

Up-skilling enterprise, driving competitiveness



Skillnets Open Call for funding New Networks 2018

Application Form Guidelines

This document provides information on making an application for funding for networks. It also includes specific guidelines for each section of the application form. Numbering in this part of the document corresponds to the relevant sections in the application form.



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About Skillnets

Established in 1999, Skillnets is an enterprise-led agency that supports workforce learning to sustain national competitiveness. Skillnets is funded through the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and is principally aligned to Ireland's *National Skills Strategy 2025*. Skillnets funds 63 learning networks supporting over 14,000 companies and 50,000 trainees across the economy. Skillnets facilitate companies to actively participate in determining their own training needs and how, when and where training will be facilitated. Programmes are optimised to suit the needs of employed learners, through both formal and informal learning that spans further education and higher education provision. Our model fosters cohesive and collaborative enterprise networking and provides a flexibility and nimbleness to respond to ever-changing skill demands.



Our networks are active across Ireland's sectors and regions. Every Skillnet is a cluster of companies from the same sector or region, directed by a Steering Group of member firms, managed by a dedicated Network Manager. The essence of our model is about giving firms full control over how business challenges are overcome and opportunities are maximised through skills development. Our model creates synergies between firms as they identify shared learning needs and jointly design learning solutions. It allows SMEs to achieve significant economies of scale and provides the flexibility to respond rapidly to changing skills demands.

The increase in economic activity and improving investment confidence has translated into an overall increase in training demand from the majority of Skillnets networks and member firms. In 2017, Skillnets facilitated the establishment of five new learning networks in medtech, design, hospitality, food and tourism sectors identified by the Expert Group of Future Skills (EGFSN) as having specific skills needs and the capacity to create new jobs. Skillnets are inviting proposals from groups of enterprises who are interested in addressing the major challenges in their businesses, and are seeking funding to establish new learning networks, in sectors and regions with capacity for job growth.



Skillnets Statement of Strategy 2016-19

Skillnets' strategy serves to support national economic growth, and bring real results to enterprise at a regional and sectoral level. Skillnets goals are also closely aligned with national policy and will contribute to the implementation of national workforce development aims. The Strategy was developed following a thorough consultation process with key stakeholders in 2016 and is closely aligned to Ireland's *National Skills Strategy 2025* and other relevant policies. In the coming years, Skillnets will be driven by three strategic goals:

Strategic Goals 2016-2019



Goal One

Make training effectiveness, impact and relevance core to Skillnets activities. Promote continuous improvement in the learning experiences provided to enterprise through our networks, and be a model for training excellence in an enterprise context.

Goal Two

Play a pivotal role in maintaining a supply of the specific skills and future skills that impact the growth potential of Irish enterprise.

Goal Three

Drive increased participation of employers in our proposition. In doing so, we will be a key enabler in sustaining national competitiveness through the up-skilling of those in employment.

This open call for proposals is an invitation from Skillnets to enterprise groups that are considering looking at the business challenges that they have in front of them and particularly the up-skilling and skilling agenda that comes with those challenges. Our Skillnets model is unique in that it's enterprise-led and we see ourselves very much as the facilitators for enterprise in terms of providing funding, and strategic advice whilst aligning to national skills policy.

Skillnets Strategy 2016-19 is available to view at: <http://www.skillnets.ie/skillnets-strategy>



1. Training Networks Programme

Skillnets funds networks of enterprises to engage in training under the **Training Networks Programme (TNP)**. TNP is the main Skillnets programme and supports training across a wide range of industry sectors and geographical regions. The model fosters cohesive and collaborative enterprise networking and provides a flexibility and nimbleness to respond to ever changing skill demands of SMEs. A critical challenge for the Irish economy is to supply the quantity and quality of skills required for the 200,000 new jobs targeted by the Government over the next five years, whilst meeting the needs for the ongoing development of specialised talent within the existing workforce. Skillnets continues to be a champion for innovation in enterprise learning, playing an important role in maintaining a supply of future skills essential for the growth of Irish firms.

