



Building Skills and Competitiveness Training Networks Programme Report 2002 - 2005



Minister's Foreword



Since 1999 the role played by Skillnets in the area of enterprise-led training has been crucial, placing a new emphasis on the knowledge base within competitive enterprises. The success of the Skillnets initiative has been recognised by the Government who in 2005 renewed the Skillnets mandate and allocated further funds for the period 2005 – 2010.

The partnership model embraced by Skillnets is reflected in the make-up and operation of its board and its activities.

I commend the board and employees for their dedicated service over the years. Skillnets continues to foster innovation and co-operation between all stakeholders engaged in the area of in-company training. The Government is committed to supporting and encouraging companies and workers to unlock and grow the human talent pool that will maintain this country at the forefront of global competitiveness.

Micheál Martin

Micheál Martin T.D.
Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, T.D.

Skillnets has been particularly successful in:

- Mobilising a large number of companies to become involved in training networks
- Focusing on the participation of SMEs in training
- Pioneering the concept of enterprise-led training whereby firms identify their training needs and how best to meet them
- Expanding the range of training and using new training methods
- Leveraging significant support from companies to match exchequer funds
- Creating new training practices in sectors that have traditionally had a low uptake of training
- Working with employees with low basic skills and encouraging a culture of life-long learning among workers
- Involving the social partners in joint approaches to training provision
- Creating alliances with the formal education sector
- Supporting the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework

The Irish economy continues to grow at a phenomenal rate and this growth can only be sustained if we are able to manage our labour market effectively. For firms to survive in the highly competitive global marketplace, they must develop sustainable competitive advantages.

One of the major competitive advantages that Ireland currently enjoys is the high level of knowledge and skills amongst our workforce. That said, this competitive advantage needs to be continuously developed, with skill gaps closed and a culture of life-long learning promoted. Such steps - along with the need to assist lower-skilled employees move up the skills chain - will create an environment where human talent and creativity will be the key driver of sustainable competitive advantage.

Skillnets mission is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and workplace learning, as a key element in sustaining national competitiveness



Chairman's Foreword



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To compete in the global economy Ireland needs a highly motivated and well qualified workforce. This requires enterprises to place a high premium on developing the skills of their employees, and people in the workforce who take their development seriously. We see our role as helping to facilitate this process.

SMEs face particular problems in tackling their skill needs. Their size and the immediate pressures of running a business can make training appear disproportionately costly. Smaller companies lead the way in job creation but they often overlook training as a key investment in longer term growth. Skillnets has always paid special attention to the needs of small firms in all its initiatives.

As this report shows we have also laid emphasis on creating a culture of life-long learning among employees and helping those with low basic skills to move up the skills chain.

The accreditation of prior learning and proper certification of training has been high on our agenda and we have formed successful partnerships with a range of educational bodies and with FETAC and HETAC towards this end.

Measuring the impact of training has always presented a challenge to trainers and enterprises alike and Skillnets has played an important role in building skills of practitioners in this crucial area. If enterprises cannot see or show the value of training they will continue to remain ambivalent around its implementation.

Recognising that the enterprise-led approach has made a positive contribution to raising the profile of enterprise training in Ireland, the Government has now granted a new mandate to Skillnets for the period 2005 – 2010. Up to €55 million will be made available from the National Training Fund. This

provides significant new support and funding to business and industry to boost the skills levels across companies and their employees. This opportunity for developing human potential can underpin the competitiveness of firms as well as increase the long term career opportunities and employability of employees.

As we move forward, Irish business continues to grow and adapt to change. Training is a crucial element in that process and may yet prove decisive in helping us to sustain a competitive edge. Skillnets will play its part in promoting not just more training, but excellence in training at all levels.

Domhnall Mac Domhnaill
Chairman, Skillnets Ltd.

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About Skillnets

Skillnets is an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of learning as a key element in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness.

Skillnets supports networks of enterprises to engage in training under the Training Networks Programme. These Training Networks, now referred to as 'Skillnets', are led and managed by the enterprises themselves and have created and delivered training programmes across a broad range of industry and service sectors nationwide.

