


Guidelines and Application Form for Development Grants

SK-105

Boosting
Skills and
Productivity

Training Networks
Programme
2005 - 2010

The logo for Skillnets, featuring the word "Skillnets" in a white, sans-serif font with a green swoosh underline. Below it, the words "Networked Learning" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.**Skillnets**
Networked Learning



The purpose of this document is to help individuals, companies or organisations to establish networks in order to fund and support their training activities.

Skillnets Training Networks have proven themselves to be excellent vehicles to deliver enterprise-led training. They provide businesses of common interest, location, or ambition with training and other performance-boosting activities. Networks work because the programmes they deliver are designed by the network members, for the network members and so are tailored to members' real needs.

This document includes an Application Form for a Development Grant. It also gives guidelines for filling out the form. The purpose of the Development Grant is to provide seed funding to encourage people to identify groups of common interest and form them into a network. Once formed, the network can apply for more substantial funding under the Training Networks Programme, funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and managed by Skillnets.

The document also gives some of the background to Skillnets and the Training Networks Programme, together with timelines.

Skillnets Ltd

Skillnets is an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the facilitation of enterprise training and workplace learning. It was established in 1999 to encourage and add impetus to Irish business's drive towards the adoption of best practice standards in human resource development. The organisation is led by employer and employee stakeholders - IBEC, CCI, SFA, CIF, ICTU - in partnership with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and receives funds from the National Training Fund.

Our mission is to provide companies and their people with new, relevant and flexible methods of upskilling staff and enhancing business performance.

In 2005, Skillnets has been awarded a new five year mandate by Minister Michéal Martin, which brings to Irish industry a significant new fund to support companies with their training and development needs.

Skillnets' enterprise-led approach to training allows companies and their staff decide on training needs, and develop the solutions to those needs. Enterprises are free to choose whatever training methods, courses, trainers or priorities which are most relevant to their companies and have those choices supported by flexible and immediate funding to make them happen. In this way enterprises have full ownership of all the training solutions. Skillnets provides facilitation, information and funding to enable companies to deliver the solutions that they feel are most appropriate to their size, sector and situation.

This new approach to enterprise training has been enthusiastically welcomed by companies, staff, industry bodies, employers, and trade unions throughout the country. To date over 5,000 companies and 30,000 employees have participated in new training opportunities which Skillnets has supported. For more information visit our website at www.skillnets.com.

The Training Networks Programme

Skillnets provides help to companies through the Training Networks Programme. This programme allows groups of companies to come together in a Training Network (or 'Skillnet') to achieve a common purpose or address a shared issue of importance to the development of skills and their long-term competitiveness.

In each Network, companies work together to jointly address their training needs, collaborate with other enterprises, and engage experts, trainers, certifying bodies, industry bodies and others to work with them to achieve their goals.

Each Training Network is made up of a group of companies which have shared training needs. This may mean that the companies are in the same sector, the same region, the same supply chain or are all SME's which face particular barriers to addressing skills in the small business context.

The companies in the Network identify what skills needs in their organisations that they want to address and work together to implement a plan to achieve their goals.

Companies across 90 Networks to date have found that training in the Network context is:

- > **More cost efficient** as they have better buying power, as well as Skillnets funding
- > **More relevant** as the companies can commission training that is suited exactly to member needs
- > **More flexible** as training is delivered at times that suit the company
- > **More accessible** as training is provided locally either near the company or at company sites
- > **More informed** as companies learn from and support one another in the process
- > **Better facilitated** as companies have full time management staff to organise Network training and other activities on their behalf

- > **More useful** to the companies as the training that is developed is directly aligned to the companies' needs and strategies

- > **More suited to enterprise needs** as companies themselves decide all aspects of the Network's strategy, plans and activities

- > **More beneficial** as companies in the Network receive new information, share ideas, develop new relationships with their peers in other companies and tap into a wide range of business opportunities that arise from being part of an inter-firm Network.

