



	Status
<p><b>1. Strategic Framework</b></p> <p>By 2000 workforce development was fully integrated into national policies and strategies; the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in workforce development were institutionalized; businesses and industry had executive and advisory roles in shaping and implementing workforce development priorities based on well-informed analysis; and recommendations on future skill supply were implemented and policies were routinely reviewed and updated.</p>	<p><b>2000</b>      <b>Advanced</b> ● ● ● ●</p> <p><b>1990</b>      <b>Established</b> ● ● ● ○</p> <p><b>1980</b>      <b>Emerging</b> ● ● ○ ○</p>
<p><b>2. System Oversight</b></p> <p>By 2000 competency-based testing and certification applied to most occupations; some measures existed to foster articulation across institutions; legislation for development of a national qualifications framework had been enacted (1999); and government funding was allocated based on explicit criteria and allocations to institutions were linked to performance.</p>	<p><b>2000</b>      <b>Established</b> ● ● ● ○</p> <p><b>1990</b>      <b>Established</b> ● ● ● ○</p> <p><b>1980</b>      <b>Emerging</b> ● ● ○ ○</p>
<p><b>3. Service Delivery</b></p> <p>By 2000 stakeholders had influence over training curricula and advisory and decision-making roles in the operations of public training institutions; incentives were in place to ensure that private and NGO providers meet quality standards; and a culture of routine monitoring and evaluation—one aided by reliable and freely available data—was well-developed.</p>	<p><b>2000</b>      <b>Advanced</b> ● ● ● ●</p> <p><b>1990</b>      <b>Established</b> ● ● ● ○</p> <p><b>1980</b>      <b>Established</b> ● ● ● ○</p>



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# Executive Summary

## Skills as an asset for growth in Ireland

From the mid 1990's the Irish economy expanded rapidly, with output and employment growth well ahead of the average for the EU and OECD countries. This growth was accompanied by a sharp increase in investment, especially foreign direct investment, and productivity. Investment in human capital development was an important contributor to this growth, and included significant reforms of education and training. The report highlights that in Ireland, during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the government and the social partners increasingly came to view investment in human capital as a strategic objective in the national development planning process and as an important tool for growth.

## Methodology

This study benchmarked levels of support for workforce development (WfD) in Ireland and identified measures which progressed workforce development within a framework of human capital development. The study piloted a new diagnostic tool (SABER-WfD) to assess Ireland's workforce development between 1980 and 2000, a period of economic expansion in Ireland and major reform in workforce development. The tool is part of the World Bank's initiative on Systems Assessment for Better Education Results (SABER) which focuses on several policy domains including workforce development. Three broad functional dimensions of workforce development policies were assessed based primarily on secondary source materials: strategic framework; system oversight; and service delivery. The findings demonstrated Ireland's overall progression on each of these dimensions; moving from an emerging to an advanced system between 1980-2000 in respect of workforce development strategic framework and service delivery, and to an established framework for system oversight by 2000.

*"In Ireland, during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the government and the social partners increasingly came to view investment in human capital as a strategic objective in the national development planning process and as an important tool for growth"*

*"Horizontal coordination mechanisms across different functional areas of government are essential to integrate WfD within national industrial and enterprise policy."*

## Key reform elements at the strategy level

Key reforms during the eighties and nineties included stakeholders' participation in a series of national social partnership compacts, integration of demand-driven workforce development within national economic plans, and an agreed implementation process for human-resources development with a strong role for autonomous government agencies. Engaging the main Labor Ministry and other key ministries including education, economic development and social protection ministries in policy facilitated this progress. Specific reforms included: social partner commitment to workforce development including strengthening of formal pre-employment training within a Program for National Recovery 1987-1990; and designation of an operational program for human resource development 1994-1999 under the framework of a national development plan, supported by the EU Community Support Framework for Ireland. Workforce development strategy was further enhanced by establishment in 1997 of a broad-based Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN) responsible for assessment of various industries and sectors, supported by an institutional implementation framework, and the establishment in 1999 of government-funded, industry-led, training networks (Skillnets).

## Reforms to improve the oversight of the education and training system

Initial measures to assure oversight of the technical and vocational education and training system (TVET) included: stakeholder agreements on standards, new program review systems and a rigorous registration system for private training providers. Progress in development of accreditation and competency standards was facilitated through increased devolution of responsibility from the Department of Education<sup>1</sup> to agencies with a wider representation of educational interests. Further significant reform of workforce development oversight progressed in the late nineties through: the establishment in 1999 of a National Qualifications Authority (NQAI) to promote the quality of education and training, and to facilitate life-long learning; the creation of a Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) with a remit for a common awards system; and piloting of a Higher Education Links scheme with credit transfer arrangements between different levels. A systematic funding strategy, with government and European and social partner input into priorities, provided oversight for efficiency and equity in funding.

<sup>1</sup> In Ireland Government Ministries are referred to as Departments.

### **Reforms to improve management of training institutions and programs**

Measures to improve management of training institutions and programs included greater focus on outcomes, efficiency, innovation, evaluation (a requirement of European funding), and allocation of resources to improve the competence of administrators and instructors. Additionally, diversity in training provision was promoted through increased use by the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) of private trainers, non-state institutions and NGO's. Reforms to increase the relevance of training included: work-experience and industry internships within TVET programs; collaboration with industry in provision of bespoke training and in applied research and consultancy, particularly between Institutes of Technology and industry. Additionally there was increased emphasis on accountability for results, and incentives were established to encourage providers to meet workforce development standards and outcomes.

### **Reflections on lessons from Ireland**

The experience of Ireland demonstrates that a cohesive approach through national consensus building with all stakeholders has been very successful in implementing workforce development. Access to international advice and funding is also important, as demonstrated by the OECD and EU contributions to TVET policy and infrastructure in Ireland. Coordination is required. Horizontal coordination mechanisms across different functional areas of government are essential to integrate workforce development within national industrial and enterprise policy. A coordinating national qualifications framework is necessary for the integration of vocational and general qualifications, the enhancement of accreditation standards, and the development of a common awards system and transfer and progression pathways. Strong coordination between the vocational education and vocational training systems is also required. Workforce development systems must be able to adapt to fluctuating economic and employment environments; however it can be challenging to assure quality while also responding speedily to skills shortages.

### **Developments since 2000**

Irish workforce development remains relevant and a useful policy instrument despite current economic difficulties because it benefits from pre-existing and continuing features, inter alia: systematic identification of the needs of individuals and enterprises, flexible and responsive training and further education provision, a well-developed accreditation/quality assurance system and wide spread awareness of the importance of workforce development to counter the effects of unemployment. Some key measures have been implemented during the last twelve months of intense fiscal crisis to minimize the effects of the unemployment crisis. Two particular programs were facilitated by previous experience of partnership between employers and the vocational training and education sectors – *JobBridge* internships for jobseekers without experience or wishing to gain new skills, and *Springboard* up-skilling courses for job seekers with a previous history of employment that need further qualifications to assist return to work.

# Introduction

Ireland has consistently supported workforce development (WfD) as a key element of economic development. This study has been commissioned by the World Bank to test a new instrument, within its SABER-WfD project, which provides an opportunity to benchmark this support and identify progress made over two decades from 1980-2000. This was a period of rapid expansion of Ireland's economy and major reform in WfD policies. The findings will assist other countries in identifying measures which have been effective in progressing aspects of workforce development within a framework of national human capital development and may also contribute to on-going policy dialogue on workforce development in Ireland.

## A New Diagnostic Tool

The tool, known as SABER-WfD, is a product of the World Bank's initiative on Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), which focuses on several policy domains, including WfD.<sup>2</sup> SABER-WfD aims to document and assess a country's policies and institutions in light of global good practice. It focuses on three broad functional dimensions of policies:

(1) **Strategic framework** which refers to the praxis of advocacy, partnership, and coordination in relation to the objective of aligning WfD in critical areas to priorities for national development;

(2) **System Oversight** which refers to the arrangements governing funding, quality assurance and learning pathways that shape the incentives and information signals affecting the choices of individuals, employers, training providers and other stakeholders; and

**Figure 1: Functional Dimensions of WfD Policies**



Source: Tan et al. 2012.

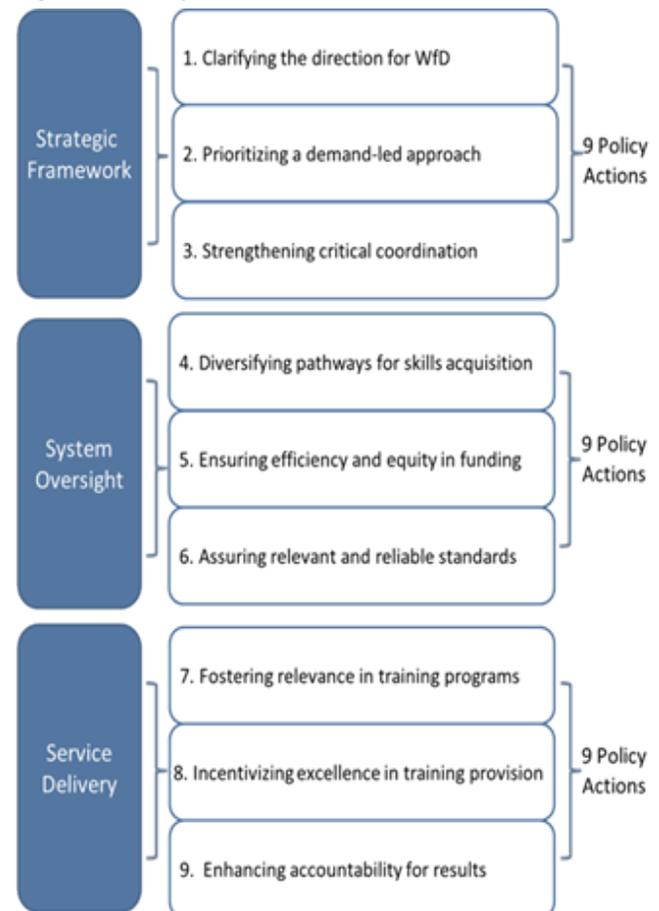
<sup>2</sup> For details on SABER see <http://www.worldbank.org/education/saber>

(3) **Service Delivery** which refers to the diversity, organization and management of training provision, both state and nonstate, that deliver results on the ground by enabling individuals to acquire market- and job-relevant skills. (see Figure 1).

From the perspective of the line ministries, typically education and labor, strategy is about sensing, influencing, and responding to the external environment for WfD; oversight is about governing the activities of all stakeholders with a direct interest in WfD activities; and delivery is about managing the activities of those responsible for training provision.

These three dimensions constitute a closed policy-making loop and, when taken together, allow for analysis of the functioning of a WfD system as a whole. Each functional dimension is composed of Policy Goals (see Figure 2) spanning three broad areas governance, finance and information. Each of the Policy Goals is in turn further defined by three tangible Policy Actions, making a total of nine Policy Goals and 27 Policy Actions.

**Figure 2: Analytical Framework of SABER-WfD**



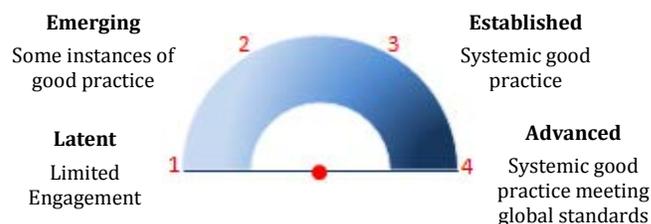
Source: Tan et al. 2012. See Annex 1 for more details.

The SABER-WfD tool uses the foregoing analytical framework to create a structured data collection instrument for gathering information on a country's policies and institutions for WfD. For each of the 27 Policy Actions, the Data Collection Instrument (DCI) poses a set of questions relating to the corresponding aspect of the WfD system. Each question is answered by choosing from a list of closed options corresponding to stages of development. The choice is substantiated either by documentary evidence or by information supplied and corroborated by knowledgeable and credible informants. As in the other countries selected for this pilot phase, the collection of data using the SABER-WfD instrument was led by Principal Investigators (PIs)<sup>3</sup> who rely on documentary evidence as well as interviews with knowledgeable informants.

**Data Processing and Scoring.** For each of the 27 Policy Actions, the information gathered by the PIs is scored according to standard rubrics. These rubrics correspond to four stages of maturity in policy and institutional development for WfD, as follows: (1) latent, (2) emerging, (3) established and (4) advanced. A summary description of the rubrics appears in Figure 3 while the details are explained in Annex 6.

The scores on the Policy Actions form the basis for scoring the nine Policy Goals. The approach involves the application of simple weights to aggregate the scores on the Policy Actions that relate to each Policy Goal, typically 1/3 for information relating to policy concepts and design and 2/3s to information relating to policy implementation. In the interest of parsimony in data collection, the SABER-WfD study accepts reviews and evaluations of policies and related follow up actions as evidence of implementation. Finally, to obtain the scores for the three functional dimensions considered in the SABER-WfD framework, the scores for the Policy Goals that relate to each dimension are aggregated with equal weights. This algorithm yields composite scores on a 1-4 scale for every level of aggregation in the data; naturally, the composite scores are rarely whole numbers.

**Figure 3: Rubric for Benchmarking WfD**



Source: Tan *et al*, 2012.

Note that in order to conform to standardized presentation of reports under the overall SABER initiative the dimension-level SABER-WfD categorical ratings shown on the cover of this report are based on the corresponding composite scores which have been converted to the relevant categories.<sup>4</sup> In the rest of the report, the composite scores are presented in the form of a dial, as shown above, in order to retain the detail they reflect.

**Box 1: A Note on Documentary Sources**

This report is based on data collected through a desk study drawing on various documents for the years 1970-2000. The most important of these are:

- National development plans and partnership agreements;
- National labor market and sectoral skills needs studies;
- Profiles of TVET policies, management, organization and delivery;
- Evaluations and reviews on TVET policies and programs;
- Annual Reports of provider institutions and agencies

Complete information on all sources appears in Annexes 4 and 5.

<sup>3</sup> For Ireland, the PI was Sue Leigh-Doyle, an independent consultant with extensive experience in evaluating HRD programs in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, and as a TVET consultant for the World Bank and ILO.

<sup>4</sup>For a given composite score, X, the conversion to the categorical rating shown on the cover is based on the following rule:  $1.00 \leq X \leq 1.75$  converts to "Latent";  $1.75 < X \leq 2.50$ , to "Emerging;"  $2.50 < X \leq 3.25$ , to "Established;" and  $3.25 < X \leq 4.00$ , to "Advanced."

# Country Context

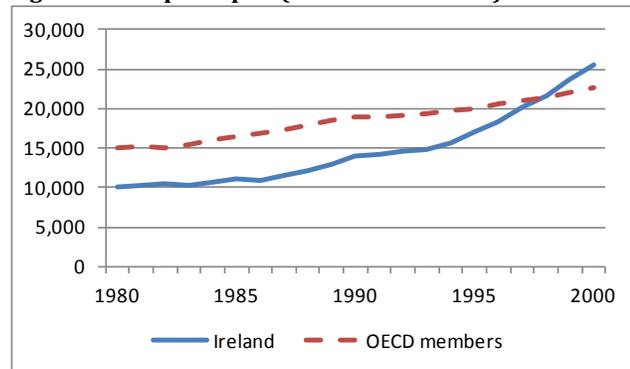
## Introduction

Ireland is a small, independent, democratic country in Western Europe; it has been a member of the European Community since 1973. Following a period of virtual stagnation in the first half of the 1980's the Irish economy expanded rapidly during the nineties. In terms of both output and employment growth Irish performance was well ahead of the average performance of the EU and OECD countries from the late eighties to 2000. Growth continued up to 2007, but the economy has since been in recession due to the fiscal crisis. Ireland invested heavily in education and training to equip the workforce with the skills to respond to new industrial and service sector employment opportunities arising from the mid 1980's. Key aspects of the economic, labor market and social context between 1980-2000 and the institutional and financing arrangements for workforce development are first presented in this section to set the stage for discussing Ireland's WFD performance during this period. Reference is also made to the post 2000 context.

## Economic Trends

**Growth 1980-2000.** In the 1980's and early 1990's the Irish economy was in a serious situation. Economic growth was low, gross national product (GNP) per capita was significantly below EU average levels (about two-thirds) and unemployment rates were high (15%-17%). In the nineties this changed and Ireland became the fastest growing economy in the EU. During this high-growth Ireland's rate of real GDP increased on average 5.1% per year, compared with an OECD average of 2.4%. Real GDP growth reached 11.1% in 1997 and 9.4% in 2000. Ireland's economy settled down into a more steady growth phase of between 4-7% over the following years until 2007.

**Figure 4: GDP per capita (constant 2000 US\$)**



Source: World Development Indicators (database).

Rapid economic growth from 1995 resulted in large increases in per capita incomes and a significant narrowing of the gap between Irish and average EU

living standards. The turn-around phase was marked by a sharp increase in investment – especially foreign direct investment and sustained growth in productivity

## Demographics and Employment<sup>5</sup>

**Demographics.** Ireland has consistently had a high level of population growth due to a high birth rate; in the past this growth has been lessened or overturned by high levels of emigration. Since the mid 1990's there has been an increase in the birth rate, a corresponding decrease in emigration and marked increase in immigration, resulting in a significant rise in the population. The population was 3.8 million in 2000.

**Table 1: Population and Labour Force (millions)**

	Population	Labor Force
1971	2,978	1,110
1981	3,443	1,271
1991	3,525	1,342
1999	3,755	1,615
2000	3,805	1,779

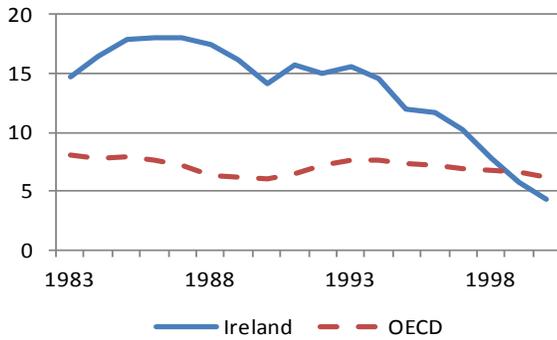
Source: CSO, Ireland.

**Employment.** The period since 1980 has seen dramatic fluctuations in employment and unemployment trends. Total employment fell by an average of 0.8% per year between 1980 and 1986; it rebounded over the next ten years by growing at 2.1% per year compared to an OECD average of 1% and an EU average of 0.3%. From 1997-2000 employment grew by over 4% per year on average and the labour force by 3.5%. The labour force in 2000 was 1.7million; with an overall participation rate of 71%. Employment grew by over 36% in the period 1993-1999; and women accounted for more than 90% of the increase in the labour force population since 1990. The participation rate of women grew by over 50%, albeit from a very low level.

Performance on unemployment was somewhat slower, with a reduction in the unemployment rate from a highest level of almost 18% in 1987 and almost 17% in 1993 to less than 8% in 1998. The decline in unemployment lagged behind the dramatic increase in total employment, largely due to strong growth in the labour market – because of population increase and the increased labour force participation of women. During 1994-2000 the Irish unemployment rate fell from 8 percentage points above the OECD average to two two points below. The standardised unemployment rate in 2000 was 4.4%, compared with 13.3% in 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Sources: O'Connell, (1999), Sexton & O'Connell (Eds) (1996); McCormick 2003.

**Figure 5: Unemployment rates 1983-2000 (%)**



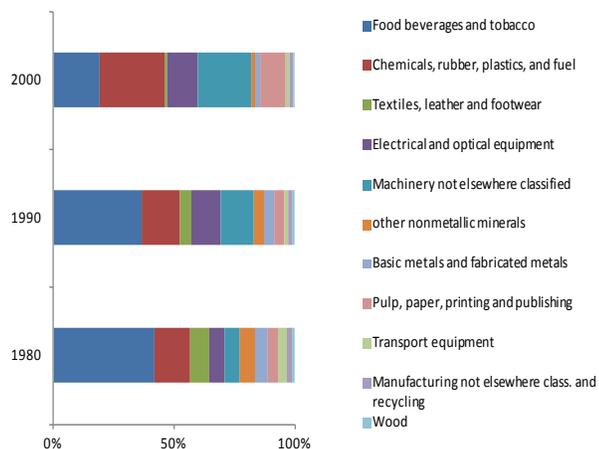
Source: World Development Indicators (database).

**Poverty and inequality.** Rapid economic growth coincided with an increase in inequality. The incidence of poverty and of low-paid employment increased between 1987-1994. The growth in poverty was largely attributable to the failure of social welfare payments to keep pace with the rate of growth in average incomes during the period of rapid economic growth. The increase in low-pay was mainly due to growth in sectors with high-demand for low-skilled workers.

**Demand for Skills 1980-2000.**

**Sectoral and occupation change.** The country moved, from a strong dependence on agriculture and traditional industries producing for the home market in the 1960's, to modern export-oriented industries. From 1980 employment in agriculture continued to decline falling from 17% of total employment in 1981 to 10 per cent in 1997. While employment in manufacturing went through a decline in the early 1980's, it grew rapidly in the 1990's, by about 3% per annum. The increase in manufacturing was mainly due to foreign direct investment with strong growth in electronics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

**Figure 6: Industrial Composition**



Source: UNIDO, ISIC4 (retrieved from WB UNIDO2R3 database).

During the 1990s Ireland transformed itself into an export oriented economy with a thriving manufacturing sector, and a growing service sector. By 1996 foreign firms accounted for 47% of the workforce employed in manufacturing and internationally traded services such as - ICT, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical technologies and engineering. However the largest growth in employment took place in services. Total employment in services grew by 40% between 1981-1997, most of this growth took place in the 1990's and in market services.

