



Leading Industry Learning

ECITB Strategy: 2026-30



| Foreword



I am delighted to publish our new five-year strategy for 2026–2030, which sets out how the ECITB will rise to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and fast-changing external environment. This strategy outlines how we will work to deliver positive, long-term outcomes for our levy payers, the wider workforce, and stakeholders across the UK.

These outcomes are ambitious – as they should be. Achieving them will require collaboration and commitment well beyond the ECITB alone. But they reflect what we must collectively pursue to realise our shared ambitions and deliver a truly bold strategy. Our approach aligns with the UK Government’s mission-driven focus – particularly its goal to achieve clean power by 2030 and

stimulate sustainable economic growth. We know that the energy transition presents both a challenge and an opportunity for industry, and we must reorient ourselves as a training board to meet it.

The engineering construction industry (ECI) faces additional difficulties. Uncertainty over project delivery can inhibit confidence to invest in developing new talent. This is at a time when our recent labour forecasting estimate tells us there could be a worker shortage of around 40,000 by 2030.

The next five years will see competition for skills within the ECI from other sectors, compounded by an ageing workforce and concerns about attracting the next generation

into the ECI. Barriers to training, inconsistent and confusing standards, and limited innovation in labour models further constrain the industry’s ability to adapt. Addressing these issues will require bold, coordinated action.

This is why we have moved to a five-year strategy cycle. It reflects our determination to drive long-term outcomes through significant interventions that can deliver lasting impact. We will continue to support our employers through grant funding for mission-critical training. At the same time, we will build upon investments like our Regional Skills Hub funding to address systemic and structural challenges facing the engineering construction industry.

This approach also reflects feedback from the recent ITB Review, which already sees us collaborating more closely with the CITB on shared priorities. I believe this strategy underlines our commitment as a Training Board, to change. Realising our ambitions will not be easy. Fully resourcing this strategy to ensure delivery will be challenging. Yet we are mindful of the pressures

facing many of our levy payers, and as such, we are not proposing any increase in levy rates for the next three-year levy period. Instead, we will seek to increase and diversify our income and prioritise activities to meet the needs of a changing world.

Across the country, from Sellafield to The Solent, from Peterhead to Pembrokeshire, members of the engineering construction industry deliver essential services to help keep our lights on and food on our tables. At the ECITB, we seek to lead industry learning – nurturing mission-critical skills to deliver shared ambitions, grow industry and ensure our workforce can return home each day safe and well.

I am confident this strategy will allow us to take great steps forward and do just that.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynda Armstrong".

Lynda Armstrong OBE
Chair of the ECITB

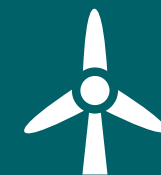
About the industry

Engineering construction is a specialised industry that underpins the delivery, maintenance and decommissioning of much of the UK's critical infrastructure. It operates across the oil and gas, nuclear, renewables, and power generation sectors, as well as other process industries, such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food processing and water treatment.

The most recent ECITB Census collected data on 74,609 workers in the industry and around 190,000 jobs are directly supported by engineering construction.



Pharmaceuticals



Renewables



Oil & Gas



Chemicals



Power Generation



Water Treatment



Nuclear



Food & Drink

| About the ECITB

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is the statutory skills organisation for the ECI in Great Britain.

A non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions, the ECITB works with employers and governments to attract, develop and qualify the engineering construction workforce in a wide range of craft, technical and professional disciplines.

Employer-led, the ECITB is accountable to parliament and funded by a levy that it is required to collect from the industry.

The levy is used to support employers to train and upskill their workforce to industry standards, develop qualifications and courses that meet employer needs, and regulate a network of approved training providers.

The ECITB is also an Awarding Organisation accredited by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Wales and SQA Accreditation.

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I look at the project pipeline and think great if it comes off. Then I think where are all the people going to come from.

Employer comment at ECITB strategy consultation event



Our mission

To lead industry learning

Our vision

A world-class engineering construction workforce that delivers vital infrastructure and powers net zero

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In the past, we got by competing against each other when it made no sense. Now we have a changed industry – either we succeed together, or we fail alone.

Employer comment at ECITB strategy consultation event

Photo courtesy of INEOS.

