

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

Submission re

*Ireland 2040 – Our Plan*

*National Planning Framework*



**cm**etb****

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin

*Cavan and Monaghan  
Education and Training Board*

## **1. Introduction**

The Ireland 2040 Consultation Paper seeks to paint a picture of Ireland in 2040. Rather than leaving Ireland's future completely to chance, this plan seeks to be proactive and action-orientated to frame the best possible outcomes for the people of Ireland by 2040.

The combined challenges of sharing the benefits of economic gain and ensuring a real equality of opportunity, a genuine inclusive and caring society, and balanced geographical and infrastructural development, are complex and daunting. Our capacity to respond in a dynamic fashion to future community challenges is dependent not just on human endeavour but also on the capacity of state agencies to bring about balanced development where it really matters – in the local community.

Education and Training Boards (ETBs) – and their predecessors – have always been rooted in their local communities, where they continue to have a very positive profile in terms of education and skills development. Their capacity to effect change and to have a genuine transformational impact on local communities has been enhanced by the expansion of the ETBs' statutory functions arising from the enactment of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.

With resources, ETBs can, and do, deliver for all age groups across all social strata, in terms of education, training and skills enhancement. ETBs work collaboratively with other agencies to coordinate services where appropriate. ETBs therefore play a significant role in terms of the realisation of national development goals. Being community based, they can and do deliver for their local communities, and over the decades, they have initiated many unique developmental education and training initiatives.

## **2. Vision of Ireland in 2040**

Ireland in 2040 must have retained the best elements of our distinct cultural heritage, and must also have embraced a culture which continues to uphold human rights in terms of equality of opportunity, community inclusiveness and fair and open access to the country's resources and benefits, including education and training. In the words of An Taoiseach, "The values of freedom and

democracy, of openness, of tolerance, of community, of solidarity, and of respect for others”<sup>1</sup> are core and enduring Irish values.

The European Commission recognises that further education and training is the backbone of economic development<sup>2</sup>. The stated objective of the Irish government is to build a world class further education and training (FET) system<sup>3</sup>, and equally to have the best education and training service in Europe within a decade<sup>4</sup>. Significantly, ETBs can assist to deliver on the following:

- Equality of opportunity and access to education and training;
- Geographical spread of education and training programmes, including skills training and re-training;
- Social inclusiveness in which the rights of individuals and communities are respected;
- Building social cohesion in an increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural Ireland;
- Reskilling and upskilling the working population and/or jobless, to ensure that Ireland can compete effectively in the global economy.

### **3. National Planning Challenges**

The role of skills training as the backbone of economic development cannot be underestimated. The roll-out of local initiatives through ETBs and other state agencies must ensure that economic benefits are spread beyond the cities into all parts of community life throughout Ireland. Communities will continue to change in the years ahead, becoming more multi-cultural, more multi-ethnic, and richly diverse.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ireland at the heart of a changing European Union.” An Taoiseach Enda Kenny’s address to the Institute of European Affairs, 15 February 2017.

<sup>2</sup> “A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy”. See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0296&from=EN>

<sup>3</sup> Ruairi Quinn, former Minister for Education and Skills, 12 May 2014. See <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2014-Press-Releases/PR14-05-12A.html>

<sup>4</sup> Richard Bruton, Minister for Education and Skills, 6 February 2017. See <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2017-Press-Releases/PR2017-06-02.html>

ETBs, as statutory authorities functioning as local education and training boards, with a multi-denominational ethos, are the perfect vehicles to support social cohesion.

In respect of spatial patterns of employment, ETBs' training centres and colleges are a vital cog in the preparation of students and clients for the workplace. Traineeships and apprenticeships are customised to the needs of local industries, whereby students are provided with the specific skills required locally. Moreover, ETBs have formal and structured relationships with local businesses and enterprises through the local skills fora, which ensures that the skills training is actually relevant to local industrial and commercial needs.

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) has a proven track record in meeting the skills needs of industry and employers in this region. CMETB works closely with Cavan and Monaghan County Councils and the local enterprise offices to ensure that the skills set is available to permit the growth and development of indigenous industry and meet the skills needs of those seeking to invest in the region.

