

FROM VISION TO AUTOMATION, CITA CHARTS THE NEXT CHAPTER

Irish building talked with Dr Alan Hore, Co-Founder and Director of CitA, to discuss the year's standout event and why embracing digitalisation and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) will define the industry's next chapter.

THE CITA Gathering 2025 was more than an anniversary celebration. Marking 25 years of the Construction IT Alliance (CitA), it captured a turning point for Ireland's construction industry, one that is defined by automation, collaboration and a renewed focus on the future efficiency of Ireland's infrastructure.

Held at the Clayton Hotel in Dublin on November 6, the event looked back on CitA's journey from its early days in Bolton Street to its current role as a leading national driver of digital construction. Under the theme 'Realising Vision, Advancing Automation', the Gathering also looked forward, future-casting for the sector.

"It was a significant milestone. We focused on realising vision and advancing automation while looking at the challenge to reshape industry. Yes, it was a reflection on the early days, but it was more about defining what's next through three principal lenses: productivity, sustainability and talent," Dr Alan Hore, CitA Co-Founder and Director said.

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For Alan, the Gathering's purpose was renewal rather than nostalgia. "We looked forward at the different job roles in construction, from the trades to more technical roles, we know these roles will change. We don't believe AI will replace these roles, but we know these roles will definitely change as a consequence of machine learning. People skills, automation skills, digital skills, that's what the conversation was about."

The theme of renewal resonated across the programme of keynote speakers and breakout discussions. Delegates explored the growing impact of automation and AI on the sector, and what the shift means for skills, processes and policy.

Dr Hore reflected on the 25-year anniversary of CitA. "It's been a fantastic journey over the last 25 years and it's great to see that CitA remains relevant today. CitA represents 25 years of collective support and we are



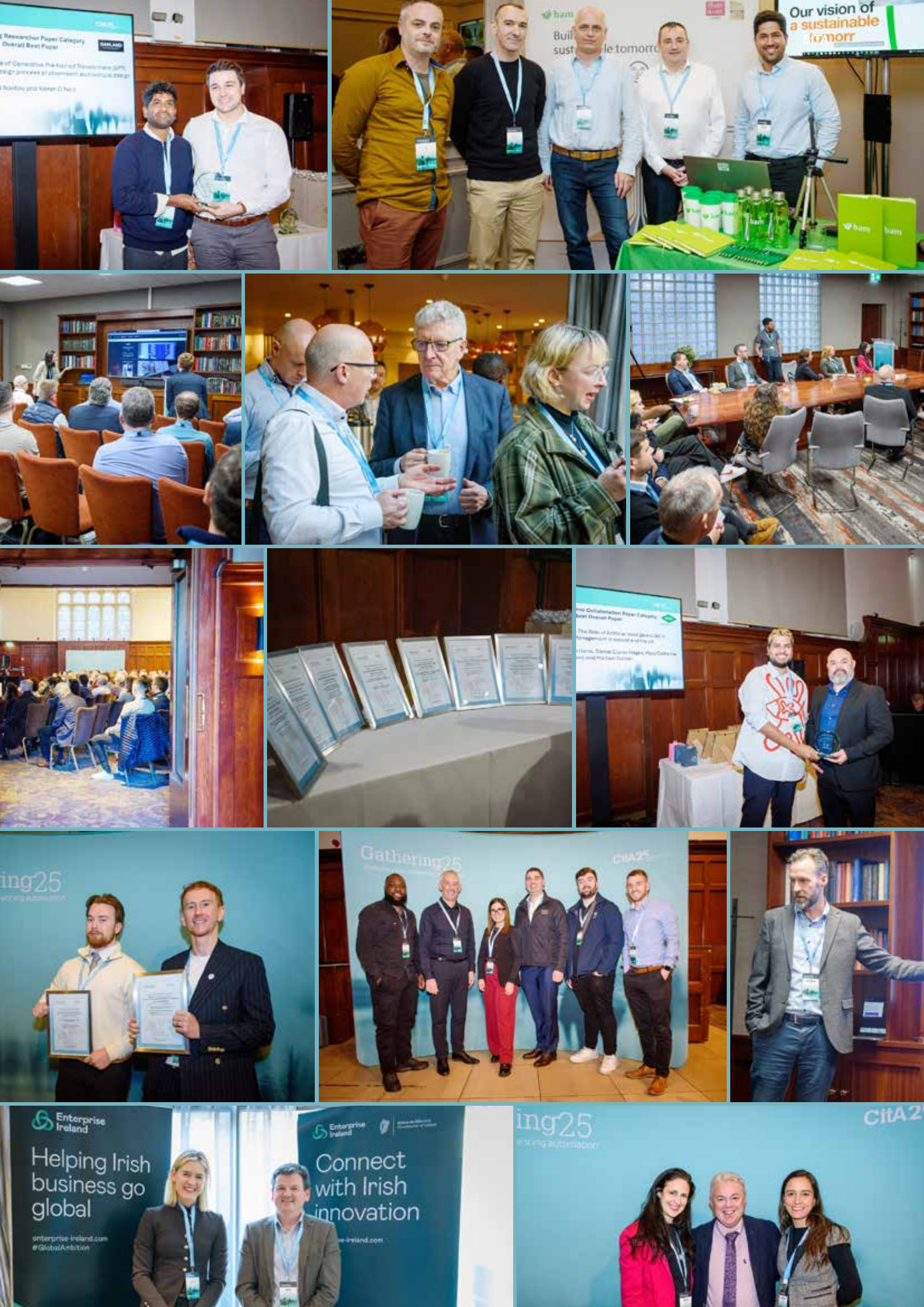
Dr. Alan Hore

extremely thankful for this support, whether it's through our member subscriptions, uptake of CitA Skillnet training, funding support from Enterprise Ireland and Skillnet Ireland and of course the many companies who sponsored our events over the years. It is fitting that 2024 and 2025 have been our most successful years to-date with the inclusion of the Skillnet MMC Accelerate programme in our portfolio of projects in 2024. This has seen us double our full-time staff and position CitA at the centre of a nationally strategic programme."

