

The EU Pact for Skills – Regional Skills Partnership for the Beara Peninsula, Marine and Offshore Renewable Energy

The challenge

- **Challenge 1: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement / Brexit Voluntary Permanent Cessation Scheme**

The Beara Peninsula is home to Ireland's second-largest fishing port, with a strong economic reliance on the fishing industry. Traditional employment opportunities in fishing are expected to decline significantly due to Brexit-related restrictions. It is forecasted that 33% of the commercial fishing vessels operating from Beara's port will avail of the "Brexit Voluntary Permanent Cessation" Scheme and be decommissioned, resulting in the loss of over 150 jobs and negatively impacting the maritime value chain in the region.

- **Challenge 2: Skills shortages hampering regional smart specialisation in the blue economy**

The Beara Peninsula is in a NUTS 3 Region overseen by the Southern Regional Assembly. Through a strategic smart specialisation (S3) assessment of the region, the Assembly has identified a concentration of activity related to the blue economy (marine technology, aquaculture, and boat building) and considerable potential for offshore renewables. The Assembly has identified a growing skills gap in these sectors as a significant challenge to realising the region's economic potential (Southern Regional Assembly, 2022¹).

The ambition

The 2020 EU strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy² states, "Technical and academic educational programmes in the Member States should factor in the increasing needs by 2050 to attract young workers with the right profiles to jobs in offshore renewable energy. Centres of Vocational Excellence can help meet the need for reskilling by bringing together a wide range of local partners, such as vocational education and training providers (at both secondary and tertiary levels), employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services, to develop skills ecosystems."

The Maritime Industry in Beara has established an industry-led steering group under the triple helix model to develop the skills ecosystem within the region's geographically isolated coastal and Island communities. The steering group includes representatives from regional Small and Medium Enterprises

¹ https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/SRA_S3_Final_Report.pdf

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A741%3AFIN>

(SMEs) operating in the S3 sectors identified by the Southern Regional Assembly – the marine engineering, off-shore renewable port services and the seafood (fishing and aquaculture) industries/sectors - along with public and private training providers such as the Cork Education and Training Board (ETB), responsible for secondary and vocational education, and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), responsible for training and development in the Irish seafood industry, and several private training providers. Cork County Council and Cork Local Enterprise Board are also represented on the steering group.

The Partnership is a grassroots initiative driven by a maritime community aware of the importance of sustainability in all its forms. It aims to be a trusted platform for the maritime industry/community of the Beara Peninsula to collaborate with education and training providers, industry stakeholders, and policymakers at regional and European levels to enhance the understanding of Beara's regional nuances and tailor initiatives and training to meet its regional needs.

The Partnership aims to drive regional smart specialisation by attracting, training, and retaining highly skilled workers to reinforce the competitiveness and innovation of the local maritime industry. By leveraging their strategic advantage as stakeholders in Ireland's traditional blue economy, the Partnership aims to drive Ireland's green and digital transition in emerging blue economy industries.

The proposal

- **Commitment 1:**

The Partnership commits to working with local and regional stakeholders to develop and implement training and skills development opportunities that respond to local and regional skills needs in the region's smart specialisations sectors. This will be achieved by:

- **Skills gap analysis:** Conduct a comprehensive skills gap analysis to identify specific skills needs in the region.
- **Collaborative program design:** Collaborate with local educational institutions and training providers to design tailored training programs addressing identified skill gaps, focusing on skills for the green and digital transition.
- **Stakeholder alignment:** Establish partnerships with industry stakeholders to ensure training programs align with industry needs and incorporate real-world applications.
- **Outreach initiatives:** Implement outreach initiatives to raise awareness about available training opportunities and encourage workforce participation, focusing on highly skilled fishers and skippers affected by the Brexit Voluntary Permanent Cessation Scheme and young

people within the region.

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs through feedback mechanisms and performance metrics to ensure continuous improvement.

- **Commitment 2:**

The Partnership commits to establishing a joint strategy to design and implement a sectoral education, training, upskilling, and reskilling framework that maximises the competitiveness of all actors involved and enhances job attractiveness and retention within the region. This will be achieved by

- **Stakeholder dialogue facilitation:** Facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders, including industry representatives, education providers, policymakers, and trade bodies, to develop a shared vision and strategy for maritime education and training.
- **Framework development:** Develop a comprehensive framework outlining specific objectives, action plans, and timelines for implementing education, upskilling, and reskilling initiatives.
- **Resource identification:** Identify funding sources and resources to support the framework's implementation, including EU funding opportunities and private sector investments.
- **Impact monitoring:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the framework's impact on enhancing job attractiveness, retention, and competitiveness within the region's Maritime economy.
- **Collaboration and exchange:** Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange with other regions and sectors to share best practices and lessons learned in education and training initiatives, contributing to the broader European skills agenda.

