

Skillnets Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011

Full network applications

General Information & Application Form Guidelines

This document provides some general information on both the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011 and making an application for funding for new networks in 2011. It also includes specific guidelines for each section of the application form. The guidelines (pages 17-56) should be read in conjunction with the application form. Numbering in this part of the document corresponds to the relevant sections in the application form – www.skillnets.ie/funding/TNP2011



The Training Networks Programme is an initiative of Skillnets Ltd. and is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills.

Skillnets Ltd. registered in Ireland No. 298694. Registered office: 5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
History of Skillnets and the Training Networks Programme (TNP)	4
Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011	5
What is a training network?	6
Who can form a network?	7
What does a network do?	7
Why train?	8
MAKING AN APPLICATION	10
General	10
Application Deadlines and Procedures	11
Application Guidance and Network Development Support	13
Assessment and Selection of Applications	14
Contracts and Payments.....	15
Further Information	16
APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR FULL NETWORK PROPOSALS	17
1. General Information.....	17
1.1. Contracting Organisation	17
1.2. CRO Registration Name and Number	18
1.3. Contact Person for Application	18
1.4. Network Name	18
1.5. Steering Group Members	19
1.6. Member Company Details	19
1.7. Sector.....	20

1.8.	Region.....	20
1.9.	Trainees	21
1.10.	Trainee Profile - Gender	22
1.11.	Current Trainee Educational Attainment Level (Employed)	22
1.12.	Word Document Questions.....	23
2.	Network Details	32
2.1.	Company Details	32
3.	2011 Training Plan	33
3.1.	Training Plan.....	33
3.2.	Consultants (development of training material and/or certification)	36
3.3.	Other Events and Activities.....	36
4.	Trainer Costs.....	39
4.1.	Training Course Costs	39
5.	Budget – Expenditure and Income.....	41
5.1.	Network Management Team Costs	49
5.2.	Overheads	49
5.3.	Consultants (development of training material and/or certification)	50
5.4.	Consultants (other)	50
5.5.	Network Management Costs	51
5.6.	Training Costs.....	52
5.7.	Income	53
6.	Network Targets and Undertaking	55
	Appendix 1 (Letter of Commitment: Steering Group members)	57
	Appendix 2 (Letter of Commitment: Member Companies)	58
	Appendix 3 (General Communication Guidelines)	59
	Appendix 4 (References for Priority Sectors)	60
	Appendix 5 (Application Checklist)	61

Introduction

History of Skillnets and the Training Networks Programme (TNP)

Skillnets Ltd, an enterprise-led publicly funded body established in 1999 to support the development of workplace skills, works with groups of companies across regions and sectors to provide quality training as a key element in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness. Since 1999 Skillnets has facilitated over 50,000 Irish enterprises in over 300 networks to improve the range, scope and quality of training and enabled over 240,000 employees to up-skill and meet their work related training needs.

Skillnets is dedicated to up-skilling those in employment and since 2010 has also been providing training to the unemployed. Job-seekers train with those in employment so they benefit from networking opportunities, as well as having access to industry-specific training.

Skillnets supports and funds networks of enterprises to engage in training under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011. These enterprise networks are led and managed by the enterprises themselves to design and deliver specific training programmes across a broad range of industry and service sectors nationwide. The networks receive grants drawn from the National Training Fund (NTF) thereby enabling network member companies to avail of significant discounts on market training rates. The member companies also contribute to the grant aided programme with match funding to a ratio agreed by the network and Skillnets.

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 benefit from training that is more relevant to their individual sectors and/or type of company. There is also a significant benefit to be achieved through the sharing of business experience and advice via networking opportunities afforded by membership of a Skillnet. 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 Education and Skills (DES) from the resources of the National Training Fund (NFT).

www.skillnets.ie

Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011

Two key features of the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011 are a focus on four themes and on training for the unemployed.

Themes

Skillnets is endeavouring to proactively respond to industry needs by focusing on how we can facilitate the rapidly changing needs of employers through best practice training while simultaneously meeting the needs of the unemployed. The employment profile of Irish enterprise is changing in response to a new economic climate.

- *Theme 1:* Facilitating the transferability of individuals' skills to increase mobility and employability across mixed sectoral /regional networks
- *Theme 2:* Facilitating company diversification or transferability within a sector or from one sector to another where skills in creativity, design, research, problem solving and innovation will be essential for high productivity.
- *Theme 3:* Facilitating increased performance and growth in priority sectors
- *Theme 4:* Enhancing the general competency skills of the lifelong learner where a renewed focus on language skills and cultural understanding will be necessary for Irish companies to compete successfully in the EU and global export markets.

Groups are emerging both sectorally and regionally who are at a high risk of unemployment and we need to respond to their needs as well as investing in those who are out of work so that they can take advantage of opportunities developing in other parts of the economy.

These responses will help ensure that we have a sufficiently proficient workforce for the growth sectors of the future, including internationally traded services, food, life sciences, software,

ecommerce and other web related services. All of these progressions will need to take place in an environment of cost reduction and improved competitiveness. Networks will be required to choose from the four themes (see specific details on the themes in [section 1.12.3](#)) and base the justification for application approval on these areas.

Training for the unemployed

All applications for Skillnets funding **MUST** include meaningful provision for the unemployed. Unemployed individuals will train with those in employment, thereby enhancing their knowledge of current market trends in the sector/region and improving their potential for employment through training and networking.

- All Skillnets network applications must demonstrate that a minimum level of 10% of the total trainees to be trained in each year are unemployed. The maximum level of unemployed trainees each year is 30%.
- Unemployed trainees must attend programmes with the employed to facilitate networking and transfer of learning.
- A maximum number of 40% of unemployed trainees can attend any programme, unless prior agreement is reached with Skillnets.
- The network must deliver on this unemployed trainee target within the network training budget.
- The unemployed trainees are not required to pay for course fees so there must not be any cash matching requirement from them.
- The level and quality of training proposed for the unemployed in the network application will form part of the assessment criteria of network applications.

What is a training network?

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.

In each network, companies 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.

Please refer to [section 1.12.1](#) for more information on the structure of a network.

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 in the development of human resources. The network must be led by a contracting organisation ([see section 1.1](#)).

Each training network is made up of a group of companies which have shared training needs. This may mean that the companies in the network may be in the same sector, region or supply chain. They may also have common needs because they are primarily small businesses who want to develop training solutions that are relevant to companies with a small number of employees. In other cases, a number of companies may have identified a skill gap which they want to address together. Whatever the common interest of the network, Skillnets can support customised and specific solutions for the enterprises.

What does a network do?

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, identify skills requirements and priorities for action
- Identify solutions and 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
- Provide feedback to Skillnets on the progress, outcomes and impact of network training activities and processes

Why train?

For employers - training can boost the bottom line through:

- Higher management effectiveness and better strategic planning
- Increased staff morale and satisfaction
- Improved customer service and sales
- Reduced waste and maintenance costs of machinery and equipment
- Lower workplace accidents and insurance premiums
- Lower recruitment costs through enhanced career progression

For trainees - new skills, information and competence can increase opportunities by:

- Providing new relevant work qualifications
- Allowing employees to maximize their performance
- Opening up career progression and development paths
- Acquiring the key skills for tomorrow's technology.

