Strategic Performance Agreement
2018 – 2020

Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board

etb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Mhaigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma
*Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board*

SOLAS
learning works

Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

European Union

Investing in Your Future

European Social Fund
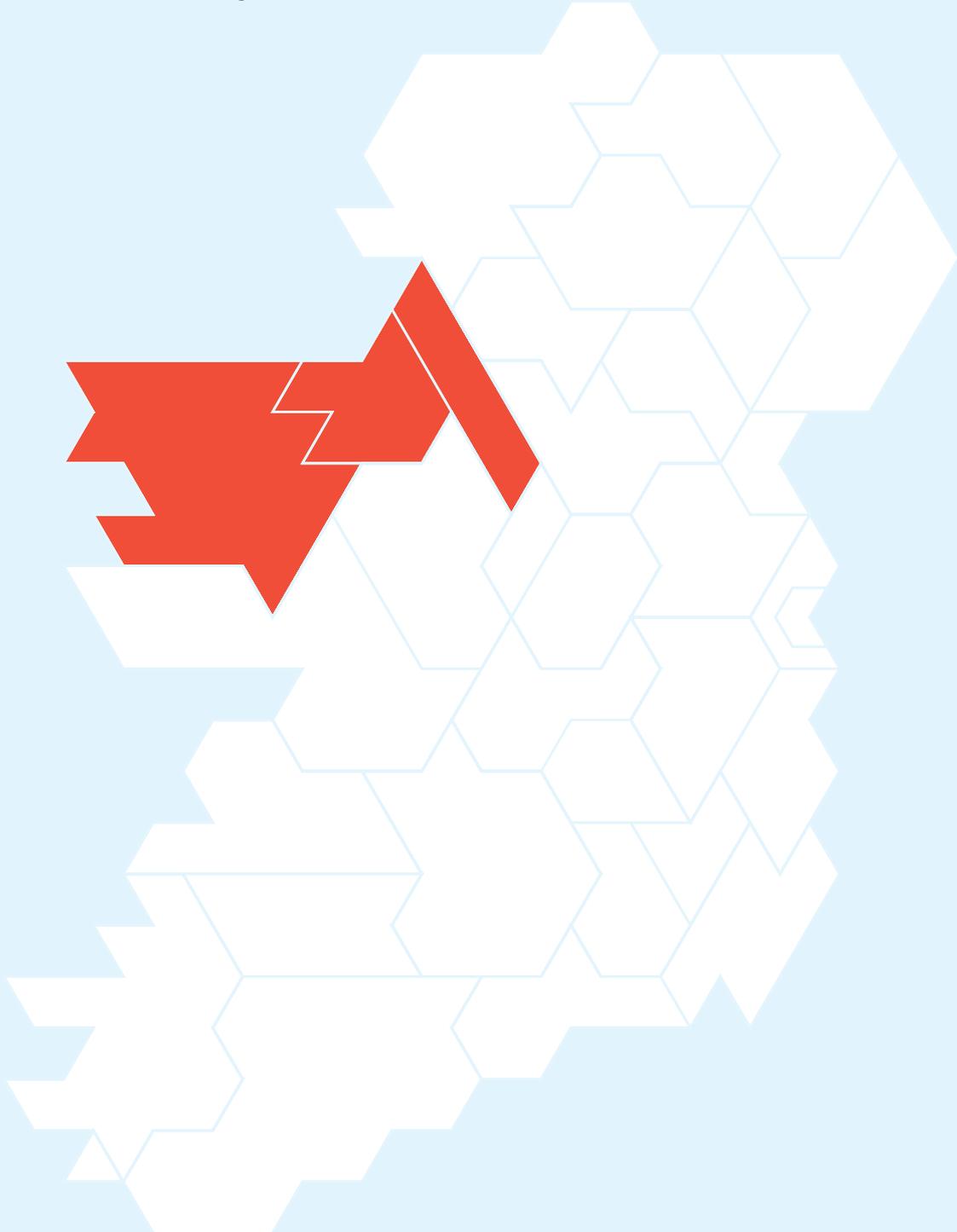
Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Introduction

This agreement between SOLAS and Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB) sets out the context, strategic priorities and ETB contribution to the achievement of key national Further Education and Training (FET) sector targets over the period 2018-20. It also articulates MSLETB's commitment to supporting the implementation of a range of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision and identifies the key risks and challenges which must be mitigated and addressed to ensure successful delivery of this agreement. This agreement is the product of extensive dialogue and engagement between SOLAS and MSLETB, with independent views and inputs from a panel of experts with an understanding of Irish and international good practice in further education and training systems.

2. Profile of the ETB Region
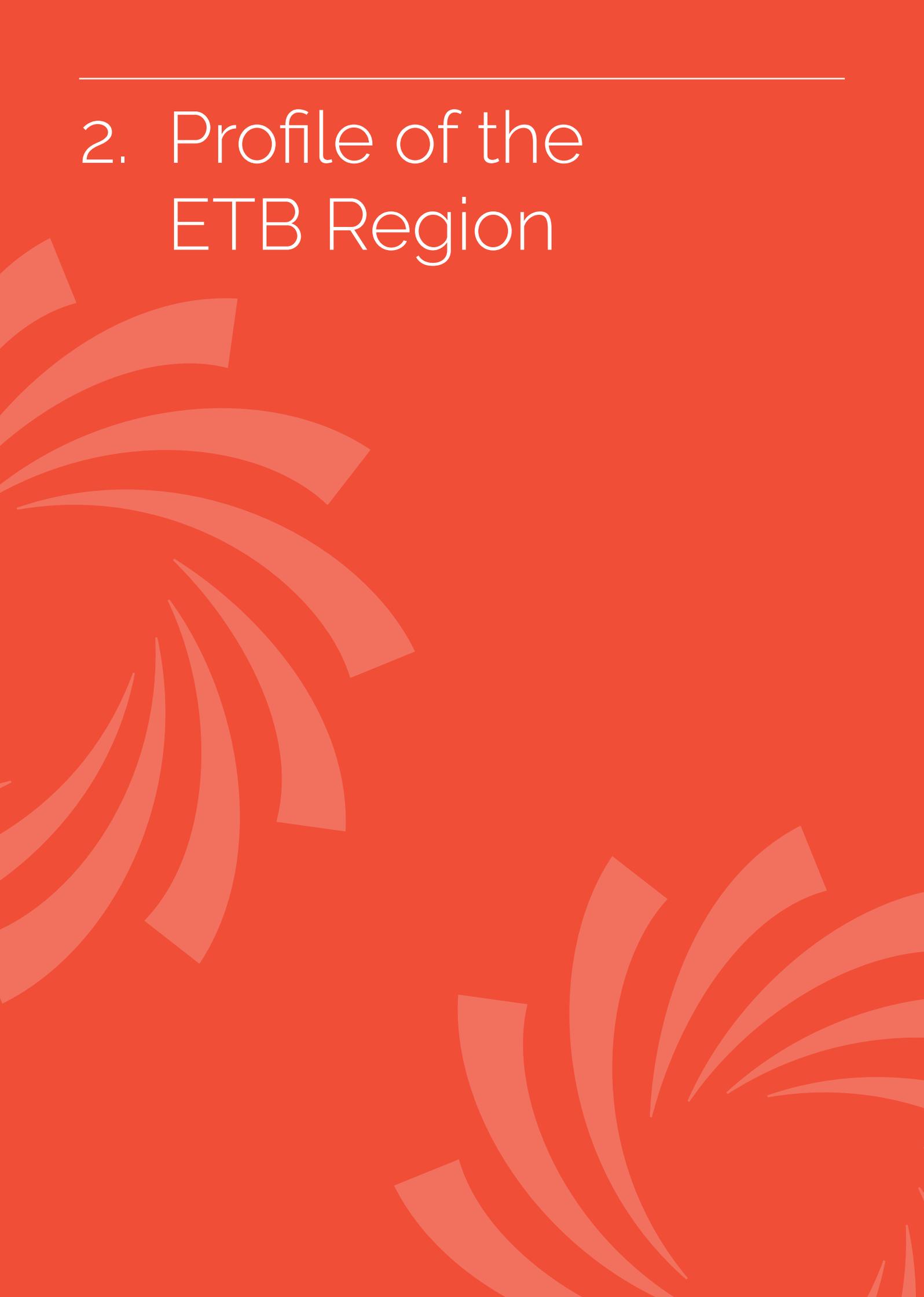
Section 2
Profile of the ETB Region

Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board has the largest geographical area of all the ETBs, with a total area of 9011 km². The population of the three counties, as per the 2016 Census, is as follows: Mayo, 130,597; Sligo, 65,535; and Leitrim 32,044; with a combined total of 228,176.

The region has relatively low educational attainment rates in comparison to national benchmarks. Of the population across the three counties, an average of 26% of those aged 15 years and over have completed third level education, compared to the national average of 42%. At the time of Census 2016, an average of 1.5% of the population had completed no formal education, whilst 8.8% of the population had completed primary education only, compared to a national average of 7%. The number of PhD holders increased from 97 in 2011 to 342 in 2016 and the number holding advanced certs/ apprenticeships increased by 107 in the same period to 3,513.

Total unemployment levels in the region, as of November 2017, are 13,000 approximately as set out in the table below, representing an across-the-board 40% fall compared with the height of the recession.

	Under 25	25 & Over	Total Nov -17
Mayo	753	6859	7612
Sligo	407	2934	3341
Leitrim	211	1830	2041
Total	**1371**	**11623**	**12994**

Source: DSP

This drop in unemployment has not been felt equally throughout the region. The majority of those who are currently unemployed fall into the long-term unemployment category and many face additional disadvantages which constrain their ability to find work, or indeed to access education and training services, such as poor public transport services, no access to broadband, etc.