Enhancing SME management capacity is a national policy imperative and also a priority for Skillnets. Often SME owner-managers may not recognise the need for an objective skill gap analysis for their employees or indeed themselves. This points to the pivotal importance of supporting SME owner-managers to identify and address not only their business needs but their workforce development needs. Training support to SME owner-managers also creates a powerful multiplier effect because leaders who undergo development are more likely to invest in the development of their own staff.

Skillnets encourages applications from high potential growth sectors within relevant national or sectoral policies. Applications are also invited from groups to support the development of skills that enable enterprises and SME's, in particular to, nurture and retain talented employees. Applicants are also encouraged to demonstrate how their network will promote the value and importance of lifelong learning to national competitiveness.

Further information is available on Skillnets and the TNP programme at www.skillnets.ie.

Who can form a network?

Any group of private enterprises or any enterprise-led association can form a training network, provided that they have a strategic and long-term common interest to pursue workforce development. The network must be led by a contracting organisation (see below).

What does a network do?

A training network (a 'Skillnet') is a group of companies that come together to carry out cross-organisational training-related activities which may not be possible on their own. The network can achieve a common purpose or address shared issues of importance to the development of skills and long-term competitiveness. The exact activities of the network are decided by the network members.

However, in general the networks carry out the following tasks:

- Analyse the training and development needs of member companies, and identify skills requirements and priorities for action
- Identify solutions and delivery mechanisms to meet those needs
- Design programmes to address the specific and future skills needs of member companies
- 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
- Ensure the network training plan addresses the business challenges of the sector/region and is aligned with national skills policy, and any other policy relevant to the sector or region



- 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
- The development of strategic partnerships between enterprises, providers, industry bodies and certification awards bodies
- Provide feedback to Skillnets on the progress, outcomes and impact of network training activities and processes

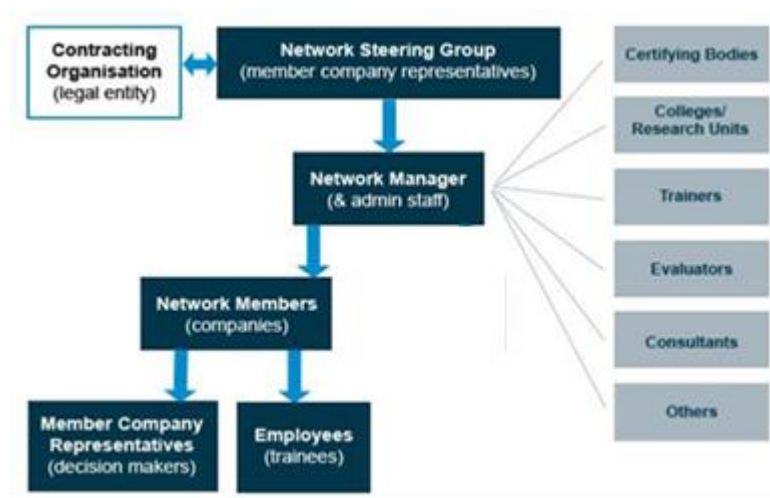
How is a Skillnets Network Structured?

Every learning network funded by Skillnets is a cluster of companies based in a sector, geographical location or a combination of both. Participating companies provide up to 50% in match funding to the grants approved by Skillnets. This approach allows companies to achieve economies of scale and significant efficiencies in the provision of training to their staff. Networks are comprised of a number of stakeholders:

- A contracting organisation will manage the activities of the network and receive the funds from Skillnets on behalf of the network.
- An industry steering group oversees and directs the learning network and is made up of representatives of member businesses.
- A network manager oversees the training network on a day-to-day basis.

Networks also interact regularly with a wide range of other bodies on behalf of their members, including training providers, higher education institutions and awarding bodies. Figure 1 shows a typical Skillnets network – the core of which is the company members. A network manager is the key coordinator, providing the professional and developmental input. Others who may provide services to the network include trainers, business advisors and third level or FET providers.

Figure 1: Network Structure



Several roles are key to the success of a network. It is important to be clear about the responsibilities of different stakeholders and how they interact.

