

**An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta**
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science



Our Ref: Case DFHE-MO-00944-2021

Southern Regional Assembly
Assembly House
O'Connell Street
Waterford
Ireland
X91F8PC

✓ April 2022

Dear Mr Kelly,

I am responding to your query of 23 December in line with the requirement for public bodies to prepare and submit a report to the Southern Regional Assembly on the progress made in supporting the objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy over these past two years.

The officials in my department have reviewed the elements of your strategy relevant to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and contacted the aegis bodies under our remit to gather this information.

Our full return is included in the annex below.

If you have any further queries or require additional information my officials will be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Simon Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Simon Harris T.D.

Minister of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science.



Technological Universities in the Southern Region

TU Agenda

Advancement of the TU agenda is a commitment in the Programme for Government 2020. TUs will significantly enhance progress in the delivery of national priorities relating to access to higher education, research-informed teaching and learning, research capacity building, increased support for enterprise and the skills agenda and enhancement of socio-economic progress and regional development.

TUs, acting as catalysts for innovation and regional development, bring a range of benefits to their regions and hinterlands including increased FDI and capital investment, research funding, international recognition and enable students, staff, enterprise, business and the wider community to avail of increased opportunities in their own areas which, in turn, stand to reap the rewards of further socio-economic progress.

In addition to TU Dublin and MTU established in January 2019 and January 2021, respectively, the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, opened its doors as the State's third TU on 1 October 2021 under the Presidency of Professor Vincent Cunnane, outgoing President of LIT. Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris has signed the draft Ministerial order, approved by the Houses of the Oireachtas, establishing the newest TU, Atlantic TU on 1 April 2022. This date will see the simultaneous legal dissolution of GMIT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT.

On 3 February Minister Harris notified the chairs of the governing bodies of Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology that he had made by final decision to grant the applicant institutes an order establishing a technological university in the South East following a rigorous assessment process. The new higher education institution will be known as South East Technological University. Subject to the completion of the requisite legislative and administrative requirements arising from this decision, all parties are working towards an establishment date for the new TU of 1 May



2022, meaning those students graduating from the current applicant institutes will do so with university qualifications.

An open public process seeking nominations for the positions of Chairperson and two ordinary members of the first governing body of the new TU has been run by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Skills and Minister Harris is currently considering a number of shortlisted candidates presented to him under this process.

The relevant applicant institutes are currently progressing an open competition to identify and put forward a suitably qualified candidate to myself as Minister for designation as the first president of the TU in accordance with section 56 of the 2018 Act.

The establishment in the first half of this year of the Atlantic and South East and Technological Universities will see the national TU agenda largely delivered with 5 new Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) being established and 12 Institutes of Technology dissolved.

The remaining standalone Institutes of Technology, Dundalk IT and IADT Dun Laoghaire, continue to work towards TU designation with the assistance both of HEA expert advice and material Exchequer support under the Transformation Fund.

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TU Funding

In September 2021, the HEA announced funding of €25.7million to relevant higher education institutions in support of either progression towards TU status or for the vital post-establishment development phase. This brings total funding under the Technological University Transformation Fund to €60 million with a further €30 million to be awarded this year to assist the development and progression of TUs. In addition, €40 million is being allocated to a TU education and reforms project under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan in the period to 2024. Minister Harris's Department, working in conjunction with the HEA, is also advancing a further TU oriented research



funding application worth over €80 million under the auspices of the European Regional Development Fund 2021-2027.

Munster Technological University (MTU)

Munster Technological University (MTU) or **Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan** in Irish, was established on 1 January 2021, following a successful application for TU designation by Cork IT and IT Tralee.

MTU is Ireland's second technology university after TU Dublin which was established in 2019. The first President of MTU is Professor Maggie Cusack.

MTU is a multi-campus technological university, with 6 campuses at Bishopstown, Cork School of Music, Crawford College of Art & Design, National Maritime College of Ireland, and Blackrock Castle Observatory as well as two campus locations in Tralee, Co. Kerry: the South Campus located in Clash and the North Campus located in Dromtacker.

