

MANIFESTO 2023



Delivering a safe, innovative, resilient and globally competitive built environment sector in Scotland.

Foreword CEO

Following the launch of ACE's three-year Blueprint and publication our UK Manifesto, I am pleased to introduce ACE's Manifesto for Scotland, outlining the Built Environment sector's policy aspirations for 2023 and beyond.

ACE Scotland comprises dedicated engineers and consultants who work tirelessly to improve the built environment across Scotland and beyond. From cutting-edge renewable energy projects to innovative transport solutions, our work is shaping the future of this vital sector and making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

The Built Environment sector in Scotland is undergoing a period of rapid change and transformation, with new opportunities and challenges emerging every day. As we navigate this complex landscape, it is important that we remain focused on our core values of sustainability, innovation, and collaboration. It is only by embracing these values and working closely with our clients, partners, and stakeholders, can we unlock the full potential of the sector and create a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

This manifesto sets out our asks of policy makers in Scotland. A recipe for success made from the core ingredients of excellence, innovation, and social responsibility. By prioritising the needs of our communities and embracing new technologies and approaches, we can build a better, more equitable world for generations to come.

As the business association for the Built Environment sector, we will continue to champion the impact of our members' work and ensure all political voices understand that our sector is pivotal to unlocking economic growth, creating jobs, and nurturing opportunity for all.

ACE Scotland looks forward to working with you to make this happen.



Stephen Marcos Jones
CEO



Foreword ACE Chair



Scotland's unique geography and resources provide a wealth of opportunities for the built environment sector to lead the way in tackling the urgent challenges of our time. With ambitious plans to pioneer the transition to net zero, become a world leader in renewable energy, and drive forward crucial transport improvements.

Scotland has set the stage for a sustainable and prosperous future. However, to achieve these goals, it is vital that the industry thrives and that ACE members are at the forefront of this transformation.

As the voice of the built environment sector, the ACE Scotland Manifesto lays out a clear path forward, providing realistic solutions and proactive steps to overcome the challenges and unlock the full potential of the industry. By focusing on areas such as innovation, sustainability, and collaboration, we can drive positive change and deliver long-lasting benefits for Scottish communities.

At the heart of this manifesto is a commitment to working closely with policymakers in the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to turn our ideas into reality. By building strong partnerships and driving effective action, we can make a meaningful difference in shaping the future of the built environment sector in Scotland.

I am proud to be part of this dynamic and forward-thinking community of professionals, and I look forward to working together to build a brighter, more sustainable future for Scotland and beyond.

Sarah Peterson

Sarah Peterson,
Chair, ACE Scotland

Introduction

The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) champions infrastructure and the built environment to government, industry and other stakeholders.

Our members employ over 60,000 in UK and 250,000 worldwide, contributing more than £15 billion to the UK economy. However, the buildings and structures they deliver actively contribute over £570 billion a year of GVA. Our members operate right across Scotland and contribute significantly to the Scottish economy.

Our **2023 Scotland Manifesto** provides a foundation for working with the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, and others for ACE to deliver a safe, innovative, resilient and globally competitive Scottish built environment sector on behalf of its members – against a backdrop of economic uncertainty.

Whether building a diverse and inclusive workforce, delivering social value, improving procurement practices, rethinking risk, or encouraging new technology and innovation, this Manifesto provides realistic recommendations, and an overarching ambition for greater collaboration to achieve these goals.

These are increasingly turbulent political and economic times, yet all recent administrations have committed to supporting infrastructure delivery. This Manifesto provides a basis for the current and future administration to support the sector in unlocking the potential in Scottish transport, energy, flood resilience, water, waste, and digital networks.

Innovation, people and social value

If we are to grow and transition our economy, innovation will play a critical part in making that happen. However, the current reality is of a fragmented and inconsistent approach to innovation, increasing challenges over IP, cost, awareness and adoption. We must also recognise that the international market poses both an opportunity and a risk to the sector right across Scotland.

Our manifesto recommendations aim to drive best practice in innovation, and ensure that the Scottish Government plays an active role in creating the conditions to support the sector to be a strong player in an internationally competitive marketplace.



