



**STRATEGIC STATEMENT  
2020 - 2022**

**IRISH ASSOCIATION  
OF  
COMMUNITY TRAINING ORGANISATIONS**

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## Chairperson's Foreword

As we went about introducing the fourth IACTO Strategic Statement at the start of the 2020 year, a number of events changed how we as a support service needed to move forward. The Covid-19 crisis shifted how our CTCs continued to provide a service to learners from March to the summer period. Thereafter our centres began to physically re-open their doors and offer in person support and learning to the most marginalised of CTC learners. By September across our network of CTCs, most centres, subject to Public Health Guidance and local ETB support, were fully and safely operational, albeit in a different manner.

The impact of Covid-19 continues to be felt across our whole Island and IACTO's ambition to provide a strong membership support service to CTCs has remained our focus throughout. The new National FET Strategy gave us an opportunity to reflect on our own Strategic Statement, re-engage with key stakeholders to gather their views and then make some minor adjustments prior to our 're-launch' at the final Information Forum of 2020.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the existing and previous members of the Board of IACTO who have worked tirelessly and on a voluntary basis to improve the service to one of the most marginalised groups in society, CTC learners on the YOUTHREACH programme.

This strategic statement, a result of extensive consultation and research, integrates with the National FET Strategy - 'Future FET: Transforming Learning' – and outlines our key themes and objectives to help CTCs meet FET learner and local community needs as appropriate in the coming three years. Further details in relation to key activities will be contained in IACTO's annual workplans.

We continue to support the development and potential of the CTC network and their local ETBs to become nationally and internationally recognised as leaders in vocational education and training for early school leavers and other severely disadvantaged groups.

Finally, nothing would be possible without the small dedicated staff of IACTO, who have done a huge amount of research to ensure the Board is fully informed. They continue to go beyond the call of duty to meet the ever-growing requests for help and support from the membership, voluntary board members, general managers and staff. On your behalf we say a big "thank you".

We have set some challenging goals and with your continued help and support we will achieve them.

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Guss O'Connell  
Chairperson, IACTO

## Introduction

The Irish Association of Community Training Organisations (IACTO) was established in October 1999 by the network of CTCs as the employee representative body for Boards of Directors of Community Training Centres. IACTO provides management services to promote and enhance the delivery of quality training outcomes. Nationally, IACTO supports local boards in their employer function and represents Boards in collective negotiations with the Trade Union SIPTU, ETBs and other relevant bodies. The Directors of IACTO are nominated by a CTC and elected by the membership at the AGM. IACTO supports CTC boards and management teams to resolve local level issues.

In view of the changes over the period of recent years in the FET sector, IACTO supports to the membership have grown significantly. Our representative function has grown and we are pleased to provide a ‘CTC voice’ on national Mitigating Educational Disadvantage fora. Working alongside colleagues from both FET and HE sectors, the aim is to move towards a seamless post-compulsory tertiary education system where the learner is at the heart of what we do. Regardless of which section of the ‘system’ learners have progressed from, are going towards or indeed have disengaged from, our CTCs are a key part of FET and are actively changing the way they work to meet local learner needs, especially those who are most disadvantaged.

The demand for the management support and HR/IR service provided by IACTO to CTC Boards has increased year on year. Annual continuous professional development (CPD) calendars are developed detailing the range of supportive interventions Boards and General Managers can opt into across the country. Where necessary, IACTO has also been available to work with Boards at individual centre level to determine appropriate responses to individual centre IR issues. This has involved negotiations with trade unions and ETBs as funding agencies, drafting proposals, research, preparing third party submissions, engaging consultants, mediators and investigators and recruitment. Virtual meetings, telephone and email helplines continue to be well used and enormously successful. The majority of queries have related to corporate governance, staff terms and conditions, absence and performance management issues. Boards and General Managers continue to seek advice and support on a range of other individual staffing items.

In addition to the AGM, regular regional meetings, quarterly information forums and newly developed operational sharing and learning forums for General Managers introduced in 2020 we have increased opportunities for the Director membership to network with other Boards. These also serve as a mechanism for the exchange of best practice, capacity building at local level, the sharing of information and ideas relevant to CTC work and continuously inform the work of IACTO in representing CTC views at national level.

In conclusion, previous strategic plans detailed initiatives and organisational resources required to lead voluntary Boards and staff through periods of substantial change. This Strategic Statement 2020 - 2022 continues to concentrate on growing the sustainability and supporting the building of capacity of Boards in community-based training centres to deliver the highest standards in training provision to early school leavers.

