


CONSTRUCTION

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

MAY/JUNE 2020





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EDITORIAL



The construction industry is currently under considerable scrutiny as it leads the return to work under the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol.

The CIF advises that all workers and site visitors must rigidly adhere to the steps set out in the 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) document, or sites will be shut down once again, most probably for a more extended period.

The fact that construction was among the first sectors of the Irish economy to reopen is to a large part down to the proactive approach taken by the CIF, members of its Safety, Health and Welfare sub-Committee, and the broader newly formed C-19 Working Group, who devised the C-19 SOP and C-19 induction programme. These enabled CIF to show Government that the sector can operate safely, protecting its workforce and minimising the risk of spreading infection.

For this Covid-19 issue of *Construction* magazine, we have compiled a range of articles and opinion pieces to provide you with information you may need to move your company forward in the coming months.

CIF directors set out key issues that members should be considering to maintain their operations and keep their workers safe

and sites open. In Project Focus, Clancy Construction is in the process of delivering two essential medical facilities in Limerick for the HSE in record time.

In Industry Analysis, leading industry professionals provide their opinions and advice on subjects such as contractual issues resulting from the Covid-19 crisis, financial advice for managing your business through the coming months, and how to provide effective leadership for remote-working teams.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, the CIF has published and is updating, as required, a comprehensive range of Covid-19 documents to assist members with the running of their operations in this challenging time. The CIF has also hosted a number of webinars, which cover topics such as implementing the C-19 SOP and addressing contractual issues. All of these, including Covid-19 posters and signage, can be accessed on the CIF website www.cif.ie

I wish you and your teams the best of luck in operating under the new conditions. Remember to keep an eye on the CIF website for regular updates and information. **C**



Stay safe
Robbie Cousins
Editor

YOUR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION TEAM - WWW.CIF.IE

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CIF NEWS

LEADING THE WAY IN REOPENING OUR ECONOMY

A message from CIF Director General Tom Parlon



Tom Parlon,
Director General, CIF.

“ OUR INDUSTRY IS NOW WELL PLACED TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COUNTRY’S ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AS WE ENABLE OTHER SECTORS TO OPERATE. ”

On 18th May, our industry reopened partially, with workers returned to sites and to jobs that are utterly changed due to Covid-19, with new measures put in place to protect them, their families and our communities.

Since the Government shut down our industry on the 28th March, construction companies and workers have been preparing to return to work safely. In terms of safety, our industry is recognised as one that is well-developed. That other countries facing similar lock-downs did not include construction is a recognition of the safety culture that is baked into modern construction. The fact that construction was one of the first sectors to reopen in Ireland is testament to our established safety culture, and our agility in being able to adapt and address challenges that arise.

Our preparation to reopen involved extensive consultations with unions, Government and international experts. The CIF’s standard operating procedure (SOP) translates the latest HSE, World Health Organisation (WHO) and medical advice into a construction context. The SOP fits into the national protocol agreed between Government, industry and unions and is enforced by the HSA.

Over 150,000 people have now completed the SOP’s online safety induction. Not all of these are traditional on-site construction workers, it includes office-based professionals, engineers, design teams, architects, etc.

I want to commend the industry’s companies and employees for their commitment to safety. These workers are rebuilding our economy while they are building. Our industry is now well placed to contribute to our country’s economic recovery, as we enable other sectors to operate. We have been able to recommence work without significant State support, and 100,000 of our employees can now gradually be taken off the pandemic unemployment payment scheme and temporary wage subsidy scheme.

We are in constant contact with several Government departments and bodies to support our members in their vital work. We are strongly lobbying Solas to reintroduce Safepass training. We are also in constant contact with DPER and the OGP to have them issue instructions for contracting authorities to collaborate with the industry in addressing Covid-related costs. We are constantly asking for support for companies struggling to overcome Covid’s impact. We will continue to support you over the coming months as you rebuild Ireland. **C**

*Stay safe,
Tom*

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EXPECT COVID-19 SOP TO BE IN PLACE UNTIL AT LEAST MID-2021

DERMOT CAREY, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, writes that all contractors must strictly adhere to the guidelines in the 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document if the sector is to have any chance of staying open.

The shutdown of the construction industry from 28th March meant that, bar essential works, the industry was brought to a standstill.

Following this, the CIF Safety, Health and Welfare sub-Committee established the C-19 Working Group to prepare comprehensive non-legal guidance on work practices to adopt to ensure compliance with the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol – Covid-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers' document and Covid-19 HSE guidelines on, for example, social distancing and hygiene. The C-19 Working Group comprises the construction industry's top health and safety managers, working in consultation with leading occupational health and safety experts from around the world.

The C-19 Working Group developed the CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document and Covid-19 induction programme.

On 18th May, a gradual or phased reopening of sites began. It should be noted that the continued reopening of sites is dependant on all personnel and visitors on sites adhering to the new SOP, which must be embedded in every contractor's work practices.

The SOP must be strictly adhered to for all construction work until at least early 2021, and probably longer. An epidemiologist advising CIF has indicated that it will be a minimum of 10 months before a vaccine may be available.

WE DO SAFETY WELL

The construction sector is best placed to lead the country in returning to work, as we do safety well.

Our industry has a strong safety culture and operates using comprehensive and strict health and safety procedures. The wearing of PPE is compulsory on all building sites, which is not the case in many other sectors. Much of our work is outdoors, and the vast majority of people working in the sector are younger.



Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF.

SOP FEEDBACK

By 18th May, nearly 120,000 people had completed the Covid-19 induction programme. While there are many workers from essential projects in this number, there are also contractors ensuring their personnel have completed induction in preparation for a return to work.

The feedback from contractors working on essential projects in accordance with the new SOP is that it has been difficult. We expected this to be the case. It will be challenging to operate under the new SOP, meeting deadlines while also maintaining productivity. I cannot stress enough the importance of having early discussions with clients about the extra accruing costs and project delays that will arise out of the return to work.

We also recommend that contractors engage with subcontractors to revisit their health and safety documentation, and risk assessment method statement, and to assess their understanding of these taking account of the Covid-19 environment. You should also take this opportunity to eliminate close proximity working and identify any extra resources that might be required.

RESOURCES

The CIF has prepared a 'Back to Work Resource Pack', which is available on the CIF website. There is also a series of recorded webinars on the CIF Learning & Development website that cover the SOP; and the role of a Compliance Officer; and a Covid-19 personnel wellbeing webinar, which has been produced in cooperation with Laya Healthcare. **C**

For the latest Covid-19 CIF health and safety updates, visit www.cif.ie

FIVE KEY COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

To maintain the safety of on-site workers and staff, it is vital that all contractors returning to work adhere to the procedures set out in the new CIF 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document. Failure to do so will result in work being halted again, and possibly for a more extended period.

With that in mind, I recommend you put the following measures in place to ensure workers can work safely on site in compliance with new Covid-19 guidelines.

- Consult the new SOP and assess if your workforce can safely operate before anyone returns to site.
- Speak to your insurance advisor about the implications of implementing the SOP onsite.
- Speak to your clients about productivity that will arise as a result of the new SOP and their impact on programme times and costs.
- Ensure that your workforce and those of your subcontractors have read and understand their responsibilities under the SOP document, undergone the C-19 induction, and completed the C-19 self-declaration questionnaire.
- Carry out a safety review for each site and put in place a restart plan for each site, (eg. ensure that all relevant PPE can be sourced and secured before work commences).

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RETURNING TO WORK – EMPLOYER CONSIDERATIONS

JEAN WINTERS, Director, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF, writes about the necessary preparations employers should be making for the return of their workforce.

When the Covid-19 lockdown was imposed on 28th March 2020, most construction sites shut down with immediate effect. Construction employers had to act quickly and place most workers on temporary lay-off. Workers were either kept on the payroll through the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme, where applicable, or they signed up to the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, where they received income support directly from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

On 3rd May 2020, the Government published its 'Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business', which stated that the reopening of the construction industry would take place on 18th May. Employers should now be making the necessary preparations for the return of their workforce.

To do this, employers should be considering the following.

WORKFORCE RECALL

Employers should be putting measures in place to recall workers from temporary lay-off/short-time working arrangements. Employers should ensure that fair and objective selection criteria are used when selecting workers for recall. As a general rule, members should apply the same criteria that they would have used in the past when selecting workers for temporary lay-off.

STAGGERED WORKING HOURS

The 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document has provided members with guidance on working arrangements in the current pandemic. Within the document, reference is made to staggered working hours and break times. Normal working hours are provided for in the three SEOs relevant to the construction industry. Employers may wish to consider staggering starting times, break times and finishing times within the timeframes set out in the relevant SEO. Employers should also be mindful of the provisions on working hours covered by the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. Furthermore, any change in working hours should be made by agreement with the workers concerned.

ANNUAL LEAVE

As the lockdown was implemented before Easter, many workers were placed on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and unable to take Easter holidays as a result. In preparation for the reopening of sites, employers should review each worker's annual leave balances and put in place a process for any unused Easter holidays to be taken at a time that is most suitable depending on business needs.



Jean Winters, Director, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF.

While workers do not accrue annual leave entitlements during temporary lay-off, workers are entitled to full annual leave entitlements if they work over 1,365 hours within the annual leave year.

REDUNDANCY

The Covid-19 pandemic may result in delays in projects starting, projects being scaled back, and indeed projects being cancelled. A reduction in workload will likely result in construction workers being made redundant. The Industrial Relations and Employment Services Department has resources with detailed information on redundancies available for members.

The CIF has issued guidance on Return to Work and sample letters recalling workers back to work from temporary lay-off/short-time working. These documents are available on the CIF website at www.cif.ie and are accessible to all CIF members. **C**

FIVE TIPS FOR REACTIVATING YOUR WORKFORCE

Employers reactivating on-site workforces should consider the following points as part of any remobilisation strategy.

- Establish the number of workers that are on temporary lay-off and which Government income support schemes are being utilised.
- Estimate the timeframe for skills requirements and the rate at which operations need to be scaled-up on various sites.
- Agree on the selection criteria for recalling workers from temporary lay-off.
- Establish the training/re-training needs of workers before they return.
- Draft a template letter for recalling workers from temporary lay-off, to include the date on which they are required and details of any new operational procedures.

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HEALTH & SAFETY OF WORKERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY IS A PRIORITY

JAMES BENSON, Director, Housing, Planning & Development, CIF, outlines the key planning, development and house-building considerations that should be under review at this time.

The construction industry was allowed to return to work on 18th May, under phase one of the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'. Only those companies that are in a position to and have implemented the specified return to work protocols should have returned to work. There is a responsibility on those who have returned to work to implement the protocols over the coming months. This will be the new norm for at least the rest of 2020.

All Irish Home Builders Association (IHBA) members should also consult and assess all aspects of their supply chains to evaluate their ability to meet all work challenges under the new norm.

PLANNING

On 29th March 2020, the Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government, and the Government, taking account of the considerations under Section 251A(5) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, made orders that resulted in an extension of time for a range of specified periods and timelines under this Act, and several other related planning acts and associated regulations. Any change to the Act will affect all those preparing applications and those currently within the planning process. Members are advised to familiarise themselves with the most up to date publications for planning matters related to those provisions under the Act, as available on the CIF website. Members should contact the Housing, Planning & Development Department of the CIF with any questions or queries.

The CIF continues to engage with the Government to secure measures to help with the remobilisation of the industry, including a derogation on working hours under planning regulations.

RETURNING TO WORK

On certain projects, where the client and the builder are the same entity, such as traditional housing projects, revised risk assessments and protocols should be in place to allow works to recommence. As



James Benson, Director, Housing, Planning & Development, CIF.

with all risk-based documents, these will be under constant review to ensure efficacy and will be fine-tuned to ensure the maximum protection possible.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

All those in the residential sector should take full account of the guidance provided in the 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document, together with adhering to The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005, (General Applications) Regulations 2007, plus the 2016 Amendment and the (Construction) Regulations 2013.

All sectors and businesses across the country will need protocols to maintain physical distancing to promote infection control and minimise the risk of transmission. Some construction sectors, such as residential housing, are better placed by their unique nature to implement and maintain these operating protocols. Practices can be redefined in

ways that make them safer to restart. Members should follow a thorough implementation framework and return to work protocol, identifying the transitional stages of returning to activity in their developments.

REVIEW OF MEASURES AND ADAPTION

A transitional return to activities will afford the requisite time to developments to integrate the necessary steps in a controlled low-risk transitional process. All measures and protocols should be fluid and under continual assessment, allowing for adaption as deemed appropriate.

IN CONCLUSION

In closing, I draw your attention to the travel restrictions and the 14-day self-isolation requirement for individuals on re-entry to the country. This is an important point for any members who have engaged overseas subcontractors or labour. Please note, this does not apply to workers from Northern Ireland.

The residential sector, along with others within the construction industry, has led the way in the production of the necessary guidance that has permitted a safe return to work. The health and safety of all our employees and the wider community should always be our key priority. **C**

FIVE TIPS FOR IHBA MEMBERS RETURNING TO WORK

- Keep updated on all planning and development amendments.
- Those involved in residential development should establish the current position and assess your ability to recommence activity under the new SOP document during the emergency period.
- Engage with clients and stakeholders to introduce revised risk assessments and protocols to allow works to recommence.
- Plan for a staged transitional return to activities.
- All new site measures and protocols should be fluid and kept under continual assessment.

COLLABORATION IS KEY FOR A SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO WORK

PAUL SHERIDAN, Director, Main Contracting and Civil Engineering, CIF, sets out some critical considerations for contractors reopening construction sites.

Since the start of the Covid-19 industry shutdown, the CIF has been engaging with Government, clients, industry bodies, the EU, health and safety experts, and legal experts to put in place plans that ensure that the industry is best placed to return to work as soon as possible, and as safely as possible.

CIF PLAN

The publication of the 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) document, a set of guidelines to help align construction working procedures with HSE Covid-19 guidelines, meant that construction was one of the first sectors to present Government with a workable plan outlining how sites can be operated safely.

The CIF has also been engaging with Government, client bodies and relevant experts to prepare member information to help address the issue of costs accrued during the shutdown, and the new costs associated with remobilising and having the sector operate under the HSE guidelines. This information has been distilled into the C-19 SOP.

It will be a difficult road ahead for contractors and clients, but it is vital that any new agreements are equitable and are put in place as early as possible to protect their clients' projects and their own supply chain.

OPENING SITES

With the announcement by the Taoiseach of the reopening of construction on 18th May, strong consideration should be given by contractors to prepare their organisation, subcontractors, labour and supply chains to remobilise as soon as possible. The Government's 'Return



Paul Sheridan, Director, Main Contracting, CIF.

to Work Safely Protocol – Covid-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers' document sets out how employers and employees should prepare for a return to work and the future work practices required to maintain social distancing. The C-19 SOP document aligns with this document. To keep sites open, it is imperative that construction workers are fully aware of all the details contained in the SOP, have undergone a C-19-related induction, such as the CIF C-19 induction programme, and completed the C-19 self-declaration questionnaire.

In addition, all sites must be reconfigured in line with the SOP to facilitate safe and socially-distanced working. Contractors should develop detailed site specific risk assessments in collaboration with their clients/ERs. It will also be necessary to adjust delivery programmes. Compliance is critical, and it must also be seen to be done to avoid public scrutiny and another potential shutdown.

ADDRESSING COSTS

The Covid-19 pandemic and related legislation have caused the shutting down of sites resulting in unavoidable costs.

The Office of Government Procurement has introduced an ex-gratia payment on Public Works Contracts to help contractors manage these costs. However, the reopening of sites will also lead to remobilisation costs, along with the additional costs of working with Covid-19 and complying with legal requirements. Some proactive contracting authorities are considering ways of helping the industry to remobilise by, for instance, injecting cash into it as a form of advanced payment. However, the cost associated with being legally compliant with Covid-19 health and safety requirements remains to be addressed.

On this matter, the CIF is continuing to engage with Government bodies and contracting authorities to identify solutions, but as yet there remains huge uncertainty around how Covid-19 costs will be measured in existing projects, and also within new tenders. Asking contractors to price a health and safety-related matter in a competitive way in their tenders may not be the best path to follow.

FACILITATING COLLABORATION

Contractors should consider the following five steps to facilitate a collaborative approach with clients to deliver projects under the new CIF 'C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP).

- Engage with your client in assessing the impact of Covid-19 on existing contracts.
- Refer to your contracts and review recent CIF contractual-related circulars for guidance around standard contracts provisions related to notices, delays, costs and instructions.
- Collaborate with your clients on remobilisation costs, using the CIF's SOP document as a basis for discussion and be aware of your responsibilities as a Project Supervisor for Construction Stage (PSCS).
- Remain in contact with your insurance brokers, particularly when restarting activity.
- Continue to consult with the CIF's Contract and Tendering Department, which can access an extensive network of internal and third-party experts.

KEY RESOURCES

The CIF has produced a number of Covid-19-related documents, circulars and webinars. These can be found on the CIF website www.cif.ie and include:

- Frequently asked questions on contractual issues by our contract and legal experts John FFF O'Brien and Tom Wren
- A contractual issues webinar by Siobhan Kenny of Eugene F Collins Solicitors
- Information on ex-gratia payments on Public Works Contracts
- Impact of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (EMPI) legislation and industry shutdown on contracts
- CIF Back to Work Resource Pack
- Remobilisation factors information document
- The Covid-19 claims programme to assist contractors.
- The Tendering and Contracting Department is also available to support members.

CIF intends to expand and adapt the above resources during this dynamic and unprecedented pandemic to support members' businesses.

The CIF has written to and is willing to work with the Government on ways to develop a consistent approach across all sites and future tenders to help address this.

In light of this, collaboration and cooperation between all parties are critical to mitigate and/or share the burdens associated with Covid-19. Without collaboration, unresolved issues will inevitably end up in disputes, causing further delays. This collaboration must be meaningful, more regular than before, and begin at an earlier stage. Due to Covid-19-driven requirements, construction programmes may change more frequently, and they will need to be more adaptable. Therefore, regular meaningful communication between contractors, subcontractors and clients/ERs is essential for project completion. Topics that you may want to discuss with your clients/ERs are outlined in the recent CIF 'Back to Work Resource Pack' and the remobilisation guidance note. However, discussions around BCAR requirements, which are critical to clients/ERs at the end of projects, might also be included. Cooperation within PWC contracts is an explicit contractual obligation on

all parties, including the employer. It is implied within the RIAI form.

WHAT'S NEXT

Similar to other industries, and maybe more so, construction contractors are heavily reliant on cash flow to maintain their businesses as going concerns. Construction is a risk-oriented business, which operates on low margins of between 1% and 3%. There is no capacity for contractors to take on the entire unavoidable costs associated with the pandemic. The industry is still recovering from the last downturn, and along with the Irish economy, it needs to get on a solid footing as soon as possible. If the sector is not supported, the economy is threatened. It is in nobody's interest to see this happen.

The Government must now maintain its capital investment programme and even accelerate its project pipeline to get the economy back up and running. The Government needs to commit to the 'Project Ireland 2040' programme, which was developed through multi-stakeholder engagement and contains essential projects necessary for the social and economic well-being of Ireland. **C**



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Available in packs for easy assembly or pre-assembled



Alternative option available for over hardhat €7.40 each

OVERCOMING THE COVID-19 CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD



Shane Dempsey, Director, Communications, CIF.

First of all, I would like to commend the exceptional work that has been carried out by the construction industry's frontline workers who continued to deliver essential projects throughout the shut-down.

We should also acknowledge the work of CIF members and staff, particularly those involved with the CIF Covid-19 Working Group, who in a few short weeks, developed our world-class 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) document, which interprets the guidelines set out in the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'. They also produced the CIF C-19 induction programme, in collaboration with GoContractor and Coop Media.

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

Covid-19 has fundamentally changed how construction companies operate. The industry must operate safely, protecting its workers from coronavirus infection, or activity will be suspended again. Covid-19-related restrictions are likely to be a factor in our business operations for the next 12 to 18 months before a vaccine becomes widely available.

We have been advising on how to adjust to this changing environment through a compilation of the key guidance notes circulated to our members. Many of these are live documents, that may be updated occasionally to include any future amendments to the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocols'. CIF will advise members directly when changes occur. Please pay close attention to any CIF correspondence you receive.

SHANE DEMPSEY, Director, Communications, CIF, writes about some of the resources that CIF has developed to assist contractors and their workers in reducing on-site coronavirus-infection risks.

RETURN TO WORK

To date, there has been a positive reception to the construction industry's return to work. This is mostly down to our members working with CIF staff in taking a measured approach to remobilisation and making a cross-sector commitment to operating safely.

At this point, 150,000 people have undergone the C-19 induction programme, which is a testament to our industry's commitment to getting back up and running safely.

The CIF has also published a Covid-19 self-declaration questionnaire to be completed and returned by employees at least three days in advance of their return to site. This questionnaire is included in the SOP document.

TRAINING

At the start of the Covid-19 crisis, the CIF Learning & Development Department was quick to move its full training offering online. It has also redesigned its website – www.ciftraining.ie – to be more responsive to members' needs.