The TU is contributing to the South West region through the provision of academic programmes that support significant student development, enterprise engagement and research capacity building. MTU has an extensive regional footprint with six campuses across the South-West region in Cork and Kerry, and a student body of 18,000 and over 2,000 staff.

Technological University of the Shannon Midlands-Midwest (TÚS)

The **Technological University of the Shannon Midlands-Midwest (TUS)**, or **Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne: Lár Tíre, An tIartharLáirín** Irish, is a multi-campus technological university formed from a merger between Limerick Institute of Technology and Athlone Institute of Technology and established on 1 October 2021. It operates six campuses, located in, Athlone, Clonmel, Ennis, Limerick and Thurles. The first President of TÚS is Professor Vincent Cunnane. More than 15,000 students and 1,200 staff across the Midlands and Midwest learn, research and work at the newly designated TUS: Midlands Midwest.



TUS is the third TU created in the state, and the first cross-regional TU spanning as it does the Midlands and Midwest regions. The new TU serves a wide geographic areas including Counties Clare, Limerick, Offaly, Tipperary and Westmeath. Through its embedded and deepening support for enterprise, industry and wider regional and local communities, the TU aims to make its regions more attractive for indigenous small and medium businesses and foreign direct investment, through connectivity, research-informed teaching and learning and research and engagement regionally, nationally and internationally.

In the latter context, TUS is part of the Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) an alliance of seven Higher Education Institutions drawn from six different EU nations and established under the European Universities Initiative. This alliance has as its aim the securing of the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders. RUN-EU will implement this mission by delivering on the future and advanced skills necessary for its students and regional stakeholders to successfully meet the challenges of the future, engage in societal transformation and promote active citizenship, thereby leading in the creation of a new type of multinational interregional alliance, a European Zone for Interregional Development In addition to TUS, the RUN-EU alliance comprises HEIs from Austria, Finland, Hungary, Netherlands and Portugal. In February 2022, TÚS received over €442,000 in funding through the initiative.

The communities TUS serves can offer an economically and socially-desirable regional counterbalance in the Irish heartlands and with its urban hubs and regional campuses, TÚS can provide a key strategic corridor between rural communities, towns and cities.

TUS: Midlands Midwest provides a wide portfolio of programmes in areas like science, engineering, health, business, hospitality, social sciences, informatics, teacher education, and art and design. The combined research capacity from its creation includes research areas of strength in microbiology, toxicology, bioanalysis, biotechnology, sensor technology, manufacturing technology, ICT, sustainable energy, and mechanical and polymer engineering.



South East Technological University (SETU)

A new Technological University is on track to become established later this year. On 3 February 2022, the Minister notified the chairs of the governing bodies of Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology that he had made a final decision to grant the applicant institutes an order establishing a technological university in the South East following a rigorous assessment process. It was further agreed that the new higher education institution will be known as **South East Technological University**, or **Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt in Irish**. Subject to the completion of the requisite legislative and administrative requirements arising from this decision, all parties are working towards an establishment date for the new TU of 1 May 2022, meaning those students graduating from the current applicant institutes will do so with university qualification. This will see Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology legally dissolved and replaced by a multi-campus Technological University. This will be the first time there has been a university presence in the South East region. The new university will have 18,500 students and 1,960 staff, with over 6,000 graduates annually. The new TU will have campuses located in Wexford and Wicklow as well as Carlow and Waterford with expanded campus footprints being progressed in both Waterford and Wexford and a new 6,083m² Science and Health building being procured for the Carlow campus. An open public process seeking nominations for the positions of Chairperson and two ordinary members of the first governing body of the new TU has been run by the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and Minister Harris is currently considering a number of shortlisted candidates presented to him under this process. The relevant applicant institutes are currently progressing an open competition to identify and put forward a suitably qualified candidate to the Minister for designation as the first president of the TU in accordance with section 56 of the Technological Universities Act 2018.