When companies invest in staff training they are sending their staff a message that:

- The business is committed to supporting future employability and progression

- The business is enabling its employees to fully engage in the development of the enterprise
- Research shows that employees' motivation is greatly enhanced and all staff respond positively to learning opportunities in terms of improved performance. Companies which provide excellent training and development opportunities attract and retain staff and experience lower levels of absenteeism.

Making an application

General

Skillnets supports private enterprises in addressing individual and organisational learning needs. Skillnets is dedicated to upskilling those in employment and since 2010 has also been providing training to the unemployed in the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011. Skillnets co-funds enterprise training and networking or other learning activities which support and encourage participation in enterprise training.

There are over 50 networks currently being funded up until the end of 2011 through the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2010/11. Skillnets is pleased to invite applications from new networks for funding until the end of 2011. There are two options for applicants:

1. Submit a full network application at any stage **up until the 3rd May, 2011**. These applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria as they are submitted, so there is a benefit in applying as early as possible.
2. Apply for a development grant in order to explore ideas and fully develop a full network application. The submission deadline for these development grants is **4th April, 2011**. Development grant applicants (whether successful or not) can then submit full network applications up until the 1st June, 2011. These applications will be assessed as submitted.

Support for new networks will be on the basis of open and competitive calls for proposals combined with transparent and equitable assessment systems.

Eligible Activities

In principle, the delivery of any activity which provides learning, skills, knowledge development and networking between enterprises can be supported by the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011. More information is available in [section 3.3](#).

Please note that specific training will not be funded by Skillnets. Specific training is defined as skills specific to a company that could not be transferred to another company.

Duration of Network Activities

Approved networks are eligible for funding until the end of December 2011. Applications for network proposals will be assessed on a first come, first served basis so start dates will vary. Therefore network should state the period of funding they are applying for and this should be reflected in the application in terms of the training plan and budget.

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 all eligible network activities (see [section 3.3](#)) are eligible for funding under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011.

The training network provides funds to match the Skillnets investment. The specific mix of funding between Skillnets and network members is decided on an individual network basis. Matching funds must be sourced from private sector contributions.

Application Deadlines and Procedures

Three key deadlines should be noted in 2011:

1. Development grant deadline: 4th April (these will be assessed in a batch after this date).
2. Deadline for full network applications (excluding development grant applicants): up until 3rd May. Applications will be assessed as submitted against agreed assessment criteria.
3. Deadline for development grant applicants progressing to full network applications: up until 1st June. Applications will be assessed as submitted against agreed assessment criteria.

In order to ensure fair and equitable allocation of funds, deadlines are fixed for all applicants. No submissions can be considered unless they are submitted in the required format by the stated deadline date and time.

Applicants can download application forms from the Skillnets website.

Applicants must submit the following by the relevant application deadline:

- Three (3) hard copies of the completed Application Form to the Skillnets office (5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18)
- 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 5](#) for a full checklist).

Applicants must ensure that they read and understand all the call for proposal documents and guidelines issued by Skillnets. These will be sent to all networks which have submitted an expression of interest form to Skillnets and will also be available on the Skillnets website.

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 promoting organisations to ensure that hard copy applications are received by the deadline date. 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.

Application Guidance and Network Development Support

Any organisations or groups of enterprises who are interested in creating a network and/or applying for funding in 2011 should:

Register as a network under development by filling out the form available on the Skillnets website and sending it to funding@skillnets.com.

Networks that are registered will automatically be subscribed for funding updates and details on information events and can access support from Skillnets staff. Skillnets has a number of staff that can assist enterprise groups in developing ideas and proposals. When you send in a registration of interest form a member of staff will be assigned to contact you and support you through the development process.

- **Information events:** Information events will be hosted by Skillnets over the period March-May 2011. These will provide interested parties with information on funding. Registered networks will automatically be notified of dates and venues.
- **Development grants:** A 'development grant' provides seed funding for potential networks seeking to develop full network proposals and make an application to Skillnets. The 'development grant' is made available to support companies in meeting the resource needs of a network 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.
- **Application forms and criteria for network development grants** can be downloaded from the Skillnets website www.skillnets.ie.

The closing date for development grants is 5 p.m. Monday, 4th April, 2011.

Any of the following groups may register with Skillnets to have access to the full range of information and support in the network development phase:

- Potential networks that received development grants
- Potential networks that were not successful in their development grant application
- Other existing networks

It is important to note that full network applications submitted by any of the groups identified above, will be treated equally by Skillnets in the application process and will be assessed on a transparent basis. This is a competitive process and the highest quality proposals will be selected for funding. Therefore the approval of a development grant is not a guarantee of further funding from Skillnets.

Assessment and Selection of Applications

All network proposals 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 Skillnets Board. A sub-committee of the Skillnets Board 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) 2011 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 three overall 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.

3. **Wider Impact** looks at what is developed and shared as well as what can be continued after the network duration.

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

Key Criteria	Sub Criteria	Weighting
Strategic Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Involvement • Relevance to Key Themes • Impact on Employability • Impact on Competitiveness 	45%
Operational Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to Deliver (Management expertise) • Clarity of Aims/Objectives • Financial Efficiencies/Match Funding 	40%
Wider Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Sustainability • Accreditation/Product Development 	15%
Total		100%

Contracts and Payments

Skillnets can only enter into a contract with contracting organisations fulfilling the minimum conditions (see [section 1.1](#) for more details).

Skillnets has developed a web-based system called SAM (Skillnets Activity Management) which allows networks to easily track and manage all financial and other information associated with

network activities. The SAM system also allows for automatic requests and processing of network payments.

Further Information

Further resources, the application form and other information as they are issued will be posted on the Skillnets website, www.skillnets.ie.

Application Guidelines for Full Network Proposals

1. General Information

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, industry associations, federations and chambers (i.e. employer organisations) act as network contracting organisations on behalf of their member companies. In other cases, trade unions (employee organisations) have taken leadership of the process, working with company management to facilitate a network. County Enterprise Boards 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. Please note that Skillnets is unable to fund not for profit groups so they are unable to act as contracting organisations or be a member company.
- 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 details of the contracting organisation's history in this section of the application form. The explanation should be supported by third party documentation such as (list is not exhaustive):

- Most recently audited accounts
- Letters of financial support from member companies

- Letters of comfort from banks or member companies
- CRO returns including abridged Financial Statements

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 a Friendly Society, the registration number of the society should be stated.

1.3. Contact Person for Application

The contact person for 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

Potential networks should develop a trading name which must use the word Skillnet at the end eg. xxx Skillnet or The xxx Skillnet. We suggest keeping the name short and memorable; the best solution would be to use a maximum of three words, including Skillnet, in the name. The name should reflect the network objectives.

Once a network is funded, there are set branding guidelines for all communications materials, including the network logo, which the network will be obliged to comply with.

Please see [Appendix 3](#) for some general communication guidelines for the application phase.

1.5. 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. A 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 should be provided for each member as suggested in the template provided in [Appendix 1](#). 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.

