



4th September 2023.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to draw awareness of the work of Fastrack into Information Technology (FIT) in the Circular Economy space with particular focus on a recently launched initiative called ***'FIT Consumer Electronic repair & reuse pilot'***.

Circular Economy & FIT

As we all know a major global trend is an unprecedented investment in carbon reduction activities including the circular economy as the new best practice requirement for products, buildings, services, and enterprises. Fastrack into Information Technology (FIT) is a representative organisation of the technology sector committed to growing Ireland's tech talent pipeline. Working in close collaboration with national education and training provision, national and regional development agencies and community organisations, FIT's mission is to promote an inclusive Smart & Sustainable Economy by creating routes to marketable technical skills for job seekers and career changers wishing to pursue quality professions in Ireland's thriving digital & emerging circular economy.

Through regular skills needs analysis with its industry partners, FIT determines the impact and skills employment opportunities arising from emerging technology trends and designs training programmes that enable a broad and diverse cohort of people to acquire in-demand tech skills. Designed for Further Education Training (FET) provision these programmes are delivered with the support and collaboration of Education and Training Boards (ETBs) nationally.

Over the last three years FIT has been actively engaging with key stakeholders such as WEEE Ireland to decipher skills identification and solution development to bring new green skills pathways to the market while in tandem aligning to FIT's mission which is to open inclusive career entry opportunities for diverse learners and job seekers. The manifestation of this collaborative work with WEEE Ireland and the White Goods Association, has resulted in the availability of specialised training in white good electrical repair to prolong the life cycle of white goods and create a steady supply of qualified field technicians (QQI L6) about maintenance, repair, and recycling.

More recently & through the Skillset for a Circular Economy, we are endeavouring to solve additional current challenges in a variety of other areas including in the green building maintenance space & consumer electronics arena.



Current 'FIT Consumer Electronic repair & reuse' pilot.

One such endeavour that FIT is currently actively researching & developing is an innovative & first of its kind in Ireland 'Consumer Electronic repair & reuse' training course. This pilot initiative will be designed & formulated by FIT and will mirror the current successful FIT White Goods Field Technician course mentioned previously. The course will be the first repair course to address the issue of Consumer Electronics preventive maintenance, repair & reuse in Ireland and work to tackle the current model of "take make and waste". This new programme would provide a curriculum template for essential training and offer a solution to possible 'right to repair' laws in the future & a greener society for all.

Purpose:

'Being able to identify a fault and fix it'.

This pilot aligns itself with multiple features of the circular economy including:

- The need to reduce waste generation and the presence of hazardous substances in materials & products.
- It will encourage remanufacturing, refurbishment & repurposing of products & repair & reuse of products/materials.
- It includes the use of ICT tools to extend the life of products and assets & ensure waste is valued and closes the loop.

EU Repair Proposal

In the context of the EU Repair Proposal, we support this development and can commit to engaging with the DETE in any further working groups and consultations, bringing our expertise in education, training and the experience of our 'CESI' and other programmes to the table. We note and thank the support from Minister Ossian Smyth and his Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, in funding provision through the Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme, and from the CIRCULÉIRE innovation fund, both of which have contributed to our circular economy training ventures to date.

Alongside the financial supports, the collaboration with industry and other stakeholders to develop the QQI certified curriculum, and their contributions in kind, including equipment donation, knowledge provision and industry placement, have been significant in the success of these programmes. We believe this collaboration demonstrates a positive model that can be shared and replicated in Ireland to deliver a new generation of qualified professional repair operators across sectors, in a way that also brings important quality and health and safety assurance to the marketplace.



I am happy to answer any questions on this initiative and the broader work that FIT is undertaking in this space, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Clare Stewart

Clare Stewart

Innovation & Development Manager

(e) clarestewart@fit.ie