

Welcome to your monthly ConsultA newsletter. In this issue you will find...

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Presidential Address: The forgotten 'promise' of Ireland

Dear all,

Ending the wait – it's difficult to appreciate the historic relief, natural joy and historic scenes we witnessed in Croke Park recently, where the outpouring of goodwill across the country reminds us of the brilliance of Gaelic games and what a fantastic country it is we live in. How lucky we are to have our own deep culture, heritage, music and language to embrace.

The 75-year wait reminds me that gaps continue to exist in the 'promise' of Ireland. We so clearly deliver on so many important things for the people who call this place home. Our output in sport is unprecedented for such a small nation. All of this benefits our national soul in incalculable ways, yet through it all there remains our professional sense that Ireland is failing to deliver on the fundamentals needed for our children to feel truly proud of the island they were born to inherit. That sense is grounded in all of the realities we know only too well. Ireland's overall capital stock remains roughly 25% to 32% lower than the average for high-income European peers, driven by rapid population growth and historical underinvestment. Deficits exist in the areas of Housing, Transport and Utilities where electricity and water bottlenecks are holding the development of the country back.

On 24th July, the Government designated its first nine major transport, energy, and water projects as critical infrastructure under the 2026 Act as follows:

- Transport: MetroLink, Cork Area Commuter Rail, and Galway City Ring Road.
- Water: Eastern/Midlands Water Supply, Greater Dublin Drainage, and Limerick Wastewater Upgrade.
- Energy: North South 400 kV Interconnector, Moneypoint Capacitor Project, and Letterkenny 110 kV Upgrade.

I am proud to lead one of the associations at the spearhead in addressing these issues. We understand that further projects will be designated in future, but for the moment the intent is that public bodies including An Coimisiún Pleanála, the EPA and MARA are to prioritise permits and that greater efficiency must be achieved whereby statutory procedures will run concurrently to reduce delays.

As member firms we face ongoing delivery issues including late payments, delayed projects, procurement and contracts. Here, we are working hard in communicating the seriousness of these matters with Government on your behalf. We have active negotiations ongoing with the Department of Education alongside RIAI and SCSi to resolve issues on delivery and that is the blueprint for us going forward. We're in contact with OPW, TII and Uisce Éireann and we recently met with the Department for Transport.

It's really important that member firms engage proactively with us in communicating your "lived experience" in the delivery of projects. This gives us vital information to take through to Government departments showcasing how member firms can help to unlock delays and play our part in the delivery of modern infrastructure for a modern nation. It was a summer where one 75-year wait ended, where with your support we will bring that energy through to unlocking infrastructure delivery over the coming months.



Ciarán McGovern
President of ACEI

ACEI Submission to Government for Budget 2027

Engineering Ireland's Future

Political Affairs Update:

August saw the culmination of months of work with the submission of ACEI's Budget recommendations to the Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation. A full rundown of political activity can be found below.

Accelerating Infrastructure

- The Secretariat presented its submission for Budget 2027 following months of consultation and drafting.
- On 6th August, a team from ACEI met with the Department of Transport. Principal Officer at the Department, Tomas Campbell led a team in the discussion which covered tendering, NCCs and capacity for sector to deliver on the Government's ambitions.

Key insights from Department of Transport meeting for members

- The Department confirmed the NTA will publish its 5-year plan in September which should provide certainty of pipeline (caveated with a 2028 review of the NDP).
- Iarnród Éireann are expected to go to procurement on all elements of DART+ West and South West before the end of this year.
 - Construction is then targeted to commence with DART+ West before the end of 2027, but additional funding above our existing NDP envelope would be required to commence DART+ South West, which Minister O'Brien will be advocating for as part of any future NDP review.
- The Department confirmed there will be additions to the Critical Infrastructure designation list. There will be perhaps a few additions to the list per year, and that DART+ is one of its largest and most important investment programmes, one it could "certainly see" being added in future.
- The ACEI continued its ongoing engagement with the Department of Education in the clearing house which has been established between both parties. Meeting was held on 7th August to progress outstanding issues on late payments and project certainty.

Upcoming meetings

- DG, Shane Dempsey will attend the EFCA board meeting on 2nd September.
- President Ciarán McGovern and DG Shane Dempsey will attend the FIDIC Global Conference in New Delhi on 14th–15th September.
- Accelerating Infrastructure Productivity and Capacity Working Group: 8th September.
- Construction Sector Group: 17th September.



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ACEI's Budget Submission 2027



We are pleased this month to have submitted ACEI's submission for Budget 2027 to the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

The full document can be read on our website [here](#).