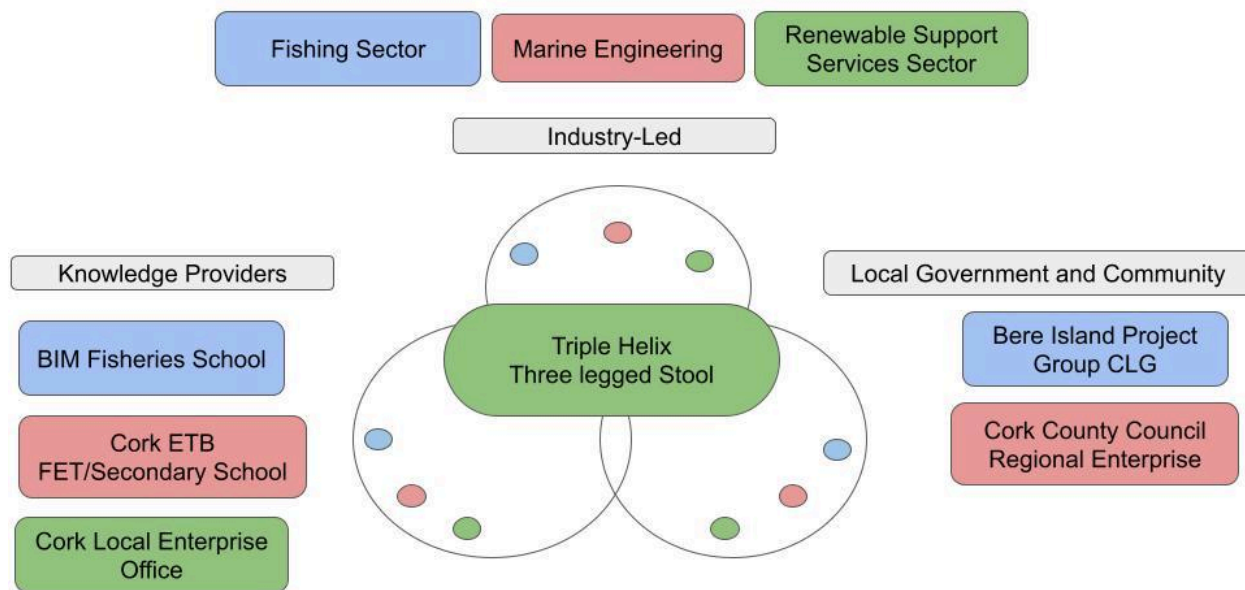
Activities and tracking our impact

Activity	KPI	Target	Timeframe for achievement
Survey industry stakeholders to identify skills gap	Skills gap analysis conducted	1	By 2026
Establish partnerships with universities, colleges, VET providers, and private training providers	Educational providers engaged with	5	By 2026
Provide industry-specific training programmes	Training programmes offered	10	By 2026
Deliver green and digital transition skills training	Training programmes offered	2 (out of the ten offered programmes)	By 2026
Establish industry forums with sub-groups to ensure cohesion	Forums established	2	By 2026
Organise industry stakeholder workshops	Workshops established	2	By 2026
Training programme promotion and raising awareness about available training opportunities	Individuals reached through communication efforts	50	By 2026
Assess the participant performance and satisfaction of training programmes	Feedback mechanisms implemented	10	By 2026
Monitor progress towards skill gap closures	Pre- and post-training assessments carried out	10	By 2026
Organise meetings and workshops to develop a shared vision between	Workshops developed	2	By 2026

<i>industry representatives, education providers, and policymakers</i>			
<i>Draft a framework outlining objectives, action plan, and timelines for skills initiatives</i>	<i>Framework developed</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>By 2026</i>
<i>Identify funding sources and other resources to support framework implementation</i>	<i>Number of funding sources found</i>	<i>3 to 5</i>	<i>By 2026</i>
<i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the framework's education and training programmes</i>	<i>Participation satisfaction activities carried out</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>By 2026</i>
<i>Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange with other regions and sectors</i>	<i>Engagement activities carried out</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>By 2026</i>
<i>Communicate the objectives, progress, and outcomes of the framework</i>	<i>Number of events where the framework is presented</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>By 2026</i>

Partnership arrangements

The B-MORE Regional Skills Partnership Steering Group



The Partnership is a grassroots initiative driven by community and Industry groups and supported by local government. To promote its development, the group has established a robust steering group and hosted several industry events.

Supported by



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