Network Contracting Organisation

Each network will have a contracting organisation typically a company whose responsibilities include acting as the contracting party with Skillnets and complying with the terms of the Funding Agreement and General Conditions with Skillnets. The contracting organisation is required to ensure good corporate governance and should play an active role in overseeing the financial management of the network. It is the role of the contracting organisation to establish the network's steering group, and to appoint the network manager and network promoter. The contracting organisation should not benefit financially, or profit from the network in any way.

Network Promoter

The Network promoter is an individual appointed by the contracting organization whose role is to champion the aims of the network, and to represent the contracting organization in dealing with Skillnets. Network promoters are keenly aware of enterprise requirements and typically represent the broad needs of enterprises within their region/sector.

Network Steering Group

The network Steering Group comprises of representatives from participating network member companies. It plays an essential role in providing strategic direction and network governance. The key tasks undertaken by the Steering Group are to:

- Provide the strategic direction and control for the network and oversee network performance
- Ensure network focusses on the delivery of skills that meet defined skills shortages vital for growth and competitiveness in the sector/region
- Guide the network manager in managing the network
- Provide a link between the contracting organisation and member companies
- Represent enterprise – the steering group composition should broadly reflect the profile of companies in the sector/region
- Oversee procurement, and financial and risk management, as well as setting and monitoring of network performance objectives

Network Manager

A network manager is appointed by the contracting organisation. Operating under the guidance of the Steering Group, the network manager's role is to:

- Promote the network and its offering to attract new member companies
- Implement the network plan
- Engage with member companies on an ongoing basis to diagnose current and future business and learning requirements
- Co-ordinate training programme development, design and customisation
- Arrange networking events and other informal learning activities that strengthen member company relationships
- Ensure the robust financial management and administration of the network
- Organize the network training and networking activities to deliver contracted targets while adhering to the overall aims and objectives of both Skillnets and the individual network.

Skillnets provides a range of supports to network managers of newly approved Skillnets networks.



What type of training can a network deliver?

Networks can deliver a range of training including classroom-based training, mentoring, e-learning, industry seminars, expert master-classes and on-the-job training. Networks are encouraged to regularly review learning methodologies and to introduce innovations where relevant and appropriate. Networks can also undertake new course development, updating programmes/course materials to ensure current industry relevance and/or the customisation of training programmes. The network training plan should be:

- Customised for the specific needs of the Network's sector/region
- Innovative in their approach to design
- Blended and integrated with work
- Configured to tap the potential learning technologies offer in a workplace context
- Optimised for maximum transfer of learning
- Reflective of the modern workplace and how adults learn
- Rooted in learning outcomes pre-agreed with members and can be evaluated against same
- Flexible and straight-forward for learners to access.

Note: Statutory training, i.e. any training that is required by law, cannot be included.

Network Funding

Skillnets funds networks by co-investing with network member companies in the delivery of training network plans and activities. Up to 50% of the costs of network activities are eligible for grant funding under the main Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2018. The training network provides funds to match the Skillnets investment. The level of grant and cash matching budget is decided on an individual network basis. Matching funds must be sourced from private sector contributions.

Duration of Network Activities & Funding Period

Applications should include proposed activities and costs for a 12-month period¹ from commencement. The funding period for approved networks is from **1st January 2018 – 31st December 2018**.

Application Form and Guidelines

Applicants must demonstrate that the application is enterprise-led and has been designed to prioritise training interventions that deliver concrete business impacts, whilst delivering quality training and value for money for all stakeholders. Applicants must ensure that they read and understand all the call for proposal documents and guidelines issued by Skillnets. Contracting organisations should contact the Skillnets office if they have any questions or queries on any information issued by Skillnets (within this or other documents), or if they require further clarification or additional information. Skillnets is committed to supporting applicants in the development of their understanding of the model and the application process.

Skillnets Support

Skillnets have a support team in place to assist interested applicants in preparing their application for submission. Please email funding@skillnets.com and a one-to-one meeting can be arranged with a member of the support team. An information briefing on the application process will be held in the Skillnets offices. Further information is available at www.skillnets.ie/funding, by emailing us at funding@skillnets.com, or by contacting Skillnets at 01-2079630.

¹The provision of any funding in 2018 is subject to the availability of funds to Skillnets.



Application Guidelines

2. General Information

The Application Form for Skillnets funding is an Excel document that must be completed by all those intending to apply for Skillnets funding. All sections must be completed before submission.

