




The National Construction Training Centre, Mount Lucas

 Mount Lucas, County Offaly

The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas offers training services, assessment, certification and registration in construction related areas to the employed and unemployed and is recognised as a retrofitting and NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Buildings) Centre of Excellence within the Midlands. The centre is located near Daingean in County Offaly and is managed by Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB).

The centre offers:

- The National Apprenticeship in Scaffolding
- The National Skilled Operator Traineeship
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Tickets and the transfer of those to the UK equivalent (CPCS)/ on HSE (the UK SafePass).



Interview Questions and Responses

How did your organisation come about? What are your key areas of focus?

Mount Lucas is a state funded entity, which was taken over by the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board in 2015. As a result, everything the centre does is leased or funded by capital funding from Government of Ireland. The centre was upskill or reskill in the construction sector to support the Just Transition.

Mount Lucas has both a local focus for Laois and Offaly and a national focus by operating programmes which are unique to Mount Lucas and do not exist elsewhere in Ireland. The Skilled Operator Traineeship and Scaffolding Apprenticeship both have a national focus. The NZEB and retrofit courses are delivered online and in the centre, varying from one day training to 3-4 week courses.

What key objectives did your organisation set out to address in the project?

The centre set out to address the skills deficit and design its programmes in conjunction with industry, using a collaborative approach to identify the skills gap. The remit of the centre is to provide training courses for unemployed people to get them back into the workforce and upskill employed people to future-proof them and give them new currency or accreditation.

How has that vision stood the test of time? Have you had to revise your plans?

All the activities offered at Mount Lucas are designed to upskill people and reintroduce them to education. Providing people with skills and capacity has remained their focus and plans have not been revised.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

How did you agree on key projects?

Construction Industry Federation (CIF) approached the National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas to develop the National Apprenticeship in Scaffolding, and Mount Lucas also consulted with representatives of industry such as NASAC in the development of the course. Equally, if the centre have identified a skills deficit, they approach key industry leaders to gain their input, which occurred for the NZEB and other retrofit courses.

How do you develop new projects?

The process of developing new courses involves drafting proposals and an occupation skills profile. Mount Lucas also seeks industry input to make sure courses are fit for purpose. Mount Lucas has a quality assurance manager and team who are involved in the development of courses. The course then goes for approval to a quality assurance team and quality council, who review the course to make sure it complies before it is put forward for validation.

Taking the example of the NZEB courses, the industry approached Mount Lucas with a need. Mount Lucas then put together a draft programme and ran 10 pilots, seeking feedback from those who were on the courses to make adjustments. The course then moved from a pilot stage to a validation stage.

If a community were to deliver a training programme, how would they go about developing this?

The Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board has a community function involved in local groups and training. They do a skills review of what is required in the area, by bringing the community together and asking what skills the community has and what skills they require.

If there is a training need within a community, the community group would put together a business case outlining the area of requiring upskilling. The community then approaches the ETB directly. The ETB would put together a programme and Mount Lucas would contract the expertise if needed and deliver the training.

How did you identify a funding need? How would communities go about identifying a funding need?

Mount Lucas is a state funded entity, meaning when they require funding, the centre designs a fully-costed programme proposal based on rationale, as part of their budget submission.

Within the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LEOTB) there is a funding stream for communities, and an individual within the LEOTB manages these funding applications. There is an application form which needs to be supported by a business case.

Did you have a need for specialist expertise?

Gaining the specialist skillset required and building up a bank of instructors has been one of the biggest areas of challenge. If firms don't have expertise on site, they contract expertise in relation to the development of courses and training. In some areas of construction finding instructors is difficult, as there is more money to be made on site.

What were the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Companies will always have unique individual needs which may not be the same as the needs of other companies. Before the centre develops programmes, it ensures that industry wide needs are addressed to provide the most useful training.

What decisions or elements of organisation have been the most important for the delivery of your programmes?

Having the correct instructors is important to ensure appropriate delivery of educational programmes. From a governance perspective, having the right quality controls in place is key to making sure everything they do is quality and learner based. This ensures that they have done everything in their power to provide learners with the most opportunities.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for you as you developed new projects?

The centre connected with industry and policy makers, such as the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with, the Health and Safety Authority and gained awareness of key policy areas. This process has helped to design courses which follow national policy and strategy.

What advice would you give you community organisations looking to deliver a project relating to the delivery of training?

Design a business case to get a clear idea of outcomes, such as getting local people to engage with education, providing people with life skills, or upskill in a new area of growth. This provided a community with an opportunity to plan what it wants or needs to achieve.

Identify opportunities and organisations are in the sector, alongside training and funding opportunities. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is good to approach and funding streams are often available with BnM (Bord na Mona) under the Just Transition Fund.

Key contact

John Kelly, Centre Manager
jkelly@mountlucas.ie

Links

Website: <https://mountlucas.ie/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MountLucasNationalConstructionTraining>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mountlucastc>