Since 1999, Skillnets has facilitated over 6,100 Irish enterprises in 114 networks to improve the range, scope and quality of training, and allowed over 35,000 employees to improve and meet their skills needs. By the end of the current Training Networks Programme (2006 - 2007) it is estimated a further 3,500 companies and 29,000 employees will have partaken in the Skillnets training programme.

Skillnets stakeholders include the Irish Business and Employers Confederation, Chambers Ireland, the Construction Industry Federation, the Small Firms Association and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions as well as the thousands of enterprises and trainees we work with on a day-to-day basis.

Skillnets' strategy is to support companies from all sectors in the economy to engage in training, but does so exclusively through networks of companies. This approach allows companies to achieve economies of scale, increase efficiency, lower costs and provide training that is more

relevant to individual sectors or types of companies. There is of course also a significant benefit to be achieved through the sharing of business experience and advice via networking opportunities afforded by Skillnets involvement.

All training and development activities are supported and enterprises are given the ownership of all training strategies and plans to ensure they meet enterprise needs.

Skillnets is funded by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment from the resources of the National Training Fund.



Key Features of the Skillnets Model

- Enterprise-led approach to enhance credibility and maximise participation by industry
- Focus on capacity building and development of programmes by enterprises themselves
- High level of ownership at enterprise level
- Collaborative or group approaches with common management and overheads
- Regional or sectoral basis focus
- High SME involvement
- Professional network facilitation
- Partnership processes
- Involvement of a wide range of learning stakeholders
- Flexibility and responsiveness to enterprise needs
- Co-investment by Skillnets and enterprises in skills development
- Support infrastructures and advisory mechanisms

What is a Training Network?

A 'Skillnet' (or training network) is a group of three or more enterprises that decide to cooperate as a group in order to undertake a project or activity that individual members of the group would be unable to undertake as successfully acting alone.

Network Promoters

The majority of Skillnet/network leaders and promoters are industry associations and federations and chambers of commerce (i.e. employer organisations) and trade unions (employee organisations).

Individual companies also act as promoters on behalf of the Skillnet members. Alternatively, some Skillnets have created companies (of which their members are subscribers) in order to assume joint responsibility for the process. In a small number of cases, enterprise-support bodies or educational establishments have promoted networks. This usually occurs where support agencies have a history of working with a particular enterprise group or where enterprises are very small. In these cases, a management

committee of enterprise members is established to ensure that the enterprises maintain control of the process.

Network Structure

In each training network/Skillnet, enterprises form steering and management groups to oversee and direct the process. These groups, comprised of a representative group of enterprises in the network, meet on a regular basis to make management decisions on behalf of the network.

Network Activity

In general each individual Skillnet carries out the following fundamental tasks:

- Analyse the training and development needs of participants, identifying skills requirements and priorities for action
- Assess the strategic importance of long-term competitiveness of the skills identified
- Identify solutions/delivery mechanisms to meet those needs
- Develop network structures and processes to establish the operation of the network as a basis for specified training activity
- Organise the delivery and implementation of training measures
- Promote collaboration and co-operative activity, sharing of knowledge and the exchange of best practice
- Monitor and measure results, providing performance indicators and quality standards for training activity engaged in by firms
- Feedback to Skillnets on the progress, outcomes and impact of network training activities and processes

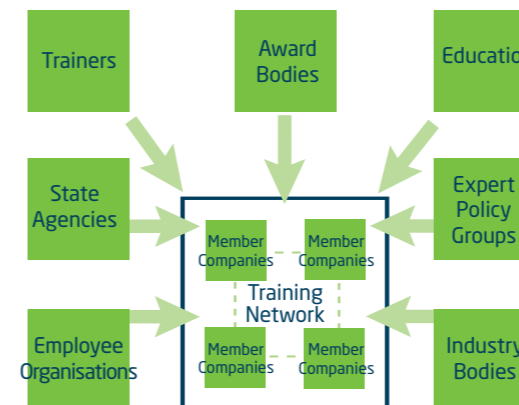


Figure 1: A Skillnet Training Network

A Typical Network

Figure 1 shows a typical Skillnet network – the core of which is the member companies. In most of the networks the Network Manager is the key co-ordinator, providing the professional, developmental input. Others who provide services to the Skillnet include trainers, business advisors and academics. The key driver of the Skillnet is the Promoter, who signs the contracts on behalf of the Skillnet. In many cases a separate company was formed to manage the Skillnet and it signed on behalf of the Skillnet company members.

