

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS GROUP 2019 PROGRAMME

Role of the Group

Many of ACE's member firms work internationally, underlining the significant reputation of UK consultancy and engineering firms for providing world-class consultancy services to clients across the globe. In order to keep abreast of international issues and to assist members working overseas, ACE formed the International Business Group. This Group, which is responsible for the development of ACE's international strategy and initiatives, meets four times a year.

The Group's main objectives are to:

- Engage with key international associations
- Direct ACE's dealings with international groupings including FIDIC
- Maintain dialogue with key international funding agencies
- Influence the international procurement process
- Raise ACE members' profile in the international arena

2019 Priorities

Next year is likely to be a turbulent year in international markets not least because of the continued uncertainty around the UK's place on the world stage as a result of Brexit but also because of the impending global economic downturn and volatile US/China Trade discussions. There will be plenty for us to be monitoring and adapting our approach to in order to keep the IBG programme relevant. In addition, the continued Government focus on overseas aid spending on infrastructure and the wider export ambitions of the DIT and BEIS through the construction sector deal mean there is plenty of opportunity and interest for us to influence the agenda.

The specific questions we should be addressing within these priorities are as follows: -

1. Influencing the UK Infrastructure Export Strategy & Government funding overseas

The aim of this workstream is to develop better coherence on the export ambitions and routes to market across UK consultancy alongside utilising our influence to improve how the UK Government commits to spending overseas on infrastructure.

Specific activities we will work on include: -

- As part of the Future of Consultancy Campaign the IBG will oversee a research package which will model the size of the export markets open to UK consultancy firms this work will deliver a simple export strategy for UK consultancies setting out which markets we should be targeting through the lens of size and ease of doing business.
- Actively engage through ACE with UK Infrastructure Exports within DIT, Transport for London's International Consultancy and Crossrail International to better understand their ambition and how we can work with them to benefit UK firms wishing to export
- Engaging DFID and FCO in order to influence how they prioritise, commission and deliver overseas infrastructure with UK firms

2. Developing networks and capability for firms who wish to work overseas

The aim of this workstream is to use the expertise of the IBG and our networks to develop the capability and partnerships across UK consultancy firms to work overseas.

Specific activities we will work on include: -

- Develop a series of guidance notes offering advice and support to firms wishing to work overseas. These will be collated into the Business Development Handbook published in November as part of the wider Future of Consultancy Campaign
- Hosting a webinar for the wider membership discussing the opportunities and experiences of consultancies working overseas including what support is available to you (supported by the affiliates)
- Run the IBG quarterly meetings with a strong speaker line up and share their content online afterwards
- IBG 'networking' reception? Joint event with British Expertise with the aim of introducing and developing the networks of firms who may wish to team up to work overseas.
- Support of the establishment of the Middle East Group?

3. Influencing international procurement and contract law

The aim of this workstream is to give ACE members access to the training, capability development and lobby activities of the umbrella bodies who can influence international contract and procurement law in addition to their links with the multilateral funders such as the world bank.

Specific activities we will work on include: -

- Working EFCA to develop and agree on a future EFCA and ACE relationship focused on accessing and influencing European markets along with networking with European firms for future business opportunities together.
- Working with FIDIC under its new leadership to develop and agree the future relationship giving ACE members better access and understanding of the capability develop opportunities FIDIC offers when working overseas.