Key achievements since 2023

Supporting industry training



4,116
new entrants supported



84%
SMEs received training grants



£1.9m
of external funding leveraged



Over
£980k
invested into Regional Skills Hubs



90,000
course completions on LXP equivalent to
£3m of training



£61m
of training funded by ECITB since 2023



145,898
ECITB-approved training courses and technical tests completed



72%
of Work Ready learners progressed onto an apprenticeship or further study



1,070
ECITB regulated qualifications awarded

All figures correct as at June 2025

About the consultation programme

To inform this strategy, the ECITB hosted 10 strategy consultation workshops across England, Scotland and Wales throughout Spring 2025. Attendees included employers, training providers, client organisations, government representatives and wider stakeholders. Our events in the North of England were jointly delivered with the ECIA and we are grateful for the support provided.



The open workshop sessions were supplemented by curated roundtables targeted at specific audiences, including nuclear stakeholders. An online survey allowed further feedback on the proposed strategy.

The feedback we gathered through this process is invaluable and is reflected in the final strategy presented.

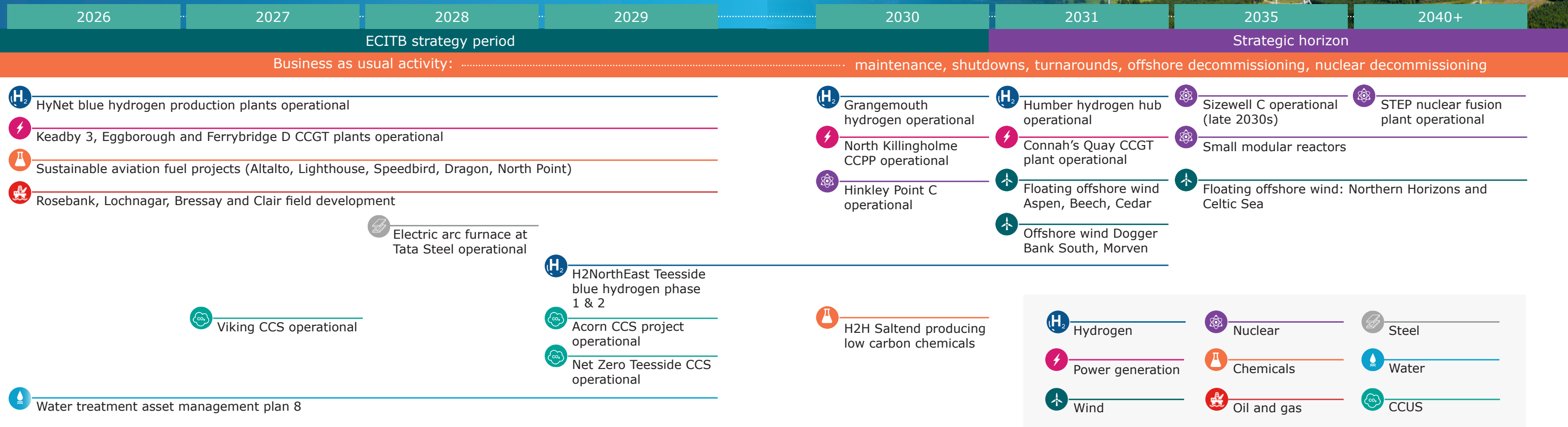
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We have a project before people mindset in this country. We need a people before project mindset.

Employer comment at ECITB strategy consultation event



Industry pipeline



Strategic drivers

Uncertainty

Since this strategy was first developed the external economic and business environment has been affected by a series of significant shocks.

The pipeline on the previous page highlights a range of potential projects on the horizon. However, a projection is not a prediction. Stakeholders have voiced a lack of confidence about when these projects will materialise – and with them, the associated supply chain activity.

This strategy recognises that reality and considers how we can mitigate risk and support industry resilience as we deliver on our objectives.

In doing so, we will be informed by our own labour market intelligence and the NISTA pipeline which provides industry and investors with up-to-date information on public and privately delivered infrastructure projects.

Opportunity

Despite the uncertainty, our stakeholder engagement has also revealed a strong sense of optimism about the future. The UK Government has made economic growth its primary focus and employers across the ECI share this ambition.

The Government's clean power mission, Modern Industrial Strategy and Clean Energy Workforce Strategy offer the opportunity to achieve economic and climate goals while creating new, high-quality skilled jobs as well as redeploying the existing workforce.

The ECITB is committed to helping individuals from under-represented groups access these opportunities. We will work closely with Skills England, devolved administrations and combined authorities across the UK to unlock the potential of our skills system.

Change

This strategy has been shaped not only by a fast-moving external environment but also by the findings of the recent ITB Review. The message was clear: the ECITB must evolve.

While the core levy and grant model remains central, we must go further – delivering more strategic, programmatic interventions that address root causes of market failures in the ECI. In doing so, we will build on our collaboration with the CITB maximising our capacity to address the skills challenges that both industries face.