Skillnets 2002 - 2005

Training Networks Programme Overview

During the period 2002 - 2005, Skillnets conducted two open calls for proposals; both were significantly over-subscribed. As a result of these calls, 56 networks were approved serving a wide range of sectors, regions and training needs. On average, networks operated for a period of 24 months with member companies ranging from micro to large enterprises.

The high level outputs achieved were:

- 3,817 companies participated – an increase of 65% on the previous 3 year period
- 22,500 workers were trained – an increase of 75% on the previous 3 years
- Grants of €13.5 million were committed to Training Networks over the period
- Companies invested over €7.5m in training through Training Networks which amounted to 35% of the total network costs
- A total of 56 training networks were supported
- 95% of companies would recommend participation in training networks to others

Increase in the Uptake of Training

- 71% of companies surveyed indicated that they had increased their training spend as a result of participation in Skillnets
- 29% of trainees had not participated in any training outside of Skillnets in the last 3 years
- 70% of companies surveyed indicated that they had increased the number of employees being trained as a result of participation in Skillnets
- 43% of companies surveyed had developed a training plan for the first time



Figure 1.2: Breakdown of Subject Area by Course

Expanding the Range of Training Provision

- 3,773 formal training courses and 1,261 non-formal learning activities were delivered
- 37% of courses delivered were independently certified

Innovation in Workplace Learning

- There were high levels of innovation in the content and delivery of training programmes with 78% of courses being specifically customised to meet network member company needs
- 1,073 courses were totally new programmes designed by the networks themselves
- 17% of all courses were delivered 'on-the-job' or via distance learning while over 60% were conducted in the traditional classroom format

Increase in Participation by Small and Micro Enterprises in Training

- Small and micro businesses (less than 50 employees) accounted for 82% of all companies supported
- Of these small businesses 49% are classed as micro-enterprises (employing less than 9 people)

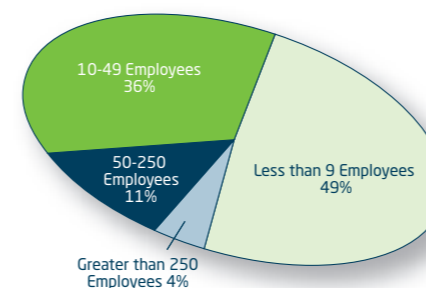


Figure 1.3: Breakdown of Companies by Size

Impact on Companies

Businesses taking part in the Programme stated that the largest impacts were:

- Improved employee satisfaction and morale (72% of companies)
- Improvements in quality (69% of companies)
- Increased productivity (66% of companies)
- Improved teamworking (65% of companies)

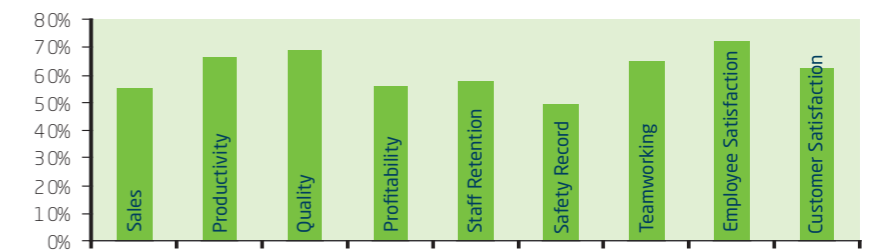


Figure 1.4: Impact on Companies

Impact on Areas of Special Need

Skillnets is reaching many workers targeted for training support in various national policy initiatives:

- There was a strong level of participation by older age groups with 33% of trainees aged over 40
- 13% of trainees were owner managers of small and micro businesses
- 9% of trainees were in the unskilled/semi-skilled occupational category. This shows an increase in participation by this group of workers
- 50% of trainees had not received a formal training qualification for at least 10 years
- 42% of trainees were female, in line with female participation in the workforce.