MSLETB Area 2016

POPULATION
228,176
UNEMPLOYMENT
14.2%
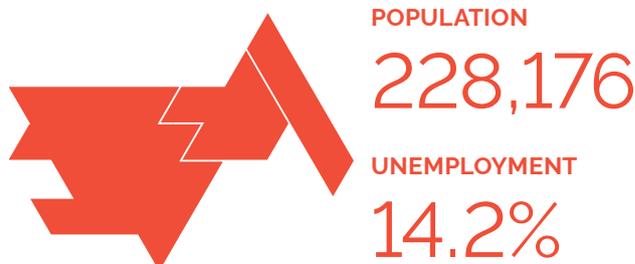
(Source: 2016 Census)

The reduction in unemployment, though obviously positive and welcome, has had the effect of reducing the numbers of available learners to MSLETB. Consequently, MSLETB has refocused funding and resources into the area of workplace traineeships and apprenticeships. A database of employers has been developed to forge better links with industry, so that learners are participating on courses that offer skills required by such industry, thereby further boosting employability and reducing unemployment levels.

According to the Pobal-Haase Deprivation Index 2016, based on the combination of three dimensions of relative affluence and deprivation (demographic profile, social class composition and labour market situation), the MSLETB area is "marginally below average". A further breakdown of this, by county, shows the following:

— Mayo has a relative deprivation score of -3.8
— Sligo has a relative deprivation score of -0.16
— Leitrim has a relative deprivation score of -3.18

The CSO figures show those aged 0-14 and 65+ (the 'age-dependent groups') represent 38% of the region's population. A total of 32,040 (14.1%) of the population of the three counties was recorded as having a disability in the 2016 Census, an increase of 793 from 2011. Non-Irish nationals account for 10.9 % of the population in the region.

The total labour force (aged 15 years and over) in the MSLETB area is over 105,000, distributed across the three counties as shown in the table below:

	% of population in labour force	Labour Force
Mayo	57.7	60,030
Sligo	57.9	30,252
Leitrim	59.3	14,891
Total		**105,173**

Source: 2016 Census

According to the Census (2016) there are 105,173 people currently employed in the Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim region. The main sectors of employment in the region are Professional Services (24.8%), Commerce and Trade (19.5%) and Manufacturing (13.4%). It is noteworthy that the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector provides employment for over 8% of those working in the region.

The Census data shows 70 electoral divisions across the country that are deemed unemployment blackspots – five of which are in Co. Mayo. In these areas, the unemployment rate is over 27%. Three of the unemployment blackspots are in the West Mayo Municipal District – An Geata Mór Theas, Cnoc na Lobhar and Cnoc na Ráithe - with two in the Ballina area – Ballina Urban and Ardnaree South, which had the highest unemployment rate of these five areas at over 31%.

3. ETB FET Provision

Section 3
ETB FET Provision

3.1 Staffing and Infrastructure

In MSLETB, learners and staff are at the centre of the organisation. The executive responsibility for the management of MSLETB's FET provision lies with the FET Leaders and PLC Principals Group, which has oversight of all MSLETB FET provision. The table below outlines membership of related governance and oversight groups.

MSLETB currently employs approximately 650 staff to deliver further education and training and associated services in the area. MSLETB's staffing structure, on a programmatic basis, is typical of all ETBs, however, MSLETB was very negatively impacted by the public service recruitment embargo. In 2017/2018, MSLETB is currently in the process of filling several core vacancies across FET services. Although MSLETB have filled a few key vacancies, a number of key posts and functions remain vacant. These include posts in IT, Quality, Employer Engagement, Programme Design, etc. MSLETB, with other ETB colleagues, are currently engaging with the DES regarding organisational design and staff resourcing and this requires action in 2018.

MSLETB operates the following services throughout Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim:

— 19 post-primary schools
— 9 PLC Colleges (2 are stand-alone roll numbers - Westport CFE and North Connaught College)
— 4 Youthreach Centres (with an additional Youthreach centre being established in Leitrim)
— Community Training Centre - Sligo Training Centre and a (20 place) satellite location in Carrick -on-Shannon
— 2 Outdoor Education Centres – Achill and Lough Allen
— 9 VTOS Centres
— Community Education Initiatives - in multiple locations across the three counties
— Music Generation Initiatives - across the three counties
— Skills for Work Programmes
— Night Class Provision - in six locations
— 2 Training Centres - located in Sligo and Ballina
— 5 Specialist Training Programmes (2 in Mayo & Sligo, 1 in Leitrim)
— 12 Local Training Initiatives - across the region
— BTEI Programmes - in five locations across the three counties
— Adult Literacy - in five locations across the three counties
— Adult Guidance and Information Services - in the three counties
— Youth Services

CE&Directors Group	Mgmt Leadership Group	FET Leaders & PLC Principals Group	QA Group	Programme Approval Committee
— Chief Executive — Director of FET — Director of OSD — Director of Schools	— Chief Executive — Director of FET — Director of OSD — Director of Schools — APO Finance — APO HR — APO Corporate Services — Area Training Manager — AEOs	— FET Director — 3 AEOs — Area Training Manager — 3 Assistant Training Managers — 9 PLC Principals	— FET Director — AEOs — Area Training Manager — Assistant Training Managers — TSOs — Quality Management System Team Lead — QA FE Staff MSLETB	— FET Director — AEOs — Area Training Manager — Assistant Training Manager — TSOs — Quality Management System Team Leam — QA FE Staff MSL

The location of the further education and training services provided by MSLETB are set out in the map below.
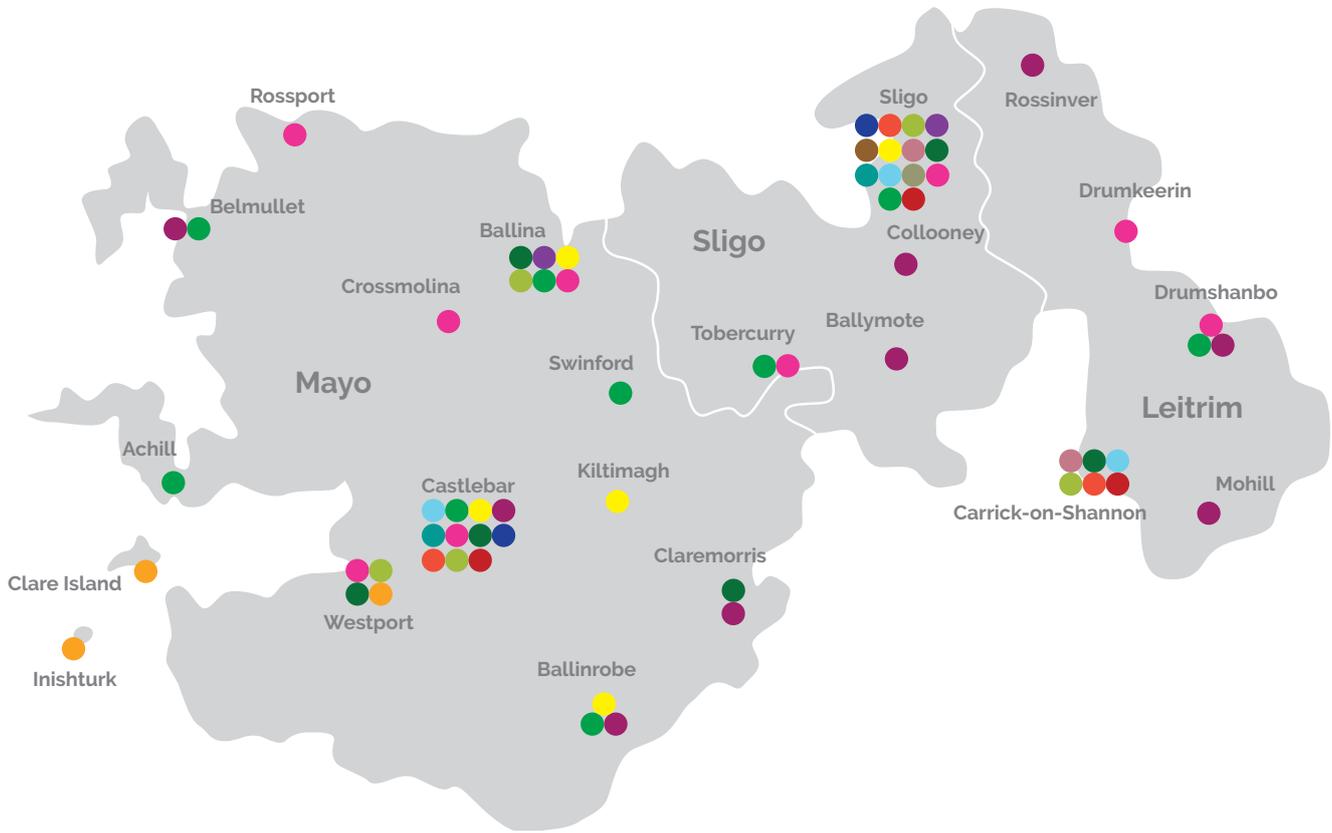
Legend:
- Post Leaving Certificagte Colleges (PLC)
- Youthreach
- The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Community Education
- Music Generation
- Skills for Work (SFW)
- Night Class Provision
- Training Centres
- Services to Business (STB)
- Community Training Centres
- Specialist Training Programme (STP)
- Local Training Initiatives
- Back To Education Initiative (BTEI)
- Adult Basic Education Service
- Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service (AEGIS)
- Youth Services

3.2 FET Provision

MSLETB offer part-time and full-time programmes under the three strategic categories linked to Targets 1, 2 and 3 set out later in this agreement:

Predominantly Labour Market Focused FET Programmes	— Apprenticeship Training — Local Training Initiatives — PLC — Specific Skills Training — Traineeships Training — VTOS
Predominantly Progression Focused FET Programmes	— Youthreach — Bridging & Foundation Training — Community Training Centres — Specialist Training Programmes — BTEI Groups — Skills for Work
Predominantly Social Mobility (Individual Transversal Skills) Focused FET Programmes	— Adult Literacy — ESOL — FET Co-operation Hours — ITABE — Refugee Resettlement — Lifelong Learning

In addition to these programmes, MSLETB is committed to offering additional lifelong learning opportunities through community education. MSLETB delivers programmes from level one to six on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) primarily certified by QQI. MSLETB also provide programmes leading to certification by: ECDL & Equalskills (Irish Computer Society); CompTia (Pearson Vue); Microsoft Office Specialist (Certiport/Prodigy); BS EN ISO 9606-1 (Welding – Metlab; First Aid Responder (PHECC); CIBTAC; CIDESCO; ITEC; City & Guilds; and Accounting Technicians Ireland.

