



ceca

Working for Infrastructure
Adeiladwaith yw'n Gwaith

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 2024

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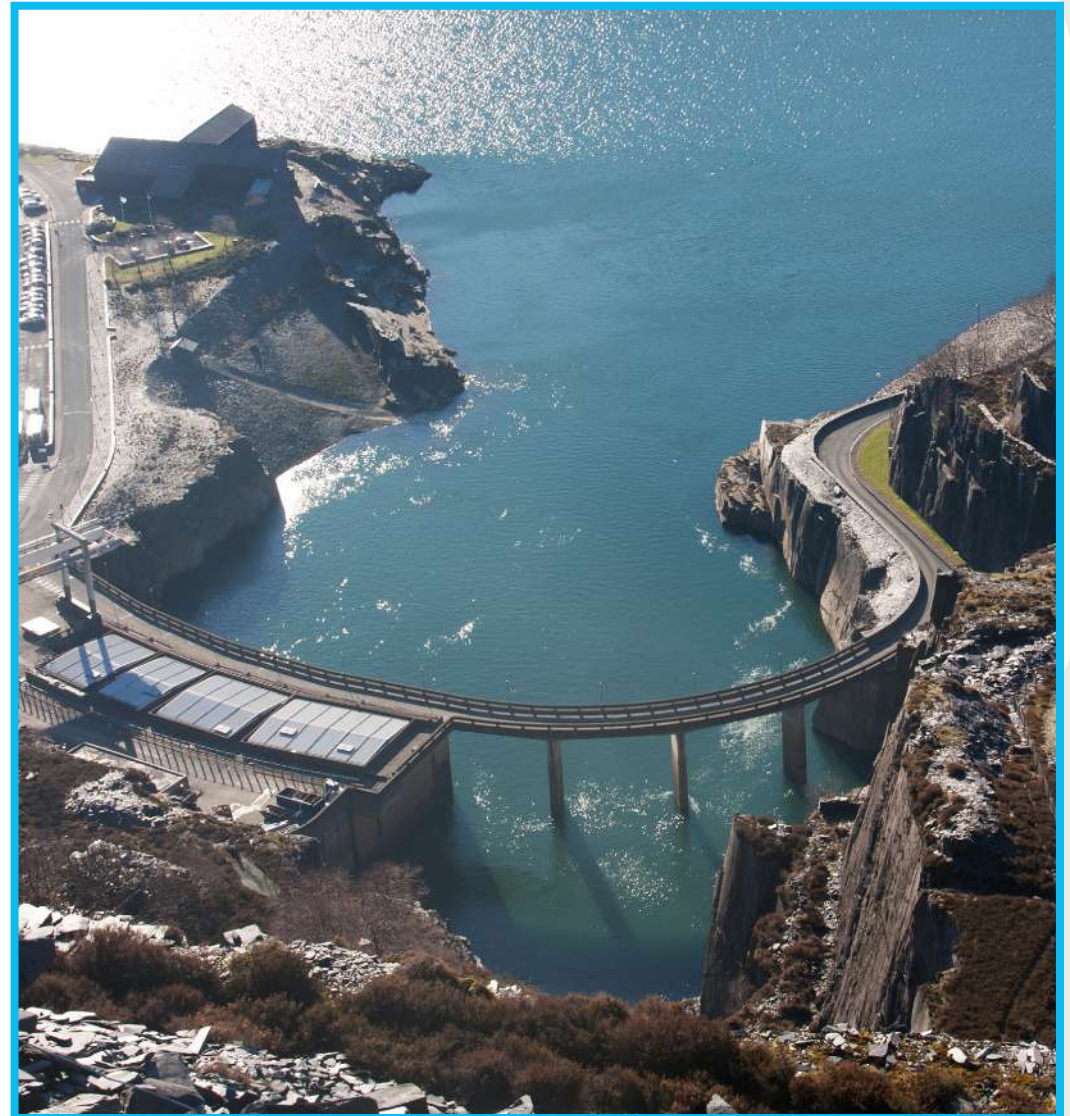
WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THIS DOCUMENT?