Any costs associated with the steering group must be included in section 5.5: Network Management Costs on the line item "Travel & Subsistence Network Management Team" of the application form.

1.6. Member Company Details

In this section, we ask you to specify the total target membership of companies involved in your network. For 'End of 2011', please give the number of companies you intend to have engaged by the end of 2011, including those that committed at the application stage as per your list in section 2.1. of the application form (please see the summary table in section 1.6.).

A Skillnet (Learning Network) must consist of a minimum of two member companies but it is recommended that it 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) 2011 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 (SME's), which face particular challenges in accessing training due to their small scale and restricted resources, have traditionally represented a strong majority of the Skillnets member companies.

1.7. Sector

In this section we ask you to select the sector that best describes your network companies from the drop down menu.

1.8. 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. These are based on administrative areas. Please select the region from the drop down list. If your training will be in more than one region please select national.

National: Nationwide

Border: The counties of Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo

West: The counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Midland: The counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath

Mid-East: The counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow

Dublin Region: the city of Dublin, and the areas of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin

South-East: The counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary (South), Waterford and Wexford

South-West: The counties of Cork and Kerry

Mid-West: The counties of Clare, Limerick and Tipperary (North)

1.9. Trainees

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.

In this section, we ask you to enter the number of individual trainees you intend to train over the life of the project in each of the occupational categories listed.

A particular area of focus for this round of Skillnets funding will be the training needs of the unemployed. A minimum 10% and a maximum of 30% of the total number of trainees must be unemployed so you will also need to specify how many of your trainees will be employed and unemployed and how many of them will be male and female.

Please note that an unemployed trainee must be aged 18 to 66, currently registered with the Department of Social Protection as being unemployed and be on the live register or eligible for of a job related social welfare payment or be self employed persons who have registered as unemployed.

Please also note that a trainee profile sheet will be required for each individual trainee. Regarding unemployed trainees, the trainee profile sheet will also require the PPS number of the unemployed individuals and an indication of their prior employment status (e.g. PAYE employee, self-employed, graduate). The individual will need to sign the trainee profile sheet to confirm that they are formally registered with the Department of Social and Family Affairs as unemployed.

1.10. Trainee Profile - Gender

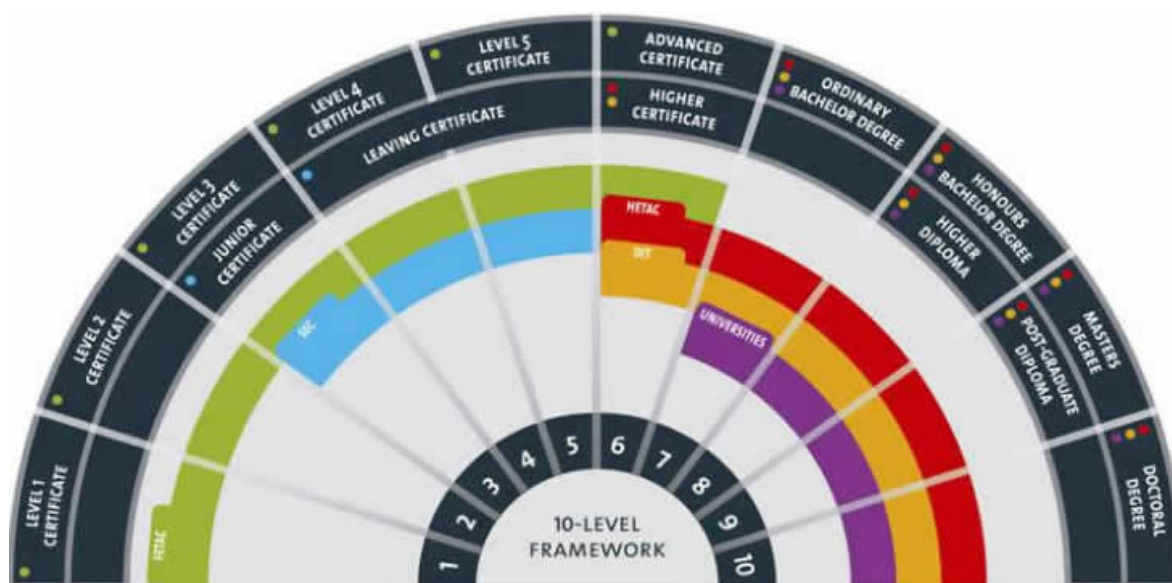
In this section, please list the number of individual trainees by gender and occupation category that you intend to train in 2011.

1.11. Current Trainee Educational Attainment Level (Employed)

In this section, please estimate the current educational attainment level for all employed trainees.

Please see Figure 1 for details of the ten levels within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). More information on the levels and the awarding bodies is available from their website www.nfq.ie.

Figure 1: National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Levels



Source: <http://www.nfq.ie/>

1.12. Word Document Questions

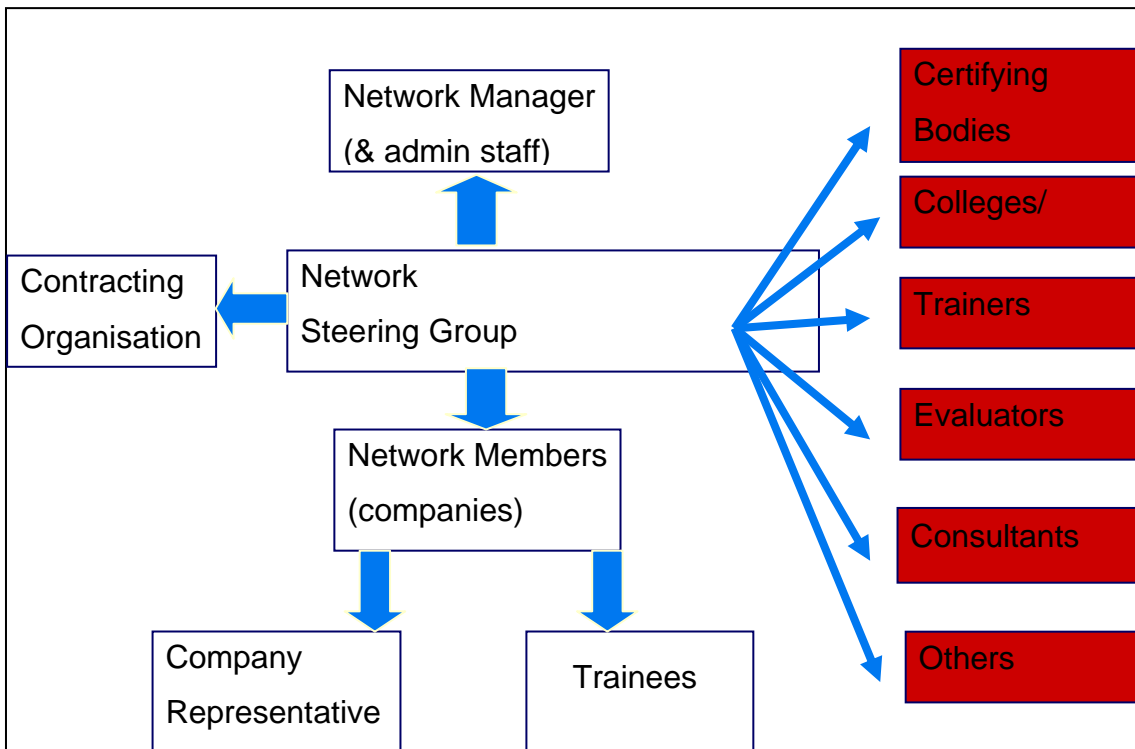
1.12.1. Describe the network and its structure

In this section, we ask you to describe your network and its structure. Please include details of how the network will be managed and describe the different roles of those involved in providing direction and managing your network i.e. steering group.