In 2017, MSLETB received €31.9m of funding from SOLAS. This supported 16,872 beneficiaries[1] across a range of FET programmes. In addition, 922 learners self-financed their participation on FET evening classes, making an overall total of 17,793 beneficiaries. Analysis of FET provision is set out by skills cluster in the table below. This highlights the strong focus on transversal skills development within the general learning and core personal categories. However, it also highlights strengths in provision in the key specific skills areas identified earlier, like business, hairdressing/beauty and the built environment.

MSLETB 2017

NUMBERS COMMENCING COURSES

14,478

NOS COMPLETING COURSES

11,614

NO OF OVERALL BENEFICIARIES

16,872

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1   Beneficiary numbers include those already enrolled at 1st January 2017

2017 Provision by Skills Cluster

	Total Actual Beneficaries	% of Total Beneficaries
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	183	1.08%
Animal Science	174	1.03%
Art, Craft and Media		
Arts & Crafts	233	1.38%
Built Environment	528	3.13%
Business, Admin & Management		
Business, Administration	1,097	6.50%
Core ICT	863	5.11%
Core Personal	4,948	29.33%
Engineering	37	0.22%
Engineering (Electrical)		
Engineering (IT)	11	0.07%
Engineering (Mechanical)	149	0.88%
Engineering (Transport)	45	0.27%
Entrepreneurship	8	0.05%
Financial Services	73	0.43%
Food and Beverage	171	1.01%
General Learning	3,498	20.73%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	397	2.35%
Health, Family other Social Services	3,207	19.01%
Information Technology	134	0.79%
Management	46	0.27%
Manufacturing	192	1.14%
Media Graphics Communications	125	0.74%
Natural Resources		
Research and Education-Training	76	0.45%
Sales & Marketing	51	0.30%
Sampling Skills		
Science and Technology	42	0.25%
Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	109	0.65%
Sport and Leisure	144	0.85%
Tourism	106	0.63%
Tourism and Sport		
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	152	0.90%
Web Development & Design	73	0.43%
Total	**16,872**	

MSLETB is committed to providing the following additional core services to potential learners, employers and the wider community through the following:

— **Youth Services** - MSLETB Youth Services support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in the Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim area. The service carries out quality assurance programmes with youth work services and with volunteer-led youth groups, administer funding to youth work services on behalf of various government departments and administers the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, which provides small grants for volunteer-led youth groups. In Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim, the ETB provides support each year to over 100 volunteer-led and operated youth groups, with over 5,000 members.

— **Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service (AEGIS)** - This service provides assistance to people in making informed educational career and life choices. Adults start from where they left off in education and the Guidance Service provides support as they make choices and progress with their return to education and training.

— **Employer Engagement** – MSLETB has established an Employer Engagement Group and an employer database. MSLETB continue to network and collaborate with employers, employer groups (IBEC, ACBI, CIF, IHF RAI, etc.), Regional Skills Fora (RSF), education providers, state agencies (SOLAS, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, LEOs, etc.) and other stakeholders. An employer services brochure, information video and a full directory of services is available on www.msletb.ie, sligotrainingcentre.ie and on other individual Training and FET Centre websites. MSLETB is currently developing a structure that can provide an organised, managed two-way communications/ interactive system between employers and the ETB.

— **Music Generation** - Music Generation Mayo, Music Generation Sligo and Music Generation Leitrim are music education services for children and young people, aged 0-18 yrs. They are part of Music Generation – Ireland's National Music Education Programme, initiated by Music Network, and co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills and local Music Education Partnerships, (MEPs). Each service is managed locally by a Music Education Partnership in their respective counties, under lead partner MSLETB.

4. ETB Strategic Priorities

Section 4
ETB Strategic Priorities

The stated vision for MSLETB is to provide innovative high-quality education and FET services and programmes that provide learners with transformative opportunities for life and living in the West of Ireland. MSLETB's FET provision offers a wide variety of lifelong education and training opportunities. FET is for anyone who is over 16 and wants to learn new skills or enhance existing skills to get the right job, progress to third level or support the achievement of personal goals.

MSLETB's overarching strategic statement outlines the strategic Mission, Vision and Goals from 2018 to 2022. This statement documents the framework against which all schools and centres operate. The Mission, Vision and Goals are underpinned by MSLETB Core Values as follows:

— **Learner-Centred** – deliver professional, high quality, learner-centred education and training services.
— **Professional** – treat everyone with respect and adhere to governance principles; engage in CPD; revise and improve work practice.
— **Collaborative** – work together with colleagues, stakeholders and learners and improve communication with learners and colleagues.
— **Proactive** – solution-focused, flexible and open to new ideas and making services more responsive in meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders.
— **Quality** – actively work on new approaches and standards to improve services; evaluating systems, work practices and programmes to identify and implement opportunities for improvement.

4.1 ETB FET Strategic Priorities

A series of strategic priorities for FET over the period 2018-2020 are discussed in the sections below.

4.1.1 Learner Experience

Ultimately, MSLETB's main mission is to deliver a higher quality learning experience that will lead to better outcomes for all those who engage in Further Education and Training, and to support the Government's economic and social priorities. Since the development of the FET Strategy, MSLETB has been harmonising and integrating FET programmes and services to develop learning pathways for learners. The philosophy behind the idea of learning pathways requires a cultural shift in thinking at a programmatic level. The learning is less about the destination, for example, graduation from VTOS and more about providing a sustainable transformative learning journey that removes barriers. MSLETB learners, who use upskilling pathways, are accessing a package of support measures to ensure they get to the end of their learning "journeys". MSLETB recognises that each learner is likely to have their own individual needs, and these will be related not just to how they might best learn, but also to non-learning obstacles such as health issues, access to transportation, etc. This requires the assembly of multi-professional teams including not only educators, but also social welfare professionals, adult guidance counsellors, and in the case of Youthreach, psychologists, etc. Each learner presents with their own unique mixture of needs.

At the beginning, middle and end of the learning journey, MSLETB Adult Education Guidance and Information Services (AEGIS) plays a key role. They provide individual and group counselling and necessary labour market, learning and career-related information. Learners need preparation for the exit from their upskilling pathway. MSLETB believes it should not be an exit, simply the next step. This service is key and requires additional investment.

In the Strategic Performance Agreement period, 2018-2020, MSLETB is particularly focussed on improving the learning pathway outcomes and progression of learners from the Youthreach services. Several innovative approaches are currently being examined, including a PLC programme embedded in a HE campus. MSLETB is also focussed on the following, to improve the learner experience:

— Continuously reviewing programmes and their outcomes to ensure they are meeting the future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees.

— Currently piloting a new programmatic evaluation approach for all programmes. This approach will systematically review the learning journey from planning, registration, induction, delivery, assessment, and transfer to employment and/or progression based on quantitative, qualitative and feedback from the learners, teaching staff and FET management staff.

— Establishment of a group to explore enhanced transfer opportunities for the Board's learners into further or higher education and/or into employment.

— Establishment an Employer Engagement Group, this includes an employer engagement strategy and a 'smart' tool that maps all MSLETB employers and captures engagement.

— Continuing to carry out skills needs analysis and skills audits using national, regional and local data.

— Continuing to review programmes to ensure they are relevant, flexible and cost effective.

— Promotion of an intelligence-led, 'best practice' continuous improvement FET environment to enhance the relevancy of training and education provision.

— Collaboration with all stakeholders to inform and continuously improve planning for FET. MSLETB is reviewing education and training programmes using evidence-based planning processes and taking cognisance of the feedback from learners and other stakeholders.

4.1.2 Programme Development

MSLETB will continue to undertake regular stakeholder consultation and develop its delivery of flexible FET courses with reference to the National SOLAS FET Strategy 2014-2019, SOLAS FET Planning Parameters 2018-2020 and the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019. MSLETB is developing and implementing an integrated FET planning process that ensures that the needs of local communities, learners and employers are identified and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner, in line with the requirements and priorities of the FET Strategy.

A significant development in 2018 in MSLETB, is the development of an online/blended resource for teachers/tutors/instructors to deliver the Communications component at NFQ Level 5. This resource will be available to support all course content delivery across MSLETB.

MSLETB currently offers, and will expand, a wide range of courses that support the development of learners' transversal skills, as defined by UNESCO (2014). These include programmes that support the development of the following skills:

— Critical and innovative thinking

— Inter-personal development (e.g. presentation and communication skills, organisational skills, teamwork, etc.)

— Interpersonal skills (e.g. self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.)

— Global citizenship (e.g. tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, etc.)

— Media and information literacy, such as the ability to locate and access information, as well as being able to analyse and evaluate media content

MSLETB is currently expanding, leading and developing, as the coordinating provider, new generation apprenticeships and is partnering and collaborating with other education and training providers in supporting a range of new and existing apprenticeships. MSLETB is also playing a lead role in the provision and rollout of new traineeships. Specific developments are discussed further in section 4.1.6.

MSLETB is currently a lead ETB in the development and validation of new FET awards under the QQI Policies and Criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Award System (CAS) (first published in 2016). A national working group comprising representatives from ETBI, FESS, several ETBs and QQI, has been established to develop a sectoral approach to implementation, and a separate timeline has been agreed as part of this process. For ETBs, the current QQI policy will apply to all programmes leading to major awards from 1st May 2018 and will apply to all other programmes from the 1st September 2018. MSLETB is leading the inaugural pilot in developing Agriculture Awards at NFQ Levels 5 & 6 and a special purpose award under the new criteria.