The Construction Professional Skillnet continues to provide 'free' best-in-class training and webinars for construction professionals. Please visit www.cpskillnet.ie to see what courses are available.

The following is a selection of the Covid-19-related resources available on the CIF website at www.cif.ie

- **CIF Back to Work Resource Pack**
- **Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure document**
- **Insurance & Bonds FAQ**
- **OGP note and template for engagement between ER and Contractor**
- **IHBA Covid-19 Remobilisation Webinar**
- **Covid-19 questionnaire/self-declaration**

WEBINARS

During the period of the shut-down, CIF held several webinars, which are available to view on the CIF website.

These include a 'Return to Work' webinar to help companies prepare their operations; a webinar on remobilisation for the housing and development sector, which includes examples of measures taken by a number of members; and a training webinar on the functions and responsibilities of the newly created Covid-19 Compliance Officer role.

LIGHTHOUSE CHARITY

The Lighthouse Charity is launching a free 24/7 employee assistance programme and wellbeing app for all construction workers in Ireland. This service is free to you and your employees and can be very beneficial in terms of dealing with stress and mental health issues.

CIF COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

Dozens of companies have sent offers of products and services to help CIF members prepare to return to work and operate while the pandemic is with us. The CIF has established a shop window – www.cif.ie/commercial-partners – for these providers. I encourage members to visit this as they prepare to return to work.

IN CONCLUSION

The CIF has received a substantial increase in the number of companies applying for membership. By working together, we have overcome many recent challenges. With more members, we will grow stronger and can continue to set new 'best practice' standards. The CIF offers tailored membership packages to reflect your sectoral requirements and to give you a market edge in an ever-competitive construction industry. If you wish to enquire about membership, please contact Bernardine Walsh, Membership Development Executive, CIF, at bwalsh@cif.ie 

LEAD THE WAY ON SITE WITH NEW STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SEAN DOWNEY, Director, Specialist Contracting, CIF, writes that proactive specialist contractors will be best placed to weather the challenges of the new working norm.

All specialist contracting members should now know, or be assessing, how they will operate under the new norm. This analysis should inform the conversations you need to be having with clients and to identify the measures that need to be in place to enable you to return to work safely and productively.

You may need to engage someone externally (eg, a QS or claims consultant to carry out a delay and disruption analysis) for this work. This person will assess the impact of the new working regime and identify solutions to enable your company to operate under CIF's 'C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP).

The challenge is to seek instruction from either the client or the main contractor, as appropriate, regarding how you are going to work, and to try to get agreement on this.

Specialist contractors who are proactive in engaging with the client to show what their programme would look like (eg, "if you give me these slots or this time to work, I will be more productive, competitive, and can be given space to work or coordinate with other contractors) will probably get more freedom to operate in the time and schedule that they want.

RISK MANAGEMENT

There is concern among specialist contractors about client engagement, and how issues are going to be dealt with, and how risk is going to be shared.

It should be noted by anyone pricing work or starting work soon, that Covid-19 is now a 'known fact'. This means that specialist contractors are now subject to Covid-19 risks. As a result, any delay in scheduling, ordering materials, or in supply from third parties is seen as the specialist contractor's risk. Consider this before entering into any contract from here on. Price whatever you can reasonably because you are carrying the full commercial risk.

The Covid-19 shutdown came about

as a result of an external factor outside everyone's control, which is to all intents and purposes a force majeure event. It is understood that everyone would like to think in a perfect scenario that people would try and work out whatever is practicable to complete projects, working together and sharing the burden both in terms of time and compensation. However, this is not always the case, and there may be situations where specialist contractors will be forced into dispute resolution.

If you require advice about resolving conflicts, contact CIF Specialist Contracting, and we can assist or, if required, direct you to a CIF Corporate Partner for professional representation in this area.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the short to medium term, I see two possible scenarios.

Firstly, restrictions will get relaxed in a reasonable fashion. Organisations will return to site, and the industry will reopen slowly, sustainably and safely. There may be disruption, prolongation of contracts, delays, and claims for compensation. There will be some disagreement. But it will be a short-term impact that may last two or three months.

The other scenario is that this will become a long-term issue, lasting a year to 18 months. If this happens, many small, specialist contractors will leave the industry. If they can't put people on site, achieve productivity and pay workers, then they simply won't trade. They will just walk away.

This would mean that the skills shortage of that past few years will exacerbate with enormous implications for projects. To add to this, overseas labour will not be an option as the restrictions have already impacted across Europe.

IN CONCLUSION

Specialist contractors will likely need professional assistance to navigate their way through these new challenges,



Sean Downey, Director,
Specialist Contracting, CIF.

whether in preparing to return to work or resolving disputes promptly.

The critical point concerning current contracts is to maintain operations as usual, keep making all monthly payment claims associated with projects, including illnesses related to them. Consider events as they arise, including instructions to return to work, and serve the appropriate notices for both additional time and money, or you may leave yourself exposed in the future. **C**

KEY POINTS

- Continue as normal contractually.
- Engage constructively to plan work and reach early agreement with clients.
- Critically analyse the commercial implications of the new arrangements and address issues formally through contracts and informally through constructive negotiation.

Roadbridge



Roadbridge is a Limerick based international company that has been in operation for over 50 year's . As a leading civil engineering and construction contractor, our skill sets go far beyond earthworks and constructing, and span the entire project life cycle.

COVID-19-RELATED BUSINESS SUPPORTS AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT

On 2nd May, the Government launched a suite of supports for SMEs, with Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe announcing the range of supports amounting to €6.5bn.

The Minister said, "On top of the measures previously put in place by Government, this suite of measures is designed to build confidence, further assist businesses in terms of the management of their companies, and allow them to begin looking to the future and start charting a path forward for the weeks and months ahead. We will continue to seek the best ways of supporting our people, and wider society, and rebuilding our economy so that we can get people back to work safely. We will do this by being cognisant of official public health advice and doing what is in the best interests of all our people."

The €6.5bn of additional crisis measures comprise the following.

PANDEMIC STABILISATION AND RECOVERY FUND

A new fund to make capital available to medium and large enterprises on commercial terms to invest across the capital structure in businesses employing more than 250 people or with an annual turnover in excess of €50m has been set up



Paschal Donohoe TD,
Minister for Finance.

under the direction of the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF), Ireland's sovereign wealth fund. It will have a total capital of €2bn.

SME CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

A €2bn Covid-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme to support lending to SMEs for terms ranging from three months to six years at below market interest rates.

TAX DEBT WAREHOUSING

The 'warehousing' of tax liabilities for a period of 12 months after recommencement of trading during which time there will be no debt enforcement action taken by Revenue and no interest charge accruing in respect of the warehoused debt.

COMMERCIAL RATES WRITE-OFFS

To help with the costs of upgrading premises to comply with social distancing rules, there will be a three-month write-off of up to €10,000 for businesses, at a total cost of €250m.

RESTART FUND FOR MICRO AND SMALL BUSINESSES

A €10,000 restart grant for micro and small businesses based on a rates/waiver rebate from 2019.

The credit guarantee scheme and the debt warehousing will require legislation to be passed in the Dail, which will be possible on the formation of a new government. **C**

Government Covid-19 supports are being updated on an ongoing basis. For details on current supports and resources available from Government, visit www.gov.ie

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS' PENSION SCHEME DEATH IN SERVICE RULE AMENDMENT

The Trustee of the Construction Workers' Pension Scheme (CWPS) in the first instance hopes that its members and their families remain well during the current Covid-19 crisis.

In response to the Covid-19 crisis and to provide some peace of mind for our members, the Trustee has agreed a rule amendment that may allow the payment of the full €100,000 Death in Service Benefit, at their discretion. This may also extend past the four-week period, which at time of going to print applies to a reduced payment of €50,000 after lay off. This is payable while employees are in receipt of either:

- The Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy payment, where the employee



has been laid off

Or

- The Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Benefit payment.

Please note that the Death in Service Benefit can only be paid if the employee meets the normal criteria, which includes,

but is not limited to the following:

- The employee must have been employed with an employer who is registered with CWPS
- All contributions due for the employee must also have been paid to CWPS at the time of death.

The employee must have accumulated 26 weeks of pension contributions in CWPS up to the date of death.

Remember, it is important to ensure that CWPS, or your pension provider, always has your correct contact details. **C**

For further information please email info@cwps.ie



NEW MEMBERS

The Construction Industry Federation welcomes the following new members who, having met all the necessary criteria, have been approved for membership by the CIF Executive Body.



Arthur Kelly & Co Ltd

Aisling, New Road
Balcarrick
Donabate
Co Dublin

Baracon Ltd

93 Upper Great Georges Street
Dun Laoghaire
Co Dublin

Brierwood Carpentry Ltd

Brierfield
Moylough
Ballinasloe
Co Galway

Conor Mulcahy Construction Ltd

Gortmore
Ballywilliam
Nenagh
Co Tipperary
www.cmconstruction.ie

Cross Electrical Ltd

Carrolls Cross
Kilmacthomas
Carollscross
Co Waterford
www.crosselectrical.ie

DGSL Building Ltd

Deanhill
Hayes
Navan
Co Meath
www.dgslbuilding.ie

Digital Construction Technologies (DCT) Ltd

2-3 Prospect Road
Glasnevin
Dublin 9
www.dctgrp.com

Erba Engineering Services Ltd

Unit 6
Ballymount Business Park
Ballymount
Dublin 24
www.erba.ie

Excel Roofing Systems Ltd

Unit 3, Drumrora Business Park
Ballyjamesduff
Co Cavan
www.excelroofing.ie

McGonagle Plant Hire Ltd

Trillick
Buncrana
Co Donegal

PHD Project Seven Construction Ltd

Cois Inbhear
Markievicz Road
Sligo
Co Sligo

Sonica Fitout Ltd

Kingram Mews
6 Kingram Place
Dublin 2
www.sonica-fitout.com

Tac Coat Services Cork Ltd

Ballineadig
Farran
Co Cork

TQM Construction Limited

Unit 291
Blanchardstown Corporate Park 2
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15
www.tqm.ie

NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS



The Construction Industry Federation welcomes the following new Corporate Partners:

Deloitte.

Deloitte Ireland LLP

Deloitte & Touche House
Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2
www2.deloitte.com



MAZARS

Mazars

Harcourt Centre, Block 3,
Harcourt Road, Dublin 2.
www.mazars.ie

CIF COMMERCIAL PARTNERS ASSISTING MEMBERS WITH ADDRESSING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Our industry has changed utterly in the space of three short months. Since sites started to open, CIF members continue to adapt within this new environment. CIF members are acquiring new products and services to improve safety, productivity and profitability.

As part of our commitment to members at this time of change, CIF has launched a new CIF Commercial Partners programme to assist with accessing essential products and services that may be required to bring building sites in line with the provisions set out in the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, HSE guidelines and guidance set out in the CIF's 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document.

In addition, many of the companies that have already become CIF commercial partners are offering substantial discounts, with genuine savings to be made.

Products and services available to date include:

- Facemasks, visors/sanitizers
- PPE




Bernardine Walsh, Membership Development Executive, CIF.

- Temperature screening
- Covid-19 compliance software
- Hand sanitizing stations
- Tools and social distancing software
- Printing & signage

- Bespoke rebar solutions
- Lifting equipment and servicing
- Mechanical services
- Work permits
- Safety management
- Accommodation
- Catering
- Mobile toilets
- Video production
- Office furniture

The latest offers from CIF Commercial Partners can be found at www.cif.ie/commercial-partners

The CIF Commercial Partners programme is a unique package of exclusive products and includes discounts and special offers available only to CIF members.

If you are a company with a unique product or service that will make life on site safer, more efficient and professional, please contact us today. 

For more information about becoming a CIF Commercial Partner, contact Bernardine Walsh bwalsh@cif.ie OR 01 4066 067

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PHONE: 01 839 1833 **MOBILE:** 087 6798866 **EMAIL:** gknets@eircom.net



COVID-19 INDUCTION — HOW IT WORKS

Before being permitted to enter construction sites, all personnel and site visitors must complete the new CIF C-19 induction programme, which supports the ‘Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure. **ROBBIE COUSINS** reports.

Covid-19 induction requires all personnel needing access to construction sites to watch a 15-minute online video, which can be accessed by smartphone, laptop or tablet. Induction is free. The content covers measures relating to Covid-19 while travelling to work, at work, and travelling home. It is available in five languages – English, Irish, Polish, Russian and Romanian.

DIGITAL CARD

On successful completion of the induction, personnel will receive a ‘Digital Card’ on their phone, which confirms that they have completed the course, and they require this to gain access to construction sites.

The CIF advises that all employees, project teams and subcontractors/suppliers must complete the programme before they can enter a construction site.

Contractors must appoint individual personnel to verify cards presented by people at construction site entrances. The appointed persons check the cards on presentation and confirm that the photograph on the card is that of the person presenting. They scan the card’s QR code using the camera on a smartphone or mobile device. If the presenting person cannot be verified as having completed the induction, the site representative should direct them to visit www.cif.ie/induction and follow the link ‘Get a Digital Card’ to complete the induction process.

Checks must be carried out for all site personnel and visitors before allowing them on site, with no exceptions. Non-compliant persons should not be permitted on site.

ONLINE PROCESS

This C-19 induction process has been developed on behalf of CIF by GoContractor, an online construction worker verification platform, over a few weeks following the shutdown of non-essential construction sites by the Government.

GoContractor is an Irish company that has developed an online onboarding platform for construction workers. From an initial start-up in Ireland, it is now operating in the United States. GoContractor operates onboarding programmes on behalf of many contractors in Ireland and is a corporate partner of the CIF.

Contractors do not have to be an existing client of GoContractor to use the C-19 induction software.

The C-19 induction video, produced at record speed by Coop Media, is presented on the GoContractor platform, which uses digital verification and certifying tools to give confidence to contractors that all workers on their sites are verified as having completed the induction.

Following the industry shutdown, John Naughton, CEO, GoContractor, approached the CIF to offer GoContractor’s



A still from the CIF C-19 induction video.

services to roll out induction programmes free of charge for essential sites that were being kept open.

“The discussion that followed revealed that CIF was looking at ways of educating its 150,000-strong workforce in a verifiable way about the work-related risks of Covid-19, and the measures that can be taken to avoid contracting the virus,” John Naughton explains. “Our focus pivoted to helping them achieve this.”

The resulting programme is the live, digital verification card that people bring with them to site on their mobile devices. They can also present a printed certificate once they have completed the 15-minute induction.

“Personnel can access the video by following a link on the CIF’s website, which directs them to the GoContractor platform. Registration involves providing some basic information – name, email address or mobile phone number – and giving consent for us to photograph them while they are taking the induction. This allows the contractor to verify that it is the person presenting who has completed the induction.”

This process of ID verification captures several images while the participant is completing the induction, which are uploaded to the cloud for checking when they arrive on site.

“The videos are also optimised,” John Naughton continues, “So, if somebody has a slow internet connection, the resolution of the video will be reduced to make sure it can be played.”

“This is a live system. Each worker is issued with a unique verification code,” adds John Naughton, “If a worker presents on-site without completing the induction, they can go through the verification process on their smartphones at the site, resubmitting their credentials once they complete the induction.”

The C-19 induction verification software is available free of charge and can be seamlessly integrated into existing software setups. It operates on both Apple and Android platforms. The only hardware required to use it is a smartphone, laptop or tablet. **C**

To complete the CIF C-19 induction, visit www.cif.ie/induction

C-19 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE CRITICAL TO REVITALISING THE INDUSTRY

The new 'Construction Sector C-19 Standard Operating Procedure' document is a guideline to help contractors devise Covid-19-safe construction stage health and safety plans. **ROBBIE COUSINS** reports.

Following the Covid-19 shutdown of the construction sector, the CIF Safety and Health sub-Committee developed the Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) document to serve as a guide for the management of Covid-19 on construction sites for the duration of the pandemic.

Frank Kelly, Chairman, CIF Safety and Health sub-Committee, and Senior Vice President, CIF, says that the shutdown presented an opportunity for the CIF to develop a quality set of standard operating procedures for all in the sector to follow.

"The speed at which the pandemic hit meant that before the shutdown, contractors were working independently to identify ways to make their sites safe for workers. This approach would never have worked, as it would have been impossible to develop a standard set of measures for all. When the shutdown happened, the industry recognised that it had to quickly put in place a standard set of measures for all sites to follow to be compliant with Covid-19 recommendations set down by Government.

"The Safety and Health sub-Committee set up the broadly-drawn C19 Working Group, comprising experts from across the industry, including specialist trades, thus bringing the broadest industry expertise together to co-author the document."

The actions set out in the SOP document should be used as guidelines to help contractors amend their construction stage health and safety plans. The purpose of the document is to protect workers, site visitors, their families and the community, while also recognising the need to protect livelihoods.

The SOP document was well received by Government, as it shows practical ways in which sites can operate safely in line with HSE guidelines, and the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol – Covid-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers'. It has also been a forerunner for other sectors setting out their own SOP.



Frank Kelly, Chairman, CIF Safety and Health sub-Committee, and Senior Vice President, CIF.

CIF ADVICE

The CIF advises that members should adhere to the letter of the SOP in devising health and safety plans and ensure that they, their clients and supply chains collaborate in a meaningful way in adopting the measures. If work cannot be carried out safely under these new circumstances, then it shouldn't take place.

The CIF also advises that in most instances, compliance with the new SOP will involve changes to the schedule or delivery programme for construction projects. Their implementation must have agreement from clients and supply chains, and be implemented following necessary contractual instructions from clients.

Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, says, "A contractor cannot operate unilaterally, and they must also keep in mind that each site and project is unique in terms of its design and the tasks associated with its construction. Clients must, therefore, accept that adapting to comply with the good practice illustrated in the SOP document has productivity and cost implications. It is recommended

that before construction resumes on any site, a revised risk assessment is conducted by the client and contractor to ensure the project can

recommence, revised delivery schedules and work programmes are agreed, and any necessary contractual instructions are issued by the client that make it possible to comply with the SOP.

"On certain projects where the client and the builder are the same entity – such as housing projects – it is still recommended that a revised risk assessment is completed before implementing the SOP," Dermot Carey adds.

The SOP is supported by the new online CIF C-19 induction programme, which every worker and visitor must complete before entering a building site. This is a critical step in protecting employees, businesses and communities.

Frank Kelly says that the SOP document may evolve as Government issues new guidance, and that contractors should expect measures to remain in place for the medium-to long-term.

"The SOP is a live document and will be updated should Government guidance change. The industry will be under scrutiny in the short-term as the new procedures are bedded in. We expect their application to be a medium- to long-term scenario. CIF will be reviewing the situation on an ongoing basis and engaging with Government and relevant bodies to ensure that sites are safe and the sector remains productive for the duration of the restrictions." **C**

To download a copy of the Construction Sector C-19 Standard Operating Procedure document, visit www.cif.ie



A STALWART OF CONSTRUCTION

Martin Lang, recently retired from CIF, having played a pivotal role in the construction industry over the past 25 years, successfully advocating for equitable contract terms for contractors. **ROBBIE COUSINS** speaks with some of those who have worked with him.

At the close of a 48-year career in construction, during which he has helped reshape sector policy, advocated for the industry at the highest level, and assisted individual CIF members with the most complex of contractual issues – not to mention having previously worked as a construction manager at the highest level on major projects across three continents – Martin Lang steps down from his role as Director, Main Contracting, CIF, leaving an enduring legacy.

A highly skilled negotiator, his advocacy on behalf of CIF members has resulted in much-improved forms of the Contract for Public Works and other contract forms. Also, his understanding of complex issues and mediatory skills has assisted many members in addressing conflict resolution issues that have stalled construction projects.

While Martin Lang has been a dominant figure in the Irish construction sector for many years, he is adamant that much of what he has achieved would not have been possible without the support and trust of those who work around him.

Speaking about his retirement at an industry event late last year, he said, “It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the members, to work with great people who allowed me into their business life so openly, and who shared their knowledge, expertise and their genuine love and commitment to the future of the industry.”

A CAREER IN CONSTRUCTION

Martin Lang’s career began in 1973 when he joined W&J Bolger as an estimator in the joinery shop. While at W&J Bolger he trained as a quantity surveyor at DIT Bolton Street and he says that the management at W&J Bolger was instrumental in enabling him to build a career in the construction industry.

“I started out as an assistant estimator in the joinery shop. Gradually, and with great encouragement and assistance from directors Paddy Bolger, a former president of the then Master Builders Association, and Billy Bolger, I worked my way through every function within the company up to



Martin Lang speaking at a DAA industry briefing in 2017.

becoming their senior projects manager.”

MCINERNEY

In 1987, Martin moved to McInerney Portugal, where he worked as a construction manager for three years before transferring to McInerney Middle East, to take up the role of a project manager with responsibility for civil engineering and shore works at the Qatar North Field Development Project.

This is where Tommy Drumm, Managing Director, Collen, and former President of the Master Builders and Contractors Association (MBCA) first worked with him.