The built environment is not alone with challenges around **people and skills**. We know of the recruitment and retention challenges, the lack of sector-specific data, and inconsistent workplace cultures. Recommendations from across our Scotland Committee are aimed at ensuring government can support the delivery of a reliable and diverse talent pool to serve both the immediate and future needs of our industry.

At the heart of all our members' projects is the positive impact it has on local communities in all parts of Scotland. We also know that **social value** can be an ambiguous concept – difficult to measure, and there continues to be low community engagement in too many areas.

At this current moment in time, many public and private procurement opportunities are focused on price rather than value. Our members in Scotland have supported the development of practical solutions as part of this Manifesto, agreeing to develop a set of metrics, language and approaches which will deliver social value.

Finally, to deliver any project, **excellence** and **risk** need to be carefully considered as part of the procurement process. In practice, quality tends to be measured by cost rather than value.

It is also difficult for new companies to attain recognition on the project frameworks of major clients, and the perception of risk has not evolved with the current industry reality – leading to a disproportionate burden on companies. Some of the practical solutions outlined in this Manifesto will ensure continuous quality improvements across the supply chain, support procurement activities, and promote a competitive market.

Recommendations in this Manifesto have been formulated **following discussions at the ACE Scotland Committee**. The Committee feeds into the delivery of ACE's three-year Blueprint and ACE will be working with the Scottish Government and other policymakers to make the ambitions in this Manifesto a reality. In a noisy policymaking and political space, it will ensure we have a distinct voice in debates around Net Zero, regional development and levelling up, and skills.



People

A reliable and diverse talent pool to serve the future needs of our industry.



Social value

A common language and approach to delivering social value across the sector which understands and meets the needs of communities.



Excellence

Continuous quality improvement across the supply chain supporting procurement activities and promoting a competitive market.



Risk

A transparent, fair and proportionate appraisal of risk that supports and drives the use and uptake of standard tools.



Innovation

The right conditions to support the UK sector to be a stronger player in an internationally competitive market for new technology.



Association

A relevant, resilient and sustainable business association dedicated to serving its members regionally, nationally and internationally.

Blueprint (2022-2025)

[Click here to view the ACE's Blueprint.](#)





Innovation

Current reality

- A fragmented and inconsistent approach to innovation
- Challenges over IP, cost, awareness and adoption.
- International market a risk.

2025 Ambition

The right conditions to support the Scottish sector to be a stronger player in an internationally competitive market for new technology.

Challenge

Innovation is key to unlocking new methods and technologies in the sector and should form a key part of any innovation strategy in Scottish. There are a variety of challenges with a lack of clarity and confidence in relation to policy and accessibility to funding, to problems with having the physical space to test innovation. It is often not rewarded sufficiently and is more challenging for SMEs, in particular. Contractual issues can stifle innovation and there are ongoing issues around intellectual property

To ensure the Scottish sector is promoted on the UK and global stage the Scottish Government should encourage collaboration and further the confidence and ability to innovate through physical space and fair procurement systems that favour innovation.

As a sector we need to be bold with clients to encourage innovation which will deliver better outcomes. We will need to work with our clients to “rebase” their appetite and perception of risk. Procurement is key to unlocking opportunities for innovative solutions to enter the market. Our industry has the solutions needed to many challenges faced by clients and the wider economy, but to do this we need to ensure adoption of standard tools and approaches such as the Construction Playbook.

Recommendation 1: Remain flexible in policy measures and strategies to include new technologies and modern methods such as digitalisation and carbon-reduction technology.

Recommendation 2: Drive forward collaborative research and development partnerships, allowing for demonstrator projects or even pre-project simulations to allow businesses a safe space to experiment and test their innovations.

Recommendation 2: Simplify the application process for decarbonisation funding to make it as accessible as possible and encourage all organisations to get involved irrespective of time and knowledge constraints.



Excellence

Current reality

- Quality measurement tends to be eclipsed by cost rather than value.
- Difficult for new companies to attain recognition on project frameworks of major clients.

