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# Galway Mayo Institute of Technology

## Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance

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### Self-evaluation report – institution overview

One of GMIT's main priorities and corresponding high-level strategic institution objectives, is restoring the Institution to financial balance and protecting the long-term performance of the institution. Linked to this, is the hope they will secure support from central Government for their campus development which they feel this is critically important for them to move forward with their ambition to be part of a technological university.

GMIT state that the strategies to restore the organisation to balance extend far beyond securing additional financial support from Central Government. Plans have been put in place and are being implemented to grow student applications and acceptances to the Institute. On the R&D front deficits are being reduced and grant income is increasing. The cost base is being reduced and also modified to meet growth in student demand in new discipline areas. A plan is also in place and being implemented to grow international student number registrations.

GMIT has some very interesting collaborations, especially in teaching and learning and a list of examples is included. The report notes that academic planning across the cluster has progressed with engagement from all parties in the process. Regrettably, while there are some indications of this, especially in teaching and learning and academic planning, the arguments around engagement are not quite as convincing as the other objectives presented in the Self-Evaluation Report. GMIT states that it is a member of the Regional Skills Fora steering group but the report lacks detail as to how this will impact on their strategic plan. GMIT subsequently confirmed that this is informing curriculum development and Labour Market Activation submissions under Springboard and its apprenticeship submissions.

Congratulations are due to the SMART consortium who won "Excellence in Marine Education and Training" at the 2016 Marine Industry Awards.

In relation to participation, equal access, and lifelong learning, GMIT on the surface delivers on their strategic goals. Targets are in line with predictions made by the HEI with some new programmes coming on stream. New supports are being rolled out across GMIT, but this continues to be challenging for the multi-campus institution.

Teaching, learning and the quality of the student experience impact on widening student access and increasing progression rates, while there is a list of outcomes and activities for both pillars the link between the two is not clearly demonstrated. GMIT agree that going forward projects might be reviewed and the impacts recorded. GMIT confirmed that the institute's Retention Officer will be asked to consider this.

Conclusion:

As recorded last year, and again in this year's SER, GMIT referred to the EUA benchmarking exercise. It refers to the conclusion made by the EUA in the assessment "GMIT is a very self-aware institution" the institution goes on to say that they can move forward with "well defined strategies", but it is disappointing to note that these strategies were not as

prominent as they might have been in this document. GMIT responded that while the strategies are not as prominent as they might have been, they have been correlated with the institute's compact and self-evaluation reports and progress is being made against 15 of the 16 Recommendations of the EUA SER.

There are some very good examples of good practice in the institution. They are positive in their approach to the reporting and the impression is that the institution is on the verge of turning itself around.

Self-evaluation report - domain level reviews

## 1: Regional clusters

### **Objective 1. Establishment of a regional Cluster in the HEIs in the West/North Region with appropriate Governance Arrangements**

GMIT reported that four of its five objectives under this domain had been achieved.

While the HEI reports that the collaboration is comparatively new, it also reports that the cluster has clear and effective governance structures in place. With the support of two programme managers, the cluster works within an agreed Regional Academic Planning Process.

Engagement has extended across the region with relevant stakeholders such as the Regional Skill Fora, ETBs, the Western Development Commission and Fáilte Ireland.

Some meetings are listed, and GMIT reports on the cooperation that exists between the cluster HEIs in teaching and learning. They list six projects for which the cluster received funding from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching.

Despite this, there is some reservation as to just how engaged the cluster is. A comment made at the end of this particular objective suggests that the Cluster has no wish to formally extend its engagement at this point, which is surprising, considering that the long-term ambition of GMIT, LYIT and Sligo is to apply for Technological University Status. At some stage, the three HEIs must formalise their collaboration, and the Cluster might provide a space to test how best they might work together.

GMIT's has responded that three of the five objectives presented are common with the member institutions of the West/North West Cluster. A management and governance model is established for this cluster and agreement was reached on a common response to the three common objectives. Currently the responses provided by the HEA to the four members of the Cluster are being analysed by the Cluster programme manager and a report will be tabled at the meeting on Sept 12th.