ECITB Strategy 2026-2030

Our new strategy builds on the success of Leading Industry Learning, but it also recognises the need for the ECITB to move further and faster in response to emerging challenges. To support this we are adopting a five-year strategy window. This longer-term approach aligns more closely with the development timelines of national infrastructure priorities and allows greater space to design and implement interventions with lasting, systemic impact.

A five-year strategy does not mean a fixed or inflexible plan. On the contrary, it gives us the time to evaluate our progress, adapt to changing circumstances, and invest in the capacity needed to deliver results.

Strategic outcomes

For the workforce

- Access to quality training and qualifications
- In-demand and transferable skills for a fulfilling career

For the industry

- Attracting, upskilling and retaining an agile, diverse and competent workforce in sufficient numbers to meet projected growth in demand
- Benefit from optimised workforce skills to increase productivity

For the UK

- ECITB labour market intelligence (LMI) supports better policy and decision making
- ECI skills powering infrastructure and the clean energy transition
- ECI skills unlocking social mobility
- ECI skills attracting investment in UK plc and boosting regional growth

Strategy 2026-30 will be structured around three key pillars



Deliver

We will continue to meet our statutory responsibilities, with a clear focus on efficiency and value for money.



Grow

We will consolidate and scale our successful innovations, creating momentum and added value.



Transform

We will identify and launch bold interventions to transform skills provision.



| Deliver:

Collect the levy:

- Provide a level playing field for industry by ensuring that all relevant employers are brought onto the register of leviable establishments.
- Ensure that establishments pay the correct levy and payments are received on time.

Distribute training grants:

- Channel funding towards high-quality training that maintains and enhances workforce skills.
- Address priority employer skills needs by sector, size and region informed by data and insights.

High quality standards and qualifications:

- Maintain and deliver up-to-date, trusted qualifications and training standards.
- Act as the authority on and custodian of ECI skills requirements – both current and future.

Robust quality assurance:

- Quality-assure delivery of ECITB standards and qualifications through our network of approved providers and centres.

Labour market intelligence:

- Build on our forecasting capabilities to enable better workforce planning.
- Deliver cutting-edge research and insights into skills gaps and training strategies relevant to the needs of industry.



| Grow:

Drive new entrants into industry:

- Scale up ECITB new entrant programmes targeting the most in need occupations.
- Build on our successful Work Ready and Scholarship programmes with support for entrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds and under-represented groups.
- Support the recruitment of more apprentices and trainees, including steps to grow mentoring capacity within industry.
- Strengthen graduate training and engage with institutions to ensure graduates have industry-relevant knowledge.

Respond to sector skills needs:

Grow competence assurance:

Bolster workforce progression and retention:

Encourage attraction and inclusion:

Expand online learning:

- Expand delivery of courses for net zero and priority sectors under the Industrial Strategy including nuclear, CCUS, hydrogen and wind.
- Support upskilling and reskilling for workers to move between nascent and conventional industries, including through bolt-on training.
- Work with industry and governments to drive forward standardised approaches to competence assurance.
- Embed and optimise the role of Connected Competence and reform the Assuring Competence in Engineering (ACE) scheme.
- Support workforce progression and retention by creating ECITB-approved career pathways, with associated training and assessment interventions.
- Invest in leadership, management and mentoring training to support employee engagement and retention.
- Engage in activities to attract and inspire under-16s into the ECI careers and promote the varied, diverse routes into industry.
- Help industry create inclusive workplaces through partnerships, standard setting and training.
- Grow the ECITB's online learning offer (the Learning Experience Platform).



| Transform

Develop a strategic skills ecosystem:

- Harness the Regional Skills Hub model to build a strategic skills ecosystem underpinned by centres of excellence in key clusters.
- Set up a multi-million pound Strategic Innovation Fund to accelerate skills investment and tackle systemic workforce challenges.
- Develop innovative interventions to: increase trainer and assessor capacity; broaden the talent pool ahead of project need; and broker the transition of the at-risk workforce from traditional into green industries.

Drive technology adoption:

- Future proof the skills base by gathering and acting on intelligence and industry trends.
- Develop and roll out training interventions and products that enable industry to harness new technologies, including AI and robotics, at scale.

Expand blended learning and modular training:

- Build on bootcamp partnerships to develop and deliver short courses, drawing on external funding.
- Develop and deliver a suite of modular and just-in time training.

Foster impactful partnerships:

- Partner with the CITB to drive skills for infrastructure and deliver the joint plan.
- Leverage Governments' skills offer to maximise impact.
- Drive industry to adopt collaborative contracting strategies to enhance strategic skills planning and delivery.

