

CONFERENCE



Global Construction & Infrastructure

Reimagining construction and infrastructure: embracing transformation and embedding sustainable practice

23 June 2026



Type of event

Online



CPD Hours

6.5
Formal



Included in

CPD Support Package

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The construction and infrastructure sector stands at a critical juncture. COP30 designated the transition towards climate-resilient development a “political and market signal that can’t be ignored”. Built environment professionals have an important role to play in reducing global emissions and strengthening strained infrastructure, yet the RICS’ 2025 Sustainability Report revealed a slowdown in the adoption of sustainable approaches and carbon measuring. At the same time, the impact of AI, inflation, urbanisation, supply chain disruption, and skills shortages are creating further challenges for construction professionals – as well as opportunities for transformative change.

At the Global Construction and Infrastructure Conference, you’ll explore the key forces and trends at play within markets worldwide that must be tackled to prepare the sector for the future. Featuring a line-up of keynotes, panel discussions, and in-depth spotlight sessions from leading experts, this year’s programme covers topics such as circular construction, green investment, bio-based materials, geothermal energy, smart assets, and AI best practice.

This is your opportunity to hear transformative debates from industry thought leaders, to deepen your understanding of the pressing challenges facing the sector, and to gain the lessons, tools, and knowledge needed to embrace new technologies, embed sustainable practice, and navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing industry.

Programme



APAC
23 Jun 26



EMEA
23 Jun 26

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Registration and virtual networking

Welcome remarks from RICS and the morning Conference Chair

Speaker: **Nick Maclean OBE, RD, FRICS**, President and Chair of Governing Council, RICS

Chair: **Tom Bell FRICS**, Partner, Quantem Consulting

Opening keynote: Global construction and infrastructure - outlooks, opportunities and challenges

This keynote presentation will help you to understand the state of play for construction and infrastructure in 2026. It offers a forward-looking forecast of the key trends and developments that will need to be navigated over the next 5 years. Hear about:

- Changing markets, such as the pivot to constructing mission-critical data centre and energy assets.
- The impact of global policy and political upheaval on construction activity and sustainable development.
- Technological advances within construction, costs and productivity, and risks to sector outlook.
- How the construction and infrastructure sector can plot a path forward.

Speaker: **Dr Nicholas Fearnley**, Director and Head of Global Construction Forecasting, Oxford Economics

Virtual networking and exhibition break

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Panel: The infrastructure investment gap - a global overview

It's been estimated that a minimum yearly infrastructure investment of \$3.7 trillion is needed to rapidly reduce emissions, support urbanization, and strengthen the resilience of cities. Whilst some markets are experiencing a construction boom, for others bridging this financial shortfall will be essential to ensuring future-proofed, fit-for-purpose infrastructure. In this economics-focussed session, a panel of experts will:

- Provide a comparative picture of infrastructure investment & urban development.
- Discuss the emerging global markets undergoing a construction boom, where financing is currently flowing (and where it is not), and what the barriers are to unlocking capital and closing the investment gap.
- Share how cities can leverage sustainable investment opportunities and labour market factors and reflect on what this all means for the sector in the future.

Moderator: **Karen Ching MRICS MCMi ChMC**, Global Client Development Program Director, AtkinsRealis. Speakers: **Holly Davis MRICS**, Major Projects Advisory, KPMG; **Laeq Hassan FRICS**, Chair of RICS KSA Board; **Steve Lewis MRICS**, Partner & Hong Kong Leader - Infrastructure, Capital Projects & Construction Advisory, Ernst & Young Transactions Limited

LionHeart session with CEO Phil Sparke, networking and exhibition break

Panel: The future workforce - addressing the labour & skills gap challenge

A shortage of labour and skills remains one of the most pressing challenges facing construction on an international level. In this session, a global panel look at how the industry can improve career visibility for young people, build a new talent pipeline, upskill existing professionals, and take advantage of digital transformation.

