

# TOWARDS LARGE SCALE DEEP RENOVATION – UNLOCKING IRELAND’S POTENTIAL

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY TRAINING OF BUILDING PROFESSIONALS



ECCoPro Report

6

APRIL 2018

[www.igbc.ie](http://www.igbc.ie)

## About the Irish Green Building Council

The [Irish Green Building Council](#) (IGBC), is the leading authority on sustainable building in Ireland. With a network of [over 100-member organisations](#), the IGBC is working to transform the Irish construction and property sector into a global leader in quality and sustainability.

To do so, the IGBC has developed several sustainable building tools, including the [Home Performance Index](#) - Ireland's first national certification system for quality and sustainable residential development – and an [Environmental Product Declaration Platform](#). The IGBC has also developed an extensive green building education programme, which includes BREEAM, LEED and LCA training courses.

See [www.igbc.ie](http://www.igbc.ie) for further details.

## Acknowledgment

Thanks to all the organisations and individuals who attended and contributed to this workshop. These are listed below. Thanks also to our workshop facilitator, [Chris Chapman](#).

Finally, we would like to thank the various organisations who took part in [Ireland's National Renovation Strategy Consultation Process](#) as part of the Build Upon project. Their feedback on the building industry energy efficiency upskilling needs directly led to the ECCoPro initiative.



## Project Overview

As construction workers and building professionals interact with end-users at key moments in time (e.g. when a building is sold or refurbished), they have a key role to play in driving energy renovation. However, depending on training and engagement they can act as advisor or as negative influencer; hence the necessity to better incentivise them to upskill in energy efficiency and sustainability.

The aim of this project is to explore the opportunity of introducing a customer-friendly energy efficiency accreditation system for construction professionals - [ECCoPro](#). This accreditation system would support closer alignment between professionals, allow end-users to clearly identify professionals who have upskilled in energy efficiency related skills, and thus incentivise professionals to upskill in the area.

The ECCoPro initiative primarily targets employed building professionals. Nevertheless, it is hoped that some of the key findings of this project would be used by higher education institutions to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to energy efficiency and sustainability in their degrees.

## Background Reading

- [Construction Professionals' energy efficiency knowledge and upskilling – A Short review](#) – Sept. 2017
- [Holistic Energy Efficiency Certification for Building Professionals – Initial Set of Recommendations](#) – Jan. 2018

## The Dialogue Journey

In September 2017, the Irish Green Building Council released the “[Construction Professionals’ energy efficiency knowledge and upskilling - A short review](#)” report. The document is intended to be used as a source of reference by all organisations involved in the development of a customer-friendly environmental accreditation for building professionals in Ireland. The IGBC is now hosting a series of workshops focusing on the potential design and delivery of this certification system.

The results of the first part of the consultation process (October 2017 to January 2018) is summarised in a short report [available here](#). The objective of this last meeting was to finalise a model for a smart and adaptive framework which allows users to identify professionals who have upskilled in energy renovation.



## Summary

The following bullet points sum up the workshop key learnings and outcomes.

- The framework must be consumer focused and simple. Quality and trust are key. A single register backed by a neutral organisation is probably the best model for users.
- The framework must be launched as part of a broader energy renovation awareness campaign, highlighting the benefits of renovation and of using the register.
- SEAI is a very strong brand in energy renovation and as key role to play in supporting the development of the framework, and in promoting it.
- However, IGBC, construction professional bodies, NSAI and education institutions should all be involved in the development and management of the framework.
- If this is to become THE framework, it may need to become statutory in future.
- The framework must be open and inclusive to create better connections between construction workers, building professionals and users. It must hence be well integrated with initiatives to upskill construction workers and with existing registers.
- It should be presented as a user-friendly holistic energy efficiency [accreditation](#) for building professionals.
- Further work is needed to see how the framework could be funded and in developing a detailed timeline to implementation.