While there is a list of collaboration projects, reporting focuses on process rather than outcomes or the impact. How will these projects impact on the cluster, the HEIs or the end beneficiary's teachers and staff? Has this been measured?

### **Objective 2. Coordinated academic planning**

GMIT states that the Cluster partners provide a diverse range of programmes across the region which respond to regional needs.

Mapping exercises and analysis of programmes across all disciplines at all education levels led to joint academic processes which are in place since 2015.

Another mapping exercise on civic engagement was the driving force behind the development of the Wild Atlantic Way Research group.

The pilot doctoral level staff development programme is underway with 10 IOT staff registered with NUIG for PhDs.

The reporting represents a missed opportunity to shine a light on work taking place within the group. Some examples of the type of research the group has or will take on would be

welcome. GMIT has responded that this feedback will be taken on board at the next reporting opportunity.

**Objective 3. To develop regional learning pathways with partner institutes and FE institutions to provide clearly articulated progression opportunities among HEIs in the region.**

In this report, GMIT states that the Cluster has developed regional learning pathways. A scheme for progression and common access and transfer policies are in place. All HEIs have a common approach to RPL.

New pilot programmes are being offered within the Cluster to support widening access and progression for FE to HE.

A concrete outcome of this is to offer three jointly awarded/delivered programmes at the masters level. Additionally, the Cluster is at an advanced stage in developing a framework to support collaboration in research degrees. It would be interesting to see how this links to the work of the Wild Atlantic Way Research Group.

**Objective 4. Building bridges across Regional Clusters**

Reporting on this objective lacks clarity. While the heading is “Review of pilot projects on retention”, it goes on to state that no formal review of the pilot project with LIT was conducted and that while the GMIT LIT MOU was reviewed, it was not renewed by the HEIs.

GMIT has responded that it should be clear from the response that this alliance is not progressing. The original objective was to build an alliance with LIT in the hope that LIT would become a member of the CUA. However, LIT has confirmed that it is not pursuing TU designation for the duration of its next strategic plan.

Additionally, the CUA partners of GMIT, IT Sligo and LYIT at the behest of the Department of Education and Skills engaged with outliers to the TU process including LIT, AIT and DKIT. On foot of a report commissioned by the CUA plus LIT, AIT and DKIT and prepared by Viewforth Consulting, LIT chose not to engage further with the CUA partners.

**Objective 5. Develop sustainable thematic clusters that enhance selected strengths of the Institute in serving the regional and national needs.**

SMART won a prestigious award at the Marine Industry Awards 2016, but the key issue continues to be funding.

GMIT also reports that inter-institutional co-operation in the commercialisation of intellectual property was strengthened in 2016 through the renewal of Knowledge Transfer Ireland’s funding for the Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative.

The New Frontiers Entrepreneurship Programme continues to be sustained through external investment which is a positive outcome, but the report neglects to provide any the link to their partners in the Cluster.

In addition to the above GMIT iHub was awarded funding of €1.8 million by Enterprise Ireland to fund the programme until 2012.

National Policy Context:

The West North West Higher Education Cluster Engagement has extended across the region to include engagement with relevant stakeholders such as the Regional Skills Fora, the Further Education sector, the Education and Training Boards, Western Development Commission and Fáilte Ireland.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

Nationally, regional clusters have progressed better in some parts than others. It is true that each member institution has its own concerns and strategic imperatives, and given limited resources should concentrate on these. However, successful regional engagement would drive the region and provide an opportunity to leverage shared resources where appropriate.

GMIT's focus has been on institutional (financial) stability and the proposed CUA Technological University, but with limited resources and an important local, regional and national presence, GMIT needs to balance its many relationships carefully.