2025 Ambition

Continuous quality improvement across the supply chain supporting procurement activities and promoting a competitive market.

Challenge

Whilst excellence underpins everything we do in the sector, the appetite for excellence is curtailed by commissioners' perception of, and appetite for, risk. Overcomplicated tendering processes and the increasing complexity of forms for large-scale, vital projects can often lead to unnecessarily prolonged timescales.

Overcomplicated tendering processes and the increasing complexity of forms for large-scale, vital projects can often lead to unnecessarily prolonged timescales. Collaboration during the procurement process could be improved as well as the fee levels to assist in avoiding a 'race to the bottom' and make sure value is put ahead of low cost.

The Construction Playbook, developed by industry with the UK Government, provides the Scottish Government with an opportunity to drive up standards in the development of places. The sector needs common language, metrics and understanding of excellence, both in terms of project delivery and diversity of its workforce.

Recommendation 1: Publishing a clear pipeline of infrastructure projects to provide clarity for the industry in relation to future planning and the delivery of infrastructure.

Recommendation 2: Look to simplifying the tendering process, specifically the over complex forms that must be completed in relation to larger frameworks.

Recommendation 3: Utilise collaborative and partnering arrangements during the procurement process to benefit Government, ACE members and the supply chain.

Recommendation 4: Receive a fair and sustainable level of fees across the profession, that continues to deliver value for money, via tender processes that avoid negative pricing strategies.



Social Value

Current reality

- Social value is an ambiguous concept, and difficult to measure.
- Low community engagement continues.
- Focus still on price vs. value.

2025 Ambition

An agreed set of metrics, language, and approaches to delivering social value across the sector.

Challenge

The understanding amongst the client base varies with regards to social value. Producing a consistency of language and a commonly agreed set of metrics for measurement of social value outcomes will be key to solving this issue.

Procurement in Scotland is good and workable; however, some authorities and clients still prioritise lower cost over value. In response, many parts of the industry in Scotland are using the Value Toolkit to ensure better decision-making and influence pre-planning on projects. There is certainly a need to use similar tools to ensure climate-resilient approaches. The higher climate change and sustainable approaches are on the Government's agenda, the more likely this is to be mirrored across the wider industry and private sectors.

With recent infrastructure projects in Scotland, there has been a challenge between communicating the overall benefits and taking into consideration the concerns of wider communities. Enhancing and improving an asset further increases its value to society, and work around social value is crucial to delivering this.

Recommendation 1: Promote the use and wider adoption of the Value Toolkit.

Recommendation 2: Retain a clear position on social value and the direction of this to enable a cohesive approach to evidence this weighing up the best model to use.



People

Current reality

- Severe challenges in recruitment and retention.
- A lack of sector-specific data.
- Inconsistent workplace cultures.

2025 Ambition

A reliable and diverse talent pool to serve the future needs of our industry.

Challenge

There is an ongoing challenge when it comes to funding the skills to meet the needs of the green transition in Scotland, whether this is in hiring experienced staff, encouraging the next generation, or retaining current expertise. Despite the demand for jobs in emerging 'green sectors' being higher than in any other part of the UK, challenges remain. As a high priority for the industry, we should be capitalising on the "move to green" to attract new people to our industry. There is also a need to up skill and spread knowledge on more general sustainability objectives.

Skills are a crucial driver to bridge regional economic disparities. More plans are needed to increase local provision, such as training courses and apprenticeships. The lack of engineering and consultancy skills is particularly difficult for those working in local government affecting medium to long-term planning decisions.