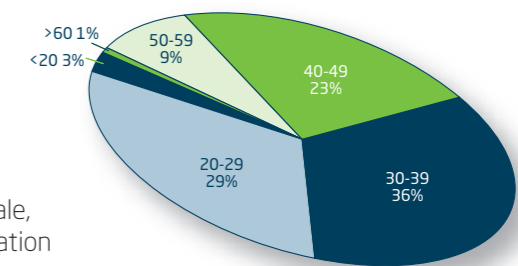


Figure 1.5: Breakdown of Trainees by Age

Skillnets 2002 - 2005

Key Performance Areas

Enterprise-led Approach

Unique to Skillnets is an enterprise-led approach to training whereby companies and their employees are directly and significantly involved in the identification, design, delivery and evaluation of training systems and processes, either as lead bodies or in partnership with other organisations. Such "other organisations" may include state agencies, advisory groups, certifying bodies, education establishments, training providers and so on.

90% of companies surveyed at the end of 2005 found that the enterprise-led approach was an effective model for the delivery of in-company training. 82% found that this approach was more effective than alternative approaches. By giving firms a real say in how to meet their training needs, Skillnets has shown that an enterprise-led approach is workable, practical and effective.

It has also shown that companies are prepared to give the commitment (in time and money) and take responsibility, which such an approach requires. Companies are motivated to partake in training networks by many factors. More than 80% of companies surveyed cited flexibility, relevance, quality and cost as key features that attract them toward training networks.

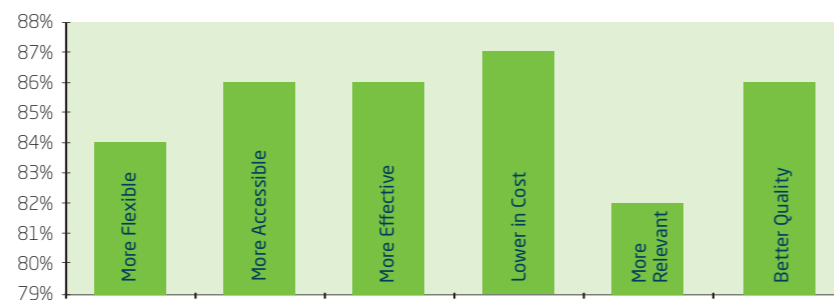


Figure 2: Company Feedback on the Skillnets Model

Focus on SMEs

The main features of an enterprise-led approach can be summarised as:

- Enterprise owned and led - where the enterprises control and decide on all aspects of the training process
- Business ethos - where the training is designed to meet business needs
- Flexible - minimal constraints on enterprises allowing firms to identify their own needs
- Co-funded - enterprises contribute financially both in terms of cash and resources
- Innovative - trying new concepts and ideas, adding to the body of knowledge, bringing new ideas to existing enterprises
- Wide range of potential partners
- Owners/managers and employees coming together
- Large companies transferring knowledge to SMEs
- Professional inputs from trainers, academia and other advisors

Over 82% of the participating companies in the Training Networks Programme are either small enterprises (employing less than 50) or micro enterprises (employing less than 9). For many of these firms their involvement in Skillnets is their first experience of any serious training and for others it is their first time to be involved in making real and informed decisions about what training to provide. Skillnets is assisting small firms to access training more easily, more quickly and more cost effectively.

Skillnets is helping to de-mystify training for small companies by developing practical tools to analyse and meet training needs,

quickly, locally and effectively. An interesting feature is the collaboration in most networks between large and small firms and the active partnership between owner-managers and employees within the companies.

Montip Engineering, based in Cashel, Co. Tipperary is a small company that has been involved in Skillnets for over six years. The company has found the advice and help received from other network participants to be invaluable. According to Gerry Horan, "over the next two years our intention is to increase turnover to €1.7 million and then to €3 million with a 7% net profit on both. Our thinking was less ambitious before we became involved in the South East Micro Skillnet. We believe we're going to achieve these targets. They now seem achievable to us."

Gerry Horan,
Managing Director, Montip Engineering

For Garry Gleeson, Managing Director of a small construction business, in the South East the decision to join Skillnets "was one of the most beneficial decisions I've ever made in regard to our company's growth. Every day I see tangible benefits of our involvement in this programme. I do sometimes wonder how Constructive Solutions would be operating today if we hadn't taken that step, and committed to getting the training we so badly needed. Our employees have also greatly benefited from our involvement in the programme, they now enjoy learning on the job and are eager to increase their skill sets moving forward."

