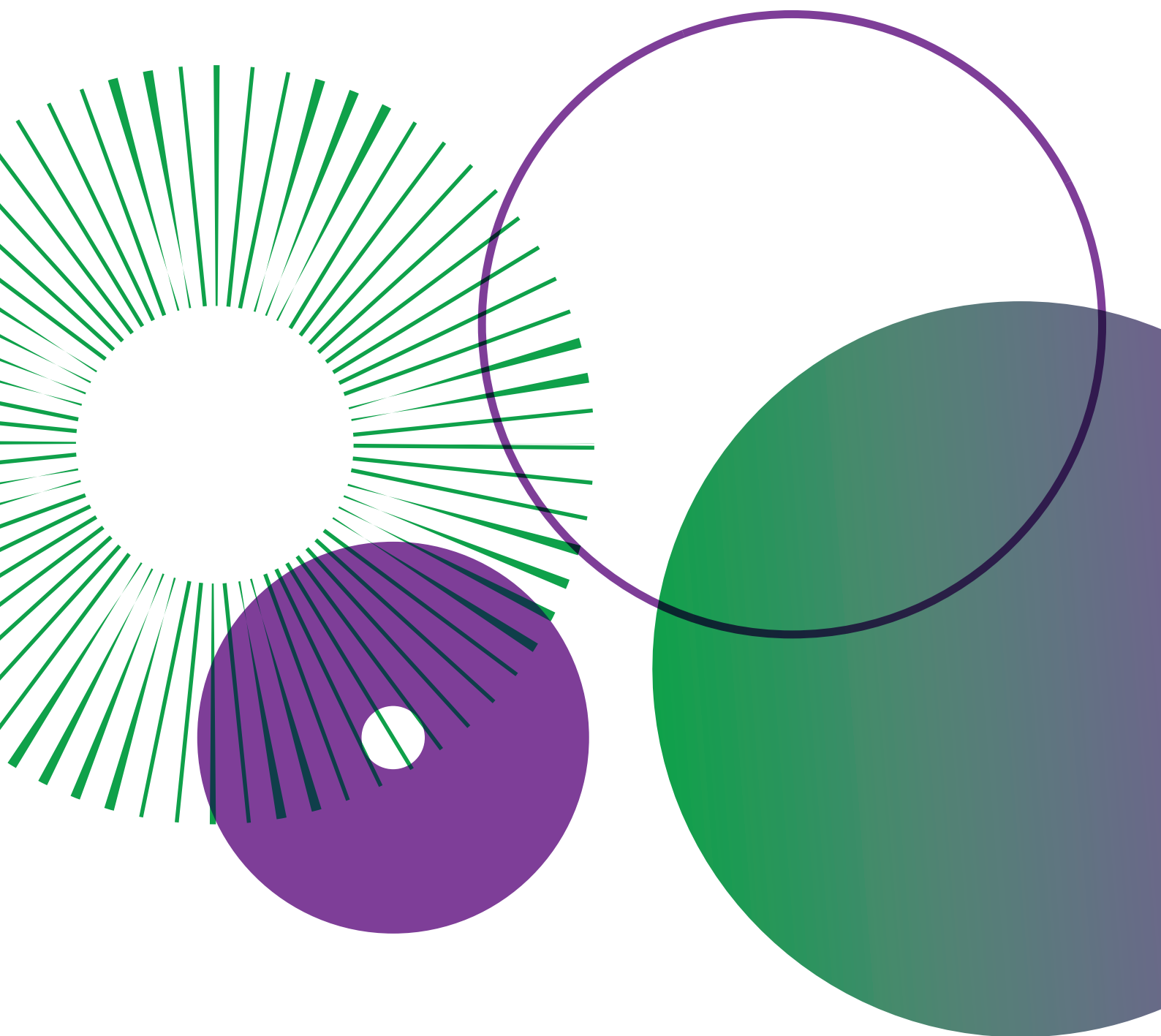


The 2018 Further Education and Training (FET) Services Plan



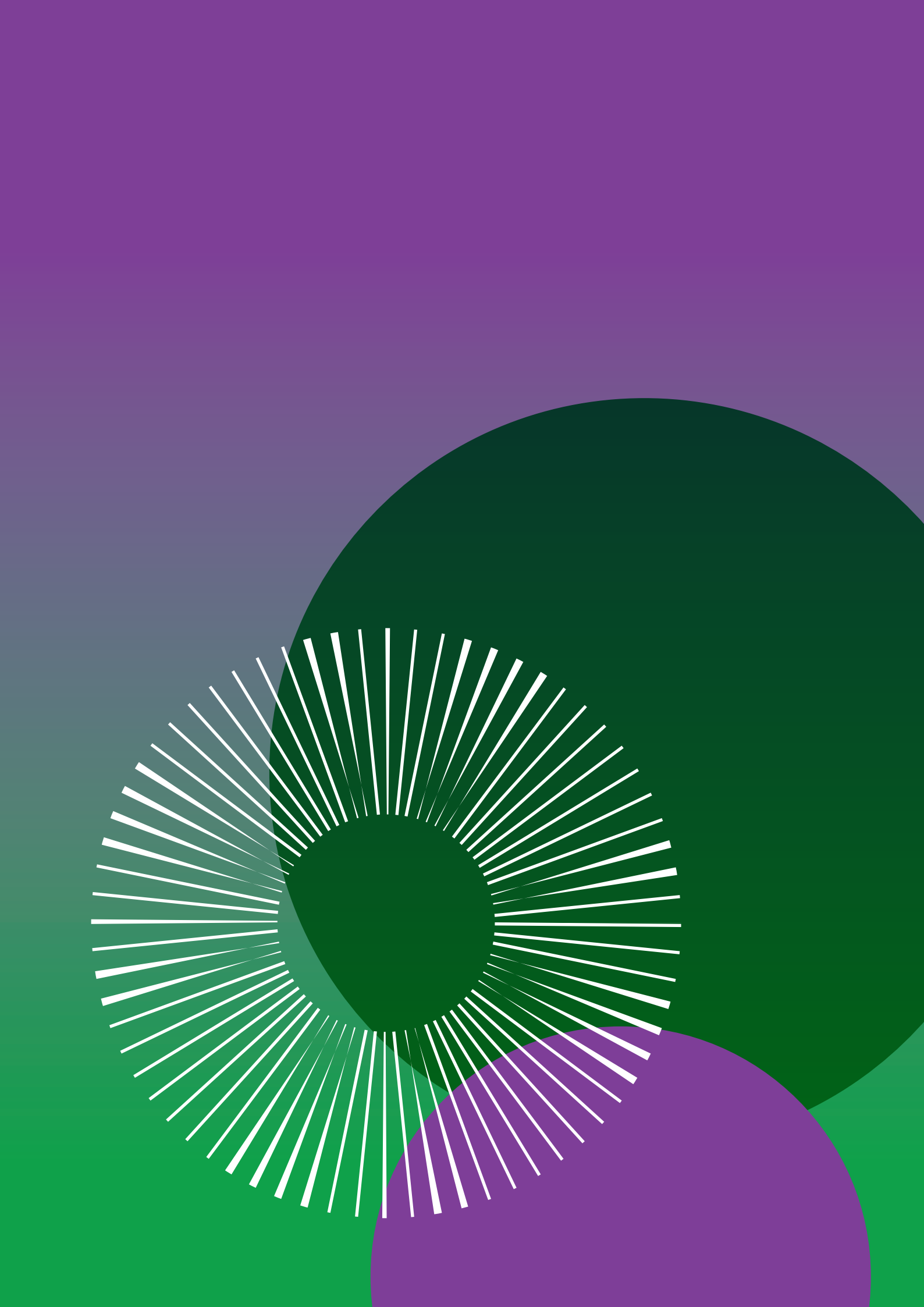


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- Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
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- Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
- Kerry Education and Training Board
- Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
- Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
- Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
- Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board
- Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
- Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
- Tipperary Education and Training Board
- Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

The Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS)

- St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, Co. Clare
- Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
- Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- North Presentation Secondary School, Farranree, Cork
- Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
- Nagle Rice Secondary School, Doneraile, Co. Cork
- Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick
- Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
- Nagle Centre Presentation Secondary School, Cannon Street, Waterford
- Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13
- St Michaels, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon

The Schools/Colleges to which Grants are allocated through the DES Post-Primary Payment Section

- Ballyhaunis Community School, Co. Mayo
- Castlecomer Community School, Co. Kilkenny
- Castlerea Community School, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon
- Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick
- Scoil Phobail, Clifden Community School, Clifden, Co Galway

- Coláiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co Galway
- Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13
- Dunmore Community School, Co. Galway
- Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway
- Gorey Community School, Gorey, Co. Wexford
- Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo
- Kilrush Community School, Co. Clare
- Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
- Our Lady's College, Presentation Road, Galway
- Mercy College, Sligo
- Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
- Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford
- Moate Business College, Moate, Co. Westmeath
- St Cuan's College, Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Coláiste Chiaráin, Summerhill, Athlone, Co Roscommon
- St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo
- St Patricks Comprehensive School, Shannon, Co Clare
- Tullow Community School, Carlow
- Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna, Co. Galway
- Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo

Other Providers

- The Irish Deaf Society

Other Organisations

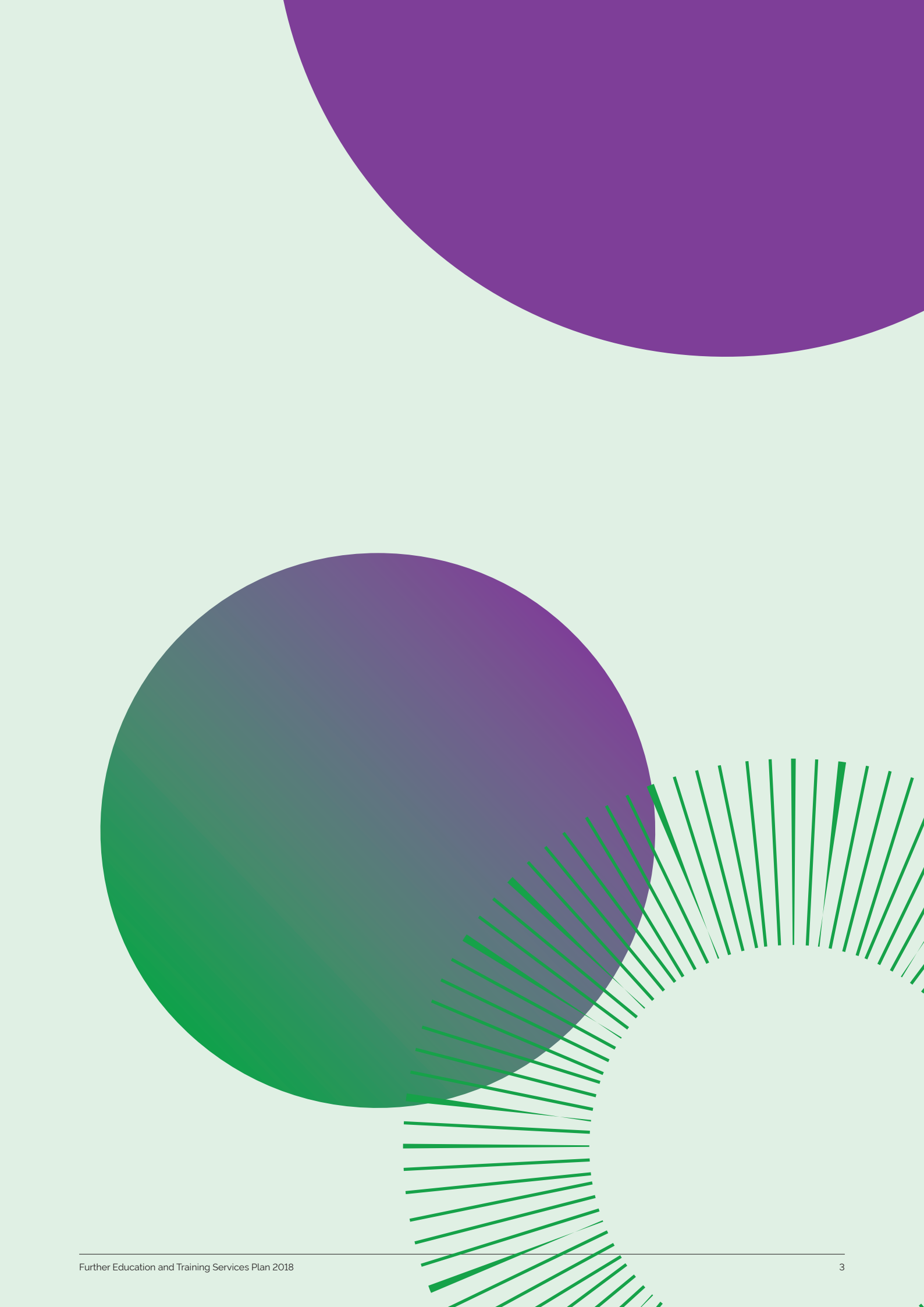
- The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) and Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCs)

Agencies and Bodies

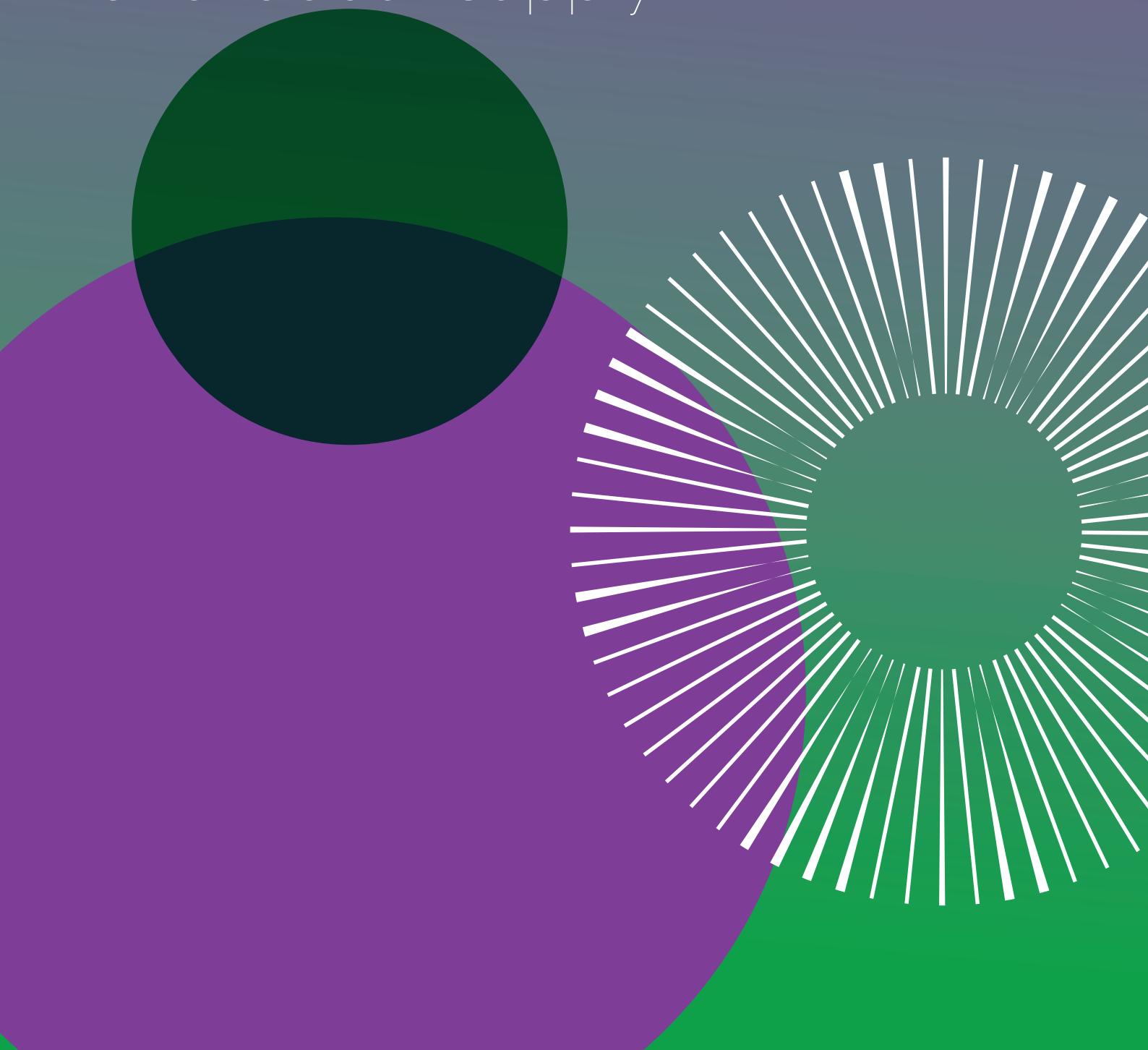
- Age Action Ireland
- Ahead
- AONTAS
- Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- Education and Training Boards Ireland
- Education and Training Boards Ireland – ITABE Co-ordinator
- European Agenda for Adult Learning
- Fast Track into Technology (FIT)

FET – Lifelong Learning Opportunities

- IACTO
- Irish Countrywomen's Association
- National Adult Literacy Agency
- National Centre for Guidance in Education
- People's College
- Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (funding to AONTAS)
- Waterford Institute of Technology/NALA
- Working for Work Publication (funding to Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed)



The 2018 Services Plan
is informed by national
policies and strategies
and evidence-based
analyses of skills demand
and labour supply



Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

SOLAS annual service planning is informed by national policies and strategies and evidence-based analyses of skills demand and labour supply, while taking into account the funding allocated to the Further Education and Training (FET) sector.

The 2018 FET Services Plan was prepared by SOLAS in consultation with ETBs, Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS), and other partner agencies and bodies funded or part-funded by SOLAS. This plan reflects the key priorities of the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019, which specifies key FET Sector Targets and key FET Sector Improvement Targets with associated timeframes to effectively meet the needs of learners, businesses and communities.

SOLAS-funded further education and training provision in 2018 will amount to €647.6 million. An estimated 251,391 individual learners will commence a further education and training course in 2018. Many will participate in FET more than once, and in this regard the total beneficiaries of FET programmes are estimated at 337,966 at a total cost of €569 million.

The SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 takes account of the improving economy and labour market. The 2018 Services Plan details how SOLAS will align FET provision with improving the skills of those seeking to enter the labour market. There will also be an increased emphasis on upskilling workers with a low level of skills and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities to support and sustain economic growth and social inclusion.

Section 2: Economy and labour market trends impacting FET

The economy continues to improve and strong domestic consumption and investment are viewed as the main factors underpinning this growth. Improvements are expected to continue across all sectors of the economy into 2019. Notwithstanding the remarkable turnaround in the economy and the labour market, there remains several areas of concern:

- Youth unemployment remains high at 12.5 percent
- A number of unemployment 'blackspots' exist
- Long term unemployment accounts for over 37 percent of total unemployment
- Low levels of literacy and numeracy exist in the economy

To help address these concerns, there will be a renewed focus on improving the skills of those seeking to enter the labour market and employees with low skills levels. The provision of FET services for residents in unemployment blackspots is a key priority for SOLAS. SOLAS will also support an increase in the provision of literacy and numeracy services for those seeking to enter employment and those already working. These linked economic and social priorities are embedded throughout the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, FET Strategy 2014-2019, the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 and the strategic plans of each of the sixteen ETBs.

As the economy continues to expand, new types of skills will be required across a whole range of occupations and sectors to support continued economic growth. SOLAS is committed to using its extensive research capacity to identify these skill requirements and to support ETBs in the provision of further education and training. The SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 identifies specific FET Sector Targets and FET Sector Improvement Targets that will effectively meet the needs of learners, business and communities.

Specific FET Sector Targets are aimed at increasing the levels of FET provision and certification in areas where skills shortages have been identified and increasing the number of individuals engaged in lifelong learning and upskilling activities. The recently published Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland 2018-2021 will target those workers in

enterprises who need FET related upskilling, and help to ensure a better anticipation of future skills requirements in particular sectors.

Achieving the goals of the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship 2016-2020, implementing Strategic Performance Agreements with all 16 ETBs, and the development of a knowledge based integrated planning model are key priorities included in the SOLAS Sector Improvement Targets.

Section 3: Policy and strategic framework underpinning FET provision

The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014-2019 continues to provide direction and focus for the setting of investment priorities, and for the establishment and development of a strong integrated FET sector that will meet the needs of the learner, enterprise and the community¹. The Action Plan for Education 2016-2019² outlines the Government's vision for Ireland to become the best education and training service in Europe over the next decade. SOLAS is working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including Education and Training Boards, other FET providers and the Department of Education and Skills to achieve this ambition. Key actions for SOLAS are the development of an outcomes-based funding model, an integrated FET guidance strategy and a shift from provision 'for employment' to targeted workforce upskilling. SOLAS is keenly focused on the development of much clearer learning pathways, and a holistic education and training system approach that considers the role of further education and training and higher education in meeting the future needs of society and economy.

A central component in this process is the establishment of Strategic Performance Agreements with ETBs that reflect the key national targets of the FET Sector, which are as follows:

- 10 percent more learners will secure employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market.
- 10 percent more learners will progress to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose.
- 10 percent increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development.
- 10 percent increase of adults, who are seeking FET level provision, engaging in lifelong learning interventions.
- From 2018, for three years to 2020, an average increase of 10,000 learners per annum securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified.
- 30,500 new apprentice and trainee registrations in the period 2017 to 2019 which will represent an increase in registrations from circa 6,000 in 2016 to circa 12,400 in 2019.

During early 2018 SOLAS engaged in extensive consultation with ETBs, which resulted in the development of draft strategic plans by each ETB. The SOLAS Director Group and a team of external experts met with senior managers from each ETB to discuss their strategic plan. Following these Strategic Dialogue meetings, ETBs were provided with feedback and invited to submit their strategic plans to SOLAS in the form of Strategic Performance Agreements.