Higher Education in the Southern Region

Springboard+ 2021 and HCI Pillar 1

Springboard+ complements the core State-funded education and training system and provides free and subsidised upskilling and reskilling higher education opportunities in areas of identified skills need.

Springboard+ 2021 was launched on 14th June 2021, providing 11,642 places on 330 courses, As a result of multi-annual funding of graduate conversion courses, this leads to

a combined total of 13,846 places in 408 courses available in the 2021/22 academic year under Springboard+ 2021 and HCI Pillar 1. Courses available under Springboard+ 2021 include high level ICT, and courses in new and emerging technologies such as Cybersecurity and Virtual Reality from Level 6 to Level 9 on the NFQ.

Under Springboard+ 2021, 3,284 places were available in the Southern region.

Breakdown of Springboard+ 2021 figures under each region:

Region	Springboard+ Places
Dublin	5,102
Midlands	935
Mid-West	1,149
North-East	198
North-West	1,333
South-East	849
South-West	1,286
West	790
Grand Total	11,642

Breakdown of Springboard+ 2021 figures for the South:

Course Providers (South)	Springboard+ Places
Chevron College	60
GetReskilled	120
Institute of Technology Carlow	452
Limerick Institute of Technology	659



Munster Technological University Kerry	354
Munster Technological University Cork	486
University College Cork	326
University of Limerick	490
Waterford Institute of Technology	337
Grand Total	3,284

Under HCI Pillar 1 2021, 733 places were available in the Southern region.

Breakdown of Human Capital Initiative 2021 figures under each region:

HEI (ALL REGIONS)	HCI Pillar 1 2021 places for academic year 2021/2022
DUBLIN	755
Mid East	65
Mid West	256
Midlands	213
North East	181
North West	16
South East	170
South West	307
West	241
Grand Total	2,204

Breakdown of HCI Pillar 1 2021 figures for the South:

HEI (SOUTH)	HCI Pillar 1 places for academic year 2021/2022
Institute of Technology Carlow	145
Limerick Institute of Technology	148
MTU Cork	64
MTU Kerry	24
University College Cork	219
University of Limerick	108



Waterford Institute of Technology	25
Grand Total	733

The Springboard+ 2022 call for proposals was launched in December 2021.

Springboard+ 2022 is due to launch in Q2 2022.

Please note while Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1 programmes aren't all located in the Southern region, with the flexible delivery in place through Springboard+ and HCI they are accessible to participants from across the region.

All courses provide job-readiness training and most offer the opportunity for work placement, project-based learning or industry site visits where appropriate. All courses approved for funding under Springboard+ 2021 were selected by an independent panel with experts from industry and education following a competitive tendering process.

Full details on Springboard+ and HCI courses, the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found on the website: www.springboardcourses.ie.

Human Capital Initiative (HCI)

The Human Capital Initiative (HCI) forms a key part of the strategic response to a changing world of work and the challenges the economy will face in the period ahead. With a strong focus on innovation and agility, the programmes being supported will ensure that graduates and the education system as a whole, are in a position to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The HCI consists of 3 main pillars - graduate conversion and specialisation courses, additional places on undergraduate provision, and an innovation and agility fund.

HCI Pillar 1, Graduate Conversion Programmes was launched on 17th June 2020, providing 5,891 places on 93 courses over three years. 2,204 places will be funded on 78 courses in 2021/22. Approval has already been granted for courses under HCI Pillar 1 to run for the 2022/23 academic year, as part of the approval process in 2020. Further



information on these courses will be available in Q2 2022. These courses are one year, full time conversion courses at levels 8 and 9, in areas of identified skills need, building on experience of the ICT Conversion Courses under Springboard+. The courses can be applied for through www.springboardcourses.ie in the same manner as Springboard+ courses.

HCI Pillar 2, additional places on undergraduate provision address identified key areas of enterprise skills needs including, but not limited to, Science, Engineering, ICT, and Professional Construction qualifications. Places will be provided through increased and incentivised provision in full time undergraduate provision. 3,000 new places on 138 full-time undergraduate courses in 22 higher education institutions were funded for autumn 2020 and 2021. A further 1,101 places on 1 and 2 year ICT graduate conversion courses are on offer under the Springboard+ 2021 initiative to commence in 2021/22 academic year.

