Sustainable Enterprise and the Talent Pipeline:

Partnership as a Competitive Advantage

Operating Environment and Challenges

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Global Uncertainty	Climate Change	AI and Technology	Labour Market
Inflation and Interest rates	Business Costs and Regulation	Housing	Infrastructure
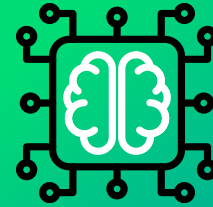
Delivering for Ireland, Leading Globally   Strategy 2025 - 2029
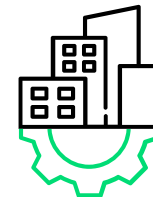
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Our Purpose
To Accelerate Sustainable Irish Business

Accelerate
Enterprise Ireland accelerates Irish businesses to start, compete, scale, and connect nationally and globally.

Sustainable
We will work with Irish business to strengthen their global reach, competitiveness, productivity, towards a net-zero future.

Irish Business
Our ambition over the next five years is to support Irish exporting companies to make an even greater contribution to the Irish economy through International growth and nationwide employment.

It is our long-term ambition that exporting Irish companies become the primary driver of the Irish economy

Enterprise Ireland Strategy

Accelerate Sustainable Irish Business to

Start

Support start-ups with long-term, sustainable growth ambitions

Compete

Strengthen productivity, competitiveness, resilience & sustainability

Scale

Increase the number of world-leading Irish companies

Connect

Enhance enterprise linkages and the innovation ecosystem

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Six key levers

Funding Ambition

Igniting Innovation

Embracing Sustainability

Strengthening Skills & Talent

Maximising Global Opportunity

Driving Performance

Client Talent and Skills Issues

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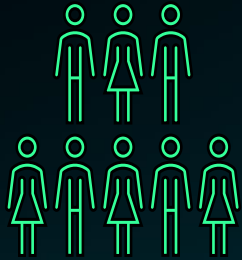
Workforce Planning	Identification of skills needs	Difficulty Navigating	Access/ Influencing	Talent
Strategic Talent Management	**Plan to address critical skills**	**Complex Skills Eco-system**	**Targeted Skills Interventions**	**Attracting & Retaining Talent**

Client Skills Challenges to becoming Future-Fit Organisations

- ❑ Talent Management
- ❑ Sales & Marketing Skills
- ❑ Digital Skills
- ❑ Functional Skills
- ❑ AI/Machine Learning/Cyber Security
- ❑ Regulatory compliance

- ❑ Data Management/Data Analysis
- ❑ Communication/Collaboration
- ❑ Leadership/Management
- ❑ Design Thinking/Complex Problem/Transversal Skills
- ❑ Sustainability/ESG
- ❑ Research and Innovation

Rethinking Talent Development for Workforce Planning

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Areas of Focus

❑ Need for a **Skills-Based focus** not an **Occupational focus to** programme design.

❑ A **data-driven approach** to future-proofing talent.

❑ **Differentiated Learning for SMEs:** bespoke, scalable, and accessible learning models.

❑ **Workforce Planning agility** is a central response to disruption (e.g., trade shocks, AI).**Design Thinking**— a tool for **customising learning at scale**.

Key Message

❑ **A one-size-fits-all approach** does not meet the diverse needs of companies at **different growth/lifecycle stages**

Key Message

❑ Need for interdisciplinary skills - **creative thinking, complex problem solving** etc.

Collaboration for Talent Development

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Areas of Focus

- ❑ **Collaboration Frameworks:** Universities cannot 'solve' the system challenge alone—they must actively partner across FET, HE, agencies

- ❑ **Frameworks for Growth-Stage Engagement:** needed for University/Enterprise/Partner Engagement to support companies during their lifecycle.

- ❑ **From Fragmentation to Integration**: unify fragmented efforts across the system in AI, micro-credentials, and upskilling through ecosystem-wide coordination.

Key Message

- ❑ **Constantly evolving upskilling:** implications for the development, design, and deliver of programmes.