Please read carefully the instructions on the first sheet of the application form.

- You must save the document to your PC before entering data.
- You must not cut and paste data into the application form as doing so will corrupt the formulas and may result in you having to complete a new form.
- You only need to enter data into the YELLOW cells.
- All white cells will populate automatically.

The information listed below relate to the sections of the application form that must be completed.

1.1 Contracting Organisation

Each network will have a network contracting organisation that will take responsibility for the activities of the network and receive funds from Skillnets on behalf of the network. They are often industry or enterprise organisations. In many cases employer organisations e.g. industry associations, federations and chambers) act as network contracting organisations on behalf of their member companies. In other cases, employee organisations e.g. trade unions have taken leadership of the process, working with company management to facilitate a network. Local Enterprise Offices and third-level institutions are also eligible to act as contracting organisations. Individual companies can also act as contracting organisations on behalf of the network members.

The contracting organisation:

- Must be a legal entity such as a company incorporated under the Companies Acts, a Friendly Society or similar body. This legal entity must be in existence for at least one year, and must not include the word Skillnet or Skillnets as part of its corporate name.
- Is responsible for the custody and distribution of public funds and is required to demonstrate accountability for all expenditure under the programme.

The applicant must demonstrate the financial substance and stability of the contracting organisation by providing financial accounts for the year preceding the application. The application should also be supported by letters of commitment from member companies (see Appendix 2).

Successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of valid Tax Clearance in the name of the Contracting Organisation before contracts can be issued.

There can be no change to the contracting organisation during the life of the network. Moreover, if the contracting organisation is unable to pay its debts or goes into liquidation, the agreement will be terminated with immediate effect.

1.2 CRO Registration Name and Number

A Companies Registration Office (CRO) number is the number issued to a company by the Companies Registration Office. If the organisation is a Friendly Society, the registration number of the society should be stated – refer to Registration of Friendly Societies (RFS) for friendly society number.



1.3 Contact Person for the Application

The contact person for the application is the person that can, and will be, contacted in relation to this application, specifically for the acknowledgement of receipt of application and notification of assessment outcome. The contact person will be a nominated official of the contracting organisation with authority to make the application.

1.4 Network Name

Please insert the proposed name of your network. The name should be chosen to reflect the sector or region that the network is focusing on. The Network name must include 'Skillnet' at end e.g. 'ABC Skillnet'.

1.5 Word Document Questions

The application contains an embedded Word document which asks the questions below and must be completed and attached as an appendix.

1.5.1 Please describe the network and its structure

In this section, we ask you to describe your network and its structure. Please include details of all parties to be involved in the network and explain how the network will be managed and describe the different roles of those involved in providing direction and managing your network. Each network will have a steering group and a contracting organisation. Please outline why your organisation seeks to act as the promoter of this network. (see Section One)

1.5.2 What are the proposed aims and objectives of the network?

In this section please describe in detail the aims and objectives of your network. The answer should demonstrate an enterprise-led approach to learning, through the establishment of training networks, enabling groups to develop strategic solutions to their joint training needs. Please include information on the following; the target companies for the network; the level of engagement with those companies; training requirements of the member companies; and the business challenges that the network seeks to address.

1.5.3 How did you identify the training needs of companies within your sector and/or region?

In answer to this question, the applicants should explain how the training needs for their sector/region were identified in detail. Applicants should outline who conducted the research, when it took place, how many companies responded and what the outcomes of the research are. Evidence of the methodology used for the TNA and the key results identified should be provided. Applicants should clearly explain how the training identified will respond to enterprise needs. Please explain how the training needs have been prioritised within the proposed plan.

1.5.4. Provide a rationale for the training plan proposed for 2018.

Applicants should refer to the training plan outlined in section 3.3 of the Excel document when answering this question. Applicants should outline how the training plan impacts on the competitiveness of enterprise and employability of the workforce within your sector or region. Indicate how the programmes proposed will address the specific and future skills needs of the Network's member companies, and how this plan is aligned to relevant sectoral or regional skills policy. Outline how the activities proposed are designed to best meet the needs of employed learners within your sector/region, through both formal and informal learning that spans further education and higher education provision.