## 1. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

### **Objective 1. To arrest student number decline experienced between 2011/ 2012/ 2013/ 2014 and grow market share in a growing demographic supporting participation levels**

#### **Participation:**

Although the number of undergraduates taking a level 7-degree course has declined by 292 (9.4%) over 2014-2015 (HEA figures) GMIT share of the cluster is 42%. In contrast to this, students studying on level 8 courses have increased by 345 or 14.7% over the same time. GMIT cites a CAO report indicating a 7% increase for level 7 programmes and 20% for level 8. GMIT state that its portfolio of programmes is in direct response to its regional remit and engagement with employers.

Based on CAO preferences for 2016, five programmes had no intake in September 2016 and a further four are being monitored for a decision on viability in 2017.

The number of part-time learners has increased, however. Targets for “Socio-economic designated groups” and “Mature Students” remain steady and are in both cases are over 1% of the national average for these categories. GMIT explains the slight decline in the number of fulltime undergraduates has resulted from HEA’s adjustment to recording new entrants.

GMIT, as with most IOTs is very focused on the applied nature of their programmes but do offer un-denominated entry to science programmes in parallel with denominated entry routes. GMIT is committed to maintaining level 6/7 course provision. Level 7 will continue to be an entry point for level 8 but with an embedded exit route.

### **Objective 2. Widening participation**

GMIT continues to meet or exceed national targets. Alternative entry routes are in place linked to programmes at PLC colleges. Entry points are reduced for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. With the exception of Nursing, Education and Medical Science, no maximum quota is applied.

10% of all places are reserved for mature students, and a pre-entry preparation course is offered to adults with a prior history of educational disadvantage.

An Access Scholarship Scheme is in place which provides additional support to students from socio disadvantage backgrounds and members of the Traveller community.

### **Objective 3. Increasing Part-time Flexible Enrolments and Apprenticeship:**

Five FE apprenticeship blocks are in place with plans to increase this to 6 by 2018-2019. GMIT is a coordination provider for the Irish Medtech HE apprenticeships of Manufacturing Technician (HC) and Manufacturing Engineering (BEng). The first intake is scheduled for September 2017 with an expected intake of 40.

A strategy for Lifelong learning is being developed with a move from non-accredited programmes to accredited awards. GMIT reports that it is moving to appoint a Director of Professional Development and Training in 2017/2018 to develop an office to support part-time, blended and online delivery. Increased use will be made of shared delivery with cluster partners and using online and blended formats. GMIT reports that the drop in the number of part-time students is attributed to impact factors including the reduction in

Springboard Courses and part time offering in the Mayo campus reaching saturation point. To counterbalance, new programmes are coming on stream including a CPD programme targeted to enterprise and industry.

**Objective 4. Provide a range of alternative entry routes from FE providers:**

Five alliances were established. There is no further comment from GMIT on this objective. As the benchmark target was reached will GMIT raise the target? What impact has this had on the region, on the FE provider and GMIT as an institution?

GMIT states that this will be a matter for consideration by the institute's executive in preparing its next Compact. Ideally the Institute intends to considerably reduce the number of objectives it is reporting against and report against more high-level objectives.

National Policy Context:

GMIT references the national plan in the cluster context, noting that, 'the Cluster partners are committed to deepening collaboration on access and have made significant process in developing regional solutions to the objectives identified in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019'.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

GMIT's commitment to equity of access and its region is both evident and commendable.

## 2. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience:

### Objective 1. To improve First Year progression rates

GMIT reported that they are happy with their progression rate which increased by 6% over the baseline of 69%, with a commitment across the institution to build on this progress. A list of activities is attached to the compact. They include online resources titles, Academic Success developed with 12 other higher education institutes around the world, the employment of a Retention and Engagement Officer, and the establishment of the Academic Writing Centre and the maths Learning Centre (2016).

Twenty-one activities are listed, and there is a sense that the HEI is endeavouring to tackle retention in a variety of ways but it is not clear why these activities were chosen or how they fit in the overall strategy for improving first year progression rates.