**Table 2: Ireland's Top 5 Exports by Value (US\$ millions)**

Rank	Description	Value
<b>1970</b>		
1	Meat of bovine, fresh, chilled, or frozen	119
2	Bovine cattle including buffalo	110
3	Petroleum, crude and partly refined	53
4	Butter	29
5	Chocolate and other food preparations of cocoa	26
<b>2000</b>		
1	Organic and inorganic and heterocyclic compounds	14,206
2	Statistical machines cards or tapes	9,748
3	Office machines not elsewhere specified	8,050
4	Thermionic valves and tubes, transistors, and so forth	4,166
5	Phonograph records, recorded tapes, and other sound recordings	4,021

Source: Some Small Countries do it Better (Yusuf and Nabeshima, 2012) and United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database.

**Skill Shortages 1980-2000.** Sectoral re-structuring combined with changes in the organization of production and service delivery generated a significant up-grading of the occupational structure between 1980-2000. The strongest growth took place among professional, technical and managerial occupations, but also in clerical and sales occupations. This expansion at the upper end of the occupational structure was accompanied by a decline in the demand for semi-skilled and un-skilled manual workers, although there was some growth in employment in these categories in the 1990's. Skills and labor shortages became apparent in the late nineties particularly in manufacturing and construction. At the higher skill level the main vacancies by occupation group were in engineering and computer associate professionals.

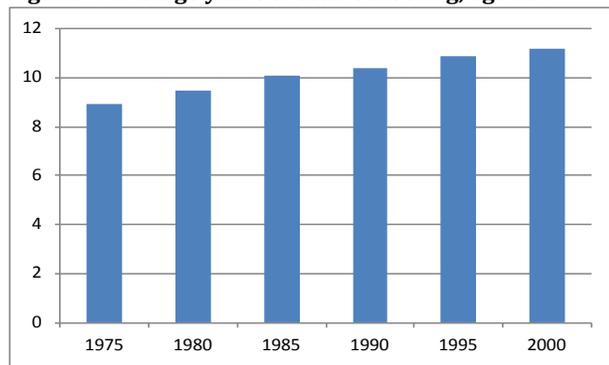
The growth in manufacturing employment resulted in increased demand for higher level skills across a wide range of occupations linked to new technology and higher productivity; particular shortages in electronics sector and for technicians were identified in the late eighties. In the late 1990s the problem of unfilled vacancies was a widespread phenomenon. Over two-thirds of vacancies were accounted for by five occupational groups: skilled manual and production

workers; personal services, clerical and secretarial; production operatives and sales<sup>6</sup>.

### Supply of Skills 1980-2000

*Education.* The Irish educational system expanded dramatically, following from large scale investment in education in Ireland from the late 1960's. This resulted in a gradual increase in the human capital of the workforce and an increased supply of skilled labour<sup>7</sup>.

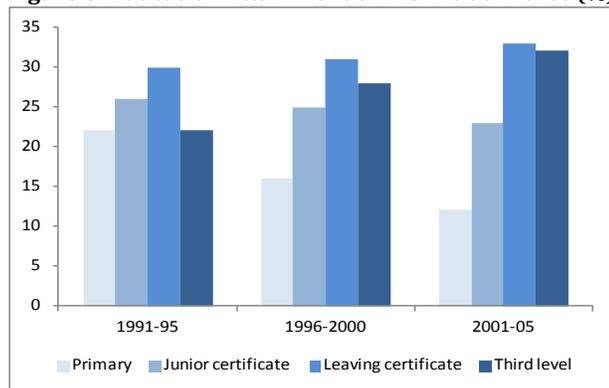
**Figure 7: Average years of total schooling, age 25+**



Source: EdStats, World Bank.

By 2001 (Q2) 58% of the adult population had achieved an upper secondary level education or higher. The overall trend in Ireland has been of an increasingly educated population, with a greater proportion of women than men achieving higher levels of education.

**Figure 8: Education Attainment of Irish Labor Force (%)**



Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> EGFSN, Forfas, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Enhanced Investments in human capital (education and training) have been found to be responsible for almost one-sixth of Ireland's positive growth differential compared with its OECD counterparts; and investments in human capital were the third largest identified contributor to Ireland's positive growth differential over the rest of the industrialised world during 1985-1995 (de la Fuente and Vives 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from: O'Hare. Education in Ireland, in An African Exploration of the East Asian Education Experience, The World Bank, 2007. Chapter 7.

The improved economic situation from 1995 led to efforts to ensure that labour and skill shortages did not act as barriers to further economic growth. The importance of training and re-training of those already employed was increasingly recognised, as enterprises were less able to meet skill needs through the recruitment of recently trained graduates.

In line with improved economic activity, the numbers registered for apprenticeships doubled between 1995-2000. About 10-15 per cent of all school leavers traditionally follow the designated apprenticeship routes. Approximately 1% of the Irish workforce was engaged in apprenticeships during this period. As 99% of those taking up apprenticeships were male apprentices comprised 2% of the male workforce. There was a significant increase in life-long learning rates from 1996-2002; rising from 4.8% to 7.7%<sup>9</sup>

### Post 2000

From 2000 rapid economic growth and virtually full employment were accompanied by issues in the supply of trained labour and a policy of encouraging inward migration which became very pronounced in 2004, when Ireland opened its doors to new EU member states. Post 2007, the growing fiscal crisis has resulted in unemployment rates exceeding 14% with enrolment in traditional apprenticeship significantly reduced and a resumption of outward migration. In this climate WfD programmes have been held out as an essential part of the policy response to reintegrate the unemployed back into employment.

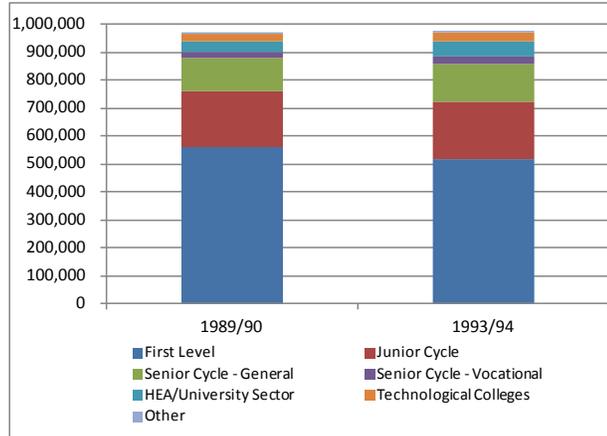
### Training Provision<sup>10</sup>

*Institutional framework.* Education is compulsory in Ireland from the ages of 6 to 16 years. The formal education system comprises up to 8 years of primary schooling. Secondary education begins at age 12 and lasts for 5-6 years with a three-year junior (lower secondary) cycle and a 2-3 year senior (upper secondary) cycle. Typically students undertake a junior certificate examination at the end of the junior cycle. A leaving Certificate examination is undertaken at the end of the senior cycle; it has three options, a traditional Leaving Certificate exam, a more vocationally-oriented exam, and an Applied Leaving Certificate program with most emphasis on continuous assessment. Those leaving school early without qualifications may opt for a two-year Youthreach program of integrated education, training and work experience.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Eurostat. LLL indicator based on % of population aged 25-64 that participated in education and training in previous four weeks.

<sup>10</sup> CEDEFOP (Fox and Harper) 2004; CEDEFOP (Fox & McGinn) 2000.

**Figure 9: Number of persons receiving full-time education by type of institution attended**



Source: EU Commission. Labor Market Studies - Ireland, 1996. Table 7.1. (Sexton and O'Connell, Eds.).

Workforce development (WfD) in Ireland covers both pre-employment (initial) and continuing training, along with training programs for unemployed persons and others wishing to return to the labor market. A four-year national standards-based apprenticeship system is in place since 1991, for 26 designated trades. Post-secondary non-tertiary education options include a post-leaving certificate course within the education system or skills and foundation level training courses provided in vocational training centers. Most third-level (non-university) vocational education is provided through Institutes of Technology; these offer two-year national certificate and one-year add-on national diploma sub-degree programs (in addition to degree and post-graduate courses).

**Table 3: Number of participants in main initial vocational training programs 1998/1999<sup>11</sup>.**

Program	Number
Technician training	41,000
Post Leaving Certificate	23,800
Apprenticeship	16,983
Leaving Certificate vocational program	26,080
Leaving Certificate applied program	6,270
Youthreach	3,214
Persons with disabilities	5,133
Agriculture	4,750
Hotels, catering, tourism	2,136
Fishing	592

Source: Fox and Mc Ginn, CEDEFOP, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Does not include participants on training programmes for unemployed.

**Legal framework.** Key pieces of legislation in respect of vocational education and training within the second-level and third-level non-university sectors are:

- The Vocational Education Act 1930 (and amendments) which led to the development of vocational education committees (VECs) and vocational schools. The development of the system since then has been largely based on ministerial orders, until the introduction of a range of legislation post-2000.
- The Industrial Training Act (1967) established an Industrial Training Authority (AnCo), and also required employers to be subject to a levy. This Act was subsequently replaced by the Labor Services Act (1988), which allowed for establishment of a broader Employment and Training Authority (FAS) through a merger with existing employment agencies.
- The Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 placed these colleges, established since the 1960's, on a statutory footing. The colleges were renamed as Institutes of Technology in 1998, based on amendment to the 1992 Act.
- The Education Act 1998 made provision for the education of every person in the State for primary, post-primary, adult and continuing education and vocational education and training.
- The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 set up structures for a national framework of qualifications.

Legislation in the late sixties also established a number of agencies to provide industrial, agricultural, fisheries, catering and tourism training. A levy system to fund apprenticeship was introduced in 1994, and subsequently replaced by a National Training Fund (2000).

**Governance.** Decisions about VET and its funding are primarily made by central government departments and bodies. Ireland does not have strong regional authorities. The majority of vocational education and training provision is within the State sector. The administrative structure generally has three levels: government departments<sup>12</sup>, intermediate agencies (channeling funds and policy implementation), and the main VET providers. Since the late 60's responsibility for vocational education has rested with the Dept. of Education and responsibility for vocational training has primarily rested with the Dept. of Labor (subsequently renamed Dept. of Enterprise, and Enterprise, Trade and Employment). The key intermediary bodies in 2000 were the Vocational Education Committees, Institutes of Technology, and the National Employment and Training Authority.

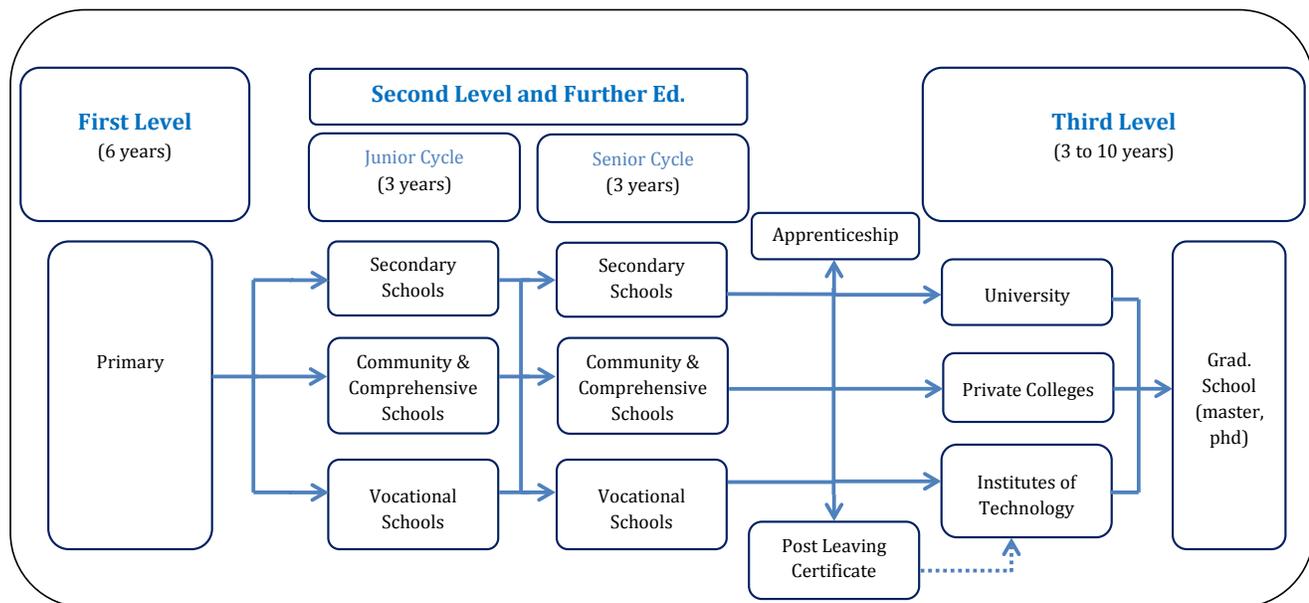
<sup>12</sup> In Ireland government ministries are referred to as Departments

Vocational Education Committees are statutory committees of county councils and other local authorities; there were 33 such committees in 2000. They provide a range of education, training and support services within local communities, including second-level, adult, community and second chance education, and post-leaving certificate programs. Fourteen Institutes of Technology (previously regional technical colleges) are run by independent boards of Management with almost all funding and direction from the Ministry of Education.

Significant changes in governance and responsibility for TVET have been implemented as part of the WfD policy response to the current fiscal crisis. The

National Employment and Training Authority (formerly the Industrial Training Authority) was governed by a Board, appointed by the Minister of Enterprise; it had twenty training centers and also delivered training through subcontracting training providers. It provided initial vocation training for unemployed people and continuing vocational training. In 2011 the training function of the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) was transferred to the Department of Education and Science, which then became the Department of Education and Skills. A new umbrella organization (Solás) will oversee all initial and further vocational education and training including the activities of FAS and the local Vocational Education Committees.

**Figure 10: Structure of Education System - 2004**



Source: Adapted from CEDEFOP - The vocational education and training system in Ireland, 2004

### Financing Skills Development 1980-2000

The principal funders of WfD in Ireland are the Government, the European Social Fund, employers and individuals. Most expenditure in this area (vocational training/Wfd) is State-funded with some ESF support. Public expenditure on education was doubled between 1961 and 1993; it increased from 3.1% of GNP in 1961 to 6.5% in 1993<sup>13</sup>. While public expenditure on education as a share of GDP has not significantly altered between 1990 and 2000, its share of total government expenditure rose from 10.2% in 1990 to 13.5% in 2000. Expenditure on initial vocational education and training in Ireland has been considerable, and grew over the decades as young people stayed longer at second-level school and a greater proportion attended

post-school training at second or third-level<sup>14</sup>. Expenditure on apprenticeship also rose rapidly from the mid 1990's as the number of apprentices recruited by employers rose rapidly in response to the improved Irish economy.

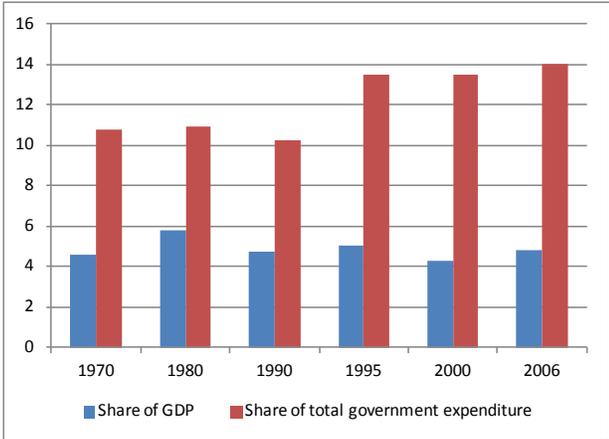
A major factor in funding policy for training in Ireland has been the support provided by the European Social Fund. Expenditure on human resources development (HRD) within EU structural funds has included training, education and employment supports. The majority of this expenditure formed part of the HRD 1994-1999 Operational Programme. It accounted for €2,460 million of co-financed public expenditure

<sup>13</sup> Tansey, Ireland at Work, 1998.Ch.4.

<sup>14</sup> Means tested maintenance grants are available for students at IOTs and for those on Dept. of Education post-leaving certificate courses. In general unemployed persons and those from other socially-excluded groups are provided with financial assistance to undertake education and training programmes.

((€1,809 million of EU aid) over the 1994-1999 period (31% of total EU aid to Ireland). There was also some additional HRD expenditure associated with other Operational Programmes such as agriculture, tourism and industrial development.

**Figure 11: Public Expenditure on Education (%)**



Source: Some Small Countries do it Better.

# Overview of Benchmarking Results

## Introduction

The SABER-Workforce Development Benchmarking results reveal that by 2000 Ireland had well developed policies and institutions for workforce development (WfD), based on continuous progress from the 1970's.

## Overview of results

Ireland's overall scores for each of the three functional dimensions in the SABER-WfD framework appear in Figure 12. They reveal a consistent and sustained pattern of improvement between 1980, 1990 and 2000 in the country's WfD policies and institutions. By 2000, the scores put Ireland's WfD system at an advanced level of development for strategic framework, at an established level for system oversight, and at an advanced level for service delivery.

Figure 12: Benchmarking Results – Dimension Level



Note: the above composite scores are the same as the categorical ratings shown on the cover of this report. They have been converted using the rules indicated in footnote 4 on page 6.

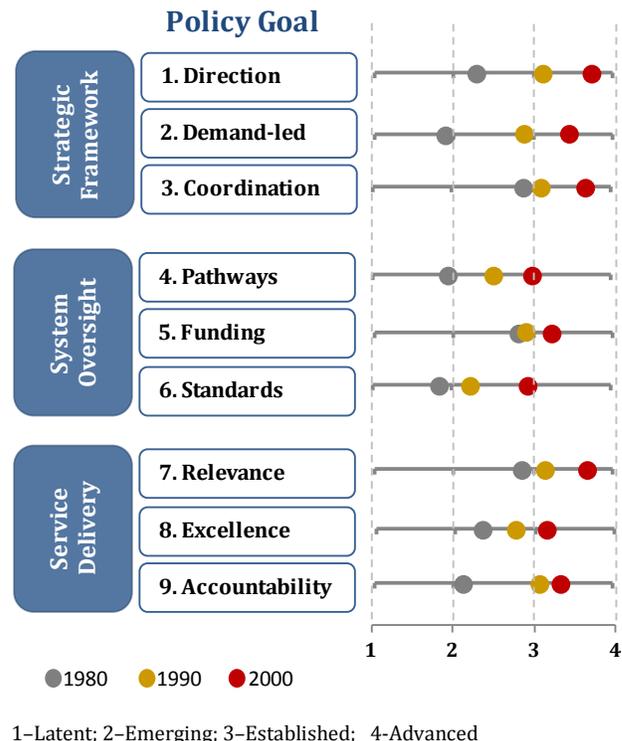
As elaborated in the introduction, the score for each functional dimension is an aggregation of the scores for the underlying Policy Goals associated with it (see Figure 13). The results show that not all aspects of policies and institutions for WfD in Ireland were equally developed in 1980 and that progress in the subsequent 20 years has been faster in some areas than others.

## Landmarks in the journey of reform

Highlights are presented below on Ireland's experience in strengthening its WfD policies and institutions in the three broad functional dimensions considered in the SABER-WfD framework.

**Strategic Framework.** Between 1980 and 2000, Ireland's score for strategic framework moved from an emerging level to an advanced level, reflecting several significant developments. By then, workforce development was fully integrated into national economic plans; strategy was demand driven, and supported by institutionalized tripartite consensus. A range of policies to address skills imbalances existed based on occasional and routine assessments by government and by independent stakeholders.

Figure 13: Ireland Benchmarking Results



Formal mechanisms were in place to assess future skill needs and to ensure critical skills challenges were promptly addressed. Critical co-ordination was ensured through institutionalized structures for WfD; with ongoing resource support for semi-autonomous tripartite agencies such as the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS), the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and other sectoral training agencies. TVET was provided by a range of different public institutions. These included vocational, secondary, community and comprehensive schools at second-level; vocational education and training centers, further education colleges and higher-level Institutes of Technology (IOTs); and FAS training centers and community training workshops.

Consistent advocacy and support for WfD by governments as part of economic development from the late seventies, along with the support of advice and funding from international organizations was critical to achievement of this robust strategic framework. Similarly, acknowledgement of the need for strong social partnership to ensure effective economic development; establishment of tripartite development agencies and an agreed implementation process for human-resources development facilitated advancement of a strategic framework for WfD. Within this

framework policies to address skills imbalances were formulated on the basis of well-informed analysis

Specific landmark reforms included:

- social partner commitment to workforce development including strengthening of formal pre-employment training within a Program for National Recovery 1987-1990. The success of this social contract led to a series of national social partnership agreements in Ireland.
- designation of a specific operational program for human resource development 1994-1999 under the framework of a national development plan, and supported by the EU Community Support Framework for Ireland; with WfD priorities for the first time reflected in a separate HRD program with implementation plans and budget allocation. Reforms to ensure a demand driven approach included inclusion of specific funding for analysis of sectoral skill needs within this HRD OP.
- establishment in the late nineties of a dedicated Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN) responsible for assessments of various industries and sectors and a new institutional framework, the Education and Training Partnership Forum, and a Management Implementation Group established to respond to the challenges identified in these assessments.
- establishment of government-funded, industry-led, training networks (Skillnets).

*System Oversight.* Between 1980 and 2000 several improvements in system oversight for WfD in Ireland enabled its score to move from an emerging level to an established level. Despite the significant progress, in 2000 the system oversight was still somewhat less advanced than the strategic framework. Strong mechanisms were in place to ensure efficiency and equity in funding; accreditation standards applied to most educational and vocational training institutions and providers in receipt of public funding, and some diversified pathways for skills acquisition existed. Progress in development of standards was assured through increased devolvement of responsibility from the central Dept. of Education<sup>15</sup> to agencies with a wider representation of educational provider interests such as the National Council for Education Awards

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<sup>15</sup> In Ireland Government Ministries are referred to as Departments.

(NCEA), the National Qualifications Authority (NQAI) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). The tripartite nature of the Boards of these and other enterprise development agencies also facilitated input by business/industry and other stakeholders into standards development, and provided a solid basis for partnership between key WfD stakeholders to address skill gaps and improve the qualifications system.

Consistent good practice in ensuring efficiency and equity in funding was assured through a systematic strategy that included government and European and social partner input into priorities. Resources and measures within the national HRD operational program (OP) 1994-1999, reflected priorities in the National Development Plan, and performance measures and targets were explicit. Formal systems for reviewing accreditation standards were also established.