“I first met and worked alongside Martin in 1988 as he project-managed a design and build project in Qatar,” Tommy Drumm says, “Since that time, I have been consistently impressed by his vision, leadership skills, and wealth of knowledge. His wisdom, attention to detail, planning and problem-solving, all with a great sense

of humour and a caring appreciation of his friends and colleagues, have made him a great colleague to work alongside.

“Martin has an inimitable style about him that sets him apart,” Tommy Drumm continues. “It takes real skill to be able to bring people together from every corner of Ireland, set objectives, build trust, seek alignment, design and circulate deliverables, and achieve significant and lasting outcomes for individuals, companies, and the Irish construction industry – and all in an entertaining manner – yet that’s what Martin has consistently achieved over his many years in the CIF.

“It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside Martin on the national MBCA Committee for several years, including my tenure as President in 2019. I know there will be no such thing as retirement for Martin Lang, just a fresh and enthusiastic vision for the future as he embraces this new phase of life.”

NIGERIA

In 1992, Martin moved to MF Kent and Nigeria, where he took up the post of regional manager, establishing and managing all aspects of the company's presence in the country, which saw him take the lead in negotiations with Government, the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation, and local tribal leaders. This work he describes as having been "complex and challenging". But, it was a very successful period for the company and for Martin, who says it helped him hone his negotiating skills.

SPECIALIST CONTRACTING ADVOCATE

In 1995, Martin returned to Ireland and joined CIF as an executive officer. In this role, he established the Alliance of Specialist Contractors Association (ASCA) and became the national secretary of the 16 trade associations that made up the Association. He played an integral part in increasing the representation of specialist contractors within the CIF, to the point where ASCA was regarded as the voice of subcontracting within the industry. He also helped introduce the first specialist contractor Forms of Contract document.

Tony O'Leary, former chairman of ASCA, says that Martin's work on behalf of ASCA changed the construction industry and much improved conditions for specialist contractors.

"Martin's contribution to the specialist contractor sector has been far-reaching," says Tony O'Leary. "The work he carried out in the 1990s on behalf of specialist contractors gave us a strong voice at the construction table for the first time, which has remained to this day.

"I first met Martin during his time at W&J Bolger," he continues. "When he joined the CIF, he became a tireless advocate for specialist contractors. He was the driving force behind the establishment of ASCA, developing a platform for specialist contractors to work together and collectively engage with other sectors. He later devised the first version of the Specialist Contract document, a form of which is still used today. I thank him for his service to specialist contractors and wish him a long and happy retirement."

MAIN CONTRACTING LEADER

In 2001, Martin Lang became CIF's Head of Contracts and Dispute Resolution.

In 2013, he was appointed Director of Main Contracting with CIF, a position in which he has played a pivotal role representing and advocating for Ireland's



Martin Lang.

“MARTIN UNDERSTANDS THE PRESSURES OF CONTRACTING AND HAS BEEN A CHAMPION OF THAT GREAT CIF TRADITION OF KEEPING THE GENUINE NEEDS OF MEMBER COMPANIES FOREMOST IN HIS MIND”

PAT LUCEY, PRESIDENT, CIF.

top building contractors and civil engineering firms.

Over the years, in this role, Martin has taken on many responsibilities within the Federation, including being secretary of the MBCA and Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), in addition to chairing many CIF policy

committees.

Martin has also co-authored and edited four books on the various forms of Public Sector Contract, which have been published in Ireland, the UK, and across Europe.

HELD IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM

An accurate picture of Martin Lang's contribution to the industry and the regard with which his peers hold him becomes clearer when you read some of the tributes paid to him by other leading industry figures.

Pat Lucey, President, CIF, says that Martin has an inherent understanding of the pressures contractors work under and this has informed how he has worked over the years.

"It has been a pleasure working with Martin, and I am sad to see him go," comments Pat Lucey. "At the same time, I wish him the very best in retirement. Martin understands the pressures of contracting and has been a champion of that great CIF tradition of keeping the genuine needs of member companies foremost in his mind. Providing the best service to members has been his hallmark. Martin built great relationships with member representatives and client representatives alike, and is highly respected throughout the industry. There are so many facets to Martin I could go on and on, but I'll summarise by saying that Martin is, to the core, a true CIF person in the best of that tradition.

Philip Crampton, a former CIF President and current Vice-President of the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), says Martin's influence on the construction industry over the past 20-plus years has been immense.

"Martin Lang's professionalism, knowledge and understanding of his brief is outstanding. He thoroughly researches any new matters before commenting and has always provided the most concise and clear briefings for those representing the industry," Philip Crampton adds. "In addition, he was available to any member, big or small, at any time to provide advice or assistance.

"On a personal note, I would like to offer him my sincere thanks for his loyal support to me as Chairman of the PTCM Committee. I wish him a long and happy retirement."

COLLEAGUES AND CLIENTS

Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF, says that Martin has been a valued colleague who has greatly improved conditions for contractors as well as organising many



At the 2017 Colloquium on Capital Investment, (L to r): Tony Horan, President, ACEI; Dr. Christian Kummert, Rubicon Infrastructure Advisors; Martin Lang, Director, Main Contracting, CIF; Carole Pollard, President, RIAI; John O'Regan, Director, Aecom.

very successful CIF events.

"Martin's understanding and interpretation of complex contract issues have resulted in the development of more equitable contracts, both public and private, within the construction industry. His acumen and negotiating skills have been applied to great effect on behalf of the industry over the years. He is also a great coordinator, having organised many important and memorable CIF conferences and events. On a personal level, as a colleague, I have always enjoyed his wit and humour. I wish him well in his retirement, great success in the next stage of his life, and I look forward to enjoying his continued friendship."

Hubert Fitzpatrick, Chief Operations Officer, CIF, and a long-time colleague of Martin's, acknowledges his service to the CIF team, main contracting and civil engineering contracting members, as well as policy committees.

"Martin's expertise in contracting services and established relationships with key stakeholders has been of tremendous assistance to Federation members, both collectively and individually," Hubert Fitzpatrick comments. "This has also assisted the Federation in policy formulation for all contracting areas. I wish him well for his retirement and thank him for his support over the years."

On the client-side, David O'Brien, Principal Officer, Office of Government Procurement, pays tribute to Martin's clarity and precision.

"Martin can always be relied upon to bring a great sense of perspective to any and all of life's challenges," David O'Brien says. "He has represented the views of the CIF's membership clearly and succinctly in his own inimitable style in the various roles he has undertaken for the Federation. A direct and open line of communication, no matter what the circumstances. I wish him a long and healthy retirement."

REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Des Mulcair, President, CECA, says he has been an invaluable figure in the construction industry, who has always been very clear in his thinking and direction.

"Martin or 'Sir Humphrey' as he has been fondly nicknamed, has been a pivotal figure in the Main Contracting Department of CIF and always has had great words of wisdom to offer from an encyclopaedic knowledge of past and present events," Des Mulcair comments. "This has been of great assistance when we are trying to map out the future for our industry."

"It has been a pleasure serving as CECA President for the last two years with Martin's guidance, and I am sure all of the past presidents feel the same. He will be a hard act to follow."

Rachel Clarke, President, MBCA, adds to the many tributes being paid to Martin's contributions to the industry.

"Throughout his years of service to the construction sector, Martin has always been impeccably professional, incredibly well-informed and a source of expertise for many," Rachel Clarke says. "He has guided and advised the MBCA council and its members through some very challenging and trying times. This advice and guidance was at all levels, often complicated, and sometimes sensitive in nature. He gave his support to both the small and large contractor alike – something of huge importance to our members."

"I wish Martin wonderful health and happiness in his retirement and thank him for his support over the years."

Cormac Smith, a former President of the MBCA, is also grateful for the support he has received from Martin Lang over the years.

"Martin has always put the members' interests first and that, combined with a

genuine regard for the industry, has made him a great leader," says Cormac Smith.

"He has a way of looking at a problem or issue from outside the box," he adds, "This ability gives him a unique and keen insight into the heart of any situation, including the current Covid-19 crisis, where even as he was about to retire, he stepped back up to the plate to address issues arising as a result of the crisis."

RETIREMENT

In closing, Martin Lang returns to the point that his successes would not have been possible without the people who have supported him throughout his time within the CIF.

"Our Director General Tom Parlon and current and previous COOs Hubert Fitzpatrick and George Hennessy have been a huge support to me, as well as my fellow CIF directors, past and present, and Federation executives in Dublin and the regions," he says. "I have been fortunate with the people who have worked with me over the years. My colleagues, Alison Irving's and Denise Tuffy's commitment and loyalty made my journey so much less burdensome."

In his retirement, Martin Lang says he looks forward to the next chapter of his life with his wife Ann, and children Stuart, Julie, and Ian.

He comments, "The industry is a reflection of society's and the economy's demands and needs. It responds to these challenges with energy, innovation, creativity and hard work, which have been the hallmarks of all the players involved in the Irish and international construction industry for generations, and this generation is no exception."

"It's been Shakespearean at times, a case of 'All's Well That Ends Well' or perhaps a 'Comedy of Errors,'" Martin jokes. "It's for others to decide. Hopefully, everything turns out to be 'As You Like It.'" **C**



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HBFI ANNOUNCES NEW MEASURES TO SUPPORT HOUSEBUILDERS

HBFI has opened new channels to enable more small and large housebuilders access funding to resume developments. The measures will also make funding available for large apartment developments for the first time.

Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFI) has launched a series of new measures to extend its presence throughout the housebuilding finance market. The measures are designed to facilitate a quick resumption of housebuilding throughout Ireland following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

The measures are being introduced under three actions:

- Providing new 'step-in' funding for housebuilders where funding from banks may not be available to enable them to commence new housing developments
- Allowing a broader range of housebuilders (both large and small) to access HBFI's €750m funding; and,
- Funding of major apartment developments for the first time.

STEP-IN FUNDING

HBFI is providing a new €200m step-in fund for housebuilders where funding from banks may not be available.

This takes the form of a new Momentum Fund, which is designed specifically for large developments in prime locations that were previously funded by banks. HBFI is also addressing potential post-Covid-19 shutdown gaps in the funding market to enable housebuilders to commence/complete developments.

BROADER RANGE OF HOUSEBUILDERS

HBFI has extended its existing offering to include more large-scale housebuilding firms by doubling the upper limit for individual HBFI loans from €35m to €75m. Margins and fees are similar to those typically charged by mainstream banks, with gearing of up to 80% for loans up to €35m and up to 65% for loans up to €75m.

SMALLER HOUSEBUILDERS

HBFI has extended its offering to include smaller housebuilding SMEs by removing the previous minimum size requirement of 10 units. Subject to commercial viability, loans from €1m are available. Margins and fees are set at commercial terms that reflect the risk of each development, with gearing up to 80%.

MAJOR APARTMENT DEVELOPMENTS

HBFI is seeking to back major apartment developments for the first time by extending the existing focus on houses and smaller apartment blocks to include major apartment developments. HBFI is offering funding of up to €75m per development with margins and fees set at commercial terms that reflect the risk of each development, and gearing up to 80%.

CONTINUITY OF SUPPLY

Dara Deering, Chief Executive, HBFI, speaking about the new HBFI offerings says that Covid-19 crisis has had an unprecedented impact on the Irish economy with huge implications for construction firms and home builders.

"Covid-19 is an unprecedented health and economic crisis that has significant implications for the viability of many construction firms and for the delivery of new homes.

"The supports we are launching today are designed to help both



Dara Deering, Chief Executive, HBFI.

large and small housebuilders through the crisis and facilitate continuity of supply of new homes in the months and years ahead.

"These measures are a natural extension of our existing offering, which has already committed funding for over 600 new homes since we opened for business just over a year ago.

"HBFI has the right skills, processes and people to help construction firms move quickly to respond to the immense challenges posed by Covid-19. We aim to play a significant and ongoing role in sustaining housebuilding, enhancing access to funding and meeting our society's urgent requirement for more housing supply."

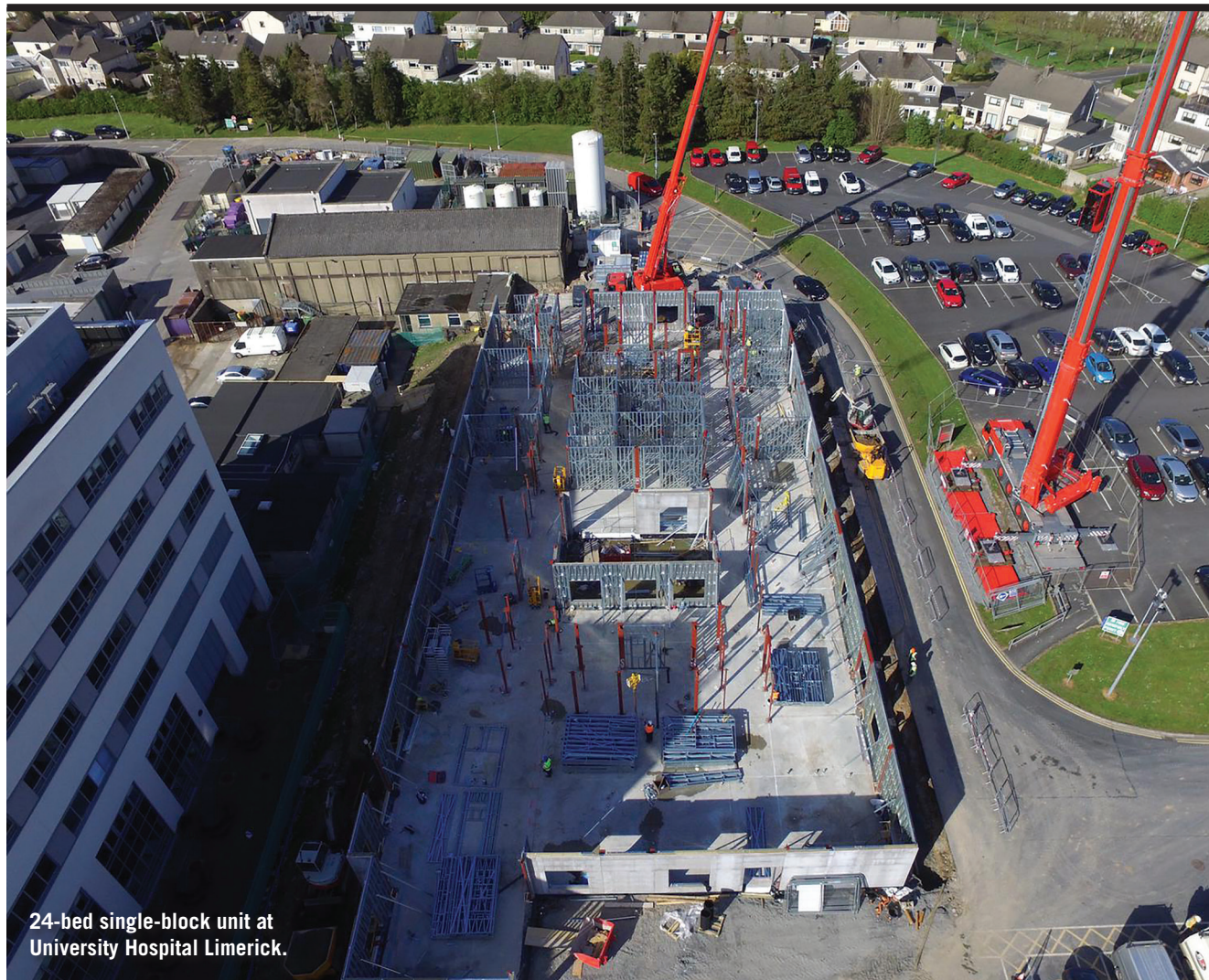
Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, says that housebuilders need access to funds at this time to deliver much needed new homes.

"Housebuilding firms need access to finance to deliver the new homes our society needs. The measures announced by HBFI will help large and small firms resume housebuilding activity quickly and bring new developments to completion as soon as possible," Paschal Donohoe says.

Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, says that since its establishment HBFI has had a considerable impact in helping to deliver new housing.

"HBFI has made significant progress in accelerating the delivery of new homes since inception last year and these new measures demonstrate the Government's commitment to widening the range of measures that will drive greater housing supply," Eoghan Murphy says. "Construction will play a significant role in our economic recovery and HBFI will continue to play a vital role in maximising the sector's capacity to generate significant economic activity and employment and in closing the gap between supply and demand for housing." **C**

For further information regarding the HBFI products or to contact HBFI directly, visit the website www.hbfi.ie



24-bed single-block unit at University Hospital Limerick.

CLANCY DELIVERING TWO COVID-19 MEDICAL FACILITIES IN 14 WEEKS

Clancy Construction is one of many CIF members delivering essential projects across the country for people who need hospital care as a result of contracting coronavirus.

In early February, following the lockdown of the city of Wuhan in China, images flashed on screens across the world of the fast-track construction of a coronavirus hospital. Prefabricated materials enabled fast construction and installation, and the site was open 24 hours a day, with workers completing 12-hour shifts.

In Ireland, observers were quickly learning how offsite construction and a coordinated construction programme can deliver results. One month later, when the first case of coronavirus infection was recorded in Ireland, authorities had to move rapidly to ensure that there was capacity in place to handle the numbers infected and needing hospital care.

CALL TO ACTION

With sites identified, HSE Estates put projects out to tender, and a number of CIF members responded to the call to deliver the much-needed extra capacity.

One such CIF member was Clancy Construction. The contractor is currently in the midst of two fast-track projects for HSE Estates, delivering a 24-bed single-block unit at University Hospital Limerick (UHL) and another similar unit at Croom Hospital, Co Limerick; both adding medical capacity to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

DELIVERY PLAN

The UHL unit has an on-site programme

of just 14 weeks, while the Croom unit, which has a three-storey element, has a 17-week on-site programme. Both projects are on track for completion in July.

John O'Shaughnessy, Managing Director, Clancy Construction, says that the tender for the works was put together in one day, while the design and planning for the project took just two weeks to complete.

"Once everything was in place, we set out a 16-hour-a-day programme, comprising two, eight-hour shifts, with all workers on site observing safety and hygiene protocols set down by the CIF and HSE, including strict physical distancing rules."

The first concrete was poured on the UHL site on 2nd April, and a light steel



A socially-distanced toolbox talk.



Site preparation works at the Croom Hospital project.

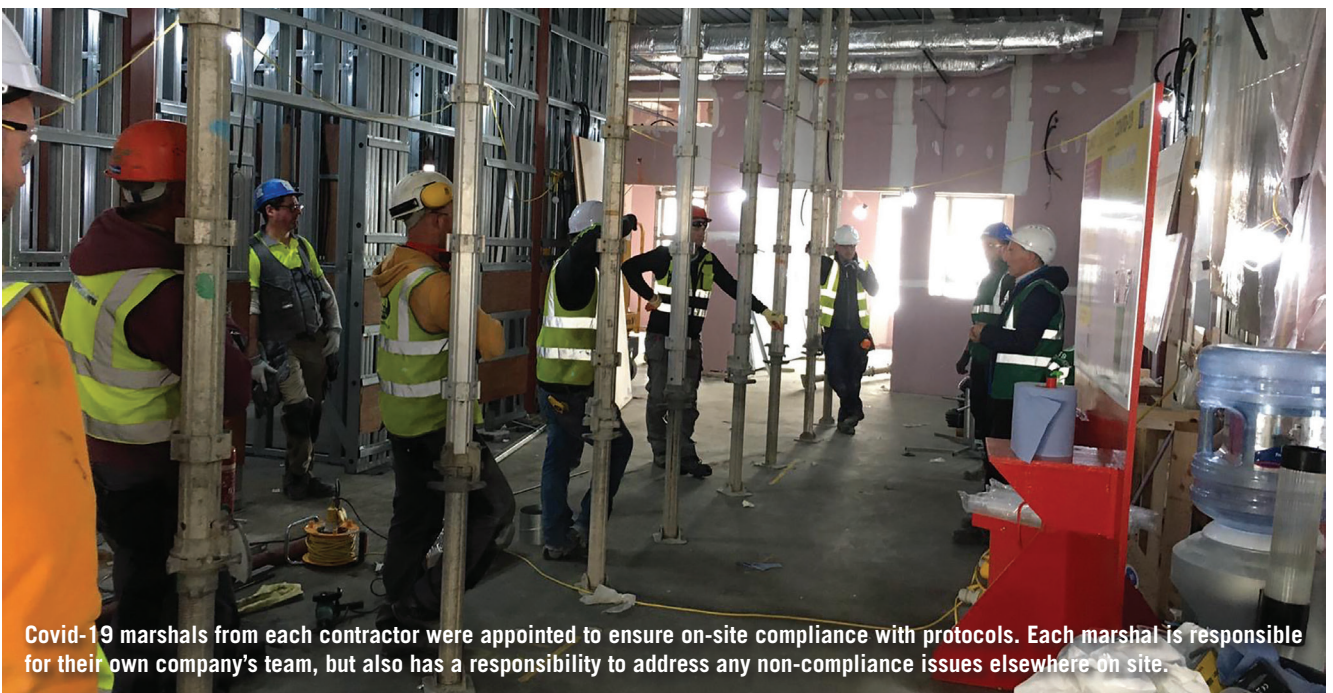
structure was quickly erected.