As a member of the North East Skills Forum CMETB facilitates ongoing collaboration between employers and education and training providers in the region, with the view to providing targeted skills development opportunities that are relevant to the needs of learners, society and the economy. This has the effect of increasing the supply of skills to the labour market, thereby addressing the current skills shortages that exist and supporting job creation and the growth and development.

In 2016 CMETB facilitated a skills audit in Cavan and Monaghan and are responding to the needs identified in that audit. In association with the Local Enterprise Office in Cavan CMETB has launched the Cavan Employers HR and Skills Network Forum (CNET) to support business in the HR needs. The ETB is engaging with indigenous companies and employers in the region to encourage up-skilling and development to equip companies to grow.

As the state education and training authority in Cavan and Monaghan CMETB are responsible for the existing 27 craft apprenticeships. CMETB is leading the development of a number of new apprenticeships in OEM Engineering and HGV as a result of direct requests from industry in the region. It is part of the consortium involved in the development of the apprenticeships in Accountancy and Combi Chef.

As a direct result of a request from Combi Lift CMETB developed a Traineeship in OEM Engineering to meet the employment requirements of Combilift. Combilift are currently building a new production facility in Monaghan, which is expected to provide 500 new jobs locally. Combilift view the traineeship as an excellent tool to provide staff with relevant skills for their company.

The delivery of a Traineeship in Hospitality Traineeship and Food Safety Training in Cavan Institute is part of the ETB's contribution to Cavan County Council's Food Strategy and the successful Taste of Cavan which attracts over 40,000 visitors each year. CMETB are working closely with the Agri Food industry to meet identified skills needs in food preparation and manufacturing in the region. Consultations are taken place with the Hospitality sector and the Restaurant Association of Ireland with a view to establishing a Professional Cookery traineeship to support the local food industry.

The delivery of the Accounting Technicians Ireland (ATI) Praktikum by Monaghan Institute has provided local companies with the opportunity to train new employees and support them to achieve nationally recognised accounting qualifications.

The work undertaken by Cavan Institute and Monaghan Institute in preparing their graduates for employment or further study has resulted in an increase in the level of qualifications in the region.

#### **4. People's Health and Wellbeing**

The education sector has a very significant role to play in respect of both physical and mental health and well-being in general.

The well-known concern is the level of obesity amongst young people. Moreover, self-image has an impact on personal wellbeing.

It must be a priority for the state to ensure that health education and a positive attitude to exercise is at the core of young people's lives.

In this respect, schools and training centres could be constructed on education campuses which can justify the provision of a swimming pool as well as gymnasium and sports facilities. However, as is

the case in ETB schools, these facilities should also be available to the general public in evenings and night times.

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board provides its facilities for use by youth clubs and organisations throughout the region. The Chief Executive of the ETB is the Chairperson of the Cavan Sports Partnership. Initiatives by the Sports Partnership and local clubs and organisations are supported and promoted by the education and training board.

Tanagh Outdoor Education and Training Centre is administered by CMETB and operates a range of full-time courses (Traineeship in Outdoor Instructing) and part-time courses for schools and organisations to support the promotion of physical and mental well-being.

In respect of spatial patterns of employment, ETB training centres and colleges can ensure that their students and clients are job-ready. Traineeships are customised to the needs of local industry, whereby students are provided with the specific skills required locally. These campuses must be at the centre of community life. The Monaghan Education Campus incorporates primary, post-primary and further education and a community theatre (Garage Theatre) on one site and was the first of its kind in the country.

ETBI currently has a mental wellbeing programme (Breathe) which promotes mental health among students. Wellbeing is now to be part of the Junior Cycle second-level curriculum, and should be part of all formal education curricula. CMETB schools are piloting the JCT WellBeing programme in all of its schools across Cavan and Monaghan.

The Youth Work functions of Cavan and Monaghan ETB as defined under Section 10 (j) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 is ..... “to support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional areas and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to such support”. CMETB is engaged with youth organisations and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the provision of youth resilience programmes in Cavan and Monaghan.