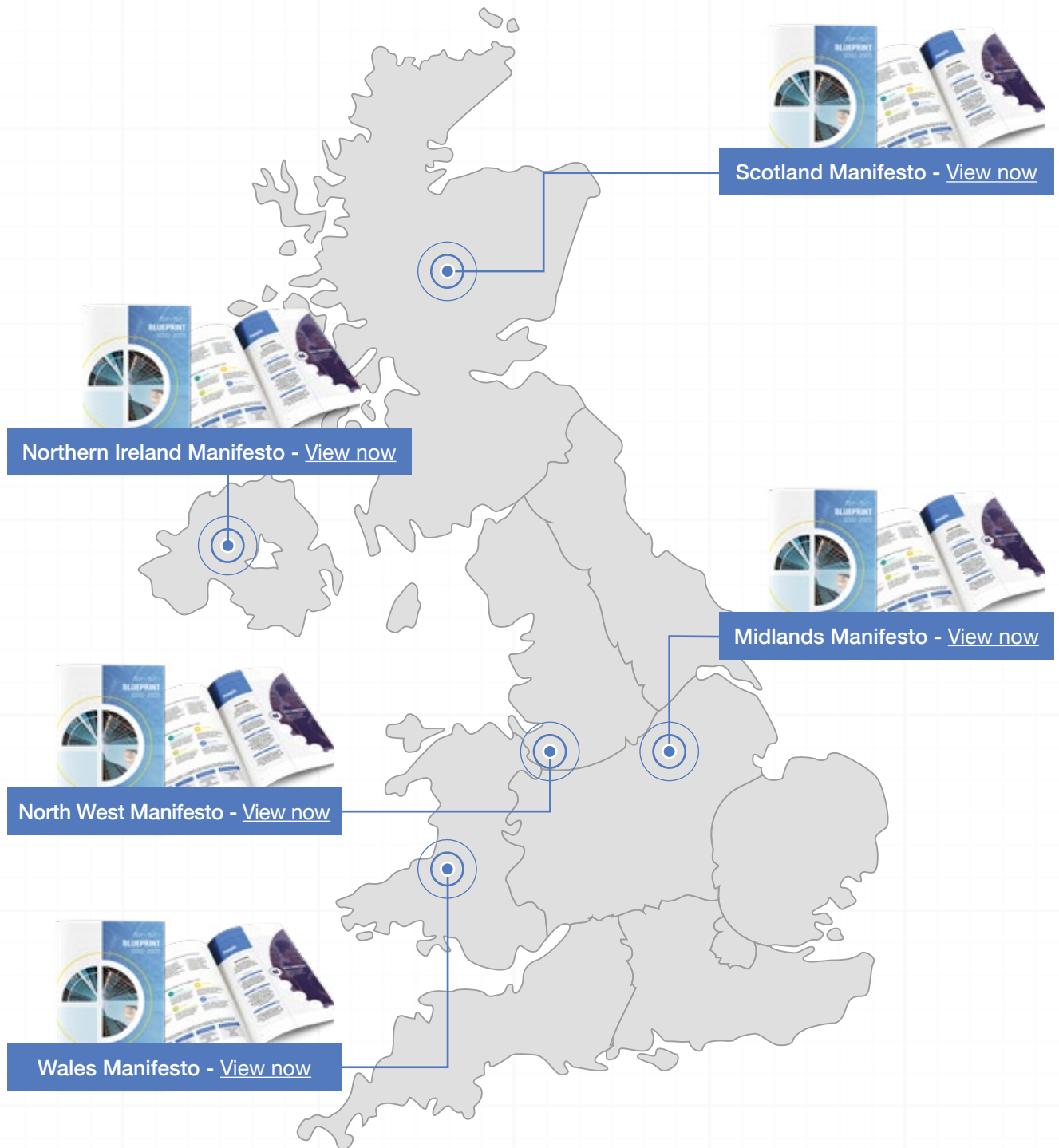
Recommendation 1: Promote a joined-up approach to People and Skills in relation to a Just Transition and meeting Net Zero.