Key Message

- ❑ **Strategic Co-Creation:** moving from "**project-based**" focus to **long term partnership.**

UIIN - Frameworks for Growth-Stage Engagement

Entry-level and tactical collaboration	Medium-level collaboration	Strategic and long-term collaboration	

Continuous improvement

Long-term partnership

Co-creation and co-investment

Strategic alignment and goals setting

Building trust and collaboration
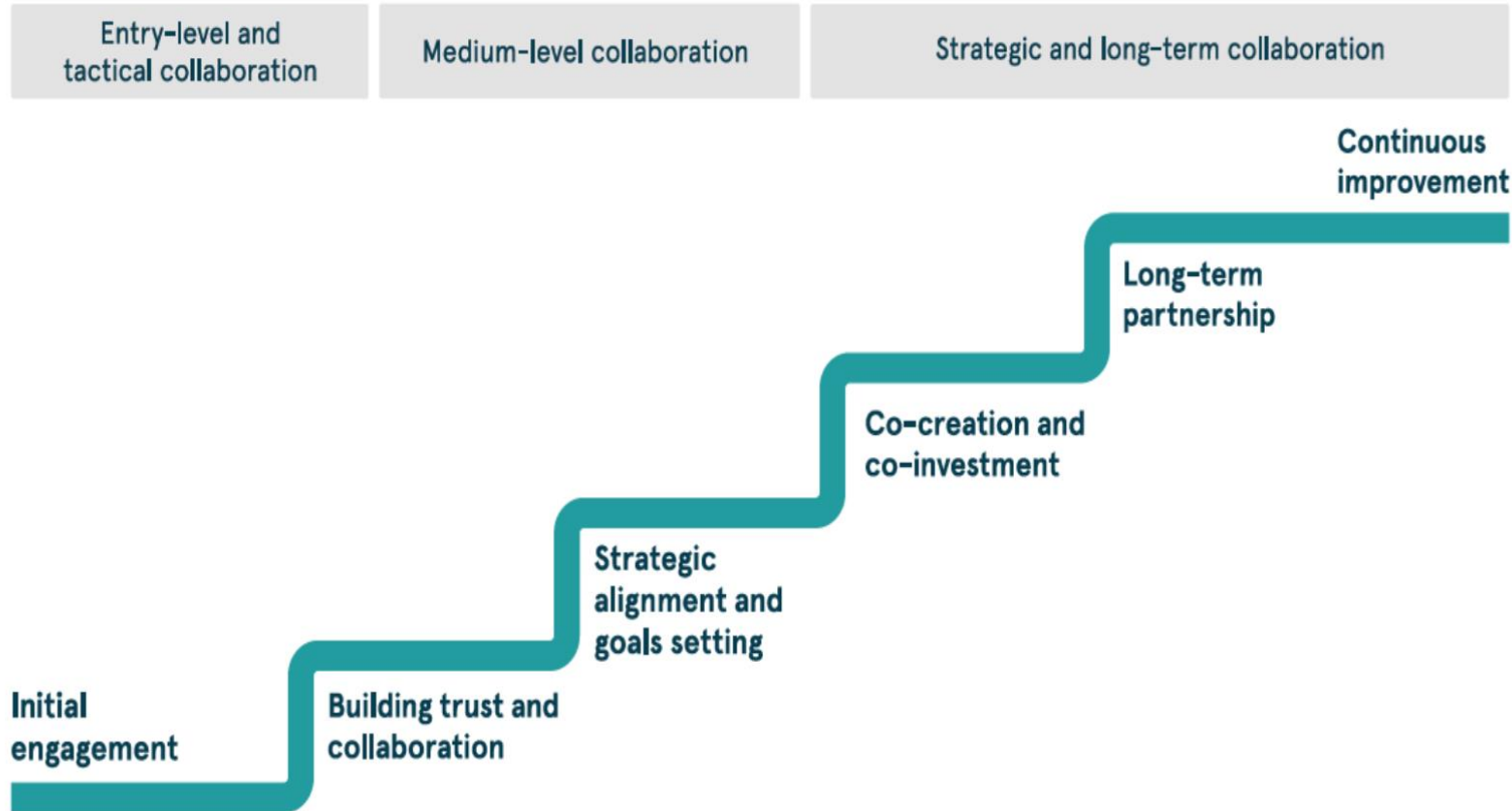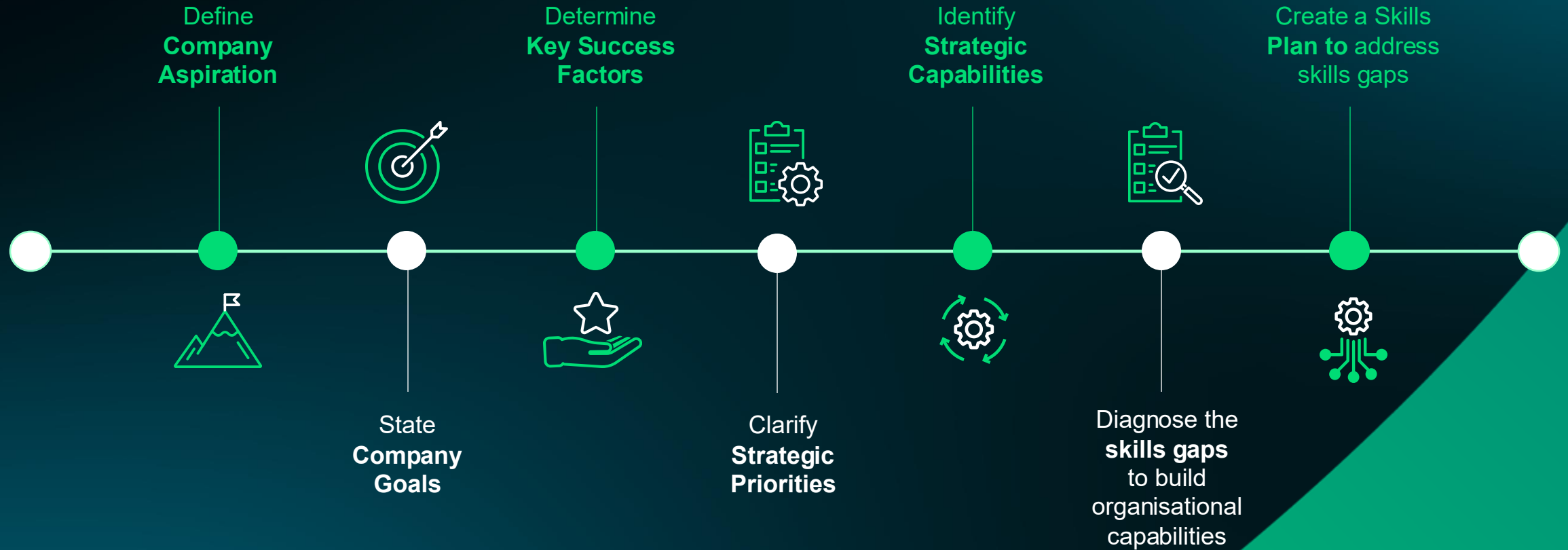
Initial engagement

