

15. Institution of Structural Engineers

15.1 Aims and policies

The Institution of Structural Engineers is a medium-sized professional body with over 28,000 members. [1] The society dates back to 1908 with the foundation of The Concrete Institute. The organisation later broadened its scope to cover all areas of structural engineering. [2]

Statement of purpose and values

The objectives, aims and values of the institution are given in its annual reports and/or on its website. These are as follows.

- Objectives
 - *“To promote the advancement of structural engineering, and*
 - *To facilitate the exchange of information and ideas relating to structural engineering.”* [3]

- Aims
 - “The Institution’s aim is to accredit and support a corps of highly qualified structural engineers for the safe, sustainable, effective and efficient design, construction, adaptation, maintenance and refurbishment of buildings, bridges and other structures throughout the world.”* [3]

- Values
 - “Professional standards*
We endeavour to ensure that our members are highly skilled and work to the highest level by maintaining a commitment to professional standards within structural engineering. We strive for continued technical excellence; advancing safety and innovation across the built environment.”
 - “Celebrating excellence*
It is our goal to celebrate and reward the most talented structural designers in the field. We promote greater understanding of the structural engineering profession by sharing the achievements and milestones of the industry with the public – creating an immediate and lasting impression of how structural engineers shape the environment.”
 - “Sustainability*
The Institution leads best practice on the key issues facing the structural engineering industry.
We aspire to create and promote sustainable solutions that can be used in practice in the built environment – supporting structural engineers as they protect, influence and advance environmental development responsibly.” [4]

Environmental policy

As stated above, sustainability is listed as one of the institution’s main values. Oversight of this issue is provided by a Sustainability Panel which publishes a range of briefing notes and other material to guide members in their professional work. [5] The briefing notes cover

numerous issues including carbon impact assessment, green roofs, responsible sourcing of building materials, and sustainable homes.

15.2 Investments

Size and location of funds

According to a recent annual report, the Institution of Structural Engineers did not hold any investments of relevance to this study. [3]

General investment policy

The institution's investment policy was stated in a recent annual report [3] as follows.

"In order to optimize the return on the Institution's funds, when appropriate, investments are made taking account of the projected availability, in terms of both time and quantum, of the funds to be invested. To ensure that cash is always available to meet specific needs, the Resources Committee uses cash flow projections and forecast planning. Funds would be invested, as deemed appropriate by the Resources Committee, in low-risk investments with no specific exclusions."

Ethical investment policy

The institution does not have an ethical investment policy. We were told, in correspondence with the organisation, that this is "because outside of its current and deposit banking arrangements, it is not in a position to commit funding for investment purposes." [6]

15.3 School education programmes

The Institution of Structural Engineers has a number of education resources. Many of these involve external organisations. The organisations listed as having worked in conjunction with the institution are: Educational Trust;^a Expedition Engineering; Jacobs Babbie; Arup; Bartlett Kendall Associates; University of Cambridge; and Scale Rule. [7] The institution also partners with Tomorrow's Engineers.^b

15.4 Events and sponsorship

The institution organises numerous events and conferences each year, but only a small number receive sponsorship. [8] We carried out a brief survey of sponsored events listed on the organisation's website in mid-2017 and the results are shown in table 15.1. We found that none of the institution's event sponsors were part of the arms or fossil fuel sectors.

^a The Education Trust (full name being 'The Institution of Structural Engineers Educational Trust'), while technically a separate charity, is very closely connected to the Institution of Structural Engineers.

^b Tomorrow's Engineers is run by EngineeringUK and receives significant funding from the fossil fuel industry – see appendix 7.

<i>Event</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Young Engineers' Conference	Oasys [8]
Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation	Kingspan [8]
'The Built Environment and the Future of Academic Skills in Higher Education'	Oasys [8]
Young Researchers' Conference 2017	TRADA, IABSE, Ramboll, Elsevier, Oasys [8]
The Structural Awards 2017	The Telegraph ^c , Beale & Company, CADS, Conrad Consulting, Energi People, Griffiths & Armour, J&D Pierce, Mapei, Oasys, Randstad, RedrUK, Tarmac, Trimble, Warners [9]

Table 15.1 – Sponsors of events organised by the Institution of Structural Engineering

15.5 Corporate membership

The Institution of Structural Engineers does not appear to offer corporate membership.

15.6 Other corporate links

The institution produces a number of publications, some of which feature advertising. We were unable to access any of them to survey during our study.

15.7 Overall assessment

Reviewing the information in this case study, we have given The Institution of Structural Engineers the assessment as shown in tables 15.2a and b.

	<i>Investments</i>	<i>School education programmes</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Other</i>
Involvement with arms corporations	None	None	None	-
Involvement with fossil fuel corporations	None	None	None	-

Table 15.2a – Corporate involvement ratings for The Institution of Structural Engineers

	<i>Ethical issues covered in this study</i>
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial links with arms industry • No direct financial links with fossil fuel industry • Extensive environmental policies and practices • No investments
Negatives	-

Table 15.2b – Positives and negatives for The Institution of Structural Engineers

^c Listed as 'event partner' rather than sponsor

The information publicly published by the institution was adequate to establish that it had no direct financial involvement with the arms and fossil fuel industries. Its annual accounts also revealed that it held no investments. Unfortunately, we could find only limited financial information about the level of corporate funding of its school education programmes or events. We found one indirect financial link with the fossil fuel industry – through the organisation’s partnership with Tomorrow’s Engineers.

The institution included environmental sustainability as one of its core values, with oversight of this carried out by a dedicated panel, which produced briefing notes and other materials for members. While the organisation did not have an ethical investment policy, this was because it had no investments.

References

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- [2] The Institution of Structural Engineers, “The history of The Institution,” 2017. [Online]. Available: <https://www.istructe.org/about-us/our-history>. [Accessed 14 06 2017].
- [3] The Institution of Structural Engineers, “Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 December 2016,” 2017. [Online]. Available: [https://www.istructe.org/downloads/about-us/governance/annual-report-accounts-31-dec-2016-\(signed\).pdf](https://www.istructe.org/downloads/about-us/governance/annual-report-accounts-31-dec-2016-(signed).pdf). [Accessed 14 06 2017].
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- [6] The Institution of Structural Engineers, “Email to SGR,” 14 03 2017. [Online].
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- [9] Structural Awards 2017, “Sponsors,” 2017. [Online]. Available: <https://www.istructe.org/structuralawards/sponsors>. [Accessed 14 06 2017].