Garry Gleeson,
Managing Director, Constructive Solutions Ltd.

Developing Sectoral Approaches

A special feature of Skillnets has been the predominance of the sectoral approach to the formation and development of training networks. This was not a requirement imposed by Skillnets but a trend that emerged from the companies themselves.

Working together to meet common training needs with other firms from within the same sector makes good sense for a variety of reasons but it has not always been easy for Irish companies to collaborate along these lines.

Many firms may have been reluctant to work with their close competitors for fear of losing competitive advantage through sharing sensitive information and knowledge and the prospect of "employee poaching". It has been Skillnets experience that training is a sufficiently neutral and win/win context that these fears have not been barriers to collaboration.

The positive experience of companies in the sector-based Skillnets augurs well for greater sector-based collaboration among firms across a wide range of functions in the future.

As shown in **Figure 2.1** the largest number of networks are in the Services, Manufacturing, Technology and Retail/Wholesale sectors.

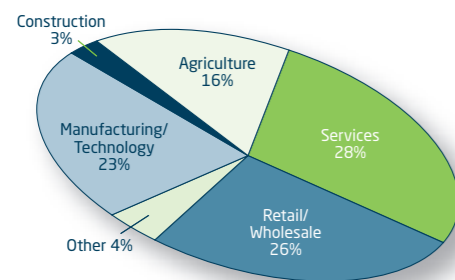


Figure 2.1: Breakdown of Networks by Sector

Developing Regional Responses

The guiding principle behind all Skillnets networks is that collaborative responses to enterprise training needs have many advantages over individual company approaches. This is even more evident when a network is formed primarily on needs and synergies with a vocational focus. The resultant bond among network members is strong with demonstrable outcomes.

Skillnets has supported 21 regionally focused networks (36% of all networks in 2002 – 2005) in response to an increasing demand from regionally located companies. This demand has been linked to a new understanding within firms that competitive advantage is now to be found more in an interdependent rather than independent business environment.

Overcoming relative disadvantages arising from geographic location has also been a strong motivation for companies to join a network. Outside of the main urban centres, companies have found it more difficult and costly to access both the range and quality of training providers they need. Buying power attained through collaboration not only removes this barrier but also allows trainers to deliver courses in regional locations with obvious extra benefits for companies and their employees.

Regionally based Skillnet networks have also discovered many additional benefits: new social, professional, and exchange relationships that had not existed prior to the Skillnet have taken root. These relationships also afford members the opportunity to build alliances with other agencies, be they local government, educational or voluntary bodies. This opportunity to co-ordinate efforts and exchange information helps create new local knowledge.

For SMEs, regional training networks have provided them the opportunity to access expertise from other organisations that they may not have been able to access outside the network support structure. Past research has shown that those SME owner-managers who engage in effective interaction within networks are more likely to invest in training and human resource development, thus making their businesses more likely to succeed in the longer term.

Skillnets mission is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and workplace learning, as a key element in sustaining national competitiveness



Measuring the Impact of Training and Development in the Workplace

Skillnets has worked with enterprises to both highlight the importance of measuring payback on training and to produce tools and supports to enable a wider range of Irish companies to adopt these measurement strategies.

If the adoption of training by Irish companies is to increase beyond its current low level then it is vital to prove the benefits of training in terms of its contribution to business goals.

To facilitate this process, Skillnets commissioned a major pilot project to test out methods to identify the impact and return on investment in training at all levels. 9 networks and 18 network member companies took part in the pilot. Skillnets used the much-respected models of Drs Jack Phillips and Donald Kirkpatrick, testing these on training interventions and reporting on the results. This has led to a new system for evaluating training within Skillnets and significant adoption of advanced methods for measuring the return on investment in training.

Networks are increasingly keen to measure the impact of training with 89% of Skillnets supported courses evaluated at Level 1 (post-course reaction), and 39% of courses at Levels 2/3 (measuring skills retention and application of knowledge in the workplace).