OFFSITE CONSTRUCTION

Both projects are using offsite as the method of construction, with a light gauge steel system supplied by Horizon Offsite, and bathroom pods manufactured by LMC Modular, both Tipperary-based companies.

The rapid build light-gauge steel-frame system facilitated the early start of the project and enabled its streamlined fast-delivery, which would not have been possible with a traditional build. The offsite manufacturing of en-suite bathroom pods by LMC Modular also ensures that there are fewer truck movements to and from the hospitals during construction.

“Like everyone else involved, both offsite



Covid-19 marshals from each contractor were appointed to ensure on-site compliance with protocols. Each marshal is responsible for their own company's team, but also has a responsibility to address any non-compliance issues elsewhere on site.

PROJECT FEATURE: COVID-19 RESPONSE



Underfloor heating at University Hospital Limerick was installed by the start of May.



Single operative pours concrete floor at University Hospital Limerick.

manufacturers have been exceptional in manufacturing and delivering materials and units to site in challenging circumstances,” comments John O’Shaughnessy.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The UHL and Croom Hospital facilities will be permanent structures, with scope for vertical expansion at a later stage. They are both parts of the Government’s National Action Plan in response to Covid-19.

Speaking about how the projects are progressing John O’Shaughnessy says, “We are moving at spectacular speed and remain on programme to deliver in July. It is great for our company and every person on site to have this opportunity to contribute to this fight in such a constructive way. I have never seen morale as high on sites. Everyone is taking great pride in being able to play such a central part in this national emergency. Our supply chain is also pulling out all the stops to ensure we can keep to the programme.”

INDUSTRY IMPACT

John O’Shaughnessy says the coronavirus crisis will have a long-lasting impact on the construction industry and that the way it has operated up to now is going to fundamentally and irreversibly change.

“The industry took a huge blow when

sites were shut down overnight. The move to remote working for unnecessary site personnel has brought about previously unimagined efficiencies. I have seen, for instance, that while some face to face meetings are essential, many can be held remotely, removing the need for many time-wasting journeys.

“The technology has been there, but we are only now starting to tap into its full potential,” he continues. “We have been utilising Microsoft Teams to communicate and coordinate our activities since this started,” he continues.

“I can also see the adoption of Lean Construction and BIM as being essential for any company looking to sustain and grow their operations after this crisis, as well as the upgrading of all on-site facilities for workers.

EARLY CONTRACTOR INVOLVEMENT

John O’Shaughnessy adds that Early Contractor Involvement has been essential to the success of the UHL and Croom Hospital programmes.

“By having Early Contractor Involvement, the client could see first-hand how this speeds up the programme and reduces costs,” he says. “This project is a prime example of how having everyone around the table at the start of the project can help identify and address any barriers to project delivery. It is the only way

forward for any future large-scale projects.”

John O’Shaughnessy closes by saying that the project is an excellent example of multi-level teamwork in action.

“I would like to say a particular thank you to all involved in these projects from the client, to both design teams, my own management team and our complete supply chain. The collaboration and teamwork have been outstanding.” **C**

CLIENT DESIGN TEAM

Architects: Kevin Jackson Architects, Limerick

Civil and Structural Engineers: Punch Consulting, Limerick

Fire Consultants: Maurice Johnson & Partners, Cork

PQS: Edwards Cotter Partnership, Limerick.

CLANCY TEAM

Architects: Reddy Architecture + Urbanism, Cork

Civil and Structural Engineers: Horgan Lynch, Cork

Fire Consultants: G Sexton & Partners, Waterford

Mechanical & Electrical: Don O’Malley, Limerick

PSDP & Assigned Certifier: Fortress Planning Tipperary.

VIDEOGUARD360 IS THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN AUTOMATED SITE-GUARDING AND MONITORING

PID Systems has recently expanded its operations in Ireland and is about to introduce a range of next-generation site-security systems onto the Irish market.

PID Systems is an innovative security-service provider whose product range includes the VideoGuard360. This battery-powered, wireless, visually-verified intrusion detection system communicates via mobile networks with a built-in battery life of up to four years. The system is ideal for protecting construction/civil engineering sites, machinery, retail units, vacant properties, scaffolding, remote areas and greenfield sites amongst others.

One of the significant advantages of the system is that it does not require a generator, saving clients associated running costs, which makes it ideal for off-grid construction/civil engineering sites.

HOW THE VIDEOGUARD360 WORKS

VideoGuard360 units are monitored remotely and are triggered by any intruder. When an activation occurs, PID's monitoring team, who are primarily ex-police, receive an instant alarm and video clip. They evaluate the incident and contact the appropriate personnel or the company's mobile patrol service. If the verified threat level is high, local policing services will be notified. After every incident, detailed reports, including incident video clips, are sent to all parties.

Latest modifications include prolonged battery life, remote updates, solar power, anti-tamper software, mobile network 5G capability and the use of LED lighting within the product.

SERVICE SECTORS

PID Systems operates in the construction, utilities, civils, retail and home-building sectors. Its armoured remote wireless security detection system offers a solution, where the company supplies an out-of-the-box, ready-to-go system with its own power source that requires no pre-wiring.

This makes it ideal for vacant properties, derelict sites, or remote locations, such as windfarms or sub-stations. The system is also used to monitor compounds located within a plant, facility, factory or airport.

SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS

PID offers a minimum of a one-week rental, which ensures that clients do not get tied into a long-term contract for a short-term

WHAT CLIENTS SAY ABOUT PID SYSTEMS

"PID Systems have an outstanding 'can do' attitude" – Project Manager, Roadbridge

"We have worked with PID for over four years. Their customer service is second to none. Their solution is innovative and effective and has transformed how we deliver site-specific jobs" — Hub Manager, Balfour Beatty

"We were looking for an innovative, cost-effective solution to provide site security on our rail jobs in the west of England and Wales and were very impressed with the simplicity and versatility of the systems developed by PID, which are standalone and do not require any rerouting of wiring or moving as a project progresses" — Project Manager, BAM Nuttall



requirement.

PID site surveyors and engineers evaluate every situation and devise customised monitoring solutions and site quotations for clients. All enquiries are treated individually with every site given a full security analysis.

CLIENTS

Currently, PID is operating on over 1,600 live sites across the UK and Ireland. VideoGuard systems are most frequently used where remote or off-grid compound work is taking place, saving clients significant costs associated with man-guarding. VideoGuards are also often used as a solution, where there is a gap in permanent security and clients are waiting for continual measures to be put in place.

PID has an extensive list of key and repeat clients. These include Roadbridge, Balfour Beatty, Murphy, Gilbert-Ash, Edinburgh City Council, ABM, JSD Contracting, Ward and Burke, and Shannon Valley Plant Hire, to name a few.

PID SYSTEMS HISTORY

PID Systems was established in 2007 by George Haye and Gordon McIntyre. Using common technologies to secure sites, they evolved an innovative manner of working to protect clients' assets and property within the construction, civils and utility sectors. The company experienced 50% year-on-year growth up to 2019 when it was acquired by SmartWater Technology Ltd, an international crime-fighting and crime-prevention company.

The Smartwater acquisition has enabled PID Systems to introduce a range of new-generation security products to the market, including thermo-imaging units with facial recognition software, and a new asset-tagging system.

PID Systems recently expanded its services in Ireland, appointing John Fahey, to oversee its growing client base in the country. **C**

For more details, contact John Fahey, Tel: 01 506 0697/ 087 122 7307. Email: john.fahey@pid-systems.co.uk

LAOIS HIRE LEAD THE WAY THROUGH COVID-19

With over 28 years of expanding business, Laois Hire has a vast wealth of experience in Hire & Sales. Their solid knowledge isn't just in relation to their product range but also their experience in Health & Safety, and delivering services in a secure way to give peace of mind to both staff and valued customers.

As with every other business in Ireland, Laois Hire had to rapidly adapt when Covid-19 came along. Branches were only open for critical hires to essential services. They supplied equipment to the Gardai Síochána, HSE, the OPW and many other businesses that needed to carry on.

The person at the helm of their staff and customer's safety is Grace Murphy, their HSEQ advisor, who has been with the company for 3 years. She tells us about her experience so far, and what strategies have been implemented to help prevent the spread of the virus.

"This is a very challenging time in the plant and tool hire industry. As this is an unprecedented situation, we are finding ourselves constantly learning & having to find innovative ways to trade whilst keeping the wellbeing of our Staff & Customers at the fore.

We are continually monitoring and reviewing our Covid 19 procedures to ensure adherence to Government Guidelines. Risk Assessments are carried out on every task that presents itself to us and we have implemented operating procedures in all Laois Hire Depots in line with the Government's and HSE recommendations on the management of Covid-19.

First and foremost we have obviously implemented changes to our Stores to try to limit customer interaction. We are open for Business and Walk In Customers, but with a couple of changes; We have a Limit of 2 Customers inside the Shop at any one time and social distancing must be adhered to whilst in the shops. We have installed Plexi Glass Screens at our Counters to Protect both Our Staff & the Customer. We



Grace Murphy, Head of Health & Safety at Laois Hire Group

encourage our customers to use the Hand Sanitiser available at the shop door. We are temperature checking staff and reminding them that their purpose is to help protect themselves and their colleagues at all times.

Our Laois Hire Drivers are essentially the face of our company; they are on the ground day to day meeting customers while carrying out deliveries & collections. We have instigated procedures to ensure we are reducing the risk of our drivers contracting the virus. For example all drivers have been provided with extra PPE such as Face Visors, Disposable Masks, Disposable Gloves, Disposable overalls for Hospital Sites. Each vehicle is supplied with a Hand Sanitiser & an Anti-Bacterial Sprayer and our Driver will Spray Down all Equipment before handling it. This is done before the Equipment is handed over to the Customer on Delivery, and again upon Collection of the Equipment. All Vehicles are thoroughly sanitised at the end of each Shift."

Laois Hire are also casting their minds forwards, on how the virus will change future operations on a long term basis. Grace says: "In terms of the future, I feel that Product Sanitisation will play a huge role in our Industry in the coming months, both within the company, and on site. In Laois Hire we have introduced a comprehensive Product Sanitisation Process that protects both our staff & the customer. Any 1 piece of equipment will have gone through our Sanitisation Process three times in the turnabout from one customer to the next, namely at Delivery, Collection, and the Test & Run stage with particular attention to the 'Touch Points' such as Levers, Buttons, Handles, Plugs, grip points, triggers, cables, doors etc.

Grace also feels strongly that we can't let the pandemic draw attention away from regular procedures. "It is paramount that the normal health and safety requirements of any operational activity must not be compromised at this time. They are no less important than usual and if an activity cannot be undertaken safely, it should not take place."

Ending on a positive note, Grace says "One Encouraging thing we can take from this is that we have used this time to focus on retraining & upskilling our team for the challenges that lie ahead. Many staff members have completed Fire Marshall Training, Manual Handling & Mental Health Awareness. We also have our office staff set up and working comfortably and safely from their own homes".

So, needless to say, in the uncertain post Covid-19 world, you can rest assured that Laois Hire will be there with a wealth of experience and knowledge to lead you forward and provide you with a reliable and safe hire & sales experience. **C**

LAOIS HIRE

PLANT & TOOL

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Safety for our Staff & Customers

At Laois Hire, we have been working tirelessly to protect our staff and customers during Covid-19. We have implemented operating procedures in all Laois Hire Depots in line with the Government's and HSE recommendations, and will continually monitor and review these to ensure adherence to the official guidelines.

- Social Distancing in all operations
- Hand Sanitisation for Customers
- Vehicle Sanitisation
- Staff Temperature Checks
- Plexi Glass Screens instore
- New Product Sanitisation system
- Drivers have extra PPE & Anti-Bacterial Sprayer

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IRISH CONSTRUCTION FIRMS MUST MAKE DIGITAL TRANSITION

Joseph Mady, CEO, DCT Group, speaks with **SEAN MURPHY** about how the Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of digital construction tools for Irish construction and why contractors should take this opportunity to start their digital transition.

Digital Construction Technologies (DCT) Group, founded two years ago, already has a network of international offices, and recently became the first digital construction company to join the CIF, when the Federation accepted its membership application.

According to Joseph Mady, founder and CEO of DCT Group, the company has already become an active member of CIF, as part of the Construction 4.0 sub-Committee planning the industry's digital transition, working with members who are employing digital construction technologies in their projects, and assisting those looking to start the transition process.

"We work with many Irish construction firms to support the delivery of projects using digital construction technologies," Joseph Mady explains, "from inception to handover, enabling each of the specialist parties involved to develop functional information-rich 3D construction models."

"When we established DCT Group in 2018," he continues, "We planned from the start to become a member of the CIF. Our core objective as a business is to play a central role in the operations of any Irish construction company that has already adopted or is planning to adopt digital construction technologies into its operations. As a member of CIF, we are well placed to succeed in that goal."

Joseph Mady has a clear vision for the future of his company, and his ambitions are not limited to becoming the top digital construction company in Ireland. As a member of the CIF Construction 4.0 sub-Committee, he has already contributed a great deal to the drive to put Irish construction on the global digital map.

"With the evolution of construction over the past number of years, the attitude towards digital construction has changed," he says. "The construction sector now views digital construction technology as a key differentiator for many, if not all, of

the big players. For companies looking to grow, those who can demonstrate their thought leadership through the utilisation of technologies are positioning themselves for future success, particularly with clients now specifying digital construction for large projects. Our clients, and the sector as a whole, are now witnessing the benefits of utilising virtual construction processes across projects. There is no turning back from here for them."

COVID-19 REACTION

Joseph Mady says that he was pleased that DCT Group was able to contribute to the Construction 4.0 sub-Committee's recent development of the CIF's 'Working Remotely: Virtual Construction and Design' guidance document to support contractors during and beyond the Covid-19 crisis.

"Covid-19 has forced many construction companies into implementing new technologies to meet their current needs and enable their staff to work remotely," he says. "One of the biggest challenges when it comes to designing and constructing a building is communication. The bigger the project, the more people involved, the more complicated it gets. Pieces of



Joseph Mady, CEO, DCT Group.

information get lost or misunderstood, and errors happen. The forced move to remote working is achieving greater efficiencies in many areas and displaying to contractors how essential digital construction technologies have become."

He provides a rudimentary example of the project efficiencies that can be achieved under normal circumstances.

"With BIM technology, everyone involved in a project works within the same BIM model, which is hosted in one



Cumberland House, Dublin, for Flynn, where DCT Group is providing full specialist virtual design and construction services (VDC).



DCT Group team, back row, l to r: Louis Slabbert, Fernando Andres Perrone, Mark Keenan, Mark Dzidic, Ana Tiric and Marko Gasic. Front row, l to r: Trina Turner, Joseph Mady, Divya Chhadwa and Ivona Jakovcovic.

location,” he continues. “Information is stored within a cloud-based platform, meaning that everybody is always up to date about what others are doing, and with every amendment visible to every party in real-time. As a result, miscommunication is reduced, and the risk of errors and, most importantly, waste is reduced across the project, thus saving time and money. Current digital construction technologies enable this to occur.”

THE IT OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Joseph Mady says that the DCT Group has positioned itself “to be ‘the IT of the construction industry’”.

“Aiming to become the ‘IT of the construction industry,’” he says, “allows us to work on any project, at any time, and from anywhere. Primarily viewed as a traditional industry, this type of operation would not be the standard methodology for construction companies. However, we believe we are about to see a greater surge in the industry, where companies will look to integrate digital technologies into their projects in order to stay as agile as possible with the technology as it rapidly evolves. This is where DCT Group will bring huge value to construction companies who don’t have dedicated in-house BIM teams.”

He adds that virtual construction processes are generally a client requirement for all large construction projects, as they speed up construction for several reasons.

“From the BIM modelling aspect, DCT Group can virtually construct all of the buildings on a project before they are physically built,” he explains. “This brings benefits for the client, including reducing installation times due to better on-site efficiency; reducing waste; reducing reworking times; ensuring constructability; and, improving overall site health and safety.”

DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION AT WORK

“Communication is key to speeding up the construction process. We engage with project programmers in charge of a project to ensure that we release the virtual construction models on time. This then enables areas of the models to be prefabricated off site with enough lead-in time to be installed on site. DCT Group also works with project engineers to ensure the correct sizes of the services and routes throughout a building and to best utilise the available space within the virtual model.”

He continues, “Before an area can be released for construction, it is crucial that site supervisors/managers are happy with the routes of the mechanical/electrical services. We work closely with M&E teams to virtually create and install the services brackets in the model. This information allows the M&E teams to create fabrication drawings and construction drawings, enabling adequate access for installation of the services and future access for maintenance.”

VIRTUAL MANAGERS

DCT Group works cohesively on a daily basis with a team of digital project managers. It is their role to virtually manage a project on behalf of the main contractor, freeing up the contractor for other areas of the project. The company is currently managing several large data centres and residential installations.

“Digital construction technologies are imperative to the site set-up for our clients,” Joseph Mady explains. “These set-ups include site security, laydown areas, logistics routes, and move-in and move-out zones. Ensuring this information is accurate for the main contractor is imperative to ensure the smooth running of the project with the installation of the cranes, equipment, etc.”

TRANSITION CHALLENGES

Talking about the process of making a transition to digital technology, Joseph Mady acknowledges that it is challenging for some clients.

“Starting on new processes and dealing with the change within an organisation can be difficult. A typical process for the DCT team with a new client would involve undertaking a current state analysis to determine their hardware, software and resources. We then review the communications between each department and get the senior members from each department to provide feedback on how they see internal processes and procedures performing. Through this process, we look to identify opportunities for improvement.”

TRANSITION SUPPORTS

With the onset of the adoption of new technologies across the construction industry, supports are available to those who are Enterprise Ireland clients.

“Where companies are exporting services outside of Ireland the ‘BIM Enable Grant’, funded by Enterprise Ireland, provides companies with a BIM consultant to work with their organisation, to perform a gap analysis and develop a BIM Implementation roadmap,” he explains.

“There is a second round of funding available called the ‘BIM Implement Grant’, where Enterprise Ireland fund a third-party BIM trainer to provide training on BIM tools and support with the implementation of BIM within the contractor’s organisation. Supports are available to the construction industry to drive this adoption and construction companies should be aware that they don’t have to set out on this journey alone.”

PLANS FOR THE PLANS

Covid-19 has stalled DCT Group’s immediate expansion plans, but Joseph Mady says he is determined to stay on target to achieve his company’s expansion goals.

The company recently made several key appointments to further assist with these expansion plans.

“I have a fantastic team around me. We have bases globally, and we are all working towards a common goal as part of our 2025 strategic plan to position ourselves as the leading BIM consultancy globally. This is something I am confident we will achieve,” Joseph Mady concludes. **C**

For further details or to learn more about digital construction opportunities, phone 01 912 1900, email info@dctgrp.com, visit www.dctgroup.ie, or follow DCT Group on social media.

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WINTHROP ENGINEERING REBRANDS AS WELTEC

The rebranding of Weltec Engineering (formerly Winthrop Engineering) will help the company confirm its position as a leading engineering and process contractor. **DARRAGH MARTIN**, Marketing Manager, Weltec, explains what the rebrand means for Weltec clients.

This year has been an important year for Waterford-headquartered Weltec Engineering. A recent name change for the firm will help us set out a distinct path for our future success, and clients can continue to expect the excellent service package they have received to date, but now under the Weltec brand.

WHY A BRAND NAME CHANGE?

Over the past number of years, Weltec's focus as an engineering and process contractor has been to deliver projects for pharma, biopharma, life sciences, industrial and food sector clients.

The rebranding, including a recently launched new website www.weltec.ie, has positioned the brand and corporate identity to reflect our core target market.

As many in the industry will be aware, Weltec, in its former guise as Winthrop Engineering, had always been a separate company to Winthrop Engineering and Contracting (Dublin). While there was previously a common shareholder in both companies, to all intents and purposes,

both companies operated independently. As there is no longer a common shareholder, the name change establishes Weltec's separate identity while also reflecting the company's focus on the pharma, biopharma, life sciences, industrial and food processing sectors.

INVESTMENT IN QUALITY, SAFETY AND PEOPLE

The change at Weltec is not just about brand identity. The management team has invested hugely over the past number of years in world-class quality and safety management systems. Weltec's achievements at the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) Safety Awards over the past five years reflect this.

In production, Weltec has established locally-based prefabrication and manufacturing facilities in Waterford for carbon steel, stainless steel and bio-bore pipework.

The company also remains at the forefront of the transition to digital construction methods, utilising BIM,

lean construction, contract management software solutions, test pack management software, enterprise resource planning solutions, on-line learning platforms, etc.

"While we have been evolving and changing continuously, the one constant has been our staff and their loyalty and dedication to the company over the years," says Shane Ryan, Operations Director, Weltec. "We are very grateful to all of our staff for the essential role they have played in our success. We are also proud of the fact that many members of our team have been with the company since leaving college and since the company opened its doors in Waterford 20 years ago.