GMIT's response: There are clear reasons why the 21 activities were chosen as they all have a focus on addressing retention. Each of the measures is kept under review in various different ways for effectiveness. A study of the effectiveness of each measure at GMIT is a useful recommendation and will be considered by the Institute. For example, the effect of the Maths Learning Centre is reported on annual. Attached below is a summary of the report on the Maths Learning Centre to the Executive Board of the Institute in August 2017:

Programme	School	No. Sessions	Attendance Statistic	Level	No. Maths Passes Total
BB Business	Bus	6	Total Students	102	74
BB Business with Entrepreneurship	Bus	1	Total Matures	21	17
BB Marketing and Sales	Bus	2	Total Non-Matures	81	57
BEng Civil Engineering	Eng	230	No. of Students - Stage 1	68	44
BEng Computer & Electronic Engineering	Eng	30	No. of Students - Stage 2	28	22
BEng Electrical Services & Automation Eng.	Eng	8	No. of Students - Stage 3	11	7
BEng Energy Engineering	Eng	8	No. of Students - Stage 4	4	2
BEng Mechanical Engineering	Eng	36	No. of Students - Level 6	2	0
BSc Architectural Technology	Eng	6	No. of Students - Level 7	53	35
BSc Construction Management	Eng	16	No. of Students - Level 8	57	39
BSc QS & Construction Economics	Eng	20	No. of Students - Semester 1	73	-
BSc Applied Bio. & Biopharma Science	Sci	5	No. of Students - Semester 2	52	-
BSc Applied Freshwater & Marine Biology	Sci	5	Total visits	389	-
BSc Forensic Science & Analysis	Sci	1	Multiple visits	324	-



BSc Medical Science	Sci	1	Total Visits - Semester 1	167	-
BSc Sport & Exercise	Sci	12	Total Visits - Semester 2	222	-
Cert. in Science in Quality Mgmt.	Sci	1	1 visit	65	40
BSc Comp. & Digital Media	Sci	1	2 visits	23	20
<b>Total Sessions</b>		389	3 visits	11	7
			4 visits	4	2
			5 visits	8	6
			6 visits	4	2
			7 visits	2	2
			9 visits	2	0
			17 visits	1	0
			19 visits	2	1
			21 visits	1	0
			23 visits	1	1
			32 visits	1	1
			<b>Maths. Performance</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
			No. Maths. Fails	7	33
			No. Maths. Passes Total	45	71
			No. Maths. Passes - Mature	21	17
			No. Maths. Defers	2	2

### Objective 2. Performance in Independent Benchmarks Measuring Student Perception

Currently the institute is developing a reporting and analysis mechanism so that individual schools and departments can benchmark their performance.

### Objective 3. Increase Post-Entry Support for Students Attending GMIT

GMIT report that as a multi-campus institution, it is challenged to provide uniform access, support and standards regarding student services. They provide, among others, supports such as the Get Ready Education MOOC, Academic Success online courses and the student led pass programme.

### Objective 4. Ensure Staff are Effectively Supported in their Professional Development

The centre for Educational Development (CED) steering group meets 5-6 times a year. The role of the (CED) members is to support advise and develop staff development initiatives

and strategy. A list of outputs was included. GMIT is supporting 26 staff pursuing a PhD programme with six further staff pursuing masters programmes.

As the nature of the IOTs is geared more towards applied learning it would be interesting to know how many staff have industry or enterprise experience. GMIT states that the vast majority of Institute staff have industry experience. Applicants without such experience more often than not do not make recruitment shortlists.

**Objective 5.** The HEI reports that it has multiple strategies and support mechanisms underpinning learning and teaching and have provided a list of outcomes and outputs including the development of an online open access VLE tool to develop online courses for HE staff and a rollout of CPD teaching and learning development module in GMIT.

#### National Policy Context:

The self-evaluation could have contextualised performance or challenges in the context of national strategy (*Action Plan(s) for Jobs*; the *National Skills Strategy 2025*; and, the *National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship*).

GMIT notes the need for un-denominated entry routes as part of the transitions debate and commits that un-denominated entries will be in place in the Art, Business, Engineering and Science Schools by September 2017.