Every year we revisit our priorities for the forthcoming 12 months, we review what's changed in Wales and beyond and we consider what we need to do to make sure that the business environment is as good as it can be for our members. That means looking back, considering our current situation and what we need to do for the future.

This document sets out the themes and priorities that CECA Wales pursued over the last 12 months and what we achieved. It looks at what has changed over this period, what are the likely challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us and what will we do to support our members in moving forward positively.

John Griffiths: Chair, CECA Wales

Ed Evans: Director, CECA Wales



CECA WALES MEMBERSHIP



AMCO-GIFFEN



Balfour Beatty



www.ceca.co.uk/our-members

SO, WHAT DID WE DO OVER THE LAST 12 + MONTHS?

The work programmes that we set out for 2023 were based on the business environment at that time with a particular emphasis on People, Partnership, Promotion, Procurement and the need to Decarbonise our sector.

In terms of promoting, supporting and lobbying on behalf of our sector, the Welsh Construction Forum, which CECA Wales was instrumental in establishing, was re-energised with the Minister for Economy at the helm and one of its first tasks being to establish clearer programmes of work for the industry. The prospect of increased visibility of workload will give our members a better chance to plan for the future. And we've continued to use our film (<https://youtu.be/kQSfNy0vpcM>), based on the work and impact of our members, to promote the industry to politicians, policy makers and construction clients

Public sector procurement continued to be challenging but we worked closely with the Welsh Government to help shape the newly introduced **Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act** and will be monitoring its progress closely! We also used our *Delivering Greater Value* report (<https://bit.ly/3FzN0f8>), co-produced with the Association of Consulting Engineers and Wales' local highway authorities, to move ahead with a joint action plan. The reality, however, is that there are deep seated cultural and behavioural challenges which need to be addressed and these will be difficult to change. But we have to keep trying!

In terms of "People" we pursued a number of initiatives in terms of attracting more people to the sector. We worked with the Welsh Government to support the introduction of higher degree apprenticeships in construction which we hope will open the door to many who couldn't follow a traditional degree pathway for a variety of reasons. We also worked with a number of partners to address the



challenges in training civil engineering and plant operatives given the removal of Level 2 apprenticeships. There's no quick solutions but there are some exciting possibilities ahead!

We're also pleased to have re-energised our CECA Wales Foundation Group for young members and they've already delivered an exciting piece of work, in the shape of a short film, to help attract more young people to the sector. It's freely available to all members who may want to use it in their engagement with young people and you can view it here in Welsh, <https://youtu.be/Q0-JRKE2Xxc> and here in English <https://youtu.be/VYnzjisBWOw>. And, of course, our **Annual Awards 2023**, which promoted our "Most Promising" young people, proved to be a success yet again.

Our many partnerships went from strength to strength. We reinforced our relationship with the Armed Forces by signing the Covenant and establishing lines of communication between Forces leavers and our members as a source of new recruits to the sector. Unfortunately we were unable to host our Leadership Challenge due to resourcing difficulties within the Armed Forces but we'll revisit this and continue to offer opportunities for the development of our younger people.



And, last but not least, we know how important it is for us all to step up to the plate, collectively as a sector, to address the challenges of climate change. Our last two conferences had direct and indirect references to the decarbonisation of our sector and we used our conference report from 2021 as an action plan for the sector to reduce carbon (*Decarbonising Our Infrastructure, Datgarboneiddio Ein Seilwaith*). We also launched a Carbon Literacy course for our members and we've produced a guidance document for SME members seeking to reduce their carbon impacts. But there is, of course, more to do and much of it is not easy and involves some very difficult decisions.

COMMUNICATIONS & REACH



The CECA website provides a portal for member communications and CECA press statements. In 2023 CECA received **more than 150 press mentions.**



CECA Wales Director Ed Evans & CECA Wales Foundations Group are both active on LinkedIn.



