

Strategy 2015 – 2020

IRSE Purpose

As specified in the IRSE Articles of Association, the purpose of the IRSE is as follows:

- a) The advancement for the public benefit of the science and practice of signalling (which for the purpose of this document shall mean the whole of the apparatus, electrical, mechanical or otherwise, methods, regulations and principles whereby the movement of railway or other traffic is controlled) by the promotion of research, the collection and publication of educational material and the holding of conferences, seminars and meetings.
- b) The maintenance of high standards of practice and professional care amongst those working within the industry and the promotion of improved safety standards for the protection of the general public.

IRSE Vision

The IRSE vision is to be recognised as the leading world-wide professional engineering institution for the development of engineers associated with railway signalling, control and communications systems.

Railway signalling, control and communications are at the heart of maximising the utilisation of railways. Increasingly demand for rail travel is growing worldwide and railways in many countries are facing the same challenge of providing extra capacity and increased availability of existing and new infrastructure.

New systems and processes to satisfy this global demand are required and the need for competent and qualified engineers to develop systems to satisfy this global demand is essential. The IRSE vision is to be the leading worldwide professional engineering institution to support the development of competent engineers in railway signalling, control and communications systems.

The IRSE recognises that to achieve its vision, it needs to embrace the needs of its members, the railway industry and society in general such that all the above can benefit from the activities of the IRSE.

IRSE Role

The role of the IRSE for its members is to provide a forum for Continuing Professional Development through:

- Promoting the benefits of the IRSE to inspire our members to enhance their knowledge for their own benefit and that of the railway industry and society;
- Sharing of relevant knowledge, experience and best practice both locally and globally;
- Opportunities to build relationships with other railway industry professionals;
- Access to text books, technical papers, other educational & reference materials as well as industry news;
- Arranging conventions, conferences, seminars and technical visits.

The role of the IRSE for the railway industry is to provide:

- A cost effective Continuing Professional Development framework for maintaining and increasing the capability and competence of railway signal, control and communications engineers;
- A source of professional knowledge and standards;
- An opportunity for organisations to market themselves to relevant industry professionals.

The role of the IRSE for society is to ensure:

- The maintenance of high standards of practice and professional care amongst those working within the industry;
- The promotion of improved safety standards for the protection of the general public.

Values

The following values are critical to the IRSE and the way it operates and expects its members to operate:

- We are inclusive and open, collegiate and team-based in the way we work;
- We undertake our role with integrity, transparency and efficiency;
- We are committed to excellence, quality, equality of opportunity and diversity;
- We strive for continual improvement;
- Partnership working is critical to our success.

Strategic challenges for 2015-2020 and how we will address them

A membership survey was undertaken by the Institution during 2014 and the results from that survey plus feedback from the industry sector have been used in determining the following key strategic challenges. These strategic challenges and the key factors for each of them were accepted by the IRSE Council at its meeting on 24th April 2015. Actions to address these challenges are being identified and will be implemented from mid-2015 onwards, and will be contained in a detailed Strategic Plan.

Strategic Challenge 1: The IRSE is now a Global Engineering Institution.

Our aim is to support the continued growth in Local Sections around the world to allow them to be the main focal point for individual members and local industry.

We will address this by:

- Encouraging the formation of Local Sections where there is a clear benefit for the membership and the IRSE in so doing;
- Greater devolvement to Local Sections where this is considered appropriate by Local Sections;
- Adjusting the IRSE administration to reflect both growth and distribution of its membership;
- The IRSE centre providing support to Local Sections in membership administration, facilitating governance through the administration of central functions such as IRSE Council and supporting committees;
- The IRSE centre providing the development of the IRSE brand so that there is a common framework within which Local Sections can provide a consistent message to their membership and local industry.
- Actively support a gender balance within the IRSE that reflects the aspirations of the industry at both a local and global level.

Strategic Challenge 2: The skills gap facing railway signal, control and communications engineering

Our aim is to support engineering, railway engineering and in particular railway signalling, control and communications engineering in attracting, developing and retaining skilled engineers and technicians.

We will address this by:

- Working in conjunction with other institutions and educational bodies to promote the benefits of engineering to society in general but in particular the promotion of railway signalling, control and communications engineering;

- Clearly defining the benefits of the IRSE and its ability to facilitate Continuous Professional Development to its members, the railway industry and society in general;
- Actively highlighting the benefits of the IRSE to new and existing practitioners of railway signalling, control and communication engineering;
- Actively highlighting to the railway industry the benefits of the IRSE in attracting, developing and retaining staff within the railway signalling, control and communications employment sector;
- Working in partnership with members and the railway industry in developing inspiring programmes to support Continuous Professional Development;
- Encouraging attendance and presentations from representatives from other Institutions and industries at IRSE events;
- Investigating opportunities to provide Younger Members with further methods of obtaining greater value for money from IRSE Membership and IRSE Continuous Professional Development activities.
- Encouraging greater numbers of women to join the profession and the IRSE.

Strategic Challenge 3: Attract more people to attend the Prestige Technical Meetings in London

A number of factors including travelling time and travelling costs including the immediate impact of industry project programmes have resulted in the attendance at the London Technical Meetings reducing over the recent years.

Feedback from the IRSE membership indicates that the Prestige London Technical Meetings are still considered to be a valuable attribute in the overall benefits to members. However to attract key speakers on important topics will be increasingly difficult if further reductions in attendance continue.

We will address this by:

- Considering whether specific Prestige Technical Meetings would be better attended at locations other than London (aligned with Local Sections) where opportunities exist associated with Presidential visits, local technical visits, seminars, etc;
- The use of video conferencing and/or web based technology to engage world wide audiences, with social media being used for interactive engagement;
- Recognising that as a global institution the Prestige Technical Meetings can be spread across the year.

Strategic Challenge 4: Facilitating the role of the President

The role of the President is a key component for the continued success of the IRSE. Attracting leading industry professionals to put themselves forward for election to the position of IRSE President is considered to be equally important – however with the increased global expansion of the IRSE, the duties required of the President could result in individuals or their employers not supporting their nomination. In addition it is recognised that, aligned with the increase in non-UK membership, Presidents will increasingly be based outside the UK with the possibility of Vice- Presidents and the President not being UK based which has implications for UK commitments.

We will address this by:

- Continuing with the President developing the programme of Prestige Technical Meetings, with the opportunity to arrange a number of these meetings at locations other than London – this aligns with Strategic Challenge 3;

- Involving Vice-Presidents in the development of a 2/3 year programme of Presidential visits to Local Sections, conventions, seminars and conferences. This will facilitate a load spread of involvement over 2 to 3 years which may be easier for individuals and their employers;
- Reviewing the UK specific activities and considering how these could be best addressed by the IRSE Chief Executive and UK based Council Members, Past-Presidents and Local Sections.

Strategic Challenge 5: Industry Support for IRSE activities

The IRSE is not universally regarded by companies involved in train control and communications as being relevant to their business. In many of these instances the benefits of the IRSE have not been fully articulated in a way that senior executives can relate to. Aligned with Strategic Challenge 2, it is essential that the IRSE is supported by the wider railway industry for its primary role of enabling Continuous Professional Development and by them releasing employees to participate in these activities in support of their development.

We will address this by:

- Developing a strategic communications plan involving IRSE HQ and Local Sections highlighting the benefits of Continuous Professional Development to employers, their employees and other stakeholders; demonstrating the role of IRSE in supporting this in a cost effective framework;
- Making IRSE activities relevant to the railway industry such that they can see the benefits to their businesses – given the range of diverse needs across the industry and the IRSE will engage industry and members at both a global and local level to make sure that both global and local needs are understood;
- Promoting and sharing news and view of industry issues from a professional engineering perspective, through the activities of existing groups such as the International Technical Committee and adhoc requests from industry such as the GB Signalling Projects review.

Strategic Challenge 6: Technology Drivers

Fast changes of technology are taking place and more can be anticipated in the field of train control and communications. These are expected to bring about fundamental changes to the industry as a whole. Through its membership, the IRSE has a considerable worldwide capability for understanding and influencing how the technology can best be applied, and how technology can be used to respond to emerging needs and drivers.

- The IRSE will aim to provide thought leadership and be a front-runner in raising awareness of the fundamental drivers in technology relevant to train control and communications, and how latest technology can be applied to address those drivers.
- A core list of the relevant subjects will be maintained, providing ideas and guidance for the themes and topics of IRSE activities (Presidential Programme, International Technical Committee publications, IRSE News, Local Section activities, Conventions and Conferences).

Strategic Plan

Following endorsement of the IRSE Strategy 2015-2020 by the IRSE Council in April 2015, an Implementation Plan will be developed by October 2015. This will allow tracking of progress against the Strategic Challenges and monitoring the effectiveness of our actions in addressing them.

Note: This Strategy was originally published in April 2015. This version was published in May 2016, incorporating changes to acknowledge the IRSE's role in promoting diversity. The changes were approved by the IRSE Council in April 2016.