## Introduction

Pat Barry, CEO of the Irish Green Building Council opened the meeting. Mr Barry highlighted that if the system is to gain momentum, it must bring value to the whole supply chain. According to him, the success of the RIAI conservation accreditation scheme can be partly explained by the need to recruit a “competent person” for works on protected structures under the Planning and Development Act 2000. While the IGBC and its members have worked on delivering on some of [Build Upon key recommendations for a better national renovation strategy](#) – e.g. [industry upskilling](#), [green leases](#) and [energy efficient mortgages](#), support from government is needed to move some of these initiatives to the next stage.

John O’Sullivan, Head of Development at SEAI said that they see the role of the “trusted advisor” as key in promoting energy renovation. Mr O’Sullivan gave some insights into the new BER advisory reports to be launched this year. To resonate with homeowners, the new report will be more outcome based. While there might be scope for better coordination between the BER report and the various registers, the ECCoPro framework must be quality assured and more work may be required in building the value proposition for homeowners.

Marion Jammet of the IGBC subsequently gave a brief overview of the project’s progress to date. A copy of her presentation is [available here](#).

Following these presentations, workshop participants were asked to introduce themselves and to explain why it was important for them to take part in that process. Their responses are summarised below.

A number of participants have been involved in that process since [Build Upon](#) and are extremely keen on making progress on some of the [recommendations made at the time](#). More specifically, they highlighted the need to upskill the whole construction supply chain and to do it faster if Ireland is to meet its climate targets. According to them, ECCoPro provides a unique opportunity to develop a register of appropriately qualified professionals who can advise on holistic solutions for energy renovation, a “network of trusted advisors”.

Many workshop participants said that ECCoPro was a great platform to better understand the perspectives of other people in the industry. The process has allowed for more joint-up thinking and for closer alignments. However, further work is required to ensure this remains an open and inclusive framework for all key stakeholders, from construction workers to building professionals and end-users.

Finally, some participants said that the value proposition for customers (and how it is communicated to them) need to be further developed.

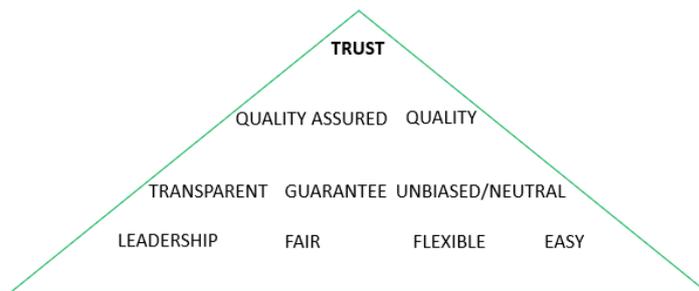
## Session I: ECCoPro Branding – Brainstorming Exercise

For this session, workshop participants were split into 2 groups of building professionals (the middle majority and early-adopters) and 2 groups of users (large-scale procurers and small users e.g. homeowners, small landlords). Each group was given a list of adjectives, verbs and attributes that based on [feedback received to that date](#) should apply to the certification. Each group was subsequently asked to rank each statement in terms of the message(s) the logo should convey and arrange them in a diamond formation. Finally, workshop participants were presented with a draft logo and asked to provide constructive feedback on it.



Figure 1: Draft logos as presented to Workshop Participants

### Building professionals: The Middle Majority



The diamond developed by this group is very much inline with the feedback received as part of [Workshop 3](#).

Quality is key to provide this group with recognition and credibility. Yet, it should also be easy for them to engage with the framework.

**Logo:** This group felt the logo was overwhelming. They said that a clear reference to energy should be made as many building professionals may not automatically associate energy efficiency with renovation. Finally, they suggested to add a year to the logo, so that people cannot use it for years without completing any CPDs or submitting examples of their work.