Key landmark reforms in strengthening oversight within the WfD system included the following:

- establishment by the National Council of Education Awards (NCEA) of an institutional and program review system in higher-level Institutes of Technology, together with procedures for introduction of new courses;
- development by the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) of a rigorous contract-trainer registration system for private providers;
- agreement between social partners, and the Departments' of Education, and Enterprise on a revised standards-based apprenticeship system.
- establishment of the National Qualifications Authority (NQAI) in 1999 to promote the quality of further education and training and higher education and training, and to facilitate life-long learning;
- establishment of a Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), within the 1999 National Qualifications Act; its remit included development of an integrated common awards system to replace previously disparate vocational education and vocational training awards.
- piloting of a Higher Education Links scheme in 1999 with credit transfer arrangements between post-second level education programs and higher level technical programs.

*Service Delivery.* Ireland's score for service delivery moved from an established level in 1980 to an advanced level in 2000. By then WfD service delivery systems had measures in place to foster relevance in training programs, to incentivize excellence in training provision and enhance accountability for results. Relevance in training programs was fostered by significant collaboration between most training institutions and industry and research institutions. Relevance of training content was assured through industry input in both an executive and advisory capacity to many publicly-funded institutions, curricula review committees and working-groups. Targets were explicit, pre-defined and evaluated for all training programs and training providers, with penalties for non-performance. Accountability for results was ensured through monitoring and evaluation, reviews of skills supply and demand, and comprehensive reporting systems.

Good practice initiatives within WfD service delivery systems included: fostering training relevance through integration of work-experience and industry internships within most technical education, training and vocational preparation programs; and development of applied research and consultancy collaboration, particularly between Institutes of Technology and industry. Diversity in training provision was promoted through increased use by the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) of private trainers, non-state institutions and NGO's in provision of contract-based initial training for school-leavers and unemployed people. A range of financial (e.g. eligibility to compete for skills training contracts and grants) and non-financial incentives (e.g. quality awards, tax exemption for training related expenses) existed to encourage providers to meet WfD standards and outcomes.

Key landmark reforms in strengthening the WfD service delivery system included:

- an increased focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation. Integrated monitoring and reporting systems were established by education and training institutions to provide routine administrative data, graduation statistics, and placement data for publicly funded programs, together with systems for routine follow-up surveys of trainees.
- increased focus on evaluation of service delivery. This was facilitated by ESF program-evaluation requirements and the establishment of a specific ESF Evaluation Unit in 1992 in partnership

between the Department of Enterprise and Employment and the European Commission.

- allocation of specific resources for a Training of Trainers measure within the Human Resources Development program 1994-1999 to foster improved competence of administrators and instructors. Pedagogical and management development was prioritized. This measure facilitated implementation of a national Leadership Development program for second-level school principals and certificate and diploma level courses in training and education for instructors.

### Reflections on lessons from Ireland

Skills development, education and training can provide sustainable competitive advantage at international level. Irish experience shows that a strong interventionist and leadership role by government on the supply side of education and training is of critical importance to economic development. Ireland's economic success during the nineties and up to 2007 was achieved as a result of decisions made in a number of areas in prior decades, including investment in education and in the orientation of industrial policies with a high priority given to export-led growth. The quality and quantity of education is acknowledged as one of the key reasons why so many significant foreign companies chose to locate in Ireland.

Effective WfD requires government intervention at a variety of levels. In Ireland this included: achievement of wide access to second-level education; subsequent emphasis on technical education at the senior secondary and tertiary levels; continuous concern with social equity, and training provision for unemployed and other disadvantaged groups; and the development of lifelong learning programs to maintain worker competitiveness in knowledge and skills. Effective WfD also requires policy level partnership between Government ministries; in Ireland this involved partnership between the main Labor/Enterprise ministry and other ministries with responsibility for education, industry and commerce, and social protection.

Sustained commitment of successive governments to social consensus and partnership with employers and unions first developed in response to an economic crisis in the mid-1980's, has also been crucial to fostering growth and WfD. The social partnership process, backed by tripartite development agencies, has been effective in facilitating a demand driven approach to WfD, and ensuring relevant TVET provision. It also facilitated representation of a wider

range of stakeholders. A bottom-up skills initiative, Skillnets, has been effective in encouraging employers to more actively engage in up-skilling and development of their employees. Social partnership processes also assisted in ensuring agreement on WFD policy priorities and resource allocation.

Mechanisms for horizontal coordination across different sectoral and functional areas of government are necessary to effectively integrate WfD as part of national industrial and enterprise policy. Such mechanisms are particularly needed for monitoring skills demands and forecasting sectoral and occupational WfD needs, and ensuring that these needs are readily addressed. The establishment of a broad-based and cross-Departmental Expert Group on Future Skill Needs, together with an implementation framework was an effective example of this in Ireland.

International advice and funding support has also been significant. From the 1970's OECD and other international experts stressed in their analysis the relevance of matching the type of education to national development needs. From the late 1980s the analytical rigor of the EU obliged governments in Ireland to develop greater capacity and technical sophistication in its policy and planning process. Additionally, the European Social Fund contributed a large amount of money in absolute terms and has helped to shape Irish vocational education and training policy and infrastructure. It enabled governments to spend at significantly higher levels on education and training than they otherwise would have done.

The WFD system needed to be adaptive to a fluctuating economic and employment environment between the mid-seventies and 2000. Strong economic growth in the nineties required that the WfD system be flexible and responsive to both the needs of enterprise and its changing skill needs, and to the needs of students. This required new approaches utilizing cost-efficient delivery methods such as conversion courses, and introduction of shorter diploma and certificate level courses in higher level technical institutions. A challenge was to assure quality while also responding speedily to skills shortages. Good quality industry placements and work-place internships are an essential part of a demand-driven TVET system and were introduced into most vocational education and training programs. However it was a challenge to ensure consistency in the quality of these placements and industry-internships at different levels of the TVET system.

Institutional capabilities also need to be adapted to support high levels of participation in life-long learning,

particularly through more flexible and part-time course provision. The lack of a specific further education infrastructure in the nineties, and limited availability of part-time continuing education and training options was also a challenge in responding to changing skill needs and demands. A need to ensure greater coherence between the vocational education and vocational training system was also recognized and has led to further institutional review and reform post 2000.

Much of the WfD reform in Ireland was incremental in nature, based on lessons from international experience and learning by doing. In responding to changes in the economic environment strategy tended to be more immediately followed by service delivery, with system oversight issues taking somewhat longer to put in place. Progress in reform of system oversight was held back by a lack of transparent pathways for learners, and the absence of standard accreditation systems for TVET providers. However, legislation and institutional development in the late 1990's to enable development of a national qualifications framework laid the foundations for a package of reforms to integrate both vocational and general qualifications; enhance accreditation standards; develop a common awards systems; and formalize transfer and progression pathways.

Irish experience also shows that capacity-building for WfD needs to be supported with measures and mechanisms to ensure professional development of administrators and instructors, and to facilitate collaboration between the education and training system and industry. VET teachers and trainers need initial and continuing development in a balance of technical-vocational and pedagogical skills, and ability to transfer 'soft-skills' such as problem solving and communications to students and trainees. The long time-frame required to develop and implement effective programs to build the pedagogical capacity of technical trainers constrained reform of service delivery.

### **WfD policy and strategy post 2000**

Since 2000 there have been several key developments that were a natural outcome of earlier WfD policies and strategies, as follows:

Full roll-out and implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications has led to a comprehensive system of education and training awards which stresses the value of competency-based learning and qualifications recognition on a national and European level for individuals and employers.

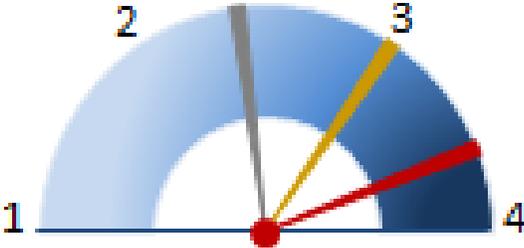
The recent transfer of the training function of the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) to the Department of Education and Skills; and the establishment of the new umbrella organization (Solas) to oversee all initial and further TVET will provide for improved articulation within the education and training system and will significantly contribute to Ireland's life-long learning and training opportunities. A further feature of the transfer of FAS from Labor to Education is that it will potentially address existing duplication and lack of synergies among Irish training and education institutions, that are also a feature of many systems in other countries. During the last twelve months new initiatives have been implemented in response to the fiscal crisis. Previous experience of partnership between employers and the vocational training and education sectors greatly facilitated the development of two key programs - *JobBridge* internships for jobseekers without experience on wishing to gain new skills, and *Springboard* up-skilling courses for job seekers with a previous history of employment that need further qualifications to assist return to work.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.jobbridge.ie>; <http://www.springboardcourses.ie>

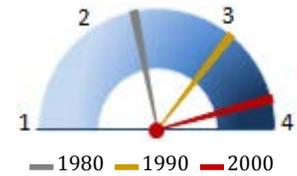
# Detailed Results

## Dimension 1 | Strategic Framework<sup>17</sup>



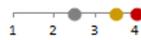
<b>Policy Goal 1</b>	<b>Articulating a Strategic Direction for WfD</b>
<b>Policy Goal 2</b>	<b>Prioritizing a Demand-led Approach</b>
<b>Policy Goal 3</b>	<b>Strengthening Critical Coordination</b>

<sup>17</sup> The composite scores shown in the dial are the same as the categorical ratings shown on the cover of this report. They have been converted using the rules indicated in footnote 4 on page 6. The categorical ratings conform to the standard presentation of results in the SABER initiative, while the presentation in the dials reveals more detail.



Results of the SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of Policy Goal 1 Ireland progressed from an emerging level in 1980, to a more established level in 1990, and to an advanced level in 2000. These summary results reflect the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the degree to which the country prioritized workforce development (WfD) between 1980 and 2000, indicating if priorities were based on analysis of economic prospects and whether such analysis was taken into account in policy implementation.

**Advocate for WfD as priority for economic development**



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980 and reached an advanced level by 1990.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Manpower management and development has long been recognized as an important asset for economic development in Ireland. In 1980, government had an active leadership role and centralized the promotion of workforce development with the support of advice and funding from international organizations. By 1990, advocacy for WfD benefited from a national tripartite partnership building process and agreement. In 2000, advocacy for WfD remained very strong. Priorities were reflected in implementation plans and budget allocations within a specific human resource development program, as part of national economic development and in line with European financial and policy support frameworks. This was further advanced by institutionalized consensus and additional tripartite agreements throughout the nineties (Box 2).

**1980:** Promotion of workforce development during the seventies was facilitated by governments’ active role in promoting economic development and a highly centralized state structure together with semi-autonomous state agencies (e.g. Industrial Development Authority and National Training Authority). There was also a sensitivity to recommendations from international institutions, particularly the OECD and the EU (Box 3). An economic crisis in Ireland in the early 1980’s, in the aftermath of the 1979 oil shock, resulted in reduced industrial employment, a significant increase in unemployment, and a return to high levels of emigration. The crisis led to the development of a national economic strategy in which employment and workforce development was prioritized. The 1978-1981 Program for National

Development addressed economic prospects and implications for skills as part of the national planning process. A need for continued industrial and secondary production sector growth was identified in line with declining employment in agriculture. Further development of training and employment schemes was proposed. Workforce development was initially promoted within a general employment and manpower policy, following from an OECD Recommendation, with the objective of balance in the supply and demand for labor. Access to the European Social and Regional Development Funds facilitated increased investment in technical and vocational education and training. The establishment of a Manpower Consultative Committee in 1979 under the Ministry of Labor, reflected further priority commitment for workforce development.

**Box 2: Key economic and WfD objectives in National Partnership Programs**

**Program for National Recovery 1987-90**

- Strengthen indigenous manufacturing
- Continue to attract overseas manufacturing companies
- Support service sector growth
- Support pre-employment training

**Program for Economic and Social Progress 1991-93**

- Job creation in manufacturing and international services
- Industrial aids/grants to indigenous industry and overseas companies
- Area-based enterprise supports

**Program for Competitiveness and Work 1994-97**

- Strengthen productive capacity
- Sustainable employment and enterprise; market-led growth
- Develop small business, services
- Promote community-based work with work-experience and training

**Partnership 2000 1997-2000**

- Improved competitiveness
- Continuous innovation through research and technology
- High-level skills and life-long learning
- Sectoral initiatives and infrastructure

**1990:** Leadership support for workforce development continued during the eighties. A need for social partnership to ensure effective economic development was acknowledged in the mid-80s and a Program for National Recovery (1987-1990) was agreed with key

social partners. Political commitment to workforce development was sustained in the Program, with agreement to strengthen formal pre-employment training and respond to specific priorities for economic growth. The success of this social contract led to a series of national social partner agreements in Ireland. These agreements gave the trade union movement, employer bodies and other social partners a central and positive role in influencing government policy; while also reducing risk and introducing predictability in the area of remuneration and industrial relations. Progression to institutionalized leadership through national consensus that prioritized workforce development was again evident in subsequent Programs (Box 2). These included agreement on increasing competitiveness and employment through enhanced skills development at all levels, and by greater labor market adaptability in response to rapid technological and structural change. A continued need for a dual strategy in which training and education were focused both on increasing competitiveness and on reducing unemployment was acknowledged.

**Box 3: Examples of Relevant OECD & EU studies**

- Training of Technicians in Ireland (OECD 1964)
- Investment in Education in Ireland (OECD 1965)
- Manpower Policy in Ireland (OECD 1974)
- Economic Survey for Ireland (OECD 1978)
- Improving Youth Employment Opportunities, Policies for Ireland and Portugal (OECD 1984)
- Education and Economy in a Changing Society (OECD 1989)
- Review of National Policies for Education in Ireland (OECD 1991)
- Report on Skill Shortages in Europe (IRDAC for EC 1993)
- White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (EU 1994)

**2000:** Recognition of, and advocacy for, the role of WfD in economic development was further advanced by 2000. Training was identified as a key factor in the country’s future economic welfare in a major review of industrial development policy in the early nineties; a re-direction of resources towards providing training for those at work and preparing for work was proposed. Increased priority for workforce development was reflected in a specific Operational Program for Human Resource Development (HRDOP), under the framework of the National Development Plan 1994-1999. This change was facilitated by the designation of Human Resources as a priority Structural Fund Intervention of the EU Community Support Framework for Ireland. The objective was to boost human capital by enhancing education and skill levels and to increase the employment prospects of the unemployed. Institutional advocacy for investment in the development of skills and knowledge of the workforce was further reinforced by a subsequent Government White Paper on Human Resources Development, and the priorities of the National Competitiveness Council with a focus on alleviation of pervasive skill shortages.

**Evaluate economic prospects and implications for skills**



The scores show that a demand-driven strategy for workforce development had emerged by 1980, was at an established level in 1990 and reached an advanced level by 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In 1980, WfD in national plans was informed by economy-wide review and analysis undertaken by government agencies but very few policy reforms took place as a consequence of these studies. However by 1990, partly in response to the economic down-turn of the 1980’s, WfD policy started to be based on more appropriate analysis and a more robust evaluation process. The analysis also became broader, focusing on manpower and skill requirements at both national and sectoral level. Surveys of the labor force, employers, industry and skill needs contributed to the implementation of policy reform. Growing awareness during the 1990’s of the need for a more skilled work force generated increased support for occupational forecasting and the formal establishment of an expert group on skill needs.

**1980:** The 1978-1981 Program for National Development was informed by two OECD studies, an economic survey and a review of Manpower Policy in Ireland. A NESC 1978 report ‘Development for Full Employment’; ESRI medium-term growth forecasts and the annual Department of Finance Economic Review and Outlook report; together with labor force surveys and quarterly employment data from the CSO were also part of the evaluation.

**1990:** Evaluation and analysis broadened during the eighties. Evaluation of necessary conditions required for economic development informed the Program for National Recovery (1987-1990). A need to address the skills implications of technology, including increased demand for higher skilled manpower as part of overall economic development was highlighted in a Government White Paper on Manpower Development (1986). This need was informed by a NESC study on Manpower Policy issues, and a Sectoral Development Committee review of the technology capacity of indigenous Irish industry. A need to strengthen manpower research and forecasting capacity was reflected in the establishment of a Manpower Research Unit within the Industrial Training Authority. The first studies in a series on training needs and manpower requirements in specific industry sectors were conducted (e.g. in chemicals, and mechanical-electrical engineering) by this Unit in the late 1980’s. This was facilitated by the availability of specific ESF co-funding for such studies.

**2000:** A well-informed demand-driven WfD strategy was in place by 2000. The evaluation process was strengthened by the establishment in 1991 of a series of Occupational Forecasting studies; continuation of

industry sector studies, and the establishment of the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs. The balance of training and education provision in the HRDOP 1994-1999 was informed by occupational forecasts prepared by ESRI. An Occupational Forecasting Project was subsequently established by the ESRI, funded by the Employment and Training Authority, with ESF co-finance. The objective was to provide information on the changing pattern of occupations and identify variations in skill requirements. This information was of value in determining medium-term manpower and education strategies and training provision.

Other studies of the human resource requirements and training needs in specific industry and service sectors were commissioned by the National Employment and Training Authority (e.g. Motor Industry, Clothing, Textiles, Food and Drink, Print and Paper). Establishment of the advisory Expert Group on Future Skill Needs in 1997 ensured further coherence in the identification of skill needs and economic trends (Box 4). The first two reports published by the Expert Group by 2000 were of considerable assistance in making informed policy decisions.

**Box 4: Expert Group on Future Skill Needs**

- Government Advisory Group since 1997; considers the Enterprise perspective
- *Key objectives:* identify sectoral skill needs and advise on actions to address them; develop estimating techniques to assist in anticipation of future skill needs of the economy; advise on the promotion of education/continuous training and business links at national and local level; improve job-seeker and school-leavers awareness of sectors with skill demands.
- *Membership* : 22 members, Chair – private sector
  - Companies; Employer and trade bodies (large & small business associations.)
  - Trade Union representative
  - Higher and further education (VET, universities, adult literacy)
  - Enterprise development agencies
  - Guidance Counselors for education
  - Government Depts.- Finance, Education & Skills, Jobs & Enterprise
- Senior Managerial *Implementation Group* to consider proposals (including Dept. of Finance).

Source: First Report of EGFSN & [www.skillsireland.ie](http://www.skillsireland.ie).

**▣ Develop policies to align skills demand and supply**



This action moved from emerging levels in 1980, progressing towards established in 1990, and reaching an advanced level in 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** By 1980 a few policies had been developed on the basis of occasional assessments to address imbalances between skills demand and supply. Policies to address skill shortages, combined

with an increasing labor force and rising unemployment were focused primarily on pre-employment skills training in a wide range of sectors and re-training for redundant workers. By 1990 policies based on occasional and routine assessments by government were in place. These addressed an increasing demand for higher level skills identified in significant policy papers on education and manpower. Increased emphasis existed on advanced technical training, apprenticeships and on more strategic grant-aid for training. By 2000 a range of policies to address skills imbalances existed based on occasional and routine assessments by government and by independent stakeholders. Skills policies initiated earlier to strengthen productivity and competitiveness in manufacturing and services and to support FDI were continued but were more sophisticated. The evaluation of policies and interventions by regular external review was institutionalized between 1990 and 2000.

**1980:** Policies to align skills demand and supply during the seventies were informed by ad-hoc studies and in-house program reviews. The existence of skills imbalances, together with a growing labor market and high unemployment prompted policy reforms. High wages and low private sector involvement also contributed to imbalance between supply and demand. In response, manpower policy was focused on training for skills and knowledge to be used on-the-job in a wide range of sectors e.g. construction, clothing, hotels and catering. Policy also included expansion of the resources of the National Training Authority to ensure additional training for apprentices, re-training of redundant workers, and training for unemployed and school-leavers. Promotional activity by the manpower agencies to address bias against industrial employment was also resourced. Additionally public employment schemes and employment incentives for employers were developed.

**1990:** Policies to align skills demands and supply, were based on occasional and some routine assessments by public labor market agencies and government by 1990. An increasing demand for higher level skills was prioritized. For example, a government White Paper on Education led to policy change in respect of Regional Technical Colleges in the 1980's; placing a greater focus on higher-level technician training (Boxes 5 & 6). This policy change also resulted in a wider emphasis on vocational and technical curricula and subject-choice at second-level. Likewise, decreasing demand in manual and low-skill jobs and a growing demand for higher level skills, highlighted in a Manpower Policy White Paper (1985), resulted in a more strategic approach to industrial training grants and a more standards-based apprenticeship system. An Advisory Committee on Management Training was also established and agencies with responsibility for workforce development were restructured. Evaluation of policy effectiveness became more established in the early

1990's, in part due to EU funding requirements. Policies and programs were sometimes reviewed for impact both through in-house studies or commissioned studies; these studies were not generally published.

**Box 5: Growth in full-time higher education enrolment in Regional Technical Colleges & IOTs 1975-2001**



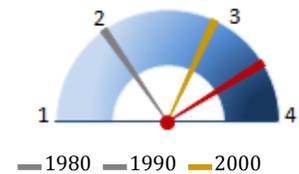
Source: Report of the Council of Directors of IOTs, May 2003.

**2000:** During the 1990's policies to align skill demand and supply were informed by a wider range of assessments with significant input from stakeholders, and a range of policies were implemented to address skills imbalances. Multi-skilling and conversion programs were identified as a cost-effective and flexible mechanism to address emerging skill needs, particularly in the context of the information society and changing technology. Policy was developed to provide grant-aid support for further education and training in specific areas; these included technological skills, marketing, management development, and commercial language skills; up-skilling of employees in smaller and medium-sized companies was specifically targeted. New policies were also developed to strengthen vocational education and training to address skill deficits and labor shortages. These included a more standards-based apprenticeship system and development of traineeships; a new pre-employment program for students who had completed the second level senior cycle and increased vocational orientation in the senior cycle of the second level school system in Ireland. Impact evaluation of policies and interventions was institutionalized between 1990 and 2000 and reports were more publicly available.