SOLAS is collating the individual responses to assess whether, in aggregate, national objectives will be met and will mediate if required. These Strategic Performance Agreements will be reviewed and revised annually on a rolling basis to maintain a future focus over at least a three-year time horizon. The process recognises that a simple application of national sectoral targets to all ETBs would not be appropriate due to variations in capacity, economic and employment opportunities and social needs. It is therefore necessary to establish individual targets at local level with each ETB that will support and contribute to the achievement of aggregated national targets for the FET sector. New data exchange agreements with Government Departments will support the gathering and measuring of data against agreed benchmarks and will be used to evaluate performance and inform future FET investment decisions.

This initiative represents a further development and evolution of the planning and funding process. The strategic performance process will ensure that there is a strategic, effective,

¹ Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 to 2019, page 3

² Department of Education and Skills (February 2018), 'Action Plan for Education 2016-2019'

transparent and dynamic relationship between SOLAS and the ETBs that reflects Government and sectoral strategies.

Section 4: Top level analysis of 2018 funding allocation and provision

The 2018 FET Services Plan provides for a total budget allocation of €647.557 million which will be made available for SOLAS-funded further education and training provision in 2018. An overall increase in FET provision of 4.2 percent from 2017 levels is planned for 2018 and almost 338,000 beneficiaries will benefit from FET programmes.

The Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) system was used to capture planning data for 2018. The 2018 FET planning cycle shows that there has also been a notable re-focusing of FET provision towards particular labour market skills needs. The percentage of projected beneficiaries of FET provision classified under the labour market focused skills clusters for 2018 shows an increase of just under 13 percent when compared with 2017. FET provision for 2018 shows planned increases in provision in engineering related skills (+127 percent), technology and web development and design skills (+20 percent), food and beverage (+38 percent), financial services (+36 percent) and health, family and social services skills (+6 percent). An increase in apprenticeship and traineeship provision is also evident and this reflects a focus on achieving the targets set out in the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020.

Section 5: FET supports and developments

SOLAS co-ordinates and administers a number of activities that support the development of a strong FET sector. SOLAS will continue to administer the National Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS) and Safe Pass programmes.

Following the publication of the National Skills Strategy in January 2016, SOLAS agreed with the Department of Education and Skills to develop a Further Education and Training (FET) Policy Framework for Employee Development to guide ETBs in relation to employee development. After extensive consultation with stakeholders and approval by the Department, the policy framework was published for implementation in Q3 2018.

During 2018, SOLAS will continue to develop and refine the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) which provides detailed information to support ETBs in their planning and scheduling at a local level. From 2018, SOLAS will use formal data sharing agreements with other Government agencies to collect robust data on progression rates, certification and employment outcomes and this data will be used to support future FET investment.

The FET Professional Development Strategy and implementation plan were published by SOLAS and ETBI in November 2016. The strategy aims to enhance the skills of those involved in the delivery, administration and management of FET programmes, through strategically targeted and consistent training and development. SOLAS will play a key role in implementing pilot professional development programmes in the second half of 2018.

SOLAS will continue to provide online learning services through the eCollege platform to clients during 2018. In 2017 this service was delivered free of charge to approximately 11,500 beneficiaries.

Section 6: FET provision supporting skills for the economy and employment

FET Strategy 2014-2019 highlights the importance for stakeholders, such as SOLAS and ETBs, to collaborate with employers to identify short to medium-term skill needs that can be addressed through FET provision. There is strong evidence to suggest that ETBs are developing new and innovative programmes in collaboration with other Government bodies and employer groups that will aid skills development.

Section 7: Appendices

SOLAS is working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to align FET provision with the needs of the labour market and the promotion of economic growth and social inclusion



Section 1

Introduction

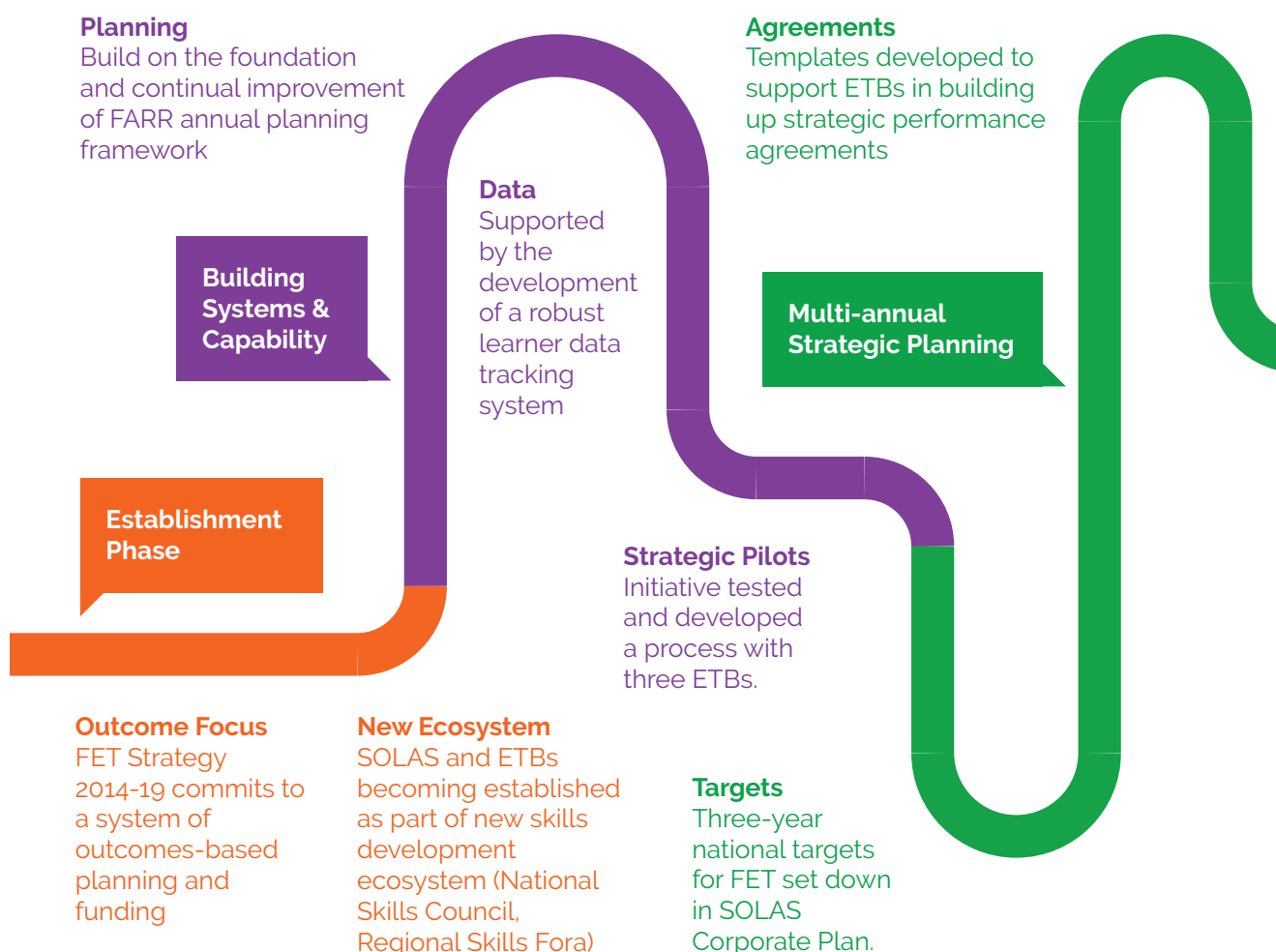
The purpose of this services plan is to set out how the state investment in further education and training (FET) will be deployed across the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS), and support agencies and bodies in 2018, and the outputs and outcomes that this investment is expected to deliver. SOLAS annual service planning is informed by national policies and strategies and evidence-based analyses of skills demand and labour supply, balanced against the funding allocated to the FET sector. This report therefore:

- Sets out the evolving economic, social and labour market context in which FET is being provided during 2018 (Section 2).
- Highlights the policy and strategic framework within which FET provision is planned, and the new multi-annual approach to strategic planning and performance, which is being implemented across the sector (Section 3).

- Provides an overview of projected FET provision in 2018, with detailed analysis via a series of tables and charts on the focus and nature of that provision (Section 4).
- Discusses some of the qualitative aspects of provision to offer further insight into the role of FET across learners, enterprises and communities (Section 5).
- Summarises some of the other supports and programmes that contribute to the effective delivery of FET (Section 6).

This is an exciting and important time in the development of FET. The establishment of SOLAS and the ETBs in 2014 laid the foundation for an integrated approach to further education and training for the first time. As set out in Figure 1.1 below, there followed a development phase during which these organisations determined appropriate structures, staffing and systems to ensure the effective integration of further education and training functions and resources into a

Figure 1.1 The evolving approach to strategic planning in the Further Education and Training Sector



holistic learner-centred service. As this was put in place and a planning and data gathering infrastructure was developed, the focus began to shift towards a more strategic approach to provision across the sector.

Following a successful two-year pilot initiative with three ETBs which looked at how strategic priorities could be set and targets pursued over a multi-annual period, a framework was agreed with ETBs for a new process of strategic dialogue to inform the development of three-year strategic performance agreements with SOLAS. The launch of the SOLAS Corporate Plan in 2017-2019, with a series of core national FET Sector Targets agreed with the Minister for Education and Skills for delivery across a three-year period, provided further clarity around what was expected from SOLAS and the ETBs.

An intensive support, planning and development process has been progressed during 2018 in order to bring these strategic performance agreements to fruition with each of the ETBs. The final documents, to be signed by the Chief Executive of the ETB and the Chief Executive Officer of SOLAS, are now close to finalisation. The agreements will reflect the unique characteristics and contribution of the ETB, its strategic priorities for FET, its commitment to implementing overall FET strategy and other relevant Government policies and articulate the contribution it will make to six key national FET Sector Targets over the period 2018-2020.

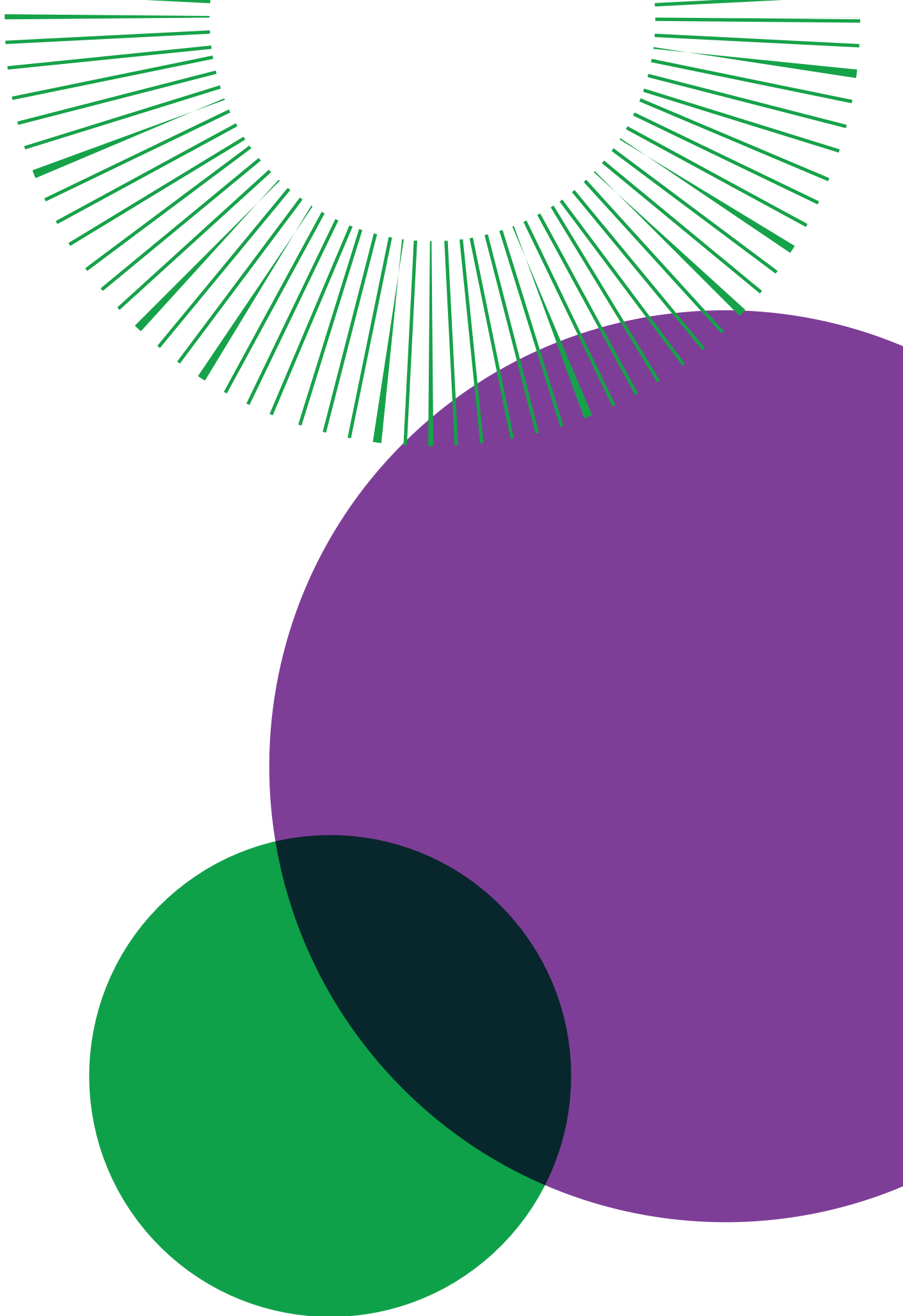
While the development of the strategic performance agreements has been running concurrently with the 2018 planning process, there is no doubt that it is already having an impact on ETB strategy and provision in the current year. The direction which is being set out within the agreements reflects many of the priorities which SOLAS had already communicated within the parameters and guidelines issued to ETBs in advance of their funding allocation requests for 2018. This included some re-balancing of provision from 'for employment' to 'in employment', the increased formalisation and accreditation of all levels of learning, the expansion of lifelong learning offerings, and a focus on meeting specific national and regional skills needs. Some of the notable trends that are apparent in the analysis of projected 2018 provision include:

- An overall increase in FET provision of 4.2 percent from 2017 levels to cater for almost 338,000 beneficiaries.
- An expansion of provision related to specific labour market skills clusters (13 percent), with a decline in provision related to transversal skills development (-2 percent).
- A strong focus on key skills needs, with provision in engineering related areas expected to more than double from 2017, and growth anticipated in provision related skills in ICT (20 percent), food and beverage (38 percent) and financial services (36 percent).
- An increase in apprenticeship and traineeship provision to reflect the evolving models of provision within these employer-focused programmes.

The impact of these agreements and their links with the annual planning process will become further embedded in 2019 and 2020, with a longer lead-in time for ETBs to roll-out the necessary changes. The overarching FET Strategy 2014-2019 also remains an important driver of activity, and a progress review undertaken earlier this year confirmed the continuing validity of its objectives, but noted the need for clearer learning pathways, closer integration with the wider education and training system and a shift towards upskilling the existing workforce.

This latter point is a reflection of the fact that, with unemployment levels having significantly reduced in recent years, there should be scope for FET to target provision on the low skilled in employment to ensure that they can sustain employment and build careers. However it is important not to lose sight of the fact that those unemployed learners presenting to FET tend to have more intensive needs, and require multiple interventions to steer them on a pathway back towards the labour market, and there remains strong demand for services as a result. It is also important to acknowledge the significant constraints in terms of staffing and re-structuring and a lack of capital investment that limit the extent to which rapid reform can be realised. The recent announcement of a policy framework for employee development, the further development of lifelong learning capacity and the implementation of the recommendations from the PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) review will all have implications for resourcing and structuring of FET provision, with such constraints limiting ETBs adaptability in the short-term.

Nevertheless with the clear direction now set out by ETBs, their contributions to key national FET sector targets agreed, and progress already apparent in realigning provision to meet and anticipate the rapidly evolving needs of the economy and society, the potential of the FET sector to support further growth and social cohesion is evident.



The economy continues to improve with strong domestic consumption and investment, and favourable international conditions viewed as the main factors underpinning growth



Section 2

Economy and Labour Market Trends Impacting FET

General economic outlook for the Irish Economy and the labour market

The economy continues to improve with strong domestic consumption and investment, and favourable international conditions³ viewed as the main factors underpinning this growth. Unemployment continues to fall⁴ with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Q1 2018 at 5.8 percent, the lowest rate since 2008. Improvements are expected to continue across all sectors of the economy into 2019. However youth unemployment remains high at 12.5 percent, while long-term unemployment accounts for over 37 percent of total unemployment. Employment figures have also been buoyed by the improving economy and in Q1 2018 a total of 2,220,500 people were employed, up 2.9 percent or 62,100 from the same quarter in 2017. The strongest occupational employment growth categories were professionals, operatives, and managers while the strongest sectors for employment growth were construction and industry⁵.

Focus on unemployment blackspots

Notwithstanding the remarkable turnaround in the economy and the labour market, there remain several areas of concern. The number of annual referrals of unemployed persons from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) to FET has been declining steadily⁶ in line with the improvements in the economy and the labour market. However, the number of individuals at risk of poverty has increased from just over 14 percent in 2009 to 16.5 percent in 2016⁷. While the monthly unemployment rate has fallen to 5.8 percent in Q1 2018⁸, Census 2016 revealed seventy-nine unemployment blackspots⁹ throughout the country where the unemployment rate exceeded 27 percent. While employment opportunities exist in many of these areas, the available vacancies cannot be filled by local unemployed residents through local recruitment, for a complex array of reasons. Research results indicate that many who are unemployed in these areas are long-term unemployed and in some cases have never been part

of the labour force at all. Early school leaving rates are particularly high in the unemployment blackspot areas with between two and three times the national average leaving school with just a primary education. As part of the 2018 planning process, ETBs have been requested to renew efforts to ensure that suitable FET programmes and services are accessible to equip residents in unemployment blackspots with the necessary skills and support to take advantage of the improved employment environment.

Labour market demographics

Since 1990, Ireland's population has been getting steadily older¹⁰. Census 2016 reported that just over 37 percent are aged 45 and older, with almost a third of the population less than 25 years old and a further third between 25 and 44 years of age. In effect employers in Ireland are facing a labour market with fewer young people and a greater number of older people. However, the number of early school leavers has declined¹¹ and there has been a steady increase over successive generations in the number of Irish workers completing second level education or over. Average retention rates at secondary level have also increased from approximately 80 percent in the early 1990's to over 90 percent for the 2010 entry cohort¹². Hence there is a disparity in Ireland between a relatively better educated youth cohort and a relatively poorly educated cohort over 50. The higher the level of education a person completes is important because there is a strong link between education levels and employment. People with skills at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education level (where FET is situated), have comparatively higher employment rates than those at low skills levels.

Literacy and numeracy

Addressing the low levels of literacy among the adult population in Ireland in general (16-65 years of age) remains a key SOLAS priority. How literacy skills are distributed across a population is closely correlated to how economic and social outcomes are distributed within society. The importance of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills for every citizen is evidently growing, yet half of the adult population (56 percent)

3 ESRI (March 2018), 'Quarterly Economic Commentary, Spring 2018'
4 Central Statistics Office (June 2018), 'Labour Force Survey, Quarter 1 2018'
5 Skills & Labour Market Research Unit (December 2017), National Skills Bulletin 2017
6 Source: SOLAS Management Information System
7 Central Statistics Office (December 2017), 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2016 Results'
8 Central Statistics Office (June 2018), 'Monthly Unemployment, May 2018'
9 Central Statistics Office (June 2017), 'Highlights from Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 2'

10 Central Statistics Office (July 2017), Profile 3 – An Age Profile of Ireland
11 Dept. Education and Skills (March 2016), 'Early Leavers – What Next Report on Early Leavers from Post-Primary Schools – Pupils Enrolled in 2010/2011 and not in 2011/2012?'
12 Dept. Education and Skills (September 2017), 'Education at a Glance 2017 OECD Indicators, A Country Profile for Ireland'

in Ireland have no ICT skills or can only fulfil the simplest set of tasks in a technology-rich environment¹³.

Low levels of literacy and numeracy also exist within the workforce, which can impede the introduction and dissemination of new productivity improving technologies, digitalisation and work-organisation practices. This can put the on-going viability of the business at risk, hence the focus that SOLAS places in progressing the Department of Education and Skills (DES) recommendations¹⁴ on improving adult literacy and numeracy in the FET sector for those seeking to enter employment and those already working.

Targeting skills development in a growing economy

Recent Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN) reports¹⁵ and Government strategies have quantified sectoral skills requirements. Demand for new jobs is expected to grow in ICT, data analytics, manufacturing including biopharma, hospitality and tourism, freight transport, distribution and logistics, agriculture and food. The Government's Construction 2020¹⁶ strategy forecasts employment growth in the order of 60,000 to 2020 as construction in the domestic housing sector accelerates. The Government's five-year International Financial Services 2020 Strategy¹⁷ forecasts growth of 10,000 jobs in this sector.

New types of skills demands are emerging that are becoming increasingly necessary across a whole range of occupations and sectors to enable and complement technical skills and employee 'know how'. These include digital, entrepreneurial, green and innovation skills. In general, a low unemployment rate signals skills shortages and many Irish-based employers report difficulty in finding individuals with the key skill sets they require¹⁸. SOLAS will continue to use its extensive research capacity to identify these skills and to provide ETBs with accurate labour market intelligence, to enable them to align their FET provision with the requirements of the relevant local labour markets.

SOLAS has identified 33 distinct skills clusters¹⁹, of which 28 have a specific labour market skills focus and five are linked to particular transversal skills. SOLAS has directed ETBs to rebalance provision and provide an additional 30,000 training places over the next

three years in areas where employment growth and skills needs have been identified²⁰. These performance objectives are now formalised within Strategic Performance Agreements between SOLAS and each ETB.

A summary of occupations where skilled employees will be required in the future is provided in the table on page 15.

Employee upskilling and lifelong learning

There are approximately 200,000 workers in the Republic of Ireland or around 10 percent of the workforce employed in low skilled elementary jobs. Individuals with a low level of skills find it more difficult to secure and sustain employment and are often at risk of poverty and deprivation, more likely to be in receipt of supplementary social supports and can often fall into the category of the 'working-poor'²¹. A common misconception is that elementary jobs are 'no-skill' jobs however, this is certainly not the case. Employers require at the very least that all employees have proficiency in transversal skills including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, problem-solving, and communication skills²². These are indispensable in all types of jobs and in all economic sectors²³. They have a huge influence on the proper functioning of employees, both in the workplace itself and in interactions with partners and customers. These skills are also enablers of personal fulfilment and development and can increase social inclusion. The SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 has set a target for ETBs to achieve a 10 percent increase in the rate of certification on courses that are primarily focused on developing these transversal skills.

There is also an increasing Government focus on workforce upskilling, with the recent launch of the policy framework for skills development of people in employment: Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland 2018-2021. This includes a commitment to free FET courses for all those existing employees with lower than Level 5 NFQ qualifications, which will be reflected in the future planning and funding of FET provision across ETBs.

Local businesses in Ireland have experienced a decline in productivity over the past decade. This partly reflects the low proportion of workers participating in lifelong learning activities. Ireland's participation rate (7.2 percent) is below the EU 28 average of nearly 11.6 percent and well behind top performers such as Denmark (31.7 percent)²⁴. Within strategic performance

13 European Commission Education and Training (October 2013), 'The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC): Implications for education and training policies in Europe'

14 Dept Education and Skills (January 2013), 'Review of ALCES funded Adult Literacy Provision'

15 Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2013), 'Addressing Future Demand for High-Level ICT Skills'; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2013), 'Key Skills for Enterprise to Trade Internationally'; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2014), 'Assessing the Demand for Big Data and Analytics Skills, 2013 – 2020'

16 Government Publications (May 2014), 'Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector'

17 Government Publications (March 2015), 'IFS2020: A Strategy for Ireland's International Financial Services sector 2015-2020'

18 IBEC (October 2017), 'HR Update Survey 2017 A spotlight on HR Trends in the Irish workplace'

19 SOLAS (June 2017), 'Evaluating Further Education and Training Expenditure: Strategic Pilot Initiative Report'

20 SOLAS (2017), 'SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019' Goal 1

21 Nevin Economic Research Institute (April 2017), 'A time-series analysis of precarious work in the elementary professions in Ireland'

22 N. L. Maxwell (2006), 'The Working Life: The Labour Market for Workers in Low-Skilled Jobs'

23 European Council (2018), 'Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning'

24 EGFSN (July 2016), 'Lifelong Learning Participation Among Adults in Ireland, Quarter 4 2015'

Skills Shortages in the Irish Labour Market		
ICT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Software developers — Cloud computing — Big data, testing & security — Technical support — Network engineers — Business intelligence — Technical support with languages 	Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Chemists/analytical scientists (especially product formulation, and analytical development for roles in biopharma) — Quality control analyst including pharma co-vigilance roles 	Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Production, process and quality, validation engineers — Product designers — Electrical, mechanical and chemical engineers — Quality assurance and control — Polymer engineers and technicians
Business & Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Risk & compliance — Accounting — Business intelligence — Data analytics 	Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Doctors — Nurses — Radiographers — Niche area specialists (e.g. audiologists, cardiac technician dieticians) 	Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project managers — Quantity surveyors — Building services — Structural and site engineers
Clerical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Multilingual financial clerks in fund accounting/administration — Credit controllers — Payroll specialists 	Construction trades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Curtain wallers — Glaziers — Steel erectors — Pipe layers — Shuttering — Carpentry — Shift managers and supervisors 	Other skilled trades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Chefs — Tool making — Welding (TIG, MIG)
Sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Technical sales, vendor managers — Customer relationship management (CRM) roles with European languages — Marketing experts in product & brand management 	Operatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — CNC — Drivers (fork lift special vehicle) 	Retention issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Care workers — Chefs — Butchers (factory) — Production operatives in the high-tech manufacturing/med-tech sector, elementary jobs

Source: Skills & Labour Market Research Unit (December 2017), National Skills Bulletin 2017

agreements between SOLAS and ETBs, individual contributions are articulated to meeting a national 10 percent increase in adults engaging in FET lifelong learning²⁵ interventions by 2021.

Globalisation and the Irish Economy

Ireland is one of the most globalised economies in the world²⁶. Large, mainly multi-national, enterprises (250 or more persons) employ approximately one third of persons engaged, despite accounting for only a small fraction (0.2 percent) of total enterprise numbers. In manufacturing, the 'Top 10' industrial enterprises account for just under half of all production in Ireland, with the remaining 3,116 accounting for the balance²⁷.

The manufacturing activity that remains is becoming increasingly highly skilled and knowledge-intensive, with manual and routine activities becoming obsolete²⁸. The consensus is that future automation and the application of digital technologies are likely to be most disruptive for workers whose skills are routine, who will have to switch to new tasks and jobs or risk sustained unemployment. In order to insulate these individuals from this impact of 'skills polarisation', SOLAS has developed a series of FET Sector Targets that are aimed at increasing the levels of FET provision and certification in areas where skills shortages have been identified and at increasing the number of individuals engaged in lifelong learning and upskilling activities.

Knowledge-intensive industries (and services) require a different approach to work organisation from traditional

²⁵ SOLAS (2017), 'SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019' Goal 1

²⁶ CSO Seminar (February 2018), 'Globalisation - Meeting the Measurement Challenges' Michael Connolly, Central Statistics Office

²⁷ CSO Statistical Release (July 2017), 'Irish Industrial Production by Sector 2016'

²⁸ UNESCO, 'Skills on the move: global trends, local resonances', Progress review of Technical and Vocational Education and Training since the Third International Congress in Shanghai' (2012).

manufacturing. This in turn requires a larger and growing proportion of the labour force to be competent in handling and processing information, in addition to their technical and transversal skills. Computer literacy and access to network facilities is becoming more important than literacy in the traditional sense. The National Skills Strategy 2025 highlights digital skills as vital for Ireland's future both in higher end dedicated ICT jobs and more widely as a basic core competence of all workers. Due to the speed of technological change and its impact on business processes, upskilling is a key priority²⁹. This is especially relevant for Ireland where investment in workplace learning is relatively low³⁰.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) accounted for 99 percent of the total enterprise population in 2015³¹. They also accounted for approximately 70 percent of total persons engaged in the workforce. Training needs of small firms differ from those of larger firms, making design of training and qualifications particularly important factors. SMEs tend to view more positively training that is targeted on their own specific skill needs and their own work environments. Therefore, flexibility in delivery is important, specifically unit-based, 'bite-sized' qualifications³² compatible with the workplace. FET providers will be required to develop effective employment engagement mechanisms in order to ensure that skills provision matches the skills requirements of the enterprise community. It is crucial for ETBs to maintain an awareness of the needs of their stakeholders, taking into account changes in economic climate, reductions and increases in unemployment at local and national level, and the evolving needs of enterprise and employers.

The awareness of how changing economic environments can impact enterprise employment and skills requirements is particularly relevant in relation to the uncertainty that surrounds the Brexit process. Brexit is expected to have a material impact on the Irish economy, and is likely to create volatility in exchange rates, disruption in supply chain activity, an increase in tariffs and taxes and a potential loss of key customers and suppliers. Brexit effects may also be felt in foreign direct investment inflows and the labour market³³. Due to Ireland's dependency on the UK market, Brexit poses a serious risk to the Irish economy as it has the capacity to reduce Irish exports by up to 20 percent in some sectors such as food and agriculture.

In November 2017 the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI), set out the

Government's enterprise strategy and response to Brexit in 'Building Stronger Businesses'³⁴. Education and training is seen as a critical enabler to help companies raise their productivity and develop internal innovation capabilities. ETBs and especially those adjacent to the border with Northern Ireland are scoping the potential implications of Brexit³⁵ for their programmes and services as part of the 2018 service planning exercise.

FET sector initiatives to enhance employability within the workforce

Work based learning

Significant activity is planned in new apprenticeship and traineeship development as set out in the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, which aims to establish work-based learning as a core contributor to skills development, employment and economic growth.

Apprenticeship

SOLAS has statutory responsibility for the co-ordination and oversight of the national apprenticeship system under the Industrial Training Act, 1967. Apprenticeship provides structured training in the workplace and off-the-job, leading to an award on the National Framework of Qualifications. Apprentices are employed for the duration of their apprenticeship.

In addition to its statutory role, SOLAS is the designated coordinating provider for development, delivery and maintenance of 25 craft-based apprenticeships. These apprenticeships are modular in structure, and generally comprise seven alternating phases of on-the-job and off-the-job training. On successful completion of a craft-based apprenticeship, apprentices receive a QQI Advanced Certificate-Craft (Major Award Level 6). The standing and value of this certificate is recognised nationally and internationally. A total of 1,462 apprentices were awarded an Advanced Certificate-Craft in 2017.

Throughout 2017 SOLAS registered 4,843 apprentices for training, of which 4,508 were registered on craft-based apprenticeships, which was an increase of 20 percent on the number of registrations in 2016. The forecast for apprentice registrations in 2018 and up to 2020 remains strong.

In April 2016, SOLAS in partnership with the ETB network commenced the process of implementing Version 4 for five craft-based apprenticeships, and there is ongoing work to continue revision of all programmes. Further work is being carried out on quality assurance with all policies and procedures being reviewed and enhanced.

29 Department of Education and Skills (January 2016), 'Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025' p41

30 Dept. Jobs Enterprise and Innovation (November 2015), 'Enterprise 2025 Ireland's National Enterprise Policy 2015-2025 Background Report'

31 CSO Statistical Release (June 2017), 'Business Demography 2015'

32 OECD/LEED (November 2012) Report for Workshop on 'Skills Development for SMEs and Entrepreneurship', 'Upgrading Workforce Skills in Small Businesses – Reviewing International Policy and Experience.'

33 Central Bank of Ireland (December 2017), 'Brexit Task Force: December Update'

34 Dept. Business Enterprise and Innovation (March 2018), 'Building Stronger Businesses'

35 Department of Finance (September 2017), 'UK EU Exit: Trade Exposures of Sectors of the Irish Economy in a European Context'

Following the 2013 Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland and publication of the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, apprenticeships are being developed in new industry areas leading to awards from Levels 5 to 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. A national Apprenticeship Council oversees the development work. SOLAS is represented on the Council and provides secretariat support. By the end of 2017 nine new apprenticeship programmes were operational, with a further 44 programmes in the pipeline. It is planned that a further twelve apprenticeships will be introduced in 2018.

As part of its statutory function, SOLAS is responsible for creation of Industrial Training Orders (ITOs) to designate specific industrial activities for apprenticeship. Three new ITOs were created in 2017 and a further five are due to be created in 2018. SOLAS also provides the funding to all consortia for development of their apprenticeships.

In parallel to development of new apprenticeships, the governance and administrative arrangements for all apprenticeships and the validation and accreditation processes necessary to support new and existing apprenticeships are being supported and enhanced.

In partnership with Education and Training Boards and with the HEA, SOLAS is proactively working to support a successful expansion of the national apprenticeship system to 2020, and to achieve the targets and goals as set out in the above mentioned action plan from 2016-2020.

Traineeship

Traineeships have been a key feature of the Irish education and training system for decades, serving the needs of all stakeholders including industry, employers and learners. Their primary aim is to provide learning in partnership with employers, improve employment outcomes for participants and increase retention and productivity within industry.

Education and Training Boards (ETBs), working in partnership with employers and employer representative bodies have developed traineeships in areas such as engineering, ICT, hospitality, construction, retail, business, logistics, sports and leisure, fashion and beauty, and finance. New traineeships are developed on an ongoing basis in response to identified skill needs. Such collaboration between education and training providers and industry enhances the performance of programmes and ensures the skill needs of industry are being met as well as maintaining Ireland's competitiveness, underpinned by a highly skilled workforce.

In November 2017, 'The Five Step Guide to Traineeship in Ireland' was launched setting out the key features of a traineeship in Ireland, as follows:

- They respond to an identified industry skills need
- Lead to an award at levels 4-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or equivalent
- Are between 6-20 months in duration
- Have at least 30 percent of learning on-the-job
- Combine transversal and technical skills development
- Are designed for flexible delivery: online, face to face, blended learning
- Provide open access to prospective trainees including people in employment

An evaluation of the Career Traineeship Pilot was completed in 2017 and the findings are informing traineeship development and delivery going forward. A review of pre-2016 Traineeship is currently ongoing and it is expected that the report will be available in the third quarter of 2018.

Plans are in place for additional traineeships in the following areas in 2018:

- Animal Care
- Automated Software Testing
- Bio Pharma/MedTech
- Builders' Merchant Retail
- Construction Skills for Employment
- Glazing
- Hairdressing and Barbering
- HGV Driver (pilot)
- Horticulture
- Life Sciences Manufacturing Operations
- Manufacturing Logistics
- Motor Technology/Engineering
- Pharmaceutical Manufacturing
- Professional Bus and Coach Driving (pilot)
- Welding/Fabrication

A promotional campaign will commence in 2018 with the purpose of increasing awareness of traineeship in the Further Education and Training sector.

The 2018 Services Plan
was prepared by SOLAS
in consultation with ETBs,
the Voluntary Secondary
and Community and
Comprehensive Schools,
and other partner
agencies and bodies



Section 3

Policy and Strategic Framework

Underpinning FET Provision

The policy framework

The first Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014-2019 was approved by the Minister for Education and Skills and published by SOLAS in 2014. The strategy continues to provide direction and focus for the setting of investment priorities, and for the establishment and development of a strong integrated FET sector that will meet the needs of the learner, enterprise and the community³⁶. The strategy reflects the on-going government focus on economic change and social cohesion and how investment in human capital through high quality education and training can be optimised.

An independent progress review of the FET strategy by Prospectus Management Consultants was undertaken during 2018. The review confirmed that significant progress had been made in the delivery of the strategy and that the strategic objectives remained valid. It emphasised the importance of implementing key outstanding actions, such as an outcomes-based funding model and an integrated FET guidance strategy. It also identified the need to prioritise key themes with the next FET strategy, including a shift from provision 'for employment' to targeted workforce upskilling, the development of much clearer learning pathways, and a whole education and training system approach which considered the role of FET and HE in meeting the future needs of society and the economy.

The Action Plan for Education 2016-2019³⁷ reinforced many of the commitments within the FET strategy and sets out a clear ambition for Ireland to become the best education and training service in Europe over the next decade. SOLAS is working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including Education and Training Boards, other Further Education and Training providers and the Department of Education and Skills to achieve this ambition.

The SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019³⁸ has been developed to align FET provision with the needs of the labour market, the promotion of economic growth, and social inclusion. As detailed earlier in this report, the targets agreed between the Minister for Education and Skills and SOLAS within the corporate plan have been

used as a framework to establish strategic performance agreements with ETBs over a three-year period, which are currently being finalised. These agreements will become a critical piece of planning infrastructure and will be closely linked to future service plans. It is intended that the targets within the agreements will be monitored, reviewed and revised annually on a rolling basis to maintain a future focus over at least a three-year time horizon.

The SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 also takes account of the improving economy and labour market situation and seeks to align FET provision with improving the skills of those seeking to enter the labour market in sectors that are experiencing skills shortages, or where significant employment opportunities exist. As unemployment continues to decline there will be an increased emphasis on targeted skills provision, upskilling workers with a low level of skills and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities³⁹ to support and sustain economic growth and active inclusion. In response to this need, SOLAS directed ETBs to rebalance provision from 'for employment' to 'in employment' with a reduction of 3.65 percent requested in the latter. This has been reinforced by the development of performance agreements, where ETBs have been planning for a re-balancing of provision over the period 2018-2020.

These core strategic documents are also supplemented by a series of other FET relevant Government or sectoral strategies, focusing on areas including rural and regional development, job creation, active inclusion and workforce upskilling. These sectoral strategies influence ETB provision and must be reflected in the service planning process and in the emerging performance agreements. Equally important is the ability to incorporate programme reform as a result of the on-going FET programme evaluations overseen by SOLAS. The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) review is now complete and the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), Specific Skills Training (SST) and Youthreach conclusions are expected in the latter part of 2018. Finally, a robust evidence base to identifying evolving needs is critical, and the Skills and Labour Market Unit (SLMRU) will continue to support and inform ETBs with regional and sectoral analysis.

³⁶ Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 to 2019, page 3

³⁷ Department of Education and Skills (February 2018), 'Action Plan for Education 2016-2019'

³⁸ SOLAS (2017), 'SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019'

³⁹ Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (March 2017), 'Lifelong Learning Participation Among Adults'

Formulating an outcomes based approach

Prior to the introduction of a 'strategic input and outcomes-based' funding model, SOLAS commenced a pilot exercise in 2015 to gain insight into the mechanisms and operations that are required to successfully implement an effective strategic planning model. This pilot initiative involved SOLAS and three ETBs working closely together to develop and agree strategic plans for each of the participating ETBs. The pilot culminated in 2017 with the publication of the Evaluating Further Education & Training Expenditure: Strategic Pilot Initiative Report and provided valuable learning and guidance for the rollout of the model to the 16 ETBs in 2018. The pilot highlighted a number of key factors that are necessary to implement an effective strategic input and outcomes-based' funding model.

Firstly, the importance of Overarching Planning and Funding Parameters and Requirements for Education and Training Boards that guide and provide direction for ETBs when formulating three-year strategic plans. Secondly, the importance of establishing accurate baselines from which performance improvements can be measured in the future. Finally, the need to capture accurate qualitative, quantitative, and financial data that measure inputs, outcomes and outputs and informs future FET investment decisions.

Prior to the implementation of the framework a comprehensive set of Overarching Planning and Funding Parameters and Requirements were developed and provided to ETBs. Systems that capture and report data were further developed and refined. SOLAS uses a number of data capture systems in the management of FET provision. FAR 1, 2, 3 are Word templates and FAR 4 is an Excel planning tool. The FARR System is a macro-planning tool that provides an overall view of FET provision. The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) provides a suite of tools for FET providers that enable them to manage and administer course provision. The system has three major components:

- The National Programme Database (NPD)
- The National Course Calendar (NCC)
- The Learner Database

A data exchange agreement was signed with the CSO that will provide SOLAS with robust data on key performance indicators such as progression rates and employment outcomes. This data will be shared with ETBs and will be used to evaluate performance and inform future FET investment decisions.

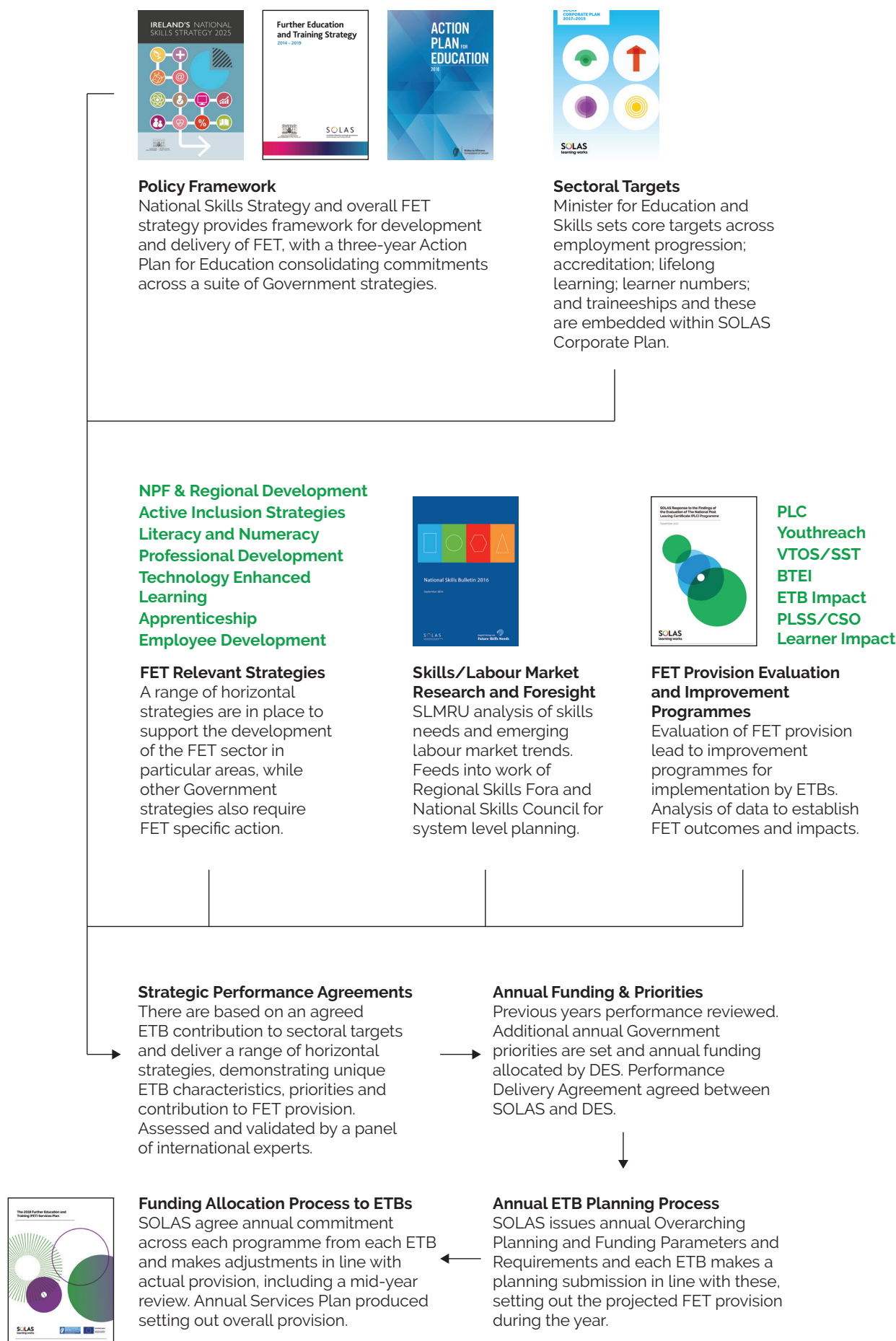
National FET Sector Targets

Aided by these developments, there are now clear aggregated national targets set for the FET sector:

- 10 percent more learners will secure employment from FET provision that primarily serves the labour market.
- 10 percent more learners will progress to other further or higher education courses from provision that is primarily focused on this purpose.
- 10 percent increase in the rate of certification on FET courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development.
- 10 percent increase of adults, who are seeking FET level provision, engaging in lifelong learning interventions (this target could be subject to upward revision following the benchmarking process).
- From 2018, for three years to 2020, an average increase of 10,000 learners per annum securing relevant qualifications (e.g. special purpose awards) in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified.
- 30,500 new apprentice and trainee registrations in the period 2017 to 2019 which will represent an increase in registrations from circa 6,000 in 2016 to circa 12,400 in 2019.
- SOLAS progress/monitoring reports on implementation of Strategic Performance Agreement over the lifetime of the agreements (referencing improvement plans where relevant targets/actions are not achieved) as appropriate.

SOLAS recognises that some ETBs will contribute more than others to the achievement of national FET Sector Targets and this will be a feature of new SOLAS funding arrangements for FET. This approach reflects and takes into account local conditions over which the ETB has no control, such as different socio-economic profiles within individual ETB catchment areas; different FET learner profiles; different levels and type of unemployment; different types and scale of industry and occupations. SOLAS will collate the individual responses to assess whether, in aggregate, national objectives will be met and will mediate if required.

Figure 3.1 Strategic context underpinning FET service planning



Implementation

Prior to implementation of the strategic input and outcomes-based funding model, SOLAS engaged in extensive consultation with ETB CEOs and FET Directors which resulted in further refinement and improvements to the proposed system. A plenary session with ETB Directors was held in February 2018 to launch the strategic performance agreement process. Support and development workshops were provided for each ETB to ensure a consistent approach towards completion of the target templates and the development of strategic performance agreements. The output from this process was the development of 16 individual strategic plans that will cumulatively achieve the overall national FET Sector Targets.

Each individual strategic performance agreement:

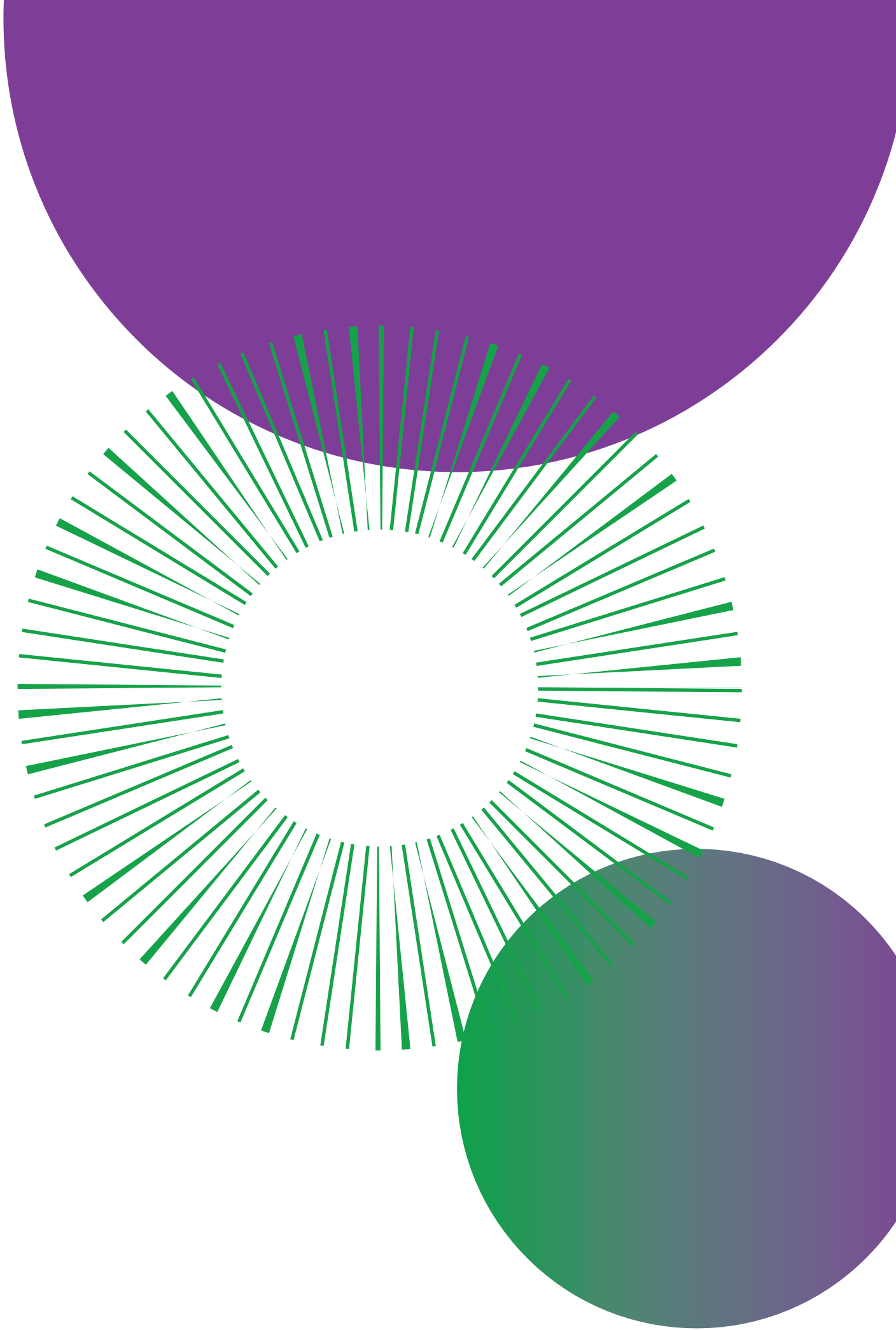
- Reflects the unique characteristics and needs of the area served by the ETB.
- Sets out the resources and infrastructure available to the ETB to meet these needs.
- Summarises the baseline provision in terms of FET provision.
- Sets out the ETB's strategic priorities for FET over the three year period.
- Identifies the challenges and risks in the context of providing FET.
- Highlights the contribution to be made by the ETB to deliver on national policies and strategies and individual FET strategy objectives.
- Identifies and agrees performance estimates and provision targets that take local demographics into account and supports the achievement of national targets.
- Identifies planned changes to provision to reflect the evolving needs of the area.

Following submission of draft strategic plans, representatives from the SOLAS Director Group met with senior managers from each ETB to discuss their strategic plans. A panel of external experts was also engaged to validate the approach taken during these strategic dialogues. Following the strategic dialogue meetings, ETBs were provided with feedback and invited to submit their strategic plans to SOLAS in the form of Strategic Performance Agreements.


The 16 Strategic Performance Agreements will be reviewed and agreed by SOLAS and a summary report of the aggregated planned provision will be compiled for publication. This document will complement the annual SOLAS FET Services Plan. It is envisaged that the 16 individual Strategic Performance Agreements will also be made available.

It is acknowledged that the 2018 process is a further development and evolution of the planning and funding processes that commenced in 2014. The Strategic Performance Agreement and associated strategic dialogue process will ensure that there is a focused, effective, transparent and dynamic relationship between SOLAS and the ETBs that can provide a platform for an agile FET sector maximising its impact on the economy and society. It is expected that these processes will be strengthened over the period to 2020 as new systems come on stream and familiarity with the new strategic approach becomes established.

An overview of the strategic and policy framework and the emerging role of strategic performance agreements in underpinning the SOLAS service planning process are set out in Figure 3.1.



The 2018 Further Education and Training Services Plan provides for a total budget allocation of €647.6 million which will be made available for SOLAS funded further education and training provision in 2018

The background features a gradient from purple at the top to green at the bottom. A large purple circle is positioned in the center-right, overlapping a dark green circle to its right. In the bottom-left corner, there is a green semi-circle with a white sunburst pattern of radiating lines.

Section 4

Top-Level Analysis of 2018 Funding Allocations and Provision

This section provides top-level analysis of the 2018 FET grant allocations and projected FET provision in regard to inputs, outputs and outcomes. No single metric can describe the overall picture of FET provision. For the purpose of this document the term 'beneficiary' is used to describe the total number of interventions supported through FET funding from which individuals will benefit from in a given year, irrespective of whether they are present at the start of the year or join a course during the year. This approach also recognises the fact that a learner may participate in more than one course during the year. Consideration must also be given to the degree of participation as some learners will partake in a full-time course, for example, a 46-week course delivered over an academic year, while others may participate in a part-time course, for example, delivered over a number of weeks for five hours a week. Both examples are considered equally when the term beneficiary is used. It is intended that future FET planning processes will encompass analysis of data to determine full-time equivalents within FET provision. This will facilitate a broader picture of the capacity of FET provision.

Budget allocations for 2018

The 2018 Further Education and Training Services Plan provides for a total budget allocation of €647.557

Table 4.1 **SOLAS Grant allocations for 2018**

SOLAS Grant Allocations for 2018	
Overall Grant Allocation Detail	€m
Total Grant Allocation to SOLAS for 2018	€644.282
SOLAS Income	€3.275
Total Budget	€647.557
Total Projected Expenditure for FET provision – Breakdown for 2018	
SOLAS Costs (including eCollege and TEL)	€63.810
SOLAS Capital	€0.500
Total SOLAS Costs & Capital	€64.310
For Grant Allocation after SOLAS Direct Costs	€583.247
Total ETB FET Grants	€566.245
Schools and Other FET Organisations funded by SOLAS:	
Other FET Providers	€1.218
FET Support Organisations	€4.449
FET LLL Opportunities	€0.180
FET Staff Representative Organisations	€0.081
FET CPD Provision	€0.502
EU and Specific Projects	€0.546
FET Support Projects (ETBI)	€1.255
Total Schools and Other FET Organisations funded by SOLAS	€8.232
Total 2016+ Apprenticeship Consortia & Contingency	€3.27
Capital Allocation to ETBs	€5.500

million which will be made available for SOLAS-funded further education and training provision in 2018. This is comprised of €366.8 million in Exchequer funding, €277.482 million from the National Training Fund and SOLAS income of €3.275 million.

Following provision for SOLAS running costs and direct programme costs (Apprenticeship, eCollege, Construction Services etc.) there is a budget available for distribution of €583.247 million. A total of €566.245 million is available for distribution to ETBs on the basis of their provision set out in each respective ETB Funding Allocation Request (FAR). There is also a provision of €5.5 million to support capital investment in ETBs. Funding of €8.232 million is provided for non-ETB schools and other organisations supporting FET. A budget of €3.27 million has been provided to fund apprenticeship development via consortia and for contingencies.

Funding allocations

Table 4.1 (SOLAS Grant Allocations 2018) provides summary details of the SOLAS grant allocation and how this will be utilised in terms of grants to:

- ETB FET Provision
- Schools and Other FET Organisations funded by SOLAS
- 2016+ Apprenticeship Consortia and Contingency

Analysis of data submitted through the Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) System

The Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting system (FARR) was used to capture planning data for 2018 and reporting data for 2017 to support the planning and funding process. The FARR system, which is now integrated with the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS), facilitated the capture of quantitative data by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to support their 2018 Funding Allocations Requests. The Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) and eCollege quantitative data is also captured in FARR for 2018.

For 2018, it is envisaged that some 337,966 beneficiaries (323,308 beneficiaries were planned for in 2017) will benefit from SOLAS-funded FET programmes and services, with 251,391 new entrants (230,641 new entrants were planned for in 2017) expected to participate in FET courses. Of new entrants commencing programmes in 2018, 52,058 will be long term unemployed persons and 18,221 will be persons with a disability. Full-time programme provision is planned at 74,358 and 174,948 beneficiaries will commence part time programmes.

Approximately 60 percent of beneficiaries will be individuals that require introductory level courses and supports focused on progression and transversal skills that will assist them in accessing further training or employment.

The Department of Education and Skills will continue to fund the PLC and 'co-operation hours' provision for teacher pay and student capitation in 2018 (this additional investment amounted to €157 million in 2017).

Set out below is a list of tables and charts that reflect the information obtained through the FARR system and Funding Allocations Requests submissions.

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- Table 4.3: Overview of FET provision: inputs outputs and funding allocations for 2018
- Table 4.4: Estimates of changes in FET programme provision planned for 2018 compared to the 2017 reported outturn
- Table 4.5: Planned FET skills cluster provision for 2018
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Further education and training outputs and outcomes

To support understanding of the concept of outputs and outcomes, explanatory notes are presented below.

Further education and training outputs

FET retention

In this plan, the concept of 'retention' is used, as opposed to the more common concept of 'dropout'. The concept of 'retention' captures the positive reality of learners progressing through their studies while also acknowledging the reality that some learners will leave the course early without completing a significant portion of it.

The term retention describes those who are estimated to be retained past 25 percent of the course duration (e.g. have not dropped out of the course early) in 2018. In the tables that follow, the percentage retention for beneficiaries is calculated as follows: the number of course beneficiaries completing more than 25 percent of the course duration divided by the total number of course beneficiaries.

FET completion

To understand the population base for the outputs and outcomes from FET provision in 2018, it is necessary to establish the number of learners retained on courses that are scheduled to finish (complete) in 2018. The concept of both 'scheduled course completion' and 'individual learner completion' on these courses needs to be considered.

FET courses can span a two-year period. In relation to 'scheduled course completion':

- Some of the courses funded in 2018, commenced prior to 2018 and will complete in 2018.
- Some of the courses funded in 2018, will commence in 2018 and will complete 2018.
- Some courses funded in 2018, will commence in 2018 and will complete after 2018.

Only learners that are estimated to complete/finish in 2018 will be considered in the calculation of completion values for 2018.

In relation to 'individual learner completion' on the courses scheduled to complete in 2018, the following must be considered:

- The learners who will fully complete their course of study
- The learners who will partially complete their course of study, i.e. have completed a significant portion of the course but left/exited the course prior to its completion and may have some success level in terms of outputs and outcomes
- The learners who will complete their course after 2018 and, therefore, will not be included in the 2018 completion values.

Where the tables in Section 4 refer to the percentage for completion, it is calculated by: the number of learners/beneficiaries estimated to finish/complete in 2018 less the estimated number of learners that have left their course early in 2018.

Understanding the basis for these 'completion statistics' is important as they underpin all the other output and outcomes estimates for 2018 FET provision.

FET accreditation

The term 'accreditation' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) on courses that are scheduled to finish in 2018 and who will achieve certification by the end of their course. The percentage certification rate is calculated based on the above number of beneficiaries (learners) on accredited programmes that are estimated to achieve certification, either QQI full or component awards and other awarding body (non-QQI) awards, divided by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2018.

Further education and training outcomes

FET outcomes include employment, progression to another course in FET or HET and personal progression.

FET into employment

The term 'into employment' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who will enter employment post-course participation. The percentage is calculated

by: the number of beneficiaries (learners) who will complete their course in 2018 and are estimated will enter employment on either a full-time, part-time or self-employment basis, (excluding apprenticeship completers, as they are already employed and community education completers, as the programme is not an active FET employment programme), divided by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2017.

FET progressing to another course in FET or HET

The term 'progressing to another course in FET or HET' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who complete their course and progress to other FET or HET courses, post their 2018 FET course participation. The numbers of beneficiaries (learners) progressing to another course in FET or HET is divided by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2018 to give the progression rate.

FET personal progression

The term 'personal progression' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who complete their course and progress on a personal level, e.g. through either voluntary work or an employment scheme. The percentage of beneficiaries (learners) achieving personal progression are calculated without the inclusion of apprenticeship completers by dividing the number of learners achieving a personal progression by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2018.

The data in the tables that follow represents, as appropriate, the projected estimated figures as provided by the ETBs, Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and SOLAS national programmes for 2018. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 present projected provision for 2018 by FET providers and programmes respectively. The data is presented on a full-time, part-time and community education basis. The data also includes the number of projected starters and beneficiaries and percentage analyses of projected data, relating to retained starters and completers.

Table 4.2 is presented over three pages and provides estimated data for FET provision inputs and outputs for 2018. It provides a breakdown of beneficiary numbers and grant allocations by ETB and other FET providers. Estimated numbers of starters, completers and certification rates on a full-time, part-time and community education basis by ETB and other providers is presented. Funding values do not include the full cost of PLC provision. There has been a notable re-focusing of FET provision towards particular labour market skills needs in the areas of engineering, ICT and Health, Family and Social Services. Details of these increases are provided under the analysis of planned FET Provision in 2018 by Skills Cluster (Table 4.5)

Table 4.2 Education and Training Boards and other FET providers: overview of provision inputs and outputs 2018

Education and Training Boards and other FET Providers: Overview of Provision Inputs and Outputs 2018								
FET PROVISION IN 2018		Estimate of Inputs in 2018				Estimate of Outputs in 2018		
Provider	Provision Type	Number of Beneficiaries			Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation
		Enrolled/ Started on 1st January 2018	Starting Courses During 2018	Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2018	Funding for FET Provision in 2018	Percentage of Beneficiaries retained on their course during 2018	Percentage of retained learners/ beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2018	Accreditation rate for learners/ beneficiaries completing courses in 2018
Cavan and Monaghan ETB	Full Time	1,957	2,791	4,748	€11,032,399	90.4%	55.5%	81.6%
	Part Time	1,195	5,454	6,649	€2,595,708	69.1%	84.7%	35.9%
	Community Education	75	1,390	1,465	€406,500	78.4%	105.9%	9.8%
	ETB Guidance Services				€350,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€1,905,319			
		3,227	9,635	12,862	€16,289,926			
City of Dublin ETB	Full Time	9,319	13,847	23,166	€58,083,100	84.6%	36.1%	77.2%
	Part Time	3,288	18,255	21,543	€10,387,900	89.4%	78.2%	22.4%
	Community Education	441	7,871	8,312	€2,050,000	94.8%	82.5%	5.4%
	ETB Guidance Services				€560,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€9,509,000			
		13,048	39,973	53,021	€80,590,000			
Cork ETB	Full Time	5,181	10,421	15,602	€34,373,935	90.6%	41.2%	63.1%
	Part Time	892	10,817	11,709	€5,439,527	85.8%	84.8%	18.2%
	Community Education	22	7,206	7,228	€1,095,000	98.7%	87.0%	1.4%
	ETB Guidance Services				€475,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€7,396,538			
		6,095	28,444	34,539	€48,780,000			
Donegal ETB	Full Time	778	1,300	2,078	€13,986,578	86.3%	54.3%	90.3%
	Part Time	1,130	3,062	4,192	€2,643,266	84.3%	74.8%	39.7%
	Community Education	76	4,982	5,058	€553,000	99.5%	88.6%	8.8%
	ETB Guidance Services				€355,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€3,672,156			
		1,984	9,344	11,328	€21,210,000			
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB	Full Time	4,259	7,895	12,154	€39,883,551	90.9%	59.0%	82.0%
	Part Time	1,568	9,362	10,930	€7,294,696	90.0%	79.2%	38.6%
	Community Education	167	3,740	3,907	€1,500,000	86.1%	93.4%	1.5%
	ETB Guidance Services				€650,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€11,121,753			
		5,994	20,997	26,991	€60,450,000			
Galway and Roscommon ETB	Full Time	2,409	4,007	6,416	€23,182,706	83.3%	50.3%	70.5%
	Part Time	1,179	8,323	9,502	€5,709,652	80.4%	80.7%	36.6%
	Community Education	70	2,993	3,063	€525,000	98.0%	90.6%	2.9%
	ETB Guidance Services				€407,642			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€4,385,000			
		3,658	15,323	18,981	€34,210,000			
Kerry ETB	Full Time	1,660	2,557	4,217	€18,632,980	88.9%	61.4%	89.4%
	Part Time	839	3,843	4,682	€2,641,445	82.9%	93.5%	57.6%
	Community Education	35	1,245	1,280	€281,437	100.0%	99.7%	0.6%
	ETB Guidance Services				€203,648			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€5,300,490			
		2,534	7,645	10,179	€27,060,000			

Table 4.2 Continued

Education and Training Boards and other FET Providers: Overview of Provision Inputs and Outputs 2018								
FET PROVISION IN 2018		Estimate of Inputs in 2018				Estimate of Outputs in 2018		
Provider	Provision Type	Number of Beneficiaries			Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation
		Enrolled/ Started on 1st January 2018	Starting Courses During 2018	Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2018	Funding for FET Provision in 2018	Percentage of Beneficiaries retained on their course during 2018	Percentage of retained learners/ beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2018	Accreditation rate for learners/ beneficiaries completing courses in 2018
Kildare and Wicklow ETB	Full Time	2,317	4,066	6,383	€22,819,428	88.6%	54.7%	74.6%
	Part Time	963	8,430	9,393	€3,463,050	91.1%	69.3%	35.1%
	Community Education	150	1,381	1,531	€544,986	90.1%	100.0%	0.1%
	ETB Guidance Services				€432,180			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€2,155,356			
		3,430	13,877	17,307	€29,415,000			
Kilkenny and Carlow ETB	Full Time	1,529	2,383	3,912	€14,425,803	81.4%	48.9%	66.5%
	Part Time	1,265	2,671	3,936	€2,453,000	88.3%	86.2%	39.1%
	Community Education	1	1,676	1,677	€345,000	94.9%	93.4%	4.9%
	ETB Guidance Services				€594,697			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€1,201,500			
		2,795	6,730	9,525	€19,020,000			
Laois and Offaly ETB	Full Time	905	1,420	2,325	€12,689,133	74.7%	60.3%	92.4%
	Part Time	3,119	4,225	7,344	€2,624,911	68.8%	73.6%	47.9%
	Community Education	15	371	386	€421,035	75.1%	96.2%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services				€376,369			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€2,333,552			
		4,039	6,016	10,055	€18,445,000			
Limerick and Clare ETB	Full Time	2,760	4,721	7,481	€33,089,228	92.2%	61.9%	76.3%
	Part Time	2,334	8,661	10,995	€6,923,731	83.7%	86.4%	35.8%
	Community Education	4	4,580	4,584	€810,000	89.9%	106.2%	0.5%
	ETB Guidance Services				€650,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€9,417,041			
		5,098	17,962	23,060	€50,890,000			
Longford and Westmeath ETB	Full Time	1,076	2,362	3,438	€17,322,887	69.3%	62.5%	56.3%
	Part Time	1,144	3,069	4,213	€3,095,067	85.8%	61.7%	40.2%
	Community Education	17	264	281	€244,982	88.3%	67.7%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services				€350,125			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€3,916,939			
		2,237	5,695	7,932	€24,930,000			
Louth and Meath ETB	Full Time	2,612	5,201	7,813	€22,674,286	86.6%	58.4%	70.4%
	Part Time	1,327	8,128	9,455	€4,032,398	84.7%	75.7%	31.2%
	Community Education	71	2,331	2,402	€376,120	100.0%	86.7%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services				€335,108			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€4,152,088			
		4,010	15,660	19,670	€31,570,000			
Mayo Sligo and Leitrim ETB	Full Time	2,053	3,471	5,524	€22,719,210	90.4%	56.0%	77.3%
	Part Time	1,120	5,686	6,806	€3,722,831	81.0%	90.0%	41.8%
	Community Education	45	4,222	4,267	€574,000	93.1%	100.6%	0.7%
	ETB Guidance Services				€440,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€4,393,959			
		3,218	13,379	16,597	€31,850,000			

Table 4.2 **Continued**

Education and Training Boards and other FET Providers: Overview of Provision Inputs and Outputs 2018								
FET PROVISION IN 2018		Estimate of Inputs in 2018				Estimate of Outputs in 2018		
		Number of Beneficiaries			Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation
Provider	Provision Type	Enrolled/ Started on 1st January 2018	Starting Courses During 2018	Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2018	Funding for FET Provision in 2018	Percentage of Beneficiaries retained on their course during 2018	Percentage of retained learners/ beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2018	Accreditation rate for learners/ beneficiaries completing courses in 2018
Tipperary ETB	Full Time	1,259	2,244	3,503	€16,577,998	84.3%	49.7%	92.5%
	Part Time	768	3,433	4,201	€3,184,482	67.2%	66.4%	56.5%
	Community Education	0	2,888	2,888	€507,000	62.5%	79.7%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services				€330,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€895,520			
		2,027	8,565	10,592	€21,495,000			
Waterford and Wexford ETB	Full Time	2,771	5,672	8,443	€35,590,389	87.4%	48.0%	82.0%
	Part Time	2,861	5,684	8,545	€6,033,224	89.9%	70.2%	39.6%
	Community Education	253	1,447	1,700	€635,000	82.2%	81.5%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services				€340,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€7,441,387			
		5,885	12,803	18,688	€50,040,000			
Total ETB Provision		69,279	232,048	301,327	566,244,926			
Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools ¹	Full Time	1,313	1,760	3,073	€320,000	89.4%	52.5%	88.9%
	Part Time	403	758	1,161	€396,487	89.2%	71.6%	73.2%
	Total	1,716	2,518	4,234	€716,487			
Irish Deaf Society	Full Time	77	325	402	€241,000	90.3%	53.2%	12.4%
NALA	Part Time	8,900	8,000	16,900	€260,000	30.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total Additional Provision		8,977	8,325	17,302	€501,000			
eCollege ²	Part Time	6,603	8,500	15,103	€1,972,000	49.9%	100.1%	23.2%
Total National Programmes Provision		6,603	8,500	15,103	€1,972,000			
FET PROVISION TOTALS	Full Time	44,235	76,443	120,678	397,644,611			
	Part Time	40,898	126,361	167,259	€74,873,375			
	Community Education	1,442	48,587	50,029	€10,869,060			
	ETB Guidance Services				€6,849,769			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€79,197,598			
	Profiled but Unallocated				€150,074			
	TOTALS	86,575	251,391	337,966	€569,584,487			

¹ Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools PLC enhanced capitation only

² eCollege funded through SOLAS allocation

Table 4.3 presents information on provision inputs and outputs on a programme basis. The information is in relation to full-time, part-time and community education provision across FET programmes. This table also indicates that the estimated total number of beneficiaries of FET provision for 2018 is 337,966 at a total cost of €569.584 million. The estimated overall beneficiary number of 337,966 includes the projected number of starters in 2018 of 251,391. This table also provides information on the estimated retention, completion and accreditation rates across the Education and Training Boards and other providers by programme for 2018.

The percentage analysis of starters retained and completers achieving accreditation is based on the planning data entered in FARR. Post-planning, the overall projected beneficiary numbers were reviewed compared to funding allocations and, where appropriate, revisions were made by FET providers, which are reflected in the table. The retained beneficiary calculations are based on the early-leaver estimates recorded in FARR and the revised overall projected beneficiary numbers.

Table 4.3 Overview of FET provision: inputs, outputs and funding allocations 2018

Overview of FET Provision: inputs, outputs and funding allocations for 2018							
PROVIDER	INPUTS			FUNDING	OUTCOMES		
Summary	Planned Inputs			2018	Analysis		
Programme	Enrolled as @ 01/01/2018	Projected Starters during 2018	Total Beneficiaries Projected for 2018	2018 Funding Allocation	Projected % of Beneficiaries Retained on all Courses	Projected % of Retained Beneficiaries Completing Courses in 2018	Projected % of Completers (full & partial) on all Courses achieving Certification
2016 + Apprenticeships	63	379	442	€3,040,616	58%	67%	89%
Apprenticeship Phases 2/4/6	1,174	8,612	9,786	€64,267,935	73%	95%	
Apprenticeship Phase 7	196	1,904	2,100	€0	80%	99%	99%
Blended Training	186	437	623	€1,044,169	80%	56%	61%
Bridging and Foundation Training	99	576	675	€735,408	73%	89%	47%
Community Training Centres	1,492	1,301	2,793	€33,204,933	80%	71%	65%
Justice Workshops	83	91	174	€747,217	76%	85%	54%
Local Training Initiatives	1,502	2,068	3,570	€23,003,876	84%	51%	71%
PLC	26,530	35,424	61,954	€6,974,082	91%	38%	84%
Specialist Training Programmes	1,639	1,830	3,469	€45,736,130	88%	62%	70%
Specific Skills Training	2,279	8,952	11,231	€42,615,421	88%	72%	71%
Traineeships Training	1,492	3,611	5,103	€37,655,963	85%	45%	72%
Traineeship Employed	0	38	38	€0	92%	11%	0%
VTOS	3,313	4,763	8,076	€71,722,823	88%	45%	65%
Youthreach	2,797	4,372	7,169	€66,335,038	79%	52%	58%
Total Full Time Programmes	42,845	74,358	117,203	€397,083,611	87%	50%	76%
Adult Literacy (incl. Family Literacy)	6,651	31,225	37,876	€26,312,079	87%	82%	23%
BTEI Groups (incl. Breacadh & Innovation Projects)	10,857	25,994	36,851	€30,924,392	84%	72%	56%
ESOL	2,504	12,245	14,749	€2,341,231	75%	75%	21%
Evening Training	430	14,969	15,399	€5,562,679	87%	95%	58%
FET Co-operation Hours	3,809	16,066	19,875	€0	83%	70%	11%
ITABE	108	2,670	2,778	€1,569,483	85%	94%	34%
Libraries Training	0	0	0	€11,500	0%	0%	0%
Refugee Resettlement (ESOL)	332	1,009	1,341	€2,991,243	87%	79%	6%
Skills for Work	241	3,823	4,064	€2,532,281	88%	88%	30%
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	60	1,102	1,162	€0	71%	89%	4%
Total Part-time Programmes	24,992	109,103	134,095	€72,244,888	84%	79%	35%

Table 4.3 Continued

Overview of FET Provision: inputs, outputs and funding allocations for 2018							
PROVIDER	INPUTS			FUNDING	OUTCOMES		
Summary	Planned Inputs			2018	Analysis		
Programme	Enrolled as @ 01/01/2018	Projected Starters during 2018	Total Beneficiaries Projected for 2018	2018 Funding Allocation	Projected % of Beneficiaries Retained on all Courses	Projected % of Retained Beneficiaries Completing Courses in 2018	Projected % of Completers (full & partial) on all Courses achieving Certification
Community Education	1,442	48,587	50,029	€10,869,060	92%	91%	3%
Total Community Education	1,442	48,587	50,029	€10,869,060	92%	91%	3%
VSCCS PLC ¹	1,313	1,760	3,073	€320,000	89%	53%	89%
VSCCS BTEI	403	758	1,161	€396,487	89%	72%	73%
Total All PLC	27,843	37,184	65,027	€7,294,082	91%	38%	84%
Total All BTEI	11,260	26,752	38,012	€31,320,879	85%	72%	56%
Irish Deaf Society (f/t)	77	325	402	€241,000	90%	53%	12%
National Programmes Full-time Total	0	0	0	€0	0%	0%	0%
All Full-time Programmes Total³	44,235	76,443	120,678	€397,644,611	87%	50%	77%
NALA (Write on/ Phone Tuition) (p/t)	8,900	8,000	16,900	€260,000	30%	20%	100%
On-line Learning (eCollege) (p/t) ²	6,603	8,500	15,103	€1,972,000	50%	100%	23%
National Programmes Part-time Total	6,603	8,500	15,103	€1,972,000	50%	100%	23%
All Part-time Programmes Total⁴	42,340	174,948	217,288	€85,742,435	79%	81%	35%
ETB Guidance Service				€6,849,769			
ETB Staff & Operational Costs				€79,197,598			
Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools				€716,487			
Profiled but unallocated				€150,074			
Total All Programmes	86,575	251,391	337,966	569,584,487			

1 Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools PLC enhanced capitation only

2 eCollege funded through SOLAS allocation

3 The accreditation rate for full-time programmes excludes Apprenticeship phases 2/4/6 as the individual phases are not accredited

4 The accreditation rate for all part-time programmes excludes Community Education Programme

Table 4.4 **Estimates of changes in FET programme provision planned for 2018 compared to the 2017 reported outturn**

Estimates of Changes in FET Programme Provision Planned for 2018 Compared to 2017 Reported Outturn							
ALL PROVIDERS	INPUTS		OUTTURN 2017		ANALYSIS		
SUMMARY	Planned for 2018		REPORTED OUTTURN 2017		Analysis of Variance		
Programme	Projected Starters during 2018	Total Beneficiaries Projected for 2018	Total Reported Starters Outturn of FET Provision for 2017	Total Reported Beneficiaries Outturn of FET Provision for 2017	Percentage Variance of Planned 2018 Starters V 2017 Reported Outturn	Percentage Variance of 2018 Planned Beneficiaries V Reported Outturn for 2017	Percentage Variance of 2017 V 2018 Funding Allocations
Full Time Provision							
2016+ Apprenticeships	379	442	28	28	1253.6%	1478.6%	100.0%
Apprenticeship Training1	0	0	7,526	9,075			
Apprenticeship Phases 2/4/6	8,612	9,786					
Apprenticeship Phase 7	1,904	2,100					
Blended Training	437	623	426	585	2.6%	6.5%	28.0%
Bridging and Foundation Training	576	675	685	813	-15.9%	-17.0%	-269.2%
Community Training Centres	1,301	2,793	2,049	3,408	-36.5%	-18.0%	1.3%
Justice Workshops	91	174	191	257	-52.4%	-32.3%	-31.5%
Local Training Initiatives	2,068	3,570	2,668	4,097	-22.5%	-12.9%	-8.2%
PLC	35,424	61,954	30,582	53,586	15.8%	15.6%	-2.3%
Specialist Training Providers	1,830	3,469	2,073	3,813	-11.7%	-9.0%	-2.3%
Specific Skills Training	8,952	11,231	10,729	13,805	-16.6%	-18.6%	-31.2%
Traineeships Training	3,611	5,103	1,770	3,075	104.0%	66.0%	30.5%
Traineeships Employed	38	38					
VTOS	4,763	8,076	4,001	7,235	19.0%	11.6%	-2.8%
Youthreach	4,372	7,169	5,055	7,696	-13.5%	-6.8%	0.6%
Full Time Provision Total	74,358	117,203	67,783	107,473	9.7%	9.1%	1.5%
Part-time Provision							
Adult Literacy	31,225	37,876	34,390	39,591	-9.2%	-4.3%	5.1%
BTEI Groups	25,994	36,851	28,437	34,953	-8.6%	5.4%	13.3%
ESOL	12,245	14,749	12,714	14,794	-3.7%	-0.3%	25.8%
Evening Training	14,969	15,399	14,487	14,905	3.3%	3.3%	-3.3%
FET Co-operation Hours	16,066	19,875	16,936	19,829	-5.1%	0.2%	0.0%
ITABE	2,670	2,778	2,254	2,329	18.5%	19.3%	-23.5%
Libraries Training	0	0	0	0			
Refugee Resettlement	1,009	1,341	1,179	1,316	-14.4%	1.9%	31.2%
Skills for Work	3,823	4,064	3,335	3,435	14.6%	18.3%	-10.6%
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	1,102	1,162	1,212	1,271	-9.1%	-8.6%	0.0%
Total Part-time Programmes	109,103	134,095	114,944	132,423	-5.1%	1.3%	8.6%
Variable Time Provision							
Community Education	48,587	50,029	53,581	54,189	-9.3%	-7.7%	0.3%
Total Variable Time Provision	48,587	50,029	53,581	54,189	-9.3%	-7.7%	0.3%
VSCCS Provision							

Table 4.4 **Continued**

Estimates of Changes in FET Programme Provision Planned for 2018 Compared to 2017 Reported Outturn							
ALL PROVIDERS	INPUTS		OUTTURN 2017		ANALYSIS		
SUMMARY	Planned for 2018		REPORTED OUTTURN 2017		Analysis of Variance		
Programme	Projected Starters during 2018	Total Beneficiaries Projected for 2018	Total Reported Starters Outturn of FET Provision for 2017	Total Reported Beneficiaries Outturn of FET Provision for 2017	Percentage Variance of Planned 2018 Starters V 2017 Reported Outturn	Percentage Variance of 2018 Planned Beneficiaries V Reported Outturn for 2017	Percentage Variance of 2017 V 2018 Funding Allocations
VSCCS PLC	1,760	3,073	1,747	3,080	0.7%	-0.2%	-37.7%
VSCCS BTEI	758	1,161	844	1,212	-10.2%	-4.2%	19.4%
VSCCS Provision Total	2,518	4,234	2,591	4,292	-2.8%	-1.4%	-6.1%
National Programmes Provision							
On-line Learning (eCollege) (p/t)	8,500	15,103	8,739	10,157	-2.7%	48.7%	14.6%
National Programmes Part-time Total	8,500	15,103	8,739	10,157	-2.7%	48.7%	14.6%
Other Programme Provision							
Irish Deaf Society (f/t)	325	402	278	301	16.9%	33.6%	0.4%
NALA Write on (p/t)	8,000	16,900	6,568	15,668	21.8%	7.9%	15.4%
Other Programme Provision Total	8,325	17,302	6,846	15,969	21.6%	8.3%	8.2%
Total All Programmes	251,391	337,966	254,484	324,503			

1 Apprenticeship Training split in 2018 into two programme groups: Group 1 includes phases 2, 4 & 6 and Group 2 includes Phase 7.

Analysis of planned FET provision in 2018 by skills clusters

All programmes within PLSS are mapped to a skills cluster using Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. This enables each course scheduled against a particular programme to be categorised by a skills cluster. The skills clusters and SOC code alignment will provide enriched data on existing and future skills demands and more pertinently the FET response to those demands. It allows labour market research to be linked to course provision at both ETB and national level. As noted earlier in this report, 28 skills clusters have a specific labour market skills focus and 5 are linked to transversal skills.

2018 labour market focus skills clusters and transversal skills focus clusters

There has been a notable re-focusing of FET provision towards particular labour market skills needs. The percentage of projected beneficiaries of FET provision classified under the labour market focused skills clusters for 2018 shows an increase of just under 13 percent when compared with 2017 reported outturn, whereas the percentage of beneficiaries of FET provision classified under transversal skills focus clusters has decreased by 2 percent.

Engineering

There are five engineering clusters in the skills cluster categories: Engineering, Engineering (Electrical), Engineering (IT), Engineering (Mechanical) and Engineering (Transport). The proportion of FET provision planned for engineering related skills clusters in 2018 is 9.3 percent, based on total beneficiary numbers for labour market focus skills clusters. This represents an increase of FET provision within the engineering related skills clusters of almost 127 percent compared to 2017 reported outturn. The largest increases were in Engineering (Electrical) and Engineering (Transport), areas in which skills shortages were identified.⁴⁰

ICT

It is estimated that 6.3 percent of beneficiaries of labour market skills focus FET provision in 2018 will be from the combined Information Technology and Web Development and Design skills clusters in which skills shortages were identified⁴¹. This represents an increase of just over 20 percent in the planned beneficiary numbers in these skills clusters when compared with 2017 reported numbers.

⁴⁰ National Skills Bulletin 2017

⁴¹ National Skills Bulletin 2017

Health, family and other social services

In 2018, it is projected that just over 24 percent of beneficiaries of labour market focus skills clusters FET Provision will be from the Health, Family and Other Social Services Skills Cluster. This is an increase on the 2017 reported outturn by 5.84 percent.

Transversal skills focus

FET Provision with transversal skills focus is concentrated within two skills clusters: Core Personal (50 percent) and General Learning (43 percent). The planned FET provision within the combined transversal skills clusters for 2018 represents just over 56 percent of the provision as a proportion of the beneficiary numbers. Compared to the reported outturn for 2017, this represents a marginal decrease (0.9 percent) in transversal skills focused FET provision planned for 2018.

Table 4.5 **Planned FET skills cluster provision for 2018**

Planned FET Skills Cluster Provision for 2018						
Skills Cluster	PROJECTED INPUTS			ANALYSIS		
	Beneficiaries Enrolled/Started as @ 1st January 2018	Beneficiaries Starting Courses during 2018	Total Number of Beneficiaries of FET Provision during 2018	Percentage Proportion of 2018 Projected Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster Focus	Percentage Proportion of Beneficiaries Projected to Complete Courses in 2018 by Skills Cluster Focus	Percentage Change in 2018 Projected Beneficiaries Compared to 2017 Reported Outturn
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	1,026	1,872	2,898	2%	1%	18%
Animal Science	1,055	1,409	2,464	2%	1%	14%
Arts & Crafts	3,104	4,505	7,609	5%	2%	11%
Built Environment	1,011	4,993	6,004	4%	3%	-13%
Business, Administration	7,821	14,047	21,868	15%	7%	10%
Engineering	434	736	1,170	1%	0%	42%
Engineering (Electrical)	581	4,027	4,608	3%	2%	471%
Engineering (IT)	59	284	343	0%	0%	50%
Engineering (Mechanical)	449	3,766	4,215	3%	2%	37%
Engineering (Transport)	615	2,803	3,418	2%	1%	201%
Entrepreneurship	20	881	901	1%	0%	2%
Financial Services	1,450	1,705	3,155	2%	1%	36%
Food and Beverage	926	2,527	3,453	2%	1%	38%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	2,848	4,978	7,826	5%	2%	14%
Health, Family other Social Services	13,417	22,059	35,476	24%	12%	6%
Information Technology	2,779	5,127	7,906	5%	2%	23%
Management	818	1,590	2,408	2%	1%	32%
Manufacturing	221	839	1,060	1%	0%	-71%
Media Graphics Communications	3,219	4,316	7,535	5%	2%	17%
Natural Resources	0	28	28	0%	0%	-30%

Table 4.5 **Continued**

Planned FET Skills Cluster Provision for 2018						
	PROJECTED INPUTS			ANALYSIS		
Skills Cluster	Beneficiaries Enrolled/Started as @ 1st January 2018	Beneficiaries Starting Courses during 2018	Total Number of Beneficiaries of FET Provision during 2018	Percentage Proportion of 2018 Projected Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster Focus	Percentage Proportion of Beneficiaries Projected to Complete Courses in 2018 by Skills Cluster Focus	Percentage Change in 2018 Projected Beneficiaries Compared to 2017 Reported Outturn
Research and Education-Training	69	626	695	0%	0%	40%
Sales & Marketing	2,149	3,666	5,815	4%	2%	24%
Science and Technology	637	970	1,607	1%	0%	23%
Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	253	1,828	2,081	1%	1%	-1%
Sport and Leisure	2,326	3,090	5,416	4%	1%	1%
Tourism	1,221	2,097	3,318	2%	1%	28%
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	324	2,319	2,643	2%	1%	-34%
Web Development & Design	498	910	1,408	1%	0%	8%
Total Labour Market Skills Focus	49,330	97,998	147,328			13%
Core ICT	3,750	8,532	12,282	6%	3%	21%
Core Personal	18,831	76,106	94,937	50%	32%	1%
General Learning	14,456	67,980	82,436	43%	28%	-6%
Language	0	40	40	0%	0%	0%
Skills Sampling	208	735	943	0%	0%	-29%
Total Transversal Skills Focus	37,245	153,393	190,638			-2%
Total All Skills Clusters	86,575	251,391	337,966			4%

The top four labour market skills focus clusters, based on percentage proportion of planned beneficiary numbers in 2018 within the labour market skills focus provision, are listed in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 **Labour market skills focus clusters - top four planned**

Labour Market Skills Focus Clusters - Top Four Planned		
Labour Market Focus Skills Cluster	Percentage Proportion of Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster	Number of Beneficiaries
Health, Family and other Social Services	24.10%	35,476
Business, Administration	14.80%	21,868
Information Technology	5.40%	7,906
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	5.30%	7,826

Table 4.7 **Labour market skills focus clusters - top four increases**

Labour Market Skills Focus Clusters - Top Four Increases		
Labour Market Focus Skills Cluster	Percentage change in 2018 Planned Beneficiaries compared to 2017 Reported Outturn	Number of Beneficiaries
Engineering (combined)	126%	13,754
Research, Education & Training	40%	695
Food and Beverage	38%	3,453
Financial Services	36%	3,155

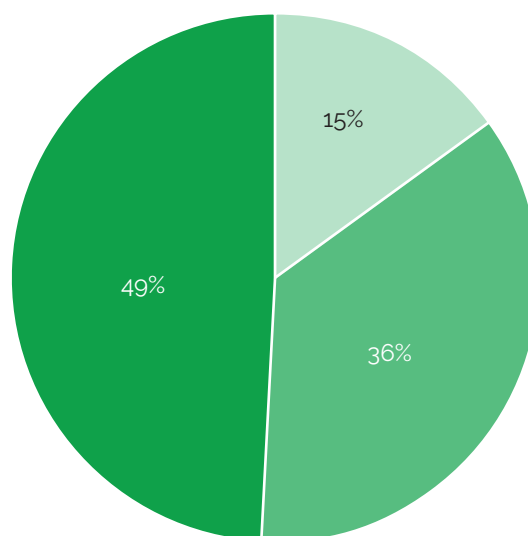
The top four increases based on percentage proportion of planned beneficiary numbers in 2018 compared to 2017 reported outturn, within the labour market skills focused provision, are listed in table 4.7.