The Training Networks Programme brings these opportunities to firms of any size, in all industry sectors and the needs of all employee groups, from owner-managers, to professional, technical and production staff, can be included in Network plans.

A full list of previous Training Networks and their activities can be found on the Skillnets website. Many of these Networks will be continuing, so companies have a choice of joining an existing Network or forming a new Network.

This document contains guidelines and an Application Form for those companies, enterprise bodies, industry groups, employee groups, sector federations or others that may wish to form a new Training Network in 2005, with a view to applying for full network funding under the Training Networks Programme in 2006 and beyond.

Networks approved as a result of this process will receive a two year commitment from Skillnets to carry out their Network plans.

Key Dates for Network Promoters in 2005

March 2005

Launch of Skillnets mandate
2005-2010

9th September 2005

**Final date for submission
of full Network proposals**

March 2005

Call for proposals from enterprises

September 2005

Selection of applications by Skillnets

22nd April 2005

**Closing date for Applications
for Development Grants**

By 14th November 2005

Offers of funding issued to
successful applicants

By 16th May 2005

Development Grant approvals issued

December 2005

Contracts issued to Training Networks

May-August

Skillnets Workshops for Networks
under development

2006-2007

Training Networks operational period

Applications to establish Training Networks may
also be submitted to Skillnets in future years.



Contents

4

Section A

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

Page No.

5	A1 What are Development Grants?
5	A2 Who can apply?
5	A3 What activities are covered?
5	A4 What are the Financial Guidelines?
7	A5 Deadlines and requirements
7	A6 What is the duration for Development Grants?
7	A7 Assessment and approval?
8	A8 What will happen if the application is successful?
8	A9 Resources Available to Networks
9	A10 Frequently Asked Questions

Section B

Application Form for Development Grants

12	B1 Applicant Details
12	B2 Organisations Associated with the Development Application
14	B3 Overview of Proposed Network
16	B4 Development Activities Plan
17	B5 Network Development Budget
19	B6 Signature Sheet

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

A1 What are Development Grants?

Development Grants are awards of funding (grants) from Skillnets to groups of companies or enterprise bodies that would like to develop a Training Network and devise full Network proposals. At the end of the development period, the new Network then submits a proposal to Skillnets for funding of their Training Network plans for a two year period.

The Development Grant is made available to support companies in meeting the resource needs of a development process. This usually involves bringing companies together, identifying the Network objectives, developing the Network plan, investigating training needs and developing plans to meet these training needs. Training consultants or other experts are usually engaged by companies to carry out this work on their behalf and Skillnets provides funding to enterprise groups to support this.

Development Grants of up to €20,000 are available to applicants approved under the development process. In the case of very large scale Networks or significant sectoral or national initiatives, a higher grant may be made available at the discretion of Skillnets.

A2 Who can apply for a Network Development Grant?

Any organisation can apply for a Development Grant to co-ordinate the process of establishing a new Training Network.

Applications for Development Grants can be submitted to Skillnets by enterprises, enterprise-led associations or other facilitating bodies committed to the development of training excellence in Irish industry. However, at the end of the development phase, the enterprises must take clear ownership of the new Training Network to be eligible for further funding support.

A3 What are eligible activities for Network development?

In the development phase, up to 100% of costs can be funded by Skillnets. However applicants are encouraged to provide matching contributions to the Development Grants and applications which also involve matching investment by enterprises will be prioritised.

The Development Grant can be used for any relevant activities required for the development of a Network and making an application to Skillnets in September.

These may include:

- i. holding seminars, meetings, or discussion groups,
- ii. producing materials on the Network ideas to recruit other members,
- iii. identifying the skills need of the firms and their staff,
- iv. bringing in external consultants to help the companies with facilitation, advice or guidance in developing strategies and plans,
- v. deciding on the operating procedures and organisation of the Network,
- vi. deciding on how the Network will be managed and by whom,
- vii. identifying potential trainers and other providers,
- viii. bringing in external consultants to help draft the application and cost Network plans.