1.5.5 How will the network be developed during its first year of operation?

Outline how your network intends to promote the network to potential member companies. Applicants should also clearly outline how they intend to recruit new member companies into their network. For example, if the network is part of an already established association or group of companies this would be an obvious avenue to recruiting members to the Skillnet. Please use examples where possible and refer to who will be responsible for the task of recruiting and securing the commitment of member companies. Applicants should also describe how participating firms will be encouraged to participate in overseeing and directing the networks activities.

1.5.6 Describe how the training offered by the network will support Skillnets' strategic goal to be a model of training excellence.

Training effectiveness, impact and relevance are core to Skillnets activities. Clear focus is given at all times to value for money, efficiency and effectiveness of Skillnets training and upskilling. Applicants need to demonstrate how the training plan proposed is customised for the specific need of the networks target sector or region and has been designed to facilitate the maximum transfer of learning for adults in the workplace. Outline any innovative approaches proposed and demonstrate an understanding of best practice in learning and development.

1.5.7 If your network is proposing Management Development programmes, please explain the approach used.

Skillnets Strategy aims to promote greater engagement with employers and business owners around the management development imperative and ensure that the leaders of such enterprises have the capacity to maximise the potential of both their businesses and their workforce. Outline how the management development training proposed addresses the business challenges faced by SMEs, placing a significant emphasis on organisational leadership skills and practice-based learning.

1.5.8 Is your organisation in receipt of any other form of public funding?

If the proposed contracting organisation is in receipt of public funding from any other source, please explain.

1.5.9 Has your organisation any current applications with other agencies for public funding?

Please include details of other applications for public funding such as SOLAS, Enterprise Ireland, etc. if applicable. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

2. Network Details

2.1 Steering Group Members

In each training network, representatives of the member companies form a steering or management group to oversee and direct the network. It meets on a regular basis and makes management decisions. An upper limit of 10 members is recommended. A balance of business skills in the steering group is recommended, for example expertise in sales, HR, finance and other relevant functions.

Please note that a signed letter of commitment to act as a steering group member must be provided for each member as suggested in the template provided in Appendix 1. This template can be edited by companies to fully demonstrate their commitment to the proposed new network. Please attach these letters in the appendices of your application.

When appointing steering group members, it is important to remember that steering group members cannot benefit financially from the network activities. The network must avoid any conflicts of interest which may arise with members of the steering group.



Please enter the required details for each person who has agreed to serve on the Network's Steering Group.

2.2 Member Companies

Table 2.2 will automatically populate as you complete Table 2.7 Company Details. The only exception is the target for the expected number of member companies at the end of the first 12 months of operation. This number must be entered into the yellow cell in Table 2.2

2.3 Network Sector

In this section, we ask you to select the sector that best describes your network companies from the drop-down menu. If your network caters for a very wide range of sectors you can select "mixed" as your sector in this section. This may apply to networks that are regional rather than sectoral.

2.4 Region

In this section, we look for the region that will be the focus of the training. The Republic of Ireland is split into nine regions for this purpose. Please select the region from the drop-down list. If your training will be in more than one region please select national.

2.5 Network Management Team Costs

In this section, you must outline the total cost of each person involved in managing the network e.g. network manager and network administrator. You must indicate if they will be employed directly by the network and hence be subject to the normal PAYE rules, or will work as a consultant and therefore must look after their own income tax affairs.

The costs quoted in this section must be inclusive of all payroll taxes if the individual is an employee and all VAT (if not entitled to a recovery of VAT) if the individual is a consultant. The maximum management team cost is **25% of total expenditure**. This percentage includes travel and subsistence, staff recruitment/training which are included under management team costs. Travel and subsistence and staff recruitment/training costs are entered directly into Table 4.1.

2.6 Overheads

A breakdown of overheads (inclusive of VAT) of the network is required outlining each cost to be incurred by the network. All costs included must be justified by an explanation of the methodology used in the calculation of that cost which will be requested at grant approval stage. Examples of overheads include (list is not exhaustive):

- Rent
- Stationery and printing
- Utilities
- Equipment not exceeding €1,200
- Maintenance
- Insurance



2.7 Company Details

In this section, please fill in all the information required on the companies who have agreed to join your network. A letter or email of commitment (suggested template provided, see Appendix 2) or a variation of this should be filled out and signed by each listed member company as an indication of their commitment to the programme. Please attach these letters in the appendices of your application.