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) plays an important part in GMITs benchmarking and self-evaluation.

#### Critical evaluation and feedback:

GMIT has made significant progress in raising its progression rate from a baseline of 69% to 75%. The commitment across the institution to build on this progress is important though as while the progress is impressive, an attrition rate of 25% should remain a major concern. The Institute has set itself the target of improving its progression performance by 1% annually. The Progression Rate at the Institute now stands at 76%.

It would be good to know more on what retention measures are considered to be working well and what future plans there are to build on progress to date.

### 3. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

GMIT reported that it met all its objectives under this pillar. One significant achievement is the reduction of the research deficit by 37% over that forecast.

Postgraduate research registrations are up from 32 to 58 in 2016/17. Nine of the 26 new postgraduates are scholars awarded CUA-subsidised Research and Innovation Strategic Endowments (RISE). The institution states that there is evidence that RISE is achieving its objective of increased research engagement and give a list of results.

Programme strength has been greatly improved by the extension of delegated authority for level 9 Research to all areas of Science (including Computer Science) relevant to GMIT.

#### National Policy Context:

The analysis would have benefitted from demonstrating linkages in research activity to the delivery of targets as set out in *Innovation 2020* and *Enterprise 2025*.

GMIT has responded that its investment in research capacity mirrors the focused approach adopted nationally in public funding of research and innovation activity, and driven by the Research Prioritisation Steering Group. GMIT has consequently concentrated the majority of its Research and Innovation supports and capacities in the areas most likely to yield greatest economic and societal impact in our region: Medical and Engineering Technologies; and, Marine Resources.

Consistent with national Research Prioritisation practice, these areas were identified on the basis of:

- Established strengths within GMIT's research capacity, and within neighbouring public research performing organisations;
- Existing strengths of our regional enterprise base;
- Opportunities for scaling and access to the global markets; and,
- High likelihood to deliver economic and societal impact through employment.

Hence, GMIT's R&I activity is acutely focussed on social and economic development – a key target reiterated in the national Innovation 2020 strategy. Specifically GMIT's thematic focus strongly aligns to Innovation 2020 Actions:

4.10 – “Support collaboration between the health system and enterprise leading to development and commercialisation of new healthcare technologies and to facilitate the health system to find efficiencies and improvements”;

4.12 – “At producer level, prioritise research and innovation investment in processes and technologies which improve productivity and sustainability of production”;

4.17 – “Support progress towards the Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth targets through coordinated marine research and development strategies”.

The Enterprise 2025 strategy reiterates that GMIT's thematic research focus align strongly to National Policy objectives. Under the aim to Realise Un-tapped Potential Enterprise 2025 (Action 5) calls for activities that:

- "Develop the full potential of the Marine economy through the implementation of the Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth strategy"; and,
- "Develop and implement strategies for new areas including eHealth, Healthcare services, Creative Industries and Design".

Our substantial growth in postgraduate research enrolment, post-doctoral capacity and Principal Investigator led research demonstrates a rapid response to Innovation 2020 Action 3.5 – "Increase enrolment of postgraduate researchers to address demand in the economy".

The increased proportion of GMIT's R&I activity funded by Enterprise Ireland and the improved synergy between GMIT's Innovation Hubs and Research Centres demonstrates substantial progress towards Enterprise 2025 Action 14 – "An integrated and collaborative approach to supporting enterprises". GMIT is quickly achieving the Innovation 2020 goal of "Greater utilisation by enterprises of the research assets of our Higher Education Institutes, ... Research Centres and Technology Centres".

#### Critical evaluation and feedback:

GMIT claims that 2016 has seen a rapid and substantial improvement in GMIT's performance under all research KPI's. GMIT notes that its 2016 research deficit of €335k represents a substantial improvement (37%) on the forecast 2016 deficit of €531k and is forecasting a 2017 deficit of €278k. This is a good performance, but a deficit remains.