MSLETB will also work on the reform of PLC provision in line with the findings of the national programme evaluation published by SOLAS in January 2018. This will include the rebalancing of PLC provision towards skills areas with a greater labour market focus and a more consistent approach to work placement. There is currently a progression rate from PLC completion to higher and further education of approx. 19%. Progression to HE and FE remains a critical priority of the PLC programme and MSLETB will aim to increase this rate over the period of this agreement.

4.1.3 Staff Development

The diverse range of service provision at MSLETB is supported by a range of specialist roles within the organisation. This requires targeted initiatives in the areas of recruitment, staff development and the creation of a positive workplace environment to ensure that the organisation retains high-calibre staff, develops the skills of staff while, at the same time, developing highly effective leaders.

— MSLETB continues, through active planning, to identify the roles required within the organisation and develop targeted recruitment campaigns, with focus on roles where a supply skills deficit has been identified.

— MSLETB continues to foster a culture of professional development and support for all staff through the targeted provision of appropriate learning and development initiatives to improve and develop their knowledge and capabilities.

— MSLETB continues to actively promote and enable staff to participate in CPD programmes delivered through the DES Professional Development Service for Teachers.

— MSLETB is actively promoting and participating in the National SOLAS FET CPD Strategy to enhance the skills and knowledge of staff delivering in FET, including facilitating access to CPD across the identified areas of focus (technology enhanced learning; quality assurance; vocational upskilling, management training, enterprise engagement, ICT and working with and supporting adult learners).

— MSLETB nurtures leadership capacity by supporting staff to avail of learning, development, coaching and mentoring programmes and to engage in leadership roles within their school/ centre and across the ETB, where appropriate.

— MSLETB continues to enable, within available resources, a model of support that allows for the release of staff to partake of relevant and appropriate CPD opportunities.

— MSLETB continues to enable staff to get involved with national bodies in the development and implementation of national policy initiatives and to support their involvement.

— MSLETB will review opportunities for staff to avail of work placement opportunities in industry/ business and other training/learning settings.

— MSLETB will introduce a system to monitor and record professional development of staff.

4.1.4 Employer Engagement

In MSLETB, employer engagement takes many different forms - employer participation in classrooms; employer involvement in the development of occupational standards; work placement; work-based learning; mentoring relationships; involvement in curriculum design or the accreditation of programmes; knowledge transfer, research and development and supporting start-ups.

In 2017, MSLETB established an Employer Engagement Team. The purpose of this team is to integrate, harmonise and develop a unified employer engagement approach across MSLETB. It is critical that there is an effective, open and clear two-way communication process between the education and training sector and the world of work. The team's main goals are to ensure that MSLETB are addressing the needs of employers, following up effectively, delivering a consistent message on capabilities and that the voice of the employer is central to all that happens. Already, an innovative outcome of the team is the development of an Employer Engagement Tool/ Application that maps all employers within the MSLETB region (and outside), captures all engagements on a real-time database, automates follow-up via an existing integrated platform, eliminates duplication, assists in providing a consistent message and provides data on progress. MSLETB is currently sharing this innovation with other ETBs who will collaborate in its ongoing development.

MSLETB is engaged with several companies delivering FET services directly in the workplace. For example, the Skills for Work programme is actively working with a range of employers from the retail sector to upskill and reskill employees. Evening course provision in MSLETB Training Centres in Sligo and Ballina also provides opportunities for those in employment to access FET services.

Through MSLETB's engagement with the Regional Skills Fora (RSF), an ICT and FinTech (Financial Technology) skills needs audit was recently conducted and a clear set of goals to enhance upskilling in these sectors was agreed. Utilising the 'Employer Engagement' database, MSLETB identified employers/ sector participants and shared this information with the RSF. Following on from this engagement, an ongoing ICT and FinTech Cluster group has been established. An example of an output from the group is a workshop aimed at MSLETB's second-level schools, outlining the benefits and opportunities of working in the ICT and FinTech Sectors and linking up companies locally with potential future employees.

4.1.5 Active Inclusion and Learners with a Disability

Active inclusion is an MSLETB priority and is supported by the overall education and training policy. The priority for MSLETB is to enable every citizen, including those experiencing barriers to the labour market (for example, people with a disability, refugees, early school leavers or those with lower levels of skills) to fully participate and access a range of quality FET services and, ultimately, to gain a job. MSLETB will continue to seek to increase levels of active inclusion through the provision of high quality, more accessible and flexible education and training programmes and supports suited to the identified needs of the individual. Specific actions include:

— The continuous review of FET provision to ensure that programmes are relevant and meeting the needs of the learner.
— Supporting jobseekers and unemployed people to gain skills, up-skill or re-skill through a range of relevant labour market programmes.
— Provide long- term unemployed and young unemployed people with opportunities to enhance their job prospects through value-added activities such as job search, guidance, work experience, and other education and training activities.
— Engage all unemployed young people under the age of 25, with a view to ensuring that they receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.
— Enhance employability skills for young people through non-formal and informal learning opportunities through the Youthreach Programme.
— Support the increased participation of people with disabilities in work by: building skills, capacity and independence; providing bridges and supports into work; promoting job retention and re-entry into work; providing seamless support and engaging with employers, as part of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024.
— Raise awareness of learning opportunities and support greater engagement of people with literacy and numeracy needs in FET.
— Integrate literacy and numeracy into all FET programmes, thereby ensuring that relevant literacy and numeracy skills are developed as part of the subject specific learning.
— Provide intensive learning programmes for a variety of groups including unemployed people, people in the workplace and families.
— Support marginalised groups and ethnic minorities to access a range of inclusive FET services.
— Provide ESOL courses to migrants, as well as ongoing support, in order raise awareness of other services and support them to progress into further education and training. MSLETB will also progress the implementations of the review of ESOL provision which was published by SOLAS and ETBI in March 2018.

Learners accessing literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes present with a variety of needs relating to reading, writing, speaking, spelling, numeracy, ICT, etc. MSLETB services not only provide literacy and numeracy support to the learners but also attempt to enhance their communications and personal effectiveness skills. Most learners are in small groups, with a reducing amount of one-to-one tuition (where this is necessary). Year on year, there is an increase in the amount of accredited provision throughout the service. MSLETB offers courses at Levels 1, 2 and 3 on the NFQ and learners have the option to pursue Minor and Major Awards. As courses are all part-time, it may take a student a couple of years to achieve a full award. In 2017, 66% of Adult Literacy learners were attending accredited programmes from Levels 1-3. However, only 30% of learners attained certification. MSLETB is endeavouring to improve upon these certification rates throughout the duration of the Strategic Performance Agreement 2018-2020. It must be noted, however, that accreditation is only one measurement for these learners and it is important to always be mindful about meeting the other needs of the learners. Themed literacy programmes are developing well within MSLETB and have the potential to reach people with poor literacy and numeracy skills through offering courses that are vocational in nature but offer a large level of integrated literacy and numeracy content, e.g. motor maintenance, cookery, horticulture, etc.

From 2018 onwards, MSLETB have implemented several actions to improve its adult literacy services. A harmonised and integrated approach to initial screening/ assessment of all FET learners prior to starting a course has been introduced, deploying the best practice toolkit produced nationally earlier in 2018 for the assessment of literacy and numeracy at Levels 1 to 3. MSLETB is also identifying appropriate progression routes for all FET learners early in the interaction, with each learner then assisted to develop an individual learning plan.

MSLETB offers a wide range of further education and training programmes that can open the door to exciting new careers and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Programmes through MSLETB's specialist training provision for people with disabilities include - ECDL, Arts and Craft, Media, Catering, Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure, Business Studies and Administration, Computers and IT, Horticulture and Environment, and Career Exploration and Employment. All MSLETB courses are available for people with disabilities to access and MSLETB assists with 'reasonable accommodation' for these learners. For students with specific learning difficulties, MSLETB's main aim is to be flexible with the range of programmes on offer to accommodate their needs and to provide them with the essential tools to complete the course successfully.

MSLETB will continue to have a positive and proactive approach to promote the inclusion of learners onto courses that can meet the learners' needs and potential. It will continue to consider and prioritise support to address the needs of particular cohorts of learners including the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, lone parents, jobless households, Travellers and other under-represented groups. This is based on the existing practice and will be continued.

4.1.6 Expansion of Apprenticeships and Traineeships

MSLETB is very active in the development of new apprenticeships and traineeships. MSLETB is currently working in a lead capacity with employers on new generation apprenticeships in sales, and butchery. MSLETB is the co-ordinating provider for both the Craft Butchery Apprenticeship, in collaboration with Association of Craft Butchers of Ireland, and the Associate Sales Professional Apprenticeship. As the lead ETB in both these new apprenticeships, MSLETB have been at the forefront of the implementation of the planned government expansion of apprenticeship and traineeships. Other initiatives include:

— MSLETB is a collaborating provider with FIT on the new National Tech Apprenticeships.
— MSLETB is a collaborating provider with Kerry ETB and the Irish Hotels Federation on the new Commis Chef Apprenticeship and plan to commence off-the-job delivery in the Hospitality Training Unit in September 2018.
— MSLETB is actively engaged in existing apprenticeships, providing apprenticeship advisory services to approximately 700 local employers with apprentices in these trades. Currently MSLETB provide off-the-job apprenticeship training in several apprenticeships – MAMF, Electrical, EI, C&J, VBR, Plumbing and Toolmaking. In the Strategic Performance Agreement period 2018-2020, it is planned to actively promote apprenticeship to the legacy employers in MSLETB and new employers in both the existing and new apprenticeships.
— The traditional traineeships of Health Service Skills, Outdoor Activity Instructor and IT Support Specialist will continue to be offered in the MSLETB area. MSLETB recently piloted the Career Traineeship in Hospitality as a direct response to local employment needs and lack of skilled personnel, in the hospitality industry, particularly in areas along the Wild Atlantic Way. This continues to be a successful venture; the fourth iteration of this traineeship is underway currently.
— MSLETB continues to engage with local employers in the Manufacturing/Engineering sector with a view to delivering a Traineeship in Engineering. Occupational Skills Profiling for this sector has been completed with a view to commencing the Traineeship in late 2018.
— Working with some of the larger employers, MSLETB are scoping the delivery of the Advanced Manufacturing Traineeship in North Mayo. MSLETB is also liaising with CPA Ireland to launch the

Certified Professional Accountancy Traineeship in the MSLETB region. MSLETB is also developing a Traineeship in sports broadcasting in Rossport, linking with local employers, and plans to commence in September 2018.
— There are several other Traineeship initiatives that are currently being explored as the Traineeship model expands across all MSLETB's full-time course provision e.g. Hairdressing, Beauty, Media, etc.