HCI Pillar 3, Innovation and Agility has two key areas of focus – innovation in modes and methods of delivery and agility in response to future skills needs. It aims to ensure that courses in areas of skills needs demonstrate innovative methods of teaching and delivery, which will include flexibility in course provision. HCI Pillar 3 will deliver 22 projects in higher education institutions, 17 of which involve collaborations between institutions. The projects include the use of virtual laboratories in higher education, a new hub to upskill the building sector on green construction, and the establishment of Creative Futures Academy to support digital and screen culture, cinema, literature and broadcasting, art, design, and fashion.



There are 13 projects that HEIs in the Southern region are leading or working collaboratively on:

HEI Lead Institution	Title of Application	Collaborative Education Partners	Proposed funding
Institute of Technology Tralee	REEdI- Rethinking Engineering Education in Ireland	UL, CIT	€8,952,142
Technological University Dublin	GROWTH HUB:	WIT	€3,496,384
Waterford Institute of Technology	Strengthening and Protecting the Funds Industry in Ireland	CIT, State Street, BNY Melon	€2,048,180
University College Cork	Sustainability in Enterprise: Delivering a Low Carbon Future	IT Sligo, MU	€3,913,440
Cork Institute of Technology	CYBER-SKILLS	UL, TUD, UCD, ITRALEE	€8,128,623
Dublin City University (IUA)	Towards a Multi-Campus Micro-Credentials (MC2) system	DCU, MU, UCC, TCD, UCD, UL, NUIG	€12,252,374
Institute of Technology Carlow (IUA and Thea)	Realising the potential of recognition of prior learning and lifelong learning in Irish higher education	ITC, CIT, DKIT, TUD, LIT, GMIT, AIT, LYIT, ITS, WIT, UCC, TCD, UL, NUIG, DCU, MU, UCD, THEA, IUA IADT ITT	€6,904,176
University of Limerick	UL@Work		€16,297,375



University College Cork	The iEd Hub: Holistic education for enterprise, with enterprise in Healthcare and Biopharma	CIT	€8,728,936
Waterford Institute of Technology	AMASE: Additive Manufacturing Advancing the South East	IT Carlow & Industry Partners	€2,152,349
Limerick Institute of Technology	Digital Academy for Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE)	AIT, GMIT, TEA, IGBC	€7,503,106
Institute of Technology Carlow	Centre for Insurance, Risk and Data Analytics Studies (CIRDAS)	LYIT	€1,725,343
Institute of Technology Carlow	Postgraduate Certificate in Innovative Materials for Industry 4.0	DCU	€2,568,083

Modular Skills Provision

On the 24th July 2020 as part of the Government's announcement on the July stimulus package an additional funding allocation of €47.5m was provided for Higher Education skills-related programmes. The higher education elements of the July stimulus package were in three broad areas – further support for Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1, Funding for Postgraduate provision, and the provision of modular courses.

Funding of €15m provided 11,597 places on 538 Modular courses in 32 higher education institutions in 2020. Following the success of the 2020 July Stimulus programme a further 4,119 places are being made available on Modular Skills Provision courses in 2021. All courses are shorter and more focused and will be offered in a flexible manner, allowing people to gain important skills without taking a considerable period away from the labour market. They will represent a new route into lifelong learning, and provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities for those who need it, while ensuring that they remain close to the labour market. Full details on Modular Skills



Provision, the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found on the website:

<https://hea.ie/skills-engagement/july-stimulus/>.

54 courses were available under Modular Skills Provision 7 Southern higher education institutions in 2021:

Institution Name	Courses Provided
MTU Cork	11
IT Carlow	11
MTU Tralee	1
Limerick IT	3
University College Cork	5
University of Limerick	14
Waterford IT	9
Total	54



Further Education and Training Sector

Cork Education and Training Board (CETB)

Cork College of FET

The most significant element in Cork ETB's plans and current initiatives to support economic and social development in the region is its development of a restructured and refocused FET service, under the umbrella/structure of Cork College of FET.