The wealth of a nation is dependent on the health of a nation. Significant investment in changing social attitudes to health and wellbeing must be accompanied by infrastructural investment in sports and leisure facilities which can form the core of community activity. The example of educational campuses with primary, secondary and further education facilities, complemented by high-quality leisure facilities, would meet this need. Planners should look at the broad-based benefits of this model in both urban and rural settings.

## **5. Opportunities in the Regions and the Potential of Rural Ireland**

Building regional resilience must be underpinned by effective regional development. Infrastructural development by the state, such as broadband, transport networks, energy, water and housing, must be the foundation for all other developments. These bring communities together and provide a stimulus for the development of the regions. Building on the natural resources of a region can be very effective, as exemplified in the case of “The Wild Atlantic Way” and “Ireland’s Historic East”, both of which have provided much-needed stimulus to economic activity in places previously overlooked. Moreover, craft and leisure facilities are becoming more relevant in a world where travel is easier, communication is better and leisure time more frequent.

Collaboration between local statutory bodies and agencies can deliver on planned development opportunities, but only if collaboration is effective, targeted and measured. A good example of such collaboration is the establishment of the Regional Skills Fora which involves ETBs engaging with local industry to ensure that training providers can meet real local needs. Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board is an active member of the North East Skills Forum. The development of a ‘Digital Hub’ in Cavan is an initiative led by Cavan Co Council and Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB). The funding, which has been provided under the REDZ Programme (Rural Economic Development Zones) will see the establishment of a new Digital Hub based in Cavan Town.

A key CMETB strategic aim is to support growth and development of business in the region through the provision of a highly educated and trained workforce and to this end CMETB is coordinating a Skills Audit with employers within the region as part of the development of the Digital Hub and Strategy. The Digital Hub has the potential of bringing together local digital entrepreneurs allowing them to “development and grow together”, and is delighted to give any such initiative their full backing and support.

Communities can help themselves if they have regional supports to exploit opportunities. Entrepreneurship education in schools is a new and innovative development being pioneered in ETB schools. Entrepreneurial education can alter how young people look critically at opportunities in life and which can be exploited if individuals have the right entrepreneurial attitudes and insights. This development alone highlights how ETBs can drive economic development through skills enhancement. CMETB schools and college participate in the Enterprise Awards each year. Several of

the QQI courses available at Cavan Institute and Monaghan Institute include the Start Your Own Business programme. Initiatives take place in both Further Education Institutes each year to encourage students to establish their own business. This is undertaken in close co-operation with the Local Enterprise Offices.

The fabric of local communities has been weakened inexorably by policies implemented over years which have effectively hastened the demise of rural Ireland. The drive towards centralisation and regionalisation has devastated communities and worsened the quality of life for many people. Now, proposals to close post offices and the fear that small rural schools could be targeted for closure only undermine any sense of community living in places other than large towns.

Yet, more people will work from home in this digital age, with the right vision and supports from local agencies, rural Ireland can be enhanced. The right mix of skills, with an entrepreneurial attitude, will incentivise the growth of SMEs in all parts of Ireland. Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board has engaged in Erasmus Plus and European Union funding programmes to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills. The Get Youth in IT in partnership with Fast Track into Innovation is aiming at improving the skills of over 200 transition year students in the Cavan and Monaghan.

Future generations can benefit from the foresight and insight of current generations. The enhancement of the quality of life for all, irrespective of location, whether urban or rural, must be the overall objective for 2040.



Climbing the skills ladder, which will help Ireland to remain competitive on a world stage, must be a key objective. The European Commission has indicated that a significant percentage of jobs today will not exist in 2030, while many new jobs and occupation have yet to be “invented”. The speed of change has been phenomenal, and the rate of change will increase over the next two decades. Young people must be imbued with the generic transferrable skills that will allow them adapt to various occupations during their working lives. This reason alone highlights the importance of education and training, and highlights the dynamic and progressive role that Ireland’s Education and Training Boards can play in the decades ahead.

Submitted by:

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