If you need additional lines in this section please contact the Skillnets office at 01-2079630.

The first section of this table will populate automatically with the details of steering group members (section 2.1).

A Skillnet network should consist of a minimum of fifteen companies. Only private sector or commercial semi-state enterprises can be member companies that avail of the training. The Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2018 covers the Republic of Ireland only. For the purposes of this programme, only trainees from member companies within the Republic of Ireland can be considered.

Network member companies span the full range of industry sectors and can be enterprises of any size. However, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which face challenges in accessing training due to their small scale and restricted resources, have traditionally represented a strong majority of the Skillnets member companies.

3. TNP Application

3.1 Trainee Target

This cell will populate from the data entered into Table 3.2.

3.2 Trainee Profile

Please enter the required data into the yellow cells provided. Companies can include any employee groups in network activities. Many networks have supported the development of management and supervisory skills, others have adopted support strategies for owner managers and the development of marketing, sales, production and technical staff skills are common features of network plans.

3.3 TNP Training Plan and Training Costs

This section gives details of the planned training for the network. You will be asked to provide a list of training courses. We also require information on several aspects of the courses planned, including training type, training methodology, course duration, number of times the course will run each year, planned number of participants per course etc. You will be asked to use the drop-down menu in several places to choose a category that best describes the course.



Name of Training Course

Please list the names of all the training courses. A training course should be based on identified training needs of the network member companies and employees.

Training Days and training costs.

This section has three parts.

1. *Contact training days* are days such as classroom days or on the job training days where there is direct contact between the trainees and the trainer. The costs associated with this type of day include the trainer cost and associated costs such as travel and subsistence (see example 1 below)
2. *Non-contact training days* are days such as online learning days or distance learning days. The trainer is typically not in direct contact with the trainees. An example of a cost associated with this would be the cost of the online learning platform
3. *Training Day Calculation* - Please enter the number of days learning for each individual course. If the course duration is a full day, please put 1 (or part thereof e.g. 0.5).

The equivalent of one training day is six contact hours of training. Contact hours are the time spent with the trainer and/or undertaking a training activity/exercise or engaging in online learning or project work.

Example 1:	Example 2:
2-day Digital Marketing course. The trainer will charge €1,000 for the course and will also claim €50 travel and subsistence each day.	3-day Marketing course which also has 3 days of online learning and project work. (i.e. 6 days) The trainer will charge €750 per day of training in the classroom environment. There is no charge for use of their online learning platform and there are no costs for the learner to complete their project work.
Calculation [€1000 (trainer cost for course) + €100 (€50 per day travel and subsistence)] / [2 (length of course)] The cost per day = €550 The total course cost (€550 x 2 + €100) = €1,100	Calculation In this case the Total Course Training days will be 6 days and the Contact Days incurring cost will be 3 days at a daily rate of € 750. The cost per day = €750 The total course cost (€750 X 3 days) = €2,250

Once the above information has been entered, the total cost of each course will automatically be calculated, taking into consideration the number of times the course is being run.

Applicants are advised to research the market costs for relevant training in order to determine a daily rate and ensure that the principles of value for money are considered. Approved networks must use a tendering process based on Skillnets procurement guidelines for ALL expenditure incurred.

Number of times training courses will be run

Please enter the number of times the course will be delivered.

Planned No. of Employed Participants per course

You are required to estimate how many employed participants will attend each individual training course.



Certifying Body

Applicants should note that Skillnets values the accreditation of training. This is reflected in the assessment criteria. For certified training, please select the organisation that will certify the training from the drop-down menu. If your training will be certified under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), please state the level to which it will be accredited. More information on the ten levels within the NFQ and the awarding bodies is available from their website www.qqi.ie. Training that is certified by Professional Bodies is encouraged. If your training is not on the NFQ, or certified by Professional Bodies, please select 'no' in the drop-down list for certified.

