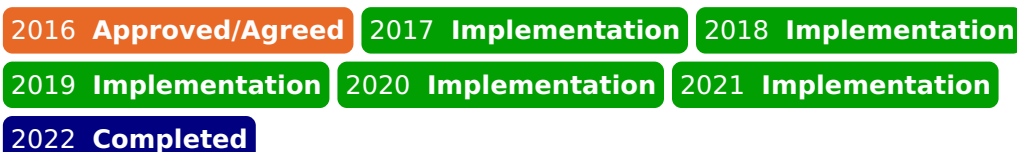


The network of regional skills forums

POLICY DEVELOPMENT
REGULATION/LEGISLATION
 **IRELAND**

Timeline


ID number 28299

Description

To take on board skills needs at regional level, the Department of Education and Skills set up and funded nine regional skills forums in May 2016. The forums are part of the National skills strategy. Their main purpose is to facilitate cooperation and engagement between employers and education and training providers to make sure that the content of programmes is aligned to labour market needs. They also promote digital skills amongst older workers. Each forum is guided by a steering group and a manager who liaise with employers and education/training providers.

2016 Approved/Agreed

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the regional skills forums (RSF) engaged with over 1 400 enterprises employing over 100 000 employees across all regions. This shows an increase in overall activity of 42.4% from the 2018 figure of 1 052. The RSF engage with all sectors and size of enterprises with particular focus on small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In 2019, 55% of all activity was with SMEs; this shows a slight decrease on the figure for 2018, which was at 69%.

2020 Implementation

The work of the nine RSFs continued: managers were in regular contact with local education/training providers and employers with the aim of identifying and addressing skills needs at regional level in Ireland. The COVID-19 pandemic required a shift to online working, which entailed new ways of working. Nonetheless, engagement and conversations with both employers and education/training providers continued. The managers of the RSFs continued also to submit data to SOLAS for skills needs identification sessions with employers, which, despite the pandemic, continued to occur.

2021 Implementation

Regional skills information campaign launched.

2022 Completed

The RSFs are now fully established as a stakeholder in VET.

Bodies responsible

- Department of Education and Skills (until 2020)
- Department of Education

Target group

Entities providing VET

Companies
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET
Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Information about regional skills forums](#)

[2019 annual report](#)

[2021 regional skills information campaign](#)

Related policy developments

2023 Completed

Skills development opportunities for the employed individuals

In line with the national skills strategy, SOLAS prepared a further education and training

(FET) policy framework for the skills development of employed people.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Completed

Promoting digital skills amongst older workers (Explore programme)

The Department of Education and Skills launched, in June 2018, the EXPLORE programme to address the lack of digital skills among older workers and to increase Ireland's rate of participation in lifelong learning.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2022 Completed

Skills for growth

The Skills for growth initiative was launched by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Education and Skills to all regions. The inclusion of other government agencies ensures that a comprehensive and coherent picture of skills needs can be gained at the government level.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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(2025 update) [Online tool].

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