

This directory summarises the activities of the networks, which were developed under the Training Networks Programme 1999-2002. The directory is Volume 3 in a set of publications on the outcomes of the first Training Networks Programme developed and managed by Skillnets and funded through the National Training Fund under the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.

The pages in this volume are an attempt to briefly summarise the activities, members, focus and outputs of each network. It is therefore indicative rather than fully comprehensive and should be read in conjunction with the other two publications in the series: Volume 1 – Summary Report of the Skillnets Training Networks Programme 1999-2002 and Volume 2 – A series of Case Studies of 11 Skillnets Networks and their members.

Further information on programmes and activities of networks can be found on a search facility on the Skillnets website at [www.skillnets.com](http://www.skillnets.com) or by contacting the Skillnets office. Detailed information is also available on dedicated network websites where noted in this directory. All programmes and products and further information on the network can be obtained from the individual network promoters noted in each network section.

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Change Management Skillnet	13
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Leinster Engineering & Technical (TEEU) Skillnet	40
South East Technology Training (SETTS) Skillnet	60
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CLÉ Book Publishers Skillnet	15
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**Network Name** Bakers and Confectioners (FCBA) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation The Flour, Confectioners & Bakers Association  
Address Executive House, Bridges Industrial Estate, Naas Road, Dublin 22  
Telephone (01) 459 3481  
Fax (01) 459 2443  
Contact Mr. Patrick Garvey

**Website** [www.fcbskillnet.ie](http://www.fcbskillnet.ie)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 35  
Sector Food & Beverages  
Region National

## Network Overview

The wide geographical spread of bakery businesses has resulted in a situation where 80% of industry employees have received no formal training or qualifications. Increased competition from supermarkets, imports and other suppliers of bakery-related food products has already resulted in many closures. New skills were needed to support the development of new products to satisfy consumers' changing tastes and to grow in efficiency, productivity and quality. The network identified significant skill gaps at operative level. A work-based training programme was designed at local level. This programme gained accreditation at level 2 from FETAC. The trainers, all of whom were highly skilled craftsmen with formal qualifications, delivered training in individual workplaces during normal working hours. In the longer term, it is intended to develop programmes in business and management skills as well.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 200  
Employee Type Craft and Related Trades Workers, Managers  
Focus of Training Health and Safety, Technical Skills, Production Operative Training  
Certification FETAC

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

The FCBA Craft & Plant Baker (Operative) Course  
The FCBA Craft Baker Confectioner (Operative) Course  
FETAC Module Descriptor – Bread/Baker (Operative) Level 2  
FETAC Module Descriptor – Baker/Confectioner (Operative) Level 2

**Network Name** Build Services Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation QC Logistics Ltd.  
Address Luffany, Slieverue, Co. Waterford  
Telephone (051) 833 090  
Fax (051) 833 096  
Contact Mr. John Delaney

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 16  
Sector Mixed; Small Business  
Region Eastern

## Network Overview

Building services and engineering departments are responsible for commissioning and maintaining production plants and operational equipment in manufacturing companies. Their activity is therefore a major overhead and their efficiency and expertise is a critical element in determining commercial competitiveness. Clusters of companies in the south of the country came together to develop training for all levels of building services. At senior level training was developed for strategic planning and project management, while at middle level, training concentrated on project management, and general and supervisory management. Operatives were re-trained, which provided them with multiple skills in mechanical engineering and electrical engineering so there would be more versatility within the workforce. Some mid-career operatives were retrained in people skills to enable them to undertake supervisory management assignments.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 177  
Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Professional & Technical Personnel, Plant & Machine Operators  
Focus of Training Human Resources, Innovation Management, Project Management, Multi-Skilling  
Certification FETAC, City & Guilds

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Innovation Management Programme. Materials include:

- Trainer Manual
- Trainee Manual and Workbook
- Case Studies

Waste Management for Companies Programme

Project Management Programme for Managers and Supervisors

Skillnet Programme Evaluation

**Network Name** Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Carlow/Kilkenny Training Network Ltd.  
Address Carlow Chamber of Commerce, Upper Floor, Haddens Centre,  
Tullow Street, Carlow  
Telephone (0503) 32337  
Fax (0503) 30652  
Contact Ms. Aisling Ward