Evaluation processes have been implemented to assess the quality of training and the reaction of trainees which show:

- High levels of satisfaction across all networks from participants
- Learning with and from the experience of people from other companies and sectors was a key success factor for many trainees
- Positive changes in behaviour, skills and knowledge
- Companies are implementing results of learning in the workplace



Diageo were able to measure a 121% return on investment (ROI) on a cross-skilling training programme.

Lionbridge Technologies measured a 32% ROI on a management and supervisory skills training programme.

Laepple measured a 150% ROI on a safety training initiative.

Certification Partnerships

Skillnets has a strong commitment to the National Qualifications Framework and has facilitated a number of networks to attain certification for newly developed courses through the recognised awarding bodies.

This has included:

- Development of 4 National Certificate Programmes
- Development of over 20 FETAC approved training modules in the following sectors: plastics, food, retail, leisure, and transportation

37% of courses run under the 2002 – 2005 Skillnets programme were independently certified compared to 24% in the previous round (1999 – 2002). 73% of the certification was provided by an awards body recognised within the National Qualifications Framework (FETAC and HETAC).

Where existing modules within the respective FETAC and HETAC frameworks do not meet the specific needs of the sector represented by the network, networks have opted to develop their own modules for submission to the appropriate awarding bodies.

Enterprises are becoming more aware of the value of certified training with 56% of Skillnets member companies surveyed indicating that it was 'very important.'

51% of companies considered that certification was assisting with employee retention.

Six Skillnets Networks in conjunction with the National College of Ireland collaborated to produce a generic Diploma consisting of 8 modules, focusing on designing a credible and practical study programme for enterprises in the area of business management. The networks involved were: BME Skillnet, Designers' Training Skillnet, Digital Media Forum Skillnet, IASC Skillnet and Westmeath Manufacturing Skillnet.

NETS Skillnet collaborated with the **SLM Manufacturing Skillnet**, in enabling craft workers to gain formal recognition for ongoing re-skilling and up-skilling. A FETAC level 6 Certificate entitled: 'Certificate in Maintenance Skills Technology' was developed.

First Polymer Training Skillnet developed a National Certificate in Polymer Processing involving 14 locally devised modules.

Catnet Skillnet has developed 4 modules that will make up a new 'National Certificate in Construction Administration' for employees working as site administrators in the construction sector.

Low Basic Skills and Literacy

Skillnets has worked with networks and enterprises to develop awareness and responses for workers with low basic skills. Over €500,000 was specifically allocated during 2004 – 2005 to 19 networks to address low basic skills thematic activity. This included the provision of basic training e.g. targeting workers with literacy & numeracy needs & English language training for international workers.

Outputs Included:

- 900 workers trained
- 14 in-company and career trainers undertook trainer-training
- Production of a promotional and resource support DVD
- "Everybody's Business: Literacy, Numeracy and Language in the Workplace," a guidelines manual was produced to assist employers, trade unions, employees and education providers address low basic skills in the workplace
- Case Studies researching and documenting the introduction of interventions to address low basic skills in the workplace
- An E-learning programme for workers with low basic skills was piloted and certified by FETAC – "Manufacturing Systems and Standards E-learning Module"
- A national survey of 160 micro-companies was undertaken, which recorded the experiences of small and micro companies in encountering and addressing the issue of low basic skills

Skillnets mission is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and workplace learning, as a key element in sustaining national competitiveness



Skillnets Strategy 2005 - 2010

Recognising that the enterprise-led approach has made a positive contribution to raising the profile of enterprise training in Ireland, the Government has granted a new five year mandate to Skillnets for 2005 - 2010. Up to €55 million has been made available from the National Training Fund. This provides significant new support and funding to industry to boost the skills levels across companies and their employees. This opportunity for developing human potential can underpin the competitiveness of firms as well as increase the long-term career opportunities and employability of employees.

Skillnets has approved 54 networks for the period 2006 - 2007.

Mission

Skillnets role is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and workplace learning, as a key element in sustaining national competitiveness.

Skillnets will continue to foster and support an enterprise-led, networked and partnership approach to the provision of enterprise training and expand and develop that approach by supporting innovation and enhanced workplace learning.

The primary aim of Skillnets will be to increase participation in enterprise training by firms to improve competitiveness and provide improved access for workers to skills development.