MMC And Digital Construction

The Gathering coincided with the near conclusion of CitA's 2025 Automation Series and the continued successful rollout of the Skillnet MMC Accelerate platform and regional roadshow of in-person events. This national initiative funded by Skillnet Ireland seeks to support the accelerated adoption of MMC in the Irish construction industry.

"We see MMC and digital construction as two sides of the same coin. You can't advance one without the



other. If you're looking to modernise your business in construction, you must embrace best-in-class technology. Whether you are an SME ready to embrace Building Information Modelling (BIM) for the first time, a tier 1 contractor introducing AI into daily workflows, or a regional house builder looking to use MMC to deliver our housing needs in Ireland, the Gathering had it all."

CitA's presence regionally throughout 2025 reinforced the importance of connection. "When we are on the road with Skillnet MMC Accelerate it is clear to see that people right across the country have a hunger for in-person regional events. At a recent visit to the Cygnum Building Off-Site in Cork we observed first-hand an entire digital team supporting the off-site manufacturing process. Precision in design prior to a commitment to manufacturing was clear to see. It was a real example of where the industry is heading."

Automation, Ai And The People

The future focus, he believes, lies in balancing technology and human capability. "You can't avoid the AI conversation. The focus is on people skills and automation combined and how various job roles in construction have to shift towards automation. Think of the many job roles in MMC or the automated generation of technical tasks. The future will certainly look very different and we need to move with the times."

He adds, "There's a momentum surrounding policy activity in construction at the moment, which is great to see. The Government has announced a joint departmental MMC plan and a vision for where the industry needs to go. The digital foundations and the use of BIM standards are maturing rapidly now because we have, in Ireland, a BIM Mandate. In the next three or four years it will apply to all government projects over €1m."

That policy momentum, paired with rapid AI adoption, is reshaping how companies operate. "Firms are tackling how to get people to work with AI seamlessly and in a controlled fashion," Alan said. "That's where the conversation is going."

The six keynote speakers at the Gathering, among them Alexandra Luck, Tomi Henttinen, Dale Sinclair, Francesca Lofiego and Lauren Lake, helped move that dialogue forward.

Looking Ahead To 2026

While 2025 marked a milestone, Alan emphasised that CitA's focus now shifts to consolidation and the next wave of industry evolution. "Many of the industry priorities will remain in 2026," he said, "but we have come up with a new vehicle in 2026 to showcase responses to the forces shaping the future of construction industry, in the form of our 2026 Platform series. We are currently in the

process of designing the series, in consultation with our members. What we do know is that housing will feature significantly in 2026 as it remains a strategically important issue for our members and project funders."

He outlined the eight themes making up that acronym, and while in the process of refinement, they are the bones of CitA's 2026 agenda. The octet of forces are as follows: Productisation – opportunities to build repeatable structures through manufacturing-led thinking; Lean – reducing waste in time, money and materials by embedding lean methodology on site; AI – its growing role in estimating, scheduling, risk detection, quality control and design; Technology Convergence – including IoT, robotics and smart data integration, aligning with the next Tech Live event; Financial and Procurement Reform – recognising that to move towards MMC, procurement frameworks must also modernise; Operational Integration – linking design and build processes into the operational life cycle; Regulatory Compliance – ensuring support structures are in place to support lean, green and digital transformation and an MMC Event – culminating in a dedicated MMC-focused session looking beyond skills to strategy and delivery.

"We will be fine-tuning the new 2026 series over the coming weeks and hope to announce the full programme prior to the Christmas break."

A Celebration Of People And Purpose

Closing the milestone event, Alan returned to CitA's founding principles. "The event represented 25 years of collective support and highlighted the strength of Ireland's commitment to embracing digital construction and MMC. The presence of so many of our members and supporters on the day amplified that Ireland is serious about this journey."

He also spoke candidly about CitA's endurance and community spirit. "We had a vision in 1999 that we are stronger together than separately, and the reality is we are. We've proven that by building such a vibrant community. CitA has always been about the people and that includes our members, our staff and our collaborators. We celebrated CitA; it was fun, it was positive. Now it's about taking the next step together."



Harnessing the potential of Information Communications Technology in the Irish Construction Industry

CitA was established as a research project in TU Dublin (formerly DIT) in association with the Waterford Institute of Technology in May 2001, with the vision of harnessing the potential of ICT in the Irish construction industry. CitA was formally incorporated into a company limited by guarantee with no share capital in November 2005. CitA is a not for profit organisation and is open to all stakeholders in the Irish construction industry who all share the CitA vision.

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- Architects
 - Building Consultants
 - Building Product Suppliers
 - Business Consultants
 - Developers
 - Engineers
 - Geo Surveyors
 - Industry Associations
 - IT Vendors
 - Law Firms
 - Main Contractors
 - Management Services
 - Professional Services
 - Project Managers
 - Quantity Surveyors
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