# New international guidance aims to stabilise long-term infrastructure planning amid political and public resistance



Planning and delivering infrastructure that meets long-term national goals remains a significant challenge for governments worldwide. In the UK, for instance, the urgent demand for renewable energy to achieve net zero targets is often met with public opposition, visible in protests against solar and wind infrastructure. Similar resistance has been observed in countries such as Spain, Italy, and Poland. This resistance is compounded by fragmented government approaches, where political changes can result in the scrapping of important infrastructure initiatives, leading to inconsistent progress. Against this backdrop, the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme, led by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), offers updated strategic guidance aimed at helping governments align their infrastructure projects with sustainable, long-term outcomes.

The EBI programme has emerged from extensive global engagement, involving 26 countries, including New Zealand, Peru, and Indonesia. It focuses on sharing lessons in strategic infrastructure planning to support governments in navigating complex, evolving needs. The programme's updated guidance incorporates these experiences, providing a framework to help governments decide what to build, why, and in what order. This includes assessing options, such as choosing between hard engineering solutions like sea walls and softer, nature-based alternatives for coastal resilience. Recognising resource constraints, the guidance assists governments in prioritising infrastructure that delivers the greatest overall value, linking projects to broader goals such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A critical feature of the EBI guidance is its emphasis on stakeholder engagement. The programme encourages early and broad consultation, involving private sectors, development banks, community groups, and academic institutions to identify bottlenecks and ensure more equitable outcomes. For example, New Zealand's inclusion of Māori communities in infrastructure planning addresses historical inequalities in access to essential services. Public engagement is also championed, with the UK demonstrating that nearly 70% of the public favour discussions that focus on the positive benefits of infrastructure projects rather than costs. The programme highlights international examples, like the Netherlands, where public input has directly shaped national infrastructure priorities, ultimately fostering greater acceptance and resilience in planning.

Political cycles often pose challenges to long-term infrastructure delivery, as priorities shift with changing governments. The EBI programme offers guidance to build consensus across political divides, helping to insulate key projects from partisan disruption. Saint Lucia’s approach of consulting opposition parties during its 25-to-50-year infrastructure planning exemplifies this, ensuring continuity despite leadership changes. Additionally, EBI supports governments in addressing practical delivery questions, such as financing, sequencing projects, and workforce training. This comprehensive focus aims to enhance the likelihood that strategic plans are implemented successfully over time.

The ICE continues to position the EBI programme as a vital mechanism for shaping resilient and sustainable infrastructure globally. As ICE President Professor Anusha Shah articulated during the programme’s launch event at a gathering in Singapore, strategic forward planning is essential for meeting climate and economic objectives. The ICE's collaboration with governments, including recent partnership agreements such as the one with Peru's Ministry of Economy and Finance, underscores the growing recognition of the value of EBI’s approach. While challenges remain, the programme's iterative development, peer learning, and inclusive stakeholder engagement have made important strides toward infrastructure planning that is built to last.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance), [[2]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance), [[6]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/policy-and-advocacy/policy-engagement/insights-working-with-governments-infra-planning)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance), [[4]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/policy-and-advocacy/enabling-better-infrastructure), [[7]](https://prod.ice.org.uk/news-insight/media-centre/press-releases-list/peruvian-government-to-work-with-ice-enabling-better-infrastructure-programme)
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* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance), [[3]](https://www.ice.org.uk/news-insight/media-centre/press-releases-list/enabling-better-infrastructure-ice-led-guidance-for-governments-updated), [[7]](https://prod.ice.org.uk/news-insight/media-centre/press-releases-list/peruvian-government-to-work-with-ice-enabling-better-infrastructure-programme)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/inside-infrastructure/built-to-last-planning-toolkit-ebi-guidance> - The article discusses the challenges governments face in planning infrastructure that aligns with long-term goals, particularly in the context of the UK's transition to a net-zero energy supply. It highlights the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme, led by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), which offers updated guidance to assist governments in strategic infrastructure planning. The EBI programme provides principles and tools to help governments identify and deliver infrastructure projects that meet both current and future needs, ensuring long-term benefits for communities.
3. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-insight/media-centre/press-releases-list/enabling-better-infrastructure-ice-led-guidance-for-governments-updated> - This press release announces the updated guidance for the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme, led by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). The new guidance aims to assist governments in improving their strategic infrastructure planning. The launch event, titled 'Improving how we strategically plan infrastructure for a nature and people positive world,' was hosted by EBI partner Pinsent Masons MPillay in Singapore. ICE President Professor Anusha Shah emphasised the importance of strategic forward planning in achieving climate and economic goals.
4. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/policy-and-advocacy/enabling-better-infrastructure> - The article outlines the key initiatives of the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme, led by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). The EBI programme provides ongoing support to senior government representatives and non-government stakeholders worldwide to enhance strategic infrastructure planning. It offers a collaborative network for insight sharing, events on upgrading strategic planning, and policy workshops to support the use of EBI's tools and principles. The programme also provides a strategic planning gap assessment tool to help countries benchmark their performance against best practices.
5. <https://ice.org.uk/events/recorded-lectures/enabling-better-infrastructure-ebi-programme-briefing-session> - This recorded briefing session provides an overview of the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme, convened by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). The session covers the EBI guidance, including its eight principles, three-step process, and strategic gap assessment tool. Dr Kerry Bobbins, head of the EBI programme at ICE, discusses how the EBI approach can support governments worldwide in strengthening their strategic infrastructure planning. The session was held on 18 June 2025 and is available for viewing.
6. <https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/policy-and-advocacy/policy-engagement/insights-working-with-governments-infra-planning> - This policy insight paper outlines key lessons learned from the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) working with governments to strengthen strategic infrastructure planning through the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme. The paper highlights the importance of strategic support, iterative development, peer-to-peer learning, and involving all stakeholders in infrastructure planning. These insights aim to inform the final update of the EBI guidance, scheduled for launch at the end of 2025.
7. <https://prod.ice.org.uk/news-insight/media-centre/press-releases-list/peruvian-government-to-work-with-ice-enabling-better-infrastructure-programme> - This press release announces the Peruvian Ministry of Economy and Finance's memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) to collaborate on strengthening Peru's infrastructure plan. The focus is on enhancing the third version of Peru's infrastructure plan through the Enabling Better Infrastructure (EBI) programme. The MoU was signed during a week-long programme of infrastructure-themed events organised by the UK Embassy in Lima, Peru, highlighting the importance of strategic infrastructure planning.