Our Twitter accounts [@CECANational](#) & [@CECA_Wales](#) currently have more than **7,500 followers.**



We issued **50 Weekly Updates, 90 bespoke member communications** and **45 CECA Wales Briefings** in 2023.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?



As we move into 2024 we're fairly certain of two political changes which are likely to influence future decisions on investment in infrastructure : a UK General Election (probably) and a Welsh Government Leadership contest (definitely). We'll continue to push the case for greater investment given its importance in building for a more sustainable future.

But it won't be easy given the pressures on public and private sector funds. Nevertheless, with Government policy in Wales moving at pace towards a "net zero" future, this brings opportunities across different sectors, not least in terms of renewable energy which is why CECA Wales will be engaging heavily with developers across both onshore and offshore wind sectors and associated port infrastructure. Couple this with opportunities across the water sector, flood risk management and sustainable transport solutions and the future could be more promising than expected.

The recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce has been challenging for some time and although uncertainty over future investment levels may rebalance this slightly it is unlikely to transform the current situation. So we all need to play our part in addressing the shortfalls, utilising the new construction qualifications introduced in Wales and expanding social value opportunities across the education and skills sectors. This will need considerable effort and energy and will mean contractors having to take a higher profile in this area.

For each £1 billion increase in infrastructure investment, UK-wide GDP increases by £1.299 billion.

And then there's the commercial and procurement landscape which is changing with legislation to "transform public procurement" moving forward at a UK level and in Wales with the introduction of a Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill. However, procurement continues to be a challenging issue for contractors with inconsistency of application by clients and bureaucratic procedures reducing the value that contractors can deliver. The whole concept of "value-based procurement", incorporating social value criteria and carbon, offers opportunities to transform this challenging area but this will only happen if construction clients and their advisors, as well as contractors and consultants, embrace these opportunities. We can use our *Delivering Greater Value* report (<https://bit.ly/3FzN0f8>) as an action plan to take this forward with partners.

The importance of partnerships as a means of delivering improvement for members remains as important as ever especially as more and more of our engagement is happening online and the impact of our work with clients is being strengthened through these partnerships.

FIVE CORE 'PILLARS' FOR 2024 AND BEYOND

So, as we move into 2024, and to ensure that we have a degree of consistency across the UK, the CECA Chairs' Strategic Forum directed the CECA UK Executive Management Board to develop and focus on the following five "core pillars" :

1. "Creating Work Opportunities"
2. "Creating a Safer Workplace"
3. "Creating a Skilled Workforce"
4. "Creating a Talent Pipeline"
5. "Creating a Better Environment for All"

Whilst these "pillars" reflect much of what we've been doing at CECA Wales over the last 5 or 6 years we hope that, by articulating them in this way, it'll be easier for our members and partners to understand how we're supporting them, not just in Wales but across the UK, and also to use our collective strengths in a more impactful way.

Everything we do will be underpinned by our commitment to promote the infrastructure sector and work in partnership with others to help deliver our priorities.

If you want to know what this will mean in terms of actions on the ground for CECA Wales then read on!



CREATING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

This is all about our engagement with construction clients, developing construction related policies, supporting a pragmatic commercial environment and identifying future workload opportunities for our members.

We'll do this by :

1. promoting the value of infrastructure investment at Welsh and UK levels through a targeted communications plan with key politicians and decision makers
2. meeting key clients and politicians in a structured engagement programme to influence thinking and decision-making around infrastructure and civil engineering matters in Wales
3. establishing a clear engagement programme with construction clients across the public and private sectors followed by briefing sessions for members on work opportunities
4. working with clients to publish their 12-24 month work programmes
5. informing and influencing discussions on fair payment and retentions
6. promoting more equitable forms of risk management amongst clients
7. informing and influencing policy making by inputting to infrastructure specific Welsh and UK government reviews
8. taking a lead role on appropriate and specific industry groups
9. engaging across the sector to achieve a fairer, more balanced procurement process that recognises equitable risk transfer.