Figure 2 shows a typical Skillnets network – the core of which is the company members. In most of the networks, a network manager is the key coordinator, providing the professional and developmental input. Others who provide services to the network include trainers, business advisors and academics.

Each network will have a promoting organisation that will manage the activities of the network and receive the funds from Skillnets on behalf of the network group, and a steering group (as described in [section 1.5](#)).

Figure 2: A Typical Network Structure



1.12.2. What are the proposed outcomes and aims of the network?

In this section please describe in detail the outcomes and aims of your network and explain how they fit in to the Skillnets Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011 aims and objectives (please see below).

Skillnets Programme Aims and Objectives

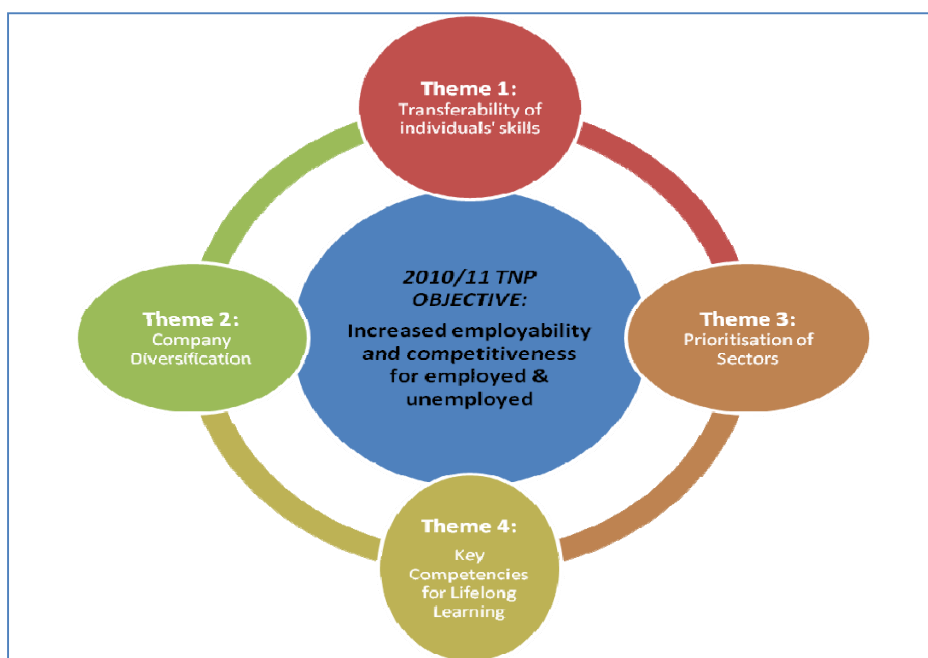
The aims and objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To promote and support the development of training networks as a strategic response to existing and emerging competitive challenges facing the enterprise sector
- To increase participation in enterprise training by firms to improve competitiveness and provide improved access for workers to skills development
- To improve the level and quality of training and development activities in enterprises which already invest in training
- To increase the level of training in enterprises and sectors where little training has taken place to date
- To promote an enterprise-led approach to learning through the establishment of training networks where groups of enterprises can develop strategic solutions to their joint training needs
- To improve the adaptability and long-term employability of workers
- To create value-added training by promoting best international practice within networks, including impact measurement, benchmarking, accreditation of new and prior learning, and strategic approaches to learning and development
- To contribute to the development of national policy on the development of workplace training by working with all stakeholders, including employer bodies and trade unions, training and education providers, awards bodies, support agencies, and policy groups
- Make a significant contribution to upskilling the unemployed and ensuring they increase their employability

1.12.3. Which of the thematic areas will be addressed by this network?

In this section, the network must clearly indicate which thematic area the network wishes to apply under. Applicants should also clearly indicate how their training will serve the needs of those in employment and the unemployed. Skillnets is fully committed to supporting small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and applicants can make their business case under any of the themes. Networks should preferably apply under one main theme, but other themes may be referred to, to support the business case. The themes are illustrated in Figure 3 and explained in detail below.

Figure 3: Skillnets Themes



Theme 1: Facilitating the transferability of individuals' skills to increase mobility and employability across mixed sectoral /regional networks

The primary focus of this theme will be on up-skilling, re-skilling and cross skilling of workers across sectors and/or regions. Training delivered under this theme will promote the adoption of incremental skills which are required to facilitate increased mobility, employability and enhanced business performance of network members. This may involve sector specific or regional specific networks delivering transversal skills training for the employed and unemployed.

Networks will need to explain how their proposed new programme will allow businesses to be able to adapt to evolving labour markets and rapid change. As companies strive to make efficiencies, they need to have multi-skilled staff. The application must reflect and explain members' needs to up-skill or cross skill their employees to allow them to take on more responsibility, be able to work in a multidisciplinary role (or environment) or be able to move from one area of the business to another.

Please refer to **section 3** of the application form to enter the training programmes which will demonstrate increased mobility and employability. Learning outcomes likely to lead to mobility reflect: (1) Up-skilling e.g. developing the management potential of an experienced engineer and (2) Cross skilling e.g. training customer service agents into technical support roles.

Theme 2: Facilitating company diversification or transferability within a sector or from one sector to another

The primary focus of this theme will be facilitating the acquisition and transferability of skills to allow companies to diversify within their sector or to secure the transformational change of their business offering to a completely new sector. This will involve sectoral networks providing industry specific training for the employed and unemployed.

Many enterprises are proactively changing their business offering and moving into sectors which may offer greater potential. These enterprises have identified opportunities to expand or radically change their business offerings and diversify into other areas. Networks that wish to apply for funding under this theme will have member companies who can clearly demonstrate a need to up-skill their employees to work in alternative roles as the companies plan to diversify into other business areas or to move completely to another sector.

Please refer to **section 3** of the application form to enter the training programmes which will enable company diversification and the transferability of skills from one sector to another.

For example, a mechanical engineering company currently working in the automotive industry might wish to move into biomedical engineering. This company might need specific technical training in the biomedical engineering area for all of their staff.

Theme 3: Facilitating increased performance and growth in priority sectors

The primary focus of this theme will be on up-skilling individuals in the key skills necessary to enter into/expand within certain priority sectors which have been identified as high potential growth sectors. These networks will concentrate on specific sectors meeting the training needs of both the employed and unemployed.

Networks that wish to apply for funding under this theme will have member companies who are working in the priority sectors detailed below. Networks can focus on one/more of the priority sectors and should also illustrate where convergence applies, for example where there is a demand for hybrid technologists within member companies with backgrounds in science, IT and nanotechnology¹. Networks applying under this theme must show how they intend to meet the training needs of employees and the unemployed within the priority sector(s).