FET provision and outcomes for 2018

The charts below provide information on FET provision outcomes with a focus on estimates related to beneficiary completion/exit and progression outcomes for 2018.

Fig 4.1 provides overall data in percentage terms in relation to the estimated number of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2018 on a full-time, part-time basis and through community education.

Fig 4.1 **Estimated percentage of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2018 by provision type**



● Full-time ● Part-time ● Community Education

Note: The data represents the projected figures provided by FET providers for 2018.

Estimates of FET outputs for beneficiary completions/exits during 2018

Fig 4.2 presents a breakdown, in percentage terms, of estimated completions and exits of total beneficiaries in full-time, part-time and community education programmes. The data available indicates that across the three programme duration types, an average of:

- 47 percent of beneficiaries will be 'full completers'.
- 9 percent of beneficiaries will be 'partial completers'.
- 18 percent of beneficiaries will be 'early leavers'.
- 26 percent of beneficiaries will not complete in 2018 and will continue their studies into 2019.

Fig 4.2 **Estimate of FET outputs for beneficiary completion/exits during 2018**

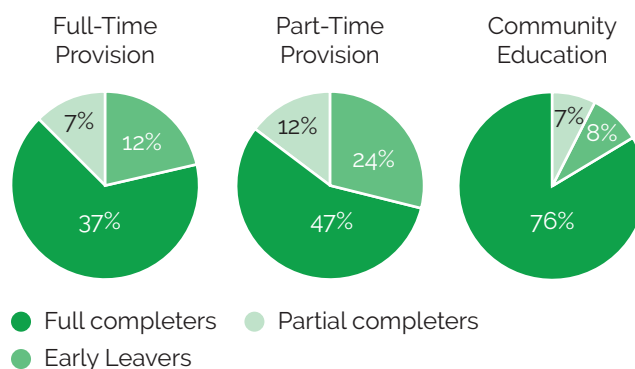
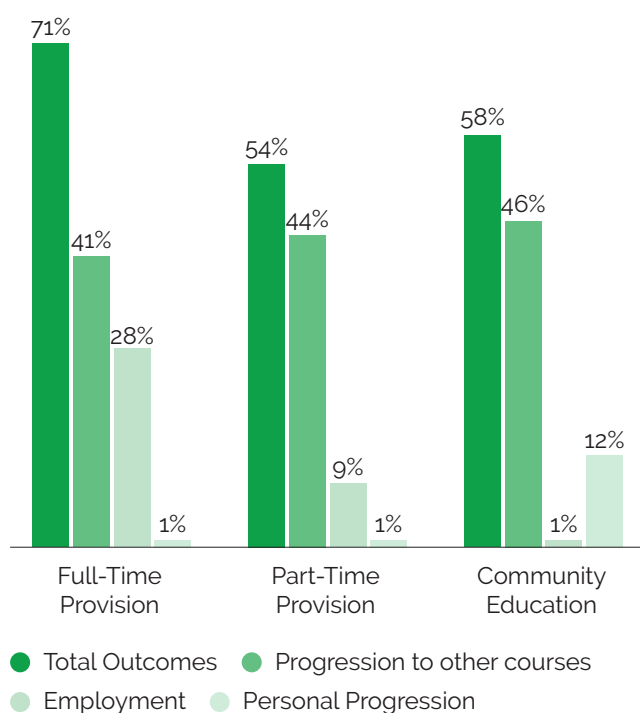


Fig 4.3 provides an estimate of outcomes in the context of full-time, part-time and community education provision in 2018 for beneficiaries:

- Gaining employment
- Progressing to further studies/learning
- Personal progression

The estimated outcomes for those completing FET courses during 2018, indicates that 43.6 percent are expected to progress to other courses at the same or higher level and 12.3 percent are expected to enter employment.

Fig 4.3: Estimate of outcomes for beneficiaries completing FET provision during 2018



Wider benefits of learning

Educational participation has a range of benefits that extend beyond the classroom into personal life and into the community. These widespread benefits of learning occur at individual, organisational and societal levels. While learners may embark on a journey of education to improve their job prospects, gain new skills, progress to a higher level of education and training or acquire a qualification, they will invariably accrue a range of wider benefits from their participation in further education and training.

The returns on investment in education are well documented; they include increased earnings, improved literacy and numeracy, increased employment opportunities, economic growth and social equity and career development. The wider benefits of learning, however, are not as well documented and this may be attributed to the difficulty in measuring soft outcomes.

Anecdotal evidence reports that the non-economic or wider benefits of adult learning are: improved health, better life satisfaction and wellbeing, transversal skills, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, civic participation and greater individual motivation.

However, "VET itself can deepen educational inequalities if its value is not recognised both socially and monetarily⁴²". SOLAS will lead a social and economic impact study of an Education and Training Board which aims to assign a monetary value to the social benefits of FET, evidencing the social returns of learning for the first time. The research will also examine the wider impact of the ETB on the cultural and social fabric of the area that it serves.

FET provision for literacy and numeracy

The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 states 'FET provision will support the active inclusion of people of all abilities with special reference to literacy and numeracy.'

The Further Education and Training Strategy continues to focus all FET providers on increasing levels of literacy and numeracy for learners. Literacy and numeracy are important skills in supporting participation in society and gaining and sustaining employment. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, contained within the Further Education and Training Strategy, aims to achieve the best possible outcomes for learners with literacy and numeracy needs. The strategy includes the following elements:

- Advertising and promotion of literacy and numeracy
- Fit-for-purpose screening and assessment systems
- Increased participation, completion and attainment at NQF levels 1-3 for learners
- Broader access and range of provision
- Literacy and numeracy for personal, family, social and community contexts
- Provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and initial competency assessment for low qualified and unemployed migrants
- Improved data collection and analysis via PLSS
- Staff support through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and review existing CPD structures
- Research into the practice and impact of integrating literacy and numeracy into all FET programmes
- Increased numeracy offered as integrated and standalone options

⁴² CEDEFOP (2011), RESEARCH PAPER No 17: 'Vocational education and training is good for you. The social benefits of VET for individuals'

SOLAS, in partnership with providers and other agencies, will support the realisation of these outcomes throughout 2018.

FET provision for the long term unemployed (LTU) and unemployment blackspots

Unemployment continues to fall and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2018 was 5.8 percent. It is estimated that 21 percent of starters on FET provision in 2018 will be long-term unemployed. As noted earlier in the report, although the unemployment rate has fallen to below 6 percent (June 2018) Census 2016 has identified 79 unemployment blackspots. As part of the 2018 service planning process, ETBs have been requested to renew efforts to ensure that suitable FET programmes and services are provided to residents of these areas.

The CSO reports that in the year to May 2018, the number of persons classified as long-term unemployed decreased by 34,800 (-40.9 percent), bringing total long-term unemployment to 50,100. Long-term unemployment now accounts for 37.7 percent of total unemployment.

Refugee Resettlement Programme

The Refugee Resettlement programme began following an announcement in July 2015 by the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, which confirmed that a total of 1,040 Syrian refugees would be selected for resettlement in Ireland. Ireland has committed to supporting the relocation of a further 1,723 people for relocation and resettlement in 2019. In addition, a new Family Reunification Humanitarian Admission Programme will see 530 family members of refugees come to Ireland. In support of the Resettlement and Relocation programmes, English language and orientation training for refugees will be funded by SOLAS and delivered by the local ETB. Adults will attend classes for the duration of their orientation (approximately eight to ten weeks). On relocation to their new homes, regardless of location, all adult refugees will be provided with access to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training to enable them to achieve the levels necessary to progress to further education or employment.

FET provision for people with a disability

SOLAS, through the SOLAS/ETB Strategic Performance Agreements & Planning Framework 2018-2020, and in conjunction with Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection/INTREO, supports the achievement of the goal of active inclusion as set out in the SOLAS FET Strategy (2014-2019). Subsequent Government strategies relevant to learners with disabilities, including The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 as well as The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 also inform the actions taken by the FET sector to achieve this goal.

The Further Education and Training sector supports the active inclusion of learners with disabilities in the following ways:

- FET programmes are available to all learners, including those with a disability who meet the eligibility criteria and the guidelines provided for each FET programme.
- Specific FET programmes are provided for persons with a disability, who require more intensive support, through Specialist Training Providers (STPs).
- Community Education, which assists learners with a disability to participate in FET provision by adapting course content, resources and teaching methodologies to suit their abilities.

In accordance with the relevant legislation, all FET providers offer reasonable accommodation to learners with disabilities. The nature of those accommodations varies depending on the identified needs of individual learners. For those learners with disabilities on PLC programmes, funding for specific supports can be obtained via the Higher Education Authority "Fund for Students with Disabilities", which allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with disabilities.

Estimate for specific target groups participating in FET provision in 2018

Table 4.8 details the estimated number of long-term unemployed beneficiaries and beneficiaries with a disability expected to start a FET provision course in 2018.

Table 4.8: **Estimate for specific target groups participating in FET provision in 2018**

Estimates for Specific Target Groups Participating in FET Provision in 2018			
Programme	Total Projected Starters in 2018	Projected Beneficiary Number for Long Term Unemployed persons starting courses during 2018	Projected Beneficiary Number of persons having a disability starting courses during 2018
2016 + Apprenticeships	379	3	2
Apprenticeship Phases 2/4/6	8,612	0	55
Apprenticeship Phase 7	1,904	0	28
Blended Training	437	81	3
Bridging and Foundation Training	576	188	38
Community Training Centres	1,301	112	30
Justice Workshops	91	27	6
Local Training Initiatives	2,068	966	138
PLC	35,424	4,611	2,472
Specialist Training Programmes	1,830	280	1,495
Specific Skills Training	8,952	2,876	306
Traineeships Training	3,611	1,167	103
Traineeship Employed	38	0	0
VTOS	4,763	2,935	406
Youthreach	4,372	168	233
Total Full Time Programmes	74,358	13,415	5,313
Adult Literacy	31,225	9,861	2,764
BTEI Groups	25,994	6,684	1,533
ESOL	12,245	4,690	349
Evening Training	14,969	2,285	153
FET Co-operation Hours	16,066	3,033	1,539
ITABE	2,670	1,194	145
Libraries Training	0	0	0
Refugee Resettlement	1,009	436	41
Skills for Work	3,823	36	35
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	1,102	401	97
Total Part-time Programmes	109,103	28,620	6,656
Community Education	48,587	6,739	5,805
Total Community Education	48,587	6,739	5,805
VSCCS PLC	1,760	176	141
VSCCS BTEI	758	303	61
Total All PLC	37,184	4,787	2,613
Total All BTEI	26,752	6,987	1,594
Irish Deaf Society (f/t)	325	0	0
National Programmes Full-time Total	0	0	0
All Full-time Programmes Total	76,443	13,591	5,454
NALA Write on (p/t)	8,000	0	160
On-line Learning (eCollege) (p/t)	8,500	2,805	85
National Programmes Part-time Total	8,500	2,805	85
All Part-time Programmes Total	174,948	38,467	12,767
Total All Programmes	251,391	52,058	18,221

Grants for other providers

Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS)

Grant allocations will be provided to 11 Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools in 2018. The grant allocations of €397,847 will be provided for the purpose of provision of the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). Details of grant allocations to Voluntary and Secondary Schools are provided in Appendix 6. The Department of Education and Skills will continue to fund all PLC and co-operation hours provision (teacher pay and student capitation), estimated at €189 million for 2018.

SOLAS will have responsibility for Enhanced Capitation and Locally Devised Assessments (LDAs) payments to Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools. There are 1,387 places approved for PLC courses in 2018 and details of the schools and colleges that will receive grant allocations through the DES Post-Primary Payment Section in 2018 are provided in Appendix 7.

Table 4.9 sets out the detail of grants in respect of other provision, which are made to the Irish Deaf Society, NALA and for PLC Enhanced Capitation.

Fig 4.9 **Grant allocations for additional provision in 2018**

Grant Allocations for Other FET Providers 2018		
Providers	Programme	Funding
Irish Deaf Society	Adult Literacy	€241,000
NALA	Adult Literacy (Write On)	€260,000
PLC	PLC Enhanced Capitation	€320,000
Total		€821,000

Due to the nature of the services provided by the Irish Deaf Society e.g. provision of literacy courses for the deaf community through Irish sign language (the Deaf Community's first/preferred language), this provision has been included in the programme tables 4.2 and 4.3.

FET-support organisations

Grant allocations to agencies and bodies in the Further Education and Training Sector

A portion of the funding that SOLAS will receive from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) during 2018 will be allocated to a number of agencies and bodies that support and provide services to the FET sector.

To facilitate funding in 2018 SOLAS developed a guideline document titled Overarching Planning and Funding Parameters and Requirements for 2018 Grant Allocations by SOLAS to agencies in the FET Sector. The document was issued to a range of agencies whose organisational objectives are closely aligned to

the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019. They were requested to outline their proposed activities for 2018 with reference to the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019, and to list the expected outcomes and the grant required. The document sets out the protocols and procedures for grant allocations in 2018.

SOLAS evaluated the submissions received and the grants requested from Agencies and Bodies. Grants were approved based on the alignment of planned activities to the overall FET Strategy.

The following tables provide a list of the Agencies and Bodies grouped according to the type of activities planned for 2018 and their grant allocations.

The following table sets out grants related to organisations that provide support within the FET sector.

Table 4.10 **FET- support organisations**

FET Support Organisations		
Agency/Body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
AHEAD	To conduct a scoping exercise to identify current good inclusive practices nationally within FET and to improve the capacity and infrastructure of FET to become more inclusive in its practice.	€80,000
AONTAS	Advocacy organisation for Learners for the formal and non-formal adult and community education sector. Develop a National Adult Learners Forum in collaboration with the ETBs and other key stakeholders as part of the new FET Strategy.	€1,171,500
Dyslexia Association of Ireland	Provide services and supports to people with dyslexia to access further education and training.	€129,500
Fast Track into Technology (Core grant)	Provide activation and employment supports for marginalised job seekers and placement and industry engagement.	€1,120,000
National Adult Literacy Agency	Works in partnership with a range of organisations to influence policy and practice to support people in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Support the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy as set out in the FET Strategy 2014-2019. The overall grant to NALA is €1,930,000. NALA Write On Provision of €260,000 is accounted for in Table 4.12	€1,670,000

Agency/Body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
National Centre for Guidance in Education	Supports and develops guidance practice in education and informs policy. Provides the Adult Education Guidance (AEG) programme for guidance practitioners.	€278,000
Overall Total FET Support Organisations		€4,449,000

FET- staff representative organisations

(ETBI administered)

Since 2017, to support the critical contribution of FET Professional Associations within the ETB sector, and as part of the implementation of the FET Strategy, funding for FET Professional Associations has been channelled through ETBI. This approach reflects the changing structures, new governance requirements and emerging demands on the FET sector.

Table 4.11 **Staff representative organisations (ETBI administered)**

FET – Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI-Administered) Funding issued to ETBI For administration to the FET Staff Representative Associations outlined below.		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	
Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI)	Representing the views of members and working with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of a FET guidance service as outlined in the FET Guidance Strategy.	
Adult Education Officers' Association	Providing continuous professional development for members and representing their views at a national level.	
Adult Literacy Organisers Association (ALOA)	Assisting members to develop their professional competencies in adult literacy and sharing knowledge and experience through networking.	
Community Education Facilitators Association	Promoting community education and supporting members through CPD and networking activities.	
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors	Providing continuing professional development, networking opportunities and other support services for members.	
National Association of VTOS Coordinators	Raising awareness of the developmental needs of adult learners and sharing best practice among coordinators.	
National Association of Youthreach Coordinators	Raising the profile of Youthreach through its website, publications and social media.	
Total		€60,400

FET- staff representative organisations

(SOLAS administered)

SOLAS will continue to administer FET grants to the FET staff representative organisations detailed below.

Table 4.12 **Staff representative organisations (SOLAS administered)**

FET – Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS Administered)		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors	Providing continuing professional development, networking opportunities and other support services for members. Increasing awareness of, access to and participation in adult education programmes.	€21,000
Total		€21,000

FET - lifelong learning opportunities

SOLAS will continue to administer FET grants to assist the provision of lifelong learning opportunities.

Table 4.13 **FET – lifelong learning opportunities**

FET - Lifelong Learning Opportunities		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
Age Action Ireland	Promoting intergenerational and lifelong learning opportunities.	€66,500
	Supporting individual learners to engage or re-engage in lifelong learning.	
	Engaging with businesses and enterprise to challenge stereotyping and change attitudes to ageing.	
	Enhancing social inclusion, competitiveness and employability.	
Irish Countrywomen's Association	Providing members and non-members with support, personal development, education and lifelong learning opportunities.	€21,000
The People's College	Supporting the provision of lifelong learning to adults through a wide range of courses.	€92,500
Total		€180,000

FET - CPD provision

The Waterford Institute of Technology/NALA Accreditation Project provides higher-education qualifications to those working in the national adult literacy service. SOLAS will continue to administer this initiative.

Table 4.14 FET - CPD provision

FET - CPD Provision		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
Waterford Institute of Technology (to support the WIT/NALA project)	Designing and delivering nationally recognised qualifications that offer flexible models of study, progression routes and innovative modes of delivery for adult and further education practitioners.	€502,000
Total		€502,000

EU and specific projects

The projects listed in Table 4.15 assist adults, practitioners, policy makers and others access information about the further education and training sector.

Table 4.15 EU and specific projects

EU and Specific Projects	
Organisation	Grant Allocation €
FIT Associate Professional: Two-year dual education pilot project comprising software development and computer systems networking courses delivered by a number of ETBs.	€130,000
IACTO: Providing advice and support to Community Training Centres (CTCs) Boards of Management in their employer function. Representing CTC Boards in collective negotiations. Providing management services to promote and enhance the delivery of quality training outcomes.	€162,000
Central Statistics Office: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC related fee).	€35,000
Léargas: Co-funding for the EPALE element of Erasmus+	€21,801
Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE): Publication and distribution of 'Working for Work 2018'.	€20,000
FIT 2016+ Apprenticeship: ICT Network Engineer and Software Developer Apprenticeships Consortia Funding for 2017 activity	€177,467
Total	€546,268

FET support projects

Table 4.16 FET support projects

FET Support Projects		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2018	Grant Allocation €
ETBI	FET New Apprenticeship Support	€601,050
ETBI	TENRCS Support and Rollout	€223,000
ETBI	FET Systems Management Coordinator	€132,000
ETBI	FET Implementation Coordinator	€179,000
ETBI	FET Implementation Support Worker	€71,000
ETBI	FET CPD Support Worker	€49,250
Total		€1,255,300

Summary of specific grant allocations for 2018

Table 4.17 Summary of specific grant allocations for 2018

Summary of Specific Grant Allocations for 2018	
Classification	Grant Allocation €
FET Support Organisations	€4,449,000
FET Lifelong Learning Opportunities	€180,000
FET Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI Administered)	€60,400
FET Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS Administered)	€21,000
FET CPD provision	€502,000
EU and specific projects	€546,268
FET Support Projects	€1,255,300
TOTAL	€7,013,968

FET Strategy 2014-2019
highlights the importance
for stakeholders
to collaborate with
employers to identify
skills needs that can
be addressed through
FET provision



Section 5

FET Provision Supporting Skills for the Economy and Employment

The FET Strategy 2014-2019 highlights the importance for stakeholders to collaborate with employers to identify short to medium-term skills needs that can be addressed through FET provision. It is therefore crucial to maintain an awareness of the needs of their stakeholders, changing environments, reductions or increases in unemployment at local and national level, and changes in the needs of enterprise. Stakeholder consultation and liaison at national and local level are therefore considered essential components of the FET planning process. In addition to stakeholder consultation ETBs are also required to indicate that as part of their 2018 planning process, consideration was given to the information provided in the following publications and guidelines:

- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs National Skills Bulletin 2017 (September 2017)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply, Trends in Education and Training Outputs (November 2017)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Regional Labour Market Bulletin 2016 (October 2016)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Vacancy Overview 2016 (May 2017)

The planning process is also informed through a range of National and EU policy initiatives, strategies and circulars such as:

Education and employment:

- Action Plan for Education 2016-2019
- The Action Plan for Jobs 2017
- FET Professional Development Strategy 2017-2019
- FET Strategy 2014-2019
- National Skills Strategy 2015-2025 Ireland's Future
- Pathways to Work 2016-2020
- Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland 2018-2021
- TEL Strategy

Active inclusion

- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024
- Social Inclusion - National Action Plan
- National Positive Ageing Strategy
- National Youth Strategy 2015-2020
- National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020
- National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, including the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion
- Migrant Integration Strategy
- Carers' Strategy

FET provision to address emerging skill needs

FET provision supports business sectors by providing a wide range of programmes and courses. The 2018 planning process required ETBs to rebalance provision from 'for employment' to 'in employment' with a reduction of 3.65 percent requested in the latter. As a result, ETBs reviewed planned 2018 provision for the purpose of matching capacity with potential demand and where necessary realigning provision to meet identified skills shortages through the inclusion of additional/alternative modules in existing courses, or through the development of new courses to address emerging skills requirements.