**Box 6: Regional Technical Colleges - Development Pattern**

- ❑ OECD report on Training of Technicians in Ireland (1964);
- ❑ Dept. of Education Steering Committee Report on Technical Education (1967);
- ❑ Eight Regional Technical College established by 1980; and a further five by 1990;
- ❑ Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992) placed the Colleges on a statutory footing;
- ❑ Initial focus on post-secondary short-cycle 'middle-level' courses in science, technology, business, art and design, and apprenticeship education;
- ❑ Combined second and third level technical and technological education;
- ❑ Certification provided by National Council for Education Awards (NCEA); from national certificate/diploma to degree and post-graduate level.
- ❑ Re-designated as Institutes of Technology-IOTs (1998); through amendments to 1992 Act; consolidated in Institutes of Technology Act (2006).

Source: Thorn (2011) & [www.ioti.ie](http://www.ioti.ie)



Policy Goal 2 addresses the extent to which national workforce development (WfD) priorities are influenced by industry and business and the extent to which their involvement is fostered. Results of the SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of this Policy Goal 2 Ireland progressed from an emerging level in 1980, to an established level in 1990 and an advanced level in 2000. This summary result reflects the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the degree to which the country promoted a demand driven approach to WfD between 1980 and 2000; if firms’ demands for skills to improve productivity were strengthened and whether critical challenges in the future supply of skills were addressed.

**Promote demand-driven approach**



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980, had become established in 1990, and was at an established level in 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In the 1970s industry played an advisory role in establishing WfD priorities based on occasional studies and assessments. This was facilitated through representation on the boards of national development and training agencies and through membership of sectoral training committees. Inputs into occasional ad-hoc studies commissioned through state bodies and the main employer organization also provided opportunities to influence WfD priorities. These advisory activities continued into the 1980’s. However their range was widened, particularly in respect of technical and vocational education through board representation. Industry also inputted into a wide range of studies of manpower needs during this time. By 2000 a demand-driven approach to WfD was in place based on routine assessments and supported by tripartite social partnership agreement. Industry leaders were key players in setting WfD and training priorities within a national review of Industrial Policy in 1991 and employer-led training networks were established in the mid-nineties. The broadly-based Expert Group on Future Skills facilitated wider stakeholder input into WfD priority setting.

**1980:** As Irish employers had traditionally been slow to engage with training and workforce development; a more interventionist approach by government was adopted following recommendation from the ILO; this included the establishment of a national Industrial Training Authority in 1967 and a system of training supports for new industries. Throughout the 1970s

industry had primarily advisory functions in setting and implementing workforce development priorities facilitated through representation as Board members on national development agencies such as the Industrial Training Authority, the Industrial Development Authority and the Irish Productivity Centre. Allied to the establishment of the national training authority, industry also had advisory functions on a limited number of sectoral training committees. Industry input and information sharing was facilitated through routine standardized protocols including attendance at monthly Board/Committee meetings. Industry was also represented on the Boards of training agencies in the primary production sector (agriculture, fishing, forestry) and the catering sector training agency. Inputs into occasional ad-hoc studies commissioned through the state-bodies and the main employer body also provided a mechanism for industry input to determine WfD priorities.

**1990:** Industry’s function in setting and implementing WfD priorities in both the primary and secondary production sector continued as an advisory and consultative one throughout the 1980’s. However industry’s role was strengthened through input into a wider range of technical and vocational education structures. For example industry was represented on the Boards of higher-level Regional Technical Colleges; and on the Board and Panels of the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA). Industry leaders were also active participants in efforts to develop a more standards-based apprenticeship system. Additionally industry and service sector leaders, through surveys and consultation, provided input into a wider range of studies and assessments of manpower development needs, commissioned by government agencies.

**2000:** A demand-driven approach to WfD was in place by 2000. The functions of industry and business in setting and implementing WfD priorities remained primarily advisory in the early 1990’s, but with a more active role in priority setting. Industry leaders were key players in an Industrial Policy Review Group established by government in 1991; the process included review of workforce development and training in Ireland and provided an opportunity for industry to identify critical supports needed. A move towards industry and other key stakeholders having more executive authority in WfD development was evident in the mid-nineties, in-part facilitated by tripartite social partnership agreements. The main employer body (Irish Business and Employers Council) indicated a

desire to have a stronger role in leading and influencing national training policy, rather than have a mainly consultative role; and at the same time sought additional state support for industrial training. IBEC sought to ensure that industry's interests were fully and powerfully represented on sectoral and educational bodies in the planning and organization of education and training for industry. Employer-led sectoral training networks (Skillnets) were subsequently established and industry was given a lead role in the newly formed advisory Expert Group on Future Skill Needs in 1998. Surveys of and consultation with industry, were part of the research process of routine studies carried out by the Expert Group. Additionally a wider range of industry, business and trade stakeholder associations inputted into WfD priorities.

#### Box 7: Skillnets

##### Key features

- Training and research networks;
- Enterprise-led
- Industry and sector specific
- Companies pool resources to identify and meet training needs.
- Established 1999.

##### Activity

- Employee training and upskilling;
- 40 training networks; 20 research networks; 456 courses; 12,800 participants (1994-2004); 25% of courses/modules certified;
- SME focus: 73% of participating companies have less than 50 employees.

##### Funding

- Government funded with ESF support.

Source: CEDEFOP (Fox & Harper 2003) & [www.skillnets.ie](http://www.skillnets.ie)

### ☑ Strengthen firms' demand for skills to improve productivity



This action scored at a latent level in 1980, had progressed towards an emerging level in 1990, and was at an advanced level in 2000

**Overview 1980-2000:** There were a limited number of financial incentives for employers to support skills development by firms. By 1980 these included a Levy-Grant scheme to encourage industry to engage in training, and grant-aid support for initial training by MNC's and some indigenous firms. By 1990 a more streamlined system of incentives and services was in place to provide selective support for skills upgrading. Following a review of manpower policy, the main training support schemes were amalgamated and supports were targeted to encourage a more strategic approach. However there was limited attention to

formal review of incentives and services. Funding re-organization and a more strategic perception of training continued during the 1990's. The grants systems for foreign and indigenous companies were merged and the Levy-Grant Fund was replaced by a National Training Fund. More routine reviews of incentives and services were undertaken during the nineties, followed by implementation of some review recommendations.

**1980:** Incentives and supports for employers to support skills development were emerging during the 1970's with a limited number of financial incentives in place, aligned to national economic development strategies. Key incentive systems were a Levy Grant System and industrial training grants. The general purpose of the Levy-Grant scheme was to tax-prime industry into accepting its responsibility for training, while simultaneously fostering a systematic approach to training and development. The system involved a gross annual payroll levy of 1-1.25% on employers, significant amounts of which could be recovered if training was undertaken. Additionally, grant-aid support for initial employee training was provided to MNCs as part of policy to encourage foreign direct investment, through a New Industry Training Grants scheme. A similar but less extensive grant-aid system was provided for training undertaken by indigenous firms; with a specific focus on management and supervisory training. Review of the training grants system was ad-hoc during the 1970's.

**1990:** By 1990 a more comprehensive system of incentives and supports was in place, with more attention also to system reviews. During the 1980's a high proportion of Ireland's employment and output was from the manufacturing sector, with low productivity levels with the exception of those sectors where foreign-owned firms predominated. The need for a more strategic approach to grant-aid and supports was recognized to address productivity and competitiveness issues. Some of the recommendations from a review of manpower policy, for amalgamation of the main support schemes, and for supports to be more targeted were acted upon. In addition to training grants and supports for MNCs and indigenous manufacturing firms a Training Support Scheme (TSS) targeted at employees in Small and Medium-Sized firms was established (Box 8). During the 1980's training functions also became more developed in Irish firms, assisted by grant-support for the appointment or designation of training managers.

**2000:** A system of financial incentives and other supports to strengthen firms' demand for skills was further developed by 2000. Following further review, the grants system for both foreign and indigenous companies was combined into a single Human Resources Grants Program; and the Levy-Grant system was replaced by a National Training Fund. To ensure

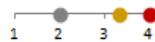
greater linkage between WfD and strategic company development, responsibility for WfD advisory and grant-aid support services within indigenous companies was transferred to the development agency for industry and internationally traded services, Enterprise Ireland. The Training Support Scheme was independently reviewed by the ESRI and key recommendations to impact on skills and productivity were implemented.

**Box 8: Key elements of Training Support Scheme (TSS) 1991-1992**

<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage and promote training in SMEs;</li> </ul>
<b>Sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manufacturing industry, internationally traded services and physical distribution;</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities for grant-aid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>technology, productivity, strategic planning, marketing, languages, management, , information systems, quality, and finance.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proposal based on a business development plan;</li> <li>funds allocated on first come, first served basis.</li> </ul>
<b>Subsidies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduated, based on number of employees (e.g. less than 12 employees 80% subsidy; 12-50 employees – max. 65% subsidy).</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1991: 17,232 employees, 1,204 firms</li> <li>1992: 22,459 employees, 1,369 firms</li> <li>1996: 26,090 employees, 2,818 firms</li> </ul>
<b>Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1991 - 4.75m £IR</li> <li>1992 - 5.63m £IR.</li> <li>1996 -5.9 £IR</li> </ul>

Source: ESRI Policy Research Series, Paper No 25. 1995; and FAS Annual Report, 2000.

**Address critical challenges in the future supply of skills**



This action moved from emerging in 1980, to advanced in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** During the 1970’s occasional assessments of the effects of new technology on employment and skills in certain sectors and occupations were made. However, recommendations arising were rarely explicit in respect of time, funding, responsibility or goals. Such assessments were becoming more systematic by 1990. Formal studies of several sectors and industries, with a focus on challenges at regional, national and international level, were completed. Implementation frameworks were specified in these studies to address future skill needs, and timelines, funding, and responsibilities were identified. Moreover, key recommendations were acted upon within a year. Improvements in assessments and

institutional support for them, triggered by a realization of the need to enhance competitiveness, continued into the 1990’s. By 2000 this was facilitated through a dedicated Expert Group on future Skill Needs (EGFSN), a dedicated tripartite body, responsible for assessments of various industries and sectors and a new institutional implementation framework, the Education and Training Partnership Group.

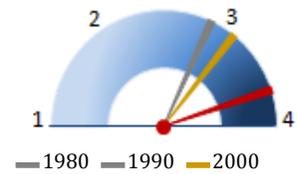
**1980:** Assessments of future supply of skills in the 1970’s were ad hoc; occasional national-level studies were undertaken by the Industrial Training Authority of the effects of new technology on employment and skills in specific sectors and occupational areas (e.g. in micro- electronics and in some craft trades). Critical challenges identified were an increasing demand for higher level skills in electrical engineering skills for example, in micro-electronics equipment diagnosis and electronic computing skills. The increasing potential of ICT both as an industry which would provide employment and as a potential means of enhancing existing training and education through the use of new technologies was highlighted. Recommendations were not explicit in terms of timelines, funding, institutional responsibility and monitorable goals.

**1990:** Assessment of the future supply of skills was more systematic by 1990. Formal assessments were undertaken for several industries and sectors focused on challenges at national and regional levels and taking account of international developments. Significant assessments of future supply of skills were undertaken in Chemicals and Clothing sectors in the late 1980’s. In the chemical sectors key challenges were again focused on an increasing demand for higher level technical personnel; conversion programs for graduates and qualified crafts persons were recommended. Additionally a need for management development and supervisory training was identified to raise company productivity. Skills updating for adaptation to new technology, and increased supervisory and management training were identified as priorities in the more low-tech clothing sector. A broad implementation framework was specified in these studies to address future skill needs; with costs, timelines and responsible agencies indicated. Key recommendations were subsequently acted upon within a year.

**2000:** By 2000 a dedicated tripartite body had been established to identify and address skills supply challenges (EGFSN) and routine assessments were carried out for multiple industries and sectors across the economy, focused on challenges at both the national and international level. Significant assessments undertaken in the late nineties addressed labor market supply and challenges in the future supply of skills for key growth sectors (e.g. software, chemical and biological sciences, and construction). An urgent need to increase the supply of graduates in computing was

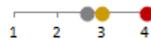
identified, at degree, diploma and certificate levels, along with a need to expand provision in accelerated technician programs. Recruitment of professionals from overseas was also recommended, particularly focused on encouraging returning emigrants. A new

institutional framework was also established in 1999 to ensure a speedy response to the identified challenges; this Business, Education and Training Partnership included an EGFSN implementation group.



Policy Goal 3 addresses the extent to which critical coordination for effective workforce development (WfD) has taken place. Results of the SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of this Policy Goal 3 Ireland had reached an established level by 1980, was still at an established level in 1990 and was advanced by 2000. This summary result reflects the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the degree to which the country ensured coherence in key strategic WfD priorities; institutionalised the structure of WfD roles and responsibilities; and facilitated communication and interaction among all WfD stakeholders.

**Ensure coherence of key strategic WfD priorities**



This action scored at an established level in 1980, continued at an established level in 1990 and was scored as advanced by 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** By 1980 formal tripartite agency and committee structures enabled the interests of the social partners to cohere in the determination of strategic WfD priorities. By 1990 coherence of economic and WfD matters was further progressed formally through institutional restructuring and through overlapping social partner representation in a range of semi-statutory agencies. There was also some expansion of the range of organizations that inputted informally at a strategic level. By 2000 an enhanced range of formal mechanisms for overseeing coordination and implementation of WfD strategies was in place, and they supported strengthening structures of WfD policy development, budget allocations, and assessments of future skills demand and supply.

**1980:** Government took the lead in WfD in the seventies; principal responsibility at the apex level rested with the Dept. of Labor. Tripartite agency and committee structures enabled social partner interests to be reflected in strategic priorities. Key deliberations of the apex leadership in the late 1970’s focused on strengthening structures for WfD policy development, mechanisms for promoting training in industry, and responses to unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. A lack of cohesion and linkages was however acknowledged and a Consultative Committee was established to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to labor market matters. Its membership included representatives of Government Departments,

the State Agencies in the manpower area and the social partners. While manpower priorities such as skill shortages and long-term unemployment were addressed by the Committee, its activities were constrained by being confined to the sphere of influence of one Ministry. A subsequent major policy review concluded that the manpower contribution to policy discussions and decision making in the general economic area and in other related fields such as education and social welfare needed to be enhanced.

**1990:** Effective structures for WfD policy development and for implementation of priorities continued to be a key focus of deliberations by the apex leadership during the eighties. The role for the Department of Labor in manpower policy development was subsequently enhanced and existing manpower agencies were merged into a National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) in 1988 to strengthen coordination and implementation of both reactive public employment services and schemes, and proactive labor market programs. Some improved coherence on economic and WfD matters was also achieved through overlapping social partner representation on a range of semi-statutory development agencies. Additionally coherence in WfD priorities was strengthened through social partner involvement in studies that identified WfD priorities in key industry sectors. There was also some expansion of the range of organizations that inputted informally at a strategic level; this included a representative organization of professional trainers in industry (IITD), vocational education and national youth organizations.

**2000:** By 2000 an enhanced range of formal mechanisms for overseeing coordination and implementation of WfD strategies was in place, and they supported strengthening structures of WfD policy development, budget allocations, and assessments of future skills demand and supply. Progress was reflected in active involvement of a wider range of stakeholders. This was facilitated through the expansion (and renaming) of the Dept. of Labor as a Department of Enterprise, with wider functions related to employment, enterprise and trade; more active participation by the Dept. of Education and education bodies in regard to their role in WfD through technical and vocational education; and engagement of the Dept. of Social Welfare in WfD deliberations relating to unemployment and welfare payment matters. Additionally the range of employer

interests at apex level was expanded with the specific involvement of SME representative organizations. This expanded framework was facilitated through formal structures such as the Monitoring Committees for the national Human Resources Development Operational Program (HRDOP 1994-1999) (Box 8) and the Industry and Tourism operational programs. A widened range of interests was also represented on relevant government-appointed advisory committees and tasks Groups (e.g. Expert Group on Future Skill Needs and the Task Force on Life-Long Learning). Specific outcomes of deliberations through these coordinating mechanisms included transfer of agency responsibility for training and development within indigenous Irish companies; establishment of an industry-led training initiative; prioritization of budget allocations for initial and continuing workforce training; and assessments of future skills demand and supply priorities.

**Box 9: Human Resources Development Operational Program 1994-1999**

**Aim**

- To boost human capital by enhancing education and skill level;
- To enhance the employment prospects of the unemployed and persons excluded from the labour market

**Key sub-programs**

- Adaptation to industrial change
- Initial education and training
- Continuing training for the unemployed
- Re-integration of the socially excluded
- Improvement of the quality of training provision

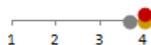
**Key implementing agencies**

- The Dept. of Education
- Regional Technical Colleges
- The Dept. of Labour
- National Training and Employment Authority

**Funding 1994-99**

- Total 3,179,982,251 IR€
- Total ESF co-funded: 1.948,486,237IR€

## ▣ Institutionalize the structure of WfD roles and responsibilities



This action scored at an advanced level in 1980, 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Roles and responsibilities of WfD stakeholders, supported by legislation and resources were well defined by 1980. A national industrial training authority was established in the late sixties to raise the skill levels of the Irish workforce. Its functions included coordination of stakeholder inputs into national training plans, information, and formulating budget requests from

the government and the EU. Similar agencies were established for training in agriculture, fisheries, catering and tourism. By 1990 political commitment to streamline the training system and address unemployment (then a serious issue) resulted in the re-definition of WfD agency roles and responsibilities, through establishment of a more multi-functional, tripartite, National Employment and Training Authority (1987). Its responsibilities included the implementation and coordination of training and employment initiatives together with promotional and research roles. The Authority was mandated through legislation to formulate and request required resources from the Dept. of Labor. Roles and responsibilities were further institutionalized by 2000. A series of national partnership agreements, together with EU funding, supported the tripartite structure of the Employment and Training Authority and other enterprise development agencies to discharge their responsibilities in a transparent manner. These agencies in turn supported the Department of Enterprise in workforce strategy development through labor market research and future skills assessment.

**1980:** Defined WfD roles and responsibilities had been established by 1980, supported by legislation and adequate resources. Responsibility for policy implementation was assigned primarily to a range of semi-statutory agencies. A national training authority, established through the Industrial Training Act 1967 under the aegis of the Minister of Labor had institutional responsibility for WfD; its primary objective was to raise the skill levels of the Irish workforce at all levels in commerce and industry. The Act specified a tripartite governing structure for the authority, and for designated industrial training committees within its remit. The Authority's functions included coordination of stakeholder inputs into national training plans; collection and distribution of WfD information; and formulation of budget requests from Government and the EU, via the Dept. of Labor. Similarly structured agencies had also been established with responsibility for training in agriculture, fisheries, catering and tourism sectors under respective government departments. These agencies were well resourced through national and European funding support and annual reports were published. The Industrial Development Authority also had a role in providing grant support for training of workers in MNCs starting-up in Ireland.

**1990:** Institutional roles and responsibilities were reformed by 1990 reflecting political commitment to streamline the training system and also address unemployment as part of workforce development during the eighties. This was enabled through enactment of a Labor Services Act, and establishment of a multi-functional tripartite National Employment

and Training Authority in 1987. Clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders as Board Members and as members of advisory committees were specified in the Act; however the act did not spell out how policy goals were to be achieved. Implementation and coordination of training and employment initiatives was assigned to the agency by the Act, in addition to promotional and research roles. The Authority was mandated to formulate and request necessary resources to carry out its responsibilities and was adequately resourced in terms of funding and staff. The Act also enabled the agency to provide consulting and advisory services to similar public institutions internationally. Tripartite structures were also institutionalized in other key economic development agencies and in task groups such as a national apprenticeship review committee.

**Box 10: Key WfD Government Departments and implementing bodies for WfD 1960-2000 in Ireland**

**1960-1987**

- **Dept. of Labour**
  - Industrial Training Authority
  - Sectoral Training Committees,
  - National Manpower Service
- **Dept. of Industry and Commerce**
  - Industrial Development Authority
- **Dept. of Education**
  - Vocational Education Committees & Regional technical colleges

**1988-2000**

- **Dept. of Enterprise**
  - National Employment and Training Authority
  - Enterprise Ireland,
  - Industrial Development Authority
  - Forfas – Enterprise Policy Development Agency
- **Dept. of Education & Science**
  - Vocational Education Committees and Institutes of Technology

**2000:** Institutionalized roles and responsibilities for WfD were sustained during the nineties. Ongoing national partnership agreements, and continued access to EU funding ensured that the tripartite institutional structure of the Employment and Training Authority and other enterprise development agencies facilitated planning and delivery of extensive resources for skills training, and employment support schemes. These agencies also supported the Department of Enterprise in the formulation and recommendation of strategy for workforce development; with additional resources provided to strengthen the institutional capacity for labor market research and future skills assessment. Monitoring and evaluation capacity was also strengthened linked to EU funding requirements. The Employment and Training Authority published a report on its core services and financial statements annually; with electronic access also available. In 2000 the Authority was assigned responsibility for administration of a

National Training Fund following new legislation that replaced previous sectorally-based levies.

**Facilitate communication and interaction among all WfD stakeholders**



This action moved from an emerging level in 1980 and 1990 to an established level in 2000

**Overview 1980-2000:** Over the review period communication and interaction among WfD stakeholders continued to develop. Two mechanisms provided most opportunity for interaction in the 1970's: the board of the Industrial Training Authority (through representation from employers, unions and education) and tripartite training committees in key industrial sectors. A tripartite consultation committee on manpower planning (1978) also provided a forum for wider dialogue on priorities. By 1990 the tripartite Boards of the National Employment and Training Authority and other enterprise development agencies provided a wider forum for dialogue and facilitated organizational linkages. Consistent with the deepening appreciation of the importance of developing skill levels and the need for industrial harmony additional structures became available during the 1990's. By 2000 these included a training and education partnership forum, a monitoring committee for the national human resource support programs, the expert group on future skill needs and sectoral industry-led skills-training networks.