A4 What are the Financial Guidelines?

A budget template is included in the application form which allows applicants to:

- (i) outline the **project costs** required to carry out Network development activities
- (ii) outline the **sources of funds** required to meet the Network development costs

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

(i) Project Costs

In a Network development project, expenditure may include:

- > Costs associated with the project management of the development activity
- > Costs of external consultants
- > Costs of events and meetings
- > Costs of carrying out training needs analysis
- > Administration overheads such as post, telephone, stationery etc
- > Costs associated with communicating the Network development to potential members - information materials, publications, websites etc

All costs included in the application budget must be real and auditable. Applicants should aim to explain the basis of the cost by clarifying or providing further details to allow Skillnets to understand how the costs have been estimated. No notional costs can be included, therefore all payments from the grant can only be made in relation to actual invoices. Expenditure on Network development activities will only be eligible for inclusion if they are incurred after the date on which all approval documentation has been completed.

All expenditure must be calculated in a manner which respects generally accepted accounting principles and any appropriate legislation, and a dedicated bank account must be set up for the development project.

In general, costs will be incurred in the following areas:

- > **Current Staff Costs** - The cost of staff currently employed by an organisation may be included in the budget. However backup documentation will be required in relation to their time spent on the project. This will include (a) verification of salary and associated employer costs (only actual salaries can be included in the budget) (b) timesheets outlining the activities carried out by the staff member.
- > **Consultant Costs** - Applicants are asked to outline the daily rates of consultants to be involved in the

Network development phase. If specific consultants have not been identified, an estimated consultant rate can be included in the budget at application stage. Verification of actual daily rates of consultants employed will be required at the end of the development phase.

- > **Costs of Events** - Applicants can include all actual invoiced costs in relation to any events, seminars or meetings.
- > **Administration Overheads** - As a general guideline, costs associated with the management or administration of the development project such as office facilities, computers, telephone, etc. should not exceed 10% of the overall budget (i.e. €2,000).
- > **Materials/Publications** - The cost of leaflets, promotional or information literature may be required to develop and promote the Networks.
- > **Accountants Costs** - The applicant will be asked to provide an accountants' certificate at the end of the development period. This will verify the income and expenditure on the Network development activities. On receipt of this certificate, Skillnets will issue the second grant payment (20% of the total grant). Therefore applicants should include the accountant's fees in the budget.

- > **Other Costs** - Any other costs that are reasonably required by the applicant to carry out the Network development project can be included in the budget.

(ii) Sources of Funding

- > **Skillnets Grant** - Skillnets will provide a grant of up to €20,000 towards Network development activities.
- > **Other funding bodies** - Other agencies may also provide funding towards the Network development. If this is the case, applicants are asked to identify these funds on the budget template.
- > **Matching funds** - Companies or organisations associated with the development process can also contribute to the funds. This money is called 'matching funds' and is a cash contribution that companies or other private sector organisations make to the development fund. Where matching funds will

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

be made available, these should also be outlined under the funding section of the budget.

A5 Deadlines and Requirements

Applications should be submitted to Skillnets not later than **5.00 pm, Friday 22nd April 2005**.

Applications can be submitted in either of the following formats:

1. SOFT COPY

by email to grants@skillnets.com **with a hard copy signature sheet to the address below**

Or 2. HARD COPY

by posting back the completed form to:

**Development Grant Applications
Skillnets Ltd
Level 1, Frankfort Court, Dundrum, Dublin 14**

Please note that if an application is being submitted by email, a signature sheet is also required by post. Both the signature sheet and the email must be received by the deadline above.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that emails are received by Skillnets. Applicants are advised to confirm that soft copies have been received before the closing date.

Incomplete applications, or applications not meeting the requirements outlined in this document, will not be considered.

No discussions on applications will be entered into by Skillnets after the application date, and assessments will be made **ONLY** on the information provided in the application. Applicants can append any further details or additional documents in addition to the application form when making an application.