GMIT has responded that it is an excellent performance given the starting point and forecast, and the substantial inertia that is systemic within research funding cycles. The critical evaluation notes the successive deficit reduction forecast for 2017. The conclusion that a deficit remains is made without reference to the explanatory comments made regarding:

- Exclusion of post-graduate postgraduate fee income: To reiterate, at current enrolment levels, postgraduate fee income results in a nett surplus to GMIT of ~€220k (currently credited to Schools rather than to the Research function).
- Inclusion of HEA/CUA co-invested postgraduate research scholarships: These are maintained to enable Technological University progression at a cost of €151k to the 2017 research budget.

GMIT didn't detail the source of these funds sufficiently but did note that nine of twenty-six new postgraduates are scholars awarded CUA supported Research and Innovation Strategic Endowments (RISE). GMIT has also made progress in appointing a VP Research and Innovation and a Manager for a New Technology Gateway Funded by Enterprise Ireland.

GMIT reports separately, and in detail, on funding sources in its annual reporting to Knowledge Transfer Ireland. GMIT's 2016 research performance involved the

establishment of 48 new research project sub-accounts. In summary, 2016 sources of research funding included:

- Enterprise Ireland (20 projects, 26% of total funding);
- Department of Agriculture Food & the Marine (2 projects, 25% of funding);
- Environmental Protection Agency (1 project, 20% of funding);
- Marine Institute (6 projects, 13% of funding);
- GMIT (9 RISE & 1 residual scholarship projects, 8% of funding);
- European Commission (1 projects, 3% of funding);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (1 project, 1.4% of funding);
- Woodside Energy Ltd, Australia (2 projects, 1.1% of funding);
- Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht (1 project, 1.0% of funding);
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (1 project, 0.8% of funding);
- The National Institutes of Health, USA (1 project, 0.7% of funding);
- Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (1 project, 0.2% of funding);
- Utrecht University, Netherlands (1 project, 0.2% of funding).

## 4. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange:

All the institution's targets were reported as being achieved and in one case, the target was exceeded. The institution reported that 94% of its graduates were in employment or further education 9 months after graduation (66% in the Connacht Region)

GMIT is happy to report that the number of engagements with enterprise has increased on previous years and the incubators remain at 100% occupancy. Lack of incubation space is being dealt with through several initiatives.

Work continues on the qualitative non-compact performance input based metrics but how this links into the pillar is unclear.

Strategically, GMIT will establish one institute contact point for engaging with the community and business type organisations.

While Springboard was mentioned in one of the previous pillars there was no mention of it here.

### National Policy Context:

The self-evaluation would have benefitted from contextualising performance or challenges in the context of national strategy (*Action Plan(s) for Jobs*; the *National Skills Strategy 2025*; and, the *National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship*).

The GMIT Innovation Hub intends to double capacity to support start-ups in Galway. It has secured funding for the New Frontiers programme for 5 years and an entrepreneurship programme for females. iHubs applied for and won €310k in external funding for a Women's Entrepreneurship programme to be delivered in 2017---2019. In 2016 Enterprise Ireland also awarded iHubs €1.826 million in funding for the 2016---2021 provision of the New Frontiers programme. GMIT delivers such services to several partners including via NUIG's Ignite business incubator.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

GMIT plays a strong regional role in support of business incubation and entrepreneurship. It also demonstrates strong engagement with city and rural communities, the arts, sports and many others. The recently co-developed and co-financed bid by Galway City Council, Galway County Council and GMIT for designation of the Galway City Region as a European Region of Gastronomy for 2018 is a good example of this engagement with enterprise and the community.

## 5. Enhanced internationalisation:

While the targets to increase the number of outbound students on study were met, the increase was modest and is not in line with other IOTs of its size. This was raised with GMIT at its Erasmus + audit. GMIT states that with changes to the staffing and strategic direction of this pillar, growth in the first five years will be measured and realistic. If the institute is to embed Internationalisation across the multi campus environment then a steady, focused approach is required, and we would hope the HEA understand this. Applications for the academic year should see fee paying international student numbers rise significantly in relative terms.