Course innovation and expanded delivery in 2018

The 2018 Funding Allocations Requests (FARs) process sought information on FET plans in relation to provision of new innovative courses. Information was also sought on plans to enhance course choice based on local and industry needs. Table 5.1 sets out some examples of new and innovative courses that will be developed by ETBs during 2018.

Table 5.1 **Course innovation and expanded delivery in 2018**

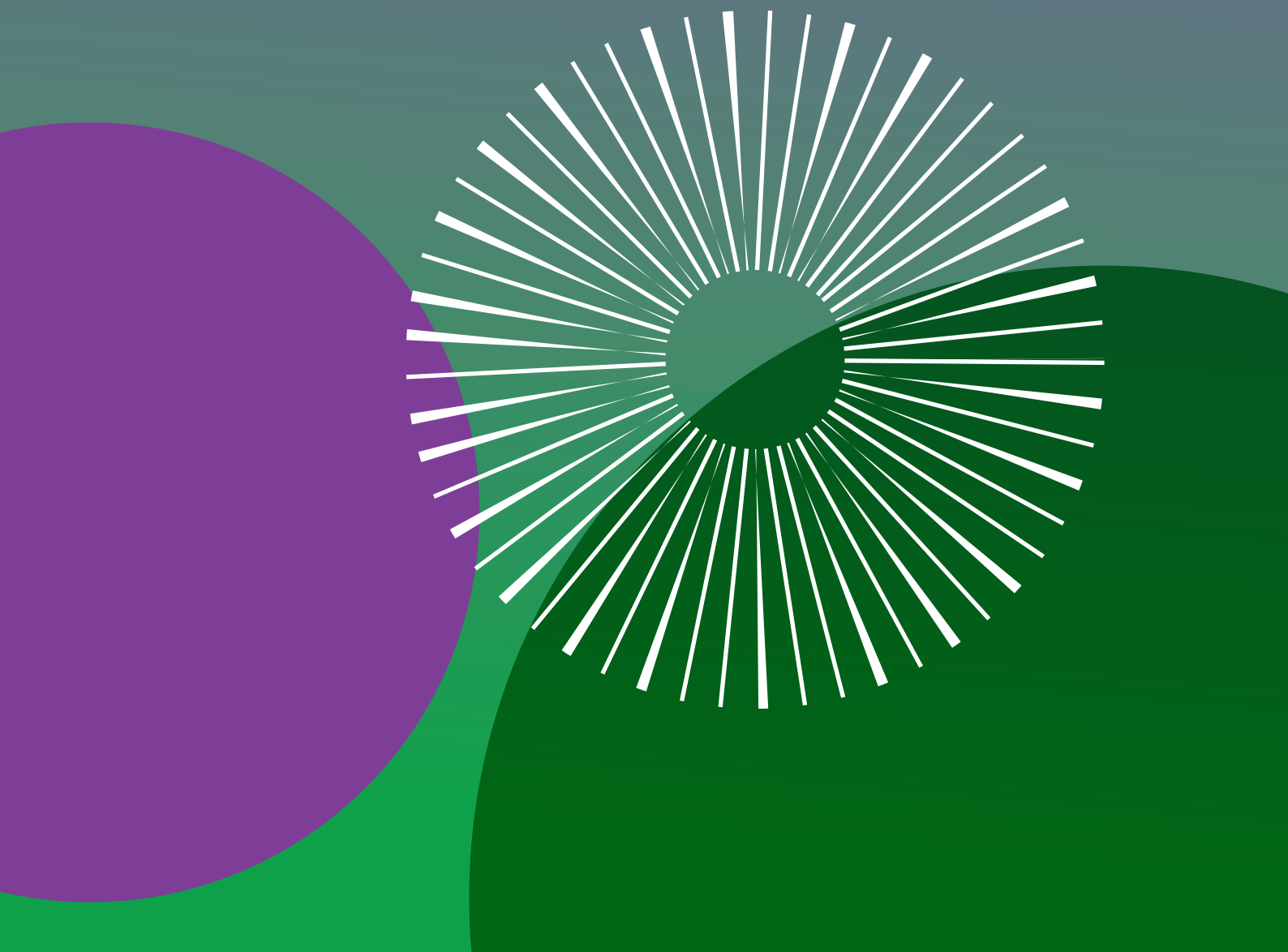
Skills Cluster	Course Innovation and Expanded Delivery in 2018
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	Arboriculture Apprenticeship, Landscape Design, Horticultural Studies, Fisheries, Boat and Net Repair.
Animal Science	Animal Science, Equine Studies.
Built Environment	Construction Groundwork Skills, Construction Technology.
Business Administration	Plans to increase delivery of the Accounting Technician Ireland (ATI) Apprenticeship are in progress. Auctioneering and Property Management.
Engineering (IT)	Mobile Technology and App Design.
Engineering (Transport)	Electric Vehicle Maintenance, Bicycle Repair.
Financial Services	Technology for the Financial Sector.
Food and Beverage	Apprenticeships in Craft Butchery, Apprenticeship – Commis Chef, Barista training.
Health, Family other Social Services	The growth in demand for healthcare and social services education and training programmes is continuing. Plans to provide new courses to address emerging skills needs include: Intellectual Disability Practice, Special Needs Assisting, Physiotherapy Assistant, and Palliative Care.
Information Technology	Plans for delivery of the ICT Associate Professional course across a range of locations are in progress. In addition courses in the following areas are also planned: Cloud Platform and Infrastructure, Automated Software Tester, SQL Microsoft Technology Associate, Cloud Support Professional, APP Development, Electronic and Software Technology and Cyber Security for Cloud Computing.
Management	Management Development, Human Resource Management, Event Operations and Security Services, Advanced Certificate in Business Management and Accounting and Legal Studies.
Manufacturing	QA Testing and Automation Engineering, Laboratory Assistant, Irish Traditional Instrument Making, Furniture Making.
Sales and Marketing	Associate Sales Professional Apprenticeship
Sport and Leisure	Programmes planned in relation to sports and recreation across a range of ETBs include: Advanced Certificate in Sports Performance and Sports Massage, Psychology and Fitness, Soccer Coaching, Outdoor Sport and Recreation, Sports and Physical Therapy.
Tourism	Corporate Transport and Hospitality. Hospitality Operations. Local and National Tour Guiding.
Transport, Distribution and Logistics	New courses in transport, distribution and logistics skills include: Logistics and Distribution.
Web Development and Design	Digital/Creative Media and Web Design, Advanced Certificate Digital Media Production.

ETB collaborative projects

The 2018 plans received from ETBs demonstrate close and on-going collaboration between ETBs and Government departments, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), local business, agencies, and third level colleges with a view to enhancing opportunities through participation in FET provision. The following are some examples that have been provided by ETBs;

- Donegal ETB in partnership with Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) has developed a project titled 'Maps and Gaps', where both organisations have mapped NFQ Level 5 and 6 provision to facilitate progression for learners to Higher Education.
- In consultation with local employers, Limerick Clare ETB is developing two new courses in Computer Games Programming and Computer Games Design. These programmes will provide learners with the opportunity to train for careers in the computer gaming sector.
- Dublin Dún Laoghaire ETB will open a new business incubation Centre in Baldoyle Training Centre during 2018. This initiative will support entrepreneurs in growing their business. Start-up office facilities will be combined with targeted skills development interventions.
- Longford Westmeath ETB is working closely with Centre Parcs Holiday Village in Longford, which opens in 2019 with the creation of approximately 1,000 jobs. Longford Westmeath ETB is providing training in the areas of catering, hospitality, and leisure to respond to these employment opportunities.
- Longford Westmeath ETB has developed a Financial Services programme in conjunction with the regional skills forum. This programme will enable both new and existing employees to gain skills in the Financial Services Sector.
- Galway Roscommon ETB is currently developing a national Arboriculture Apprenticeship in collaboration with industry.
- In consultation with industry representatives Waterford Wexford ETB is developing a new course in design and manufacturing techniques using 3D modelling and printing to address identified skills shortages in this sector.
- Cavan Monaghan ETB in conjunction with Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) and Third Age (Fáilte Isteach) is developing a World of Work Programme for low-skilled migrants. The primary aim of this course is to enable migrants to access the labour market and to enable them to break the cycle of low-skilled roles in manufacturing and other industries that may be vulnerable to the potential negative impact of Brexit.
- Laois Offaly ETB is working closely with Carlow IT to align current and future Training Programmes with Carlow IT's higher education programmes. This work will involve the provision of additional support modules to better equip learners to progress to higher education opportunities.
- Tipperary ETB recently developed a Certified Accountancy Pathway Traineeship. This programme will provide the opportunity for learners to achieve a full accountancy qualification.
- In consultation with the association of Craft Butchers, Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB is developing a new apprenticeship programme in Craft Butchery.

SOLAS coordinates and administers a number of activities that support the development of a strong FET Sector



Section 6

FET Supports

This section of the FET Services Plan presents additional programme information and provides an overview of systems and strategies that support the development of a strong FET Sector.

National construction schemes and the Safe Pass programme

SOLAS is responsible for the governance of the national Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS) and Safe Pass programmes. The CSCS programme provides for the training, assessment, certification and registration of non-craft operatives within the construction sector and is covered under the provisions of Schedule 5 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

The QSCS programme provides for the training, assessment, certification and registration of non-craft operatives within the construction sector and is covered under the provisions of Schedule 1 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Quarry) Regulations 2008.

The Safe Pass Programme is a one-day health and safety awareness training programme aimed primarily at construction sector workers, including new entrants. The Safe Pass Programme is covered under the provisions of Schedule 4 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

SOLAS is responsible for the maintenance of the national database and the processing of applications for Safe Pass, CSCS and QSCS cards. Participants who successfully complete their respective courses are registered on the relevant database and are issued with their cards. In 2017, a total of 17,201 CSCS cards, 605 QSCS cards and 91,511 Safe Pass cards were issued.

Following consultation with industry stakeholders, an employer card validation facility has been implemented. This will allow registered employers check the validity of all SOLAS CSCS and Safe Pass cards without having to contact the unit directly. SOLAS will continue to maintain the mutual recognition agreement with Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) UK, Construction Employers Federation (CEF) NI and process applications for recognition of qualifications, in compliance with S.I. No. 8 of 2017 regulations.

Skills for Work programme

Skills for Work is a national programme that aims to provide employees with skills training that meets the basic demands of the workplace. In previous years the programme was co-ordinated nationally by Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB). From 2018, SOLAS will provide funding directly to each ETB participating in the Skills for Work programme. In line with the Funding Allocations Requests process, ETBs participating in the programme develop and budget for their planned response to the Skills for Work project. The 2018 budget allocation for the Skills for Work programme will be €2.5 million with provision for 4,046 beneficiaries.

eCollege

eCollege is a fully online learning service which delivered training free of charge to approximately 11,500 beneficiaries in 2017. eCollege courses are aligned to professional and industry certifications and are particularly suited to continuous professional development and lifelong learning objectives.

eCollege courses are available anytime, anywhere and this continuous intake model means no waiting lists, and flexible course duration. Learners are given access to a virtual learning environment (Moodle) and are given remote tutor support. These 'etutors' support the learner at each step of the way, from activating accounts, to setting and correcting assignments. The e-tutors also help learners going forward for certification to identify their most convenient test centre, and support progression to further education, training or employment.

The Moodle virtual learning environment allows for communications and collaboration online between learners, and between learners and tutors. An individual course may contain online tutorials, simulations, videos, animations, eBooks, virtual labs, assessments and assignments. Where specialist software is necessary, the learner will also be given access to this. Learners can interact in real time via live video conferencing, and can also watch previously recorded training sessions. Courses are free to jobseekers.

European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The SOLAS EGF coordination unit in collaboration with the EGF Managing Authority within the Department of Education and Skills provides the operational platform for the implementation of European Globalisation Adjustment (EGF) programmes in Ireland. Ireland has made ten successful applications to the EGF. Seven of these applications have been made for workers made redundant in specifically named companies i.e. Dell, Waterford Crystal, SR Techniks, Talk Talk, Andersen Ireland, Lufthansa Technik and PWA International. The other three EGF applications covered almost 9,000 workers and apprentices made redundant in three sectors of the construction industry.

All ten EGF programmes are now closed and three post programme audits are pending (EGF Andersen, Lufthansa and PWA International). In conjunction with the EGF Managing Authority, the SOLAS EGF Unit is actively monitoring redundancy announcements nationwide with regard to potentially meeting the strict eligibility criteria for possible supports from EGF.

Systems and strategies currently in development to support FET

Programme and Learner Support System

The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) is a joint initiative between SOLAS and the ETBs. It is an ICT system which provides a suite of tools for FET providers to manage and administer the programmes and courses which they offer. ETBs can also use the PLSS system to completely manage the applicant and learner lifecycle. Within the PLSS there are three major components:

- The National Programme Database (NPD)
- The National Course Calendar (NCC)
- The Learner Database

At the end of 2017, all three components were operational throughout the FET sector. The system has been further developed to include a reporting module, which provides detailed information to support the ETBs in their planning and scheduling at a local level. Enhancements to all three components are on-going.

By June 2018 there were 896 national programmes, comprising 3,987 modules, published on the National Programme Database. These included a diverse range of awards available through FET provision, including awards by QQI, ACCA, Accounting Technicians of Ireland, CITAC, City and Guilds, CompTIA, Irish Computer Society (ICS), ITEC, Microsoft, Oracle, and Pearson. In 2017, there were circa. 27,500 courses scheduled on the National Course Calendar and 227,551 learners were recorded on the learner database.

A PLSS Management Information System (MIS) is currently under development. This will give context to the data that the PLSS collects, and will support the management and decision making processes for both SOLAS and the ETBs.

The PLSS also provides secure web interfacing facilities for interoperability with third-party systems. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection can refer clients directly into the application process of FET courses and learners. Furthermore, work is underway on integrating elearning features into the PLSS, whereby learners, once registered for a course, will be given access to their local elearning resource on the Moodle platform.

The import and export facilities in the PLSS allow third party systems load and extract data to and from the PLSS. This facilitates the export of the PLC October returns data to the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This functionality also provided the groundwork for the eCohesion programme, which the ETBs used to submit their ESF returns. The PLSS also integrates with the funding, allocations, requests and reporting (FARR) planning process.

Fetchcourses.ie is the Further Education and Training Course Hub. During 2017 there were over 500,000 visits to the site, of which circa. 231,000 were unique users. FET providers now have the option to accept online applications via fetchcourses.ie. Learners can apply for a diverse range of courses run by different providers all through a single website and can completely manage their application process online. Functionality to provide an online payment facility for the Fetchcourses site is on-going.

Data-sharing agreements

A Data Sharing Agreement has been signed with the CSO, which will provide SOLAS with robust data on progression rates, certification and employment outcomes and will be used to support future FET investment decisions. A new GDPR compliant Data Sharing Agreement is also being negotiated with DEASP.

Workforce Development Strategy

Following the publication of the National Skills Strategy in January 2016, SOLAS agreed with the Department of Education and Skills to develop a Further Education and Training (FET) Policy Framework for Employee Development to guide ETBs in relation to employee development in alignment with the objectives of the National Skills Strategy.

Following extensive consultation with ETBs, ETBI and other relevant stakeholders including Regional Skills Fora, Enterprise Ireland, LEOs, IDA, IBEC, NALA, Skillnets Ireland, SFA, ISME and ICTU, and approval by the Department of Education and Skills, the policy framework was published for implementation in Q3

2018. As part of annual planning and their 2018-2020 performance agreements with SOLAS each ETB will set out and agree their own annual targets.

FET Professional Development Strategy

The FET Professional Development Strategy and an implementation plan were published by SOLAS and ETBI in November 2016. The aim of the strategy is to enhance the skills of those involved in the delivery, administration and management of FET programmes, through strategically targeted and consistent training and development. It has three strategic goals:

- Creating the infrastructure and delivery systems for high-quality professional development
- Increasing FET sector capability through relevant, targeted professional development
- Securing sustainable funding and the resourcing of professional development.

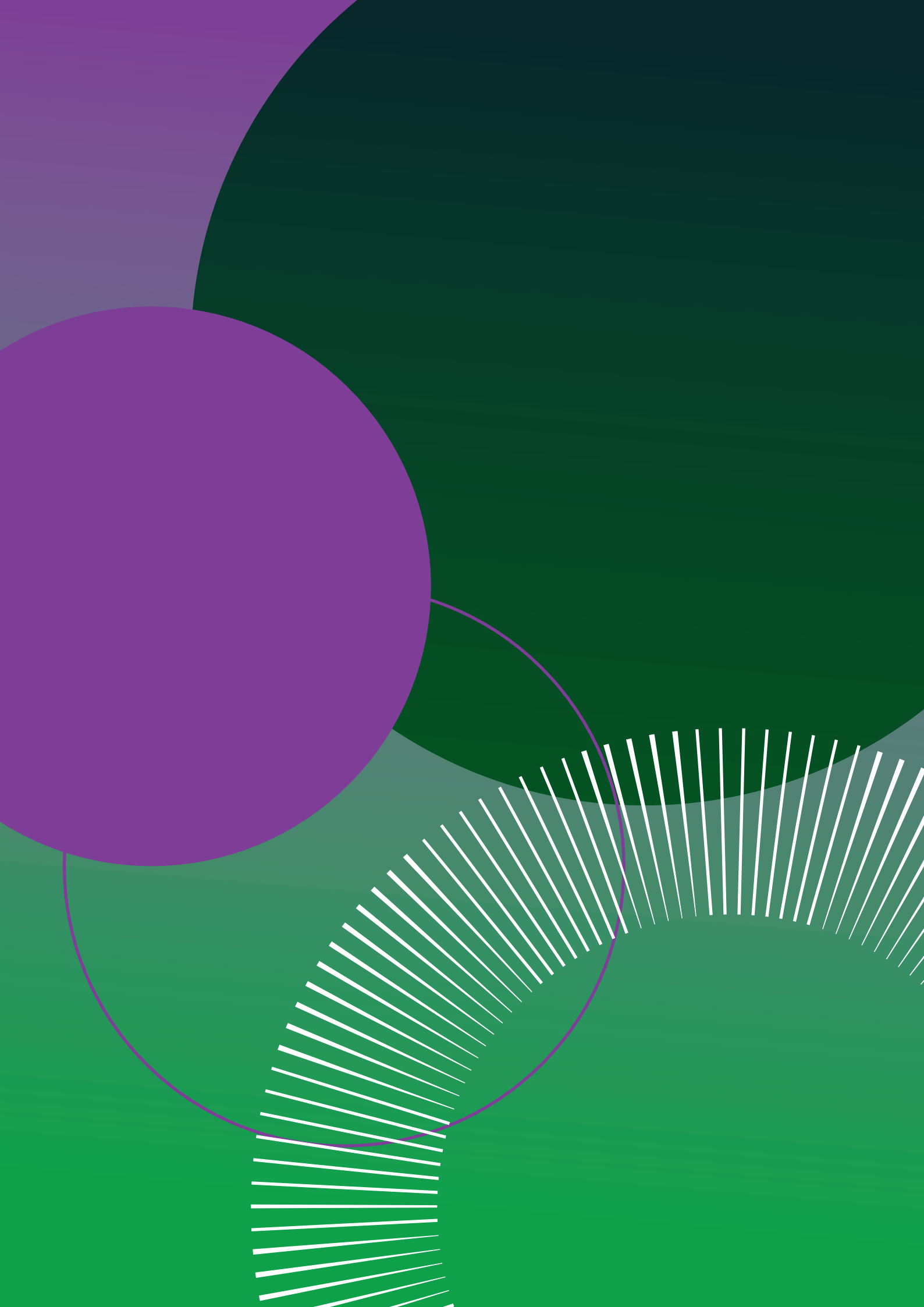
SOLAS, in conjunction with ETBI and ETBs, is responsible for the implementation of the strategy, which is overseen by a National Steering Group, chaired by DES.

