

# HEA Strategic Innovation and Development Fund

## Application under Strand 2, Phase 2 by NUI Galway and the Connacht-Ulster Alliance

To establish a Regional Cluster of the HEIs in the  
West/North West Region



## Section 1 Strategy

The Connacht-Ulster Alliance and NUI Galway is establishing a Regional Cluster covering the West/North West Region with the aim of better coordinating the provision of higher education in the region and improving quality and access and pathways for students whilst maintaining the distinct mission of each institution and meeting the broad higher education needs of students, society and industry.

The cluster will improve the efficiency of higher education in the region and, over time, will reduce unnecessary duplication of provision.

Governance arrangements are being established and it is envisaged that there will be liaison between the West/North West Cluster and the cluster being established in the Mid-West.

## Section 2 Proposal

The cluster will have three initial priorities

1. To formally establish a functioning cluster with appropriate governance arrangements
2. To develop a coordinated academic plan
3. To develop regional learning pathways with partner institutions and FE institutions to provide clearly articulated progression opportunities HEIs in the region.

The outcome will be a coordinated academic plan and regional learning pathways and progression opportunities in the region.

The task of mapping programmes and learning outcomes, developing a matrix of programme provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level, mapping Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) opportunities, reviewing ATP practices and developing a common ATP policy will be detailed, complex and time consuming. Engagement between the four institutions will be significant and at this detailed level.

It is therefore proposed that a Senior Manager is appointed at each of the four institutions to assist the Registrars undertake this work. The post would be at IoTI Central Services Manager Grade and NUIG equivalent for a period of 2 years.

### Cost

	Salary (based on mid point)	Total cost pa	Total cost for 2 years
GMIT Senior Manager	€75,500	€83,616	€167,232
LyIT Senior Manager	€75,500	€83,616	€167,232
IT Sligo Senior Manager	€75,500	€83,616	€167,232
NUIG Senior Manager	€75,500	€83,616	€167,232
Total			€668,930

### Section 3 Implementation Plans

The cluster has identified three priority objectives and the specific targets, outputs and performance indicators are set out below.

Objective 1	To establish a regional cluster of HEIs in the West/North West Region
Performance indicator	The establishment of a functioning cluster
2014 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster defined as the West/North West region in the first instance</li> <li>• Governance agreed</li> <li>• Engagement of HEIs in the cluster to agree cluster objectives</li> <li>• Engage with FE sector / ETBs</li> </ul>
2015 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functioning cluster</li> <li>• Achievement of short term cluster objectives</li> </ul>
2016 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of cluster objectives and performance</li> <li>• Achievement of medium term cluster objectives</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

Objective 2	Coordinated academic planning
Performance indicator	A coordinated academic plan
2014 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of all programmes in the cluster, full time, part time, online and lifelong learning</li> <li>• Development of a matrix of programme provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level across partner institutions</li> <li>• Mapping of research activity</li> <li>• Mapping of civic engagement initiatives</li> </ul>
2015 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities</li> </ul>
2016 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring a diverse range of programmes across the region, responding to the needs of the region</li> </ul>

Objective 3	To develop regional learning pathways with partner institutions and FE institutions to provide clearly articulated progression opportunities among HEIs in the region
Performance indicator	<p>Review access, transfer and progression policies and practices across institutions.</p> <p>Creation of a matrix of course provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level across partner institutions, map common areas,</p>

	<p>specialist areas, progression opportunities.</p> <p>Develop new entry routes for non-traditional students to full time and part time programmes.</p> <p>Harmonise RPL policies and develop agreements to enable students with prior formal and experiential learning to gain direct or advanced entry to particular programmes.</p>
2014 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing access, transfer and progression policies</li> <li>• Devise formal schema for progression amongst partners and develop common access and transfer policies</li> <li>• Agree on regional targets for number of transfers across institutions</li> </ul>
2015 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer system in place</li> </ul>
2016 Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New entry routes in place</li> </ul>

#### **Section 4      Process for reporting**

The Cluster will report annually to the HEA on progress against the three specific objectives set out above and any further objectives agreed by the cluster once it is formally established.