

Growing international interest in Ireland's MMC capabilities

Skillnet MMC Accelerate is supporting Ireland's growing engagement with MMC and contributing to wider international understanding of MMC adoption



Orla Gilroy, Project Manager, Skillnet MMC Accelerate

AS MODERN METHODS of Construction (MMC) gain momentum, Ireland is increasingly being watched from the outside by returning expats, international talent, companies assessing where the next phase of industry growth will take place and those looking to invest in the opportunities MMC provides. Skillnet's MMC Accelerate Initiative, including the online national platform www.skillnetmmccelerate.ie, is at the centre of that spotlight.

Skillnet MMC Accelerate, the national Initiative delivered through a partnership between Skillnet Ireland and Construction IT Alliance (CitA), is designed to support and accelerate the growth of MMC in Ireland. The Initiative combines a digital platform that brings together industry insights, indicative career pathways, and signposting to MMC-related training courses and upskilling opportunities across Ireland alongside a programme of in-person Business Support Events held in MMC manufacturing facilities across the country.

The Initiative aims to help companies, particularly SMEs, build capability, stay competitive and discover the MMC-related skills needed to transition towards more efficient, offsite, and technology-driven construction methods.

"The whole project is really about the platform - the platform is a central aspect of the Initiative," says Orla Gilroy, Project Manager at Skillnet MMC Accelerate. "Everything feeds into it, including the events, the content from industry, job role profiles, and signposting to national MMC training courses. It's all about creating a central place where people can learn from what's happening in MMC and understand how they can become part of it."

That central hub is now reaching far beyond Ireland's borders. "We're seeing engagement from more than 90 countries," Orla says, referencing user data from the online platform. "There's a real mix of people accessing it too, and that's what makes it so interesting."

The platform's reach reflects a growing international curiosity around Ireland's role in MMC, she says. "There are people living overseas who are originally from Ireland, and they're looking at the platform to see what's happening here, what the opportunities are, and the skills related to these opportunities - perhaps they are considering returning to Ireland to work. At the same time, there are people in other countries looking at Ireland and possibly considering working here and transitioning into MMC."

"We're also seeing companies investigating the construction landscape more broadly. They're looking at what's happening in Ireland, whether with competitors, potential partners, or Government

bodies. Companies are also considering establishing MMC operations here or are developers who would like to work with MMC companies."

That level of visibility into the inner workings of MMC in Ireland available through the Skillnet MMC Accelerate platform is being driven by the depth of information available. "When you're looking in from the outside, it's exciting. You can see the breadth of activity, the industry insights, indicative career pathways, the national MMC skills courses, it's all there in one place."

And for those actively planning moves into the sector, the platform is increasingly practical. The upskilling and training sections that take users to Qualifax and Fetch Courses for MMC-related national training opportunities are some of the most visited areas on the platform.

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The scale of engagement is evident in clear metrics. To date, the platform has recorded more than 12,000 user sessions, with contributions of original content from more than 65 organisations and signposting to more than 400 national MMC-related training courses across the country.

"About 90 percent of the businesses engaging are SMEs," Orla reveals, highlighting the importance of accessibility to small businesses that make up the bulk of the construction sector.

Gender engagement is also notable. "The split is very close, around 53 percent male and 46 percent female," she says. "But even that does not tell the full story, because not everyone identifies themselves when they're using the platform."

The Initiative has a goal to address skills gaps and support the transition to MMC in the Irish construction trade. Research underpinning the programme identified a wide range of competencies required, from offsite manufacturing and fabrication processes to digital automation, logistics and modern supply chains, the integration of onsite and offsite delivery, lean operational efficiency, sustainable construction technologies, and soft skills.

"MMC can totally alter the skillset required for construction projects. You're looking at areas like automation and robotics, more effective operational management and Nearly Zero Energy Building, alongside traditional construction skills," says Orla.

Among the key sections of the national online platform are Career Pathways, Education and Upskilling, Industry Insights, Research, Supports, and Industry Events, while new developments are continuing to expand that offering.

"We're working on a tool that will help people find more MMC-related courses linked to indicative job roles and career pathways. That will give a much broader picture of what's available across the country and what is coming down the line. It will help with futureproofing the skillsets of construction professionals in Ireland."

A new media hub is also in development, which will allow companies to access content they have been involved in, from soundbites to articles and 'Day in the Life' videos that show real stories of those who work in the sector. "It's about making it much easier to find and use all of the valuable content we collaborate on with MMC companies," Orla explains.

While the platform is global in reach, its real impact lies in who it is drawing into the sector. Construction has traditionally been an environment that only attracts certain types of people, - Through our engagement, we are seeing how MMC can create new opportunities and career options for a broader range of people entering the sector.

"We're meeting people from all sorts of backgrounds. Different age groups, different industries, different levels of experience, different nationalities." That includes individuals transitioning from entirely different careers.

"We have had people come from hospitality, for example, looking for more stable hours and income," she says. "There are a lot of stories like that."

Others are returning to the sector with a new perspective. "We met a woman who had been an architect, stepped away, and was now looking at MMC as a way to come back in," Orla adds. "She was really interested in the range of opportunities and how she could upskill to support that."

Tradespeople are also exploring new pathways. "We have spoken to electricians, carpenters, small business owners — people looking to transfer their skills into different roles within MMC. They can see the opportunities to be had embracing new technologies and ways of building," she adds.

MMC is also being associated with greater accessibility to a wider range of roles across the construction sector.

"We are seeing more gender diversity, particularly women across the sector, and in a wider range of roles. Not just traditional positions, but across manufacturing, design and delivery."

She points to structural changes within the industry as a key factor too. "A lot of MMC work is based in factory environments, working set shifts Monday to Friday. That

offers an alternative work-life balance, which may be attractive to some individuals."

Accessibility extends further still. "We recently met a young person with different abilities who was studying construction. She was looking at engineering or architecture, but what stood out for her was the potential to work in offsite manufacturing within MMC."

For Orla, that moment was telling. "It highlighted how MMC can open up opportunities for people who might not have considered construction before. Regardless of your differences, It has the potential to support more inclusive working environments."

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While the platform provides the foundation for engaging with MMC, in-person engagement remains critical.

Business Support Events, held in MMC manufacturing facilities across the country, are a key part of the Initiative, bringing people into real environments to see how MMC works in practice, ask questions on the key technologies and processes involved, and connect with others in the industry.

Upcoming Business Support Events include a session hosted by Kirby Group Engineering in Portlaoise, Co. Laois on 14 May 2026 and Extreme Balconies in Clane, Co. Kildare, on 24 June 2026.

"There's a real value in meeting people face to face - connecting, learning from each other, and sharing critical insights about the sector. It also provides us the opportunity, in real time, to introduce and show how the platform can support small business owners and their business as a whole."

A consistent theme across the initiative is the range of opportunities available. "The platform is there for anyone with an interest in construction. It might feel outside your comfort zone, but you could be surprised by what's available."

She continues, "There's a sense that people are watching what's happening here. Whether they're in Ireland or thinking about coming here, they're looking at MMC and seeing the potential."

As Ireland continues to develop its MMC capability, that attention is unlikely to diminish.

Instead, it points to a broader shift, one where construction is no longer defined solely by traditional roles or skills pathways, but by a more flexible, inclusive, and globally connected model. And in that shift, Ireland is actively engaging in this shift through initiatives that support the development of MMC capability. ■