Implementation is underway, with significant progress across all areas. Pilot programmes of support are scheduled for delivery in the second half of 2018 to FET personnel in a number of areas including technology enhanced learning, management development, enterprise engagement and quality assurance. Development work is underway in other areas such as ICT, working with and supporting FET learners and vocational upskilling/reskilling.

TEL Strategy

The SOLAS Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Unit works closely with the further education and training sector on supporting the implementation of each Education and Training Board's TEL Action Plan. The unit aims to support the enhancement of FET provision by building on existing good practice in the sector, while encouraging the dissemination of good practice and fostering a culture of creative collaboration across the ETB network. The TEL Strategy is part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2017, the Action Plan for Education 2017 and The National Skills Strategy 2025.

ETBs completed a benchmarking and action planning process in 2017 and have now completed a three-year TEL action plan. To support the implementation of these action plans, a TEL Action Support Group has been formed to identify the requisite supports required to achieve the ambitions of the Action Plans by facilitating collaboration, avoiding duplication and supporting a common approach to the adoption of TEL into existing activities.



Section 7

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Appendix 1: List of Education and Training Boards

List of Education and Training Boards
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Cork Education and Training Board
Donegal Education and Training Board
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board
Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
Kerry Education and Training Board
Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
Tipperary Education and Training Board
Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Appendix 2: List of tables - Section 4

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4.2	Education and Training Boards and other FET providers: Overview of Provision Inputs and Outputs 2018
4.3	Overview of FET Provision: Inputs, Outputs and Funding Allocation for 2018
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4.7	Labour Market Skills Focus Clusters - Top Four Increases
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4.10	FET Support Organisations
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4.15	EU and Specific Projects
4.16	FET Support Projects
4.17	Summary of Specific Grant Allocations for 2018

Appendix 3: SOLAS FET Sector Provision Targets

FET Sector Provision Targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 percent More Learners will secure employment from provision, which primarily serves the labour market.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 percent more learners will progress to other further or higher education courses from provision that is primarily focused on this purpose.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 percent increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 percent increase of adults, who are seeking FET level provision, engaging in lifelong learning interventions (this target could be subject to upward revision following the benchmarking process).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 2018, for three years, an average increase of 10,000 learners per annum securing relevant qualifications (e.g. special purpose awards) in sectors where employment growth or skills needs have been identified (e.g. Construction, ICT, Food and Beverages, Hospitality, Wholesale/Retail, Biopharma/Pharmachem, Health/other Care, Digital Media, Sport and Fitness, Engineering, Enterprise Skills needs; domestic and international.

Appendix 4: SOLAS FET System Improvement Targets

FET Sector System Improvement Targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30,500 new apprentice and trainee registrations in the period 2017 to 2019 which will represent an increase in registrations from circa 6,000 in 2016 to circa 12,400 in 2019.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Strategic Planning Performance Agreements with all 16 ETBs (integrated with FET planning process).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The FET literacy and numeracy strategy delivered and objectives achieved including improved screening and assessment systems, ESOL policy, and awareness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific targets to be developed to meet government policy objectives. FET service plans to adopt these targets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six FET programmes evaluated and programme improvement plans presented to DES for agreement (Youthreach, VTOS, BTEI, SST, Traineeship and STP).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New funding model, including an appropriate contested element, aligned to all national and regional objectives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced, knowledge based, integrated planning model connecting policy, strategy and actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 percent increase in Stakeholder satisfaction with FET provision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New online 'market place' for learners and employers to connect, initially concentrating on Apprenticeship.

Appendix 5: Summary of the Further Education and Training (FET) support organisations planned activities for 2018

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)	
<p>An independent charity working in partnership with government departments, organisations, tutors and learners to advance adult literacy policy. Ensuring that adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and access learning opportunities that meet their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and promote learning supports through Write On and Deaf Language Services (DLS) • Increase learner engagement and accreditation, participation in training and attendance at events • Publish family literacy, lifelong learning benefits and good practice case studies • Collect and disseminate research on student views to the FE Sector • Evaluate the impact of training and events. • Adopt Guidelines on inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in adult literacy services • Provide CPD for professionals involved in supporting literacy and lifelong learning • Support ETBs and partner organisations to promote and ensure accessibility for all learners
Dyslexia Association of Ireland	
<p>Membership based association, representing and advocating for over 2,000 families and individuals affected by dyslexia all over Ireland. Membership also includes teachers, psychologists and other professionals. Currently has a nationwide network of 37 branches and workshops providing information, assessment, training and support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide subsidised educational psychology assessments for disadvantaged adults • Develop and deliver expanded CPD training on assessing needs in the FET Sector • Pilot 'brief-assessment' model for improved access to dyslexia identification services • Provide daily specialist literacy and numeracy tuition to learners on Career Paths course • Facilitate learner progression to education and the workplace through specialist support and training • Provide a specialist information service on adult dyslexia, including helpline, drop in service and information seminars. Work with FET sector, employers and policy makers to drive policy and new initiatives for learners with dyslexia
AONTAS	
<p>Non-governmental voluntary membership organisation with over 500 members from the formal and non-formal adult and community education sector and the lifelong learning spectrum. Advocating and lobbying for the development of a quality service for adult learners, promoting the value and benefits of adult learning and widening participation in lifelong learning, ensuring quality learning opportunities are offered to those who are educationally disadvantaged. Ensuring adult learners are central to adult learning policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to national and EU FET/Lifelong learning policy and practice • Produce and disseminate the 'Adult Learner Journal' • Engage in regional, national and international advocacy, consultation and research with SOLAS, ETBI, International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and the European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA) • Co-ordinate and support the Community Education Network (CEN), ERASMUS+ and EAAL project • Organise and promote the 2018 National Learners Festival, including the AONTAS STAR awards and National Learner Forum • Promote the OneStepUp Adult Learner Information and Referral Service resource and supports

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
Fast Track Into Technology (FIT)	
<p>Industry-led, not for profit organisation that develops and promotes technology based programmes and career development opportunities for job seekers. Works in collaboration with government, education and training providers and disadvantaged communities to improve access to employment for marginalised job seekers and those at risk of long term unemployment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot courses in Cybersecurity, Smart Building, Advanced Manufacturing and Fintech. • Pilot Cisco ICT online progression resources. • Roll out 'Getting Citizens Online' programme to 4,000 learners. • Publish FIT ICT Skills Audit. • Provide preparation for work supports to 3,200 learners. • Deliver employability programmes to 1,000 learners. • Coordinate job placements for 540 learners. • Recruit and support 3,500 participants on FIT programmes. • Review existing training and develop new courses to provide pathways to employment and to meet the needs of the labour market. • Provide access to appropriate training programmes for marginalised learners. • Participate in policy steering groups and advocate for the development of ICT apprenticeships. • Promote the value of further education and training through engagement with employers.
National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)	
<p>Agency of the Department of Education and Skills, under the aegis of Léargas, responsible for supporting and developing guidance practice in all areas of education and informing the guidance policy of the DES. Hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland and represents Ireland/DES at the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the DES Career Guidance Review including FET guidance provision. • Support the development and implementation of the FET Guidance Strategy in collaboration with SOLAS DES and ETBI. • Review and update the AGM System. • Coordinate the delivery of CPD for FET guidance practitioners. • Collaborate on the provision of FET Guidance services for Apprenticeship and under the provisions of the EU Receptions Conditions Directive. • Support and promote mobility in the FET sector through the Euroguidance Centre.

Further Education and Training - lifelong learning opportunities

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
Age Action Ireland	
<p>National non-governmental, membership-based organisation concerned with ageing and older people. With 3,660 members it acts as a network of organisations and individuals including older people and carers of older people. It is a development agency promoting better policies and services for older people. The organisation engages with a variety of people who have an interest in the ageing sector and works with Government Departments, Universities, Health Care Professionals, Private Commercial Bodies, Banks and Insurance Companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of University of the 3rd Age (U3A) groups by five to 32 nationally. • Organise 300 community-based events during Positive Ageing Week. • Complete the Age Action/Suas literacy pilot project. • Complete pilot EU project on family and home care residents. • Support national, regional and cross border activities and events through education programmes including the University of the 3rd Age (U3A). • Continue to support regional and national workshops and events promoting lifelong learning opportunities.
Irish Countrywomen's Association	
<p>The Association is the largest membership organisation of women in Ireland. The Association's Adult Education College 'An Grianán' plays a key role in the education of the Association's members and the wider public, providing access to a wide range of courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide further education courses for members and non-members. • Inform and assist learners in accessing and attending programmes of learning.
Irish Deaf Society	
<p>The Society seeks to achieve and promote the equality for and rights of Deaf people in Ireland and to achieve full access to citizenship and society for the Deaf community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide QQI certified, Continuing Professional Development and personal development training interventions and workshops for approx. 400 learners who are members of the Deaf community. • Support 60 learners to achieve QQI certification at Levels 2 to 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
People's College	
<p>Voluntary body that provides general adult education, personal development and communication skills to trade unionists, their families and the general public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adult education classes in a wide range of areas including politics, finance, history, languages and the arts. • Support social and cultural activities for the student population. • Enhance collaboration with the Peoples College in Wexford. • Promote and celebrate the college through a 70th Anniversary celebration.

Further Education and Training – staff representative organisations

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors (NAACED)	
Provides a support structure and networking arrangement for Directors of Adult and Community Education within the Community and Comprehensive School sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide continuous professional development (CPD) and support for members and second level schools providing Adult and Community Education programmes. • Promote Adult Education through the NAACED website, social media and at national Adult Education events.

Further Education and Training - CPD provision

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
Waterford Institute of Technology (support for WIT/NALA Project)	
Adult Literacy Accreditation Project that provides third level programmes for practitioners in the adult literacy field, e.g. managers, tutors, organisers and resource workers. The centre collaborates with stakeholder groups to heighten awareness of the value of adult literacy and the CPD needs of practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 39 modules across four programmes (10 through blended learning) benefiting approximately 200 FET Practitioners. • Improve access and participation through increased blended learning solutions, RPL and supports for learners. • Pilot two new NFQ Level 6 and 7 QQI component awards in line with the Professional Development Strategy for FET. • Engage with individual ETBs to provide site-specific programmes. • Evaluate and review programmes in consultation with stakeholders. • Contribute to and support on going and emerging research on Literacy in FET.

Further Education and Training EU and specific projects

Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
<p>European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)</p> <p>AONTAS is the National Co-ordinator for the EAAL promotional project.</p>	<p>Deliver a web-based information service on FET services to assist adults navigate the resources and services available to them online, including via ETBs and other organisations.</p>
<p>FIT - ICT Associate Professional</p>	<p>The ICT Associate Professional initiative is designed as a 2 year dual education pilot project in which 200 learners will participate on a number of Software Development or Computer Systems Networking courses delivered by specific ETBs.</p>
<p>Irish Association of Community Training Organisations (IACTO)</p> <p>IACTO is the representative body for Boards of Management of Community Training Centres (CTCs). IACTO supports local CTC boards in their employer function and represents Boards in collective negotiations with the Trade Unions, SOLAS, ETBs and other relevant bodies and provides management services to promote and enhance the delivery of quality training outcomes for members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training and provide HR advice, consultancy, coaching and support services to CTCs. • Support for the development and delivery of three innovation pilot projects. • Provide training in Operational Management, Recruitment, Dignity at Work and Inductions for new General Managers and Directors. • Provide mediation intervention services. • Deliver four regional and two national information forums. • Represent CTCs in discussions and negotiations with DES and ETBI.
<p>Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)</p> <p>Co-funding to Léargas for the EPALE element of Erasmus+. Léargas is the National Support Service for EPALE in Ireland.</p>	<p>The Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) is a multilingual on-line community funded by the European Commission. It is designed to assist teachers, trainers, researchers, academics and policy makers and those with an interest in adult learning.</p>
<p>Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)</p> <p>PIAAC is co-ordinated in Ireland by the Central Statistics Office, which provides statistical information to Government for the formation and monitoring of policy and programmes at a national, regional and local level, and serve the needs of the wider national and international community.</p>	<p>Participate in an international survey of adult skills measuring cognitive and workplace skills necessary for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper. The results of the survey assist educators, policy makers and labour economists to develop economic, education and social policies that will enhance the skills of adults.</p>

Project/Agency/Body	2018 Planned Activities
'Working for Work 2018' Publication-Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, centres, groups, community organisations and Trade Unions. The INOU promotes and campaigns for policies to achieve full employment for all and for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and distribute 25,000 copies of Working for Work to unemployed people, INOU member organisations, ETBs, DEASP Intreo and local offices, Citizen Information Centres, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and other organisations, including those associated with education and training provision and support services. Support the on-going development of the online version of Working for Work.
AHEAD- Association for Higher Education Access & Disability Non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation. Provides information on disability issues in education to students and graduates with disabilities, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensively review national and international best practice for inclusivity in FET. Establish a steering group of FET Directors to inform and guide the project. Make recommendations and develop guidelines for inclusive practice based on a Universal Design for Learning framework, variability in engagement, in representation and in action.

Appendix 6: Grant allocations for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools

2018 BTEI Grant Allocations for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools	
School/College	Funding Allocations
Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick	€57,834
Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13	€56,500
Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare	€42,500
Nagle Centre, Presentation Secondary School, Cannon Street, Waterford	€35,000
Nagle Rice Secondary School, Doneraile, Co Cork	€19,000
North Presentation Secondary School, Farranree, Cork	€74,000
Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty, Co Cork	€10,513
Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co Mayo	€14,000
Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, Co. Clare	€13,500
St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, Co. Clare	€44,000
St Michael's School, Castlerea, Co Roscommon	€30,000
Total	€396,847

Appendix 7: List of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges approved

PLC places

List of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools that grants are allocated to through the Department of Education and Skills post-primary payment section for the PLC programme.	
Schools/colleges	Places (2018)
Ballyhaunis, Community School, Co. Mayo	20
Castlecomer, Community School, Co. Kilkenny	14
Castlerea Community School, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon	9
Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick	236
Scoil Phobail, Clifden Community School, Clifden, Co Galway	15
Coláiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co Galway	13
Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13	11
Dunmore Community School, Co. Galway	11
Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway	50
Gorey Community School, Gorey, Co. Wexford	89
Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo	75
Kilrush Community School, Co. Clare	20
Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare	37
Our Lady's College, Presentation Road, Galway	10
Mercy College, Sligo	45
Moate Business College, Moate, Co. Westmeath	430
Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Co. Mayo	16
Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford	14
Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo	17
St Cuan's College, Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway	38
Coláiste Chiaráin, Summerhill, Athlone, Co Roscommon	34
St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo	136
St Patricks Comprehensive School, Shannon, Co Clare	10
Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna, Co. Galway	6
Tullogh Community School, Carlow	31
Total	1387

Appendix 8: Supports provided for further education and training learners

A number of supports are provided for learners engaging in Further Education and Training programmes. The following examples are not definitive.

- The Adult Education Guidance and Information Service (AEGIS), which provides nationwide guidance for learners before, during and after they participate in BTEI, Adult Literacy, Community Education or VTOS programmes. This service also supports the provision of quality AEGS guidance and information services to people aged 16 and over.
- Participants in Youthreach, VTOS, or BTEI are eligible for low-cost childcare under the Childcare in Education and Training Scheme (CETS), operated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).
- The HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities can provide support for students with a disability. This fund allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for services and supports to full-time students with disabilities. The fund aims to ensure that students can participate fully in their academic programmes and are not disadvantaged by reason of a disability.
- The Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Service in Youthreach and Community Training Centres mainly provide counselling for young people on these programmes.
- The INTREO service, administered by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, provides a single point of contact for all employment and income supports. It also offers employment services and supports for both jobseekers and employers.
- The Advocacy Service provides a network of full-time advocates whose role is to support Youthreach participants in decision-making, referral, progression and placement. Advocates are also instrumental in organising work experience and monitoring students on work experience.

Appendix 9: Definitions

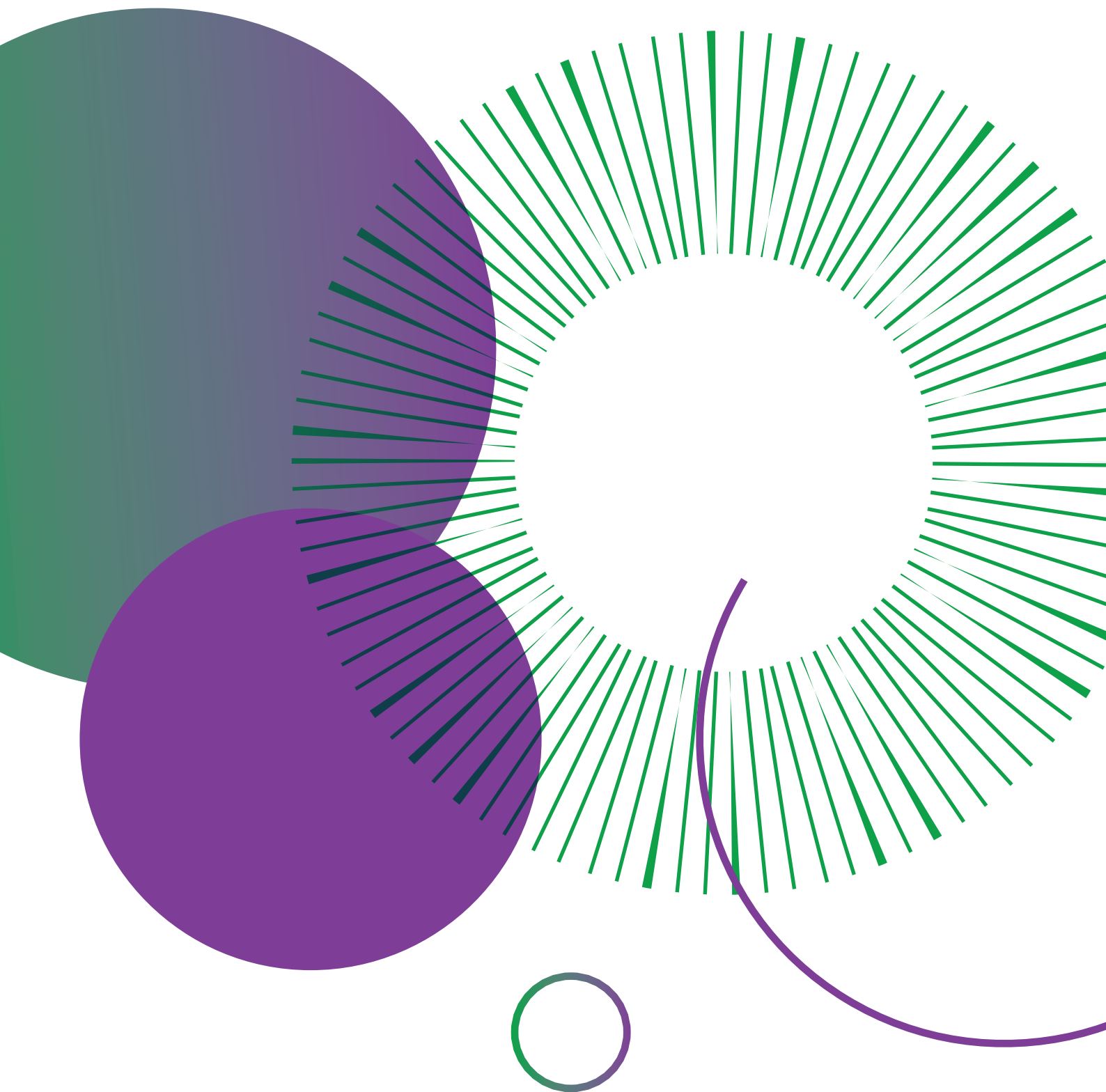
Definitions	
Full-time Further Education and Training programmes	
Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study (typically in September/October)
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study (typically in May).
Note	In the case of multi-year PLC programmes, each year is a standalone year and should be considered independently. If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	In the case of multi-year VTOS programmes, each year is a standalone year and should be considered independently. If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.

Definitions	
Full-time Further Education and Training programmes	
Youthreach	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study
Note	<p>Youthreach is organised on an academic year/semester basis therefore:</p> <p>Completion of the summer programme should be considered as the completion of the year.</p> <p>Resumption of the Youthreach programme post summer break should be considered as the start of the next year,</p> <p>If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.</p>
Bridging, Foundation, Specific Skills Training (SST), Traineeship Programmes, Local Training Initiatives (LTIs), Apprenticeship.	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
Community Training Centres (CTCs)	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	<p>If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.</p> <p>The commencement of subsequent years occurs on the anniversary date of the learners' initial registration on the course.</p>
Specialist training providers	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	<p>If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.</p> <p>The commencement of subsequent years occurs on the anniversary date of the learners' initial registration on the course.</p>

Appendix 10: Acronyms/glossary

Acronyms/glossary	
AEGI	Adult Education Guidance Initiative
AEGIS	Adult Education and Guidance Information Service
AES	Adult Education Service
ALCES	Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CETS	Childcare in Education and Training Scheme
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CTCs	Community Training Centres
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
DEASP	Department of Employment and Social Protection
EGF	European Globalisation Fund
EGFSN	The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FAR	Funding Allocations Requests
FE	Further Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FIT	Fast Track Into Technology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

Acronyms/glossary	
GNP	Gross National Product
HET	Higher Education and Training
INTREO	DSP service offering a single point of contact for all employment and income supports
IOT	Institute of Technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ITABE	Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LTI	Local Training Initiative
LTU	Long Term Unemployed
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System
P-POD	Post-Primary Online Database
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QSCS	Quarry Skills Certification Scheme
SLMRU	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (Further Education and Training Authority)
SST	Specific Skills Training
STP	Specialist Training Providers
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
VSSCCS	Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools
YDI	Youth Development Internship
YG	Youth Guarantee



SOLAS

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