The submission focuses on accelerating infrastructure delivery, reforming public sector procurement, building engineering capacity, advancing climate action, and leveraging digitalisation. ACEI warns that outdated procurement models and onerous contractual conditions are making public sector projects increasingly unattractive to consulting engineers.

The document was created following a year of meetings with an unprecedented number of political representatives on the key issues which affect our member firms and will act as the basis for further negotiation with Government and Ireland's contracting authorities.

Five Key Recommendations

Accelerate Priority Projects Through the Design Phase. 3–5 year ringfenced funding allocations to contracting authorities for specific projects, enabling a steady pipeline of work entering the design phase. Fast-tracking NDP and Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025–2030 projects through design now would reduce planning delays and accelerate construction delivery.

Reform Contractual Conditions. We urged the Government to introduce Net Contribution Clauses (NCCs). We also called for procurement to shift from a 70/30 to an 80/20 quality-to-price weighting, and for the introduction of Median Price Tendering to prevent a race to the bottom on fees. Critically, we flagged that Approved Housing Bodies and the Housing Finance Agency are imposing contractual conditions more onerous than OGP guidelines, deterring major firms from HFA-funded housing projects.

Build Engineering Capacity. Ireland's infrastructure ambitions require both immediate and long-term talent measures: placing all engineering occupations on the Critical Skills Occupation List, streamlining work permits, funding a national engineering careers campaign, and strengthening collaboration between Government, industry and higher education.

Prioritise Climate Action. The NDP should centre climate-resilient and low-carbon infrastructure – offshore wind, home retrofits, public transport, water and flood defence. We recommended adopting an all-of-life carbon perspective on public works, investing more at design stage to reduce embodied carbon.

Leverage Digitalisation. Building on the Government's BIM mandate, we requested common asset information requirements across contracting authorities, a feedback loop from funded BIM projects to central policy, and sustained investment in the Build Digital and Construct Innovate programmes to drive meaningful productivity gains.



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Graduate Development Course



ACEI is delighted to announce the launch of the 2026 ACEI Graduate Development Course

Across the four sessions there will be five different themes with insight from the profession's leading practitioners.

17 Wednesday 4 November: In Person, Chartered Accountants Ireland, Dublin 2
Leadership and People | Business and Finance

17 Thursday 12 November: Virtual via Teams
Strategy and Innovation

17 Thursday 19 November: Virtual via Teams
Sustainability and Climate Change

17 Thursday 26 November: In Person, Chartered Accountants Ireland, Dublin 2
Technical and Operations | Designing for Compliance, Safety & Performance

Delivered by: ACEI leadership and senior practitioners from ACEI member firms.

Who it's for: Graduate consulting engineers with minimum one year's experience, ready to build on their foundational knowledge of the profession. It will provide delegates with a structured, bespoke training programme to enhance their development and progression after graduation towards Chartered Engineer status.

Click [here](#) for further information and bookings.

Golf Classic just one month away

Hard to imagine 1st October being just one month away but here we are! We're ready and looking forward to welcoming members and guests for another memorable day on the course at Grange Golf Club.

Date: Thursday, 1 October 2026

Time: From 11am

Format: Scramble, shotgun start

Location: Grange Golf Club, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16

Cost: €850 per team of four

*This includes green fees, breakfast on arrival, and a post-game meal and prizegiving.



New DSC and PSDP Courses go live!

DSC Course Dates and Times:

Day 1 – 3rd September – 9.30am–4.30pm

Day 2 – 10th September – 9.30am–4.30pm

Places can be booked online [here](#).

PSDP Course Dates and Times:

Day 1 – 14 October – 9.30am–4.30pm

Day 2 – 21 October – 9.30am–4.30pm

Places available [here](#).

Course Fees:

- Staff of member firms €560
- Engineers Ireland members €560
- Non ACEI/Engineers Ireland members €630

*Fee includes copy of documentation.



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Upcoming Webinars September

September will see ACEI host two fantastic webinars in the space of sustainability and climate resilience.

Webinar 1: Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor **16th September @1pm**

This webinar will cover the interesting work conducted on environmental and climate developments in the Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC).

Cross-border work is accelerating but with both jurisdictions committed to ambitious climate goals and further cross-border collaboration, how is the group working towards these climate targets? Presented by Damien McConville of DBEC this webinar will cover:

- The work of the Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor
- What cross-border collaboration looks
- Challenges to implementing cross-border policy
- Goals and ambitions on the island

This webinar is free to attend. To secure your ticket simply click on the link [here](#).

Webinar 2: Overcoming challenges to PTNZ **23rd September @1pm**

Our second webinar invites members to a conversation on our Pledge to Net Zero presented by David McHugh Senior Director of Tetra Tech. This session will provide members with practical insights and case studies from member firms on their journeys to net zero. It will be relevant to companies thinking about joining the initiative and will include an overview of the overall process, from signing up through to submitting annual report-backs.