4.1.7 Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

MSLETB is currently heavily involved in implementing its TEL strategic goal. Throughout the duration of the Strategic Performance Agreement 2018-2020, all learning in MSLETB FET will be supported and enhanced using electronic media.

Strategic Objective 1 – MSLETB will have the best possible technology infrastructure.

1. In 2017, MSLETB will develop a plan to improve broadband and wireless internet and network access in all centres.
2. In 2017, MSLETB will commit to invest in technology for learning as required.

Strategic Objective 2 – Incorporate technology in all FET programme design and delivery.

1. In 2017, all programmes will incorporate technology enhanced learning in all full-time programmes and on a phased basis across part-time provision.
2. Starting in 2017, all full-time provision (and on a phased basis across part-time provision) will be required to integrate innovative approaches such as the flipped classroom; 'bring your own device'; blended learning; social media; interactive, individualised learning plans; feedback mechanisms and assessments into FET programmes as appropriate.

Strategic Objective 3 – Make learning content available on online learning platforms.

1. From 2017, e-learning content supporting the course learning outcomes to be made available as appropriate for the subject area or client group across the full spectrum of FET provision e.g. eBooks, video, virtual animations, simulations and eLearning resources.

Strategic Objective 4 – Promote and provide high quality continuous professional development in technology enhanced learning.

1. From 2017, MSLETB will commence building expertise and confidence in using technology to teach and to enhance learning for existing staff.

There is evidence that when blended learning is designed and implemented effectively, it has the potential to transform the learning experience for all those involved. MSLETB expects tangible benefits to arise out from blended learning experiences.

For students:

— Improvements in learning style, insight and/or reflection.
— Enhancement of skills, employability and/or confidence.
— Enhanced satisfaction, motivation, attendance and/or retention.
— Enhanced recruitment through greater accessibility or opening-up of new markets.

For staff:

— A stimulus to creative teaching and to educational research.
— Enhancement of staff satisfaction and retention.
— Enhancement of staff skills, employability and/or confidence.

For assessment:

— Remove much of the burden of managing assessments, freeing up staff to focus on setting effective assessment tasks and giving effective feedback.
— Allow assessments to be more and more transparent, uniform and fair.
— Allow students opportunities to practice assessment tasks before undertaking high stakes assessment, and optionally to choose the timing of their assessment.
— Generate multiple instances of 'the same' task, problem or question to allow multiple technology in learning opportunities for practice.
— Allow assessors to share tasks, problems and questions, learn from each other, and standardise good practice across assessing bodies.

For the learning organisation:

— Time saving for teaching and other frontline staff (however, extra time burdens have also been recorded).
— Specialism and diversification of teaching roles (some benefits and some risks have been reported).
— More effective use of resources/management of assets.
— Performance in quality reviews.

4.1.8 Data and Systems Improvement

Business intelligence and data is important as a driver of knowledge to enhance managerial decision making, to improve planning and to be proactive and ready to respond to any challenges that emerge. Brexit is a good example of this. MSLETB are monitoring this very closely. Throughout MSLETB, there are workers who cross the border in both directions. According to the Centre for Cross Border Studies - Border People Project, it is estimated that approximately 30,000 people are crossing the border to work in either jurisdiction. The shape of the final Brexit situation, if the UK and Northern Ireland were not to retain access to the Single Market, could have serious implications on the continuity of both private and public sector to employ workers from across the border. In addition to regular consultation with key stakeholders, MSLETB utilises the SOLAS Labour Market Research Unit to provide critical labour market intelligence. The reports from the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN) and the National and Regional Labour Market Bulletins provide critical labour market data and analysis to MSLETB in support of the joint SOLAS/ETB annual business planning exercise and influences the ongoing provision of courses in MSLETB.

MSLETB is currently implementing PLSS and FARR, and this is being supported centrally through an internally appointed champion. MSLETB are represented on the national PLSS advisory group. MSLETB also provides FARR and PLSS training to staff as required. Support is offered to schools and centres in using the systems. MSLETB recognises the importance of data as a driver of knowledge in the context of the planning process and the need to ensure the quality of data input around PLSS.

MSLETB has identified many strengths with this system. PLSS is a data repository which has resulted in the reduction of ad-hoc management information systems (MIS) at a centre level. The system facilitates integration and metrics for self-evaluation of programmes using FARR and PLSS reporting functions. Recent updates in the system have resulted in the reduction in the amount of reporting required at centre level. The system has additional beneficial features such as notifications, online payments and online application system through FETCH courses. MSLETB recognises the benefit of the development of the FETCH courses website, which collates and displays PLSS course information. The National Course Calendar Schedule (NCCS) provides course recruitment facilities to enable scheduled courses to attract 'referrals' through the FETCH website and integration with the DEASP BOMI system. The learner database records enable 'touch points', which give the functionality of real-time information on dropout, completion, certification and follow up which is very beneficial regarding planning, measuring outcomes and reporting of FET provision.

The system has many benefits, however, there are several issues identified by users. MSLETB acknowledges that work is currently underway to further integrate the system with other systems such as the QBS, P-pod, ESF, DES statistical returns, and SUSI. The current lack of integration and interconnectivity with other systems requires schools and centres to manually export data, which carries risks regarding data transfer that are being mitigated at a centre level. These matters are currently being addressed and it is essential that administration is minimised so that MSLETB personnel can focus on the quality of teaching and learning.

MSLETB have identified a number of opportunities which would offer additional functionality on the system, for example, timetabling facilities that would enable centres to no longer require private MIS, reducing duplication of work. Schools and centres promote FETCH courses and advise learners to access FET provision via the site, however, MSLETB have identified that a national marketing campaign would be very beneficial; utilising social media, a viral campaign, traditional media sources and social media influencers to build brand awareness and recognition.

Further issues have been identified as barriers to using the system by users, such as the lack of administrative support in FET to complete reporting and administration requirements; GDPR considerations in relation to the collection, handling and storage of data and; learners' non-disclosure of data resulting in incomplete data sets and IR concerns.

4.1.9 Strategic Partnerships

MSLETB have agreed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and have excellent working relationships with GMIT, IT Sligo and St. Angela's College (NUIG). In all cases, advanced entry pathways have been mapped for all relevant FET programmes delivered throughout the nine MSLETB PLC Colleges. MSLETB is working collaboratively with all three ITs on several initiatives including the following: improved linkages with MSLETB post-primary schools; jointly aligning programme provision to the needs of the national and local labour market; eliminating duplication of provision; CPD for staff; and collaborating and assisting in the development of new apprenticeships and traineeships.

It is the experience, and is clearly recognised by both GMIT and Sligo IT, that FET graduates have a much higher completion rate on Higher Education (HE) programmes. The clear majority of MSLETB graduates successfully complete third level courses once they commence them. Throughout the Strategic Performance Agreement 2018-2020, it is the intention of MSLETB to work closely with its education partners in Higher Education to: identify barriers to access, transfer and progression and propose appropriate and feasible solutions; create greater awareness of opportunities for students who are in the Further Education and Training Sector to progress to Higher Education; collaborate on enhancing transparent visible access, transfer and progression pathways and progression opportunities across the region; identify where resources and good practice could be shared and to explore thematic collaborations; foster and support research on access, transfer and progression across the FET & HE sectors to inform policy; provide opportunities to share and disseminate information relevant to staff and students; and collaborate with wider stakeholder groups to further the above objectives.

In 2018, MSLETB agreed an MOU with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) in the West and North West region. The purpose of this framework is to establish more structured links at national, divisional and area levels between the DEASP and MSLETB. This framework facilitates the exchange of data between the organisations and the referral of clients to suitable education and training interventions provided by the ETB. The objective is to provide DEASP clients with the knowledge, skills, competence and supports to assist them to find a job or to progress to further education and training, if appropriate.

In addition to this, MSLETB is actively working with Local Authorities (through the Local Community Development Committee) and other stakeholders to identify and provide services for citizens in general and, specifically, marginalised and at-risk groups, e.g. refugees in each of the three counties and new initiatives to assist Traveller groups.

4.2 Risks and Challenges

Over the last 3-4 years there have been new structural changes and policy initiatives happening around the FET landscape in Ireland. Whilst MSLETB welcomes the new goals, action plans and strategies that are now in place in FET, it is imperative that they are backed up with proper resources. It is proving very challenging to implement what has already been rolled out because of the lack of action on the operational, funding and structural changes that are needed at an ETB level. A number of core, overarching challenges exist:

— **Lack of investment** – in relation to capital budget, ICT, personnel, CPD, etc.
— **Staffing** – the impact of the employment embargo and fit-for-purpose organisational structure; availability of qualified teachers/instructors in new skills areas and with programme development skills; CPD supports.
— **Programme development** – currently FET programmes are at the end of their shelf-life and new programmes need to be developed under new validation criteria. The new validation criteria fundamentally change the way that programmes are developed, managed, delivered and continuously adapted. Currently, little or no mechanisms or infrastructure exists to support programme development, syllabus management and curriculum evolution.
— **Pre-existing national programme guidelines and constructs** – these create silos and different ecosystems of approaches within programmes - this is a barrier to the integration of FET services.
— **External environment and the pace of change** – the current pace of change in the economy and skills development is at an accelerated pace and it is difficult to keep up with.
— **Standing of FET** – FET is still not seen as an equal, but rather an alternative, complimentary pathway for people as compared to HE.
— **Labour market** - falling unemployment is leading to difficulties filling courses.

