the geoscience community can help address these challenges, and provides links to extensive further resources online. In 2015, we produced a European edition of ‘Geology for Society’ [2], and with the assistance of the European Federation of Geologists and its national associations, translated it into 13 other European languages.

This presentation will explore some of the ethical challenges faced by individuals and by learned and professional institutions when they engage in debates about meeting our current and future resource needs, and seek to inform and improve the quality of these debates, drawing on the case study of the ‘Geology for Society’ project.

Figure 1: Cover of ‘Geology for Society’ (European edition)

References:

[1] Geology for Society (2014), The Geological Society of London,

<http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/~media/shared/documents/policy/Geology%20for%20Society%20final%20version%20v3%20March%202014.pdf>

[2] Geology for Society – European edition (2015), The Geological Society of London,

<http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Policy-and-Media/Geology-for-Society/Geology-for-Society-European>