These sectors were selected based on the following criteria (overleaf).

- Sectors which have been prioritised in government policy, specifically in the document *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy* (Department of the Taoiseach, 2008)
- Existing, emerging or potential export sectors
- Sectors which are large employers or have potential for employment growth

SECTOR	PRIORITY SUB SECTORS
Life Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmachem • Biotechnology

¹ National Skills Bulletin 2009, EGFSN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Technologies
Green Technology & Environmental Goods & Services (EGS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-construction • Low carbon emission transport • Waste management/Recycling • Renewable energy
ICT Manufacturing & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer hardware • Digital media • Telecommunications • ICT services
Food & Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-food • Meat and Livestock • Speciality food
International Financial Services ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking & Capital Markets • Investment Management • Insurance
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-tourism³

Please see [Appendix 4](#) for a list of reports and publications that were referenced in the compilation of this list.

Please refer to **section 3** of the application form to enter the training programmes which will enable increased performance, competitiveness and high potential growth for your chosen priority sector(s).

² These needs are being met by the FINUAS Networks Programme. For more information go to www.finuas.ie

³ Please note that eco-tourism is the sole priority sector within the general tourism sector

Theme 4: Enhancing the general competency skills of the lifelong learner

The primary focus of this theme is the up-skilling of individuals in certain key competencies which have been identified by European policy as necessary skills for all European workers. This will involve sectoral and/or regional networks providing particular competency training for the employed and unemployed who may have been at an educational disadvantage.

A number of current skills shortages have been identified which focus on the ability of workers to acquire skills in areas which would allow them to have a more multidisciplinary role. For example, an experienced IT programmer may need to be up-skilled in another EU language. It is imperative that the European worker continuously improves their skills and ensures that their knowledge is up to date. The core competencies of workers as identified by the European Union are communication in the mother tongue (including essential reading and writing skills); communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competencies in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competencies; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression⁴. All applications should be able to clearly demonstrate how their network aims to up-skill employees and the unemployed in these core competencies and provide sufficient evidence to support their case. Research should also be conducted to determine what competencies are required by member companies for employees/potential employees to enable more efficient business performance.

Please refer to **section 3** of the application form to enter the training programmes which will enable increased competence in skills such as communication in the mother tongue (including essential reading and writing skills); communication in foreign languages; maths, science and technology; digital skills; learning to learn; social and civic competencies and skills in entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

⁴ Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning – European Reference Framework, 2007. Office for Official Publications of the European Union.

1.12.4. How have the training needs been identified and analysed?

Part A - The Employed

In this section, please describe in detail, the methods employed to identify and analyse the training and development needs of member companies. If applicable, attach details as well as any forms/questionnaires that were used, as an appendix to your completed application.

Part B - The Unemployed

All applications must include some provision for the unemployed, and in this section you need to provide evidence that you have researched the needs of the unemployed within the sector/region who could benefit from participation in training.

The findings should highlight which training programmes might facilitate the up-skilling/re-skilling of the unemployed and part-unemployed (those no longer on a five day week as the need for their role has diminished) into full employment and/or another role

You should also explain:

- How you identified the unemployed in the relevant sector/region
- How you identified their needs
- How their participation in training programmes will potentially impact on their employability
- How you plan to select them for training courses

As part of the research applicants may survey member companies to identify the numbers of people that have been made redundant and the skills required for re-entry to the job market. In addition, applicants should engage with other stakeholders such as FÁS, educational institutions and community and voluntary organisations in establishing the needs of the unemployed. If applicable, you can attach details of your research in an appendix to your completed application.

1.12.5. Are you in receipt of any other form of public funding?

Please include examples of other forms of public funding including funding received from FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, Leader, County Enterprise Boards etc, if applicable.

1.12.6. Have you any current applications with other agencies for public funding?

Please include examples of other applications for public funding such as FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, Leader Companies, County Enterprise Boards etc, if applicable.

2. Network Details

2.1. Company Details

In this section, please fill in all the information required on the companies who have agreed to join your network.

A letter 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 please contact the Skillnets office at 01-2079630.

3. 2011 Training Plan

This section gives details of the planned training for the network. You will be asked to provide a list of training courses for each year. 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.

3.1. Training Plan

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

Note regarding training courses that include unemployed participants

Participating in enterprise-led training programmes in areas that are in demand by employers will keep the individual's skills up-to-date and/or increase their capacity to diversify into employment within different sectors and/or job roles. Networks should not design training programmes solely for unemployed trainees as this model is designed to facilitate the unemployed training with the employed on programmes that meet defined business needs of member companies. However, networks can provide additional innovative supports such as mentoring, job search approaches and networking. Unemployed trainees can attend both certified and non certified courses in any area that they consider will improve their employability, including areas that they have experience in or sectors they wish to diversify into.

Training Type

The types of training that the network may engage in can include:

- Customer Relations
- Executive Development
- Accounting/Financial Skills
- Interpersonal Communications
- Information Technology Skills
- Language Skills
- Management/Supervisory Skills
- New Employee Orientation
- Occupational Safety/Compliance
- Product Knowledge
- Professional Skills
- Quality Competition & Business Practice
- Sales/Marketing Skills
- Technical Processes
- Other

Training Methodology

Training methodology is the method that will be used to train individuals. Please select one of the following from the drop down menu for each course.

- Activities to accredit acquired prior learning
- Instructor led i.e. primarily classroom

- Mixed learning event i.e. classroom and non-classroom
- On the job - involving input from instructor/trainer/staff
- Self paced i.e. e-learning and distance learning
- Other

Duration per course (days)

Please enter the number of days training for each individual course. If the course duration is a full day, please put 1 (or part thereof e.g. 0.5).

One training day is taken to be equivalent to six contact hours training. Contact hours are the time spent with the trainer and/or undertaking a training activity/exercise.

Planned No. of Employed/Unemployed Participants

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

While a maximum of 30% of the total trainees to be trained in each year should be unemployed please note however, that an individual training course should have no more than 40% unemployed participants. This is to maintain the status of the Skillnets programme as an enterprise-led training programme for employed individuals. More importantly, this ensures that the unemployed are getting the full benefits of contact with the employed including networking and the transfer of learning.

In-Company Training

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). This will be checked in section 4.1.

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.

No specific training will be funded by Skillnets. Specific training is defined as skills specific to a company that could not be transferred to another company.

Certification

For certified training, please select the organisation that will certify the training from the drop down list. 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.nfq.ie.

If your training is not on the NFQ, or certified by a professional body, please select 'no' in the drop down list for certified.

3.2. Consultants (development of training material and/or certification)

Please list the type of consultants the network will need over the funding period e.g. certification experts etc.

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.

3.3. Other Events and Activities

These are events that the network engages in, other than training. These could include network launches, networking events, conferences etc. No trainee profile sheets will be required and hours do not count towards targets.

Eligible Activities

The activities listed below are eligible for inclusion in training network applications. The list is indicative rather than prescriptive. In principle, the delivery of any activity which provides learning, skills, knowledge development and networking between enterprises can be supported by the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011.