Widen commercial offer and scope:

- Explore options to grow product and service offering.
- Expand commercial partnerships to enhance skills development.
- Explore options for, and advocate changes to, ECITB scope to ensure it better reflects current and future industry practices.

Plans in the devolved nations, regions and sectors

To deliver our strategy we will craft approaches that meet the needs of our employers in their local and sectoral markets. This will respond to the policy priorities of the devolved governments and local authorities in England and will involve sub-regional plans where appropriate.

It will also recognise the particular needs of the nuclear sector, which is not only the largest single employer within the ECI but presents some unique challenges to be addressed.



* Nuclear sites are correct as of 2026.

Northern England

In the North of England, we will continue using industry intelligence and data to drive targeted decision-making and provide value adding interventions across the region.

Our priorities include:

- Continuing to target investment in programmes that can deliver the skills industry needs at scale and at pace.
- Driving skills development across the regional industrial cluster hotspots; embedding industry-recognised training and qualifications at the heart of all new entrant, upskilling and cross-skilling pathways.
- Spearheading greater client-contractor collaboration on skills across the region.
- Forging new partnerships to maximise external funding streams, so that we can deliver more for industry to allow the collective levy to go further.

Scotland

In Scotland we will support the existing and emerging sectors with a focus on attraction and retention of new entrants, bridging skills gaps and skills for energy transition.

Our priorities include:

- Working in partnership with industry and other stakeholders to attract higher numbers of new entrants to the Scottish ECI, including apprentices and those furthest away from the labour market.
- Supporting new entrant recruitment and retention.
- Working with the UK and Scottish Governments to provide support for the at-risk workforce to transition into existing, new and emerging sectors - building on the success of our recent Wind Turbine Technician Cross Skill pilots.
- Identifying and addressing skills gaps in technologies such as hydrogen and CCUS and fund appropriate training interventions.

South, Wales, Midlands and East of England (SWMEE)

In the SWMEE region we will continue to support a wide and diverse range of employers, both large and small. We will focus on developing the provider network, growing the workforce and developing client and external stakeholder engagement.

Our priorities include:

- Addressing skilled and semi-skilled labour shortages through initiatives that build capacity.
- Seeking to match ECITB levy skills investment with external funding.
- Creating provider networks that are responsive to proven industry need and that offer complementary ECITB products and services across the region.
- Continuing to support the development of the Welsh, Solent and Black Country industrial decarbonisation clusters.
- Forging new partnerships with clients in the region to inform in-scope employer training activity.
- Enhancing existing partnerships with Welsh government, Combined Authorities and regional skills bodies to grow ECI skills.

Nuclear

We will increase the size of the nuclear-ready workforce and close the gap on critical skills shortages. We will work in partnership with the Nuclear Skills Delivery Board on key areas identified in the Nuclear Skills Plan.

Our priorities include:

- Continuing to support apprenticeships and graduates and expand initiatives such as Hinkley Support Operatives (HSO), Work Ready and Scholarships.
- Enhancing the retention of the existing workforce for the lifetime of projects through professional pathway development focused on employer-identified disciplines.
- Strengthening the training provider network through partnership approaches.

Funding the strategy

During the strategy consultation we presented a potential funding shortfall between the amount of income we forecast receiving (£200m over five years) and the estimated funds required to deliver the new strategy. We presented options to address this gap including, reducing direct grants to employers, increasing levy rates, securing third-party funding and prioritising programmatic interventions.

Following careful deliberation, the Board has decided to continue with the current levy rates for the next three years (2026-28).

Given the external uncertainties and the rising cost pressures facing employers during what remains an uncertain and fragile environment for many ECI operating sectors, the Board does not think that this is the right time to raise levy rates.



To resource the intent of this strategy we will review and prioritise existing delivery, seek to grow the contribution from commercial income and seek opportunities to work in partnership securing third-party funding as we do so. We will continue to review the funding position and our options to close the gap as the situation evolves over the duration of the strategy period.

This position does not dampen our resolve to deliver what is an ambitious strategy, on the contrary it emboldens the ECITB to do more, to work in partnership with government, industry and other partners to maximise our collective impact and deliver the skills needed by industry.



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I can look back on our history with pride. I want to look forward to our future with optimism.

Employer comment at ECITB strategy consultation event

Proposed levy rates* 2026 - 28:

Site levy
1.2%

Offsite levy
0.33%

* The levy exemption thresholds of £275,000 for site-based workers and £1m for off-site/all other workers will remain unchanged.