Cork College of FET (CCFET), the new identity for Cork Education and Training Boards Further Education Colleges, Training Centres and Services is closely aligned with the National Further Education and Training Strategy, "*Future FET: Transforming Learning*", published by SOLAS in 2020.

Cork College of FET will deliver on the ambitions and objectives of the strategy, and its establishment underlines Cork ETB's commitment to developing skills, pathways for learners through a community focussed model for inclusion in the region. Cork College of FET will build on the experiences and expertise of Cork ETB's Colleges, Centres and Campuses, to support **EVERY** learner on their learning journey, and contribute to the social and economic development of the region.

The establishment of Cork College of FET is underpinned by the priorities set out in National and Cork ETB strategies:

- Developing Skills
- Fostering Inclusion
- Enhancing Pathways



A key feature of the College development is to simplify the structure and improve communications for and with employers and learners, presenting courses in a much easier to understand format, and creating greater synergies with employers, to identify training and education solutions for both prospective employees, and those already in employment.

Cork ETB has pioneered many developments in Lifelong Learning through its adult and community education services. To meet the demands of the future, to provide flexible, adaptive, and relevant experiences that meet the needs of learners and employers, new and alternative approaches to delivery will be a central feature of Cork College of FET. Developing and implementing innovative models, with a significant focus on the

opportunities digitalisation provides, will allow a more diverse cohort of learners to engage with education and training in towns, communities, and business enterprises across the region, regardless of their location.

The links and relationships between Cork ETB, employers, and its Higher Education partners, in particular UCC and MTU, are unique. Cork College of FET will work to further develop pathways and opportunities for learners to move seamlessly from one level to the other, and ensure that inclusion for all learners is enhanced and extended.

The establishment of Cork College of FET requires significant restructuring, and will take several years to fully implement, and will require capital infrastructure investment under the Capital development plan for FET. One of the first submissions under this plan will be towards the development of additional apprenticeship training capacity to meet sectoral needs in the construction, engineering, and transport industries particularly.

Apprenticeship provision

Cork ETB continues to extend the range of its post 2016 apprenticeship delivery, and additional apprenticeships are planned to commence delivery in 2022, with two new apprenticeship proposals in development for submission to the Apprenticeship Council.



Nearly Zero Energy Building

Cork ETB is also committed to the development of a regional NZEB “Centre of Excellence” which it has scheduled to open in the second half of 2022. Providing focused trade and sector specific training, this centre will contribute significantly to the upskilling of trades workers engaged in the retrofitting initiatives under the Governments Climate Action Plan, and the “green” requirements for new builds.

Remote Working and Learning Hubs

Cork is a geographically dispersed region, with mixed urban and rural communities located across a wide area. Access to employment and services has created additional challenges for people living in locations more distant from the main urban centres. In partnership with Cork County Council, Cork ETB will open two remote working and learning hubs, located at or centres in Clonakilty and Castletownbere later in Q1 2022, to provide additional opportunities for people in those areas to avail of remote working and learning opportunities.



Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)

In line with national policy and a number of policy directives, Limerick and Clare ETB collaborates with the Regional Skills Forum, the Universities in the region and Limerick City & County Council in the development of a number of projects to drive regional development.

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Enabling a digital and innovative economy

In collaboration with the Regional Skills Forum, Limerick and Clare ETB has the highest number of participants on the Explore programme (digital training programme aimed at older workers in the manufacturing sector). The programme aims to equip older workers with current digital skills and provides each learner with an iPad to facilitate their digital training.

Limerick and Clare ETB in collaboration with Limerick for IT skills cluster / Mid-West Regional Skills Forum provides software/coding training and development programmes, specifically aimed at women in response to the lack of females in the STEM sector. The USP of the programme includes work placement with multinationals and SMEs.