## MISSION

The mission of the Irish Association of Community Training Organisations is:

*“To empower and support the membership in working towards the elimination of unemployment and social exclusion in their communities through the provision of well resourced, holistic, integrated and quality-led community-based training”*

## CORE VALUES

IACTO and its membership of CTCs will work towards the following common values;

**Centres of Excellence.** All locations will work in the public interest with facilities and resources that promote innovative training and life long learning opportunities to further the career aspirations and potential of designated individuals and groups within the FET learning community.

**Enabling Individuals.** All endeavours will focus on actively engaging with local workers, both early school leavers and young adults in and out of jobs, in a respectful manner that empowers them to identify and realise their education and training development potential. This will be within a holistic, integrated and quality led training environment which enables learners gain a secure foothold in both the labour market and life-long learning community.

**Quality Services.** We will ensure that all training offered will lead to recognised accreditation, will satisfy QQI and ETB Quality Assurance standards and will be delivered in a professional manner that is inclusive. We will place a high priority on learner’s progression potential that is in accord with best practice and innovation.

**Learner Focus.** All support services will be learner-centred and have as their eventual outcome the provision of a better service for the learner.

**Policy Promotion.** National and local practices will, at all times, actively promote Government policies in the associated fields of health and safety, education, training, employment and social inclusion.

**Publicity and Information.** Promote public awareness of the CTC ethos, role, programmes and services in an open and transparent manner.

**Community Ethos.** We will provide services, both internally and externally, in a personalised, courteous, fair and impartial manner and in full compliance with all equality legislation. We will support a community service ethos and will accord members of the public and IACTO/CTC staff the same levels of respect and courtesy.

**Communication, Consultation, Feedback.** There will be regular channels established to promote on-going communication, consultation and feedback with key Stakeholders, Boards of Directors, General Managers, Staff, Learners and their Families and other relevant Organisations. We will deal with all complaints and queries in an open, transparent, objective and fair manner.

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

IACTO is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors whose role is to ensure that the organisations mission and purpose as outlined above in its strategic statement and in its establishing memorandum is reflected in its mission and core values.

The role of the board is to:

- Agree strategic priorities for the organisation and provide governance oversight
- Support and contribute to the work of the Executive Director in operationalising the service
- Participate in Board Executive teams on a time limited project/task basis in order to encourage building capacity and skills sets of all Directors
- Approve (and monitor) the organisation's workplans, programmes and services
- Receive reports and monitor progress
- Champion and advocate for key themes and issues as they relate to CTCs
- Promote responsible and sustainable business and corporate governance practices with members
- Oversee financial integrity of the organisation and ensure effective risk management
- Carry out Board business efficiently
- Renew and review Board business and governance in line with best practice

## Reporting

IACTO is committed to communicating how its resources have been expended on all activities. It will seek over the next three years to be a role model, emulate best practice and support member Boards to do likewise within its means. It will continue to report mid-year and on a year-end basis to SOLAS, measuring and targeting challenging key activities. In complying with corporate governance requirements, it will maintain the highest standards in openness and transparency.

## Key Strategic Statement 'Themes' 2020 - 2022

The IACTO Board will continue to work to the following six key themes:

- 1 As collective CTC Employer Representative Body
- 2 Contribute to National Policies & Procedures as they relate to CTC work
- 3 Provide CTC Board & General Manager and where possible CTC staff access to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and programmes to upskill and retrain to meet #FutureFET
- 4 Provide Management Support and HR/IR services to CTC Boards
- 5 Develop Social Media services to include an on-line communications 'hub' for CTCs
- 6 Support CTC Boards in relation to Employer Engagement and champion Innovative and new Work-Related Skills development for FET learners who progress into workplaces
- 7 Play a key role supporting CTCs with Learner Pathways and FET Progression opportunities. This involves linking with community and other key stakeholders to support learners' transitions to their next step.



## Strategic Theme 1

### As collective CTC Employer Representative Body

To achieve this, we will:

- *Act as nominated representative contact for DES/SOLAS & Liaison Committee*
- *Engage with Liaison Committee and Trade Union nationally*
- *Agree interim collective bargaining procedures with stakeholders*
- *Review DES, SOLAS, ETBI and other relevant national and international documentation*
- *Monitor operational developments*
- *Represent CTCs at National policy discussions which may include industrial relations issues*
- *Review FET policies and practices in relation to CTC target group identification and funding requirements*
- *Take a pro-active stance in representing the needs and views of CTCs with ETBs and other relevant bodies*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery and Active Inclusion*



## Strategic Theme 2

**To contribute to National Policies & Procedures as they relate to CTC work**

We will do this by:

- *Implementing a common induction programme across all CTCs for all new Board members*
- *Providing guidelines to CTC Boards in relation to management of a CTC in the form of a CTC Directors Manual Template*
- *Supporting and Monitoring the implementation of PMDS across CTCs and further strengthening CTC human resource policies, practices and procedures*
- *Researching, Developing, Agreeing and/or Reviewing policies and procedures e.g., Protected Disclosures Policy, Managing Compliance & Risk*
- *Researching and developing change proposals to meet changing employment law*
- *Reviewing and updating Board Audit processes*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery and Active Inclusion*



### Strategic Theme 3

#### **To provide CTC Board, General Manager and Staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities**

We will do this by:

- *Providing theme-based briefings and training events across the CTC network*
- *Developing annual CPD 'calendars' to meet CTC Board and GM needs and build capacity across network*
- *Identifying opportunities for CTC Board members with particular expertise to share it with and/or have an input into general CTC development. This will follow on from IACTO on-going evaluations and fact-finding across CTC networks*
- *Hosting regular regional meetings with Boards and sharing & learning fora with General Managers to provide opportunities to discuss best practice across the CTC network*
- *Coordinating in-service CPD & Innovation projects that facilitates staff to exchange ideas and practices between CTCs for mutual enrichment*
- *Supporting Board/GM meetings with ETBs locally to minimise 3rd party intervention and support Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems locally*
- *Identifying models of best practice in management and leadership and support Boards and GMs to adopt similar practices and procedures across the network*
- *Attending individual CTC Board Information & Briefing sessions both regional and local as requested*
- *Attending NACTM Briefings as agreed*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery, Inclusion and Skills Gaps*



## Strategic Theme 4

### To provide HR/IR services to CTC members

We will do this by:

- *Developing Service Level Agreements (SLA part 2) detailing HR/IR and Management support services offered to CTC members*
- *Providing a Telephone & Email Advice service for Human Resource Management (HRM) advice, National Collective policy, Employment Law and other as required*
- *Providing local HR/IR 1:1 Consultancy Service on matters relating to Grievance, Disciplinary, Dignity at Work, Absence Management, Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR) and Redundancies for example*
- *Delivering CTC Board & General Manager HR/IR workshops as required*
- *Hosting CTC & Stakeholder Information Forums quarterly*
- *Hosting IACTO/CTC Strategic Planning events as required including development of templates to support members*
- *Supporting the continued Implementation of the “CTC Operational Standards”*
- *Researching other models of Voluntary/Statutory collaboration and make recommendations*
- *Continuing to support the development and building of HR/IR capacity across CTC member Boards and GMs*
- *Reviewing the external environment, legislative and case law developments and assessing the impact for CTCs*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery, Active Inclusion and Skills Gaps*



## Strategic Theme 5

### **To develop as a communication's 'hub' for CTCs**

We will do this by:

- *Developing an IACTO 3-year strategic statement 2020–2022 in consultation with key stakeholders*
- *Acting as the nominated contact for CTC Boards on the DES/SOLAS/ETBI Liaison Committee Group*
- *Facilitating networking between CTC Boards and staff*
- *Hosting Regional Meetings with CTC Boards and General Managers*
- *Maximising the use of IACTO website and use of Social Media to keep CTCs up to date with relevant information*
- *Inviting key stakeholders to our annual IACTO AGM*
- *Inviting nominated CTC GMs from NACTM to attend IACTO Board meetings*
- *Hosting Key Stakeholder consultation events*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery and Active Inclusion*



## Strategic Theme 6

**Play a key role supporting CTCs with Employer Engagement and Learner Pathways to access FET Progression opportunities. This involves linking with community and other key stakeholders to champion Innovative and new Work-Related Skills development for FET learners with transitions to their next step.**

We will do this by:

- *Supporting the development of HR and people management skills across CTC Boards & GMs. This will enable their delivery of ETB requirements in relation to the provision of a flexible education and training system that provides learners with the skills necessary to progress and participate in the labour market*
- *Being a key resource to support CTC Boards and GMs to manage change processes where appropriate and as required for the delivery of #FutureFET e.g., the identification of business sectors likely to require additional employees to meet labour market demands and the skills learners will require to meet those demands*
- *Supporting CTC Boards and GMs to develop Employer Engagement Strategies to strengthen Linked Work Experience (LWE) Programmes*
- *Supporting CTC Boards, GMs and Advocate development to ensure programmes enable learners to make well informed realistic career choice decisions (WIRD) linked to labour market availability and to realise their potential as active citizens. Lead & Collaborate on Innovation projects with key partners to support new workplace entrants (NWEs) e.g., allocation of additional funding to CTCs to support new and innovative approaches to their work with learners transitioning to the workplace*

*The above theme is linked to Future FET Strategic Priorities and Outcomes; New Models of Delivery, Active Inclusion and Learner Pathways*