**Website** [www.cktraining.ie](http://www.cktraining.ie)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 13  
Sector Mixed  
Region Eastern

## Network Overview

An established group of managers in the Carlow Kilkenny area pooled their training and development resources for their members. The group, which was regionally based, had an ethos of sharing facilities and exchanging knowledge to benefit the total network membership. The network identified a common need for the development of human resource strategies to overcome skill shortages and provide second-chance education and ongoing development to employees. The outcomes from this network included the development of a group of trained trainers in each organisation, a library of training manuals and materials, a central administrative resource and an intranet for the network members, and shared training equipment.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 365  
Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Plant & Machine Operators  
Focus of Training Human Resources, General Management, Health & Safety, Teambuilding  
Certification FETAC, NCI

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Employee Development Programme for Factory Operators and Lead Hands (FETAC Level 1)  
Supervisory Development Programme (NCI Diploma)  
Management Development Programme (FETAC Level 3)  
Train the Trainer Programme (FETAC Level 3)  
Evaluation Report on the Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet

**Network Name** Ceramics Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Qualceram Shires Plc.  
 Address South Quay, Arklow, Co. Wicklow  
 Telephone (0402) 31288  
 Fax (0402) 31292  
 Contact Ms. Linda Wafer

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 9  
 Sector Ceramics, Chemicals, Rubber & Plastics  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The ceramics industry in Ireland consisted of one main manufacturer, some small ones and a network of businesses that supply goods and services to it as well as retail outlets that sell the products. Historically, the sector had a presence in the Arklow area for a very long time, but much of the expertise left when companies closed. There was no training provision for the ceramics industry. Skill needs were identified both in technical and management areas. Modules were delivered that covered casting technologies, robotic glazing, equipment operation, environmental management and computer skills. By grouping this sector together, the largest of the companies was in a position to lead the network and to attract quality trainers and expertise from abroad for shared training and development.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 56  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Clerical/Administrative Staff, Craft Workers, General Operatives  
 Focus of Training Production Techniques, Technical Skills, Basic Operator Skills, Information Technology, Health & Safety, General Management, Marketing  
 Certification ECDL, BCRM

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Chemistry of Ceramics Programme
- Mould Making Programme
- Environmental Monitoring and Controls Programme
- Low Pressure Casting of Ceramics Programme. Materials include:
  - Technical Manual
  - Training Manual
  - Ceramics Glossary
  - Reference Materials

<b>Network Name</b>	Chamber Skillnets
<b>Promoter</b>	
Promoting Organisation	Chambers of Commerce of Ireland
Address	22 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
Telephone	(01) 661 2888
Fax	(01) 661 2811
Contact	Mr. John Dunne

**Website** [www.chambersireland.ie](http://www.chambersireland.ie)

### Key Network Data

No. of Companies	280
Sector	Mixed; Small Business
Region	Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, Limerick, South Dublin, Waterford

### Network Overview

Unlike large companies, small businesses are unlikely to have in-house training expertise or significant funds to buy in training for their employees. The key challenge to most small businesses is to find affordable training that really fits their needs. Rather than being led by what the training providers are offering, small businesses must learn to identify their specific training needs and to formulate strategic training plans. The Chambers of Commerce of Ireland formed the Chamber Skillnets to facilitate training networks throughout the country to engage with the training process. Each company was facilitated to develop their own training needs analysis and to create strategic training plans. Once these were in place, training liaison officers brokered local training to suit the local company network. They met regularly to discuss training experiences, to design training programmes in collaboration with local training providers and to pool their purchasing power. The aim was to obtain economies of scale and design, as well as to reduce costs. Because training was well targeted, learning outcomes increased. Companies were empowered to manage their own training function which, in turn, encouraged small companies to invest more time and resources in developing their staff.

### Key Training Data

No. of Trainees	806
Employee Type	Owner/Managers
Focus of Training	Human Resources, Marketing, Health & Safety, Customer Service, General Management, Teambuilding, Information Technology, Financial Management for Small Business

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Chamber Skillnets Evaluation Report, "Understanding My Company's Training Needs"  
 – a Five Step Guide to Identifying and Prioritising Training Needs for Chamber Skillnet Members.  
 Range of programmes at local level available on local chamber websites.

