ACEI — ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS OF IRELAND

ConsultA

ACEI Newsletter - 23 April 2020

Information and Advice for ACEI Members

Covid-19 Updates

- *ACEI*
- *EFCA*
- *FIDIC*

Online Resources

- *HSE*
- *Revenue*
- *Institute of Public Health*
- *Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection*
- *Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government*
- *Health & Safety Authority*
- *World Health Organisation*
- *Centre for Disease Control*
- *Health Protection Surveillance Centre*
- *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*

ACEI Working Arrangements

The ACEI office continues its temporary closure while the Secretariat is working remotely. Calls are being diverted and email is monitored at info@acei.ie. ACEI Secretary General Sarah Ingle also welcomes member feedback and queries to sarah.ingle@acei.ie.

ACEI Communications

ACEI has published a press release based on results from the recent member survey and addressing other member concerns. Further such releases will be prepared as needed to support ACEI firms and the consulting engineering sector.

Several communications were sent from ACEI to a few government bodies recently, requesting updates and actions on a variety of issues including: life safety systems, government procurement, contracts / payments and site restrictions.

ACEI Website

The ACEI Website continues to be updated with current information from government and others. The latest uploads include a guidance document from the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) in relation to Standard Operating Procedures in preparation for a return to working on sites.

ACEI Awards Dinner

For several reasons there has been a date change for the rescheduled Awards Dinner to Friday, 6 November 2020. A Friday date is preferable for national and international guests and it avoids a clash with the 2020 European CEO conference planned for 19 & 20 November in London.

Introduction of Interim Staged Payments DoES

The Department of Education and Skills (DoES) has established temporary interim measures with respect to design team fee payments during the current restrictions. A significant portion of fees will be released on submission of stage reports instead of later approval. These measures are welcome and will remain in place until further notice.

New Update on OGP Note

In mid-April, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) provided an update to its note on procurement and contractual matters associated with recent response measures to the ongoing emergency. On 22 April, the OGP published the form of letter agreement to be used for a Covid-19 *ex gratia* payment by the Employer.

EFCA Survey and Memo

The European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA), of which ACEI is a member, has issued regular Covid-19 Memos to provide European updates. EFCA also carried out a survey of members in early April. Responses from 20 national member associations were received, including an outline of national measures being undertaken.

New Business Supports

The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation has announced a major expansion of business supports for all firms affected by the crisis. Included is a new €180m Sustaining Enterprise Fund for those in the manufacturing and international services sectors. Free mentoring and online training have been made available for all SMEs. The supports also include an additional €30m for firms with less than ten employees.

Employer's Guide for Human Resources

Enterprise Ireland has published Covid-19: An Employer's Guide to help companies to implement appropriate human resources (HR) polices and practices. The aim of the guide is to assist firms in understanding related HR requirements and needs of employees. It also includes details of financial supports and guidance and indicates where further information can be sourced.

NSAI Free Standards

To assist in increasing the production of medical supplies, the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) is offering free access to standards for medical devices and personal protective equipment. The standards being made available include those covering common filtering masks, medical gloves and protective clothing. The provision of free access to these standards, will help EU firms that are converting their production processes, to rapidly manufacture critical items for front line workers.

SFI Discover Programme

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) has announced the SFI Discover Programme Call 2020.Its purpose is to stimulate and support projects that extend activity and ability in engaging the public in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). SFI is particularly interested in projects that will broaden the relevance to, and participation of, communities less represented in STEM in society. The application deadline is 10 June 2020.

One Kind Word

A new mental health campaign has been developed to address the often toxic atmosphere of social media. The One Kind Word generator was set up by the 3Ts (Turn the Tide on Suicide) charity to promote mental health. It is based on the simple idea that each person can positively change another's day by finding one kind word to say. Kind words can be uploaded to Twitter with the hashtag #OneKindWord.

Recent Covid-19 Good News

- A graphic about the importance of taking time for Self Care has been published by the *American College of Lifestyle Medicine.*

- *Silicon Republic* has published some good advice about addressing wellbeing while working remotely during the crisis. Useful tips for staying positive and keeping mentally healthy are provided.

- An Italian tech company, *Issinova*, has adapted a snorkelling mask into a ventilator for use in hospitals using a newly designed 3D printed valve. The design has been made freely available.

- *Penneys Ireland* has donated more than 40,000 products in care packages to several Irish hospitals. The donations of clothing and toiletries are to support healthcare workers and patients.

- A team of Irish engineers is facilitating local libraries and individuals with 3D printers to supply frames for protection visors to the HSE. More than 150 people are involved in printing the equipment at home, producing about 1,000 masks per day. Anyone with a 3D printer is encouraged to participate.

- *South Dublin County Council* has made Cyc-Lok bicycle parking free to use until 5 May for frontline workers. Cyc-Lok's lockers are completely enclosed and protect bicycles and belongings.

- The European Commission is providing seven ways to enjoy a variety of art and culture online including opera, literature and cinema.