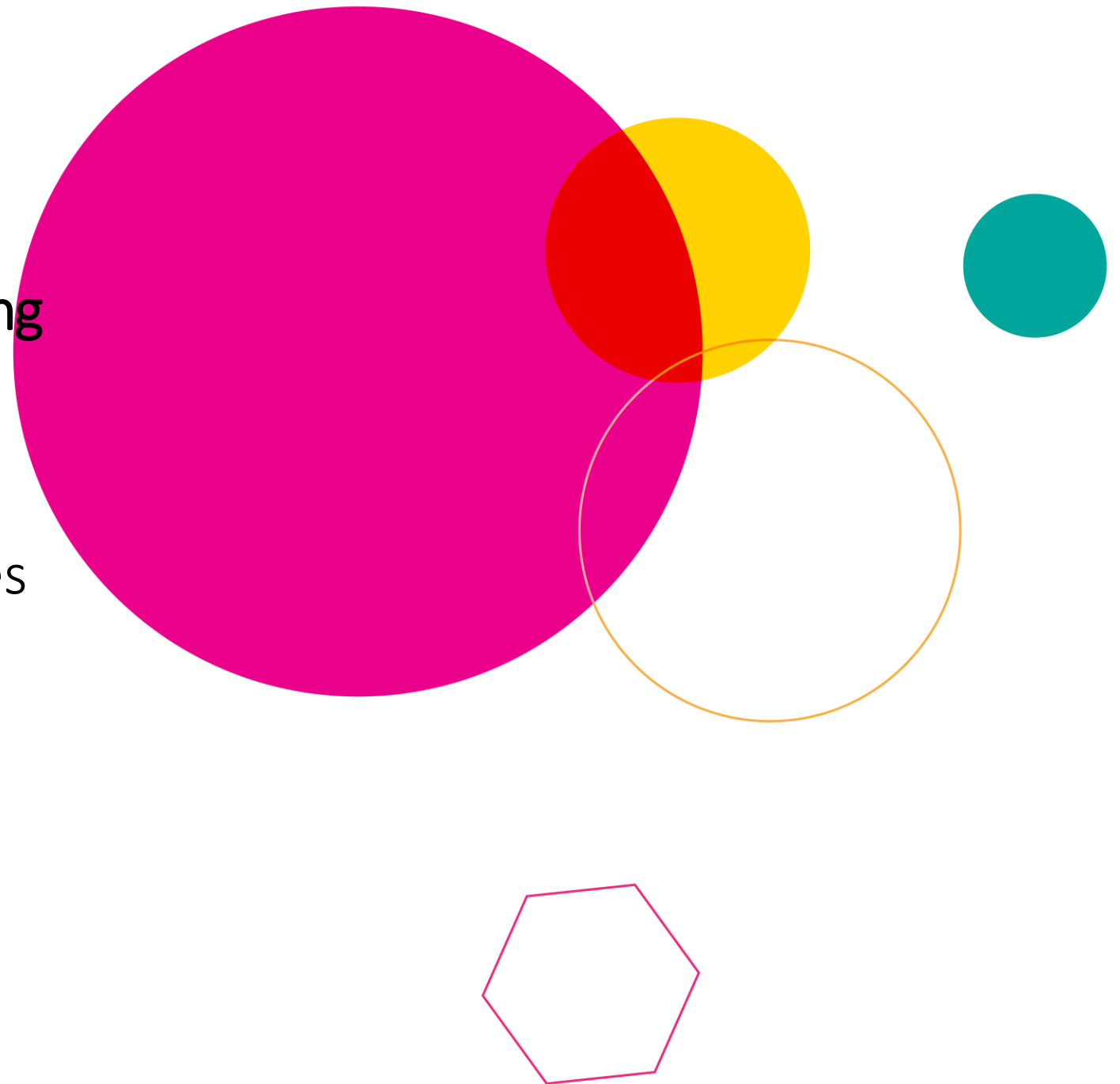


FET Micro-Qualifications

Innovation in Workforce Upskilling
in Ireland

Mary Lyons

Director of Enterprise Employees
and Skills



SOLAS

The Further Education & Training Authority in Ireland



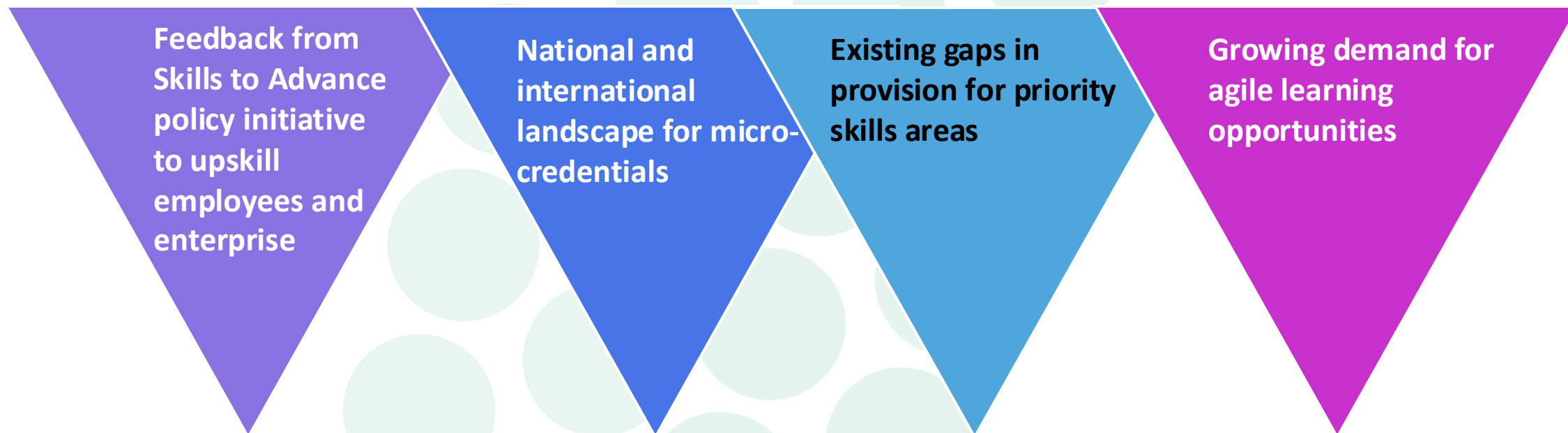
- **SOLAS's** mission is to plan, fund and co-ordinate further education and training in Ireland.
- Over 439,000 people in 2024 – 1 in 10 of the population avail of FET.
- Our ambition is to grow this further to half-a-million people by 2026
- The FET sector has experienced unprecedented growth and demand for FET

- FET is delivered by 16 **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)** nationally

- **2019** SOLAS initiated Skills to Advance, a workforce development initiative.
- **2024** FET Micro-Qualifications, a new FET offer to target critical upskilling needs.
- Strategically positioning FET as a key **business resource** delivering flexible, accredited and future proofed upskilling for SMEs
- **Driving change and reform across the FET system** – providing easier access; simplified pathways; a consistent learner experience; and a stronger identity.



Drivers of FET *Micro-Qualifications* Model



- Strategic Partnership of SOLAS and Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with Stakeholders