They'll consider: How can we improve the diversity of the profession, remove barriers to entry, and close the demographic gap? Where will we find talent in the future and do we need new pathways to entry? What is the story we tell about careers in construction and infrastructure around the world? What opportunities lie in technology and new roles, and how can we create a resilient profession that holds the skills of the future?

Moderator: **Alison Watson MBE**, Founder and CEO, Class of Your Own. Speakers: **Lauren Lemcke MRICS**, Senior Project Surveyor, AECOM; **Sarah Hayford**, CEO, The Land Collective; **Dr Eugene Seah FRICS**, CEO, DLS Consultancy Pte Ltd

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Virtual networking and exhibition break

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Panel: Beyond net zero - regenerative design, living buildings & bio-based materials

Can the construction of new developments restore the balance between the natural and built environments and have a positive impact on the planet?

This case study-oriented session will spotlight the concept of regenerative design and the innovative bio-based materials that are changing the ways we approach net zero, aiding the capture of embodied carbon, and benefiting both the environment and the users of buildings and infrastructure. Panellists will share exciting real-life examples and transformative learnings on:

- How regenerative design and green materials can move from an ambitious idea to common practice.
- The growing demand for mass timber construction and CLT and the ways engineered wood usage is being scaled for larger projects.
- Navigating the supply chain and cost challenges involved in procuring and using bio-based materials.
- What steps you can take to influence clients, combat hesitancy, and align longer-term benefits with investment opportunities.

Moderator: **Dr Tim Foreman**, Associate Teaching Professor, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. Speakers: **Joe Giddings**, European Networks Lead, Built by Nature; **Elina Kalliala**, Sustainability Director, Transport, Ramboll; **Juliana Renn**, Head of Sustainability, HLM Architects

15:00

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Virtual networking and exhibition break

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Panel: Circular construction and supply chain challenges - recycling, urban mining and challenging demolition

Circular economy concepts continue to grow in popularity as a sustainable solution to supply chain disruption and resource scarcity. Developers are establishing ambitious 'Zero Waste to Landfill' goals whilst some major cities are setting deadlines for achieving full circularity. Join our expert global panel for a look at the latest approaches within circular construction and procurement, their challenges and benefits, and what action needs to be taken for long term, systemic change.

- Designing for disassembly and reuse: How can the default of demolition and disposal be challenged and what opportunities does end of a building's life hold.
- Comparative global attitudes: What barriers and regulations might affect scaled rollouts of reuse and what lessons can be taken from existing circular initiatives.
- Innovations in recycling and reuse: What tools can be utilised in identifying, sourcing, costing, and maximising opportunities for reuse.
- Urban mining: How can we unlock the resources that are held within our cities to create a further source of recovery and reuse.

Moderator: **Aythian Lewes MRICS**, Director, EALA Impacts CIC. Speakers: **Carolina Montano Owen**, Technical Lead of Sustainable Buildings, WorldGBC; **Jelle Buikema**, Project Manager, C-Creators; **Debbie Ward**, Director - Reuse & Circular Economy, The Alliance for Sustainable Building Products; **Dr Ali Al Jassim**, President of Circular Cities Network and Chairman of The Society of Sustainability & Green Materials

16:05

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Virtual networking, exhibition break and Americas region registration

16:35

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Welcome remarks from afternoon Conference Chair

Chair: **Michael Hardman MRICS**, Vice President - Turner and Townsend, Chair of the RICS Americas World Regional Board

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Spotlight: The future of smart assets - digital twins & building connectivity

Join this session for an engaging look at how digital twins and IoT technologies can be applied to optimise building design, enhance management and operation and create smart ecosystems.

- What are the implications of smart assets for the built environment and sustainability, and how can they reduce costs, waste and carbon emissions, and benefit users?
- What is the potential for scaling up digital twins across major infrastructure and transport systems?
- How can the technology support decision-making and investments – and what challenges do they pose around data transparency and trust?
- What lessons can be taken from real life usage cases and success stories.