Networked Learning & In-Company Learning

The emphasis in the TNP model is on learning in a network context. This maximises the potential for learning as participants from different firms can share perspectives and experiences. It is possible for a limited amount of a networks activity to be directed towards one company only. Please note that no more than 15% of the total training cost may go towards in-company training (training planned and delivered for one company only). In-company training must be training which provides transferable qualifications and substantially improves the employability of the trained worker, and excludes the costs of training specific to a single enterprise.

3.4 TNP Planned Certification & Programme Development

If the Network is proposing to develop new certified programmes, these training programmes and the related certification costs should be shown in this table. The costs of delivering the programmes should have been included in Table 3.3 where the numbers of participants etc. will also have been included for the proposed new programme.

3.5 Other Networking Events

These are events that the network engages in, other than training. These could include network launches, networking events, conferences, the launch of a new training programme, graduation ceremony etc.

3.6 Consultants (Other)

Please list the costs associated with all other activity here. You are not expected to name the consultants at this stage, as each successful network must use a tendering process based on Skillnets procurement guidelines for any consultants employed. Networks may engage the services of consultants for many reasons such as web design, marketing, PR and so on.

3.7 Marketing & Promotion Costs

In this section, the network will indicate the costs associated with the promotional activities of the network. Examples could include printing, digital marketing costs, advertising etc.



4. Summary of Income and Expenditure Budgets and Targets

4.1 2018 Summary Budget

The budget should be prepared for a 12-month period. The budget is outlined per budget line and the network should complete the yellow tabs in the budget as follows:

2018 REQUESTED GRANT RATE	Insert grant rate. The maximum grant rate for this programme is 50% of the total network expenditure.
----------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2018 EXPENDITURE: Network Management Expenditure

Network Management team costs	automatically populated from section 2.5
Travel & subsistence Network Management Team	enter costs here
Staff recruitment/Training	enter costs here
Management Team Costs Subtotal	this should <u>not exceed 25%</u> of the overall expenditure
Overheads	automatically be populated from section 2.6
Audit	enter costs relating to end of year independent audit
Overheads Costs Subtotal	automatically calculated
Maximum Management %	Maximum is 25%
Maximum % Requested	automatically calculated from data entered and will flash red if it exceeds 25%

2018 EXPENDITURE: Training Expenditure

Consultants (Other)	automatically populated from section 3.6
Trainers	automatically populated from section 3.3
Training Materials/Facilities	Enter facilities costs e.g. training room hire, manuals/handouts, refreshments etc.
Events	automatically populated from sections 3.5
Training Development/Certification	automatically populated from section 3.4
Marketing & Promotion	automatically populated from section 3.7
Total Training Costs	automatically calculated
TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURE	automatically calculated



2018 GRANT INCOME

Requested Grant – Management Costs	this will be automatically populated from the previous sections
Requested Grant – Training Costs	this will be automatically populated from the previous sections
Total Requested Grant	this will be automatically calculated

2018 CASH INCOME - All income for the network must come from non-publicly funded sources.

Cash – Membership Fees	If the Network proposes to charge a membership fee to member companies, the total projected amount of membership fees for the year should be entered here
Cash - Programme fees	Programme fees are derived from the fees the Network may charge participating member companies for participation on the programmes listed in Table 3.3. The total projected amount of programme fees for the year should be entered here
Cash – Sponsorship	If the Network anticipates receiving sponsorship of its activities from non-state funded sources, the total amount of such sponsorship should be entered here.
Cash – Other	If the Network has other sources of cash income planned, these should be entered here. An explanation of any such income will be required.
Sub Total Cash	this will automatically be calculated
TOTAL NETWORK INCOME	this will automatically be calculated

NOTE–If the budget balances and a message appears that total expenditure is not equal to total income this may be due to a rounding issue. Please re-check budget and if you are satisfied that it is a rounding issue please ignore. Clarification on any aspect of the budget can be sought from your Programme Support Manager.

4.2 Summary targets

This will be automatically populated from the previous sections. The key training activity targets proposed by networks within the application form for 2018 are;

- Member Companies
- Employed Trainees
- Employed Training Days
- Non-Formal Events



4.3 Undertaking/sign off

This must be signed by a director (as per the CRO/Friendly Society list) of the contracting organisation. In signing the Application Form, they are confirming that the information contained is true and accurate.