We hope that many ACEI members will participate in this important event, to continue the development of the association's PTNZ commitment in line with science-based targets.

This session will cover:

- Direction of travel from Government on green procurement etc.
- Barriers faced in signing up / how to overcome them
- Benefits for firm / tendering etc
- Help in implementing / reporting etc.

This webinar is free to attend for members and places can be secured [here](#).

On-site safety module

Reminder to all readers that ACEI and Engineers Ireland operate a Site Visitor Safety Course intended for consultant engineers and other professionals who are required to visit sites on an occasional basis, but not to undertake construction work. The aim of the course is to provide a general awareness of health & safety on sites. It is intended to provide industry recognised training that will support the duty of the employer under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 regarding the provision of information, instruction and training to enable employees to carry out their work safely.

To book a place please [click here](#).

Please note the remaining enrolment dates for 2026:

August – Wednesday 5th
September – Wednesday 2nd
October – Thursday 1st
November – Wednesday 4th
December – Wednesday 2nd

All those who book after the last enrolment date, will be given access to the course at the next enrolment date per list above. From your date of enrolment, you will have 28 days of access to complete the course and download your certificate.

Course delivery

This e-learning course is delivered online via the Moodle platform. Once enrolment has commenced, students have access to interactive videos and knowledge check quizzes. This is followed by a short assessment. All modules must be completed in order to access the assessment, of which you must achieve 70% to pass. You will have two attempts at the assessment. Once the course has been successfully completed, you can download the certificate directly.

Fees

Enrolment is €95.00 (includes two attempts at the assessment).



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Sector news you might have missed...

ACEI in the News for Budget Submission Irish Independent

WAYNE O'CONNOR

Engineers have warned crucial infrastructure and housing plans are at risk of never getting off the ground because of issues around how state agencies procure and contract work.

They say efforts to increase housing could be undermined by red tape in the approved housing body (AHB) sector, which makes charities receiving state supports less attractive to work with.

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI) also called for a greater focus on investment in renewable technologies to make the country more resilient and to support a green transition.

Its pre-budget submission called on the Government to reform public contracts and make it more affordable for engineers to get professional indemnity insurance to protect them in cases where a client claims work caused them a financial loss.

The association said the current public contract regime means engineers can be held 100pc liable for a defect so long as they can be proven to be 1pc liable. The group representing 126 leading consulting engineering companies said AHBs in receipt of state funding similarly place "excessive liability" on engineers, which makes their projects less attractive.

The association's director general said state investment in housing, transport, renewables and other infrastructure will not translate into projects on the ground unless the Government creates the conditions needed to deliver them efficiently.

"Budget 2027 must be about more than the level of investment. It must be about how effectively that investment is converted into infrastructure," Shane Dempsey said. "Investment alone does not deliver projects. If we want to build faster, we need to design faster, procure projects differently and ensure the engineering capacity is there to deliver them.

"Without those changes, Ireland risks having an ambitious infrastructure pipeline with plenty of financial backing but that continues to face delays in getting from plans to projects on the ground."

The Coalition has earmarked projects such as MetroLink, the Shannon pipeline, Galway's new ring road and a commuter rail project for Cork as priorities in the coming years. It has introduced new legislation to support the speedy delivery of these.

"We cannot simply focus on securing the lowest price. We need to ensure that projects are attractive enough for the best firms to participate and that risk is allocated fairly," Mr Dempsey said.

Further Budget Coverage

- Director General, Shane Dempsey speaks to Newstalk's *Hard Shoulder*: Listen [here](#)
- Director General, Shane Dempsey speaks to Galway Bay FM: Listen [here](#)

Worth a read

With busy diaries, it can be a challenge to stay abreast of industry news and opinion pieces setting the national tone for debate in the sector. Below are several recommendations for your consideration:

- EFCA [Report](#) calls for a new approach to strengthen Europe's water resilience
- [Building Magazine](#): Ireland's population grew by almost 67,000 people in the year to April 2026
- [€29.5bn procurement strategy](#) puts carbon, SMEs and value for money at centre of State contracts
- Major Galway [school expansion](#) gets under way with €5bn investment programme
- [Engineers Ireland](#) appoint Áine Myler as Director General
- [Tenders](#) invited for Rahan flood relief schemes
- Stephen Robb in the [Farmers Journal](#) writes Ireland's push towards energy security remains painfully slow
- [Irish Examiner](#): Cork's skyline undergoing dramatic transformation

Thanks for reading



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