4.3 Delivering on FET Relevant Policies and Strategies

The FET sector in Ireland has gone through very significant changes over the last four years in the context of Government reform of the Public Service, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, that led to the establishment of SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards. Against this background, MSLETB continues to evolve in line with the overarching SOLAS aim to ensure that FET programmes, nationally, play a vital role in economic development through the provision of relevant, quality-assured education and training programmes. MSLETB will continue to prioritise, and is acutely aware of, all the policy initiatives (and others) detailed below:

Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 (APE)
Action Plan for Jobs (APJ)
Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014-2020
Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES) for People with Disabilities 2015-2024
Connecting for Life - Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020
EU Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion contained in What Works for Roma Inclusion in the EU: Policies and Model Approaches
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act 2014– Guidance on The Public Sector Duty
Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020
National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016
National Carers' Strategy 2012
National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
National Drugs Strategy: Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery - A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025
Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025
National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 – 2020: creating a better society for all

National Strategy On Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015 – 2020
National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020. Interim Review: 2011 – 2016. New Targets: 2017 – 2020
National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
National Youth Strategy 2015-2020
Pathways to Work 2016 – 2020
Review of ALCES funded Adult Literacy Provision
SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2020
Speak Today, Shape Tomorrow: 2016 National FET Learner Forum Report
The Migrant Integration Strategy 2017 – 2020
The National Positive Ageing Strategy 2013
Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training 2016-2019
A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025
Updated National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2015 – 2017
Integrating Literacy and Numeracy Final Report
Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and Traineeships 2016-2020
Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland

MSLETB is also committed to the wider process of programme reform across the FET sector and of responding to the findings and recommendations arising from programme reviews, evaluations and subsequent SOLAS responses and guidelines. In particular MSLETB note:

— Evaluation of Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) provision and SOLAS response
— Reviews of and guidelines issued on traineeship provision
— Evaluation of Youthreach/CTC provision (to be published in 2018)
— Evaluation of VTOS/SST provision (to be published in 2019)
— Evaluation of BTEI (to be published in 2019)
— Evaluation of Specialist Training provision (to be published in 2019)

5. ETB Contribution to National FET Strategy and Targets

Section 5
ETB Contribution to National FET Strategy and Targets

5.1 Skills for the Economy

MSLETB FET provision will address the current and future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees and will contribute to national economic development. It is set out below how the FET strategy objectives under this pillar link to specific initiatives being progressed by MSLETB.

Strategic Objective 1 - Install an appropriate advisory infrastructure to ensure that the relevant provision is informed directly by employers and reflects/ responds to emerging labour market challenges.	1. Establish an Employer Engagement Group. 2. Establish a database of employers and employer engagement in MSLETB. 3. Network and collaborate throughout MSLETB with employers, employer groups, Regional Skills Fora, education providers, state agencies and other stakeholders. 4. Continuously review programmes and their outcomes to ensure they are meeting the future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees. 5. Carry out a skills needs analysis and skills audit using national, regional and local data. 6. Create an organised, managed, two-way communications/ interactive system between employers and MSLETB.
Strategic Objective 2 – Provide further education and training programmes for a diverse range of individuals and communities with a focus on long-¬-term unemployed people and unemployed young people.	1. Implement an MOU between MSLETB and DEASP. 2. Engage fully with regional, local and community stakeholders including Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) and contribute to all relevant action plans. 3. MSLETB will continue to prioritise and support positive interventions for unemployed young people and other marginalised groups. 4. MSLETB will continue to provide Youthreach services in all counties; specific focus will be to establish Youthreach services in Co. Leitrim in 2018.
Strategic Objective 3 - Develop and implement programmes under the new apprenticeship system.	1. MSLETB will establish itself as the coordinating provider of at least one new apprenticeship in 2017. 2. MSLETB will participate as a collaborating provider of new apprenticeships. 3. Promote new and existing apprenticeships to all stakeholders. 4. Develop, promote and deliver new Traineeships.
Strategic Objective 4 – Provide further education and training programmes for employees supported by a new FET Employee Development Strategy.	1. Establish a workforce development plan through the MSLETB Employer Engagement Group. 2. Expand current employee and employer FET provision. 3. Pilot at least two new workforce development initiatives in 2017. 4. Work with SOLAS to support the effective implementation of "Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth", a 2018-2021 FET policy framework for skills development of people in employment over this period.
Strategic Objective 5 – Provide further education and training programmes to assist people to start and sustain their own business.	1. Include a component on entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship on all relevant FET programmes. 2. Develop an EU project proposal for international collaboration on developing sustainable rural economies.

5.2 Active Inclusion

As noted in section 4.1.5, through active inclusion, MSLETB's FET services will endeavour to support all people to access FET services that enable them to reach their potential and enable them to contribute to society. Special focus under this goal is given to targeting people who are most marginalised within society. Key actions against FET strategic objectives are set out below.

Strategic Objective 1 - Support Active Inclusion across FET.	1. Constantly review and monitor programme delivery and provision to ensure that all citizens benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. 2. MSLETB will endeavour to meet all learners' needs. 3. MSLETB is committed to: ensuring that persons with disabilities benefit from relevant training and education that enable their progression to employment opportunities; ensuring provision of vocational education for people with disabilities and; and encouraging participation by persons with disabilities in education programmes.
Strategic Objective 2 – Devise and implement a strategy to promote literacy and numeracy across FET.	1. Implement an MOU between MSLETB and DEASP. 2. Engage fully with regional, local and community stakeholders including Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) and contribute to all relevant action plans. 3. MSLETB will continue to prioritise and support positive interventions for unemployed young people and other marginalised groups. 4. MSLETB will continue to provide Youthreach services in all counties; specific focus will be to establish Youthreach services in Co. Leitrim in 2018.

5.3 Quality Provision

MSLETB FET will provide high quality education and training programmes and will meet the appropriate national and international quality standards. Key actions to support the objectives within the FET strategy around quality provision are set out below.

Strategic Objective 1 - Respond to the needs of learners, employers and communities.	1. MSLETB will continue to review and provide programmes that are current, relevant and fit for purpose. 2. MSLETB programmes will enable learners progress to employment or a higher-level qualification in FET or HET. 3. MSLETB will ensure that all services provided to our learners with transformative opportunities for life and living. 4. The health, safety and welfare of all people interacting with MSLETB services will remain of paramount concern and central to all management decision making. 5. Provide for a systematic approach accommodating work experience and Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities for learners and employers.
Strategic Objective 2 – Ensure excellence in FET programme development.	1. Establish an MSLETB FET Quality Assurance Unit which will ensure excellence in FET programme development, delivery and standards. 2. Develop and implement a quality system for MSLETB FET provision over the duration of this strategy statement. 3. Ensure that continuous improvement, innovation, flexibility and responsiveness to social, economic and employment conditions are central to programme development.
Strategic Objective 3 - Enhance adult educational guidance services within FET and extend it to all who engage with FET, including employees.	1. Continue to integrate adult guidance and information and recruitment services in MSLETB.

Strategic Objective 4 – Develop standards for staff qualifications in the FET sector.	1. Establish a CPD FET project team in 2017, in line with the national FET CPD Strategy. 2. Implement a CPD work plan. 3. Review current CPD policy and procedures on an annual basis.
Strategic Objective 5 – Provide effective pathways for FET graduates to Levels 7 and 8 within the higher education sector.	1. Establish and agree MOUs between GMIT, IT Sligo and NUIG. 2. Review programmes and outcomes to ensure that they are relevant and fit for purpose.
Strategic Objective 6 - Provide suitable and appropriate facilities for further education and training.	1. Provide education and training facilities that are fit for purpose. 2. Continuously improve and update facilities including classrooms, workshops, equipment, ICT infrastructure and all learning and training areas to achieve a high level of infrastructural and technological modernity. 3. Incorporate sustainability/renewable energy initiatives in all future building projects.
Strategic Objective 7 – Ensure that all MSLETB staff delivering further education and training programmes have current and relevant qualifications and skills.	1. Establish a workforce development plan through the MSLETB Employer Engagement Group. 2. Expand current employee and employer FET provision. 3. Pilot at least two new workforce development initiatives in 2017. 4. Work with SOLAS to support the effective implementation of "Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth", a 2018-2021 FET policy framework for skills development of people in employment over this period.
Strategic Objective 8 – Ensure that all MSLETB FET provision and delivery complies with the highest standards of corporate governance and compliance.	1. Implement and develop policies and procedures as issued by MSLETB. 2. Support and empower staff and stakeholders to always make correct and ethical decisions. 3. Co-operate with all relevant external bodies and stakeholders to ensure value for money and good corporate governance and compliance.

5.4 Outcomes-based Planning and Funding

MSLETB FET provision will be planned and funded based on objective analysis of needs and evidence of social and economic impact. Key actions in support of the FET strategy objectives around outcomes-based planning and funding include.