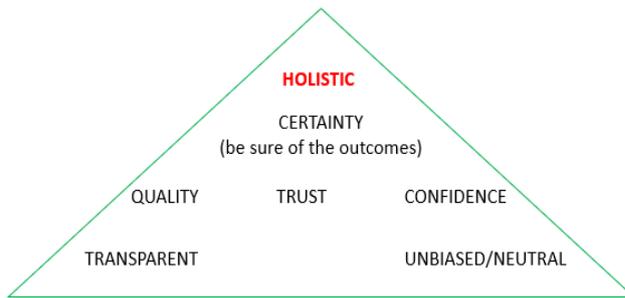
### Building professionals: Early-adopters



Quality and trust are also critical for early-adopters. One suggestion was to leverage off existing strong and established brands of engineers, architects and surveyors to create that level of trust.

**Logo:** The colour difference between the 3 levels of certification should be greater and the text should clearly indicate the [category of the holder – level 1, 2 or 3](#). This group also felt that the logo did not represent the idea of quality well enough and that that it could be worth looking at an ISO certification approach.

### Users: Large-scale procurers



Certainty and confidence are key for large-scale procurers. According to this group, this message must be clearly conveyed by the logo. Interestingly, workshop participants added an extra word to the list of suggested term: holistic. This is a holistic accreditation scheme and this message must be better communicated to large-scale procurers.

**Logo:** This group expressed concerns that the logo was very much designed for building professionals and not for users. The logo should resonate more with what users are looking for i.e. comfort, well-being, quality and reduced bills. The positive impact on the environment may only be a second-thought and green may not be the best colour. Instead of using the SEAI logo, it may be better to use a little home or something that people already associate with SEAI. Finally, the name could be improved. E.g. the word certification should be replaced by accreditation as a certificate may be associated with a lower level of qualification.

### Users: Homeowners / Small Landlords



Homeowners and small landlords must be able to easily identify building professionals who have upskilled in the area. However, the risk is that they automatically perceived an accredited professional as more expensive than other professionals. This needs to be kept in mind when designing the logo and communicating the framework.

This group added arrows to their diamond ranking to show that homeowners need to see the framework as unbiased and quality assured to gain confidence in it. Quality work and certainty of outcomes will subsequently lead to trust in the framework.

**Logo:** The logo may be suitable for the industry but does not relate to small users. The logo must connect emotionally with people and must hence be as simple as possible. It would make sense to build upon an existing SEAI logo such as the BER logo. Some further work must also be done on the name and the colours as the shades of green are too similar.