**Network Name** Chambers Research Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Chambers of Commerce of Ireland  
Address 22 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
Telephone (01) 661 2888  
Fax (01) 661 2811  
Contact Mr. John Dunne

**Website** [www.chambersireland.ie](http://www.chambersireland.ie)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 821  
Sector Mixed  
Region National

## Network Overview

On-site multi-media training tools are a recent addition to the way in which small businesses can support learning in the workplace in a flexible manner. The advantage of being able to learn without limitations as to time or venue and at the chosen pace of the trainee makes them very attractive. Training media include CD-Roms, distance learning, computer-based training, web-based training, bulletin boards and videoconferencing. This research project was aimed at compiling an online database for small businesses that describes the tools available, their sources, advantages and disadvantages.

## Research Outputs:

"Making it Work – How to develop and implement an e-learning strategy for your company"

– A guide to developing an e-learning strategy for an SME

"SMEs and e-learning: Awareness and Attitudes" – Survey of 821 Irish SMEs undertaken by MORI/MRC on behalf of the CCI research skillnet on the impact of e-learning on the SME sector

"SMEs and e-learning" – A series of eight in-depth interviews with companies involved in the Chamber Skillnet"

Web-Based Resource for Irish SMEs on "Chamber Campus" on CCI website. Explains concepts of e-learning, lists suitable e-learning vendors, proposes how to develop an e-learning strategy, lists other web-based information resources and policy documents

**Network Name** Change Management Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Apple Computer Ltd.  
 Address Hollyhill Industrial Estate, Molhill, Cork City  
 Telephone (021) 428 4000  
 Fax (021) 428 4664  
 Contact Mr. Bernard Cronin

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 8  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region Southern

## Network Overview

The rapid pace of change is a common challenge to all enterprises. A group of Cork and Dublin companies, mostly within the IT and food sectors, identified change management as a key area for skill enhancement. The network was particularly interested in looking at innovative structures for partnership within companies. They also looked at knowledge and skill transfer and improved communication systems to reach those employees traditionally removed from the flow of information and knowledge. The network applied a sophisticated multi-level approach to identifying training needs in order to ensure buy-in by all participants at all levels of the organisations. This was particularly important to build relationships within the network. Training was provided in three areas: network building, capacity building (including train the trainer and facilitation skills) and a change management programme. Each of these skill areas was aimed at a particular category of staff and fulfilled specific business needs. Training was hosted on rotation within the network to facilitate networking opportunities in real business situations.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 365  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Service Workers, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, General Management, Customer Services, Personal Development, Change Management

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

“The Change Management System” – A review of the Change Management Skillnet

The Change Management Programme – A series of six interactive modules designed to tackle the issue of managing change in small, medium and large organisations

**Network Name** CIF CON\_ECT Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Construction Industry Federation  
 Address Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6  
 Telephone (01) 406 6000  
 Fax (01) 496 6953  
 Contact Ms. Lynda Bradshaw-Dunn

**Website** [www.cif.ie/projects/connect](http://www.cif.ie/projects/connect)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 44  
 Sector Construction  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The construction industry faces challenges to improve project delivery, quality, safety and the environmental impact of construction activities. In some areas of the industry recognised specialist training is available, but there are many gaps in non-technical areas. The aim of this network was to make up skill deficits in the management and contractual/financial administration of construction projects. Three regional clusters of companies were identified, training needs were established for each cluster and training was designed by the network to meet these needs. The training within each regional cluster established three target groups as follows: the first target group trained mentors in communication and coaching skills from within their companies. In the long term, this ensured that training was led and often delivered by the enterprises themselves. In the second target group trained, office administrators and site supervisors learned to plan and organise work, manage people, and to control costs and information. And finally, graduate engineers, senior staff and executives were trained in negotiation skills, labour relations, team building, and sustainable development. Certification of these modules, especially those covering soft skills, has been a valuable resource for the sector who have not had such courses tailored to their needs before.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 220  
 Employee Type Site Managers, Project Managers, Foremen, Site Engineers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Administration Skills, Teambuilding, Communication  
 Certification CIF, FETAC