With placement, again there is a modest increase. GMIT states that the Institute advocates that all work placement is a welcome development. Institutes of technology have significant experience in delivering applied learning however this activity is slightly different. Managing a learning experience that will take place off-site requires oversight and input from a team of colleagues. With limited resources the Institute will ensure all growth is sustainable and must be planned, managed and supported ensuring a high-quality learning experience for students and a programme industry partners are active participants in.

GMIT reports that it did engage proactively last year in international recruitment however, targets were not met for increasing the number of Non-EU students. While they are keen to internationalise their curriculum, they feel they need to be realistic with student registrations. Restructuring of the international office, underfunding, the absence of a borrowing framework, and capacity issues around housing are some of the factors influencing the institution's decision for not setting a growth target for Non-EU student in the life time of the compact. It will be interesting to see if they set targets for the next one.

On a positive note, GMIT plans to deliver programmes overseas in Nanchang university and has signed an MOU with the Maltese Hotel and Restaurant Association, with GMIT as the lead partner in a major European project funded by the Maltese government.

In relation to staff mobility, GMIT continues to promote the value of such experiences to enhance their teaching practice and personal development.

### National Policy Context:

The analysis would have benefitted from contextualising activity in terms of Ireland's international strategy, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An international education strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020*. The self-evaluation report commits to the establishment of a 'high-functioning International Engagement Office for our staff, students and for international students' and that 'it is expected that improvements in the performance of the Institute's international activities will begin to manifest from the academic year 2017/2018'.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

Over the period of the compact the Institute has altered, reviewed and changed its approach to International Engagement.

In 2016 GMIT appointed a Director for International Engagement alongside new working practices to support the strategic direction of the Institute.

GMIT plans to deliver programmes overseas in Nanchang University and to potentially operate and manage facilities overseas. GMIT has also signed an MOU with the Maltese Hotel and Restaurant Association (MHRA). These are interesting developments but it would be good to hear more on strategy to manage any downside risks too.

GMIT states that following engagement with the HEA, particularly at the last compact meeting in Autumn 2016 a discussion took place concerning managing risk and opportunities. That engagement questioned why any HEI might engage in this activity when funds are limited. During this meeting the Institute clearly outlined how aspects of International engagement had long been a part of the 'DNA' of GMIT and it was the opinion of the Executive Board, following extensive discussion in late 2015, that we would revisit this pillar and commit to agreeing a plan of work for a five-year period. The Institute is currently engaged in the development of a new strategic plan and the outcome of that processes will guide the development of future international activity.



## 6. Institutional consolidation:

The institution is on target to achieved its planned deficit of €(1.0M) for 2016 and a small surplus in 2016-2017. GMIT are seeking ring fenced funding for it multi-campus model.

The development of the Internal Resource Allocation Model/Work load model continues but its implementation is limited due to several factors including:

- The need to prioritise the achievement of the targets contained in the five-year financial plan
- The inflexibility of tenured employment contracts; and
- The implementation of significant non-pay expenditure cuts resulting in only essential expenditure taking place

In relation to the TU as a partner in the CUA, GMIT are committed to pursuing a trajectory that achieves re-designation as a TU.

GMIT states that there are several challenges including, amongst others the absence of legislation, delays in approved funding by the HEA and the turnover of senior staff. Nevertheless, GMIT feel significant progress has been made.

In relation to progress in achieving TU status, the lack of legislation and a consequential TUI ban on engagement are very significant barriers to progress. This has afforded the institute make considerable progress on internal consolidation, particularly in relation to the Mayo campus.

### National Policy Context:

The CUA partners are somewhat reliant on resolutions of issues around technological universities at national rather than local level.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

Overall commitment to CUA progress and Technological University status seems to vary across the partnership. While it is true that progress has been somewhat restricted due to external factors, the partners should continue to progress together where they can and be prepared to move when the opportunity arises. More evidence of progress such as collaborative projects progressing or completed, towards the shared TU goal, would be useful.

## **7. Additional Notes:**