Strategic Objective 1 - Implement a new integrated and co-ordinated FET planning model.	1. In 2017, MSLETB improved its planning and budgeting systems for FET. 2. MSLETB will continue to review programmes to ensure that they are relevant, flexible and cost effective. 3. Promote an intelligence-led 'Best Practice' continuous improvement FET environment to enhance the relevancy of MSLETB's training and education provision. 4. MSLETB will collaborate with all stakeholders to inform and continuously improve planning for FET.
Strategic Objective 2 – Ensure excellence in FET programme development.	1. Establish an MSLETB FET Quality Assurance Unit which will ensure excellence in FET programme development, delivery and standards. 2. Develop and implement a quality system for MSLETB FET provision over the duration of this strategy statement. 3. Ensure that continuous improvement, innovation, flexibility and responsiveness to social, economic and employment conditions are central to programme development.
Strategic Objective 3 - Introduce performance-related funding (appropriate to the type of FET provision and defined strategic outcomes).	1. MSLETB will review FARR submission and strategic plan, as per the SOLAS FET Funding and Parameters, to ensure effective implementation and corrective action as necessary. 2. MSLETB will establish an FET innovation fund to increase the incidences of innovation initiatives.

Strategic Objective 4 – Evaluate the effectiveness of all current FET provision.	MSLETB will continue to review programmes to ensure they are relevant, flexible and cost effective.
	Carry out skills needs analysis and skills audits using national, regional and local data to facilitate effective integrated FET planning.
	Implement the recommendations of national programme evaluations coordinated by SOLAS.

5.5 Standing of FET

MSLETB will ensure a valued learning path leading to agreed employment, career and developmental, personal and social options. Key actions to support FET strategy goals around the standing of FET are set out below.

Strategic Objective 1 - Promote and provide high quality FET response to the needs of industry and learners.	1. In 2017, MSLETB established and supported a Marketing and Promotions Group.
	2. In 2017, MSLETB established an Employer Engagement Group.
	3. MSLETB will develop an effective, managed two-way communications/ interactive system between employers and MSLETB.
	4. MSLETB will use every opportunity to create and share a single consistent message for the value proposition of MSLETB FET services.
	5. MSLETB will work with SOLAS to maximise the value and impact of a national campaign to promote further education and training in 2018 and 2019.
Strategic Objective 2 – Conduct an economic and social impact study of MSLETB FET provision.	1. Over the duration of the strategic plan, MSLETB will conduct market research of the perceived impact, reach and awareness of MSLETB services in the region.
	2. In 2017, MSLETB will assist SOLAS in conducting an economic and social impact study.

5.6 ETB Contribution to National FET Targets

MSLETB commits to making the specific contribution to each of the six core national FET targets over the period 2018-2020 set out below. A summary showing how the contribution to each target is driven by activity within different skills clusters is provided as Appendix A. The definition underpinning each target is detailed in Appendix B.

Target	National Sectoral Target	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB Contribution
1. More learners securing employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market	10% over 3 years	41% over 3 years, equating to 608 learners securing employment in 2020
2. More learners progressing to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose	10% over 3 years	14% over 3 years, equating to 2,471 learners progressing to other courses in 2020
3. Increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development	10% over 3 years	66% over 3 years, equating to 481 completers certified in 2020

Target	National Sectoral Target	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB Contribution
4. Increase in adults seeking FET level provision engaging in lifelong learning interventions	10% over 3 years	10% over 3 years, equating to 13,008 starting LLL relevant programmes in 2020
5. Increase in learners securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified	10,000 learners per annum	Average annual increase of 608 and a 48% increase in learners in 2020 compared with 2017
6. New apprenticeship and trainee registrations in the period 2018 to 2020	13,900 over 3 years	561 over 3 years or 55% growth

To deliver on **target 1,** new programmes will be introduced to include the new-generation apprenticeships – Sales, Chef, Butchery, ICT, etc; new traineeships in accountancy, hairdressing, childcare and media; and new full-time and part-time programmes in manufacturing, construction, farm management, clean room operations, etc. There will also be increased provision in labour market demand areas in existing apprenticeships/traineeships, including call centre, engineering, welding, transport, tourism management, driving, retail, etc. MSLETB note that the achievement of this target is dependent on the implementation of rigorous learning pathway supports and processes for transitioning learners into employment.

To deliver on **target 2**, new offerings will be introduced to include Leitrim Youthreach, Leitrim CTC, Transition from Youthreach and Pre-apprenticeships. Planned increases in course provision include for tourism, agri-food, IT and general learning. The application of linked work experience to Youthreach will be explored in conjunction with the new YESS scheme, and Youthreach classes are planned in PLC settings. MSLETB note the achievement of this target is dependent on the implementation of rigorous learning pathway supports and processes for transitioning learners into FET (or HE). Additional supports for learners in Youthreach will also be required.

To deliver on **target 3**, MSLETB will provide more certified programmes and additional modules to learners on programmes.

To deliver on **target 4**, self-financing night classes are to be scheduled and reported on the PLSS. It was suggested that due to learners paying for courses it may be more difficult to gather the data in the learner details form. The unemployment blackspots in County Mayo were identified as a specific area that needs targeted programmes. Expansion will also be achieved by providing work-based programmes via SFW, Traineeship, and/or using the evening training in the model via the training centre. The achievement of this target is dependent on providing more opportunities for learners to engage in labour market/or transversal skills relevant modules to upskill/reskill.

The delivery of **target 5** is linked to Target 1 and the expansion and improvement of certification outcomes of labour market programmes in Traineeship, Apprenticeship, PLC, VTOS, LTI, SST, BTEI and evening training. This target will be increased by embedding self-financing provision into FARR / PLSS systems. MSLETB notes that the achievement of this target is dependent on providing more opportunities for learners to engage in labour market programmes or modules, on improving the certification rate of learners on programmes.

To deliver on **target 6,** MSLETB is expanding traineeships in engineering, business, accountancy etc.

The delivery of all targets will also be dependent on ensuring all activity is fully recorded on FARR and PLSS database.

6. Performance Agreement

Section 6
Performance Agreement

In entering this agreement, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board commits to pursuing the priorities and actions set out in the previous sections and making the stipulated contribution to each of the six core FET targets over the period 2018 to 2020, subject to the risks and challenges identified and set out in Section 4.2 of the agreement. MSLETB also commits to adherence to legislative requirements, the Overarching Planning and Funding Requirements for FET and SOLAS funding Terms and Conditions.

SOLAS commits to supporting the delivery of these priorities, actions and targets wherever practical subject to and within its existing resource constraints and competing commitments. The realisation of the targets will be monitored on an ongoing basis via the PLSS and FARR systems, and it is proposed that a formal mid-term review will be undertaken in September 2019, including a further strategic dialogue session between the two parties at this point.

Signed:
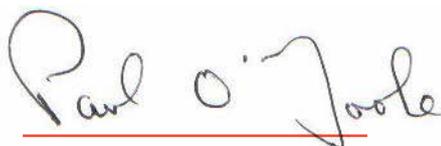
Paul O'Toole
Chief Executive, SOLAS

Tom Grady
Chief Executive (Acting), Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board

Date: 02/10/18

Date: 02/10/18

Appendix A

Appendix A
MSLETB Contribution to National FET Sector Targets by Skills Cluster

Further Education & Training Provision	Target 1		Target 2		Target 3	
	2018-2020		2018-2020		2018-2020	
	Sector Provision 10% More Learners will secure employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market.		Sector Provision 10% more learners will progress to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose.		Sector Provision 10% increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills Development.	
	Expected overall Increase in Completers Securing Employment		Expected overall increase in Completers Progressing to FET or HET		Expected overall increase in Completers certified	
Skill Clusters	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	2	8%	0	0%		
Animal Science	-2	-13%	5	0%		
Arts and Crafts	-20	-61%	0	0%		
Built Environment	27	540%	0	0%		
Business Administration	13	19%	8	7%		
Engineering	-5	-63%	0	0%		
Engineering (Electrical)	30	0%	0	0%		
Engineering (IT)	3	0%	0	0%		
Engineering (Mechanical)	12	120%	0	0%		
Engineering (Transport)	3	0%	0	0%		
Entrepreneurship	4	0%	0	0%		
Financial Services	9	225%	0	0%		
Food and Beverage	20	400%		-8%		
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	-25	-33%	0	0%		
Health, Family other Social Services	6	5%	43	4%		
Information Technology	21	525%	20	0%		
Management	1	13%	0	0%		
Manufacturing	10	0%	0	0%		
Media, Graphics Communications	10	0%	8	114%		
Natural Resources	0	0%	0	0%		
Research and Education-Training	-18	-78%	0	0%		
Sales & Marketing	19	1900%	30	0%		
Science and Technology	6	150%	0	0%		
Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	3	60%	0	0%		
Sport and Leisure	4	67%	5	0%		
Tourism	11	1100%	12	0%		
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	25	500%	0	0%		
Web Development & Design	7	140%	0	0%		
Core ICT			-216	-66%	48	129%
Core Personal			290	49%	1386	63%
General Learning			94	162%	9	0%
Language			0	0%	0	0%
Skills Sampling,			0	0%	0	0%
Key Skills			0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL	176	41%	298	14%	1443	66%

[1] This target could be subject to upward revision following the benchmarking process.

