

IMAGINE A BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
THAT ENABLES A HIGH QUALITY  
OF LIFE FOR ALL



CO-CREATING  
AN AMBITIOUS  
NATIONAL  
RENOVATION  
STRATEGY FOR  
IRELAND

Mini Workshop

Making sure we have  
the right skills

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*Irish Green Building Council –  
Dublin*

*Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016*

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Department of Communications,  
Climate Action & Environment

# SUMMARY

In early 2016, the [Irish Green Building Council \(IGBC\)](#), in conjunction with the department of communications, climate action and environment organised a series of workshops on Ireland's National Renovation Strategy V.2. These events were attended by over 170 key stakeholders and led to the publication of a "[Declaration in 10 Points for a Better National Renovation Strategy](#)".

Since the beginning of the consultation process, workshops participants have consistently identified the lack of support and investment in skills as one of the main risks to the successful implementation of the strategy. On Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016 the IGBC organised a follow-up event to explore how to better incentivize construction workers and construction professionals to upskill in deep renovation.

## Key suggested actions

- Introducing skills cards for both construction workers and construction professionals
- Introducing minimum skills requirements in all tender documents
- Merging / Better integrating SEAI contractor list, CIRI and the Construction Worker Skills Register
- Developing an apprentice model (government supported training)
- Developing a comprehensive map of all the deep renovation training courses currently available in Ireland
- Developing PASs for external wall insulation, ventilation and indoor air quality

## How to better incentivised construction workers and construction professionals to upskill in deep renovation?

As the construction industry is picking up, it becomes more and more challenging for construction workers and construction professionals to find time to upskill. According to the workshop's participants, several actions could be taken to better incentivise the construction industry to upskill in deep renovation.

First, clients' insistence for high quality work could act as a driver for upskilling. However, for this to happen, general awareness needs to be raised. Public bodies and larger private organisations could all include minimum skills requirements in their tender documents. This would give certainty to construction companies that it is worth investing in deep renovation upskilling. Finally, for the system to function customers must be able to easily identify construction workers and professionals who have upskilled in deep renovation.

This could be done through the introduction of skills cards or badges and via the publication of a comprehensive skills register (the merging of [SEAI contractors list](#), [CIRI](#) and the [Construction Worker Skills Register](#) was suggested).

While no agreement could be reached on the need for subsidised training for construction workers and professionals currently in employment, workshop's participants called for a cultural shift toward constant training (*a CPD culture*) at all levels of the construction chain. According to them, the introduction of skills cards would greatly help in that direction.

Through skills cards, upskilling in a topic as wide as deep renovation could be broken down into simpler tasks (e.g. 1 hour training classes). Furthermore, skills cards could also include information on heritage training, LEAN, health and safety, thus bringing all of these requirements into one system. Finally, the introduction of skills cards for both construction workers and construction professionals could facilitate a more holistic approach to deep renovation training. Training people in full-time education in deep renovation should be easier as there is no fear of change barriers to overcome ("*We have always done it this way*" syndrome). All people studying construction (no matter at what level) should have a general understanding of deep renovation and should be given the option to learn more about it. More specifically, workshop's participants strongly supported the development of an apprenticeship model guaranteeing general knowledge of deep renovation. When it comes to training people already in employment flexibility is key – Online training courses and flexible modules such as [MEnS](#) were mentioned as best practice.

In addition, workshop's participants strongly supported the introduction of an accreditation system that would set a common standard for all building professionals that would be recognised across the board.

Finally, in order to encourage energy efficiency upskilling and to support policies development, participants suggested to develop a database of all deep renovation training courses currently available in Ireland.

### Upskilling required by construction workers and construction professionals - Post-1945 buildings

In the second part of the workshop, participants were asked to look at the type of upskilling required.

They called for a holistic approach to deep retrofit. While financial and health benefits are key selling points for buildings' owners, construction workers and professionals need to gain a better understanding of same. Furthermore, a greater understanding of the basic principles of building physics is required across the industry as quality is key. This should include training of sales people as they are often end-users' first point of contact. In training courses, a greater emphasis should be put on actual building performance (including maintenance) as a greater awareness of operational expenditure is required.

Construction professionals should also learn to better integrate risk evaluation analysis into design and specification. Workshop's participants called for the development of Publicly Available Specifications (PASs) that would cover most building types – going far beyond [S.R. 54](#) and [Technical Guidance Documents A, C and D](#). More specifically, they widely supported the development of PASs for external wall insulation, ventilation and indoor air quality. In fact, this should be in place before proper curricula can be developed.

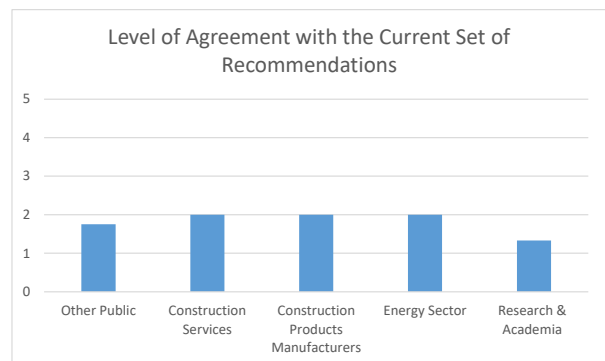
Some participants highlighted the need of upskilling academic staff and said that universities should be able to recruit experts from industry on acceptable contracts.

Finally, participants agreed that the main challenge is the deep renovation of the residential sector, and more specifically of one-off houses. How do you guarantee quality when there is no design professionals? How do you find a financially acceptable manner of providing disinterested professional advice? According to some participants, the easiest way to tackle this issue is through multi-unit retrofits, thus allowing for architects' contracting and reducing risk. Others felt that this issue could be solved through upskilling of BER assessors or through the setup of independent one-stop-shops.

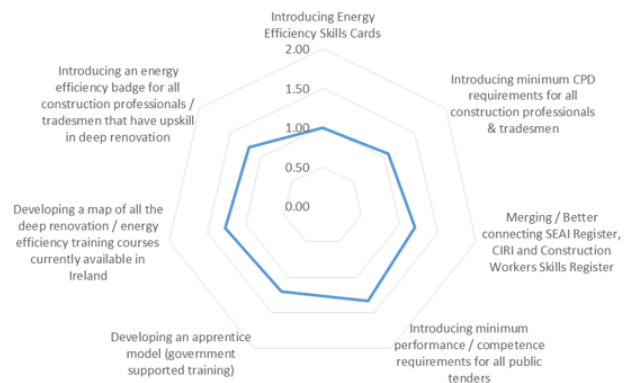
## GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT

At the end of the event participants were asked to complete a short survey to measure their level of support for the [initial set of recommendations](#), and some selected actions.

On a scale from 1 (full endorsement) to 5 (serious disagreement), how would you rate your level of agreement with the current set of recommendations?



On a scale from 1 (full support) to 5 (serious disagreement), how would you rate your level of support for the following measures?



## WORKSHOP'S PARTICIPANTS ANALYSIS

### Mini WS2 Attendees

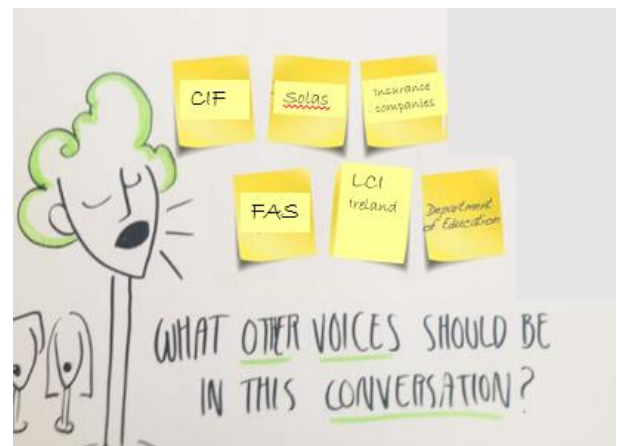


## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WORKSHOP'S PARTICIPANTS



## WHAT OTHER VOICES SHOULD BE IN THIS CONVERSATION?

The following missing key stakeholders were identified by workshop participants as key to the development of the strategy.



## COLLABORATING ON WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS:

A series of over 80 events in the 13 project countries will bring stakeholders together during the project. As part of this process, six high level Energy Efficiency Building Renovation Workshops will be organised across Ireland by the Irish Green Building Council. The workshops are supported by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and are a must for anyone who wants to ensure their voice and views are heard in Ireland's National Renovation Strategy Process.

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COUNCIL



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