NB: Please don't forget to sign the application as it will only be processed with a valid signature.

Successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of valid Tax Clearance in the name of the Contracting Organisation specified in Section 1.1 before contracts can be issued.

THIS IS THE END OF THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Process for Assessment and Approval of Applications

All network applications submitted to Skillnets by the application deadline will be assessed against structured criteria (see below). Final decisions on allocations of funding are made by the Board of Skillnets. A sub-committee of the Board of Skillnets oversees the assessment process to ensure that fair, transparent and equitable consideration of all applications received is applied throughout the process.

Applications for this new funding under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2018 will be assessed under the key criteria outlined below. There is a minimum threshold of 60% in each section. There will be an automatic disqualification if marks fall below this in any area.

The two key criteria are –

- 1. Strategic Criteria** are the core guiding principles of Skillnets and they address the key performance factors of successful training networks as well as key areas of enterprise training, which are encouraged.
- 2. Operational Criteria** look at the process and methods of achieving network strategies, including all key network management factors.

The criteria are divided into three categories with sub-categories as listed in the table below. The relative weighting attributed to each category is also shown.

Key Criteria – TNP	Sub Criteria	Weighting	
Strategic Criteria	Enterprise Engagement	200	60%
	Impact on Competitiveness	200	
	Supplying Future Skills	100	
	Accreditation/Innovation	100	
Operational Criteria	Capacity to deliver (Management expertise)	100	40%
	Clarity of aims and objectives	150	
	Financial Efficiencies/Match Funding/Value for Money	100	
	Quality & Relevance of Training Plan	50	
Total		1000	



Application Deadlines and Procedures

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Thursday, 23rd November 2017.

Applicants must submit the following by the application deadline:

- Two (2) signed hard copies of the completed Application Form to the Skillnets office (5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18) Tel: 01 207 9630.
- An MS Excel electronic format of the application to grants@skillnets.com

The hard copies must be signed by an authorised representative of the applicant organisation and must include all relevant extra documentation (see Appendix 3 for a full checklist).

Contracting organisations should contact the Skillnets office if they have any questions or queries on any information issued by Skillnets (within this or other documents), or if they require further clarification or additional information.

It is the sole responsibility of contracting organisations to ensure that hard and soft copy applications are received by the deadline date.

Soft copy takes precedence over the hard copy submitted.

No failure of postal, courier or other transportation services will be considered as a reason to make an exception to these conditions. Receipt acknowledgements will be issued by Skillnets to confirm that applications have been submitted on time and will proceed for assessment.

Skillnets reserves the right to invite applicants for interview to clarify any aspect of the submission made.



Appendix 1 (Letter of Commitment: Steering Group members)

(If possible please print this page on company headed paper)

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

I wish to indicate my intention to be a member of XXX Skillnet Steering Group which will be formed to oversee and direct the network. I confirm that I will commit my time to participate on a regular basis in the group's meetings, at which strategic decisions will be taken on behalf of the network.

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Signature



Appendix 2 (Letter of Commitment: Member Companies)

(If possible please print this page on company headed paper)

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

I wish to confirm that it is our intention to be a part of the XXX Skillnet and commit the necessary financial resources towards the network's cash matching. I also commit to release the relevant staff of our organisation to participate in the training programmes organised by the network.

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Signature



Appendix 3 (Application Checklist)

Please use this check list to ensure that your application is fully complete before you send it into the Skillnets office.

Check that each section of the application form is fully completed – both the excel spreadsheet and the embedded word document. This will form **Appendix 1** of the application.

☐

Two (2) signed hard copies of the form printed - **please ensure that the application forms and accompanying documentation is submitted unbound**

☐

Steering Group Letters of commitment / financial support (1 copy of each). This will form **Appendix 2** of the application.

☐

Member Company Letters of commitment / financial support (1 copy of each). This will form **Appendix 3** of the application.

☐

Any other relevant supporting documentation e.g. Training Needs Analysis questionnaire. This will form **Appendix 4** of the application form.

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