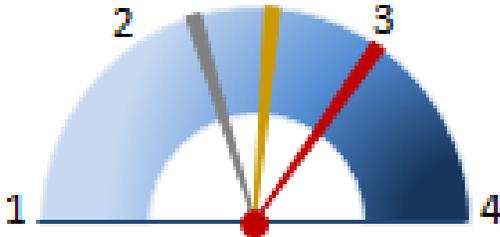
**1980:** Communication and interaction among relevant stakeholders in the seventies existed through the Board of the Industrial Training Authority; it contained employer, union representatives, and a representative of the education sector. Tripartite, statutory Industrial Training Committees in seven key industrial sectors also provided a formal forum for dialogue regarding WfD priorities and enabled some institutional and organizational linkages and information sharing. The designated sectors were: textiles; clothing and footwear; food, drink and tobacco; engineering, construction, printing and paper, chemical and allied products. These committees were however somewhat narrowly focused; with prime attention to aspects of the Levy Grant system and training schemes and on apprenticeship. A tripartite consultative committee on manpower planning established in 1978 provided a forum for wider dialogue on priorities.

**1990:** The established formal mechanisms continued to sustain communication and interaction among key WfD stakeholders during the 1980's. This was facilitated through structures such as the Boards of the Employment and Training Authority, other enterprise development agencies, and tripartite Training Committees for both industry and service sectors.

**2000:** Communication mechanisms were strengthened by 1990 through the existence of a wider range of formal structures established in addition to the relevant tripartite agencies and sectoral training committees. These included a training and education partnership forum; monitoring committees for the national human resource, industry and tourism support programs; the expert group on future skill needs; and sectoral industry-led skills training networks. These fora provided the opportunity for a wider range of stakeholders and sectors to engage in dialogue on WfD priorities, and for more extensive organizational linkages, learning and information sharing.

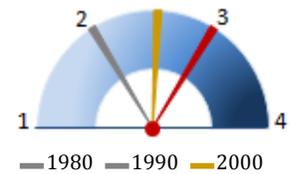
# Detailed Results

## Dimension 2 | System Oversight<sup>18</sup>



<b>Policy Goal 4</b>	<b>Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition</b>
<b>Policy Goal 5</b>	<b>Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding</b>
<b>Policy Goal 6</b>	<b>Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards</b>

<sup>18</sup> The composite scores shown in the dial are the same as the categorical ratings shown on the cover of this report. They have been converted using the rules indicated in footnote 4 on page 6. The categorical ratings conform to the standard presentation of results in the SABER initiative, while the presentation in the dials reveals more detail.



Policy Goal 4 addresses the extent to which diversified pathways for skills acquisition have been established. Results of the SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of this overall Policy Goal Ireland was at an emerging level in 1980, with some further progression by 1990 and was at an established level by 2000. This summary reflects the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the extent to which articulation across levels of instruction was fostered; life-long learning was promoted with recognition of prior learning; and policies and procedures were set for the renewal of publicly-funded programs.

**Foster articulation across levels and programs**



This action moved from emerging in 1980 and 1990 to established in 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In 1980 arrangements for transfer across levels and programs in vocationally oriented courses within the second level and post second level education and training system were ad hoc and uncommon. Such arrangements between programs in higher level regional technical colleges were also ad hoc. By 1990, although opportunities for transfer between programs and levels had increased in secondary schools and vocational training centers, they continued to be ad hoc. However articulation systems for transfer between courses within and across higher level technical colleges had become more transparent. In 2000 the range of options at second level, post second level and in training centers had increased but articulation systems were not formally established. In 2000 a Higher Education Links scheme with credit transfer arrangements was implemented on a limited scale.

**1980:** In the seventies arrangements for transfer across levels and programs in vocationally oriented programs were ad hoc within the second level and post-second level system education and training system. Students could transfer from more classical academic schools at second level to vocational schools and could transfer back; however such transfer was not the norm. Arrangements for transfer between programs in higher-level (non-university) regional technical colleges were also ad hoc; these were in some cases governed by entry requirements based on

a national points system (i.e. attained in final school examination). At the vocational training level trainees could transfer between programs within training centers, and from in-center training programs to community-based training programs, however such programs were unevenly spread geographically. Such transfers were organized on an individual and ad hoc basis. No system of credit or incentives operated to facilitate transfer.

**1990:** Due to increased provision of vocationally oriented programs within the mainstream secondary school system during the eighties there were increased opportunities for transfer between programs and levels by 1990. However the vocational cycle option was not provided in all secondary schools and articulation arrangements remained somewhat ad hoc. Likewise while options to transfer to different programs within vocational training centers increased, any arrangements or incentives to facilitate this were ad hoc. However, articulation systems for transfer between courses within and across higher level technical colleges became somewhat more transparent.

**2000:** During the nineties further expansion in the range of vocational options at second level and post-second level facilitated increased transfer between programs. Likewise expansion of the range of vocational training provision by the national employment and training authority increased access and transfer options but articulation systems remained ad hoc and were not formally established. Policy and procedures on credit had not been developed by 2000. However in the late nineties developments were underway to establish a Higher Education Links Scheme, with credit transfer arrangements, to allow learners with NCVA awards to enter specific programs leading to NCEA awards. This scheme was first implemented on a limited scale in 2000.

**Promote life-long learning**



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980, moved to an established level in 1990 and was scored as advanced by 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In 1980 arrangements or resources to support life-long learning or recognize prior learning were ad hoc and limited. By 1990 more

public resources and arrangements were in place to support life-long learning. Career guidance, information and advisory services were expanded and a pilot program on recognition of prior learning was implemented. Programs for disadvantaged groups, with broadened eligibility criteria were also increased. Further resources and arrangements to support life-long learning existed by 2000, with expanded provision of career guidance, information and advisory services. The national public employment services were strengthened to provide one-stop online information services by 1998. The recognition of prior learning was a key focus for the new National Qualifications Authority (NQAI) established in 1999. Specialist facilities were introduced to strengthen support systems for some disadvantaged persons.

**1980:** Life-long learning was an emerging concept in the seventies. Career guidance was provided in some second-level schools and through public manpower service offices but access to such services was variable. No formal arrangements or public resources were available to promote life-long learning or recognition of prior learning. However some vocational preparation and training programs for disadvantaged groups had been put in place during the seventies. These included programs for early school-leavers in inner-city areas, women returning to the labor force, and young members of the traveler community.

**1990:** During the eighties a wider range of career information and advisory services was provided; this included a more extensive network of public employment offices with extended information services. Funding for employment of a full-time career guidance teacher was extended to all second-level schools with 500 or more pupils. A daily television service for job-seekers was initiated by the national employment agency. In light of high numbers of unemployed, a short duration Job Search program was also implemented nationally by the agency; this included guidance and support in job-seeking. A pilot project on recognition of prior learning was implemented, as part of a European initiative; it focused on developing qualifications for employees in the retail sector and was supported by industry associations. Programs for disadvantaged groups were expanded to include long-term unemployed, women returning to the labor market and people with a disability. Such programs were funded annually, with provision for literacy and social and personal skills development along with basic technical skills. European funding support required attention to monitoring and evaluation of labor market outcomes from these programs.

**2000:** Promotion of life-long learning was further advanced by 2000. Career guidance services were provided in all vocational preparation courses. A

national employment service was developed; this included information and advisory services within mainstream public employment offices, and more intensive employment guidance and counseling services provided in disadvantaged communities through a network of local employment offices. Additionally one-stop online services were provided by the national employment and training authority from 1998; with information on training programs, employment schemes, notices of job vacancies and a career information data-base. Development of policies and procedures on recognition and accreditation of prior learning was a key focus of a newly established national qualifications authority (NQAI) (Box 10). The infrastructure and support system for programs for disadvantaged persons was also strengthened, within specialist facilities such as Community-based Training Workshops and YouthReach Centers. Lone-parents were additionally identified as a target group in need of specific training and supports to access the labor market. Monitoring of the outcomes of all programs for disadvantaged groups was institutionalized within the mainstream monitoring system.

**Box 11: Key Objectives of National Qualifications Act 1999**

- Establish and develop standards of knowledge, skill and competence
- Promote the quality of further education and training and higher education and training
- Facilitate life-long learning
- Promote and maintain procedures for access, transfer and progression ( to include development of policy on credits and processes for recognition of prior and experiential learning)
- Promote cooperation between the providers of education and training and industry.

[www.nqai.ie](http://www.nqai.ie)

Source: Towards a national framework of qualifications; NQAI, 2001.

**▣ Set policies and procedures to renew programs**



This action moved from an emerging level in 1980 and 1990 to an established level in 2000.

**Overview 1980-1990:** In 1980 the management of program offerings was not standardized. Within centralized parameters of the Depts. of Education and Labor, county based vocational education committees decided program offerings at second level while such decisions by the national training authority were made in an ad hoc fashion at local training center level. By 1990 more explicit requirements were in place. Procedures existed for introducing vocational or technical programs at second level, along with criteria and guidelines for validation of new programs in higher-level technical colleges. Within the national

training agency decisions on the introduction and renewal of programs were made at a regional level and were aligned with regional training plans and labor market analysis. Additional standardized requirements were established by 2000. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was responsible for introducing vocationally oriented programs into the second level education system (Box 11). Explicit standardized requirements for the introduction of publicly funded programs were also in place for institutes of technology through the NCEA and applications could be made online.

**1980:** During the 1970's policies to manage program offerings were not standardized. County-based vocational education committees made decisions on program offerings at second level, within a broad framework set by the Dept. of Education. The main vocational training agency decided on the introduction of programs in a somewhat ad hoc fashion at local training center level. Policies and procedures for introduction and renewal of programs in third level technical colleges were being developed by the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA).

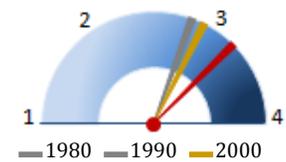
**1990:** By 1990 explicit and standardized requirements for introduction of new vocationally or technically-oriented programs or syllabi at second level had been developed by the Dept. of Education. Programs were piloted prior to national roll-out of a new program. The NCEA developed criteria and guidelines for validation of new programs in higher-level regional technical colleges. These included demonstration of capacity to provide the program, evidence of consultation with relevant industry and

stakeholders and labor market analysis. Course Recognition Committees were established, with assessors used to evaluate new course proposals. Working Groups were also set up to oversee the introduction of new apprenticeship programs and national post-secondary vocational education programs (e.g. Youthreach). Within the national training agency, decisions on the introduction and renewal of programs were made at a regional directorate level aligned with regional training plans and labor market analysis. However procedures for adjustment and closure of publicly funded programs were not generally explicit.

**2000:** By 2000 a newly formed National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was responsible for procedures for introduction of new vocationally-oriented programs into the second level education system. Explicit standardized requirements for introduction of publicly-funded programs were also in place for higher-level Institutes of Technology through the NCEA; applications could be made online and were vetted by formal Course Recognition Committees. Industry was represented on these committees. Procedures and guidelines were revised to reflect the increased shift to modularization and semesterization. A system of five-year program reviews was also institutionalized by the NCEA. Piloting and evaluation of new programs (such as traineeships) was also standard procedure for the national training authority prior to wider introduction. Procedures for closure of publicly funded programs remained less standardized.

**Box 12: Vocationally-oriented programs introduced into second & post-second level education system 1989-2000.**

Leaving Cert. Vocational Program (LCVP) 1989	Leaving Cert. Applied. (LCA) 1995	Post-Leaving Certificate (PLCs) 1985
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modified the established LC with concentration on technical subjects and additional modules with a vocational focus.</li> <li>• Expanded in 1994 to broaden the choice of subjects and strengthen vocational content with introduction of 3 mandatory Link Modules: enterprise education; preparation for work; and work - experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person-centred course involving a cross-curricular approach rather than a subject-based structure.</li> <li>• Framework consists of a number of linked modules grouped under 3 headings: general education; vocational education; vocational preparation.</li> <li>• Students taking the LCA are not eligible for direct entry into higher education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide: appropriate education and training to bridge the gap between school &amp; work; and an alternative route to higher education in the Institutes of Technology (IOTs).</li> <li>• Student numbers increased from 12,000 in 1989/90 to 24,000 in '99/2000</li> </ul>



Results of the SABER-WFD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of Policy Goal 5 Ireland progressed from an almost established level in 1980, to an established level in 1990, and was more advanced by 2000. These summary results reflect the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the degree to which Ireland articulated a funding strategy for workforce development (WfD) between 1980 and 2000; whether public funds were allocated to achieve results with efficiency; and whether partnership between WfD authorities and stakeholders was fostered.

**Articulate funding strategy**



This action moved from an emerging level in 1980 to an established level in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In 1980 WfD funding strategy was decided by government departments (i.e. Education and Labor) and agencies; it consisted of annual budget appropriations and line item allocations. Some European funding was also made available. Allocations included some funding for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Reviews of funding mobilization and allocation were ad hoc. Systematic government funding was continued in the 1980's and European support was increased. By 1990 national and European funding included dedicated allocations to prioritized fast-growing economic sectors and to some disadvantaged populations. Social partners had some input into establishing these priorities. Influenced by European funding requirements evaluations of resource allocation were becoming routine. By 2000 social partners had more influence on funding priorities. Performance and relevance were increasingly used as criteria for allocations and there were more routine evaluations of them.

**1980:** During the 1970's funding of WfD was determined by government ministries and agencies, with annual budget appropriations and line item allocations. Funding for vocational and technical education was determined by the Dept. of Education, following submissions from second-level schools and regional technical colleges. Funding resources for vocational training were determined by the Dept. of Labor, through annual appropriations to the Industrial Training Authority, and an employer levy/grant scheme for vocational training. European funding

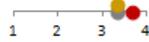
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resources were also mobilized. Funding allocation included some dedicated funding for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Reviews of the strategy for resource mobilization and funding allocation were ad hoc.

**1990:** Systematic funding of WfD continued to be determined by government ministries and agencies during the 1980's with annual budget appropriations and line item allocations, and increasing levels of European funding support. National and European funding allocation strategies included dedicated funding for prioritized fast-growing economic sectors (e.g. ICT), and for disadvantaged populations (e.g. young unemployed and early school-leavers in disadvantaged urban areas). Social partners had some input into funding priorities. An additional Levy was introduced by government to support funding of youth-employment measures. Regional Technical Colleges were enabled to generate revenues from research and consultancy services to foster links with industry; and fees were charged for part-time and evening vocational courses. However these revenues were not a significant source of funding. Evaluation of the strategy for WfD resource mobilization and funding allocation became somewhat more routine from the mid-eighties influenced by European funding requirements.

**2000:** Systematic funding of WFD continued to be determined by the relevant national Ministries (e.g. Education, Enterprise) and public agencies (e.g. Employment and Training Authority, Enterprise Ireland, Institutes of Technology), and EU support requirements. There was increased advice and input from key social partner stakeholders on funding priorities and strategies (e.g. consultation with employers and unions on funding mechanisms for a revised national apprenticeship system). Fees charged for part-time training and education courses for adults, and employee-training within public training organizations were increasingly an additional funding resource. Performance and relevance were increasingly used as criteria for funding allocations; and there was more routine evaluation of the strategy for resource mobilization and funding allocation (e.g. mid-term evaluation of the six-year national human resources development program), and of the support framework for EU structural funds in Ireland.

## ▣ Allocate funds to achieve efficient results



This action scored at an advanced level for the three periods considered.

**Overview 1980-2000:** The allocation of funds for WfD over the review period adapted to changing circumstances and priorities and was revised periodically. In 1980 public funding allocation was based on explicit criteria aligned with WfD priorities. The national and European commitment to TVET in the seventies was reflected in support for infrastructure investment. By 1990 economic and WfD priorities had shifted to support for HRD, in particular for initial training in MNC's, middle-level technician training and management development in indigenous firms; this was reflected in funding criteria. By 2000 allocation of WfD funds, was based on explicit criteria, aligned with national economic priorities and EU requirements. There was an increased emphasis on efficiency and criteria for allocating funding were reviewed periodically. The HRD Operational Program (1993-1999) reflected priorities in the National Development plan and performance measures and targets were explicit.

**1980:** A formal process for allocating public funds for WfD was in operation during the 1970's. Public funding was based on explicit criteria aligned with WfD priorities. For example, national and European commitment to TVET was supported by funding for infrastructure investment in new regionally-based colleges and training centers. Funding for initial training of apprentices and school-leavers and for re-training of redundant adults was prioritized in the late seventies reflecting a difficult economic climate. The criteria for allocating WfD funding were reviewed periodically.

**1990:** Economic and WfD policy priorities during the 1980's shifted from support of infrastructure investments to funding for HRD, particularly support for initial training of workers in MNCs; middle level technician training, and management development in indigenous Irish firms. Funding criteria for HRD aligned with WfD priorities were outlined in the 1987-1993 Industry Operational Program; this included a systematic review process aligned with European co-funding.

**2000:** During the nineties allocation of WfD funds continued to be based on explicit criteria aligned with national economic priorities, and EU structural funding requirements; and with increased emphasis on efficiency in resource utilization. Resources and measures within the national HRD operational program (OP) 1993-1999, reflected priorities in the National Development Plan, and performance

measures and targets were explicit. Criteria for allocating funding were reviewed periodically and recommendations were implemented in a timely manner. For example, increased focus on access, diversity and equality; and on results and impact was recommended in a mid-term review of the HRD OP. Some immediate re-allocation of resources was implemented for the remainder of the OP, and the review recommendations were taken into consideration in the framing of the subsequent 2000-2006 HRD OP.

**Box 13: Estimated total training expenditure, 1998**

	Euro (millions)	%
Initial vocational training	440	38
Publicly funded CVT for employees	37	3
Vocational training for unemployed people	140	12
Other training	97	8
<b>All publicly funded training</b>	<b>714</b>	
Enterprise-funded training	432	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fox and McGinn, CEDEFOP (2000).

## ▣ Foster partnerships



This action scored at an established level for the three periods considered.

**Overview 1980-2000:** National-level partnership between the national training authority and stakeholders in business/industry and trade unions had emerged by 1980. This was facilitated by the authority's tripartite board structure and related training committees together with overlapping partnership representation on other development agencies and educational bodies. Access to some public resources enabled the partners to act as intermediary agencies in TVET delivery and to provide advisory and research services on WfD. By 1990 partnership processes had also developed at regional and local levels and widened to include most WfD stakeholders. Other partnerships had developed to improve apprenticeships, tackle unemployment and disadvantage, and improve WfD information services. The tripartite structures developed earlier provided a strong basis for further developments in the 1990's. This was clearly reflected by 2000 in the composition of new bodies such as EGSN, the NQA and FETAC. Cross-border partnership between WfD stakeholders in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland also facilitated increased access to resources and technical

knowledge.

**1980:** National-level partnership between the Industrial Training Authority, as the key WfD agency, and stakeholders in business and industry was in place in the 1970s. This was facilitated by the agency's tripartite Boards structure, and related Industry Training Committees, as well as overlapping partnership representation on other economic development agencies and educational bodies. Key partner bodies with the Industrial Training Authority during the seventies included the Confederation of Irish Industry (CII), the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and the Irish Management Institute. Access to some public resources enabled the partners to act as intermediary agencies in TVET delivery, and in provision of specialist advisory and research services on aspects of WfD.

**1990:** Systematic partnerships continued to be established during the 1980's; with increased partnerships being developed at regional and local levels. Partnership processes widened to include most WfD stakeholders, including the education sector, a broader range of business and trade associations, union organizations, and networks of community and voluntary interest groups (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Small Firms Associations, Youth bodies and Community Training Workshops). Access to public resources facilitated these stakeholders to contribute with training facilities, technical knowledge and personnel, and WfD data. Strong partnership was established between the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) and Regional Technical Colleges in delivery of a revised apprenticeship system. Measures to tackle unemployment during the eighties also increasingly involved partnership between public employment services, the TVET system, and social welfare services, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Box 14). Additionally partnership was agreed between the Employment and Training Authority and the Economic and Social Research Institute to enable systematic access to labor market forecasts and other WfD data.

#### **Box 14: Area-based Partnership Companies**

##### Origin:

Created under the 1990-93 tripartite national agreement. Piloted in 12 disadvantaged areas in 1991; number increased to 38 in 1994/1995.

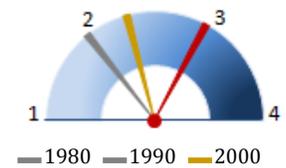
##### Key features:

- Board administration (15-20 members); public, private and voluntary interests;
- Commitment to a strategic and integrated approach to local development;
- Local autonomy in agreeing priorities and allocating funds;
- Financial and policy support from national government and the EU;

##### Key responsibilities:

- Help the long-term unemployed back into job market;
- Assist the development of local economic and employment projects – particular emphasis on promoting entrepreneurs within low-income communities, and establishing new businesses in the social economy;
- Support more traditional community development projects, particularly for vulnerable groups.

**2000:** Extensive partnership between the main WfD agency (the National Employment and Training Authority) and key stakeholders had been established by 2000. Tripartite structures developed during the seventies and eighties provided a solid foundation for this partnership in the nineties. Partnership between the main WfD agency and the education sector was further strengthened; with Institutes of Technology providing additional off-the-job apprentice training in response to increased demand in the late nineties. The composition of newly- established bodies such as the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGSN), the National Qualifications Authority (NQAI), and Further Education and Training Council (FETAC) reflected partnership between key WfD stakeholders in the education, training and enterprise sectors to address skills gaps and improve the qualifications system. Cross-border partnership and cooperation between key WfD stakeholders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was also fostered in the late nineties, with national government and European support. This facilitated access to additional resources and technical knowledge.