Above: Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change, and CECA Director Ed Evans launching "Infrastructure: supporting healthy & active lives"



Have a look at our *Delivering Greater Value* report which is free to download (<https://bit.ly/3FzN0f8>).

CREATING A SAFER WORKPLACE

This is all about the health, safety and wellbeing of our people and we'll support this by :

1. promoting and supporting CECA's "Stop. Make a Change" annual programme
2. promoting Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) programmes
3. inform members and influencing decision makers on health, safety and wellbeing legislation and guidance
4. Represent members' interests with clients/ client bodies to ensure Health, Safety and Wellbeing issues and initiatives are aligned and effective
5. promoting best practice and circulating current and relevant health and safety information to members including details of the 2024 CECA "Stop: Make a Change campaign"
6. Promoting initiatives and best practices to enhance physical, financial and mental health wellbeing.



CREATING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

This is all about how we support the development of skills and training across our membership. Our plan for 2024 is to:

1. Expand our existing training programme with additional modules relating to social value and carbon management
2. Continue delivering our NEC4 training and development programme for members
3. Continue delivering the CECA Wales Annual Leadership Challenge (<https://bit.ly/4cetN1q>) in the north and south of Wales
4. Work with CITB and other industry partners to develop and Infrastructure Sector Skills Plan to ensure access to focused and relevant training for members
5. Work with others to assist members to access a programme of school engagement to promote the civil engineering sector as the career of choice for school leavers.

The UK will require an extra 225,000 construction workers by 2027 - CITB Construction Skills Network



CREATING A TALENT PIPELINE

This builds upon our previous theme of “People” focusing on attracting more people to the sector and giving them clear career paths. We’ll seek to do this by :

1. **increasing our engagement with younger members through our Foundations Group**
2. **hosting the CECA Wales Annual Awards for our “most promising” young people**
3. **continuing to work with Qualifications Wales, City and Guilds and WJEC to develop and roll out the new Construction and Built Environment qualifications at GCSE, A-level and Foundation Apprentice level**
4. **increasing our engagement with schools and colleges and developing new resources, via our Foundations Group, to support the new Welsh curriculum and utilising social value opportunities wherever possible**
5. **supporting and promoting alternative pathways into the industry including routes for employing ex-offenders and ex-Forces personnel.**

Have a look at our new film produced by the CECA Wales Foundation Group which is aimed at attracting new people to our sector:

<https://youtu.be/VYnzJisBW0w>.



John Griffiths, Chair, CECA Wales, addresses the 2023 CECA Wales Dinner & Awards Ceremony



CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

This is all about increasing sustainable practices across the sector, decarbonising our operations and increasing our social value.

To do this we'll work with partners to support construction clients to increase sustainable practices and reduce the carbon footprint of infrastructure projects across Wales by implementing the Action Plan in our 2021 report on *Decarbonising Our Infrastructure / Datgarboneiddio Ein Seilwaith* which focuses on 4 key themes:

- A) **Justification** – ensuring that carbon performance is embedded in investment justification models
- B) **Procurement** – ensuring that procurement processes reflect carbon performance
- C) **Materials and technology** – ensuring that the choice of materials and technologies reflects carbon performance
- D) **Business Development** – supporting businesses towards a zero carbon future.

We'll also support members to decarbonise their operations by :

1. **providing guidance on ways to reduce their carbon footprint**
2. **improving their understanding of carbon management planning for SMEs.**

And we'll support members to deliver greater social value by :

1. **working with construction clients to develop models for better delivery of social value**
2. **working with our Foundation Group to deliver resources for members to better deliver social value at schools and colleges**
3. **using our training programme to share good practices across our membership.**





REGIONS & DEVOLVED NATIONS

CECA members are supported by a network of six regional offices across England, a national office in Westminster, and offices in the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales.

CECA's regions and devolved nations are:

- CECA **Scotland**
- CECA **North West**
- CECA **North East**
- CECA **Yorkshire & The Humber**
- CECA **Wales**
- CECA **Midlands**
- CECA **Southern**
- CECA **South West**





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