Achieve a low-carbon sustainable economy

Limerick and Clare ETB has collaborated with SOLAS on Lean4Green: Lean Skills for Sustainable Business Level 5 and Sustainability Awareness Level 4 programmes. These will be delivered to a range of businesses in the Mid-West through Skills to Advance funding under the banner of green awareness within industry.

Limerick and Clare ETB collaborated with AMCS (Waste Management Software Group) on the delivery of QQI level 5 award in Environmental Studies that will upskill learners for employment in industry roles related to the Green Agenda and Sustainability. The course includes 2 days of industry-specific training and 1-week of work placement as a help desk operator.



Limerick and Clare ETB has designed a Centre of Excellence for Retro-fitting and Nearly Zero Energy Building programmes, commencing delivery April 2022.

Limerick and Clare ETB participates in the Mid-West Renewable Energy Training and Education Network. The aim is to assist with development of growth in training for the onshore wind industry and the emerging offshore wind generation sector.

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Supporting enterprise growth in regional towns and rural areas

Limerick and Clare ETB continues to develop a network of FET Campuses across towns and villages across Limerick. The suite of programmes on offer includes apprenticeship, full- and part-time provision and specific skills training in niche areas, such as the bicycle traineeship, robotic welding, façade training, marine.

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Economic Generation for Areas of High Unemployment Blackspots

Limerick and Clare ETB operates an Active Inclusion Support Service across the 21 economic blackspots in Limerick City, providing educational supports through a variety of funding, including the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF). Support Services such as guidance and counselling are part of this work.

Film Industry

Limerick and Clare ETB collaborates with Film in Limerick on multiple training programmes for the film industry. In line with regional development policy for the film industry (tax incentive 481), Limerick and Clare ETB collaborates with Troy Film

Studios, Screen Training Ireland and Innovate Limerick in the collection of a creative industry sector aligned to the College of Further Education & Training, LCFE Mulgrave St Campus.



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

The Covid-19 pandemic irrevocably changed the educational landscape in Ireland and posed many challenges for the sector. It necessitated a thorough review of how education and training was delivered, the methods of assessment used and the social structure of classes. Progress within some programmes of work continues to be impacted by the restrictions but on the whole WWETB responded quickly and flexibly to these challenges. By embracing new technologies and ways of working we have continued to effectively deliver education and training programmes and create new forms of meaningful engagement with staff, students and learners. Certain challenges remain however, most notably the need for continued significant investment in technology.

As 2022 unfolds there is a new sense of optimism and much to look forward to. The announcement in November 2021 that the south east is to get its first university has been warmly welcomed in the region. IT Carlow and WIT will become a technological university in 2022. WWETB is delighted to nurture partnerships with both the Institute of Technology, Carlow and Waterford institute of Technology. These existing partnerships will enhance the opportunities to work together as the new Technological University of the Southeast begins to take shape.

The following major education and further education& training projects remain priorities for WWETB:

- New education campus at Clonard
- Wexford Town, with a 1,000-pupil replacement school for Selskar College and a 16-classroom primary school for Educate Together, both schools with Special Education Needs specialist facilities on a 16-acre site.
- Major extensions to Bunclody Vocational College and Bridgetown College
- New large scale accommodation projects for Coláiste Abbáin, Adamstown and Coláiste an Átha, Kilmuckridge, St. Declan's Community College Kilmacthomas, St. Paul's Community College in Waterford City, Meánscoil San Nioclás in An Rinn and Dungarvan College-Coláiste Dhún Garbhán.