Figure 1. The Partnership Development Stairway[1]

Key Points –

- Define what strategy means for you.

- Map existing collaborations

- Invest time in understanding your partners

- Be transparent about your own interests

- Scale relationships at the right pace

- Support partnerships properly

- Stay flexible and Responsive

*UIIN - Building strategic and sustainable university–industry partnerships

Spotlight on Skills Partnership

Define **Company Aspiration**

Determine **Key Success Factors**

Identify **Strategic Capabilities**

Create a Skills **Plan to** address skills gaps

State **Company Goals**

Clarify **Strategic Priorities**

Diagnose the **skills gaps** to build organisational capabilities

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IMI IRISH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

EsmarkFinch

"Spotlight helped us to delve into our skills gaps in order to develop our future strategy. Regional Skills are a key enabler of our People Strategy"
Rolando Cedeño

Spotlight on Skills Case Study – Critical Skills Identified:

Response:

Transversal Skills/Functional Skills

- English language classes via Adult Education Services (10 employees)
- Workshops on Abrasive Wheel, First Aid, Cardiac First Response, Fire Extinguishers, Forklift training. Workplace Transport Safety through HAS
- SOLAS & Enterprise Ireland SME Leadership and Management (3 employees - upcoming)

Upskilling in Business Processes

- Lean Six Sigma White Belt through ATU Sligo (2 employees)
- Agile Methodologies through SOLAS eCollege (2 employees)
- Excel Basic & Advance through DDLETB (10 employees)

Technical Skills

- L6 Cert. in Automation and Instrumentation through ATU Sligo (1 employee)
- L5 Automotive Electrics & Diagnostics (12V) in Tallaght (5 employees)
- Crash Test Flooring & Vehicle Fitter Graphics onsite training

Driving Competitive Advantage

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Areas of Focus

- **Ireland's Strategic Edge:** Ireland's **policy coherence, responsive skills ecosystem, and global connectivity** as enablers of agile, scalable innovation.

- **Career Mobility through Networks:** alumni networks, micro-credentials, and lifelong learning in enabling individuals to **navigate nonlinear careers.**

- **SME Empowerment:** SMEs can access shared infrastructure, joint R&D, and embedded research models - **EI's The PhDStart Programme**

Key Message

- **Universities have a key role:** universities playing a **central role in shaping global standards** e.g. in areas such as AI regulation

Key Message

- **Support Collaborative Life-long learning –** support people to build the skill of learning how to learn.

Key Messages -

- **Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships across the skills eco-system** can address Ireland's evolving talent challenges **and build a future-ready workforce—particularly for SMEs.**

- **Essential to Build Engagement Frameworks** to support companies during their lifecycle stages and scaling journeys.

- **Skills provision must be informed by robust talent and skills data,** to ensure enterprises continue to be **agile, resilient, and globally competitive**, aligned with national priorities and global trends
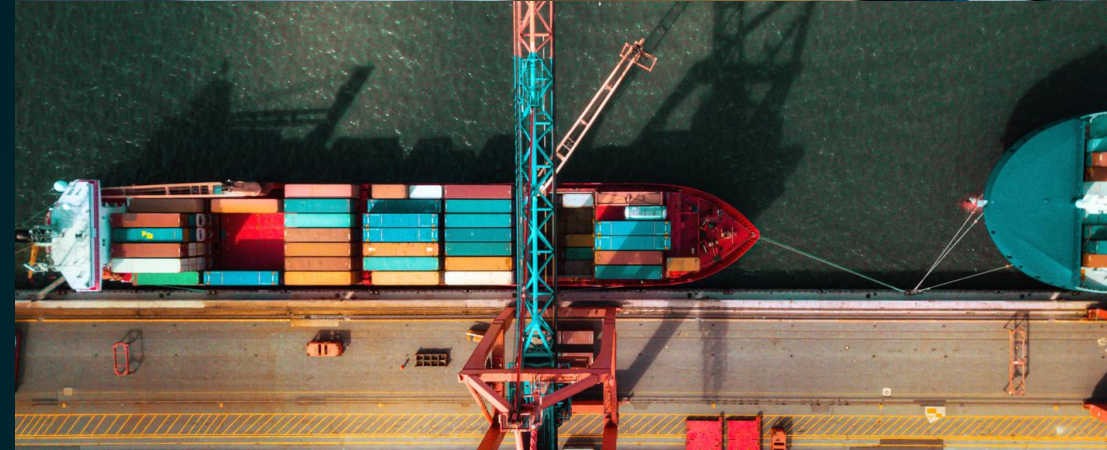
Thank You!

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