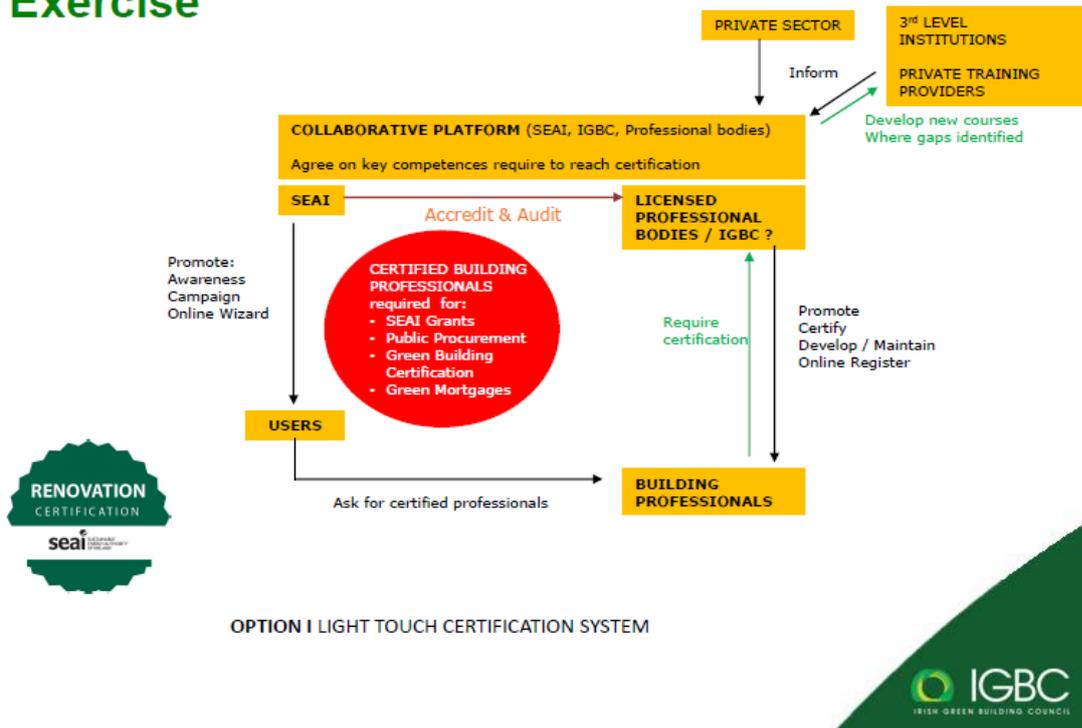
### Session Summary

The logo must convey a sense of quality and trust to all users. Workshop participants felt that the logo may work for building professionals but does not connect emotionally with people. Instead of using the SEAI logo, it was suggested to build upon an existing SEAI's logo such as the BER. Something that everyone already associates to SEAI without mentioning the name. As environmental considerations are often not the main motivation for renovating, it was suggested to change the logo colour and the name to better convey the idea of comfort and wellbeing. Although participants agreed that the logo should be simple, building professionals felt that the distinction [between the 3 levels of certification](#) should be clearer.

## Session II: Walk through exercise

For the second part of the morning, workshop participants were asked to provide feedback on two diagrams illustrating how the framework could potentially work: A light touch certification framework and a more comprehensive one.