All decisions on the awarding of Development Grants are at the sole discretion of Skillnets and decisions issued will be final.

If all available development funds have not been committed as a result of this process, a further offer of Development Grants may be published.

A6 What is the duration for Development Grants?

The primary purpose of Development Grants is to enable enterprise groups to prepare comprehensive Training Network proposals for submission to Skillnets in September 2005.

Therefore activities supported by the Development Grant will generally take place between May 2005 and August 2005.

Please note that only costs that are incurred after the date on which all approval documentation has been completed are eligible for inclusion in Development Grants.

A7 Assessment and approval

The criteria for the selection of proposals will include areas such as:

- > Completeness of application forms
- > Engagement of enterprises and enterprise bodies associated with the application
- > Commitment of organisations to activities proposed
- > Clarity of objectives outlined in the application
- > Competence of applicant to carry out the proposed activities
- > Potential impact of the Network proposed

At the point of submitting Development Grant applications, it is recognised that ideas are in early development and only a small number of enterprises or enterprise bodies may be involved. However, if the application is being made by an organisation that is not an enterprise or enterprise body (e.g. a consultant, trainer, agency or other provider of services to enterprises), the engagement and commitment of an initial group of enterprises to the process is mandatory.

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

A8 What will happen if the application is successful?

Skillnets will inform all applicants of the outcomes of the application process by 16th May 2005.

Applicants will be sent an offer form which they will be required to complete with necessary details of their organisation. All applicants must hold an appropriate legal status to enable Skillnets to award funding.

Applicants will be required to return the offer form. The provisions relating to granting public funds also require that all applicants provide Skillnets with a current and up to date tax clearance certificate before funds can be released.

Grants will be paid in 2 instalments:

1. 80% of the grant will be issued immediately on return of the offer form
2. 20% of the grant will be issued at the end of the development phase

An introductory 2 day workshop for Networks under development will be held on 25th & 26th May 2005.

This will include the following:

- > How to develop Networks
- > Case studies of existing Training Networks
- > Key success factors of Network development
- > How to engage companies in the development process
- > How to make Networks work
- > Developing a Network proposal
- > Tools and materials for companies involved in Network development
- > Support available from the Skillnets office
- > Workshops for Network promoters

It will also give Network promoters and facilitators the opportunity to meet one another, to talk to companies already involved in Training Networks, to learn from the experience of previous promoters, and to meet Skillnets programme managers who will be available to facilitate promoters throughout the development phase.

A schedule of further development workshops will be issued to all Network promoters in May 2005.

A9 Resources Available to Networks

Further information and resources available to networks are listed at the back of this document. These can be downloaded from the Skillnets website at www.skillnets.com or requested from the Skillnets office. Queries can be sent to info@skillnets.com

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

A10 Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply for a Development Grant if I am an existing Network?

No, Development Grants are solely available to develop new Networks; however existing Networks can submit full network proposals.

What help is available from Skillnets in completing application forms?

You can call Skillnets at any time prior to the deadline for Development Grants. Skillnets has a dedicated team of Network advisors on staff that can assist you with any areas of the application form or simply discuss your ideas.

Can I submit an application in September if I do not get approved for a Development Grant?

Yes, any group of enterprises can develop full Network proposals for submission to Skillnets for grant funding in September. All full Network applications will be treated equally, whether they are submitted by a group which has received a Development Grant, are an existing Network, or have not received any previous funding from Skillnets.

Any group can register with Skillnets as a Network Under Development (whether they receive a grant or not). Registered groups will be provided with support and assistance from Skillnets advisors, will be sent all information that they require to develop a Network proposal for September, and will be invited to all development workshops. However, there are only a small number of Development Grants available, so it is not expected that all Networks which are developing proposals for submission to Skillnets in September will receive Development Grants.

What should I do if I am interested in developing a Network but don't know how to go about it?

You should submit a Development Grant application to Skillnets and we will assist you through the process. This will probably involve identifying a Network facilitator who will be able to develop your ideas and bring together other companies that you can work with.