Eligible activities that may be carried out by training networks include:

- The engagement of network companies
- The provision of staff, office facilities and administration required for network activities
- The provision of accounting services necessary to manage and administer network grants and network matching funds
- The analysis of training needs of individuals, enterprises, sectors or regions
- The provision, development and customization of training programmes for managers and staff within enterprises
- The commissioning of trainers to design, deliver and evaluate training for network members
- The engagement of industry and training and development experts to assist in the development and carrying out of learning activities within the network
- Best-practice visits, case studies, networking events and other inter-firm learning activities
- Networking events and activities including workshops, seminars and conferences
- The provision of inter-firm mentoring, coaching and other knowledge transfer activities
- The publication of new training materials and information
- The promotion of network training activities and programmes
- The development and administration of certification within the context of the National Qualifications Framework
- The development of methodologies, tools and materials to support best training practice
- Surveys, studies and evaluations of the impact of network activities on business performance and staff development

- The development of strategic partnerships between enterprises, providers, industry bodies and certification awards bodies.
- The development of training and development plans, processes and people (decision makers, trainers and staff) within enterprises to improve the internal capacity of firms to identify and meet training needs
- The development of processes at sectoral or regional level to provide strategic support and direction for skills development to meet future market needs and competitive challenges

4. Trainer Costs

4.1. Training Course Costs

Most of the information in this section will be automatically generated from section 3.1. Please complete the remaining field 'cost per day' highlighted in yellow.

Please make sure that in the 'cost per day' column you quote the trainer cost of a full day's training equivalent at a daily rate. This can include travel and subsistence for the trainer only. See example below.

The 'cost per day' must be calculated manually for each training course as follows:

Total trainer cost of course (please ensure that the trainer cost includes the total amount of any travel and subsistence which may be charged by the trainer) divided by the number of days the course will run.

Example:

A network intends to run a 2 day bookkeeping course. The trainer will charge €1,000 for the course and will also claim €50 travel and subsistence each day.

The cost per day = €550

$$[\text{€}1000 \text{ (trainer cost for course)} + \text{€}100 \text{ (€}50 \text{ per day travel and subsistence)}] / [2 \text{ (length of course)}]$$

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

Networks 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.

5. Budget – Expenditure and Income

This section of the application form brings together all of the costs of the proposed activity and also describes how it will be financed. It is a summary of the network's income and expenditure.

The elements of the budget are described in more detail below and if this is insufficient, clarification on any aspect of the budget can be sought from the Skillnets office.

The networks expenditure will comprise costs under two headings

- Network management costs
- Training costs

Skillnets will co-fund training programmes and will provide grant assistance to cover part of the two cost categories. The network is required to provide cash funding from its member companies to finance the remaining part of the expenditure. The programme will conclude in a breakeven position, i.e. zero bank balance, with all of its expenditure matched by grants from Skillnets and cash from member companies.

The network must deliver on its unemployed trainee target within the network training budget and therefore there is no special provision in the budget for the unemployed.

- The unemployed trainees are not required to pay for course fees so there is no matching requirement from them. Effectively, activity costs, such as costs for trainers and facilities, are sponsored by the network by allowing unemployed candidates onto the programmes at no cost. Networks need to manage their budgets to facilitate the unemployed trainees and must not accept any matching from the unemployed participants.
- Applicants need to be fully aware of this condition of funding - that the costs for facilitating the unemployed trainees is to be borne by the network using the approved grant and cash matching from member companies.

The networks income will come from two sources:

- Skillnets grant
- Cash from member companies (can include sponsorship)

Some general principles apply to the network budget completion –

Transparency – Applicants should aim for total transparency in information provided, to ensure that Skillnets clearly understand all financial aspects of the application.

Procurement Guidelines – A network, if successful in its application, will be required to comply with procurement guidelines provided by Skillnets. Networks must adhere to the procurement guidelines for ALL expenditure. This includes the appointment of network management resources.

Other Funding Agencies - It should be noted that Skillnets does not fund activities that are also funded by other funding organisations or initiatives (please see [section 1.12.6](#)).

Eligibility - Only costs approved in the original budget submitted are eligible. Subsequent changes to the budget and/or training activity during the lifetime of the project must have the prior approval of Skillnets.

Grant Funding Rates

The maximum level of grant funding which can be requested is 50% of budgeted expenditure. If a higher rate is requested, this will be flagged in section 5.7 of the application form and the requested grant amount will have to be amended to a percentage equal to or less than 50% of expenditure prior to submitting the application form to Skillnets.

These are maximum rates and each applicant may choose to opt for a lesser rate referred to as the Requested Grant Rate, the selection of which will result in lower grant funding.

Where the Requested Grant Rate is significantly below 50%, additional points will be awarded as part of the application assessment process.

Designated Bank Account

Your network **must** operate a new, separate bank account to be used exclusively for the network's financial transactions for the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2011. All network transactions must go through this specific bank account and the documentation to support these transactions must be kept on file.

It is a requirement that bank statements are reconciled to the Skillnets internet-based reporting system - SAM (Skillnets Activity Management) and income and expenditure records are updated every month and submitted to Skillnets with bank statements. This is the responsibility of the contracting organisation.

All bank statements and reconciliations along with the bank mandate showing authorised signatories should be retained for inspection by Skillnets.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenditure

- Costs must be real and relevant to the network plan to be eligible
- Expenditure must be made during the network's term
- Expenditure incurred before the network start date (see contract) or after the network end date will not be eligible. Any spend within the contracted period which is deemed ineligible, will have to be covered by 100% cash matching i.e. the network cannot receive grant funding towards this spend.
- All transactions must be real and reflected individually in cash transactions passing through the network's designated bank account

Expenditure that is ineligible includes (list is not exhaustive):

- Cost of trainee time spent attending training
- Notional charges or opportunity expenditure
- Non verifiable expenditure

- Interest and overdraft charges charged by banks
- Recoverable VAT
- Purchase of items, such as equipment or software with an individual cost in excess of €1,200
- Expenditure outside your network contract term
- Expenditure where it is deemed a conflict of interest may exist for the beneficiary.
- Expenditure made contrary to Skillnets procurement guidelines
- Fines and penalties
- Costs incurred outside the Republic of Ireland (unless approved by Skillnets in advance)
- Losses arising out of commercial activity
- Management expenditure in excess of agreed budgeted proportion of management costs to network's total spend
- Expenditure on invalid programme activity or communications
- Expenditure co funded by another public body

Match Funding Income

Match funding is the enterprise sector's contribution toward the costs of the network activity. Match funding must be:

- In cash and not be in-kind.
- It should be collected from member companies and not from individual trainees. Examples include membership fees, course fees and sponsorships.
- Not from other public funds. You must declare in the application form that no match funding reflected in the network budget is from any public body (section 5.7).

The networks strategy for raising match funding should be established early on by the steering group. Insufficient match funding will prevent the network from completing its programme and drawing down grant instalments.

In the network budget, match funding represents the difference between expenditure and grant funding. Please note that total expenditure must equal total income in the network budget. Any imbalance will be flagged on the application form (section 5.7). The application form should not be submitted until the network budget is balanced.

Value for Money & Procurement

Networks should show that they obtain value for money and will be required to comply with Skillnets TNP procurement guidelines. Please refer to the table below for an overview of the procurement processes required under these guidelines.

Contract Thresholds	Procurement Processes
Less than €5,000	Quotations from competitive suppliers
Between €5,000 and €25,000	Minimum of three written quotations required
Greater than €25,000 and less than €125,000	Formal tender process required.
Greater than €125,000 – EU Threshold	EU Procurement Directives apply

Taxation

VAT on eligible expenditure is allowable provided the network can demonstrate that it is not recoverable.

Skillnets does not provide taxation advice and encourages networks to seek suitable advice so that a proper approach to VAT and PAYE treatment is adopted. It is the responsibility of the network to consult with their tax advisor or consultant regarding VAT issues.

If the network is unsure of its VAT status at the time of application, please ensure that all expenditure figures quoted in the application include a VAT element where relevant.

End of Year Reporting Obligations

At the end of 2011 an independent accountant's report on your network's income and expenditure statement is required. This is in addition to a statutory audit of the contracting organisation if such an audit is required. Please note that the statutory audit of the contracting organisation is not eligible network expenditure.

Skillnets will provide networks with guidelines for independent accountant's reports. Please note that only registered auditors are eligible to prepare the accountant's report. The accountant must be registered with one of the recognised accountancy bodies and completely independent to the network and the contracting organisation i.e. cannot be an employee of the contracting organisation.

Budget Revisions

Occasionally, Skillnets may require networks to revise their budgets. The network will be advised of the nature of this requirement as it arises and any budget revisions will be carried out primarily by the network before being approved by Skillnets.

Further guidance

Please note the following restrictions regarding funding:

- Activities must be of a non-commercial non-profit nature and must not result in direct financial benefits to the contracting organisation or any individual member companies
- Statutory training is not eligible
- No double funding for the same activity with other public and/or EU sources
- Training that would go ahead without Skillnets (which is referred to as 'deadweight' training) and training eligible for funding by other agencies (which is referred to as 'displacement' training) is excluded

The Skillnets programme will run from the date each network is contracted with until the 31st December 2011. To be considered, eligible activity funded by the Skillnets programme must occur in this period. Only income and expenditure received or paid in the period is eligible for co-financing with the Skillnets grant.

Payments of Grant

Payments are made on a phased basis and networks are provided with a schedule of payments on the commencement of the programme. In general, payments are issued in advance to allow networks immediate access to the funds they require to deliver plans. In most cases, when a network has spent 80% of a previous payment, a further payment will be issued to the network. Payments are made by inter-bank transfer to a dedicated account established by the training network. Payments may be conditional on network reaching a certain level of activities and performance. A retention payment in the region of 10% of grant will be withheld pending satisfactory reporting of 2011 finance & activity

How to approach completing your budget

The budget section is near the end of the application form. When you reach this part you will have outlined your training plans in section 3 and determined the related costs of that training in section 4. These training costs carry through automatically to sections 5.5 and 5.6 in the budget sheet. Guidance on each section of the budget is provided.

1. Fill in all the requested information on budget expenditure in sections 5.1 to 5.6. Some of this information will be automatically completed from previous sections.
2. When all expenditure details are complete, scroll down the spreadsheet from 5.4 through 5.5 and 5.6 and familiarise yourself with how these costs are summarised as Total Network Expenditure.
3. Proceed now to determine income that will match or equal this expenditure. Until this is done the following sign appears.

<< Total Income not equal to Total Expenditure. Correct where required and proceed.

4. Income –

The Maximum Grant Rate is 50% and will appear above in a box above section 5.5 (see table below). Note that you must specify a Requested Grant % which may be equal to or less than the Maximum Grant Rate. Once you have done this the Requested Grant amount (€) appears and will flow through to 5.7, the income section of the budget. Grant income may be reduced by specifying a lower Requested Grant %.

Maximum Grant Rate	50%
Requested Grant %	
Requested Grant	€

5. Having determined grant income, the remaining element of income is in cash from one or more of the sources suggested in this section. In order to balance the budget, you must now determine an amount of cash funding that bridges the gap between Total Network Expenditure and Total Requested Grant. Carry out this procedure for each of the two budget years and allot the amount for each year in its entirety to one of the suggested cash categories or in part to a combination of these categories. Having done so, the following sign should **disappear** having successfully balanced your budget.

<< Total Income not equal to Total Expenditure. Correct where required and proceed.

6. If this has been unsuccessful, we suggest you remove all funding other than Requested Grant Income, calculate the difference between Total Network Expenditure and Total Requested Grant again and allocate this difference to one or more of the sources of cash or other funding sources suggested. If you continue to have difficulty in balancing your budget, please call the Skillnets office for advice. We will be happy to help.

5.1. Network Management Team Costs

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

The costs quoted in section 5.1 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 costs of this section flow through to the summary of network management costs in 5.5. Approved networks must adhere to the Skillnets procurement guidelines for all network management team costs.

5.2. Overheads

A breakdown of overheads of the network is required outlining each cost to be incurred by the network. All costs included must be accompanied by an explanation of the methodology used in the calculation of that cost (basis of calculation).

Examples of overheads include (list is not exhaustive):

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

5.3. Consultants (development of training material and/or certification)

Please input details of all consultant costs to be incurred in the development of training materials and/or certification. The maximum daily charge for any such consultant should not exceed €1,000. If the required consultant charge exceeds €1,000 per day you should get written approval from Skillnets prior to committing to hiring the consultant. This is in addition to following the procurement guidelines.

By inserting a daily cost rate for the consultants you will convert the figures on time spent into a budget for each year for this activity.

We ask you to be aware of VAT as an eligible cost making provision for it in the daily rate provided that the network is not entitled to recover the VAT from the Revenue.

The costs of this section flow through to the summary of training costs in section 5.6.

5.4. Consultants (other)

This section should be used to describe the consultants you intend to use in the operation of the network which are not described elsewhere.

Services such as public relations, event management, web design and report writers could be included here.

Note that audit and network management services will be included under Network Management Costs in section 5.5 and consultants for training development/certification will be included in section 5.3.

The maximum daily charge for any such consultant should not exceed €1,000. If the required consultant charge exceeds €1,000 per day you must get written approval from Skillnets prior to committing to hiring the consultant. This is in addition to following the procurement guidelines.

The costs of this section flow through to the summary of network management costs in section 5.5.

5.5. Network Management Costs

The network management costs should include all costs associated with the management and running of the network excluding any costs directly linked to the delivery of training. The Network Management Costs cannot exceed 25% of the total costs of the network. The percentage will be automatically calculated on the application form and will be flagged if it exceeds 25% of the total expenditure. If this % exceeds 25% of the total expenditure, you must recalculate your budget prior to submitting the application form to Skillnets.

Please note that networks are encouraged to design a budget in which management costs are less than 25% of the total expenditure. Where management costs are significantly below 25%, additional points will be awarded as part of the application assessment process.

If the budgeted management ratio is exceeded in any year, the portion the portion of management costs in excess of this ratio will be deemed ineligible.