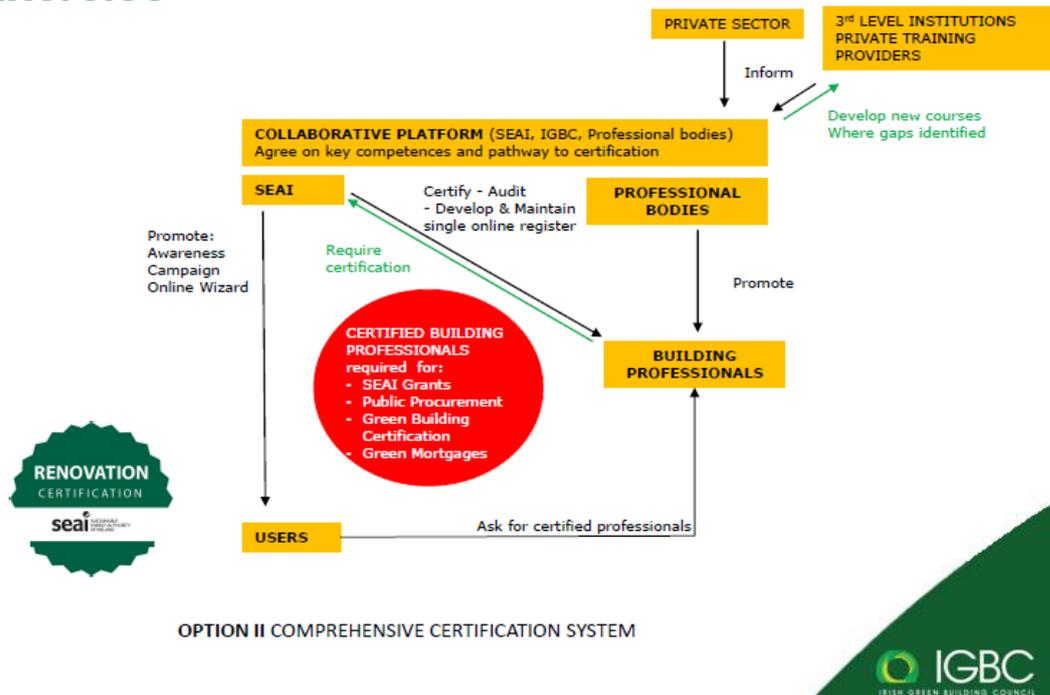
## Session 2: Walkthrough Exercise



OPTION I LIGHT TOUCH CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

All participants working on this diagram felt that SEAI, professional bodies and education institutions have a key role to play in this process. Some participants said SEAI should take the lead, while others felt IGBC should do it. In any cases, all of them said the IGBC and NSAI should play a more central role in developing and managing the framework. Workshop participants liked how users are integrated in that framework and the idea that expertise is available to all (*trusted advisor*). However, the framework must be better connected with construction workers' upskilling and register initiatives, and with existing accreditation and register schemes for building professionals. Other key considerations include the development of a detailed implementation plan, as well as sustainable ways of funding the framework. Some participants also expressed concern about the suggested use of public procurement to support the accreditation's take-off as this could be extremely difficult to achieve. It would probably be easier to work on a link with SEAI's grants first. Finally, it was suggested to involve both insurance companies and trade-unions in the process.

## Session 2: Walkthrough Exercise



Workshop participants analysing this diagram felt that having a single register and SEAI’s central role were both extremely positive. In fact, SEAI is a strong brand in energy renovation. This is key as a marketing campaign would be required to increase public awareness of professionals’ capabilities and of the value to be derived from it. Furthermore, this approach is likely to be perceived by users as more inclusive and more impartial. However, it is also likely to be more expensive. Members of this group felt that the interaction between construction workers and building professionals’ upskilling needed to be made clearer. Finally, some participants felt that the IGBC should play a bigger role in developing and managing the framework.

### Session Summary

No consensus was reached on a final version of the framework: It should probably be a mix of both options. SEAI has a key role to play: It is a strong brand in energy renovation and it could use its experience to raise awareness of the programme and its value. SEAI is also perceived by users as more neutral. However, the IGBC, professional bodies and education institutions, all have a role to play. To avoid confusion and to ensure the framework is fully inclusive, connections with existing construction workers and professionals’ registers must be developed. Further clarifications on how the framework would be funded and administered is also needed.

## **Final Recommendations**

At the end of the event, workshop participants were asked to express their concerns in terms of the vulnerabilities of the system, and to identify areas in which further work is required to make the framework operational. These are listed below.

*We need to ensure the consumer understands the process. Marketing is key, and we must get the name and branding right.*

*The scheme must be properly communicated to consumers. A full marketing campaign is required.*

*A marketing campaign must support the launch of the framework. Public awareness of the scheme must be raised.*

*The accreditation must be consumer focused and simple.*

*Full support at government level is needed for the framework to be trusted and used by consumers.*

*The accreditation process must be robust and accepted by all involved in the construction industry.*

*How will the framework be administrated? Who will be in charge?*

*If the framework is overly complex, it will result in various stakeholders not fully buying into the process.*

*It seems too complex and expensive.*

*I am concerned about the sustainability of such an accreditation scheme over long term given the number of moving parts. There is a need for targeted training for so many different groups with varying levels of attainments and priorities.*

*Do we have the resources to implement this framework?*

*SEAI, IGBC and the various professional bodies have limited resources.*

*The organisation overseeing it must have experience of building professionals' upskilling.*

*It may be challenging for professional bodies to make the resources available to get the framework up and running.*

*Lack of IGBC leadership in the process. IGBC need to be at the forefront of the development and management of the process.*

*If the implementation is not made statutory it would be difficult to enforce or further develop. Work on policy needs to happen.*

*The process must become statutory. We are lacking a mandate.*

*Self-policing by professional bodies is a source of concern for consumers.*

*Construction workers must be more involved in the process.*

*How can we aggregate all existing registers so that it does not become too confusing for users?*

*Will it get lost among the many existing registers? To gain traction, it must be pushed and widely promoted. Ideally, it should become statutory.*

The accreditation and audit processes must be clarified. CPDs are important but may be difficult to monitor. Should membership of a professional body be a prerequisite to be accredited and listed on the register?