Policy Goal 6 addresses the extent to which relevant and reliable standards for assuring quality in workforce development were in place. Results of the SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of this Policy Goal Ireland was at an emerging level in 1980, with some further progression by 1990 and was at an established level by 2000. This summary reflects the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the extent to which accreditation standards for training providers were specified; skills testing and certification systems were strengthened; and the credibility of these accreditation and skills certification systems was assured.

**Specify accreditation standards**



This action was evaluated at an emerging level in 1980 and 1990 and progress to an established level in 2000.

**Overview 1980-1990:** In 1980 TVET was provided mainly by public institutions, based on broad standards established by government departments and agencies (e.g. the Curriculum and Examinations Board of the Department of Education (DOE) for secondary school level; the National Council of Educational Awards (NCEA) approving and occasionally reviewing courses provided by Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology). By 1990 responsibility for accreditation standards; was increasingly devolved to agencies with a wider representation of educational provider interests, and frameworks existed for program and institutional reviews in higher level technical education. Use of private contract training providers to deliver vocational training courses also led to increased focus on development of standards. By 2000 accreditation standards were well established for public higher level technical education; with reviews for all institutions having been initiated by the NCEA. Similarly the National Employment and Training Authority introduced a more rigorous contract-trainer registration system during the nineties. Enactment of legislation in 1999 for a national qualifications authority together with the establishment of a Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) were significant innovations towards assuring the quality of all future training courses.

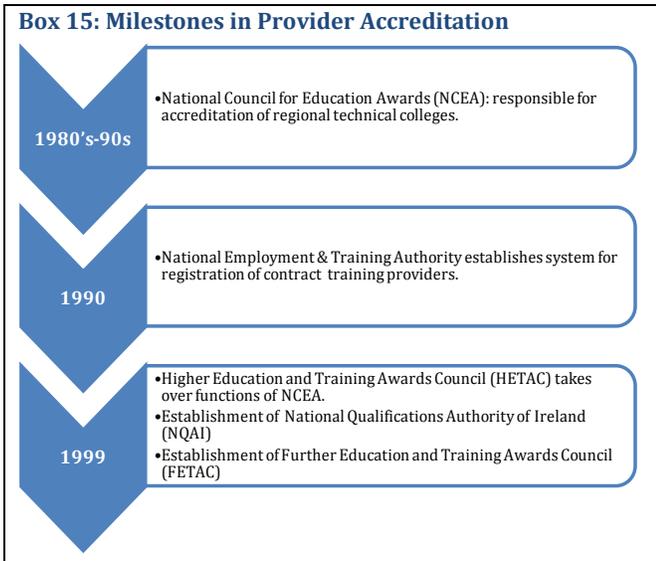
**1980:** During the seventies the Dept. of Education was directly responsible for accreditation standards at  
**SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR BETTER EDUCATION RESULTS**

secondary school level through its Curriculum and Examinations Board. Responsibility at the post-secondary higher (non-university) level was devolved to a National Council for Education Awards (NCEA), established by the Minister for Education in 1971. Establishment and maintenance of standards in all courses for which it grants awards was a key priority of the NCEA. By 1980 it was primarily responsible for approving courses to be provided by Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) and Colleges of Technology, and for occasional review of these courses. The Industrial Training Authority (under the Ministry of Labor) as a direct provider of vocational training set standards for its own training courses through a central internal curriculum development department, with some consultation with industry, particularly with respect to apprenticeship standards.

**1990:** During the 1980's the NCEA continued to be responsible for accreditation of higher (non-university) technical, scientific, and commercial education, primarily Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology. In line with the growth and expansion of these colleges into a wider range of disciplines the NCEA established Boards of Studies for all of the courses within its remit; and a framework for institutional reviews was also developed. In the late eighties responsibility for accreditation standards at second level also were devolved, through establishment of a National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, with broad-based representation of educational provider interests. There was an increasing focus on development of provider standards by the national training authority in the eighties. Increased use of private and NGO providers on a contractual basis resulted in establishment of a panel of 'approved' trainers being established by the national training authority; and the agency's central Curriculum division was designated as the Development and Standards division to reflect this change.

**2000:** Systems and procedures for regular institutional and program reviews for all Institutions of Technology were institutionalized by the NCEA during the nineties; these included increased stakeholder representation. The national employment and training authority established a more rigorous 'trainer' registration system for private contract providers, which included a procedure for renewal. Further momentum in development of provider-

standards was evident in the enactment of legislation for a national qualifications authority in 1999 together with establishment of a Further Education and Training Awards Councils (FETAC). The latter agency would in the future be responsible for assuring the quality of all training providers.



### ▣ Strengthen skills testing and certification



This action scored at a latent level in 1980, moved to an emerging level in 1990 and reached an advanced level by 2000.

**Overview 1980-1990:** There was a gradual improvement in skills testing and certification over the review period. In 1980 there was only limited focus on competency-based standards in skills testing. Apprenticeship training was largely assessed from a time-served perspective. During the 1980's testing was focused on a mix of theory and practice. In addition to the main training providers there was some use of independent parties in its administration. By 1990 competency-based testing was applied to a wider range of craft and semi-skilled service occupations during this time. During the 1990's testing focused on a mix of theory and practice, and included off-the -job and on-the-job components of apprenticeship training. By 2000 a standardized competency-based testing system was in place for most craft and semi-skilled occupations. Additionally, independent testing and certification systems for post-second level vocational preparation and training courses was assured through the established of a National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA).

**1980:** Competency based testing was in place for only a limited number of skilled and semi-skilled occupations during the seventies (e.g. clerical and secretarial skills; telephone technicians). Apprenticeship training was largely assessed from a

**SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR BETTER EDUCATION RESULTS**

time-served approach rather than on standards reached. Testing was largely based on theoretical knowledge and administered by the national training authority or other semi-state agencies (e.g. posts and telegraphs agency, electricity supply board). No significant measures were taken to manage the costs of certification.

**1990:** Competency-based testing was being applied in some craft and semi-skilled service occupations and sectors during the eighties (e.g. welders and fitters in transport sector, and tool makers, metal fabrication workers in engineering sector), in tandem with efforts to develop a more standards based apprenticeship system. Testing focused on a mix of theory and practice, and continued to be directly administered by the main training providers. However there was some use of independent 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, like City and Guilds of London for testing and certification of occupations such as hairdressing and secretarial skills. However proposals for a new apprenticeship system (which included competency-based testing) were not formally agreed until the late eighties and did not become operational until the mid-nineties.

**2000:** During the nineties the national employment and training authority developed a modularized, competence-led, standards-based assessment and certification system which operated within a framework of ascending skill levels (introductory, basic, intermediate and advanced).This competency-based testing system had been established for most designated craft apprenticeships by the mid-nineties (e.g. metal work, carpentry, plumbing, electricians). Testing focused on a mix of theory and practice with competency tests undertaken for both the off-the-job and on-the-job components of apprenticeship training. Additionally the remit of National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) established in the early nineties included testing and certification systems for post-second level vocational preparation and training courses.

### ▣ Credibility of accreditation and of skills certification



This action scored as emerging in 1980 and 1990 and reached established in 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** The credibility of skills accreditation and certification improved over the review period. The engagement of industry, trade associations and other external parties contributed to this as did the availability of external funding. By 1980 accreditation standards were in place for the second level education system, public providers of higher level technical education and the universities. However, formal standards were not explicit for many

vocational courses. During the 1980's standards for higher level technical education improved. By 1990 standards were more widely publicized and enforced; testing protocols were specified and random monitoring and audits were carried out. Industry and trade associations became more involved in the specification of standards. Additional technical assistance, often funded by the ESF, contributed to standards development in technical education and vocational training. By 2000 accreditation standards applied to most educational institutions and providers in receipt of public funding. Winning the endorsement of industry was a key objective in setting standards.

**1980:** Formal accreditation standards were not mandatory for all WfD providers in the seventies. Accreditation standards were developed and specified by the NCEA for public providers of higher level technical education providers. A similar system was in place for the university sector through a Higher Education Authority (HEA). However, formal standards were not explicitly specified for many vocational training courses or where specified they served mainly as guidelines to help providers improve service delivery. Some technical assistance support for program design, facilities and equipment was provided to Regional Technical Colleges and Vocational Training Centers through national and European funds to facilitate increased standards specification.

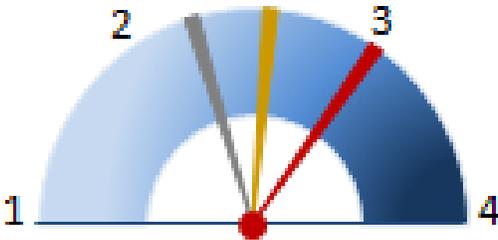
**1990:** During the 1980s standards were more established, particularly for higher level technical education provision, through NCEA accreditation of courses in Regional Technical Colleges; with standards more widely publicized and enforced. Standardized testing protocols were specified and random monitoring and audits were carried out by external examiners. National industry and trade associations were increasingly involved in the specification of standards, particularly for apprenticeships and technician level programs. Additional technical assistance, particularly through ESF funds, ensured progression in standards -development both in Regional Technical Colleges and vocational training centers. Accreditation was increasingly important for private providers, linked to access to public funds (primarily through for delivery of contract training for the national employment and training agency).

**2000:** By 2000 accreditation standards applied for the majority of educational sector institutions and providers in receipt of public funding; and considerable progress had been made in development of accreditation standards in the vocational sector. The establishment of a National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) in 1991 assured the credibility of accreditation and certification for vocational training, complementing the existing NCEA structure for higher

level technical courses. Standards were informed by industry and industry endorsement for relevant qualifications was a key objective. Standardized test protocols were applied by both the NCEA and the NCVA, and random audits were undertaken by agency staff and external examiners.

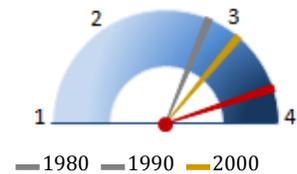
# Detailed Results

## Dimension 3 | Service Delivery<sup>19</sup>



<p><b>Policy Goal 7</b></p>	<p><b>Fostering Relevance in Training Programs</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Goal 8</b></p>	<p><b>Incentivizing Excellence in Training Provision</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Goal 9</b></p>	<p><b>Enhancing Accountability for Results</b></p>

<sup>19</sup> The composite scores shown in the dial are the same as the categorical ratings shown on the cover of this report. They have been converted using the rules indicated in footnote 4 on page 6. The categorical ratings conform to the standard presentation of results in the SABER initiative, while the presentation in the dials reveals more detail.



The SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicates that on Policy Goal 7 Ireland progressed from an almost established level in 1980, to an established level in 1990 and to a more advanced level in 2000. These summary results reflect the scores of the three underlying Policy Actions: the degree to which linkages among training institutions, industry and research were strengthened; the extent to which industry inputted into training design; and whether measures were in place to improve the competence of WfD administrators and instructors.

**Link training, industry, and research institutions**



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980, continued at an established level in 1990 and was scored as advanced by 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Some formal links between training, industry and research institutions were in place by 1980; these primarily facilitated work experience placements for some second-level and post-second level students and trainees. Some formal linkages between TVET institutions and research institutions also existed; technical colleges were developing internal research capacities based on their connections with industry. By 1990 formal links and collaboration ensured that work experience placements were integral to most skills training and technical education at secondary and post-secondary level. Formal linkages also enabled Regional Technical Colleges to strengthen their consultation services for industry. Similarly, the national training authority collaborated with industry, including high-tech multinationals, in the provision of tailor-made training programs. By 2000 there was significant collaboration between most training institutions and industry and research institutions. This included industry internships and work experience placements at most levels of the TVET system and specialist research centers within Institutes of Technology.

**1980:** Formal links existed between some training institutions, industry and research institutions by 1980. Work-experience placements for students and trainees on second-level pre-employment programs and some specific skills vocational training programs had been established. Some Regional Technical Colleges had appointed designated Industry Liaison Officers and student placements in industry were a core part of some higher-level technical programs.

Some Colleges of Technology and the Industrial Training Authority had formal linkages with research institutions such as the Institute of Research and Standards (IIRS), and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Additionally, the Colleges of Technology, RTCs and the Industrial Training Authority were themselves developing internal applied research capacities based on linkage with industry.

**Box 16: Examples of Training and Industry Cooperation 1990**

The National Employment and Training Authority in 1990 provided off-the-job training in electricians and avionics in two centers in the mid-west region for an aircraft maintenance company, Shannon Aerospace,

Similarly in the Dublin region the agency cooperated in the provision of specific training or electronic assembly for MNCs such as Intel Ltd, Pratt and Whitney, Airmotive International and Munekata Electronics.

*Source: Annual Report, FAS, 1990.*

**1990:** Enhanced formal linkages existed between most training institutions and industry and research institutions by 1990. Work-experience placements were integral to most pre-employment, skills training and technical education programs at both second and post-secondary levels. Applied research undertaken by Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) was supported by some grant aid from Eolas (National Science and Technology Agency). Collaborations were in place between some RTCs and industry through a Science and Technology Service Centre Program that provided consultancy in areas of traditional regional specializations. Likewise the national training authority collaborated with industry in provision of tailor-made training programs (Box 16).

**2000:** Linkages established during the eighties and nineties were further advanced by 2000. There was significant collaboration in the provision of industry internships and work-experience placements at in the TVET system. Most Institutes of Technology (IOTs) had established specialist Research Centers. The newly established roles of Head of Development or Research in some IOTs included promotion of external linkage with industry. Collaboration in applied research was fostered through designated grant aid from Enterprise Ireland. IOTs also provided bespoke training programs for specific industries within their regions. The opportunity for instructors, teachers and

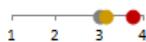
lecturers to undertake sabbatical periods in industry had been established in Institutes of Technology and in the National Employment and Training Authority. However the level of take-up was not extensive. Some collaboration between industry and companies also involved industry in supplying the specialist equipment to vocational training centers for training of future employees.

**Box 17: Examples of Institutes of Technology: Centres of Expertise (2000)**

- Telecommunications Software Systems Group; Surface Science Research Centre (Waterford IT);
- Polymer Engineering Centre (Athlone IT);
- Centre for Sustainability (Sligo IT);
- Pharmaceutical Research, Education and Training Centre (Tallaght IT)
- Software Ergonomics Research Centre (Limerick IT)
- Molecular Diagnostics and Cell Biology Unit (Cork IT)
- Software Technology Research Centre (Dundalk IT)

Source: Expert Group Report: Council of Directors of the IoTs (2003). ([www.councilofdirectors.ie](http://www.councilofdirectors.ie)).

**▣ Design training with industry inputs**



This action moved from an established level in 1980 to an advanced level in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** By 1980 industry had an advisory and decision-making role in identifying, prioritizing, and designing programs in some training institutions. This was channeled through board membership of the national training authority and its affiliated sectoral training structures and through input into curriculum design in the RTC's. By 1990 industry's advisory and decision-making roles were expanded through its representation on enterprise development agencies, the revision of the apprenticeship system, advising on standards for specific occupations and reviews of curricula for technical subjects at secondary level. Its input into higher-level technical programs was developed through its representation on the NCEA. By 2000 industry's advisory and decision-making roles in most publicly funded institutions were consolidated. It took a lead role in the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs and in the establishment of government-funded sectoral training networks; it was also influential at regional and local level.

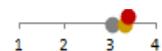
**1980:** During the seventies industry involvement in identification and prioritization of programs was facilitated formally through board membership of the National Industrial Training Authority and its affiliated sectoral training committees. While industry did not input significantly at the secondary education level in the seventies, its input was considerably stronger at the post-secondary level in Regional Technical Colleges. Industry input into the design of program

curricula was also formally fostered by the Industrial Training Authority, through its central curriculum department, and more informally at local training center level by individual curriculum officers.

**1990:** Industry's involvement in decision making on training programs priorities and content was further strengthened during the eighties. Formal industry input was continued through representation on the Boards of the re-structured National Employment and Training Authority (FAS), and enterprise development agencies. There was strong industry participation and input in the design of a revised apprenticeship system from the mid-eighties. Industry experts were also regularly recruited on a contract basis by the Development and Standards Unit of FAS to advise on standards for specific occupations. Industry input into higher-level technical program content was strengthened through its representation on the Boards of Studies and Course Assessor Panels of the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA). The Confederation of Irish Industry (CII) was also formally consulted by the Dept. of Education in reviews of curriculum for technical subjects at secondary education level and for pre-employment courses.

**2000:** Expanded advisory and decision making roles for industry in identifying, prioritizing and designing publicly-funded programs in most training institutions existed by 2000. The structures for industry representation and input that existed for higher level technical education programs through the NCEA, were also put in place as part of the development of a new National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) in the early nineties. The main employer body IBEC was represented on the Board of a newly established Curriculum and Assessment agency for second level programs (NCCA). By the late nineties industry had a lead role in the governments advisory Expert Group on Future Skill Needs, and in the establishment of government funded sectoral training networks - Skillsnets. In addition to membership on national agencies, industry inputted into newly established regional and local partnership bodies, such as County Enterprise Boards.

**▣ Improve competence of administrators and instructors**



This action scored as established in 1980 and reached an advanced level in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** By 1980 the recruitment of heads of heads of TVET institutions and instructors was based on minimum academic qualifications, with some requirements for industry experience. Such standards were maintained by 1990 with some refinement due to a wider range of courses existing to develop teachers and trainers. Also, evaluations of

professional development were more routine by then – though measures for recruitment evaluation and retention were ad hoc. By 2000 opportunities for in-service professional development of administrators and trainers were considerably expanded. This was facilitated through a specific measure for Training of Trainers in the Human Resources Program 1994-1999; pedagogical and management development were prioritized. In addition more routine evaluation of the competence of administrators and trainers was undertaken in the nineties.

**1980:** Recruitment of heads of vocational education and training organizations and instructors was based on minimum academic qualifications in 1980. Standards for second-level vocational education schools and for higher level Regional Technical Colleges had been primarily set by the Department of Education in agreement with education trade unions. The Industrial Training Authority established standards for recruitment of managers of vocational training centers and for instructors together with the Department of Labor and the relevant trade unions. A minimum of an under-graduate degree or equivalent was required for vocational school principals together with minimal levels of teaching/training experience. Second-level technical subject teachers and instructors were required to have at minimum a degree or a national craft diploma. Minimum levels of industry experience were also specified for RTC directors, vocational training centers managers, and for lecturers/teachers in higher-level technical colleges. A new training college for teachers of technical subjects at second level was established in 1979, Thomond College of Education. In-service professional development programs for second-level teachers were organized centrally by the Dept. of Education and by a Staff Development Unit in the Industrial Training Authority. Most WfD managers and staff were recruited on the basis of standard public-service permanent contracts, with salary packages aligned to industry levels. However some teaching posts were on a contract or temporary basis (e.g. instructors in community-based training centers; some RTC lecturers/teachers).

**1990:** Standards for recruitment and professional development of WfD administrators and instructors were maintained and refined during the eighties. Short-courses and part-time programs were provided by Thomond College of Education in addition to full-time degree programs. An in-career Development Unit was established in the Department of Education; and departmental procedures stipulated a requirement for gender balance on selection boards. The national training authority piloted a foundation-level program in Training and Continuing Education in conjunction with Maynooth University in 1987 to improve the pedagogical competence of new craft instructors. This

program was designed as open/distance learning to respond to increased regionalization of staff, and to replace the traditional central in-house instructor-training program. Most second-level technical teaching and instructor posts were full-time and permanent by 1990, and also sixty per cent of higher-level RTC posts. Evaluation of professional development was more routine by 1990, while evaluation of measures for recruitment and retention were ad hoc.

**2000:** Existing recruitment standards were maintained during the nineties, with some additional refinements in minimum selection standards (e.g. membership of a professional association became an additional minimum requirement for RTC Directors; a higher diploma in education was required for technical teachers in some second-level schools). Opportunities for in-service professional development of administrators and instructors were expanded through allocation of funds to a specific Training of Trainers Measure in the Human Resources Operational Program 1994-1999.

**Box 18: Training of Trainers Measure – Human Resources Operational Program 1994-1999**

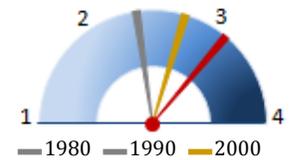
<b>Aim</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a more coherent approach to ToT across all TVET institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>ToT Objectives – Dept. of Education.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To update knowledge, skills and curricula and to develop enterprise;</li> <li>To develop management skills; and special intervention techniques;</li> <li>Improve career guidance/employment links and counselling skills.</li> </ul>
<b>ToT objectives – Training and Employment Authority</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all trainers have required level of technical skills;</li> <li>Ensure all trainers are regularly up-dated in the pedagogic principles and techniques required to ensure the personal development of their trainees.</li> </ul>
<b>Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trainer technology; technical training, training in management, guidance and counseling; certification.</li> </ul>
<b>Targets 1994-1999</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Education: 345,000 participant training hours</li> <li>Employment &amp; Training Authority: throughput 3000 persons.</li> </ul>
<b>Budget allocation 1994-1999</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55.5 IR£m.</li> </ul>

*Source: OP for HRD 1994-1999.*

The measure prioritized pedagogical and management development. Within this framework, a Leadership Development Program for second-level school principals was developed by the Dept. of Education; vocational training center managers attended development courses in the Irish Management Institute or Institute of Public Administration; and certificate and diploma level courses in training and education for instructors were developed by the National Employment and Training Authority in

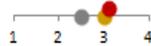
conjunction with University College Galway. To ensure coherence in staff development the Institutes of Technology established a Training of Trainers steering committee, and appointed a National Coordinator. Administrators and instructors within the public TVET system were incentivized to undertake further development through awards of salary increments following achievement of an additional qualification.

More routine evaluation of competency development of administrators and instructors was undertaken within the framework of European funding support; a thematic report on Training of Trainers was published in 1994.



The SABER-WfD benchmarking exercise indicates that in respect of Policy Goal 8 Ireland progressed from an emerging level in 1980, to more established levels in 1990 and 2000. These summary results reflect the scores of the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the degree to which the country promoted diversity in training provision; the extent to which private providers were incentivised to meet workforce development (WfD) standards; and how public training institutions were motivated to respond to the demand for skills.

**Promote diversity in training provision**



This action moved from an emerging level in 1980 to an established level in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** In 1980 diversity in training provision was limited as non-state provision was underdeveloped. It consisted of some community-based NGO’s, private training providers, and private secretarial and commercial training colleges. Access to government funding for training and support services, through the national training authority, was the main incentive available. By 1990 training policies increasingly facilitated the involvement of non-state providers; with training being offered by private providers and NGO’s. By 2000 there was a more diverse mix of non-state providers in Ireland – including NGO’s and for-profit and non-profit providers. Equal certification of training by state and non-state providers, facilitated by a joint agreement between City and Guilds of London and the National Employment and Training Authority, was an incentive for non-state providers. Incentives were more routinely reviewed by then also.

**1980:** There was very limited provision non-state provision within the vocational education or training system in the seventies. In some urban areas community-based NGOs were emerging as providers of training services for disadvantaged young people. Some non-state provision existed at post-secondary level, primarily private secretarial and commercial training colleges, and private providers of return-to-work training courses for women. Limited incentives were in place to foster non-state provision of training. The main incentive was eligibility to access government funding for training and support services from the Industrial Training Authority. Information and advice on training curriculum, and support with

instructor training were the main types of available support services; these were availed of primarily by community-based NGOs.

**1990:** Non-state training provision expanded during the eighties. In response to a need for skills training provision for an increased number of unemployed people during the mid-eighties, the National Employment and Training Authority actively promoted involvement of contract private providers in delivery, primarily in areas not served by the authority’s own network of training centers. NGOs also continued to be providers of training for disadvantaged clients groups on behalf of the national authority. Eligibility to compete for government-funded training contracts thus became an increasingly important incentive in the eighties for private companies and not-for-profit institutions. Access to support services continued also to be an incentive for NGO providers during the eighties.

**2000:** A diverse range of non-state providers were involved in training delivery by 2000. This included NGO’s, private training firms, and non-profit institutions (e.g. Irish Management Institute and National College of Industrial Relations). Private companies provided initial training for job-seekers in a wider range of occupational and skill areas, including training in IT, commerce and business, language training and beauty therapy. Additionally there was increased non-state provision in continuing training and development for employees. Incentives were in place to facilitate the involvement of non-state providers; these included eligibility to compete for government-funded training contracts and access to support services. Additionally equal recognition of certificates became an incentive during the nineties for non-state providers, facilitated through a joint agreement between City & Guilds of London and the National Employment and Training Authority. Incentives were more routinely reviewed by 2000, and a major review on the scope for increased use of a market-driven approach in delivery of human resources development measures was undertaken by the Department of Enterprise in 1999.

## ▣ Incentivize private providers to meet WfD standards



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980, continued at an emerging level in 1990 and was scored as established by 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Incentives for private providers to meet WfD standards developed gradually over the review period. In 1980 the principal incentive for NGO's, the predominant non-state provider was financial, in terms of access to government funding. No formal review system was then in operation. By 1990 financial incentives still predominated. Eligibility to compete for skills-training contracts and training grants, together with tax exemption for training related expenses remained the principal incentives for non-state providers to comply with WfD standards. By then formal systems were however in place to monitor and review contracted training, and included the penalty of fee retention for non-adherence to standards. By 2000 both financial and non-financial incentives existed. Non-financial incentives for private providers included giving them authority to issue government recognized certificates. Quality recognition awards, from the National Employment and Training Authority, were also available to providers who met the required standards. Training evaluation was also by then well established; this included a monitoring system for contracted training and evaluation within the framework of European funding support.

**1980:** As there was very little non-state training provision in the seventies, there was little use of incentives to encourage such providers to meet WfD standards. The main incentive for NGOs, as the key non-state providers, was financial in terms of eligibility to access government funding for provision of training in community-based workshop settings, but no formal review system existed.

**1990:** During the eighties incentives for non-state providers to meet WfD standards were also primarily financial, and related to eligibility to compete for skills training contracts and for training grants operated by the national training authority. Additionally tax-exemption (VAT) for training related expenses was an incentive. By 1990 formal systems were in place for on-going monitoring and review of contracted-training; this included fee-retention for non-adherence to standards.

**2000:** Both financial and non-financial incentive systems existed by 2000 to encourage non-state providers to meet WfD standards. Eligibility to compete for skills training contracts and grants, and

tax exemption (VAT) for training-related expenses continued to be the main financial incentives. The main non-financial incentive was authorization to issue government recognized certificates. Additionally non-state training providers could seek to obtain a quality award 'Excellence through People' promoted by the National Employment and Training Authority; this focused on striving for excellence through training, development and involvement of employees. Occasional and routine evaluations were carried out to encourage adherence to standards. These included a training monitoring system for contracted training implemented by the National Employment and Training Authority, and evaluation within the framework of European funding support. The Authority had also developed a formal review system by 2000 to assure training providers continued adherence to WfD standards; non-state providers were required to re-apply at fixed periods for retention on an internal Trainer Registration System.

## ▣ Motivate public institutions to respond to demand for skills



This action scored at an emerging level in 1980 and moved to an established level in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** By 1980 public TVET institutions were expected to meet target participation and graduation rates, and placement rates in respect of skills training. There were few incentives in place then to ensure that such targets were demand driven. By 1990 the institutions were expect to meet a wider range of targets; this included some measurement of trainee and employer satisfaction levels and progression levels from foundation programs. Some incentives existed also to encourage institutions to respond to demand for skills, including public recognition and increased funding for well performing programs. By 2000 targets were explicit, pre-defined, monitored and evaluated for all programs within the national human resource development system. Existing incentives were sustained and penalties introduced; with poor performance addressed through reduced funding and corrective measures.

**1980:** During the seventies participation and graduation rates were the main targets for public vocational education institutions. Additionally placement targets existed for skills programs in public vocational training centers. Few incentives were in place by 1980 to ensure such targets were demand-driven; however there was some public recognition of well-performing training centers, vocational schools, and higher level technical colleges.

**1990:** By 1990 vocational training and education institutions were expected to meet a wider range of WfD outcomes; trainee and employer satisfaction

levels were monitored through routine studies in addition to participation, graduation and job-placement outcomes. Targets for progression to further training or education also existed in respect of foundation-level programs. Some incentives were in place to ensure that institutions responded to the demand for skills; these included public recognition of well-performing institutions, and increase in funding for well-performing programs.

**Box 19: General Measure Activity and Impact Indicators in HRD OP 1994-1999**

**Number**

- Throughput; carry-over; total participants; start-ups.

**Duration**

- Course duration in hours by theory, practice/work-experience; counseling/guidance and jobsearch

**Certification**

- Extent of achievement of nationally recognized certification

**Follow-up**

- Placement, relevant placement and progression.

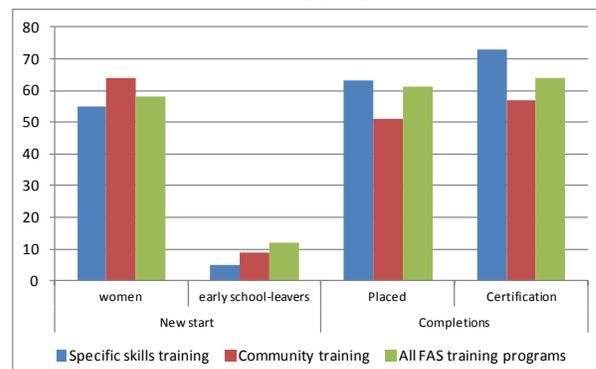
**Gender**

- General indicators disaggregated by gender.

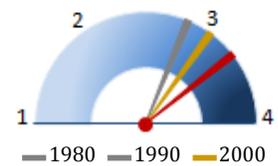
Source: OP for HRD 1994-1999.

**2000:** More explicit pre-defined targets for graduation, job placement and certification existed by 2000 for all programs within the national human resources development program. Additionally systems were in place for routine evaluation of trainee and employer satisfaction levels. Routine monitoring and evaluation mechanisms had been developed to ensure that institutions responded effectively to the demand for skills, with performance based incentives and penalties. For example, based on a mid-term evaluation, decisions on re-allocation of expenditure within the 1994-1999 national HRD program were adjusted taking account taken of well-performing programs. Similarly some measures to address poor performance were in place. These included increased support to address weaknesses; for example changes were made to the design and structure of a Job Initiative program, following independent review of its performance in 1999. At a local level skills-training programs that were found on a consistent basis to have poor job-placement outcomes were closed.

**Box 20: Example of Key Performance Indicators and results for selected training programs 2000 (%)**

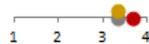


Source: National Employment and Training Authority (FAS) Annual Report 2000.



Results of the SABER WfD benchmarking exercise indicate that in respect of Policy Goal 9 Ireland was at an almost established level in 1980, had reached an established level by 1990 and had advanced further by 2000. These summary results reflect the scores for the three underlying Policy Actions highlighting the extent to which monitoring and evaluation was strengthened, reporting requirements were specified for training institutions; and focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation had increased.

**Strengthen monitoring and evaluation**



This action scored as advanced in 1980, 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was established by 1980 and advanced over the review period. In 1980 broad-based reviews of skills supply and demand were implemented and overviews of WfD data were published by government departments and public agencies. By 1990 national public data sources were complemented by European and international data, and initial studies of sectoral skills demand and supply were commissioned. By 2000 sectoral skills studies were routine, and regional and local reviews, were also contributing to M&E. The process was further strengthened by the establishment of an Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.

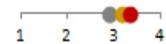
**1980:** Routine broad-based review of skills demand and supply based on analysis of labor force and employment data from the Central Statistics Office was in place by 1980. An overview of WfD data was available in published reports of government departments and public agencies. These included the Department of Finance, Department of Labor, ESRI, NESI, National Science Council, and Industrial Training Authority.

**1990:** Routine monitoring and evaluation of skills demand and supply by public agencies continued and was strengthened by 1990. Existing national public data sources were bolstered by European and international data (e.g. EuroStat and OECD). During the late eighties initial studies of sectoral skills demand and supply were undertaken internally by the National Employment and Training authority (FAS).

**2000:** Skills demand and supply continued to be monitored and evaluated through routine surveys and specially commissioned studies during the nineties. An

ongoing series of commissioned sectoral skills needs studies was established with ESF co-financing. Additionally regional and local level reviews undertaken by the national training authority. The process was further advanced by the establishment by government in the late nineties of an Expert Group on Future skill Needs, with a specific focus on growth industries and sectors; this expert group was located within the national enterprise policy development agency (Forfas) and was supported by a specific Skills and Labor Market Research Unit.

**Specify reporting requirements by training institutions**



This action moved from an established level in 1980 and 1990 to an advanced level in 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** Reporting requirements for training institutions were in place by 1980 and were extended over the review period. Administrative data, graduation statistics, and placement data in respect of publicly-funded training, collected through management information systems, were reported to the Departments of Education and Labor. By 1990 reporting requirements were widened and applied to both public and non-state training providers in receipt of exchequer and European funds. Limited incentives and penalties were in place to foster compliance with reporting requirements; non-compliance could result in fee retention. By 2000 systems for reporting a more comprehensive list of data were in place; including routine follow-up surveys of trainees and graduates. Measures to foster compliance were strengthened; technical assistance existed and the possibility of de-registration together with fee retention were penalties for non-compliance by contract trainers.

**1980:** Public training providers were required to collect, maintain and submit a range of data through an integrated management information system by 1980. Administrative data, graduation statistics, and placement data was sought by the Industrial Training Authority and the National Council for Education Awards in respect of publicly-funded training provision; such data was reported to the Departments of Labor and Education. The data provided access to institution-level information on all providers. Providers were officially notified if timely and reliable data was not submitted.

**1990:** A mandated requirement to collect, maintain and submit a comprehensive list of data through an integrated management information system continued during the eighties. This applied to both public and non-state training providers in receipt of exchequer and European funds and enabled both institutional-level and customized reports to be accessed. Wage-data was additionally sought in respect of graduates from higher-level training programs. Annual or bi-annual follow-up surveys were the main methods used to collect employment and wage data. Technical assistance was provided to contracted non-state providers to facilitate submission of reliable data and non-compliance with reporting requirements by contracted non-state providers could result in fee-retention.

**2000:** Submission of comprehensive data continued to be a mandated requirement during the nineties for both public and non-state training providers in receipt of exchequer and European funds. Integrated management information systems within the National Employment and Training Authority (FAS), the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA) and the Department of Education enabled access to institution-level information and the preparation of customized reports. Protocols were established to enable key user agencies to electronically access the data systems. Systems for routine follow-up surveys of school-leavers and of trainees were put in place with the ESRI on behalf of the Department of Education and National Employment and Training Authority; while the NCEA undertook follow-up first-destination studies of graduates from Institutes of Technology. Timely submission of data was fostered through technical support; fee-retention and possible de-listing from an integral trainer register were penalties for non-compliance by contract trainers.

## ▣ Increase focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation



This action started off as emerging in 1980 and reached a level of established in 1990 and 2000.

**Overview 1980-2000:** A focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation developed over the review period. Occasional M&E of some aspects of training services was undertaken by 1980 to provide feedback to institutions and prioritize funding allocations. Evaluation of service delivery focused primarily on pilot or experimental activity, or efficiency comparison. Limited information on labor market outcomes for graduates was available from training institutions. M&E activities were stronger by 1990, partly because of an increased focus on outcomes and efficiencies within European funding programs. A wider range of M&E methods were used and there was an increased focus

on evaluating high expenditure programs. A specific ESF Program Evaluation Unit was established. M&E projects were now used to identify good practice in addition to improving training and prioritizing funding. By 2000 routine M&E of several key aspects of training services was in place with results used for a wide variety of purposes.

**1980:** Occasional monitoring and evaluation of limited aspects of training services was undertaken during the seventies. Monitoring was primarily based on analysis of administrative data. Mechanisms for undertaking follow-up surveys of trainees had been piloted by the Industrial Training Authority and the NCEA by 1980. Results were used to provide feedback to institutions and to inform decisions on prioritizing funding allocations to programs. Evaluation of service delivery focused primarily on review of pilot or experimental activity: for example reviews of two Dept. of Labor Initiatives, a national Work Experience Program for young unemployed and a pilot Schools-Industry Links Program. Likewise the Industrial Training Authority commenced a review of contracted external training delivery, to facilitate comparison with training directly provided by the agency. By 1980 some information on labor market outcomes of graduates was available from training institutions.

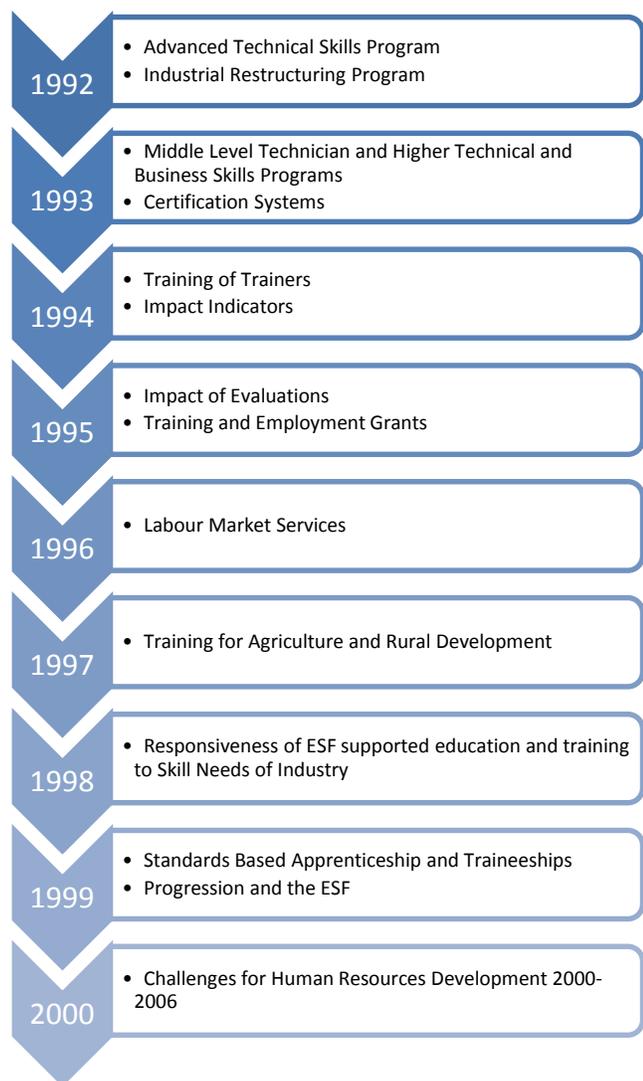
**1990:** By 1990 arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of aspects of the delivery of training services had been strengthened; this was in part due to an increased focus on outcomes and efficiency within European funding programs. A wider range of methods were used to monitor and evaluate the delivery of training services; these included: routine assessment of institutional performance and analysis, collection of specialized data (e.g. skills measurement) and analysis of selected issues using various methodologies (e.g. client surveys, cost-benefit analysis), along with program reviews. There was increased focus on evaluation of high-expenditure programs in the late eighties; independent evaluations were commissioned on two such programs the Community Training Workshops (1986) and the Social Employment Program (1988). Monitoring and evaluation results continued to be used primarily to provide feedback to institutions and inform funding allocations to institutions. Information on the labor market outcomes of graduates was publicly available, primarily through agency annual reports and reports on follow-up studies of school-leavers, and TVET trainees and graduates.

**2000:** Routine monitoring and evaluation of several key aspects of training services was in place by 2000. The range of M&E activities established by individual TVET agencies in the eighties was continued with the ESRI increasingly commissioned to undertake impact evaluation studies on training and education. Additionally, a specific ESF Program Evaluation Unit

was established in the early nineties in partnership with the Department of Enterprise and Employment; its function was to evaluate the effectiveness of all HRD interventions supported by the European Social Fund. The Unit carried out individual program evaluations, thematic evaluations across agencies and programs, and surveys on various groups within the labor market. Recording systems and performance indicators were specifically evaluated by the unit in the mid-nineties. While M&E results continued to be used to provide feedback to agencies, to improve training quality and to prioritize funding allocations, they were further used to identify good practices in service delivery. This was a

particular focus of evaluations of pilot projects funded by innovative European Community Initiatives such as the EUROFORM, HORIZON, INTEGRA and NOW programs. By 2000 information on labor market outcomes of graduates was more publicly available for all institutions, with results of follow-up studies published jointly by the ESRI and the Employment & Training Authority, and data on the first destinations of school-leavers and sub-degree level graduates published by the education sector (ESRI, NCEA and HEA).

**Box 21: Key Evaluation Reports and Topics of ESF Program Evaluation Unit 1992-1999**



Source: ESF Program Evaluation Unit. 2000. ([www.esf.ie](http://www.esf.ie)).