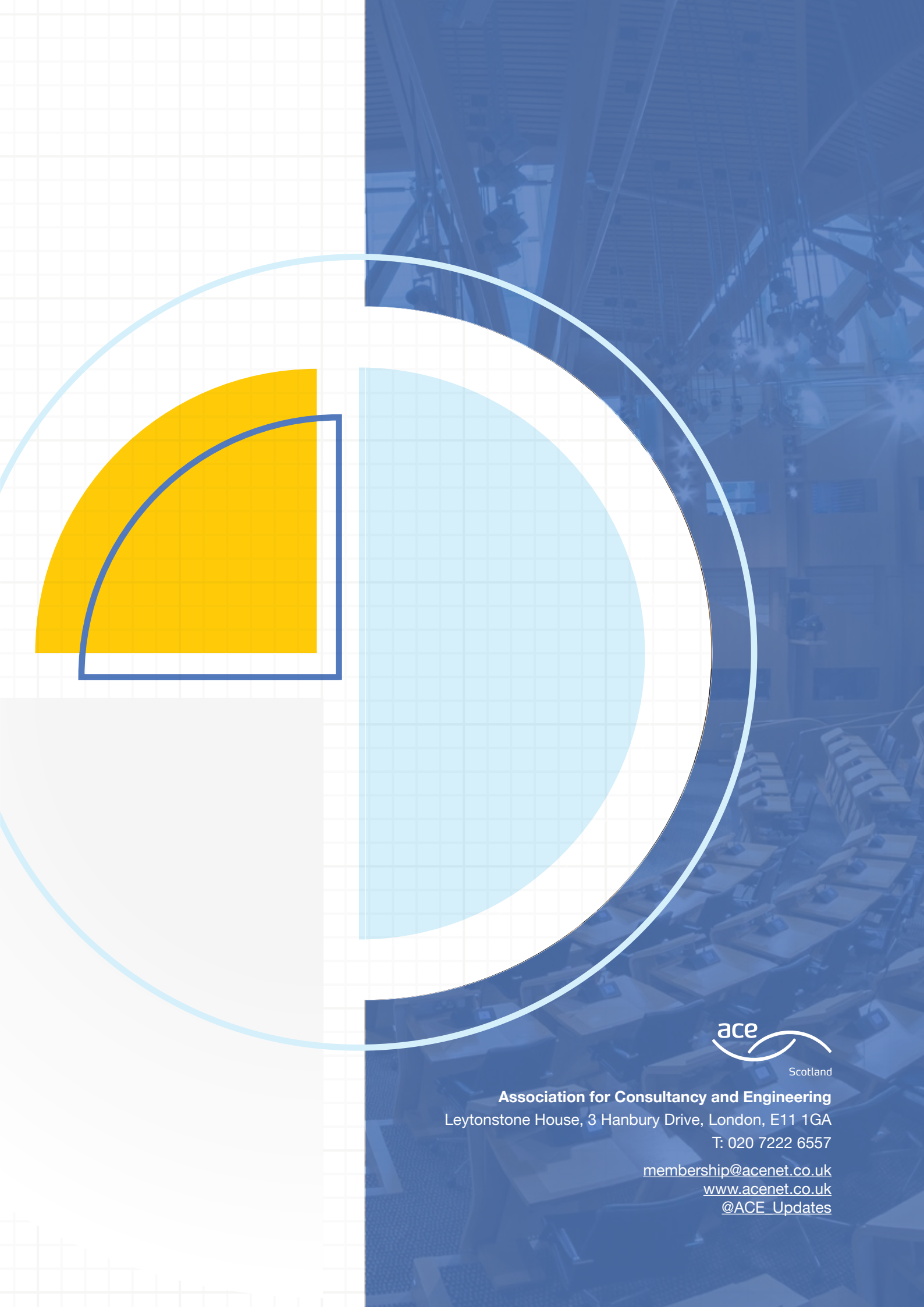
Recommendation 2: Ensure that Skills Development Scotland works efficiently to its Strategic Plan 'Skills for a Changing World' to enhance industry-focused skills and drive productivity.

ACE Policy

The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) is a UK professional organisation that advocates for the interests of consulting and engineering companies. As part of its advocacy efforts, the ACE has published a series of manifestos across the UK that promote the importance of investing in infrastructure to improve the economy.

These manifestos typically include recommendations for policymakers and analysis of trends and challenges in the infrastructure sector. To coincide with this manifesto, ACE has published a [UK-wide manifesto](#).





Association for Consultancy and Engineering
Leytonstone House, 3 Hanbury Drive, London, E11 1GA

T: 020 7222 6557

membership@acenet.co.uk

www.acenet.co.uk

[@ACE_Updates](#)