A comprehensive timeline must be developed.

Make sure a single person accreditation isn't used as a badge for an entire company.

Better connection with construction workers' upskilling schemes.

This cannot be a one-off accreditation process. Accredited building professionals must complete CPDs in that area on a regular basis.

A truly holistic accreditation system which recognise that different approaches are required for traditional buildings.

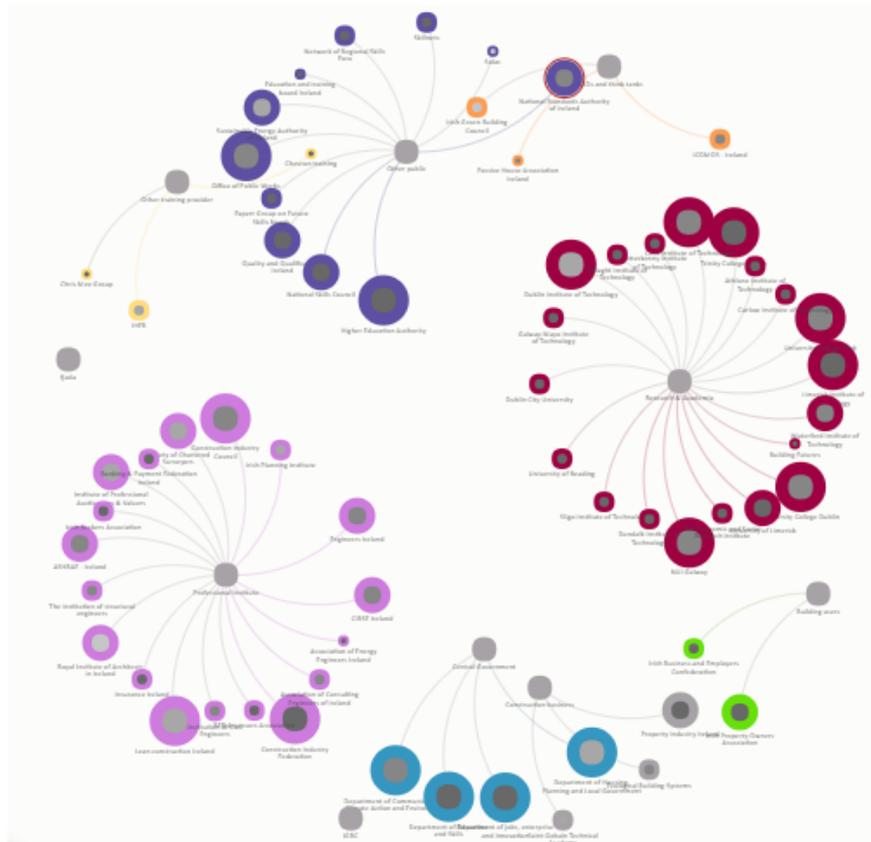
A company accreditation is not a guaranteed that all employees have the right level of knowledge. The accreditation must be for individuals.

That it could be too difficult for most building professionals to achieve accreditation and that too many are left behind. The framework must be tiered / tailored so that all organisations can participate.

The Department of Housing are not fully involved in the process. They should have attended all meetings as they have significant contributions to make.

## Stakeholders

Check out who's who in [our interactive stakeholder map](#) and send your feedback to [Marion@igbc.ie](mailto:Marion@igbc.ie).



## **Collaborating on Workshops and events**

A series of 4 workshops will bring key stakeholders together during the project. The workshops are supported by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and are a must for anyone interested in large scale energy renovation and building professionals upskilling in Ireland.

Organisations and individuals interested in getting involved in this process should contact Marion - [Marion@igbc.ie](mailto:Marion@igbc.ie).

Website: [www.igbc.ie](http://www.igbc.ie)

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