

Further Education and Training Colleges of the Future (CotF): Capital Call

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** **IRELAND**

Timeline

2022 Implementation**2023 Implementation****2024 Implementation****ID number 45179**

Background

Further education and training (FET) capital stock (buildings, equipment) was of variable quality across the system, consisting mainly of small scale dispersed facilities, and required significant modernisation. The National FET strategy 2020-24 set it as a critical priority. One of the ways to modernise FET is through creating the FET Colleges of the Future (CotFs). The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) announced capital investment of EUR 430 million in FET and higher education (HE), with 45% directed to FET, including the establishment of FET CotFs.

Two funds have been set up:

- (a) the FET College of the Future (CotF) Major Projects Fund, to support projects that can help drive reform of the FET sector, including consolidation of provision in high quality facilities, integration of further education and training, realisation of centres of excellence, and unified tertiary planning;
- (b) the FET Strategic Infrastructure Upgrade Fund (SIUF), to support smaller-scale investments in existing FET infrastructure, ensuring that works progressed within the context of an overall strategic plan for the building and aligned with FET College of the Future principles.

The statutory VET sector was surveyed in 2021 on capital stock, for the first time ever. That provides a baseline on the physical delivery infrastructure of FET nationwide as regards site details, programme delivery in each location, space suitability and buildings condition, and informs future capital investment decisions in FET.

Capital investment in FET is coordinated by a single unit in the DFHERIS to ensure a collaborative regional tertiary education investment strategy.

Objectives

Creating CotFs, supported with capital investment, is aimed at putting in place a FET system that provides cutting edge, quality and accessible education and training to potential learners, staff, employers and communities. CotFs should improve the perception of FET and lifelong learning in the Irish society by being centres of community-based learning excellence.

Description

The National FET Strategy defined that CotFs should have the following characteristics:

- (a) consolidation: CotFs are single integrated colleges;
- (b) dual outcome focus: the offer of courses designed to facilitate immediate entry to careers and employment and those that link directly to further study in HE, exploring opportunities for co-delivery with HE institutions;
- (c) access pathways: supporting a learning pathway from a network of FET providers offering Level 1 to 4 provision;
- (d) consistent learner support: providing a central resource for learner support services, ensuring all learners are supported in a consistent manner;
- (e) flexible learning opportunities: all year-round availability and the offer of flexible and technology enabled opportunities available to a diverse array of potential learners, including those in employment;
- (f) Green Campus: embedding sustainable development principles across its operations and ensuring its students are equipped with the environmental awareness and green skills which can drive future change;
- (g) institutional structure: staffing, governance and management structures appropriate to an education and training institution of scale;
- (h) community resource: to serve as a community resource, with facilities used for a range of societal and cultural purposes and be seen as the obvious 'go to' place to access education and training;
- (i) financial autonomy: more financial autonomy for the ETB with greater scope to generate its own revenue, build reserves across calendar years and invest strategically to support future growth and development.

2022 Implementation

In February 2022, the DFHERIS announced the first ever FET capital call for proposals, both for SIUF and CotFs.

By autumn of 2022, 13 projects passed the first requirement assessment for the SIUF capital call. While individual project cost estimates are to be refined as part of the design stage, it was expected that investments under this phase could reach a total of EUR 50 million. Other 14 project applications remained under consideration.

A total of 10 new major CotF projects in key locations across the country passed the first assessment stage.

2023 Implementation

A further six (6) SIUF projects were announced by the Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, bringing the total number of SIUF projects to nineteen (19).

2024 Implementation

In October 2024, the Minister announced six (6) College of the Future projects has been approved to progress to e Pre-Tender - Project Design, Planning, and Procurement Strategy stage of development under Infrastructure Guidelines - Ireland's set of financial rules and procedures governing capital investment. The Infrastructure Guidelines aim to ensure that Irish public bodies adhere to their obligations, to treat public funds with care and ensure the best value for money is obtained when public money is invested in public capital infrastructure. the projects were in a variety of locations across Ireland - Cavan, Cork, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick and Tipperary. This capital investment will deliver state of the art facilities to drive access to education, lifelong learning and workforce transformation in those regions.