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Certificate in Construction Administrative Studies (FETAC Level 3) – Under Development  
 FETAC Level 3 Module Descriptor – Project Planning & Programming  
 CON\_ECT Training Course Directory  
 Final Network Evaluation Report

**Network Name** CLÉ Book Publishers Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation CLÉ – Irish Book Publishers Association  
 Address 43-44 Temple Bar, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (01) 670 7243  
 Fax (01) 670 7642  
 Contact Mr. Fergal Tobin

**Website** [www.publishingireland.com](http://www.publishingireland.com)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 40  
 Sector Paper, Printing & Publishing  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Because Irish publishing houses are quite small, they find it difficult to access all the skills they need for so few people. In addition, there are more and more organisations, with limited experience, publishing their own documents. There is an overall need for enhancement of the skill base in book publishing. Despite a demonstrated interest in obtaining business and technical skills related to publishing, there was little formal training provision available. The CLÉ Skillnet was an opportunity to lead training provision from within the industry, where the expertise resided, and to build upon an existing network of publishing enterprises and freelancers. This network provided training to fill the skill gaps identified by its members. Resource material was developed on a closed website; an email newsletter kept the network in touch. Within the network, many of the new and emerging technologies, such as e-publishing, were adopted earlier, either by integrating them into current practice or by forming strategic alliances with new partners.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 387  
 Employee Type Managers, Editors, Publishers, Clerical Staff, Marketing Personnel  
 Focus of Training Marketing, Technical Skills, Information Technology, Administration Skills

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Training Manual for Programmes on Rights and Permissions  
 Website Development for Publishers, E-commerce for E-publishing, Copywriting for Publishers  
 Website contains bulletin boards for each network group, training resource material, newsletter archive, codes of practice, and proceedings of working group on occupational standards

**Network Name** Clothing & Textiles (ICATA) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Irish Clothing Manufacturers Federation  
 Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (01) 660 1011  
 Fax (01) 638 1560  
 Contact Ms. Susan Doyle

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 13  
 Sector Textile & Clothing  
 Region National

## Network Overview

Within the Irish clothing and textile industry, there has been an emphasis on the high-labour low-cost end of the market. It is no longer possible to compete successfully against cheaper labour markets in this niche. However, the transition to a more high-value market demands a focus on innovation, design and branding. As a result of these changes the workforce needs major up-skilling to compete in international markets. With traditional labour market becoming scarcer at the same time, it is imperative that high-technology systems are brought in and that existing workers are up-skilled to work in this new environment. Two specific skill needs were identified and addressed. First, senior managers developed strategically across the whole management field to become creative and visionary leaders. Secondly, existing and emerging junior and middle managers and supervisors gained skills in operational management, especially operations planning and control, effective technology application and people management. The ICATA network met these needs through formal focused work-based training. The training was skills-based but also had a cross-company component for company improvement. Informally, the network collaborated to produce case studies illustrating best practice and facilitated inter-company visits. In the evaluation phase of the project, benchmarking was used as a feedback mechanism within the network.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 20  
 Employee Type Managers  
 Focus of Training Marketing, Human Resources, General Management, Information Technology, Customer Service, Teambuilding  
 Certification National Institute of Transport & Logistics (NITL)

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Training manuals for modules on:

- Improving Business Effectiveness
- Strategy Development and Implementation
- Strategic Marketing
- Operations Planning and Control
- People Management Manufacturing Strategy
- Manufacturing Strategy

ICATA Skillnets Brochure

**Network Name** Coach Tourism Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Coach Tourism Council of Ireland  
 Address c/o Barton's Transport, Straffan Road, Maynooth, Co. Kildare  
 Telephone (01) 628 6338  
 Fax (01) 628 6722  
 Contact Mr. Feargal Barton