Policy Innovation: FET Micro-Qualifications - 3 options reviewed

FET Micro-Qualifications strategic ambition

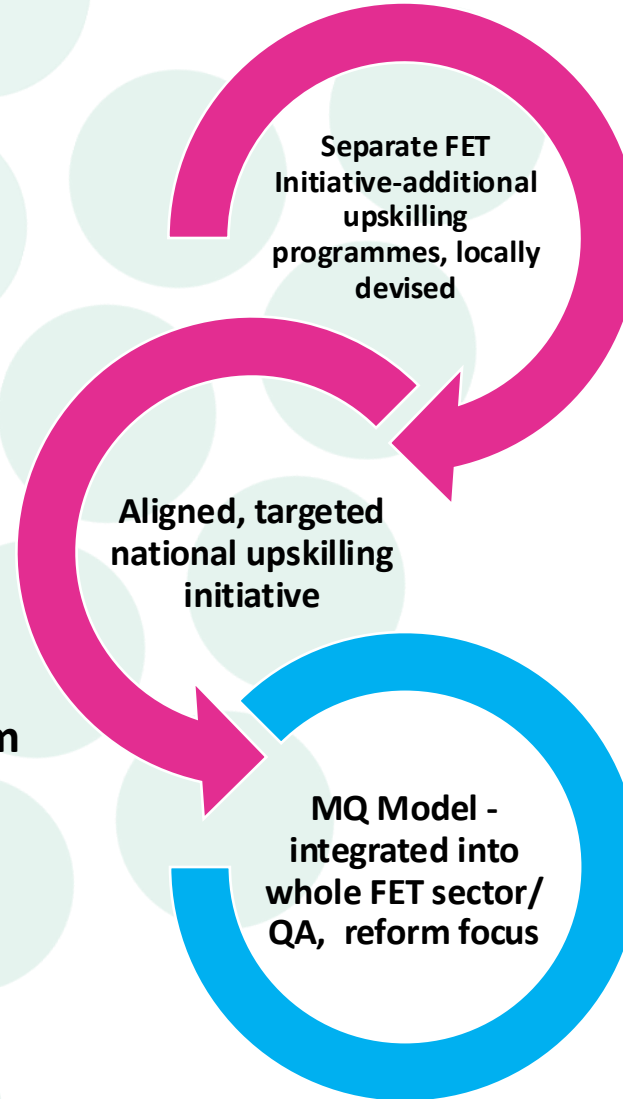
1. European context
2. Irish context



Strategic reform of Further Education & Training System



FET Micro-Qualifications as a key lever.



Quality and Qualifications Framework

MicroQuals Level 4-6



CLASSES OF AWARD

- Major Awards: named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level.
- Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award.
- Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award.
- Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement.
- Professional Awards: are for occupation-orientated qualifications including apprenticeships.

*Please refer to NCCA website, ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/

IRISH REGISTER OF QUALIFICATIONS

- For more information on:
- Qualifications
 - Providers
 - Courses
- visit www.irq.ie

Strategic approach to FET MQ Model

Guiding Principles

Value

Collaboration

- FET MQs within National Framework of Qualifications via strategic partnership with Quality & Qualifications Authority, Ireland
- Co-creation by SOLAS, ETBs, enterprise agencies, companies
- Shared programmes across ETBs, available nationally

Agility

Flexibility

- Bite sized training and qualifications, 50 hours
- Incremental learning opportunities - stackability
- Flexible delivery in person or blended

Relevance

Enterprise Engagement – 2 Levels

Stakeholders

- Priority Skills

Companies

- Identification of Needs
- Verification of content



They are short, stackable
accredited programmes
delivered locally by 16 ETBs



A FET MQ is typically 25 hours
training delivery and 25 hours
self-directed learning

**Tutor
Supported
Learning**



**Self
Directed
Learning**



**FET
MQ**



**Skills to
Advance**

boost skills - boost business

FET Micro-Qualifications

- Deliver value for the employer and employee
- 32 FET MQs co-created with companies, enterprise agencies, ETBs and QQI
- 40+ FET MQs in the pipeline
- Offer incremental, flexible, targeted upskilling at little or no cost

Implementing FET MQs - Successes and Challenges

Successes

- Relevant, up-to-date, new FET micro training offer
- Fit for purpose model of micro-awards in FET
- Collaboration with enterprise and sectoral partners/agencies
- Flexibility in use of MicroQuals by ETBs across programmes and learner profiles

Challenges

- Creating a shared vision for MicroQuals
- Differentiation from Micro Credentials
- Resourcing – human and financial
- Innovation in the National Framework of Qualifications
- Embedding in the wider FET system
- Promotion- creating awareness of the new offer

Policy insights



Identification of key stakeholders



Creating shared ambition



Practical mechanisms to share responsibilities



Management of sustained relationships

Impact -Enhanced offer from FET sector

Enhanced skills offer to enterprise, employees and FET

1

Suite of MQs in
priority skills area
delivered by ETBs

2

Robust
collaborative
model for industry
engagement by
FET

3

A programme
development
model capable of
replication across
the wider system

Thank you

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SOLAS
learning works