Bodies responsible

- Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB)
- Cork Education and Training Board (CETB)
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB)
- Donegal Education and Training Board (DETB)
- Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB)
- Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB)
- Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB)
- Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB)
- Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB)
- Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB)
- Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)
- Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB)
- Kerry Education and Training Board (KETB)
- Laois Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB)
- Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB)
- Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)
Learners with migrant background, including refugees
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers
Learners with disabilities
Adult learners
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment
Low-skilled/qualified persons
Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)
National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Supporting Centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs)

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Ministerial Announcement of VET Capital Call, February 2022](#)

[Education and Training Boards Ireland publication on FET College of the Future](#)

[Ministerial announcement of first tranche of 13 capital projects to be funded under new capital programme for VET](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Tipperary Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Cork Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to the next stage for Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to the next stage for Limerick Clare Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to the next stage of Kerry Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to the next stage for Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board](#)

[Ministerial announcement of FET College of the Future approved to progress to next stage for Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board](#)

[Future FET: Transforming Learning. The National FET Strategy](#)

[Government announces purchase of major site in Kilkenny as part of next phase in multi-million euro FET capital investment](#)

[Important milestone for Tipperary as go ahead given for next phase in delivery of Ireland's first FET and Higher Education campus](#)

[Government announces significant milestone for Cork ETB as green light given on next phase in multi-million euro FET investment](#)

Taoiseach announces next stage in development for major new college campus in Bray

Government announces milestone for Limerick and Clare ETB as green light given to next phase in major FET capital investment

Approval granted for next phase in delivery of FET College in Cavan

Minister Harris announces significant capital investment in Ballyfermot College of Further Education

Minister Harris announces significant capital investment at Scariff in County Clare

Minister Harris announces significant capital investment in further education and training services in Sligo

Minister Harris announces significant capital investment for two projects in County Galway

Ministers Foley and Harris announce agreement between the Department of Education and City of Dublin ETB to facilitate strategic capital investment in the schools and FET sector in North Dublin City

Minister Harris announces new campus for Dunboyne

Related policy developments

2024 Design

Learner Support in Further Education And Training (FET): Towards a Consistent Learner Experience

The position paper of this policy is underpinned by a Universal Design (UD) approach and aligns with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The Framework to implement the policy outlines the enhancement of the overall learner experience within FET by:



Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Completed

First National Further Education & Training (FET) Strategy for the Green Transition: Green Skills 2030

The strategy was developed by SOLAS, in partnership with consultants KPMG and in consultation with Ireland's sixteen (16) Education and Training Boards (ETBs), public bodies, government departments and key industry stakeholders.



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**New Green Devolved Capital Grant to Improve Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation across VET Estate for 2024**

The Green Devolved Capital Grant is to be distributed to the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) who deliver VET to assist them to hit their targets for 2030 as set out in the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Further Education and Training (VET) Funding Model Review**

The process of review started in 2019 with the agreement on the guiding principles and approach. An international expert panel was appointed, with an internal funding model review advisory group and data modelling working group established to support the panel's work.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Tertiary Degrees in Further Education and Training, guaranteeing progression to Higher Education.**

Creating a unified tertiary system is one of the strategic priorities of the National FET strategy 2020-24.



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**The Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-25**

Ireland's Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-25 was launched in 2021 by the Ministers for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister of State for Skills and Further Education.

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Completed**Green Skills for Further Education and Training (FET) Roadmap 2021-2030**

The policy roadmap 'Green Skills for FET 2021-30' sets a strategic direction for green skills initiatives throughout the Irish FET sector and points to key areas for the FET Sector in the transition to a green economy.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Review of Education and Training Boards (ETBs) Quality Assurance**

The external review is conducted by review teams. National and international external reviewers are selected for their expertise in one or more specific areas, providing perspectives from education and training, quality assurance, learner voice, community and industry.



Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2023 Completed**Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Strategy 2021-23**

DFHERIS funds and creates policy for the higher and further education and research sectors. It also oversees the work of the State agencies and public institutions operating in these areas.

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Approved/Agreed**Transforming Learning 2020-24: Ireland's National Further Education and Training Strategy**

The FET strategy 2020-24 was developed in consultation with the FET sector and other key stakeholders. Consultation was wide-ranging and included bilateral meetings, regional workshops and a public call for submissions.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Strategic Performance Agreements for FET System National Targets 2022-2024**

Each SPA set out plans for the development and innovation of the VET system and include each ETB's contribution to the national FET system targets agreed with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).

**Type of development**

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Further Education and Training Colleges of the Future (CoF): Capital Call: Ireland. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/45179>