# Annex 1 | Analytical Framework of SABER-WfD

## Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

### Aligning WfD to national goals for productivity, growth and poverty reduction

#### *Policy Goal 1: Articulating a strategic direction for WfD*

Policy Action 1: Advocate for WfD as a priority for economic development

Policy Action 2: Evaluate economic prospects and its implications for skills

Policy Action 3: Develop policies to align skills demand and supply

#### *Policy Goal 2: Prioritizing a demand-led approach to WfD*

Policy Action 4: Promote demand-driven approach

Policy Action 5: Strengthen firms' demand for skills to improve productivity

Policy Action 6: Address critical challenges in the future supply of skills

#### *Policy Goal 3: Strengthen critical coordination*

Policy Action 7: Ensure coherence of key strategic WfD priorities

Policy Action 8: Institutionalize WfD roles and responsibilities

Policy Action 9: Facilitate interaction among all WfD stakeholders

## Dimension 2: System Oversight

### Governing the system to achieve desired goals

#### *Policy Goal 4: Diversifying pathways for skills acquisition*

Policy Action 10: Foster articulation across levels and programs

Policy Action 11: Promote life-long learning

Policy Action 12: Set policies and procedures to renew programs

#### *Policy Goal 5: Ensuring efficiency and equity in funding*

Policy Action 13: Articulate funding strategy

Policy Action 14: Allocate funds to achieve efficient results

Policy Action 15: Foster partnerships

#### *Policy Goal 6: Assuring relevant and reliable standards*

Policy Action 16: Specify accreditation standards

Policy Action 17: Strengthen skills testing and certification

Policy Action 18: Assure credibility of accreditation and of skills certification

## Dimension 3: Service Delivery

### Ensuring tangible results on the ground

#### *Policy Goal 7: Fostering relevance in training programs*

Policy Action 19: Link training, industry, and research institutions

Policy Action 20: Design training with industry inputs

Policy Action 21: Improve competence of administrators and instructors

#### *Policy Goal 8: Incentivizing excellence in training provision*

Policy Action 22: Promote diversity in training provision

Policy Action 23: Incentivize private providers to meet WfD standards

Policy Action 24: Motivate public training institutions to respond to demand for skills

#### *Policy Goal 9: Enhancing accountability for results*

Policy Action 25: Strengthen monitoring and evaluation

Policy Action 26: Specify reporting requirements by training institution

Policy Action 27: Increase focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation

## Annex 2 | Benchmarking Scores

Dimension	1980	1990	2000	Driver	1980	1990	2000	Policy Action	1980	1990	2000			
Strategic Framework	2.4	3.0	3.6	Articulating a Strategic Direction	2.3	3.1	3.7	Advocate for WfD as priority for economic development	2.5	3.5	4.0			
								Evaluate economic prospects for skills	2.0	3.2	3.8			
								Develop policies to align skills demand and supply	2.3	2.7	3.3			
				Prioritizing a Demand-led Approach	1.9	2.9	3.4	2.9	3.1	3.7	Promote a demand-driven approach to WfD	2.0	2.7	3.0
											Strengthen firms' demand for skills to improve productivity	1.7	2.7	3.3
											Address critical challenges in the future supply of skills	2.0	3.3	4.0
				Strengthening Critical Coordination	2.9	3.1	3.7	2.7	3.0	4.0	Ensure coherence of key strategic WfD priorities	2.7	3.0	4.0
											Institutionalize the structure of WfD roles and responsibilities	3.7	4.0	4.0
											Facilitate communication and interaction among all WfD stakeholders	2.3	2.3	3.0
System Oversight	2.2	2.6	3.1	Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition	1.9	2.5	3.0	Foster articulation across levels and programs	1.8	2.3	2.5			
								Promote life-long learning	2.0	2.8	3.5			
								Set policies and procedures to renew programs	2.0	2.5	3.0			
				Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding	2.8	2.9	3.2	2.3	2.6	3.0	Articulate funding strategy	2.3	2.6	3.0
											Allocate funds to achieve efficient results	3.3	3.3	3.7
											Foster partnerships	2.8	2.8	3.0
				Assuring Relevant and reliable Standards	1.8	2.2	2.9	1.8	1.9	2.8	Specify accreditation standards	1.8	1.9	2.8
											Strengthen skills testing and certification	1.7	2.3	3.3
											Assure credibility of accreditation and of skills testing	2.1	2.4	2.7
Service Delivery	2.7	3.0	3.4	Fostering Relevance in Training Programs	2.8	3.1	3.7	Link training providers, industry and research institutions	2.5	3.0	3.9			
								Integrate industry inputs into the design of training programs	3.0	3.1	3.8			
								Enhance competence of WfD administrators and instructors	3.0	3.3	3.4			
				Incentivizing Excellence in Training Provision	2.3	2.8	3.1	2.5	3.0	3.1	Promote diversity in training provision	2.5	3.0	3.1
											Incentivize private providers to meet WfD standards	2.2	2.3	3.2
											Motivate public training institutions to respond to the demand for skills	2.3	2.9	3.2
				Enhancing Accountability for Results	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.7	Strengthen the WfD monitoring and evaluation system	3.3	3.3	3.7
											Specify reporting requirements by training institutions	2.9	3.2	3.3
											Increase focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation in service delivery	2.3	2.7	3.0

## Annex 3 | Acronyms

AnCo	Industrial Training Authority (An Chomhairle Oiliuna)	ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
CCI	Chambers of Commerce of Ireland	IDA	Industrial Development Authority
CE	Community Employment	ILO	International Labour Office
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training	IOT/IT	Institute of Technology
CII	Confederation of Irish Industry	LCA	Applied Leaving Certificate
CSF	Community Support Framework	LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Program
CSO	Central Statistics Office	LES	Local Employment Service
CTW	Community Training Workshop	MNC	Multi-National Corporation
DEE	Department of Enterprise & Employment	NCC	National Competitiveness Council
DES	Department of Education and Science	NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	NCEA	National Council for Education Awards
DOL	Department of Labor	NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs	NDP	National Development Plan
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skill Needs	NGO	Non-governmental organization
EI	Enterprise Ireland	NES	National Employment Service
ESF	European Social Fund	NESC	National Economic and Social Council
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute	NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
FAS	Employment and Training Authority (An Foras Aiseanna Saothair)	PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
Forfas	National policy advisory Board for enterprise, trade, science and technology	RTC	Regional Technical College
FETAC	Further Education Awards Council	SFA	Small Firms Association
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council	SST	Specific skills training
HRD	Human Resources Development	TOT	Training of Trainers
HRDOP	Human Resources Development Operational Program	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	VEC	Vocational Education Committee
HEA	Higher Education Authority	VET	Vocational Education and Training
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation	VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
ICT	Information Communications Technology	Wfd	Workforce Development

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## Annex 5 | Informants

This report is primarily based on documentary evidence.

The following individuals were interviewed to gather additional information and clarifications. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged:

Dr. Daniel O'Hare – Former Chair of Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN)

Dr. Richard Thorn, Director, Flexible Learning and Research, Institutes of Technology, Ireland.

Mr. Stan McHugh – Former Chief Executive of Further Education & Training Awards Council (FETAC)

Mr. Donal Kerr – Regional Director, Employment and Training Authority (FAS)

Mr. John McGrath – Senior Manager, Skills and Labour Market Research Unit, FAS.

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# Annex 6 | Benchmarking Rubrics

Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework					
Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
1. Articulating a Strategic Direction for Workforce Development	<i>Advocate for WfD as a priority for economic development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WfD is <b>not prioritized</b> in national economic development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political and other leaders <b>recognize the importance</b> of WfD for economic development; economic development plans have identified a few WfD priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political and other key leaders in industry provide <b>sustained support</b> for WfD; economic development plans assess and specify several WfD priorities that are being implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WfD is fully integrated into national policies and strategies, reflecting a holistic approach<sup>20</sup> to WfD; economic development plans formally assess and specify a wide range of WfD priorities that are supported by implementation plans and budgets, these are subject to <b>continuous evaluation and improvements</b>.</li> </ul>
	<i>Evaluate economic prospects and its implications for skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept of a demand-driven approach<sup>21</sup> to WfD has <b>yet to emerge</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A demand-driven WfD strategy is <b>beginning to take shape</b> but policy reforms are often impeded by various difficulties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A demand-driven WfD strategy <b>informed by appropriate analyses</b> is accompanied by some policy reforms that have been implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A well-informed demand-driven WfD strategy with <b>continuous evaluation and improvements</b> has been internalized as a standard practice.</li> </ul>
	<i>Develop policies to align skills demand and supply</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies are being developed but are <b>not based on formal analyses</b> of skills demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few policies have been developed on the basis of <b>occasional assessments</b> to address imbalances between skills demand and supply; these policies and interventions are subject to <b>in-house reviews</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of policies based on <b>occasional and routine assessments</b> by government and independent WfD stakeholders have been implemented to address skills imbalances; these are subject to <b>routine in-house reviews and independent external evaluations</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies are formulated on the basis of <b>well-informed analyses</b>, including assessments by independent organizations, and they are <b>routinely reviewed and updated</b> with inputs from relevant stakeholders to ensure program offerings fit the economic climate and demands for new skills.</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> A holistic approach is one that addresses multiple dimensions of skills development, including: (a) aligning skills training to employers' needs and national goals for productivity, growth and poverty reduction; (b) governing the system to achieved the desired national goals, and (c) ensuring tangible results on the ground.

<sup>21</sup> In a demand-driven strategy, the demand for skills drives the supply of training services. Arrangements to achieve this relationship between skills supply and demand include: the involvement of employers in shaping training policies and provision, financing tied to employment outcomes, etc.

## Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
2. Prioritizing a Demand-led Approach	<i>Promote a demand-driven approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is <b>limited or no attempt</b> to incorporate business and industry inputs in establishing and implementing WfD priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business and industry play an advisory role in establishing and implementing WfD priorities <b>based on occasional studies and assessments</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A demand-driven approach to WfD is in place with business and industry providing inputs for setting WfD priorities <b>based on routine assessments</b> provided by government agencies, employers, trade associations and labor unions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A demand-driven approach to WfD has been fully established with business and industry <b>playing both advisory and executive roles</b> supported by routine assessments from government agencies, other key WfD stakeholders and independent organizations.</li> </ul>
	<i>Strengthen firms' demand for skills to improve productivity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Few incentives and services</b> exist to support skills development for technology upgrading by firms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Incentives and services</b> are in place to provide selective support for technology-related skills upgrading; incentive programs are <b>subject to occasional reviews</b> but often without adequate follow-up of recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives and services enable firms to expand the skills sets of workers to facilitate technology adaptation and adoption for greater productivity; these measures are supported by <b>routine reviews</b> followed by implementation of some review recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives and services enabling firms to address skills constraints impeding their ability to upgrade technologies and productivity are well established; these are routinely reviewed and adjusted for impact; <b>all key review recommendations are implemented</b>.</li> </ul>
	<i>Address critical challenges in the future supply of skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is <b>limited or no formal assessment</b> of the future supply of skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future supply of skills is <b>assessed on an occasional basis</b>; recommendations from assessments are implemented with some delay, often without adequate funding and assignment of responsibility for implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments of future skills supply are <b>routinely conducted</b> for key sectors at the regional and national levels; recommendations are implemented with <b>little delay</b>; responsibilities for implementation of recommendations are made explicit but without explicit attention to monitorable goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future skills supply is routinely assessed for multiple industries and sectors at the national and international levels; <b>recommendations are implemented promptly</b>; responsibilities for implementation are clearly spelled out and attention is given to the realization of monitorable goals.</li> </ul>

### Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
3. Strengthening Critical Coordination	<i>Ensure coherence of key strategic WfD priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is <b>no mechanism</b> in place to ensure coherence of key strategic WfD priorities among WfD leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherence of key strategic WfD priorities at the leadership level is achieved through <b>informal processes</b> that yield limited WfD outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherence of key strategic WfD priorities at the apex leadership level is achieved through <b>formal and informal mechanisms</b> that yield positive WfD outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal mechanisms overseeing coordination and implementation of WfD strategies are in place and they support strengthening structures of WfD policy development, budget allocations, and assessments of future skills demand and supply.</li> </ul>
	<i>Institutionalize the structure of WfD roles and responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities for WfD <b>are not formally defined</b>, leaving the WfD authority without a clear mandate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities of WfD stakeholders are <b>poorly defined</b>, leaving the WfD authority with a limited mandate and limited resources to discharge its responsibilities effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities are <b>well-defined</b> and supported by legislation and resources that enable the WfD authority and key stakeholders to discharge their respective functions effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear WfD roles and responsibilities have been institutionalized through legislation and <b>the WfD authority has the mandate</b> to formulate and request resources that are needed for the relevant authorities to discharge their responsibilities in a transparent and effective manner.</li> </ul>
	<i>Facilitate communication and interaction among all WfD stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>No formal process</b> exists for engaging all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Informal structures</b> exist that facilitate communication and interaction among key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Formal structures</b> exist in key economic sectors that support extensive communication and interaction among the relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal structures fostering <b>extensive interactions</b> among WfD stakeholders that culminate in consensus on WfD priorities and policies are in place in most sectors.</li> </ul>

## Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
4. Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition	<i>Foster articulation across levels and programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No functioning articulation arrangements.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Ad hoc</i> articulation arrangements exist within secondary schools and post-secondary institutions; <b>only ad hoc incentives</b> are in place to foster articulation across levels of instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Ad hoc</i> articulation arrangements exist across institutions at the secondary and post-secondary levels; a <b>program of incentives</b> is in place to foster articulation arrangements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Standardized articulation arrangements</b> exist across secondary and post-secondary programs as well as between TVET and higher education; a system of incentives is in place to foster articulation across programs and levels of education and training.</li> </ul>
	<i>Promote life-long learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No arrangements or public resources</b> are in place to support life-long learning, recognition of prior learning, and disadvantaged groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ad hoc private resources and arrangements</b> support life-long learning and recognition of prior learning; publicly-funded training programs exist with for disadvantaged groups subject to some restrictions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School- and community-based resources and arrangements</b> support life-long learning and recognition of prior learning; publicly-funded training programs with minimal restrictions are available for most disadvantaged groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Integrated regional or national system with one-stop online resources and standardized arrangements</b> support life-long learning and recognition of prior learning; publicly-funded training programs provide open access to all disadvantaged groups.</li> </ul>
	<i>Set policies and procedures to renew programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are <b>no set policies</b> to manage program offerings; training providers may introduce, adjust or close publicly-funded programs at will.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, adjustment and closure of publicly-funded programs are made through <b>ad hoc, non-standardized processes</b>; applications for these changes must be done personally and are vetted by <i>ad hoc</i> committees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, adjustment and closure of publicly-funded programs are based on a <b>few explicit and standardized requirements</b>; applications can be made online and they are vetted by formal committees with some representation from other WfD stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management of publicly-funded training programs are made on the basis of <b>comprehensive and explicit requirements</b> that include labor market analyses; applications can be made online and they are vetted by formal committees with representation from other WfD stakeholders and they operate with a commitment to act in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

**Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight**

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
5. Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding	<i>Articulate funding strategy</i>	▪ <i>Ad hoc</i> funding of WfD by multiple stakeholders; <b>no evaluation</b> of funding allocation and strategy.	▪ Systematic funding of WfD is determined by government agencies with annual budget appropriations and line-item allocations; <b>only occasional evaluations</b> of funding allocation and strategy.	▪ Systematic funding of WfD is determined by government agencies with advice from key stakeholders; annual budget appropriations are supported by detailed spending plans; there are <b>routine evaluations</b> of funding allocation and strategy.	▪ Systematic funding of WfD is determined through consensus building among government agencies and key stakeholders; annual budget appropriations are supported by detailed spending plans to foster improved performance; routine evaluations of funding allocation and strategy are <b>accompanied by appropriate reforms</b> as needed.
	<i>Allocate funds to achieve efficient results</i>	▪ <b>No formal process</b> for allocating public funds for WfD.	▪ <b>A formal process without explicit criteria</b> is in place; there are no reviews of allocation criteria.	▪ A formal process for allocating public funds based on <b>explicit criteria</b> exists; there are periodic reviews of the criteria but recommended changes face relatively long implemented lags.	▪ Allocation of WfD funds is based on explicit criteria aligned with WfD priorities, including efficiency in resource utilization; there are frequent reviews of the criteria and recommendations are <b>implemented in a timely manner</b> .
	<i>Foster partnerships</i>	▪ <b>Limited or no partnership</b> between WfD authority and stakeholders in business and industry; key stakeholders provide few, if any, resources toward meeting WfD priorities.	▪ <b>Limited partnership</b> with business and industry is in place; partners have access to some public resources; key stakeholders contribute a small range of resources toward WfD priorities.	▪ <b>Extensive partnership</b> between WfD authority and key stakeholders in business and industry; partners have access to some public resources; key stakeholders contribute a broad range of resources for WfD.	▪ An <b>institutionalized partnership network</b> with open membership for all WfD stakeholders is in place; partners have access to wide range of public resources; key stakeholders contribute an extensive range of resources to meet WfD priorities.

## Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
6. Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards	<i>Specify accreditation standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No accreditation standards</b> have been established; training providers are free to offer any program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Some accreditation standards</b> have been established; standards are infrequently reviewed; accreditation applies to public institutions only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>An accreditation agency has been established</b> with standards developed jointly with relevant stakeholders; standards are reviewed internally on a regular or as needed basis; accreditation applies to public institutions and non-state providers receiving public funding; <b>renewal applies to the latter only.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An accreditation agency with standards reflecting international best practices is in place; accreditation standards are reviewed frequently both internally and by independent parties; <b>accreditation and renewal of accreditation is compulsory for all</b> public institutions and non-state training providers, regardless of their sources of funding.</li> </ul>
	<i>Strengthen skills testing and certification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Competency-based testing has <b>yet to be introduced</b>; testing is largely based on theoretical knowledge and administered by training providers themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Competency-based testing <b>applies to critical occupations in key sectors</b>; testing may focus on a mix of theory and practice and is administered and certified by independent third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A standardized competency-based testing system is in place and <b>applies to most occupations</b>; testing may focus on a mix of theory and practice and is administered and certified by independent third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A standardized competency-based testing system has been established for most occupations; <b>IT-based testing</b> focuses on theory and practice and is administered and certified by independent third parties.</li> </ul>
	<i>Assure credibility of accreditation and of skills certification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is <b>limited attention</b> to accreditation standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accreditation standards are established through <i>ad hoc</i> arrangements; some support is provided to encourage non-state providers to seek accreditation; credibility of skills testing is ensured through explicit <b>standardized testing protocols.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accreditation standards established with inputs from WfD stakeholders apply to all institutions and providers receiving public funding; credibility of skills testing is ensured through explicit standardized testing protocols and <b>accreditation of testing centers.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A license to operate is issued only to institutions and providers meeting accreditation standards determined by key WfD stakeholders; credibility of skills testing is ensured through standardized testing protocols, accreditation of testing centers and <b>random audits.</b></li> </ul>

### Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
7. Fostering Relevance in Training Programs	<i>Link training industry and research institutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Weak or no links</b> between training institutions and industry and research institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Informal links</b> exist between some training institutions and industry and research institutions to improve training relevance and quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Formal links</b> exist between <b>some</b> training institutions and industry and research institutions, leading to significant collaboration in several activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Formal links</b> exist between <b>most</b> training institutions and industry and research institutions, leading to significant collaboration in a wide range of activities such as the provision of industry internships and training, and the introduction and redesign of training programs.</li> </ul>
	<i>Design training with industry inputs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Industry has limited or no role</b> in identifying, prioritizing and designing publicly-funded programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Industry has an advisory role</b> in identifying, prioritizing and designing publicly-funded programs in some training institutions, usually through informal contacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Industry has both an advisory and a decision-making role</b> in identifying, prioritizing and designing publicly-funded programs in some training institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Industry has a widespread advisory and decision-making role</b> in identifying, prioritizing and designing publicly-funded programs in most training institutions.</li> </ul>
	<i>Improve competence of WfD administrators and instructors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Few or no measures</b> are in place to enhance the competence of WfD administrators and instructors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment of administrators and instructors is based on minimum academic qualification(s), with provisions for some in-service training and performance-based recruitment and retention measures based on <b>occasional evaluations</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment of administrators and instructors is based on minimum academic qualification(s), with provisions for in-service training and performance-based recruitment and retention measures that are based on <b>routine evaluations</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment of administrators and instructors occurs through a competitive process based on <b>both academic qualification(s) and industry experience</b>, with a wide range of in-service training programs and performance-based recruitment and retention measures based on routine evaluations.</li> </ul>

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
8. Incentivizing Excellence in Training Provision	<i>Promote diversity in training provision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training occurs through <b>state provision only</b>, with no incentives to promote non-state provision of training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training policies allow some private providers to operate; training is provided <b>mainly by non-profit providers</b> with few incentives in place to foster non-state provision of training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training policies facilitate participation of non-state training providers; training is offered <b>mainly by NGOs</b>, with a system of incentives that are evaluated routinely are in place to foster non-state provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>highly-diverse mix of non-state training providers</b> offer training within a comprehensive system with a wide range of incentives is in place to foster non-state provision; incentives are subject to evaluations and the recommendations are implemented.</li> </ul>
	<i>Incentivize private providers to meet WfD standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>No incentives</b> are in place to encourage non-state providers to meet WfD standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>At least one incentive</b> that is subject to occasional evaluation is in place to encourage non-state providers to meet WfD standards, but no review system exists to ensure continued adherence to WfD standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>system of financial and non-financial incentives</b> that are subject to occasional and routine evaluations is in place to encourage non-state providers to meet WfD standards; periodic audits are conducted to ensure continued adherence to WfD standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>comprehensive system of incentives</b> that are subject to both occasional and routine evaluations and adjustments is in place to encourage non-state providers to comply with WfD standards; periodic audits with penalties for noncompliance are conducted and enforced to ensure continued adherence to WfD standards.</li> </ul>
	<i>Motivate public training institutions to respond to demand for skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>No mechanism or process</b> is in place to ensure training institutions are demand-driven.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training institutions are expected to meet target repetition and graduation rates but <b>few incentives</b> are in place ensure they are demand-driven.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training institutions are expected to meet a wider range of WfD outcomes; <b>some incentives and penalties</b> that are subject to both occasional and routine evaluations are in place to ensure these institutions respond to the demand for skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training institutions are expected to meet a wide range of WfD outcomes; a <b>robust system of incentives and penalties</b> that is subject to both occasional and routine evaluations and adjustments is in place to ensure that the training institutions are driven by employers' demands for skills.</li> </ul>

Policy Goal	Policy Action	Level of Development			
		Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
9. Enhancing Accountability for Results	<i>Strengthen WfD monitoring and evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Limited attention</b> is placed on the monitoring and evaluation of skills demand and supply; an overview of WfD data is available through informal channels only..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Occasional monitoring and evaluation</b> of skills demand and supply is in place; an overview of WfD data is available only in government agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Routine monitoring and evaluation</b> of skills demand and supply is in place; an overview of WfD data is available in published reports and websites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skills demand and supply are monitored and evaluated through routine surveys and specially commissioned studies; WfD data are available from a consolidated website.</li> </ul>
	<i>Specify reporting requirements by training institutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No specific data collection and reporting</b> are required; training providers maintain their own data bases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public institutions and non-state training providers are required to collect and maintain administrative and graduation statistics; <b>data reporting is voluntary</b> for non-state providers but they may be notified of non-compliance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public institutions and non-state training providers are required to collect, maintain and submit a comprehensive list of data through an integrated management information system to the WfD authority; <b>timely submission is fostered through incentives for compliance</b> and penalties for non-compliance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both public institutions and non-state training providers are required to collect, maintain and submit a comprehensive list of data, including client-feedback, to the WfD authority using an integrated management information system; <b>incentives, penalties and data quality audits are performed to ensure timely reporting of reliable data.</b></li> </ul>
	<i>Increase focus on outcomes, efficiency and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No system of evaluation and monitoring</b> is in place to ensure efficiency in delivery of training services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Occasional evaluation and monitoring of limited aspects</b> of training services is in place with results used to provide feedback to the training institutions; information on labor market outcomes of graduates is publicly available for some institutions only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Routine evaluation and monitoring of several key aspects of training services</b> is in place with results used to provide feedback to training institutions, to prioritize funding allocations, and identify good practices in service delivery; information on labor market outcomes of graduates is publicly available for all institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Institutionalized routine evaluation and monitoring of all key aspects of the delivery of training services</b> with results used to provide feedback to institutions, to prioritize funding allocations, identify good practices and options for system-level improvements; online dissemination of labor market outcomes of graduates is available to all users.</li> </ul>

## Authorship and Acknowledgements

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Sue Leigh-Doyle collected the data using the SABER-WfD data collection instrument, prepared initial drafts of the report, and finalized the report;

the Bank team scored the data, designed the template for the report and made substantive contributions to the final write up.

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**The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)** initiative produces comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data. The SABER country reports give all parties with a stake in educational results—from administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, objective snapshot showing how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of **Workforce Development**

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