

# ConsultA

**ACEI Newsletter - 19 November 2020**

## Information and Advice for ACEI Members

### ACEI Work Arrangements

The ACEI office is temporarily closed. Email [info@acei.ie](mailto:info@acei.ie) with queries or contact [sarah.ingle@acei.ie](mailto:sarah.ingle@acei.ie).

### Covid-19 Updates

- [ACEI](#)
- [EFCA](#)
- [FIDIC](#)

### Online Resources

- [HSE](#)
- [Revenue](#)
- [Institute of Public Health](#)
- [Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection](#)
- [Health & Safety Authority](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Health Protection Surveillance Centre](#)
- [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

### ACEI Office Arrangements

Due to current uncertainties, the Secretariat will continue to work remotely until at least the end of the year. Members can contact the office by email: [info@acei.ie](mailto:info@acei.ie). ACEI will be closed for the Christmas break during 21 December 2020 - 1 January 2021 inclusive.

### ACEI 2020 Leadership Course Final Call

This year's Leadership Course, scheduled to begin on 27 November, is proving very popular with appropriately qualified member firm employees. However there is still some availability remaining on the course. [Book now online](#) before 2pm on Friday 20 November to register delegates.

### EFCA Autumn 2020 Barometer Survey Results

The latest European consulting engineering [industry barometer report](#) from the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA) indicates that the pandemic continues to impact on recruitment, order stock, turnover and profitability. Currently the main challenge for the sector is the lack of a clear project pipeline. EFCA welcomes the [European Green Deal](#) along with the EU's digital strategy in recovering from the coronavirus crisis, and towards building a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous Europe.

### EGFSN Report: Management Development for SME Productivity

Small and medium firms (SMEs) in Ireland have been facing unique and unprecedented challenges to their operations arising from the pandemic. For many, a dramatic and sudden loss of demand and revenue has affected their ability to function as well as disrupting staff and supply chain availability. A recent report by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN): [Leading the Way: Investing in Management Development for SME Productivity and Growth](#), examines management skills and practices in Irish SMEs.

The report also explores the attitudes and barriers to management development, and the opportunities that exist for Irish SMEs to improve their performance through greater investment in targeted, high-quality management training and development. The research for the report was undertaken from October 2019 to March 2020, and seven key findings were identified.

## Irish Water Toolbox Talks

Irish Water has developed some [Toolbox Talks](#) to support all involved in the construction of water and wastewater services connecting into Irish Water networks. The Toolbox Talks summarise key information for the construction of self-lay connections. They outline Irish Water's requirements for common activities and are complementary to the water and wastewater [Standard Details and Codes of Practice](#).

## Virtual Site Inspection / Certification Solutions

Since April 2020, ACEI members have been finding innovative ways to take into account construction site physical distancing requirements in relation to inspections and certifications. A number of technological solutions have also been developed including virtual or augmented reality devices. One such [product developed](#) for use in production environments may also be beneficial for professionals and others carrying out inspection / certification in the built environment industry.

## Good Leadership is an Act of Kindness

Boris Groysbery, a Professor in Harvard Business School, provides advice about how to lead in a time of great uncertainty and unprecedented employee stress. He believes that one powerful, fundamental leadership strategy is being largely overlooked, i.e. the innate human capacity to be kind. In a [recent article](#) he notes that: *Practicing active, habitual kindness can transform the remote workplace ... A little reassurance, compassionate listening, a conscious effort to validate people's fear and confusion all go a long way.*

## Buy Irish: Architecture & Engineering Gifts

[ARCKIT](#) is a freeform architectural modelling system developed in Ireland for all ages which facilitates physically exploring designs and bringing ideas to life. The kit is based on modern building techniques using a 1.2m grid to scale. 'Click and Connect' modular components make it possible to create a wide range of structures that can be quickly assembled and modified.

Other kits and games in Science, Technology and Engineering are also available this year from Irish firms [toysandgames.ie](#) and [cogsthebrainshop.ie](#).

## Recent Good News

- Congratulations are due to ACEI members [Cundall](#) and [Mott MacDonald](#). Earlier this year, both firms were among the first consultancies in the world to be certified carbon neutral and achieve [Carbon Trust certification](#).
- ACEI also congratulates member firm, Arup, which has been awarded the Engineers Ireland [CPD Employer of the Year](#).
- The Government continues to encourage firms to provide pensions where possible to permanent employees. A new [digital pension product](#) has recently been introduced by ACEI sponsor, KBC, which may be of interest.
- The Board of the European Investment Bank (EIB) has approved an [EIB Group Climate Bank Roadmap](#) to support €1 trillion green investment by 2030 and Paris Alignment of all financing activities.
- The [IDA announced 765 jobs](#) in Cork, Kildare, Galway, Waterford and Wexford last week in company expansions, or new firms entering Ireland.
- A recent TED post outlines [five ways to increase gratitude levels](#). These can be completed in stages to suit your schedule and lifestyle.

## CIF Health & Safety Summit 26 November

Health and safety in the built environment sector has been drastically changed by the coronavirus crisis. The pandemic has severely impacted on many vital areas including site interactions, inspections, compliance, protocols and mental health. On 26 November, the Construction Industry Federation ([CIF Health & Safety Summit 2020](#)) will address these and other matters. All are welcome to register for this virtual event.

## Birdsong Replacing Noise Pollution

Launched earlier this week, during two weeks in November Irish railway nationwide will be filled with the sound of birdsong for an hour every morning. [On Chorus](#) is a public art project by sound artist Christopher Steenson. Sounds of birdsong recorded in April 2020 in Dublin's inner city are being played over Iarnród Eireann PA systems. The aim of the project is to highlight the dramatic reduction in noise pollution in Ireland during the first lockdown.