"Weltec remains an advocate for innovation and continuous improvement and maintains ongoing investment in improving our modular and prefabrication capabilities and processes. Modular building and prefabrication are key drivers of improved quality, safety and productivity at our facilities," continues Shane Ryan. "Weltec has worked hard and developed a strong and loyal client base, which we fully appreciate. We also recognise the opportunity for us to continue to expand that base as we have done successfully over the past number of years." **C**

To learn more about Weltec Engineering's services and review its portfolio of projects, visit www.weltec.ie





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REMEMBERING OUR LOSSES — NOT THE RECOVERY

SUSAN O'MARA writes when it comes to your pension, you should stay the course of your investment strategy.

No doubt, at this point, you have heard reference to the Great Depression of the 1930s. While there are technical similarities, we live in a very different world with very different economic and fiscal policies. From reading current commentary from across the globe and across partisan lines, one thing is clear – we do not know what economic recovery will look like.

I am writing this piece, while working from home, unsure of what the future holds. My role advising clients around their pension savings and retirement planning has meant that I certainly have not had time to be bored during the lockdown.

You may not have had time to evaluate your own pension savings yet. You may be concerned about the damage the recent markets have done or you may have panicked and got out of the markets completely. While economic conditions are volatile, pensions are long-term savings schemes. Pension funds invest in stocks and shares in order to keep your money growing in line with inflation and hopefully provide additional growth.

VOLATILITY AND RECOVERY

Stocks and shares are the riskiest asset class as they display high levels of volatility. The volatility refers to the potential ups and downs that a share may experience over time. There are specific events that occur highlighting how volatile this can be, notably the 1929 Wall Street Crash; Black Monday in 1987; and the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. The common denominator of all three is the fact that the economies all bounced back.

For the purposes of this article let me focus on the global financial crisis, as it is the most recent in our memories and the recovery has been heavily documented. Late 2007 saw the beginning of the global financial crisis. This crisis was triggered in the US as the housing bubble burst and the combination of subprime lending



Susan O'Mara,
Milestone Advisory.

“ WHEN MARKETS TURN UPWARDS, MOST OF THOSE THAT OPT OUT AT THE BOTTOM DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE UPTURN. ”

and the complex financial structures underpinning the debt caused a wave of problems for global financial institutions. There was a chain reaction throughout global economies. Closer to home, our own property bubble burst, exposing the weakness of Irish financial institutions, which included the now defunct Anglo Irish Bank. In September 2008, Ireland officially entered recession and it was not until early 2009 that the full impact of the Irish financial crisis was exposed. Ireland did not officially exit the recession until September

2013.

It is a story we all know only too well. It had a huge personal impact on many pension savers and investors. However, from March 2009 until the middle of February 2020, there was period of significant gains, predominantly driven by US equity markets. The question economists and investors had been pondering for the last few years was, When would it end? Well, now we know.

The point here, however, is that large falls happen, inevitably followed by large gains. This brings me to the next point: What should we do during such shocking times?

ECONOMICS OR EMOTIONS

When reviewing the situation with pension savers, our experience is that only 20% of people make any investment decisions over the lifetime of their savings. However, during a market downturn, the majority of those that do make a decision opted out of the markets so as not to face any further losses. This on the surface seemed reasonable, however, when markets turn upwards, most of those that opt out at the bottom do not participate in the upturn, thereby locking in the losses. This is due to the fact that it is incredibly difficult to time the markets. After significant market events, many investors avoid the market altogether.

This overreaction by investors makes sense according to behavioural economists, such as Meir Statman, Professor of Finance at Santa Clara University, who says “We have a tendency to extrapolate not only the most recent experience, but the most vivid. Even though the market has gone up substantially, when people think about it, they don't think that it's gone up.”

In other words, investors remember the trauma of the losses and nothing else.

In short, there is no crystal ball to show us how the world will look beyond the current pandemic. However, for those of you who are in the privileged position to be employed, you should continue to save for your retirement and stay the course of your investment strategy. **C**

Susan O'Mara is a financial services consultant with Milestone Advisory. Milestone Advisory DAC t/a Milestone Advisory is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. For more information, visit www.milestoneadvisory.ie

“RESOLUTION OF COSTS AND DELAYS WILL REST ON ENGAGEMENT AND CONTRACT PROVISIONS”

SHOBHAN KENNY, Associate, Property & Construction, Eugene F Collins, writes that the current Covid-19 crisis is unprecedented and none of the standard contracts make provision for its consequences.

As everyone involved in projects at this difficult time will be aware, the construction industry is facing a litany of novel issues courtesy of the Covid-19 emergency, and the unprecedented measures taken by Government to deal with it.

The construction landscape has changed. As on-site activity resumes, contractors are faced with a full regimen of new regulations and constraints, the effect and impact of which will remain unclear for some time. We have undertaken a review of relevant contract provisions.

STANDARD FORMS CONSIDERED

In considering the issues arising on the resumption of on-site activity, we have concentrated on the two forms of Main Contract in most common use in Irish construction projects – the Public Works Contract (Employer Design) (PWC) and RIAI standard form (2017). These standard forms do not provide for the current crisis.

The PWC standard forms are rarely amended, but the RIAI standard form is rarely left untouched. In larger private projects, amendments to the form are often substantial, resulting in an entirely bespoke form of contract. Every contracting party, on every construction project, would be well advised to check the terms of the contracts that they have entered into with every other contracting party.

Engagement and Cooperation

From the outset, commentators have recommended that the best way for contracting parties to respond to the challenges they are facing is to engage with each other. Such engagement should remain of the highest priority in the context of the resumption of activity on site.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has issued guidance encouraging engagement and drawing attention to the specific provisions of the PWC, which require this.

Clause 4.1.1

“The Employer [subject to restraints as a public authority] and the Contractor shall support reciprocal cooperation for the Contract purposes, including



Shobhan Kenny, Associate, Property & Construction, Eugene F Collins.

cooperation with and between Contractor’s Personnel and Employer’s Personnel.”

While the RIAI standard form does not contain an express cooperation provision, legal authorities are clear that a party to a construction contract is required to do that which is necessary to enable the other to perform their obligations. A failure to comply with an obligation to cooperate through meaningful engagement amounts to a breach of contract.

Engagement on these issues will, of necessity, involve consideration of contractual provisions, as well as commercial realities.

Claims Procedures

The PWC standard form includes a rigid, condition precedent notice procedure for claims. Failure to comply strictly with that procedure will, in all likelihood, result in a loss of entitlement.

The equivalent provision of the RIAI standard form also requires that the Contractor gives notice of claims, but it is not a condition precedent to entitlement. Many private sector contracts include

provisions similar to the PWC provisions by amendment of the RIAI standard form.

The pandemic is an event that should be notified; it impacts on the time and cost involved in progressing the works. Notices should be served within stipulated periods, and further information should be provided in accordance with the contract and, as necessary, notices of continuing effect should be served.

The full impact of the new regulations on-site activities will not be fully understood until the new measures are implemented and works recommence.

Claim notices should be continuously updated, and include as much detail as possible in each update. The importance of record-keeping cannot be overstated.

Time and Prolongation Costs

Implementation of the new regulations is likely to have an impact on the progress of the works, and the time required to complete the project.

Contractual entitlement to additional time (and consequent protection against LADs) arises under Clause 9 of the PWC Contract, and Clause 30 of the standard form RIAI. Recovery of costs arising from a prolongation of the contract period is contingent on establishing that the event giving rise to the prolongation is one for which the Contractor is entitled to compensation. The contractor is under continuing obligation to mitigate the effects of such delay.

Under the PWC standard form, the issue causing prolongation must be a Delay Event as set out in Schedule 1K.

Delay Event 15 (Schedule 1K) is of particular significance in the context of this emergency. Event 15 is usually a Delay Event only.

No entitlement to costs arises, and no element of the programme contingency is used up in respect of a Delay Event that is not also a Compensation Event.

Prolongation costs, evaluated under Clause 10.7, will be recoverable if the event causing prolongation is identified in the schedule as a Compensation Event as well as a Delay Event.

Under Clause 30 of the RIAI contract, an extension of time will be granted if the Architect forms the view that the event



“ A FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN OBLIGATION TO COOPERATE THROUGH MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AMOUNTS TO A BREACH OF CONTRACT.”

in question (as per the list set out in that clause) has caused delay, and does not arise as a result of Contractor default. The list of events is broad enough to capture Architect instruction, variations and changes, as well as force majeure.

The Architect must act reasonably in forming the opinion and in granting the resultant extension. Prolongation costs will be recoverable if the cause of the delay is one for which the Employer is contractually responsible – which does not usually include force majeure.

COST RECOVERY

Recovery of additional costs incurred as a consequence of the implementation of the new regulations on site comes down to questions of contract interpretation and contractual responsibility – unless the parties reach agreement as to how issues are to be managed.

Clause 10 of the PWC standard form, and Clauses 2 and 4 of RIAI Standard form of contract are of relevance.

Under the PWC standard form, the Contractor is required to establish that their claim for an adjustment arises on foot of a Compensation Event, as identified in Schedule 1K.

The most relevant Compensation Events in the PWC standard form appear to be the following:

- The issue of a Change Order
- The failure of the Employer's Representative to respond to a request (Clause 4.11) for a required instruction (Clause 4.5.4).

Change Order is defined as meaning 'an instruction of the Employer's

Representative to change [including add to or omit from] the Works or to change [including impose or remove] constraints in the Contract on how the Works are to be executed."

Under Clause 4.5.4, "If in the ER's opinion, it is physically impossible or contrary to Legal Requirements to complete the works in accordance with the Works Requirements, the ER shall give a Change Order".

The Contractor may argue that the new constraints render it physically impossible or contrary to Legal Requirements to carry out and complete the works in accordance with the Works Requirements. In that case, he will submit a request for a Change Order to cover the issue, in accordance with the procedure set out in Clause 4.1.1. The failure to issue a Change Order in circumstances where it is warranted comprises a Compensation Event.

If a Compensation Event has occurred, the Contractor is entitled to an adjustment to the Contract Sum (Clause 10.1) to be calculated in accordance with Clause 10.6 – for the value of any additional, substituted and omitted work arising as a result of the Compensation Event.

The parties might also consider implementing the Contractor Proposal mechanism provided for in Clause 10.4. In making such a proposal, the Contractor will be in a position to set out the issues, the likely costs, and how it is proposed to manage the time and cost implications of the imposed restraints.

If the ER accepts the Contractor's Proposal, they then notify the parties and make any resulting adjustments to the Contract Sum (Clause 10.5.1 (2)).

Finally, it should be noted that under the PWC standard form, the Contractor is expressly obliged to comply with the Law and with Legal Requirements – both of which terms are defined broadly – in completing the Works.

Clause 2 of the RIAI standard form provides for the issue of Architect's instructions. If the instruction involves a variation, it will be valued under Clause 13. In addition, if compliance with an instruction involves the Contractor in loss or expense beyond that provided for in the contract Sum, the amount of that loss/expense should be recoverable.

Clause 4 of the RIAI standard form – dealing with legislative enactments – is relevant. The EMPI legislation and the regulations issued under it comprise legislative changes, which will give rise to additional costs. Commentators differ as to whether the clause is broad enough to allow Contractor cost recovery, but the reference to the change – "affecting the cost of labour or otherwise" – is of assistance to the Contractor.

GOING FORWARD

The current emergency is unprecedented, and none of the standard contracts make provision for its consequences. If, however, it happens again, it will no longer be unprecedented. Standard form contracts will require amendment to reflect that new reality. **C**

Siobhan Kenny is an Associate with the Construction Team at Eugene F Collins solicitors. If you would like more information on this issue, email skenny@efc.ie; or visit www.efc.ie

CIF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR DELIVERY STRATEGY

ROBERT BUTLER, Head of Learning & Development, CIF, writes about how CIF Learning & Development has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and how its revamped online learning programme can meet the industry's immediate training needs.

As of 23rd March last, all classroom delivery of CIF Learning & Development training programmes was postponed to minimise the risk of exposure of delegates and CIF staff to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since this date, CIF Learning & Development has been converting training products and examination modules to online delivery via its Zoom webinar platform and continuing to offer a training service to members and clients.

By 3rd April, the whole of the CIF Learning & Development team was working remotely to continue providing support on training enquiries, as well as delivering our revised offering of programmes, and liaising with our tutor panel to ensure remote access for training.

CLOSING OUT POSTPONED PROGRAMMES

CIF Learning & Development was conscious of delegates already engaged in courses that were impacted by the sudden postponement of training. As part of our business continuity planning, we worked with delegates to close out outstanding programmes.

The CIF City & Guilds Site Safety Supervisor programme, which was delivered via a Zoom webinar on 1st and 2nd April, was very well attended. And, for the first time, we had a long-distance delegate from Denver, USA, who was planning to work in Ireland in the near future. CIF Learning & Development received very positive feedback from course delegates, which is always welcome.

The CIF Two-Day Temporary Works Coordinator Programme was also delivered via a Zoom webinar on 8th and 9th April. It again was very well attended, with very positive feedback from course delegates.

CIF Learning & Development also closed out a CIF IOSH MSIC and CIF QQI PSCS course, which was underway at the start of the crisis, by providing delegates with new webinar delivery dates in April. This included content, examination and certification.

Benefits of webinar-based training delivery:

- No need for travel for delegates resulting in a saving in time and money
- Maintaining learning and development needs and achieving upskilling of staff
- Training leads to retention of skills and key employees
- Webinars enable the achievement of training goals and targets.

Webinar training delivery dates are now available for June and July as CIF Learning & Development continues to support members' training needs during this challenging time for the industry. The current training programmes are designed to support members to increase their operational effectiveness once sites re-open.

CIF Learning & Development has a rolling plan for continuity of business. To this end, we plan to deliver a significant number of courses over June and July, with the ability to offer additional days depending upon demand for in-house courses or further need for training programmes. **C**



Robert Butler, Head of Learning & Development, CIF.

CIF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE UPGRADE

As part of CIF's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting move to remote working, CIF Learning & Development has overhauled and launched an upgraded training website to enable members to have a better user-experience when booking or researching their training needs. Developed with Outset Agency, the website has faster search facilities. It provides more detailed information on each programme to enable clients to select the programme that best meets their business training needs.

The responsive website is mobile-friendly, with detailed course information on each page to allow delegates to make informed choices on the type and level of course they wish to access. The upgraded search facility also helps delegates.

Better designed pages provide greater access to the CIF Learning & Development Virtual Academy's free CPD content and enable delegates to find short CPD-type programme choices that are available and carry CIRI CPD points.

Some of the Virtual Academy programmes have a nominal fee of €20 per delegate with two programmes Building Control (Amendment) Regulations (BCAR) €65 for members/€115 for non-members and Core Safety Management Renewal €165 for members /€215 for non-members.

To learn more, visit www.ciftraining.ie

MANAGING REMOTE WORKING TEAMS

CIF Learning & Development is no different to any other office-based group of workers now facing the unique challenge of working remotely from home with all the entailed distractions and the need for self-discipline in achieving daily tasks. It is important to check in with staff to ensure they have the right access to the system and the tools to continue operating as close to optimum as possible.

Being able to move our staff onto a remote-work footing quickly was significant to how quickly CIF Learning & Development was mobilised to begin offering our programmes via Zoom

webinars at the start of the Covid-19 crisis. The team had the necessary equipment already at home as part of the business continuity plan we had in place to ensure we could still operate.

Below are some helpful tips for team leaders in maintaining the critical working relationship with staff to ensure good engagement and as full a participation as possible in the daily operation of the business.

Successfully Managing Remote Teams – A Simple Checklist

- Have a daily check-in. Whenever

possible, this should be one-on-one and face-to-face via video or by phone.

- Communicate a lot. It probably goes without saying that you should be in regular communication with your team.
- Take advantage of technology
- Manage expectations
- Focus on outcomes, not activity
- Resource your team with laptops, mobile phones, etc
- Be flexible with work-time practices as you will get the best from your team.



The new CIF Learning & Development website.

If you would like more information on the CIF's range of accredited training programmes, contact a member of the Learning & Development team,

Robert Butler, Tel: 01 406 6071
or email: rbutler@cif.ie

Conor Greham, Tel: 01 406 6031
or email: cgreham@cif.ie

Kim Hutchinson, Tel: 01 4066051
or email: training@cif.ie

Aisling Darby, Tel: 01 406 6029 or
email: adarby@cif.ie



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THREE FINANCIAL PLANNING TIPS FOR THE CURRENT MARKET ENVIRONMENT

COLM POWER and BARRY KENNELLY of Davy Private Clients write that the time may be right to re-assess your financial plan for life.

The impact of coronavirus on our lives has been enormous and continues to wreak havoc as we navigate this uncharted territory. Financial asset values have fallen at a rate faster than most of us have ever seen, presenting challenges for investors as they come to grips with the impact on their portfolios. At an individual level, many continue to experience stress and anxiety from this massive evolving change.

In a period of such unprecedented uncertainty, it may help to exert a level of influence on some aspects of our lives that we can alter. One thing worth considering is your financial plan, which can help keep you on track by allowing you to reposition in these times of uncertainty.

DEFER NON-ESSENTIAL DRAWDOWNS

The worst time to draw money down from a portfolio is when assets have fallen significantly. For some, there won't be any other choice, as lifestyle needs may dictate an immediate requirement for funds. However, not all drawdowns are essential in the short term, and any portfolio withdrawals or encashment from invested assets should be reviewed in the short term. Deferring for a while may allow for asset recovery and access at a more suitable time.

RETIRE PENSIONS CLOSE TO THE TAX-EFFICIENT LIMIT

The bull market that followed the global financial crisis provided plenty of growth to pension savers. Many clients would have seen their pension grow over the €2m tax-

efficient limit, known as the Standard Fund Threshold (SFT). There is an immediate 40% tax charge when drawing pension benefits on any chargeable excess amount above the tax-efficient limit, although a credit available from tax paid on retirement lump sums can increase the efficient value to €2.15m before 40% tax arises.

A dip in pension values may present a good time for some clients to tax-efficiently draw benefits as the market movements may have eliminated some or all of the amount subject to punitive tax.

LIFETIME ASSET TRANSFERS

If you are considering transferring assets to the next generation, this may still be appropriate.

A time of low asset values typically means that a transfer will give rise to less exposure to capital taxes, ie capital gains tax (CGT), capital acquisitions tax (CAT) and stamp duty. The hope is that the growth in asset values will be in the hands of offspring when values recover, rather than being subject to tax at some point in the future. It is possible to tax-efficiently transfer wealth to the next generation in such a way that parents can maintain control.

Of course, there is a possibility that rates of tax will increase in the future, which may also accelerate action.

At Davy, our strength lies in the close working relationships we have with our clients. In recent years, we have invested heavily in highly-skilled people to ensure

that we are well-positioned to plan for your future while mitigating risks. Our thinking is balanced and long term. We provide frequent, accessible financial planning and wealth management advice, which is able to weather the storm and adapt to market forces. **C**

To learn more, visit www.davy.ie/businessowners and contact a Davy adviser.

This article is general in nature and does not take account of your financial situation or investment objectives. It is not intended to constitute tax, financial or legal advice and is based on Davy's understanding of current tax legislation in Ireland. Davy does not provide tax or legal advice. Prior to making any decision which may have tax, legal or other financial implications, you should seek independent professional advice. There are risks associated with putting any financial plan or strategy in place. The value of investments may go down as well as up.

J&E Davy, trading as Davy and Davy Private Clients, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. J&E Davy is a member of Euronext Dublin and the London Stock Exchange. In the UK, J&E Davy is authorised by the Central Bank of Ireland and authorised and subject to limited regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority. Details about the extent of our authorisation and regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority are available from us on request.

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL SKILLNET OFFERING FREE COURSES FOR MEMBERS

LIZ CARROLL, Network Manager, Construction Professionals Skillnet, writes about several new Skillnet programmes designed to assist contractors in addressing issues that may arise as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

To support the Irish construction industry during the Covid-19 crisis, Skillnet Ireland has made a response fund available, the aim of which is to help ensure the continuity of business post-shutdown and to ensure that companies are better equipped to deal with the new circumstances. With the aid of this funding, the Construction Professionals Skillnet made several training programmes, courses and webinars available virtually and free of charge up to the end of June.

The Skillnet has also been awarded additional funding to enable it to upskill unemployed in the sector. These courses will include a number of the CIOB Certificate in Construction Site Management modules and a course on Technology for Site Workers. They are available from May to the end of August.

The following are courses and programmes that have been provided using the Covid-19 Response fund, but they will also be available at a later date.

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS – A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR SME OWNER MANAGERS

Ten owners/managers have started on the journey of working on their business, not just in their business. They are being given the tools to set an effective strategy in their company with clear goals for themselves and their staff with the structures to maximise performance for themselves and their employees.