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 26  
 Sector Transport; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Private tourism coach services in Ireland are operating in a time of great change. Semi-state tourism services may be privatised as the industry becomes deregulated and foreign service providers will soon be competing. Private tourism coaches are usually small family-run businesses whose drivers have not had the advantages of formal training and whose management has not had the market advantages of the semi-state sector. Coach drivers are now expected to interact with tourists intensively. To compete successfully, drivers must become qualified one-person driver guides. This Skillnet identified and provided training in the areas of driving skills and advanced safety for existing drivers. For most drivers, this training provided the first validation of their knowledge by the award of a recognised qualification. This provided great motivation to those working in the industry. Owner/managers acquired skills in marketing, quality control, safety management and human resource management. Again, for many, this was their first opportunity to acquire core management skills. This enabled them to more effectively manage their businesses and to compete in this challenging new business environment. Networking provided opportunities to see best practices in other companies and to learn from the experience of similar services in other countries. It was also a nursery in which to grow strategic alliances within the industry for the first time and to recognise themselves as an 'industry'. These alliances may be able to work differently in the future, for instance, by tendering together for new business and working internationally.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 225  
 Employee Type Managers, Coach Drivers, Maintenance Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Information Technology  
 Certification NTCB, CIT

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Driver Guide Course for Coach Tour Drivers
- Pricing for Profit Course for Owner/Managers
- Decision Driver Training for Coach Tour Drivers
- Training Template for the Coach Tourism Industry

**Network Name** Construction IT (CIF) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Construction Industry Federation  
 Address Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6  
 Telephone (01) 406 6000  
 Fax (01) 496 6953  
 Contact Mr. George Hennessy

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 55  
 Sector Construction  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The construction industry will benefit from exploiting communications and information technologies to work more effectively, according to a survey of construction firms carried out by the Dublin Institute of Technology. A training needs analysis pinpointed the need for managers to be able to understand the potential of IT to meet the demands of their clients. They should also be able to use the internet as a resource and develop the use of intranets as shared information resources. Clerks of works, foremen and other user groups could benefit from the use of computers and email to carry out routine tasks more efficiently. It is clear from the survey that the ability to use specialist software such as CADMeasure, as well as the more generic packages, is invaluable. Doing original work on computer and transferring it electronically between the design offices, the site and the contractor’s offices avoids reworking the same job and reduces errors.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 100  
 Employee Type Managers, Professionals, Clerical & Accounts Staff  
 Focus of Training Technical, Information Technology Skills  
 Certification CIF

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

CIF Skillnets Research Report: “Considerations for the Development of ICT and HRD strategies in the SME contracting factor”

“Relevant Training with a Key Business Focus” – training programme descriptors for Application of Information Technologies within the Construction Environment –

- Drawing collaborators and eGovernance for Contractors
- Effective Use of online Project Management and Tendering Systems
- IT and the Construction Industry Process

**Network Name** Consumer Food Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Walsh Family Foods  
 Address Unit 10, Poppintree Industrial Estate, Ballymun, Dublin 11  
 Telephone (01) 834 8033  
 Fax (01) 834 8078  
 Contact Mr. Patrick J Walsh

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 16  
 Sector Food & Beverages; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Within the food sector, the fastest growing area in both exports and employment is consumer foods, that is value-added, usually ready-made products. The consumer food sector formed a network of participants who were committed to working together for competitive advantage. The common activities shared by the network included meeting increased food safety standards, responding to a similar customer base, frequent customer factory audits, similar processes and a commitment to business growth. Shared business needs were the backbone to the network and sharing ideas for the functional areas of the food industry such as buyers, audits, technology, sourcing product, maintenance and grants were all seen as benefits. Most companies were experiencing difficulties retaining staff. Training new staff and providing motivation to existing staff by upgrading their skills, especially for team working hoped to ameliorate this situation. Trainers from within the network were used by preference and, for variety, as many different trainers as possible were used. Training was delivered in two local rural clusters and certification was applied as far as possible. The network also facilitated open methods of learning, such as storytelling and crosslearning.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 444  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Product Development Personnel, Clerical Staff  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Technical Skills, Customer Service, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Operator Training, Sensory Analysis, Packaging, Food Law, Labels, Staff Retention  
 Certification City & Guilds, Letherhead Certificate

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Consumer Food Training Network Final Report
- Legal Labels and Food Law Programme
- Sensory Analysis Programme for Product Development Personnel
- Packaging Technology Programme for Product Development Staff