Speakers: **Dr Bola Abisogun OBE FRICS**, Founder & CEO, AI-QS and Founder & President, Digital Twin Skills Academy CIC; **Mark Coates**, Vice President of Infrastructure Policy Advancement,

Virtual networking and exhibition break

Panel: The energy transition - geothermal infrastructure & heat networks

Could unlocking the untapped potential of geothermal power hold the answer to decarbonising global electricity and heat systems? Geothermal resources are available everywhere in the world and could pose a sustainable and controllable source of power for commercial, industrial and urban networks - yet despite growing interest and investment, usage levels remain comparably low. In this enlightening discussion, hear:

- Why geothermal energy has lagged behind other renewables in much of the world, and what role new infrastructure might play in the ongoing energy transition.
- How geothermal technology can be scaled up, and what opportunities or blueprints for the future lie in established supply chains, existing expertise & waste heat.
- Diverse case examples of domestic heat networks, data centre plants, successful collaboration and the repurposing of fossil fuel sites.
- What debates & barriers are impacting the growth of networks in new markets, including: cost, labour & concerns around environmental impact & site longevity.

Moderator: **Roger Esson MRICS**, Regional Market Director - North, RICS. Speakers: **Dr Charlotte Adams**, CEO, National Geothermal Centre; **Dr Will Pettitt**, Global Lead, Geothermal, Baker Hughes

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Virtual networking and exhibition break

Spotlight: Putting AI into practice - compliance, value and application

As AI becomes more widely adopted and integrated into processes, AI literacy is an important skill that can help futureproof the profession, enhance decision-making and data management, and allow companies of all sizes to gain a competitive advantage. Join this enlightening session for a look at how to implement AI tools in practice and make the most of what this rapidly changing technology has to offer:

- Navigating regulations: Advice on how to comply with professional, national and international AI rules and standards to ensure correct usage and ethical innovation.
- Challenges and constraints: Managing client expectations around AI efficiencies, tackling trust around data, the importance of avoiding a 'race to the bottom' and ensuring the AI adds positive value to individuals, partners and the profession.
- Practical tips and demos: A show-and-tell of uses and tools that can be taken away and applied to your practice today.
- Practice cases: Hear real-life examples of how AI tools have been integrated into project and building lifecycles.

Speaker: **James Garner FRICS**, Head of AI and Data, Gleeds and **Matthew Jackson**, Director of Global Product Marketing, RIB Software

Virtual networking and exhibition break

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Virtual networking and exhibition break

Closing keynote: Combatting the sustainability slowdown - accelerating carbon measurement, resilient infrastructure and green development

The RICS 2025 Sustainability Report revealed a lessened demand for sustainable buildings, a lack of progress in carbon measurement and a widening gap between climate commitments and practice. This presentation offers a forward-looking perspective on why we are seeing a slowdown, the blocks to sustainable investment and how the industry can act to promote decarbonisation, encourage the adoption of sustainable processes and accelerate green transformation, including:

- Policy and regulations: Green legislation reform and the importance of green building certification.
- Green finance and investment: The appetite for green financing and borrowing, and how the industry can demonstrate long-term economic benefits to clients and investors.
- Resilient infrastructure: Tapping into adaptation finance, ESG goals and structuring projects that attract investment.
- Skills and knowledge gaps: How the can sector build more capacity for sustainability work and embed approaches into professional practice.
- Action: Ideas for high-level activities to speed up the sustainable transformation of the construction industry.

Speaker: **Mina Hasman**, Sustainability Director & Climate Action Lead, SOM

Conference closing remarks

End of conference

Delivering confidence

We are RICS. Everything we do is designed to effect positive change in the built and natural environments. Through our respected global standards, leading professional progression and our trusted data and insight, we promote and enforce the highest professional standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others provides a foundation for confident markets, pioneers better places to live and work and is a force for positive social impact.

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