Network Management Team Costs

The figures will be automatically generated from information entered in section 5.1.

Travel and Subsistence - Network Management Team Costs

Please include the expected costs from travel and subsistence for the network management team only, including steering group members. This figure should not include travel and subsistence for trainers. Travel and subsistence for trainers should be incorporated into the trainer costs quoted in section 4.1 of this application form.

Travel and subsistence rates used cannot exceed the Department of Finance rates issued from time to time. The current rates can be found in the following location on the Department of Finance website:

Staff Recruitment and Training

Please include expected costs of recruitment or training of any members of the Network Management team listed in section 5.1 of this form. This budget does not allow for training of anyone other than the Network Management Team.

Audit

The cost associated with the Independent Accountant required to carry out the networks End of Year Reporting obligations must be included here. Please refer to the explanation of the End of Year obligations outlined on page 46. The focus when contracting an independent accountant should be on value for money. Tendering and procurement procedures must be followed in line with the guidelines provided by Skillnets.

5.6. Training Costs

This section deals with the costs of delivery of training, including their development and certification. This section is nearly complete as many of the budget lines will be automatically generated from previous sections of the application form.

Detailed information on each individual budget line is provided below.

Training Materials and facilities

Please include any costs associated with the provision of training excluding the trainer costs.

Examples of such costs would be:

- Room hire
- Provision of manuals/handouts
- Provision of refreshments

Contractors Training Development/Certification

The figures will be automatically completed in this section of the application form from section 5.3.

Trainers

The figures will be automatically completed in this section of the application form from section 4.1.

Events

Please include any costs the network will incur for events designed to promote and boost network activity. Such events should include the network launch, award ceremonies, and other networking events. The costs should include venue hire and any other associated costs.

Where a network is donating towards the cost of an event organised by a third party, written approval for the expenditure must be sought from Skillnets prior to committing to the donation.

Dissemination (Publications/websites etc)

Please include any costs the network will incur in the dissemination of the network activities. No cost should exceed €1,000 incl. VAT. If a spend in excess of this limit is required on any item of dissemination, written approval is required from the Communications Department in Skillnets prior to committing to the expenditure. Branding Guidelines issued by Skillnets will have to be adhered to in relation to all network dissemination.

Consultants (Other)

The figures will be automatically completed in this section of the application form from section 5.4.

5.7. Income

You have reached the final stage of the budget. In this section, you are required to provide details of all income of the network so that you are in a position to submit a balanced budget i.e. total network expenditure equals the total network income.

Income will come from two sources:

- Requested Grant
- Cash

Requested Grant

This grant amount is taken from earlier in the budget section.

Cash Matching

Please include details of expected cash matching collectable by the network. Please split this cash matching into the relevant matching sub category.

Cash matching cannot include any cash collected from other public bodies. If matching is collected from other public bodies, please provide Skillnets with details of the circumstances surrounding collection of this cash at the time of application.

Please note that Total Network Expenditure must be equal to Total Network Income. If there is a difference between Income and Expenditure, this will be flagged on the application form by the appearance of a warning box. If this occurs, you must revise the budget figures prior to submitting the application form to Skillnets.

At this stage you should have successfully balanced your budget.

6. Network Targets and Undertaking

These targets will be automatically generated by combining information entered in sections 2, 3 and 5.

Target Trainees in employment

This is the number of employed individuals who take part in the network training activities over the lifespan of the overall programme including breakdowns for each year. Please note that one trainee can be a participant on a number of training courses. This target is automatically generated from section 1.9.

Target Trainees not currently employed

This is the number of unemployed individuals who take part in the network training activities over the lifespan of the overall programme, including breakdowns for each year. This target is automatically generated from section 1.9 of this application. Please note that at least 10% of the overall number of trainees trained by the network must be unemployed at the time of training.

Target Training Days

This target is automatically generated from information entered in section 3.1 of this application.

(For your information, the final figure is calculated by multiplying the following columns from this section for all planned training courses: the duration of course (days) by the number of times training courses will be run by the planned number of participants per course.)

Target No. Companies

This is the number of companies which have joined or will join the network over the lifespan of the programme. This target is automatically generated from section 1.6 of this application.

Network Budget Summary

This is a summary of all planned network income and expenditure per year and as a total for two years. These targets are automatically generated from section 5 of this application.

% number unemployed trainees compared to total trainees

This will be automatically generated and must be between 10-30%.

Successful projects will be monitored against these targets during the funding period.

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 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 a valid Tax Clearance Certificate before contracts can be issued.

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 which may be partly used to fund training for the unemployed. 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 (General Communication Guidelines)

Potential networks should develop a trading name which must use the word Skillnet at the end e.g. xxx Skillnet or The xxx Skillnet. We suggest keeping the name short and memorable; the best solution would be to use a maximum of three words, including Skillnet, in the name. The name should reflect the network objectives.

This name of your potential network can only be used in print and verbal communications in a way that reflects clearly the fact that the xxx Skillnet is a network under development and in the process of applying for funding.

In the application phase applicants **must not**:

- Develop individual network logos
- Use the corporate Skillnets logo on any communication material.
- Develop any long life communication materials with references to Skillnets or the network name (for example substantial printed documents, brochures, pop up stands, DVD's and websites).
- Launch the network prior to funding being approved.

In the application phase applicants can:

- Produce temporary, limited, short life communication materials, for example, flyers, event leaflets and short term printed documents for the purpose of promoting the potential network to member companies.
- Host events to encourage membership of the potential network.

Once a network is funded, there are set branding guidelines for all communications materials which the network will be obliged to comply with.

Appendix 4 (References for Priority Sectors)

Publication	Author	Date
National Skills Bulletin 2009	EGFSN	Jul-09
New Skills for New Jobs - Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs	European Commission	Apr-09
Getting Fit Again: The Short Term Priorities to Restore Competitiveness	National Competitiveness Council (NCC)	Jun-09
Sharing our Future: Ireland 2025 - Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Development	FORFAS	Jul-09
The Report of the High Level Group on Manufacturing	FORFAS	Mar-08
The Food and Drink Industry in Ireland – Closing the Gap. Competitiveness Indicators 2009	IBEC	Jun-09
A Review of the Employment and Skills Needs of the Construction Industry in Ireland	EGFSN	Dec-08
Statement on Education and Training	National Competitiveness Council (NCC)	Feb-09
Statement on Raising National Mathematical Achievement	EGFSN	Nov-08
Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness	NCC	Apr-09
Statement of Activity 2008	EGFSN	Jun-09
Building Ireland's Smart Economy	Department of the Taoiseach	Dec-08
Half Year Review 2009	Irish Exporters Association	Sep-09
Statement on Energy	FORFAS	Oct-09
Preparing for Export, UK Guide 2009	Enterprise Ireland	2009
Waste Management in Ireland: Benchmarking Analysis and Policy Priorities	FORFAS	Aug-09
Science, Technology and Innovation - Delivering the Smart Economy	DETE	Oct-09

Appendix 5 (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

Four (4) hard copies of the form printed

Audited accounts (or similar) (1 copy)

Letters of commitment / financial support (1 copy of each)

Any other relevant supporting documentation e.g. Training Needs Analysis questionnaire