**Network Name** Co-operative Societies (ICOS) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Irish Co-operative Organisation Society Ltd.  
Address The Plunkett House, 84 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
Telephone (01) 676 4783  
Fax (01) 662 4502  
Contact Mr. Malachy McGlynn

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 8  
Sector Food & Beverages  
Region National

## Network Overview

Co-operative societies are unique business organisations set up to provide common economic, social and cultural needs for their owner-shareholders. Although that is their primary aim, profitability is necessary to maintain viability. While major dairy co-operatives are well organised to provide training, small societies do not have this capacity, nor can they afford to buy in tailored training. Increased competition, changing technologies and increased customer awareness means that skill deficits are becoming more apparent. The owner-shareholders are usually also the main customers. Because of the close relationship of the owner-shareholder and the customer, customer care may be neglected just at a time when competition is becoming more critical. The aim of this network was to provide an efficient self-sustaining training mechanism for small and medium-sized agricultural and rural based co-operative societies. Initially, training was provided regionally to those in direct contact with customers, delivery staff and shop staff. Modules included standard of service, merchandising skills, communication skills and personal management practices.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 67  
Employee Type Service Workers, Shop Staff and Van Sales Staff  
Focus of Training Health & Safety, Information Technology, Operator Training, Customer Care, Hygiene, Management Training

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Customer Service Programme 1 – including sales and merchandising  
Customer Service Programme 2 – including customer relations and complaints  
Food Handling and Plant Hygiene Course  
Introduction to Management – including leadership, motivation and performance

<b>Network Name</b>	Córas Gnó Skillnet
<b>Promoter</b>	
Promoting Organisation	Údarás Na Gaeltachta
Address	Foras Cultúir Uladh, Gleann Cholm Cille, Dhún na nGall
Telephone	(073) 30330
Fax	(073) 30333
Contact	Mr. Micheal Mac Giolla Easbuig

#### Key Network Data

No. of Companies	38
Sector	Mixed; Small Business
Region	Northern

#### Network Overview

The Gaeltacht area of Donegal is one of the most peripheral and infrastructurally deficient regions in Ireland. Traditionally the region suffers from high unemployment and emigration, though efforts of the past few years have developed a small business sector and new industry is being attracted to the area. The purpose of this project was to develop a self-sustaining participant-led network so as to build competitive advantage for the participating enterprises and the region as a whole. The network provided comprehensive business and information technology training while also meeting the members' language preferences. Most training was delivered in half-day sub-modules to suit the pressures of small business and make it possible to miss a sub-module and yet still continue training.

#### Key Training Data

No. of Trainees	60
Employee Type	Managers, Supervisors, Clerical & Accounting Staff
Focus of Training	Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Administration Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Basic Operator Skills
Certification	ECDL, NEBS

#### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

- "Maximising the Commercial Potential of the Web" – Programme for Owner/Managers
- "Purchasing and Materials Management" – a four module Programme
- Module Descriptors – Irish Language for Business, Business Innovation, Human Resource Management
- Case studies on company members
- Evaluation Report on the Network

**Network Name** County Waterford Micro Skillnet

### Promoter

Promoting Organisation Waterford In Business Ltd.  
Address 21 Church Street, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford  
Telephone (058) 45300  
Fax (058) 45238  
Contact Ms. Clare Connors

### Key Network Data

No. of Companies 15  
Sector Mixed; Small Business  
Region Southern

### Network Overview

This regional training network was originally planned as two clusters, one food related, the other manufacturing and engineering. The food cluster had previously worked together before on quality and branding issues. However, the manufacturing/engineering cluster consisted of companies who had until then worked in isolation and competed fiercely with each other for contracts; collaborative networking was a new concept for them. As the clusters developed, members clearly identified a wide range of common needs. It was agreed to amalgamate the two clusters into one more generic network of 17 micro to small companies. Network members collaborated amongst themselves, between each other and in sub-groups; each permutation identified training to meet the individual needs of each small business. It was proposed that ongoing training and development could be further shared within the network by training trainers who could deliver in-company cross training. Courses were offered to enterprises outside the network as a means of generating income for reinvestment. Training developed included marketing, information technology, human resource management, personal development and general management skills. Workshops were planned on staff retention and motivation and on best practices within the network.

### Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 154  
Employee Type Managers, Clerical Staff, General Operatives  
Focus of Training Human Resources, Sales & Marketing, General Management, Technical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Time Management & Negotiation Skills  
Certification ECCL, FAS

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Human Resource Training Programme  
Marketing Planning for SMEs  
Management Development Programme

**Network Name** Craft Brewers Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Irish Craft Brewers Network Ltd.  
 Address c/o Celtic Brew, Enfield Industrial Estate, Enfield, Co. Meath  
 Telephone (0405) 41558  
 Fax (0405) 41561  
 Contact Mr. Dean McGuinness

**Website** [www.irishcraftbeers.com](http://www.irishcraftbeers.com)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 9  
 Sector Food & Beverages; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Microbreweries are a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland and a growing part of the drinks sector. It is a cash-poor and capital-intensive industry with great potential for growth. Because it operates in a strict regulatory environment, there were urgent skills needs not met. Training and development are required to ensure product quality and consistency. Expertise in this area is all sourced from abroad and this makes it expensive. It is important therefore, that local training and development capability is built in a way that will support growth in the sector and provide a structured certification system for employees. Training in the Skillnet included practical hands-on work as well as the theoretical fundamentals of brewing and some business management skills as well. A one-year course resulted in certification, accredited by the Institute of Brewing. A collection of resource material was put together for the use of the network. This network built on a strong base of collaboration where a complex legal and excise environment brought them together as a lobby group. It worked to fulfil the training needs of its members and welcomed new members as the sector grew.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 20  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Craft Workers, Sales Staff  
 Focus of Training Management & Production Techniques  
 Certification Institute & Guild of Brewing

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Four Module Beer Taste Training Programme  
 Evaluation of Technical Brewing Training 2001  
 A nine module Programme in Brewing and Beverage Technology

**Network Name** Craft Butchers Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland  
 Address Apollo Business Park, Dundrum Road, Dundrum, Dublin 14  
 Telephone (01) 296 1400  
 Fax (01) 296 1396  
 Contact Mr. John Molloy

**Website** www.acbiskillnet.com

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 100  
 Sector Food & Beverages; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

To date, this sector has not had a structured development strategy or programme to address its various needs. With new tactics and strategies being employed every day by competitors, changing consumer trends and eating patterns, many new challenges face the retail butcher. As retail butchers, specialities are unique, but the members felt that they needed to learn how to adapt, to become more efficient in how they did business, how they marketed and promoted themselves, and how they portrayed themselves to consumers. The retailing environment is changing with increasing pace and this sector sought to learn to meet these demands and develop for the future. Butchers need to develop an aggressive, innovative and competitive yet highly profitable strategy for the future. The way forward is through creating business networks. Under the ACBI Skillnet Retail Development Programme, groups of businesses throughout the country created business networks that came together to participate in retail development workshops, seminars and demonstrations. Outcomes for participants included improving the quality of working life for themselves and their colleagues, improving the commercial outcome of their businesses, and increasing participants' abilities to successfully challenge the threats and changes in the modern retailing environment.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 200  
 Employee Type Owner/Managers, Service Workers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Customer Service, Teambuilding, Technical Skills  
 Certification FETAC (under development)

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Retail Development Programme for Craft Butchers  
 Module descriptors – trainer and trainee manuals, handouts, workshop materials  
 Modules include:  
 • Shop layout and design  
 • Meat Presentation and Display  
 • Marketing and Promotion  
 • Using Technology in a Retail business  
 • Food Safety Processes as a Management  
 ACBI Skillnet Newsletters

**Network Name** CREST Retail Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation South Dublin Chamber of Commerce  
 Address Business Development Centre, Whitestown Business Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24  
 Telephone (01) 458 5217  
 Fax (01) 459 9512  
 Contact Mr. David Fitzsimons