Can an industry federation, industry body, or other existing enterprise group apply to Skillnets for funding?

Yes, any organisation whose membership is comprised of enterprises can apply to Skillnets on behalf of their members.

Are there any restrictions on the type of companies that can apply?

No, there are no restrictions. Companies of any size and from any sector are eligible for Skillnets funding

Are there any restrictions on the type of training that can be supported by Skillnets?

All employee groups and all types of training and development are eligible for support. The only restriction applies to training that is required by law. This should be carried out by all companies whether or not they access training grants.

Who chooses the types of training and who provides that training?

As Skillnets is an enterprise-led initiative, the companies in the Network decide all aspects of the training. Skillnets makes no restrictions on who provides the training or what type of courses the Network delivers.

How do I find consultants to help me develop a Network?

You can work with any consultants that are known to you in developing a Network. Skillnets also has a list of consultants that are available on the Skillnets website - see the Network Facilitator Panel. The consultants' details are provided for your information. These consultants are not endorsed or approved by Skillnets. The responsibility for choosing consultants lies solely with Network promoters.

Guidelines on Applying for Development Grants

Can a trainer submit a Development Grant application?

Any organisation can submit an application to Skillnets. However if you are a service provider to companies (i.e. a trainer, consultant, or support body), you must show evidence of engagement of enterprises on the application. At the end of the development phase, it is essential that all ownership of the Network is passed directly to the companies involved and full Network proposals will only be accepted from the enterprises in the Network.

What funding is available from Skillnets if we do develop a full Network proposal for submission to Skillnets in September?

Up to 75% of the total Network costs can be grant aided. Network costs will usually involve the cost of Network management (staff, offices and overheads), Network events (meetings, seminars, conferences, best practice visits, etc), Network communications (website, literature, reports, publicity materials, etc) and learning activities (trainer fees, training materials, evaluators, certification costs, etc).

Do all proposals have to be from groups in the same sector or industry?

No, proposals can come from any group of companies with a shared need. Networks can be a group of companies in the same town for example, or a group of companies that have a common goal such as training their staff in electronic commerce. Training needs can also apply to any specific group within a company e.g. sales staff, operatives, owner-managers - or to the company as a whole.

When will I know whether my project application has been successful?

All applicants will be issued letters on or before May 16th informing you of the outcome of your application.

Do I need to know which type of Network I want to develop when submitting an application for a Development Grant?

No, you only need to have intent to develop a Network. The type of Network and which pillar best meets your needs will be decided during the development phase. Skillnets can advise you on this as you develop your ideas.

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

11

Please complete the application form, detach and post back to Skillnets by **5.00 pm, Friday 22nd April 2005**.

Development Grant Applications
Skillnets Ltd
Level 1, Frankfort Court, Dundrum, Dublin 14

Alternatively you can download the application form, complete and email back to the Skillnets office:
grants@skillnets.com.

If an application is being made by email, please note that the signatory sheet **must also be signed and posted** to Skillnets by the closing date.

Applicant Organisation
Name of Contact Person

For Skillnets reference only:

Reference number

Decision Code

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

1. Applicant Details

Name of APPLICANT ORGANISATION in relation to this application

(note that the applicant is the organisation or company leading the development process)

Person Responsible for application

Name

Title

Please describe the nature of the Organisation making the application (e.g. company, industry body etc)

Legal Status (e.g. private limited company)

Address

Phone Number

Fax Number

Email address

Website (if applicable)

Have you made a previous application to Skillnets for funding?

Yes No

Please outline experience (if any) of managing or promoting other projects which have received public funding (from Irish agencies, cross border bodies or EU programmes).

Is your organisation currently receiving funding from any other public, EU or other grant-giving agency?

Yes No

If yes please specify

Has your organisation any pending application with any other public, EU or other grant-giving agency?

Yes No

If yes please specify

2. Organisations Associated with the Development Application

Please list the enterprises or other organisations which are associated with this proposal and will be involved in developing the Network ideas, strategies, structures and processes?