Approach

Skillnets will continue to adopt a broadly based approach, and support the uptake of training in a range of sectors from those with high growth potential, to workers in vulnerable sectors. Skillnets will continue to place a special emphasis on small and medium sized companies and provide higher levels of support to networks involving smaller companies.

The Training Networks Programme

The Training Networks Programme will ensure that, insofar as possible, training is available to employees at all levels in participating organisations. In particular, Skillnets will encourage firms to include the training needs of workers with low basic skills by piloting appropriate work-based approaches.

Strategic Pillars

In implementing its programme of activity from 2006 onwards, Skillnets will focus primarily on the following strategic areas:

- Pillar 1 - Driving skills strategies through sectors and partnerships to encourage training participation at sector level
- Pillar 2 - Growing the skills base by giving workers access to life-long learning opportunities
- Pillar 3 - Developing local learning responses to allow enterprises to develop training opportunities for employees at local level
- Pillar 4 - Building best practice in learning and development in all aspects of the design, delivery, evaluation and dissemination of enterprise training

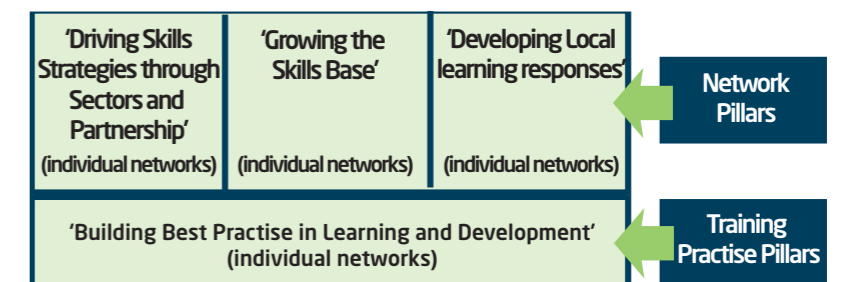


Figure 3: Skillnets Strategic Framework 2005 - 2010

Networks in the 2002 - 2005 programme

Network Name	Sector	Region	Website
Arrow Skillnet	Mixed	National	www.chambersireland.ie
Associated Food Producers (AFPS) Skillnet	Food & Beverage	National	www.craftbutchers.ie
Bakers & Confectioners (FCBA) Skillnet	Food & Beverage	National	www.fcbskillnet.ie
BizWest Skillnet	Mixed Sector	West	www.bizwest.ie
Border, Midlands, East (BME) Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Border, Midlands, East	www.bmetraining.com
Brewing Skillnet	Brewing	National	
Carlow Kilkenny Training Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Carlow, Kilkenny	www.cktraining.ie
CAT Net Skillnet	Construction	National	www.catnet.cif.ie
Ceramnet Skillnet	Ceramics	National	www.ceramnet-ireland.com
CIF West Skillnet	Construction	West	www.cifwestskillnet.ie
Consumer Food SME Skillnet	Food & Beverage	National	
Craft Butchers Skillnet	Butchers	National	www.acbiskillnet.org
CREST Skillnet	Retail	National	www.crestireland.com
Designers Training Skillnet	Design	National	www.designireland.ie
Digital Forum Skillnet	Digital Media	Dublin	www.digitalmediaforum.net
Enterprise Partnership (SIPTU College) Skillnet	Mixed Sector	National	
FICTA Skillnet	Services	National	
First Polymer Training Skillnet	Plastics	National	www.firstpolymer.com
Fresh Produce Skillnet	Food Production	Dublin & Mid East	
Galway Executive Skillnet	Small Business	Galway	www.galwayexecutiveskillnet.com
Gréasán na Mean Skillnet	Media	Connacht Gaeltacht	
Hospitality Management Skillnet	Hotels	National	www.ihci.ie
Hotbed Skillnet	Small Business	National	www.hotbedskillnet.com
HPI Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Dublin & Mid East	
IASC Skillnet	Seafood	National	www.iasc.ie
IBEC Retail Skillnet	Retail	National	
IFA Skillnet	Agriculture	National	www.ifaskillnet.ie
IIFANet Skillnet	Transport/Logistics	Dublin & Mid East	www.iifa.ie
Irish Fashion Industry Federation (IFIF) Skillnet	Clothing	Dublin	
Institute of Packaging (IOP) Skillnet	Packaging	National	
Irish Software Association (ISA) Skillnet	Software	National	www.isaskillnet.net
ISME Owner Manager Skillnet	Small Business	National	www.isme.ie
ITAG Skillnet	Technology	Galway	www.itag.ie
Learning Waves Skillnet	Radio	National	www.learningwaves.ie
Leisure & Amenity Skillnet	Leisure Sector	National	www.ilamireland.ie
Mallow Chamber Skillnet	Mixed Sector	South West	
Medical Devices (MDA) Skillnet	Medical Devices	National	www.ibec.ie/mda
MIDAS Skillnet	Micro-electronic Design	National	www.midasireland.com
National Engineering Training Skillnet (NETS)	Engineering	National	www.lets-skillnet.com
National Partnership Training Skillnet	Mixed Sector	National	www.npts.info
North Mayo Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Mayo	www.northmayo.ie
North West Regional Food Skillnet	Food & Beverage	North West	
Northside Business Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Dublin	www.nbsl.ie
Plato Ireland Skillnet	Mixed Sector	National	www.plato.ie
Refrigeration Technology Skillnet	Refrigeration	National	www.refrigerationskillnet.ie
Renewable Energy Skillnet	Construction	West	www.renewableenergy.ie
SLM Food & Beverage Skillnet	Food & Beverage	National	www.slmskillnet.com
South East Micro Skillnet	Small Business	South East	
Southern Corridor Skillnet	Mixed Sector	South	www.southerncorridor.ie
SRMD Skillnet	Mixed Sector	South West	www.corkchamber.ie
TsunamiMat Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Mid West	www.tsunamat.com
Waterford Chamber Skillnet	Mixed Sector	Waterford	www.waterfordchamber.ie
Western Credit Union Skillnet	Credit Unions	West	
Western Organic Network (WON) Skillnet	Agriculture	West	www.westernorganicnetwork.com
Westmeath Manufacturing Skillnet	Manufacturing	Westmeath	