"We have very particular assignments which are exactly what we should be doing in our organisation. There is a sense of getting through the process in small steps each week."
David O'Sullivan, ACS Construction

"This course scares me a little as it's like an alarm sounding Time For Change. But it would be foolish to ignore that alarm."
Leona Melia, Litchford Ltd

CIOB'S CERTIFICATE IN CONSTRUCTION SITE MANAGEMENT

The Certificate in Construction Site Management requires the completion of four modules. Two of these are being



**Liz Carroll, Network Manager,
Construction Professional Skillnet.**

offered as part of the Covid-19 response, with additional modules being offered under normal circumstances at a later stage. The target audience is tradesmen with at least two years' supervisory experience.

In the first module offered – Project Planning for Construction – participants learned how to:

- Detail the types of documents used for project planning
- Produce a method statement for works
- Produce a coherent and complete programme for works
- Explain how site inspections findings influence the execution of the works
- Determine resource requirements for construction works.

"Really enjoying doing this course online and the tutor is good on delivery."
Declan Cairns, SIAC

The second module – Project Control and Monitoring for Construction – starts on 8th June. On this module participants will learn how to:

- Explain the procurement of construction materials and plan for the execution of works
- Monitor the progress of construction works

- Manage the environmental impact of construction works
- Manage expenditure against budget.

One of the critical areas in any construction project is project planning. If this is carried out correctly, then the implementation and management of that project should be much smoother. The above two modules focus on traditional tools and techniques used in project management. Another of our programmes, Introduction to Lean and the Last Planner System, helps manage the project by focusing on the entire supply chain in the delivery of the project, using tools and techniques originally used in manufacturing to improve efficiencies but equally applicable in construction and more of a necessity currently with the reduction in productivity on account of Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION TO LEAN CONSTRUCTION AND THE LAST PLANNER SYSTEM

- Participants in this course learn about
- Lean Construction
- Eyes for waste
- The Last Planner System in practice
- Creating a roadmap to implement the Last Planner System in your Project.

ZOOM TO IMPROVE - A SERIES OF WEBINARS AIMED AT SMES

Several webinars were provided to help SMEs during the Covid-19 crisis. They covered areas such as financial supports, cash flow, resilience, working with a remote team, positivity, productivity and leadership. **C**

For full details on all available courses see www.cpskillnet.ie. Booking is essential. To book, please contact Liz Carroll Tel: 087 932 3749 or email: cpskillnet@cif.ie

The Construction Professionals Skillnet is still open for normal business. If you wish to provide training for your staff and need support financially or in the design or sourcing of training, Liz Carroll can assist you with this and can be contacted on 087 932 3749 or cpskillnet@cif.ie

COVID-19 COULD BE THE SPUR TO START YOUR DIGITAL TRANSITION

The 'Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction (VDC)' guidance advises on how to maximise efficiency while working remotely and suggests strategies for companies considering a full digital transition. **ROBBIE COUSINS** reports.

The move to remote working from home as a result of the Covid-19 shutdown, while challenging, is an opportunity for contractors to look at how digital technologies can benefit their businesses. It may also be the catalyst that construction business owners have been waiting for to start a full digital transition.

If this is something you find yourself considering at this time, according to new CIF 'Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction (VDC)' guidance, you must have a clear roadmap before setting out on this process.

The Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction (VDC) guidance was developed by the CIF Construction 4.0 Committee to provide members with guidance on remote working during the Covid-19 construction shutdown and to assist in introducing measures to facilitate remote working into the future.

Cillian Kelly, Deputy Chairman, Construction 4.0 Committee, and CIF's Digital Ambassador for Construction, says that maintaining productivity while working remotely has been challenging for many working from home in recent weeks, and part of the goal of the guidance document is to help contractors and their staff overcome the challenges they may face while working remotely.

"Maintaining productivity for staff working from home has been challenging for many firms," Cillian Kelly explains, "isolation, disruptive environments, family distractions, poor connectivity, and no access to a virtual private network (VPN) or servers can have huge implications for staff trying to maintain their productivity. The Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction guidance was devised to address these challenges as well as to promote digital construction in a way that supports staff working remotely."

OPPORTUNITIES OF REMOTE WORKING

The document provides direction for construction firms on the basic digital

requirements to enable remote working, including digital strategy, guidance, protocols, hardware/software, etc. It also has a brief synopsis on Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Virtual Design and Digital Construction, with a broad outline of the processes involved, as well as guidance on how to manage projects utilising digital workflows.

It describes BIM, in the context of construction, as "the process of delivering and operating built assets using well-structured digital information that all the necessary parties can access. BIM is a way of working, rather than a physical object or entity. Operating in this way – often referred to as 'working in a BIM environment' – requires all parties to collaborate and share the information they create in a mutually accessible online space known as a Common Data Environment or CDE."

Cillian Kelly believes that contractors who have not yet transitioned to digital construction but who have seen greater efficiencies as a result of personnel working remotely should be considering the opportunities that a full digital transition would present for them.

"If an organisation was to take one project it is currently working on and identify all the on-site tasks that need to be completed on a daily basis across the whole project team," he explains. "For example, safety inductions, site walks, design review meetings, progress report meetings, client walk-downs, etc. These tasks cannot be carried out in the traditional way at the moment due to the restrictions. But, with the utilisation of a number of digital construction tools and processes listed in the guidance document, these tasks could be remotely carried out. Safety inductions are now being completed online ahead of trades arriving to site. Client walk-downs can be held using cameras and live video streaming. Progress report meetings can be held using drone footage, time-lapse cameras footage or the 4D BIM construction sequencing. Design review meetings could be and are being easily



Cillian Kelly, Digital Ambassador for Construction, CIF.

accommodated online using collaboration platforms, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom, with multiple people joining from their homes in different locations from around the world. This last example, in particular, has been seamlessly adopted as a standard communications platform across the sector in the past few weeks."

CREATE A DIGITAL ROADMAP

However, the implementation and utilisation of new technologies is more than applying a new piece of hardware to the existing processes within an organisation and hoping that this will solve all issues. It requires a re-evaluation of the current business processes and procedures. To allow for growth, a number of elements need to be aligned to ensure that change can occur.

An organisation's management team should ask what it is that they wish to achieve by adopting new technologies? This question will allow the organisation to start the process with a clear picture or roadmap of where they want to go. It will assist management in making clear and informed decisions to get from where the organisation currently is to where it is aiming to be.

SPECIALIST CONTRACTORS

Cillian Kelly also suggests that specialist contractors and subcontractors looking to incorporate digital technology assets that fit with the systems of main contracting clients should engage directly with their



10 TIPS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

1. Set up a separate designated workspace where you can focus on tasks without being distracted and set up with everything you need for a normal working day.
2. Make sure you have all the tech you need, including a reliable and secure internet connection, any necessary files, hardware and software, remote access to your company network, and knowledge on how to get IT support.
3. Get dressed in working clothes to switch to a productive work mode and distinguish between 'homeworking' and 'home life'.
4. Write an achievable daily to-do list.
5. Know when to step away from your workstation, being clear about when your working day begins and ends.
6. Stay in the conversation by regularly contributing to team chats/group emails, so you don't drop off the radar.
7. Foster relationships by making time for non-work chats as you would in the workplace and use video calling to maintain face-to-face contact.
8. Be clear in your communication. Speaking in person gives visual and audio cues that help communication. Conversing remotely removes a lot of that extra information, so make your communications clear and concise.
9. Ask for support when needed. Your manager, colleagues and you are part of a team and should be supporting each other, especially when working remotely.
10. Make remote working work for you. Change where you sit, put on music, whatever helps you work.

client and make informed decisions on this basis.

"I would recommend that specialist contractors and subcontractors should first read the CIF's Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction guidance. They should then consult with their main contractor clients to learn what systems (ie, Common Data Environment, Collaboration Platform) they have in place, and ask for a copy of the BIM Execution Plan, as many of these tools and processes will be detailed in these contractual documents."

BE INFORMED

Construction companies need to inform themselves, as much as is possible, about available digital technologies, and determine the steps they need to take to approach this. Trying to adopt digital technologies within a company without knowing what it entails can do more harm than good and can result in wasted time, resources, and a loss of faith in the technology by the staff.

Developing a plan for the implementation of digital technologies enables an organisation to create a clear and structured map that allows all stakeholders to envision how each process works and fits into the bigger digital process picture.

A strategic digital plan can then be

used to formulate goals and objectives, enabling the organisation to progress in the required direction.

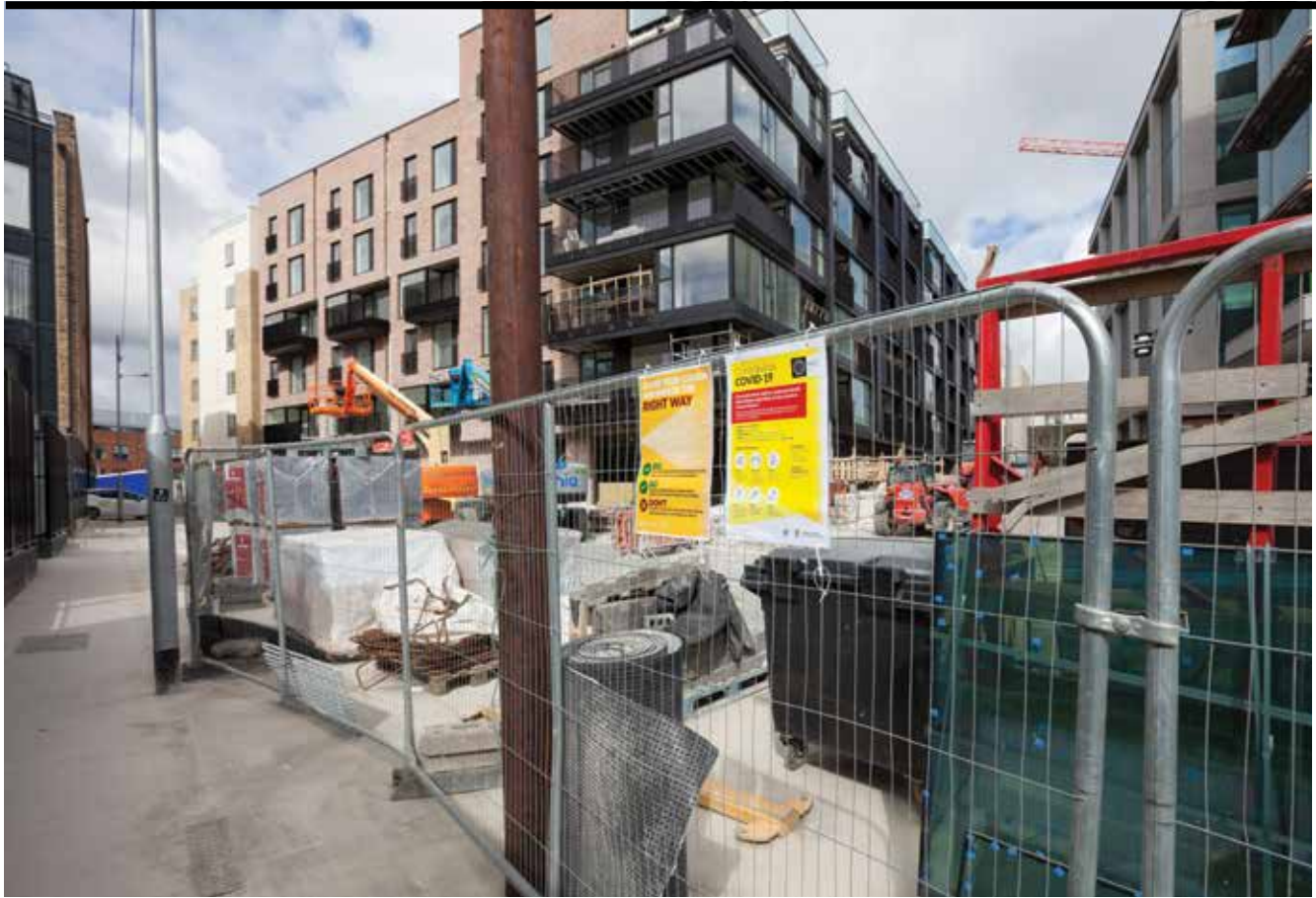
The Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction guidance is designed to take construction companies through this process step by step and devise customised solutions that meet their specific needs.

IN CONCLUSION

In closing, Cillian Kelly offers the following advice, "Don't make big investments across your business until you have tested the tools and technology on a pilot project first. You should also contact the CIF for advice, as the Construction 4.0 Committee would be happy to support or give guidance to companies looking to start their digital transition."

The Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction guidance was prepared by the CIF Construction 4.0 Committee's BIM Working Group, which comprises Cillian Kelly, Head of DPD Ireland/Europe, John Sisk & Son; Joe Mady, Managing Director, Digital Construction Technologies Group; Brian Cass, BIM Coordinator, Clancy Construction; John O'Brien, Divisional BIM Manager, Jones Engineering Group; Niall Carolan, BIM Lead Ireland, Wills Bros Ltd; Jason Rymer, BIM Manager, John Paul Construction; and Ray Coote, BIM Manager, Collen Construction. **C**

To access the Working Remotely: Virtual Design & Construction (VDC) guidance and other CIF Covid-19 resources, visit www.cif.ie



WEATHERING THE STORM

PADDY O'CONNELL, Director, RSM, sets out some of the issues management should be considering to chart a sustainable path for their businesses as the industry emerges from the Covid-19 shutdown.

In recent months Covid-19 has impacted not only on society but also on business activity in all sectors. The construction industry has not been immune to the effects of the pandemic. Significant work has been undertaken by the industry in dealing with the immediate impact of Covid-19 on how it operates, with sites closing, staff layoffs, restricted movement during the lockdown period and preparations to return to work safely.

The focus has been on business continuity and crisis management.

MAINTAIN FOCUS

However, business owners must maintain a strategic focus on their business as the impact of Covid-19 will extend well beyond the period of restricted activity. The economic forecasts are extremely negative, and there is no doubt that Irish and global economies are facing into a potentially protracted period of recession. The depth and duration of the downturn remain to be seen. Consequently, business owners and management must revisit their medium- and long-term strategies, and dedicated time must be set aside by business owners, senior management and boards of directors to achieve this.

A business will have a strategic vision, the cornerstone that the business is built on. A well-conceived strategic vision establishes the business's long-term direction. It may be the case that the

current strategy remains valid but will be challenged during the coming period.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Challenging objectives will have been set, converting the strategic vision to performance targets against which progress can be measured. The performance targets will stretch staff and management to improve a business's financial performance and business position. Given the exceptional circumstances that we are now facing, previously established objectives will need to be revised. These objectives will be a combination of financial (eg, revenue targets, return on investment, cashflow) and strategic objectives (eg, market share, outperforming the market, identifying growth opportunities, leading the way in with innovation and use of technology). The desired performance and revised objectives should ensure the business is more intentional and focused on its actions.

While the business will have established planned strategies to achieve its objectives, these will need to be adapted to react to the exceptional challenges now being faced. This step should be considered in the context of the business's situation and prospects. An honest diagnosis of the company's internal and external situation is required.

An assessment of how resources are deployed should be undertaken. Are staff being committed to productive tasks that



Paddy O'Connell
Director, RSM.

support the achievement of medium- and long-term objectives? During a period of crisis, there is a risk that businesses will eliminate costs or resources that are non-essential for the short term but essential for the long term and damaging responses to the inevitable downturn. It is, however, inevitable that employee and wage decisions will be made.

WORKING CAPITAL

Robust and efficient management of working capital is required to lay a solid foundation for the delivery of a revised business strategy. From an early stage in the Covid-19 response, most companies will have looked at their cost base and made adjustments where necessary. The next step is to consider and manage the timing of receipts and payments (along with external funding if required) to ensure your company has the necessary cash and capital to trade.

In an established business with long-standing supplier relationships, cashflows can be easy to predict. The current climate has caused previously reliable payment terms to be a source of financial uncertainty, absorbing key management time. The ability to create efficient and robust management of working capital can

TIPS TO SUSTAIN YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH CHALLENGING MARKET CONDITIONS

- Previously established objectives will need to be revised to ensure your business is more intentional and focused on its actions.
- Business objectives should be adapted to react to the exceptional challenges now being faced with an honest diagnosis of your company's internal and external situation.
- A realistic assessment of how resources are deployed should be undertaken.
- Robust management of working capital is required to lay a solid foundation for the delivery of any revised business strategy.
- Adapt your strategies now to enable your business to chart a path through the inevitable recession.
- Evaluate implemented strategies regularly against the impact of changing external conditions.

be the foundation for supporting a company's Covid-19 response. This management could involve:

- Engagement with suppliers and stakeholders – there is an element of “we are in this together”, and there needs to be openness in dealing with your supply chain and confidence that payment and commitments will be honoured.
- Agreeing on cash milestones throughout contracts, including upfront retainers or payments on account – clients will need to understand that cashflow is required to progress projects. Slippage in the timing of payments may raise more serious questions.
- Engaging with banks to understand the level of forbearance available, the continuing availability of facilities and additional lines of funding – the development of cashflow projections taking account of the new reality.
- Driving efficiency on projects that will pay – maximise profitability on those contracts and not chasing work to the point that margin is compromised just to stay busy.

Projections prepared for the current year will be required to be revisited and likely restated, as will high-level projections for subsequent periods. The underlying assumptions and robustness of those projections should be stress-tested. Weakness in projections will affect the credibility of representations to stakeholders.

ADAPT TO SURVIVE

Adapting your strategies now will allow the business to chart a path through the inevitable recession. Companies that plan and adjust their strategies have a better prospect of survival. The viability of the business may come into question, and there will be fallout within the construction sector. Revised strategies may require a material re-organisation of the business, with tough decisions being made.

The job of implementing and executing strategy will be hands-on. It will involve reshaping the business, setting budgets, allocating resources, motivating your team towards achieving objectives, ensuring the internal support is fit for purpose, building a culture that is capable of achieving strategic objectives and, above all, showing leadership to drive implementation and challenging the business to improve continually.

CONSTANT EVALUATION

Constant evaluation of implemented strategies will be required, as changing external conditions impact. Management needs to stay close to the situation to detect when any further response is required. The availability of timely, complete and accurate financial information will aid decision-making during this critical period.

IN CONCLUSION

There is an expectation that stimulus packages will be introduced to reinvigorate economies and to kick-start business activity. As Covid-19 has impacted the entire economy, there will be significant competition from all sectors and their representative bodies for funding, and it will likely take some time before the benefits of a stimulus package for the economy and individual businesses to come to fruition. The challenges brought on by Covid-19 will be with us for an extended period. Companies need to commit to revisiting their business strategies, with key week by week steps, to ensure they can weather the storm and emerge from this challenging period as a stronger, more resilient business. **C**

Paddy O'Connell is a director in RSM's Transaction Advisory Services Department with over 20 years of experience in managing profile construction and property development assignments. To learn more about RSM, visit www.rsm.global/ireland



LEADERSHIP IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

STEPHANIE GOOD, People & Organisation Consulting, PwC Ireland, discusses both the immediate and longer-term actions that leaders in the construction industry should take to emerge in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis.

The current crisis is a real test of leadership, as employees look to management at all levels for a sense of direction and a calm steer.

As one of the earliest sectors to restart activities, construction leaders face a complex range of challenges, with little precedent to draw from when making fast and difficult decisions.

However, there are clear priorities that should be kept in mind.

IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

Manage the Current Situation

- Provide direction in a time of high uncertainty
- Ensure employees are settling into new ways of working and maintaining productivity (for those continuing to work) while they face personal concerns
- Communicate and engage with employees in a variety of situations (eg, on site, working remotely, or unable to work)
- Protect employee health and wellbeing (mental and physical)
- Manage people-related costs (eg, temporary lay-offs, redundancies, pay cuts).

Plan for the future

- Evaluate when and how to bring employees back to the workplace
- Plan for different return-to-work scenarios, including identifying the key skills and working patterns required in the short-, medium- and long-term
- Refresh workforce strategy
- Embed revised safety protocols and ways of working to meet Covid-19 guidelines
- Manage the immediate and longer-term impact of the pandemic on organisational culture and behaviours.

CREATE CLARITY

As we emerge from the initial crisis response phases, workers will be seeking clarity from leaders on the medium- to long-term plan. How leaders 'show up' will be critical to sustaining engagement and productivity.

To respond effectively, the essential skills leaders (and organisations) need are: strategic thinking; planning and risk management; empathy; adaptability; agility; and resilience. Leaders can draw confidence from the industry's track record of resilience in the face of crisis. Although demands on their time are high, leaders should reflect on the lessons learned from the financial crisis and how they might be

relevant now.

It seems likely that we will be living and working alongside the virus for some time. What are the specific actions that leaders should take?

DEVELOP A FORWARD-THINKING MINDSET

An early action for leaders will be to develop a plan to get to the other side of the crisis. This means considering multiple timescales and scenarios simultaneously, pivoting between strategic and operational concerns. Leaders are likely to feel the strain in the short term, so they should keep a watchful eye on their own resilience to ensure sustainable working.