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

13

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Company Name

Name of Contact Person

Title of contact person

Phone number of contact person

This person has been contacted in relation to the proposal

Yes No

This person has agreed to participate in the Network development process

Yes No

Note: Please continue to add key people associated with the proposal as required

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

4. Development Activities Plan

What are the main activities that you envisage will be part of the Network development process e.g. identifying Network companies, carrying out training needs analysis, appointing a Network facilitator to support the companies in developing the Network, carrying out research etc

Activity (please outline the activity in as much detail as possible)	Who will be responsible for this activity
1	
2	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

5. Network Development Budget

Please complete the budget below outlining the funds that will be required for the Network development process. Please only complete the sections that will apply to your activities.

Expenditure	
Staff Costs (Please also complete Table 1)	€
Wages	_____
Employer Costs	_____
Travel and subsistence	_____
Consultants (Please also complete Table 2)	
Training Consultants	_____
Other Consultants	_____
Audit/Accountancy	_____
Activity Costs	
Meetings & events	_____
Materials & publications	_____
Other activity costs (please specify)	_____
Overhead Costs	_____
Other Costs (please specify)	_____
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS (€)	_____
Funded by	
	€
Skillnets Grant	_____
Other Funding Bodies (Please specify)	_____
Matching funds	_____
TOTAL PROJECT FUNDS (€)	_____

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

Table 1 - Staff Costs

Name of staff member	Job title	Role in Network development project	Salary (per annum)	No. of days*	Total Cost (€)
Total Staff Costs					

*on Network development activities

Table 2 - Consultants Costs

Consultant name	Role in development project	No. of consulting days	Cost per day	Total
Total Consultants Costs				

Important: Please check that figures entered in Table 1 & 2 are consistent with figures in the main budget.

Application form

for Network Development Grants 2005

19

6. Signature Sheet

This undertaking must be completed and signed by an authorised signatory of the applicants' organisation

Undertaking (to be completed by applicant)

I, the undersigned, hereby certify on behalf of the Network named below that the information contained herein is true and accurate.

Name of person making application
Signature of person making the application
Title of person making application
(On behalf of) Company/organisation name
Is the applicant organisation a company registered in Ireland? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Company/Organisation name as registered with the companies office (if different to above)
Please enter Company Registration Number
Date

For Skillnets reference only:

Reference number

Decision Code

Resources Available for Networks

Skillnets has a variety of resources available to assist new networks to take advantage of the programme. These are available for download at the Skillnets website www.skillnets.com

The Skillnets Story

A DVD which tells how Skillnets works, from the experience of participating companies and networks.

The Training Networks Programme 2005 - 2010

A brochure which outlines the history and operation of Skillnets and the Training Networks Programme. The strategic framework for Skillnets 2005 - 2010 is explained and procedures for making applications, developing Networks and accessing assistance for Networks under Development are detailed.

Skillnets Network Profiles & Directory 2002-2005

The stories of the existing training Networks that have come together to address their competitive skills needs through the application of an enterprise-led training model.

Skillnets Network Series

This is a series of guides for enterprises covering the following: Why Networks, Network Formation, Network Management, Problem Solving, Barriers to Participation, Network Success Factors, SMEs and HR Development, and Information Technology.

Selecting The Right Trainer

A comprehensive guide to all aspects of selecting, contracting, monitoring and managing external trainers.

Training Courses and Programmes

Information on training products and materials already developed by existing Skillnets Networks.

Case Studies

A selection of best practice case studies of networks developed under the first round of the Training Networks Programme.

Measuring Return on Investment

A Handbook of tools and job aids to help you evaluate training programmes up to the level of analysing return on investment.



Skillnets Ltd
Level 1, Frankfort Court
Dundrum Road, Dublin 14
Phone +353 1 207 9630
Fax +353 1 207 9631
Email info@skillnets.com

www.skillnets.com

The Training Networks Programme is an initiative of Skillnets Ltd and is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment