



## **ConstructionSkills 2020 Vision Project**

ConstructionSkills is the Sector Skills Council for construction. An independent, employer focused organisation, it is responsible for addressing the skills and productivity needs of the industry, from bricklayers to steel erectors.

### **Looking beyond a five-year horizon**

In 2007 it commissioned SAMI Consulting and Experian to identify key issues and changes which the UK construction industry could encounter over the long term and assess the potential implications for industry employment, skill and training requirements.

An initial meeting concluded that, given the length of time required to train new entrants to the industry, particularly in the professions and a number of other highly skilled disciplines, the project should look beyond the existing five-year horizon to 2020.

### **SAMI's role: charting the most effective course**

Given the scope and time-frame of the project, SAMI decided that adapting the existing government-developed Foresight Futures Vision 2020 scenarios was the most effective approach. These scenarios have been built on an extensive review of national and global futures well-suited to key drivers in the construction industry.

The process began with extensive desk research and contact with other relevant organisations to highlight key trends, issues and uncertainties in all aspects of the industry. SAMI and Experian worked closely together on this industry consultation and the production of the report, with SAMI leading on the technical research and the development of the industry scenarios. Experian led on the modelling.

There was also widespread consultation with industry participants and stakeholders, including clients, consultants, contractors and manufacturers, among others, through a series of workshops – some 15 workshops were run throughout the country.

Four scenarios were then developed and a picture drawn of what the construction industry would look like under each one:

- **World Markets:** this is a world driven by aspirations of personal independence, wealth and mobility, a belief in the efficacy of integrated global markets and internationally-coordinated policy. In this scenario, there is rapid innovation and domination of major projects by international contractors with an emphasis on self-regulation.



- **National Enterprise:** people aspire to personal independence and material wealth, embracing liberalised markets as an effective route to achieving their goals within a nationally-rooted cultural identity in a regionally unstable world. In this scenario, there is weak investment in new infrastructure and new public building, with an emphasis on repair and maintenance.
- **Global Responsibility:** here people aspire to high levels of welfare with shared values and more equal distribution of opportunities. There is a strong focus on investment in environmental approaches, with tight regulation and planning controls and a high public sector investment and service profile.
- **Local Stewardship:** In this scenario individuals seek sustainable levels of welfare within federal and networked communities, while there is an emphasis on small-scale regionally-based economic activity. Construction remains fragmented, with slow innovation and an emphasis on refurbishing and repairing.

## **Conclusions: the way forward for construction**

The exercise led to some thought-provoking conclusions for the industry to consider. These include the immediate need to address possible skill shortages over the next few years, the increasing demand for environmentally friendly solutions, a stronger focus on a holistic approach to construction, and ensuring that enough training is in place to deal with change, whatever the scenario.

Significantly, the resulting [report](#) identifies some early warning indicators that could help signal the precise direction of future change in the UK construction industry and the skills required.