Time should be spent planning in detail how to create a workplace where construction occurs safely alongside Covid-19 for an extended period. This may involve:

- Assemble a multi-functional Return to Work Taskforce to plan for a number of scenarios to understand what a staggered return to site may look like based on; i) Different levels of demand, and, ii) Different levels of restrictions. Planning should assess an organisation's ability to work safely and productively in each scenario (eg, Will social distancing be possible within

specific tasks?).

- Scenario planning can also:
 - Identify the critical, minimum-viable roles within projects
 - Clarify the impact of revised ways of working on productivity and project deadlines
 - Identify the preferred sequence and pace of ramp-up
 - Determine the cost to appropriately bring people back to work
 - Indicate how much capacity the organisation will have to meet a potential surge in demand.

The Return to Work Taskforce should develop guiding principles and a transition plan which they will then oversee.

COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE

Regular, responsive and empathetic communication should be a leadership priority for the foreseeable future, particularly with those offsite. The need to communicate will vary over time, but it will be particularly important as major changes happen (eg, returning to site). We advise creating a simple communication strategy with a clear narrative and key messages that are communicated consistently.

Leaders should:

- Communicate frequently and authentically, being open about what they know and don't know, and clarifying the reasons for decisions;
- Clarify where workers can direct questions and concerns;
- Establish a regular rhythm of communications with those working remotely, using video conferencing, if possible, to maintain a sense of connection;
- Use toolbox talks, where appropriate and possible, to highlight specific hazards in the workplace and to raise awareness of control measures in place;
- Provide training, coaching and guidance on safety to workers as early as possible;
- Ensure that subcontractors and any necessary visitors to site are aware of all safety briefings and control measures;
- Acknowledge the significant stress, anxiety, worry and fear that people may be experiencing (including those who may have experienced bereavements);
- Encourage workers to avail of the mental health support available. The importance of employee welfare protocols and supports cannot be underestimated at this time. The collaboration between CIF and Laya Healthcare in delivering a mental health and wellbeing support package to the sector is an invaluable resource;



Stephanie Good,
People & Organisation
Consulting, PwC Ireland.

- Take some time to reflect on how the recent changes are affecting workers' lives. Being mindful of their responses to change/crisis is critical to supporting workers right now.

MANAGE AND PROTECT EMPLOYEE WELFARE AND SAFETY

Protecting the workforce and minimising the risk of the spread of Covid-19 will be paramount until the pandemic has passed. There is an established culture of safety in the industry, which is a strength. Leaders should identify what has worked well in the past when introducing new health and safety measures to determine what could work now.

Leaders should communicate as soon as possible about the new measures that will be in place, allowing time for individuals to understand them fully and to ask questions. Some workers will be concerned about returning to work so leaders will need to communicate empathetically and consider if those who are uncomfortable can continue to work from home. The focus on safety will likely be highest as sites reopen, but it will be important for leaders to communicate regularly to maintain vigilance.

The following practical steps can be actioned by sites that are continuing to operate, and be put in place for those that are preparing for a phased return to activity:

- Leverage the guidance set out in the 'Construction Sector Covid-19

Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) to ensure the application of best practice in complying with HSE guidelines

- Train, coach and guide workers on Covid-19-related safety so that they understand the requirements and are equipped to self-assess workplace safety
- Leaders at all levels should be explicit about the safety behaviours they want to see from workers and role model them at all times.

UTILISE THE INTELLECTUAL POWER OF THE WORKFORCE

Leaders need to remember that they are not alone. In times of crisis, the creativity, knowledge and experience of their people is an asset that can be harnessed.

Leaders can take the following actions:

- Appoint a member of the leadership team as the Covid-19 Compliance Officer, whose role will be to monitor site activities and ensure social distancing and hygiene rules are being observed. Ensure that they have (or are given) the authority to make decisions quickly and effectively;
- Establish a rhythm of continuous scenario planning to enable a quick response to changing circumstances (eg, if restrictions are reintroduced);
- Elevate the most empathetic members of the leadership team for communications. Workers will remember the faces and voices who led the charge during this time; be sure those voices are not only wise but compassionate and caring.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

This crisis has produced challenges that the industry has never before encountered and a sense of uncertainty that requires resilient leadership.

But times of uncertainty can also be times of opportunity, transforming your business in ways you may not expect. Previous barriers will be broken, new ways of working developed, and new leaders (formal and informal) will emerge. This crisis will pass, and although we may have a 'new normal', in the future, construction will continue to play an important role.

If leaders live their values in the workforce decisions they make in the short term, while preparing for the longer term, their organisations can emerge from this crisis in the best possible shape. **C**

If you would like more information, contact Stephanie Good, PwC Ireland, on Tel: 086 031 0224, Email: stephanie.good@pwc.com, or visit www.pwc.ie



Kelly O'Hara, Partner and Head of Property, Dillon Eustace.



Fiona O'Neill, Consultant, Construction Law, Dillon Eustace.

TAKING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATING CONTRACT AMENDMENTS

KELLY O'HARA, Partner and Head of Property, Dillon Eustace, and **FIONA O'NEILL**, Consultant, Construction Law, Dillon Eustace, address some key construction contract issues arising from the Government's Covid-19 public health measures.

As we are all aware, with limited exceptions, construction in Ireland ceased while the Government's Covid-19 stay home measures remained in place, which at the date of writing are due to be relaxed in phases commencing at midnight on 17th May 2020.

Accordingly, parties to construction contracts need to review the terms of their contract to see what provisions are relevant to the unexpected circumstances prevailing during the Covid-19 emergency. Developers, contractors and design team consultants are just some of the stakeholders in the construction industry that will be affected by the commercial implications and risk associated with Covid-19 project delays.

Landlords and tenants of pre-let premises will also be adversely affected by uncertainty on the potential to achieve project completion dates. Funders will also be concerned to see the extent to which revenue generation may be delayed.

While "outdoor workers" may have returned to work from 18th May, the return will be phased, and construction projects are not simply re-commencing in full, as originally programmed (and probably as budgeted for) from that date. Delays, supply chain uncertainty and difficulties around cashflow should be anticipated. A phased return, while very welcome, will increase the complexity of interpreting and applying contractual provisions to the complex and evolving factual circumstances in which contractors, employers and related professionals currently find themselves.

Users of construction contracts in Ireland should also keep up to

date with updates to the CIF 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures' document. The intention of this is to provide a standardised approach to commencing construction projects incorporating Covid-19 public health requirements.

PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS

Public bodies procure public sector projects in Ireland by way of a suite of contracts under the Capital Works Management Framework (Public Works Contracts). On 14th April 2020, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) issued an 'Updated Guidance Note' aimed at assisting contracting authorities that may be required to procure emergency professional services or works as a result of the Covid-19 response measures and also where contracting authorities are currently party to a Public Works Contract.

It contains useful guidance, for example, as regards Public Works Contracts where sites are now closed as a result of the public health measures.

It sets out: "In relation to cost, the Public Works Contracts do not provide an entitlement to the Contractor to recover costs associated with a delay arising from site closure in the current circumstances."

However, the updated guidance note outlined proposals for employers, under Public Works Contracts, to make ex-gratia payments to contractors relating to costs associated with delay under certain Public Works Contracts from 12th April 2020 to midnight on 4th May 2020. The OGP also issued a form of letter on 22nd April 2020 that employers and contractors could use to

document a Covid-19 ex-gratia payment by the employer.

As Government further updates the public health measures, the Updated Guidance Note will be amended as necessary.

RIAI CONTRACTS

In many privately-funded projects in Ireland, the contract of choice is the RIAI construction contract (RIAI Contract). In most high-value projects, the standard form RIAI construction contract is changed by a substantial schedule of amendments. As a general rule, even an amended RIAI Contract (similar to other contracts) will not have been amended to the extent that the effects of Covid-19 will be directly addressed.

RIAI CONTRACT – DELAY AND EXTENSION OF TIME

Set out below are some key clauses in the RIAI Contract that parties should consider at this unprecedented time:

1. Force Majeure

There is no standard legal definition of force majeure. As such, the application of force majeure protocols in each contract will depend on the interpretation of the precise wording used.

In seeking to rely on a force majeure clause as a result of the current crisis, the relevant party will need to be able to demonstrate that the impact of the pandemic is the sole reason for not being able to meet their obligations under the contract. Parties must also consider any contractual obligations to notify the other party to the agreement of the commencement of any force majeure event.

The only express reference to force majeure in the RIAI Contract is at Clause 30, under which the Contractor may seek an extension of time (EOT) upon the happening of an event giving rise to delay in completing the works due to force majeure. The meaning of force majeure in Clause 30 is somewhat open to interpretation as the term is not defined in the RIAI Contract.

The RIAI Contract sets out time limits within which the Contractor must give notice of the event giving rise to the delay to the Architect. It also deals with the Architect's obligations regarding the granting of a "fair and reasonable" EOT. Where the RIAI Contract is amended by a schedule of amendments, they will usually make timely notification of delay a precondition to the Contractor's entitlement to the EOT.

An EOT under Clause 30 of the RIAI Contract does not necessarily entitle the Contractor to an increase in the contract sum. On the happening of a delay event, Clause 30 obliges the Contractor to use best endeavours to prevent delay and to proceed with the works.

2. Inability To Secure Essential Labour and Materials

The Contractor is also entitled to seek an EOT where it or any nominated subcontractor or supplier is unable for reasons beyond their control, to secure labour and materials essential for the proper execution of the works.

This provision in the RIAI Contract may now be relevant as the stay-home restrictions are lifted if problems with the supply of materials and labour ensue.

3. Compliance with Architect's Instructions for an Employer Variation

The Contractor is also entitled to seek an EOT by reason of any Architect's instructions issued for an Employer's variation pursuant to Clause 2 of the RIAI Contract. Unlike an EOT request due to force majeure, the Contractor may claim for loss and expense associated with an Architect's instruction for a variation.

Key Point

Whether the RIAI Contract is amended or not, it is vital now for the parties to comply with notice requirements and to keep comprehensive records of communications, correspondence and

information relevant to an EOT request.

RIAI CONTRACT – CHANGES IN LAW

Clause 4 of the RIAI Contract deals with variations arising from legislative enactments. As most construction sites have been temporarily closed by law, Contractors may seek an adjustment to the contract sum pursuant to Clause 4. The administration by the Architect of claims pursuant to Clause 4 could potentially lead to disputes, which, if not resolved by negotiation, could result in the parties invoking the dispute avoidance and resolution provisions of Clause 38 of the RIAI Contract.

RIAI CONTRACT – PRICE FLUCTUATION

Clause 36 deals with wage and price variations. In the majority of cases, Clause 36 is deleted from the RIAI Contract following price buy-out negotiations between the parties. However, bearing in mind the potential for supply chain issues as a result of the Covid-19 emergency, where Clause 36 is not deleted, the Contractor may be able to claim an increase in the contract sum due to the operation of Clause 36.

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS ACT 2013

The Construction Contracts Act 2013 (CCA) applies to all construction contracts in Ireland, regardless of whether or not it is referred to in the contract. While the CCA deals mainly with payment obligations of parties to construction contracts, it also provides that any dispute relating to payment may be referred to an adjudicator at any time.

Both parties to a construction contract (including design team appointments) need to give some thought to the practical implications of the potential of a submission to adjudication in the event of a payment dispute, which may happen as a result of the effect of the Covid-19 emergency.

IN CONCLUSION

In light of current uncertainties and the rapidly changing landscape, it is possible that parties to construction contracts may not be satisfied that their contract reflects the circumstances in which they now find themselves. As a result, there is merit in the parties adopting a collaborative approach and considering the negotiation of some contract amendments. However, both parties need to consider the short- and long-term effects of any agreed change.

They will need to formally and carefully document any change and consider the knock-on effect of any change on, for example, an associated agreement for lease, development agreement or funding arrangement. Prior agreement of a funder would probably be a prerequisite to any construction contract amendment. Legislation, guidance and policy affecting construction projects are changing rapidly. The health warning heard so often these days is "wash your hands". From the business health perspective for stakeholders in the construction industry, the current advice is "read your contract" before deciding upon the next steps. **C**

“ READ YOUR CONTRACT BEFORE DECIDING UPON THE NEXT STEPS ”

SISK PLOTS A ROUTE TO A LOW CARBON CONSTRUCTION FUTURE

ROBBIE COUSINS talks to Wayne Metcalfe, Director, Health, Safety, Sustainability & Quality, John Sisk & Son, about the company's sustainability ambitions set out in its soon to be published 'Sisk 2030 Sustainability Vision'.

John Sisk & Son has three core values that underpin how it operates; 'Care', 'Integrity' and 'Excellence'. Practical examples of these values in operation include acknowledging the contribution of its suppliers to its success with its annual supply chain awards, and the company's diversity and inclusion forum, established to foster an inclusive environment across its operations so everybody can be themselves at work.

Wayne Metcalfe, Director, Health, Safety, Sustainability & Quality, Sisk, says this robust set of values is at the heart of how the company does business. It is the basis on which it has been developing a proactive and ambitious sustainability agenda since 2017, which will be encapsulated in its soon to be published 'Sisk 2030 Sustainability Vision' strategy document.

"In developing the Sisk 2030 Sustainability Vision, we have been looking at what has worked in other agendas, such as health and safety, or diversity, to see how we can get the same momentum and traction in the sustainability space. We took the lessons learned from progressing these agendas, both of which have been active for several years, and used these as a guideline for setting out our sustainability agenda.

"In the health and safety, and diversity spaces, everyone talks about 'moral', 'legal' and 'economic' reasons for doing things. The sustainability agenda is no different. The Sisk approach is to consider sustainability in the context of our values, namely Care, Integrity and Excellence. While our 2030 Sustainability Vision will work in all of these spaces to try and make a real difference, Care is the one value I place the most emphasis on when discussing sustainability. Care encompasses how we look after our people, our stakeholders and suppliers, the planet, and how we try to bring enduring benefits to the local communities in which we work.

"How we care for these elements today will impact on what happens in the future.

This is the essence of any sustainability strategy.

"The Sisk 2030 Sustainability Vision will bring together all the threads of what we have learned in the past few years into an exciting and deliverable set of goals aimed at having a positive impact in all areas in which Sisk operates today and will be operating in the next 10 years and beyond."

CARBON EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

Wayne Metcalfe explains that in terms of energy, the goal is to reduce consumption to achieve a significant reduction in the carbon footprint of Sisk sites. This is currently being achieved by measuring energy consumption, where and how energy is used, analysing its efficiency, and then looking at ways to reduce consumption and maximise procurement from sustainable sources.

"Reducing diesel or electricity consumption on site may save money in the short term, but from a sustainability perspective, the resulting reduction in carbon emissions will ultimately have an even more positive impact in the years ahead.

"From an energy consumption point of view, it is easy to get caught up on the inputs; ie, use less diesel or electricity. The sustainable focus should be on the output or what are you achieving in terms of reducing carbon emissions. Sisk is looking to reduce the carbon outputs linked to our energy consumption. In environmental terms, this won't necessarily make a huge difference tomorrow, but it will contribute to the overall wellbeing of the planet in many years to come.

"Our immediate goal is to reduce our carbon emissions by 5% per annum. How Sisk approaches this varies from country to country. In Ireland, 100% of our electricity is already from renewable sources. We are not quite there yet in the UK yet, but we should achieve this by 2021. Conversely, the UK is currently ahead in terms of the network of electric vehicle charging points. So, we would find it easier to promote our electric vehicle strategy there. It is a



Wayne Metcalfe, Director, Health, Safety, Sustainability & Quality, John Sisk & Son.

case of adapting to what opportunities or challenges local conditions present."

In Ireland, the Sisk board has already committed to providing anyone entitled to a company car with an electric vehicle (EV) if they want one instead of a standard vehicle. It currently has a fleet of 15 EVs in Ireland and is installing chargers on all sites.

As already pointed out, energy consumption is measured at sites' points of use rather than points of supply, whenever possible. Telematics are used on plant as much as possible to establish how much fuel is used per hour and to help develop more efficient ways of utilising the equipment.

"We apply the science of energy management to the data we collect," Wayne Metcalfe explains. "We have also put in sub-meters on sites to show where energy is being used during the day."

One area that delivered immediate results was the electricity usage of drying rooms, where he says they have historically used energy inefficiently.

"Heaters were being left on when they were not needed, even when clothes were dry," he explains. "On one site, we installed two-panel electric heaters and dehumidifiers. It now takes around four hours to dry the clothes, and the heaters switch off automatically."

Another area where the company is focusing efforts is tower cranes, which are a huge draw on power. Meters were installed to analyse how they operate on



Electric vehicles were introduced by Sisk to reduce energy consumption.



Sisk has achieved a 14% reduction in diesel consumption through the use of telematics.

a day-to-day basis, looking in detail at power demands at each stage of the day. These registered regular bursts in use, but also significant periods of lower demand. With this detailed understanding of the power use, the Sisk team is now working with a team at University College Dublin to develop a specific battery solution to trial on tower cranes in Dublin city. The batteries, of course, can be recharged by solar PV panels.

SUPPLY CHAIN BUY-IN

Wayne Metcalfe explains that the energy strategies that Sisk has introduced to date are being adopted in some form by its supply chain.

“Our supply chain has been learning from our existing energy strategies and seeing the benefits of these for their operations,” he says. “Our approach is to educate, share knowledge and to help like-minded supply chain partners on the journey with us, and we generally try to identify suppliers who share our vision, and want to work with partners who share our values.”

In terms of how this works on site, he gives an example of the company’s diesel strategy, in which he says suppliers are

fully engaged.

“At the moment, we are looking to reduce diesel use and have a strategy in place to achieve this with our suppliers. First up, there are binary items such as not leaving vehicles idling, and servicing and maintaining vehicles, so they remain efficient. On the next level, we meet with suppliers, who are specialists in their field, to get their input on how we can reduce consumption through planning and sequencing work to make sure it is carried out efficiently.”

Other successful energy management interventions include having fully insulated cabins and using heat and light only when they are needed.

In the area of waste management, he says that Sisk has identified the six most significant sources of waste from its project sites and it has become very good at analysing what leaves a site, and ensuring it is dealt with responsibly, with a transparent reporting system focused on the ultimate goal of minimising what ends up in landfill. The focus is really turning to eliminating the production of the waste and starting to look at it much earlier in the project life-cycle.

“This all ultimately works together and



Down Syndrome Cork’s Field of Dreams is a market garden for the cultivation of fruit, vegetable and farm produce on a three-acre plot, which was developed by Sisk in partnership with Janssen Sciences and PM Group.

feeds into our overall sustainability goals.”

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will be an integral part of the Sisk Sustainable Vision 2030 strategy document, and the company has a formal system in place to measure the impact of various initiatives it undertakes in the communities in which it works.

Wayne Metcalfe explains, “We use a system called AVA Airseweb to register, measure, analyse and report upon the social value activity of each of the projects we have on site.

“For instance, overall, in 2019, we recorded a total number of 170 CSR events, which involved 4,318 hours of input and delivered a return on investment of over €6m.”

With the AVA Airseweb system, the activities are grouped by standard categories, known as ‘outcomes’, in the assessment model used in the system.

“We can see from this model that local employment is where we currently deliver the biggest benefit. This is about giving people transferable skills that they can use to sustain a working life, with all the benefits that follow through from that. Our activity in this area ranges from our formal apprenticeship programme at the Sisk Joinery Centre in Dublin to individual employment opportunities for the unemployed in the areas where we work. For example our One Wilton project in Dublin alone offered three such opportunities in 2019.

“The big step forward for us in 2019 was starting to formally record and measure what we have been doing in this area for a long time, and doing this against a formal assessment model has let us see where we are really adding value. This in turn helps us to focus our energy and efforts on where it will make the greatest difference.

“It all comes back around to our values and particularly in this instance, ‘Care,’” Wayne Metcalfe concludes. **C**

REDUCING COVID-19 LOSSES – A FUTURE STATE OF READINESS

VINCENT SOROHAN, Director, Real Estate Advisory, Deloitte Ireland, sets out some of the steps that those operating in the construction sector need to take to reduce or recoup losses accrued as a result of the Covid-19 shutdown.

As the impact of Covid-19 is felt around the world, the primary focus of the construction sector will mainly be on-site operations and ensuring that the correct health and safety protocols are in place in advance of the return to operational 'new' normality.

In this article, we highlight some of the financial implications of the pandemic for those operating in the construction sector; what steps need to be taken now; and, what steps can be taken in the near future to ensure a reduction and recuperation of ongoing losses.

FINANCIAL ISSUES YOU MAY BE FACING NOW

Construction is a sector where margins are traditionally tight, and cashflow is of paramount importance. Covid-19 has had an immediate and unforgiving impact on both financial measurements. So, understanding and taking the right steps from a financial planning perspective can ensure that inevitable revenue, working capital and funding challenges are mitigated now.

Recommended Steps

- Reforecast trading and cashflows: Ongoing reviews of projections for the remainder of 2020 should be undertaken. This will allow companies to implement actions to preserve cash in the short- to medium-term until such time as any effects to operational new normality have become clear.
- Complete a scenario analysis: Understanding both actual and potential financing needs is critically important. Companies need to test and challenge all assumptions and run downside scenarios to give themselves clarity. This will also help highlight whether any specific restructuring expertise or advice is required.
- Review lending documents: Companies should ensure that they have a clear understanding of the key terms, covenants, headroom, and any flexibility in existing banking and financing documents. If in any doubt, they should consult their accountant or legal advisor.
- Proactively engage with funders: Forecasts may indicate a potential breach of financial covenants. By proactively engaging with funders, businesses can look to negotiate covenant waivers or covenant resets, helping to prevent any breach.
- Identify additional sources of capital: Should cashflow forecasts suggest that liquidity is or will become an issue, companies should assess options for raising new funds, including arranging temporarily larger facilities, introducing new equity, or considering asset-based financing.
- Demonstrate ability to recover: It is, of course, important to demonstrate to funders the ability of the business to return to something approaching its original underwrite within a reasonable period of time. It may be helpful to consult an accountant with regard to this.



ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Once a company has considered all of its options from a financing and operational standpoint, there are some other avenues available should financial difficulties remain.

All businesses wish to turnaround their fortunes and avoid a terminal insolvency situation in difficult times such as this. There are several restructuring options available to companies to avoid such a scenario including;

- **Examinership:** A very effective tool to allow companies to obtain a period of protection from its creditors, seek fresh investment in the business, and propose a restructure of its overall balance sheet.
- **A Part 9 scheme or arrangement:** A similar process to examinership that has the advantage of lower costs. But, it has a higher bar for creditor approval. It is designed to allow a company restructure its debts or one class of its creditors.
- **A managed exit from the business:** This entails a further options analysis to consider areas to fix within the business. This analysis could take the form of a potential carve-out or sale of an underperforming segment or whole of a business, or a controlled closure of the company.

Company directors have a duty of care to ensure they do not trade while insolvent, and there are a range of insolvency processes available to companies as a last resort and where all other avenues have not driven a recovery.



A FUTURE STATE OF READINESS FOR DISPUTES

While the immediate worry will be remaining solvent and in business, there is also a need to look to the future and the possibility that contractors could end up in complex disputes with clients and suppliers following the period of suspension of most construction across the country.

It is important that companies are thinking ahead, to be in a state of readiness to resolve any contractual challenges or navigate contentious scenarios, to protect the future of their businesses, and to preserve important commercial relationships.

Set out below are key considerations for companies across the entire spectrum of the construction sector, be that contractors, design professionals or other professional advisors, in terms of protecting future business.

Recommended Steps

- Failure to meet contractual obligations: Check whether your contract allows for the impact of an 'uncontrollable factor' or 'force majeure' to be taken into account. Communicate your legal understanding of this clause with your client to ensure initial engagement is on record.
- Insurance cover: Review whether you have applicable insurance coverage to take into account business interruption or credit risk arising from, for example, the loss of a key supplier. Is it currently enforceable in the current environment?
- Review your supply chain: Has the impact of Covid-19 created or exacerbated a contractual under-performance of one of your suppliers? Does the contract set out specific performance metrics that a party is already breaching or at risk of breaching? Communicate your legal understanding of the

performance with your supplier to ensure initial engagement is on record.

- Quantify your losses: Consider whether you are able to take mitigating actions to reduce fixed and semi-permanent costs. Ensure you avail of the Government relief schemes, where relevant. Accurately capture all associated internal and external costs and losses incurred to be in a state of readiness for dispute resolution.
- Get ready for new alternative dispute resolution options: Traditionally, the speed of dispute resolution has been slow, and the cost of disputes tend to be high. With the growing use of online dispute resolution, technology is increasingly becoming prominent in ensuring speedier resolutions using portal-based video conferencing/electronic chat or asynchronous forms of communication such as email. Ensure that you are set up to take advantage of online dispute resolution, as this will be the quickest way back to the new normality.

KEY MESSAGE

It can be a daunting task to make sense of the current environment and keep abreast of all the information needed for you to make informed choices.

It is therefore wise for companies and individuals with links to the construction industry to review all of the steps and measures set out in this article to ensure that costs and losses are minimised, while also making certain that they have identified all mechanisms to recoup losses and recover a healthy and safe trading future. **C**

Vincent Sorohan is a Director in Deloitte Ireland's Financial Advisory team and leads the Real Estate Advisory Services. For more details, visit www.deloitte.com/ie

BUILD HEALTH – LOOKING AFTER YOUR EMPLOYEES' MENTAL WELLBEING



The CIF' Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme', which has been developed by Laya Healthcare, is designed to help employers assist workers in addressing any mental wellbeing issues that may arise.

Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, says that the mental wellbeing of staff has become a pivotal issue for construction firms in recent years.

"Research shows that 10 people a week in Ireland take their own lives and that eight out of these 10 are men," he says. "This shocking statistic is further amplified when you consider that 96% of those working in the construction sector are male. We know from feedback CIF has received that workers in the construction sector are part of these statistics. As an industry, we have focused a lot of our effort in the past on managing safety issues. Recently, it has become clear that we also need to give time to managing people's wellbeing."

According to Darren Gavin, Corporate Relations Manager, Laya Healthcare, "In Ireland, one in six employees experiences stress, anxiety or depression at any given time, 40% report being regularly stressed, and 70% of employees do not feel they can speak openly about these issues."

This programme, available at discounted rates to all CIF members, provides employees with easy access to a wide variety of mental health services to help them and their family members over 16 years of age through many personal or work-related issues, while helping to equip them with the tools they need to protect and manage their mental health proactively.

"The programme also has a seminar that includes modules to train managers to help them to understand commonly occurring issues and disorders, and how to recognise

their symptoms. They will also learn how to take stock of their team's mental health and how to help someone they feel may be struggling."

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

Put simply, through the CIF Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme, Laya Healthcare and its health and wellbeing partner, Spectrum Life, helps employers to help their employees.

If an employee is experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety or depression, they can make direct contact by phone or online with a case manager, who is a trained counsellor. Straight away, the case manager will begin a short-term counselling process, where appropriate, supporting the employee there and then, and conducting a comprehensive intake assessment of the caller's needs to determine the most suitable treatment.

Once the needs of the caller have been determined, further contact will be made with a counsellor where appropriate within 48 hours and an appointment offered within five working days. If at any point, a case manager or psychologist identifies an emergency, high-risk situation, Laya has robust procedures in place to ensure they get the individual to safety.

By supporting employees, the CIF Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme also supports employers through a sizeable reduction in costs from reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased productivity and employee engagement. **C**

To find out more, email: sales@spectrum.life, phone: 01 518 0356 or visit <https://wellbeing.spectrum.life/ci>

LAYA HEALTHCARE – BUILD HEALTH PACKAGES

Under the 'CIF Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme', from Laya Healthcare there are three packages available, with additional add-on modules included.

Each package has a free telephone helpline, video counselling, up to six free counselling sessions, and access to helpful mental health resources.

Depending on the package chosen, companies can avail of the following staff and worker programme options.

Build Health Package One

Four Quarterly Seminars
One Mental Health Workshop

Healthy Minds Package 2

Four Quarterly Seminars
One Mental Health Workshop
One First Responders Mental Health Training Module

Healthy Minds Package 3

Four Quarterly Seminars
Two Mental Health Workshop
One First Responders Mental Health Training Module

SEMINARS

Seminars cover topics that include mental health, sleep, nutrition, fitness and a holistic education around overall wellbeing.

You can choose from the packages combining seminars, workshops and training as an additional or standalone service.

MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

Qualified professionals provide mental health workshops for employees, managers, senior leaders or HR teams, to ensure that they are fully confident in discussing mental health, understanding internal policies and can support colleagues who may be having difficulties.

FIRST RESPONDERS TRAINING

This two-day course is delivered by qualified mental health professionals who train attendees to provide emergency support to colleagues in distress and de-escalating crisis situations.

INDUSTRY NEWS

ARDMAC LAUNCHES MEDIPOD UNITS IN IRELAND AND THE UK

Ardmac has recently launched its modular MediPod unit product in Ireland and the UK. Medipods are a fast, flexible modular solution to deliver high-value medical workspaces quickly. The launch follows a partnership agreement between Ardmac and US-based Germfree Laboratories, a specialist in the design, engineering and manufacture of advanced biological containment laboratories.

The MediPods are stand-alone modular buildings that are manufactured and fitted out in a controlled factory environment. They are designed for applications ranging from ICU to isolation units, and they are part of a suite of offerings that Ardmac is providing for high-value workspaces and technical environments across the healthcare, pharma, research and IT sectors.

The self-contained pods are designed for ease of delivery by road and ready for rapid installation on site. They can be sited and ready for use within days, minimising disruption to the site location. They are designed to operate as complete functioning units and include heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, plumbing, electrics, medical gases and primary containment equipment.

Ronan Quinn, CEO, Ardmac, says, "At Ardmac, we are

MediPod units can be constructed and deployed within weeks for a rapid response.



committed to continually reviewing and enhancing our portfolio of high-value workspaces to meet the needs of customers. The MediPod units are an innovative solution that can be constructed and deployed within weeks for a rapid response in times when business continuity, refurbishment and temporary location needs are critical."

MediPods are scalable in a multi-module arrangement and reconfigurable, allowing for future reuse or redeployment. The units have been designed to comply fully with the HTM/HBN standards for specialist healthcare construction and, should rapid deployments be a priority, these can be provided with services to meet more basic requirements. **C**

ACTAVO LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE TO ASSIST COMPANIES THROUGH COVID-19

As a response to the Government's announcement regarding phased re-entry to workplaces, Actavo Events launched a new service to equip, support and advise Irish businesses to re-open while remaining fully compliant with social-distancing guidelines. The re-opening business packages are a controlled and measured approach that will enable employers, workforces, and clients to return to the workplace, in a manner that will protect their safety and well-being.

In terms of the delivery of its re-opening business packages, the Actavo Events team is working closely with Government, statutory/sporting bodies, construction/education/hospitality/retail, sectors, tech, and pharma companies, along with the events industry across Ireland and the UK. The company's skill set and experience are enabling it to pivot its event knowledge and infrastructure to execute a prompt turnaround on behalf of businesses.



Its 'Workplace Package' includes workstations and training facilities that are designed and deliver to each client's requirements, ensuring Covid-19 regulations compliance in providing a safe working environment.

The 'Business Package' includes perimeter fencing; queuing system; signage gantry; a point-of-entry thermal screening; contactless hand sanitiser; branding and signage.

Paul Griffin, Commercial Director, Actavo Events, says that the company developed the packages to provide a custom, direct solution to the Covid-19

crisis.

"In direct response to the impact of Covid-19 on businesses, Actavo Events has developed a comprehensive range of re-opening businesses packages that will enable businesses and employees to return to the workplace in line with the phases outlined by governments. The aim is to enable companies to adapt to the changed environment. Our team has extensive insight and experience with indoor and outdoor events to deliver this service and provide the infrastructure that is compliant with social distancing requirements." **C**

ACEI ISSUES COVID-19 SITE SAFETY ADVICE NOTE

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI) has published an advice note to highlight some key issues that ACEI member firms should consider in relation to site health and safety risks during the Covid-19 crisis.

Sarah Ingle, Secretary-General, ACEI, says that the note is mainly relevant to site inspections and monitoring activities for building and infrastructure projects, adding, "The advice is relevant at the time of its publication. At all times, ACEI member firms should consult, and abide by, all HSE and Government advice in relation to Covid-19 restrictions."

In relation to health and safety on construction sites, the note states that "while all parties involved in a construction project have H&S responsibilities, the responsibility for safety on construction sites, including Covid-19 management of the site, lies with the Project Supervisor for Construction Stage (PSCS) and the contractor. Procedures for site management should be communicated by these parties in



Sarah Ingle, Secretary-General, ACEI.

writing to consultants before any site visits are undertaken, and the consultant should request and review these in advance of site visits."

The advice note reiterates that the role of the PSCS is to manage and co-ordinate health and safety matters during the construction stage and to develop a suitable Construction Stage Safety and Health

Plan for the project. It is the duty of the PSCS to update the plan and ensure that relevant information is available to anybody associated with the project.

This is now critically important in the context of Covid-19 management of construction sites.

The ACEI advice note states that the CIF's 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) document is likely to become a standard requirement for all professionals attending sites for the purposes of site inspections and site monitoring. The association advises all ACEI members to refer to the SOPs document and co-operate with the Covid-19 Compliance Officer for each site. As part of site procedures, all persons attending a site, including visitors, are required to undertake an online C-19 induction programme and complete a questionnaire/self-declaration before attending sites. **C**

The full ACEI Covid-19 Advice can be found at www.acei.ie/covid-19-news

AG SPECIFICATION CENTRE OPENS IN SWORDS

Specialist building products firm AG has opened a new, state-of-the-art digital specification centre in Swords, Dublin, underlining its commitment to the Irish market.

Headquartered in Tyrone, AG is a third-generation family-owned business, which employs around 200 staff throughout Ireland and the UK. AG manufactures and sells a wide range of specialist walling, paving and facing brick products used in domestic and commercial hard-landscaping projects.

The opening of the new centre on Balheary Road, Swords, follows on the back of a 30% year on year increase in general sales across the business, and will see the new centre focus on commercial growth in the Irish market through relationship building with architects, engineers, local authorities and key influencers across multiple sectors.

Eamonn Cullen, Specification Consultant, AG, says that the company's mission is to create innovative quality solutions that are better, safer and faster.

"We believe this commitment is one of the things that sets AG apart in our current markets and that this new facility will provide tangible evidence of our long-



AG specification centre in Swords.

term confidence in the Irish marketplace, Eamonn Cullen says. "This investment will underline our objective to establish AG as one of the most efficient, innovative and productive companies in our sector. Regardless of what happens as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, AG will remain focused on growing sales, profit and performance wherever the opportunities present themselves."

Ireland has been an important market for AG for many years, and the new centre will provide an easy to access location where

specifiers of all kinds, whether landscape designers, design consultants or architects, can meet experts and see first-hand the wide range of products and support AG has available. **C**

The address of the new centre is Digital Office Centre, Balheary Rd, Balheary Demesne, Swords, Co Dublin. For more information, contact Eamonn Cullen at Tel: 01 963 0367, Email: eamonn.cullen@ag.uk.com, or visit www.ag.uk.com

PERFORMANCE BONDS PROVIDERS' RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CHALLENGE

As the construction industry returns to activity, sureties will continue to provide bond support, but contractors can expect a small increase in premium rates, higher levels of financial due diligence and longer lead-in times for the issuing of bonds, according to Chris Davies, Managing Director, DRS Bond Management.

"Bond capacity flow was restricted in the initial weeks of lockdown, but with greatly increased levels of financial due diligence, bonds continued to be issued," Chris Davies says. "As the Covid-19 horizon begins to settle, capacity will steadily increase with sites re-opening, albeit with reduced productivity. Sureties have maintained high levels of financial due diligence, so lead-in times for agreeing and issuing bonds have increased. During the lockdown, DRS arranged an array of multi-million GBP/EUR bonds on both sides of the Irish Sea, the largest of which was in Ireland for €8m."



Chris Davies, Managing Director, DRS Bond Management.

He says that as a result of losses sustained due to contractor insolvencies in the UK, particularly in Q4 2019 and Q1 2020, combined with the economic uncertainty resulting from Covid-19, premium rates are trending upwards.

"Sureties are not applying across the board increases as of yet. Each applicant

is being considered based on the strength of their financial covenant and the loss experience in their sub-sector."

He adds that more than 15 sureties are operating in the UK that are investment grade ('A' Standard & Poor's or equivalent with other ratings agencies). There are four main reinsurers who sit behind the sureties, which account for over 90% of the reinsured business.

"DRS continues to only source performance, retention and advance payment bonds from investment-grade sureties. Despite the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic and its commensurate impact on the global economy, the UK and Ireland surety market is robust," he says. "While sureties are underwriting with high levels of financial due diligence, bonds continue to be agreed and issued. DRS Bond Management would welcome the opportunity to speak with any contractors who are experiencing difficulty in accessing the capacity they need." **C**

A COMPLETE MEMBRANE SOLUTION FOR BUILDING ENVELOPE FIRE SAFETY

In the past few years, DuPont™ has been focussed on developing an airtight and vapour control layer for the internal walls and ceilings in its high-performance AirGuard® range, to offer similarly advanced, non-toxic, fire-resistance with proven efficacy.

The new DuPont AirGuard A2 FR AVCL brings benefits for energy-saving, moisture management, air quality and climatic comfort to the building interior, together with an added fire-retardant function. This complements the new Tyvek® FireCurb® Housewrap, which forms a weather-protective, vapour-open lining behind ventilated facades.

The DuPont AirGuard A2 FR airtight and vapour control layer (AVCL) is fire-retardant with an independently classified Class A2 rating. Along with Tyvek 2060M Metallised Tape, DuPont now offers a complete membrane and sealing tape system with certified A2 classification. These products provide fire safety measures that surpass existing regulations.

However, as with all systems – be they intended for fire safety or airtightness –



correct installation and the sealing of all laps, junctions and penetrations are crucial. In addition to airtightness and vapour control, properly taped systems also help to reduce smoke penetration, which tends to be responsible for more casualties than the flames themselves.

In order to give assurance that such a complete system is 'fire-safe', a full test that includes the sealing tape has recently been conducted to EN 13501 at the Prufinstitut Hoch (Classification Report, KB-Hoch-200148, 4th March 2020). DuPont also offers clear and comprehensive technical guidance and support to ensure its products perform as designed.

The DuPont AirGuard A2 FR fire-retardant air and vapour control layer (AVCL) is designed for use within the internal wall system behind finishes, such as dry-lining. It is compatible with a variety of materials, from mineral wool to gypsum plasterboard and cement particleboard, and it is suitable for all building types, sizes and locations. **C**

For more information about DuPont™ Tyvek® and AirGuard® or technical advice, contact the DuPont Tyvek Building Knowledge Centre, Email: Tyvek.construction@dupont.com or visit www.building.dupont.co.uk

CIF TRAINING COURSES

Training Dates for May & June Live Training Webinars 2020

COURSES

CODE

LOCATION

DAYS

DATES

HEALTH AND SAFETY COURSES

CIF IOSH Managing Safely in Construction	MSIC 3984	CIF Virtual Classroom	5	2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th June
CIF City & Guilds Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3982	CIF Virtual Classroom	2	3rd, 4th June
CIF QQI Level 6 Project Supervisor for Construction Stage	PSCS 3990	CIF Virtual Classroom	3	10th, 17th, 24th June
CIF Project Supervisor for Design Process	PSDP 3992	CIF Virtual Classroom	2	15th, 22nd June
CIF QQI Level 5 Safety Rep Course	SR 4155	CIF Virtual Classroom	4	11th 12th, 18th, 19th June

BUILDING CONTROL COURSES

CIF Working with the Assigned Certifier – A Site Manager's Approach	AC 3987	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	9th June
CIF Site Managers – A Practical Approach to Building Regulations	SMBR 3971	CIF Virtual Classroom	2	15th, 16th June

CIF QQI LEVEL 6 BUILDING REGULATIONS PROGRAMME

Legislation 1 & 2	BCC 3966/1	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	27th May
Legislation 3 & Materials/ Workmanship	BCC 3966/2	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	4th June
Part A & Part C Subsoils & Substructures 1	BCC 3966/3	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	25th June
Part A & Part C Subsoils & Substructures 1	BCC 3966/4	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	2nd July

ENVIRONMENTAL COURSES

CIF One Day Environmental Management Course	EM 4157	CIF Virtual Classroom	1	29th June
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CONTRACTING AND TENDERING COURSES

Payment Process under the Construction Contracts Act	PPCC 3967	CIF Virtual Classroom	0.5	20th May
	PPCC 4158	CIF Virtual Classroom	0.5	26th June



Japanese Knotweed Ireland Ltd.

Japanese Knotweed Ireland Ltd are one of Ireland's leading specialists in the identification, surveying and removal Invasive Alien Plants Species (IAPS). Our team of specially trained and experienced operatives provide an efficient and professional service on each and every project so you can rest assured that your IAPS problem is in the best possible hands.



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- ✓ Nationwide Service ✓ NPTC & QQI Certified Operatives
- ✓ SUD Professional Users ✓ PCA Certified Surveyors
- ✓ Construction Industry Federation Members
- ✓ National Irish Safety Organisation Members
- ✓ Comply with ISO 9001, ISO 18001 & Environment Agency Procedures



Services

- Site Assessments
- Site Specific Remediation Reports
- Risk Assessment
- GPS/GIS mapping
- Site Management
- Biosecurity

As control options we offer the following:

- Herbicide Treatment Programme
- Burial and Root Membranes
- Stockpiling / Bund Solutions
- Excavation and Off Site Removal
- Mapping and Management




Which control option is chosen is largely dependent on the clients requirements. Whilst herbicide treatment is arguably the most cost effective solution, time requirements for the likes of housing developments may not allow for a treatment program spanning a number of years. If you wish to discuss your requirements with one of Surveyors, please feel free to contact us.

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