Key Activities and Events 2002 - 2005

Date	Event
October 2002	Call for Proposals issued
October 2002	127 Applications from Networks for Development and Full grants
January 2003	Decisions issued to applicants
January 2003	Development phase networks commence
April 2003	21 Strand A full networks commence
	Development Phase completed
April 2003	Development Phase networks assessed and approved
May 2003	21 Further Networks commence (as a result of Development phase)
June 2003	'Breaking the Mould' 1999 - 2002 Dissemination Conference
	Skillnets Case Studies, Network Directory & Final Report 1999 - 2002 published
September 2003	Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Network Managers commences
November 2003	Supplementary Call for Proposals issued
December 2003	49 Applications received
January 2004	14 Additional Networks commence
March 2004	42 Network Managers complete the Professional Development Programme
March 2004	Return on Investment Pilot study launched - 9 Networks involved
August 2004	Skillnets Network Directory & Profiles 2002 - 2005 published
August 2004	Low Basics Skills (LBS) Initiative launched
September 2004	Deadline for receipt of Applications for LBS Initiative
	19 LBS Projects approved
September 2004	'Learning Our Way to the Top' Skillnets Conference
January 2005	Call for Proposals April - December 2005 issued 44 Networks approved
January/February 2005	Invitation to panel of Network Development Facilitators issued
	57 Applications received
February 2005	Network Development Facilitators Training
March 2005	Skillnets Story DVD launched
March 2005	The Training Networks Programme 2005 - 2010 produced
March 2005	New Skillnets Mandate 2005 - 2010 issued and launch of Training Networks Programme 2005 - 2010
	Call for Proposals for Development Grants issued
March & April 2005	Training Networks Programme 2006 - 2007 Awareness Seminars held in Dublin, Cork, Ennis, Sligo, Athlone and Kilkenny
April 2005	103 Development Grant Applications received
April 2005	'Measuring the Impact of Training & Development in the Workplace' Report launched & Conference held
May 2005	39 Networks commence Development Phase
June 2005	Call for Full Proposals, 2006 - 2007 issued
September 2005	76 Full Applications received
October 2005	54 Networks approved
January 2006	54 Networks commence activity



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Skillnets Stakeholders:



As Rann Fostair, Skills agus Fionnachtas
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



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