Target 4		Target 5		Target 6	
2018-2020		**2018-2020**		**2018-2020**	
Sector Provision 10% increase of adults, who are seeking FET level provision, engaging in lifelong learning interventions[1]		**Sector Provision** **Increase in Relevant Qualifications across FET programmes.** **Increase of 10,000 learners per annum securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified.**		**Traineeship Programmes.** **Traineeship National Target of 19,000 (2016-2020) - 13,900 - (2018-2020) Commencments on Traineeship** **(Skill Clusters By Starters)** **Labour Market Skills**	
Expected overall contribution to the National Target for increase in Starters and ETB capacity %		**Expected overall annual average contribution to National Target for Completers Certified & ETB Capacity %**		**Expected overall contribution to National Target and ETB capaciy %**	
Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
50	71%			0	0%
53	353%			0	0%
20	28%			0	0%
56	46%	60	479%	0	0%
-27	-4%			36	0%
-49	-33%	18	264%	0	0%
0	0%	31	775%	0	0%
12	0%	5	122%	0	0%
40	0%	36	200%	0	0%
0	0%	10	0%	0	0%
72	900%	67	0%	0	0%
47	64%			48	0%
66	49%	74	426%	93	55%
-41	-41%			72	0%
-126	-6%	25	4%	170	-28%
106	757%	65	250%	42	0%
39	186%			0	0%
44	122%	33	0%	24	0%
48	0%	40	285%	0	0%
20	0%			0	0%
0	0%			0	0%
17	44%	51	1500%	0	0%
50	0%	10	111%	0	0%
-37	-52%			0	0%
52	76%	28	127%	44	27%
42	74%	34	159%	32	0%
62	53%			0	0%
8	24%	22	117%	0	0%
-103	-12%				
-163	-5%				
780	23%				
0	0%				
0	0%				
0	0%				
1138	**10%**	**608**	**48%**	**561**	**55%**

Appendix B

Appendix B
Explaining the Targets

In agreeing the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-19, the Department for Education and Skills specified a range of targets to be met by the further education and training sector over a three-year period:

— **Target 1 – Employment Outcomes:** 10% more learners will secure employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market.

— **Target 2 – Progression:** 10% more learners will progress to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose.

— **Target 3 – Transversal Skills Development:** 10% increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development.

— **Target 4 – Lifelong Learning:** 10% 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.

— **Target 5 – Relevant Qualifications:** 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 / 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).

— **Target 6 – Apprenticeship and Traineeship Provision:** 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.

Also, in 2017, the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (D-PER) conducted a spending review of further education and training. A key aspect of this review involved analysis of programmes delivered by the ETBs by categorizing each programme as one of the following: -

— Predominately Labour Market Focus FET Programmes

— Predominately Progression Focus FET Programmes

— Predominately Social Mobility (Individual Transversal skills) FET Programmes

The setting of these three-year national sectoral targets and broad categorisation of targets provided a framework by which strategic performance agreements between SOLAS and ETBs could be developed, highlighting the planned contribution of each ETB to their realisation. However, to ensure that this contribution could be clearly understood and linked to development of activity across FET programmes, some definitions and parameters were placed around each target, and these are discussed for each in turn below.

Target 1: Employment Outcomes

This target takes a broad strategic approach by considering FET provision in terms of the programmes that are primarily focused on leading to employment. The D-PER spending review identified programmes which had a predominantly labour market focus and to ensure consistency with this review, the measuring of employment outcomes under Target 1 was related only to programmes within this category:

Full-Time	Apprenticeship Training	Blended Training
	Local Training Initiatives	PLC
	Specific Skills Training	Traineeships Training
	VTOS	VSCCS PLC
Part-time	Evening Training	On-line Learning (eCollege)

The target itself is calculated by looking at the actual completers from these programmes in 2017 logged on PLSS or via FARR who were recording as achieving an employment outcome, and then asking each ETB to set out a plan for the numbers completing who it expects to achieve an employment outcome in 2018, 2019 and 2020, calculating the expected change from this 2017 baseline. Currently therefore the contribution is self-declared by the ETB, based on its understanding of a learner outcome and with the assumption that all employment outcomes have been logged comprehensively within the system. It is however acknowledged that work to integrate FARR and PLSS and to ensure comprehensive and quality learner data input into PLSS is still progressing, and it is likely that the baseline for each ETB in 2017 may be higher than initially estimated.

SOLAS and the ETBs intend to move to a more robust method of setting the baseline by using access to revenue and jobseeker's databases held by the CSO to establish independently the employment outcomes of learners on these programmes in 2017. This should not change the ambition for number of completers securing employment outcomes in 2018, 2019 and

2020 but could revise the baseline which will mean the overall ETB contribution to meeting the target (i.e. the percentage change in completers securing employment outcomes) over the three-year period could be updated.

Target 2: Progression

This target takes a broad strategic approach by considering FET Provision in terms of the programmes that are primarily focused on facilitating progression to other further education and training and higher education courses. The D-PER spending review identified programmes which had a predominantly progression focus and to ensure consistency with this review, the measuring of progression outcomes under Target 2 was related only to programmes within this category.

Full-Time	Justice Workshops	Youthreach
	Bridging & Foundation Training	Community Training Centres
	Specialist Training Programmes	
Part-time	BTEI Groups	Skills for Work
	VSCCS BTEI	

The target itself is calculated by looking at the actual completers from these programmes in 2017 logged on PLSS or via FARR who were recorded as having progressed to other further and higher education courses, and then asking each ETB to set out a plan for the numbers completing who it expects to achieve such a progression outcome in 2018, 2019 and 2020, calculating the expected change from this 2017 baseline. As with Target 1, currently the contribution is self-declared by the ETB, based on its understanding of a learner outcome and with the assumption that all progression outcomes have been logged comprehensively within the system. It is however acknowledged that work to integrate FARR and PLSS and to ensure comprehensive and quality learner data input into PLSS is still progressing, and it is likely that the baseline for each ETB in 2017 may be higher than initially estimated.

As with target 1, the baseline may be revised once learner outcome data from access to CSO databases (which also includes higher education learner data) is available. This should not change the ambition for number of completers securing progression outcomes in 2018, 2019 and 2020 but could mean the overall ETB contribution to meeting the target (i.e. the percentage change in completers securing progression outcomes) over the three-year period could be updated.

It is also acknowledged that PLC provision has an important role in facilitating progression, particularly to higher education, yet the categorisation approach to ensure consistency with the spending review within the targets, where a programme can only be either predominantly labour market focused **OR** predominantly progression focused, meant that it was only included in the former when setting proposed ETB contributions in the formal target template. However, each ETB has been asked to articulate the current level of progression from PLC provision and state any ambition for change in the progression rate over the lifetime of the agreement. Given the focus on this area and wider national work of FET to HE transitions, it is expected that the current rate of progression to HE from PLC across all ETBS will be at least maintained between 2018 and 2020.

Target 3: Transversal Skills Development

This target takes the same strategic approach as Targets 1 and 2 by considering FET Provision where the aim is primarily focused on programmes which build transversal skills. The D-PER spending review identified programmes which had a primary focus on transversal skills development and to ensure consistency with this review, the measuring increases in the rate of certification under Target 3 was related only to programmes within this category.

Full-Time	Irish Deaf Society provision	
Part-time	Adult Literacy	ESOL
	FET Co-operation Hours	ITABE
	Libraries Training	Refugee Resettlement
	Voluntary Literacy Tuition	NALA Write on (p/t on line)

The target itself is calculated by looking at the actual completers from these programmes in 2017 logged on PLSS or via FARR who were recorded as having achieved certification, and then asking each ETB to set out a plan for the numbers completing who it expects to achieve such a certification outcome in 2018, 2019 and 2020, calculating the expected change from this 2017 baseline. In contrast with Target 1 and 2, the data should for 2017 should be robust as it relates to certification rather than perceived outcomes.

Target 4: Lifelong Learning

The lifelong learning activity measured under Target 4 used the EU definition of lifelong learning which relates to people over 25 years. As comprehensive data for all FET learners aged over 25 is not available in 2017 (as the PLSS was rolled out during the year), the target focuses on activity (measured by numbers starting courses) within programmes that predominantly address the needs of learners over 25. This base can be reviewed at the end of 2018 when there is a full dataset available through PLSS, and where it should be possible to isolate the cohort of learners aged over 25 across all FET. In the meantime, the baseline and plans have been built up those starting or expected to start courses in the following programmes over the period 2018-2020.

Blended Training	Specific Skills Training
Traineeships Training	Traineeship Employed
VTOS	Evening Training
On-line Learning (eCollege) (p/t)	Bridging & Foundation Training
Specialist Training Programmes	BTEI Groups
Irish Deaf Society	NALA Write on (p/t on line)
Skills for Work	Adult Literacy
Voluntary Literacy	LTI
ITABE	Refugee Resettlement
Community Education	

Deriving the target in this way means that it does not fully compare to wider national lifelong learning targets, or to new targets for employee development and workforce upskilling, but it does nonetheless provide an insight and ambition to grow lifelong provision across FET in a way that can be robustly tracked over the course of the performance agreement.

It is also important to note that FARR and PLSS does not currently record the self-financed evening course provision which takes place in FET facilities, most commonly in PLC further education colleges. SOLAS has asked ETBs to estimate the extent of this cohort if possible within the agreements.

Target 5: Relevant Qualifications

This target attempts to increase the focus of FET provision on key skills areas with an ambition to grow qualifications in these areas by an average increase of 10,000 learners per annum. Relevant qualifications can include special purpose awards and are measured in the following skills clusters as part of this target.

Built Environment (Construction)	Engineering
Engineering (Electrical)	Engineering (IT)
Engineering (Mechanical)	Engineering (Transport)
Entrepreneurship/ Enterprise Skills	Food and Beverage - Hospitality
Health, Family other Social Services	Information Technology - ICT
Manufacturing	Media, Graphics Communications - Digital Media
Sales & Marketing - Wholesale/ Retail	Science and Technology - Biopharma/Pharmachem
Sport and Leisure - Sports and Fitness	Tourism - Hospitality
Web Development & Design	

The number of certificates awarded in 2017 sets the baseline for this target and ETBs are then asked to project the number of certificates within these skills clusters that they expect to award in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Target 6: Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Drawn from the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and Traineeships 2016-2020, this sets a national target of 30,500 new apprentice and trainee registrations in the period 2018 to 2020. Pre-2016 apprenticeships are coordinated centrally by SOLAS while new apprenticeships are in a development stage and more difficult to plan in terms of specific course roll-out. In the performance agreements therefore, we have asked ETBs to focus on three-year plans for expanding traineeship provision, asking them to project numbers starting traineeships in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The Action Plan defines a target over the period 2018-2020 of 13,900 new registrations.