- The provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and community facilities around the school projects, with WWETB and Wexford County Council working together will greatly enhance the quality of life in the adjacent communities.
- New Further Education and Training College of the Future in Wexford Town, catering for increased numbers of courses and learners in apprenticeships, traineeships, PLC (Post Leaving Cert), Literacy, VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme), BTEI (Back to Education Initiative), Community Education and many other courses to assist upskilling of people in employment.
- A major extension to Waterford Training Centre catering for increased numbers of courses and learners in apprenticeships, traineeships, retrofitting and many other courses to support upskilling.
- New Further Education and Training College of the Future in Waterford City located at the present WIT College Street site when those facilities are vacated by the new Technological University of South-East Ireland.
- A new state of the art Further Education and Training centre in Enniscorthy providing Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) and other green skills programmes e.g., Heat Pump and Ventilation skills in collaboration with Wexford County Council and the High Performance Buildings Alliance (HPBA).
- Other smaller projects include an extension to Kilnamanagh Community National School, a new Youthreach Centre in Gorey, a new Further Education and Training Centre in Tramore, a new Gorey Institute of Further Education and a large extension to the present Further Education and Training Centre in Enniscorthy.

WWETB is well placed to respond to the needs and challenges identified across counties Waterford and Wexford in relation to educational attainment, lifelong learning, work readiness, access to employment, social inclusion and sustainable communities.

WWETB is represented on and works closely with steering committees and sub-committees of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in Waterford and Wexford, Ireland South-East Development, and South-East Regional Skills Forum. We also liaise closely with industry through membership of Chambers of Commerce and IBEC. Our Service to Business Unit supports hundreds of employers. WWETB is delighted to nurture partnerships with both the Institute of Technology, Carlow and



Waterford institute of Technology. These existing partnerships will enhance the opportunities to work together as the new Technological University of South-East Ireland begins to take shape.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is an employer driven demand led educational and training programme which aims to ensure that qualified apprentices are fully skilled to act in an independent capacity in their respective industries. While apprenticeships are national programmes, it is the pattern of employer recruitment of apprentices that determines the availability of individual apprentice opportunities.

Apprenticeships are available in many sectors that have a strong regional presence such as manufacturing, hospitality, construction, and retail. The continued expansion of the apprenticeship system into new sectors of the economy such as agriculture and horticulture, together with the opportunity of online and blended learning, will bring real opportunities for learners and employers throughout the country.

Objectives such as balanced regional development will inform the manner in which the education and training system can support employers in planning and addressing their skills requirements. This is why a survey undertaken by the Regional Skills Fora Managers of 340 SMEs across the country formed part of the consultation process for the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021.

Under the Action Plan for Apprenticeship, the new National Apprenticeship Office will drive promotional activities to heighten public awareness and that of employers of the range of apprenticeship offerings throughout the country. Visibility of programmes will be supported through the national Generation Apprenticeship campaign and continued engagement with regional vocational skills showcases. The Regional Skills Fora, with their in-depth knowledge of the local and regional landscape, will support the National Apprenticeship Office to ensure that there is a strong regional focus to the future development of apprenticeships. Education and Training Boards, Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities are spread throughout the country and play



a very important role in ensuring apprenticeship provision has a strong regional dimension.

Under the Action Plan for Apprenticeship prospective apprentices from all geographical locations will be able to find out information about apprenticeship opportunities and will receive more support and clearer communication throughout their entire learning journey.

Apprenticeships are offered by employers throughout the country. Phase 2 off-the-job training for all of the 25 craft apprenticeship programmes is held in Training Centres across the country including CETB, LCETB AND WWETB, with certain locations specialising in specific apprenticeship programmes due to the need for specific workshop equipment and trainer expertise.

Details of consortia-led apprenticeships delivered across the Southern Regional Assembly area along with further details of all apprenticeship programmes available as of Oct 2021 can be found in the attached document. They include

Solas in consultation with the Department, is currently developing a call for proposals under the public spending code for large scale college of the future capital projects (€5m+) and for medium scale projects under the new Strategic Infrastructure Upgrade fund projects (€100k up to €5m). It is expected to issue this out to ETB's in the next few weeks with the selection criteria being linked to the objectives of the FET strategy and the public spending code requirements. The initial call will be for 2 priority projects from each category (2 projects for over €5m / 2 projects between 100K and €5m).

In the meantime, Solas and the Department will continue to assist the ETB's in the development of their overall Estate Management Plan to further identify key capital projects and synergies between ETB's and other tertiary and community.