**Website** www.crestireland.com

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 248  
 Sector Wholesale & Retail Trade; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The retail industry employs 11% of the Irish workforce. There is a need for training to remedy significant skill gaps. Recruitment is difficult as few people see retailing as a long-term career; it is more usually viewed as a temporary employment opportunity. The need for training was identified among small independent, indigenous retailers who faced international competition and were poorly equipped in terms of core management skills to face the ongoing challenges. The aim of the CREST network was to raise professionalism in the sector by developing skills in independent retail owner/managers. The core programme included general business management and concentrated on staff management, customer service, product positioning and Euro currency conversion. This programme was offered to retailers on a two-year cycle completing the core programme in the first year and then moving onto the advanced programme in the second year.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 300  
 Employee Type Managers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, Customer Service, Personal Development, General Management, Health & Safety

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Core Development Programme manuals
- Advance Development Programme manuals
- Video – National Retail Award Case Studies
- CREST magazines
- Retail Excellence Member Directory
- CREST Quick Reference Guide to Employment Law in Ireland
- Retail Awards Winners Brochure 2002
- CRESTMARK Retail Store Diagnostic Tool – Company Report Template
- Mystery Shopper Business Analysis Feedback Report
- CREST Retail Benchmarking System

**Network Name** EB-ETI Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation SIPTU/NUI Galway Alliance  
 Address SIPTU House, Forster Court, Galway  
 Telephone (091) 567 536  
 Fax (091) 565 987  
 Contact Mr. Eddie Higgins

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 23  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The network grew from the belief that there was a low level of investment and training in the workplace and a high level of literacy-specific difficulties in developing many workers. The increased number of women and foreign-born workers compounded this problem. Based on partnership principles, this initiative was led by unions and supported by the employees whose functions were being integrated at all levels of the business. Operatives and production staff were the ground level resource supporting fellow employees to identify and address training needs. Technically competent staff were given training skills and these peer trainers then passed on their technical skills to other employees. Not only did this build learning capacity within the organisation at a low cost, but it was also more flexible and accessible than traditional training provision. Four modules were developed, the first two covered effective training skills and equality in the workplace to make up the foundation certificate. The second two modules dealt with health, safety and employment issues; these two modules represented the diploma. Some progressed towards a degree in training and development. Participating companies reported significant benefits and a new Peer Training Network was established to support ongoing sharing and development amongst the trainers.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 68  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Plant & Machine Operators, Service Workers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Health & Safety, Teambuilding, Train the Trainer, Management Development  
 Certification NUI

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Accredited Peer Training Report
- Train the Trainer Programmes Manuals and Materials
- Manuals and Workbooks – Distance Learning Modules including:
  - An Introduction to Health and Safety
  - Health and Safety Law
  - Practical Steps to a Safer Workplace

**Network Name** E-Business (FEII) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Federation of Electronic & Informatic Industries (FEII)  
Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
Telephone (01) 660 1011  
Fax (01) 638 1569  
Contact Ms. Kathryn Raleigh

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 19  
Sector Communications, Informatics, Computer & Related Services  
Region National

## Network Overview

While the electronics, software, communications and informatics industries are in many ways advantaged in their ability to understand the technical aspects of e-commerce, there is a realisation that working in this sector requires the constant acquisition of new skills and knowledge across the whole organisation. Only in this way can non-specialist staff understand how the technologies of e-commerce work in the marketplace and respond competitively. Training was developed on e-business fundamentals aimed at non-technical decision-makers within companies. The skills needed often included a broad general awareness of the fundamentals of e-business as well as the ability to apply technology to their own business skills. A feature of this Skillnet was its commitment to constant improvement and awareness building with the hosting of 'guru' seminars for participants to stay abreast of the latest developments within the sector.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 45  
Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel  
Focus of Training Technical, Information Technology Skills

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

E-Technology Fundamentals Skillnets Programme, including:

- Using the Internet as an Effective Business Tool
- Managing e-Commerce Implementation
- Website Marketing Promotion and Monitoring

**Network Name** Engineering Design Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Engineering Zone Ltd.  
 Address c/o Stratum Composite Technology, Slane Industrial Estate, Slane, Co. Meath  
 Telephone (041) 988 4070  
 Fax (041) 988 4072  
 Contact Mr. Gabriel Matthews

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 18  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region Eastern

## Network Overview

Manufacturing engineering companies were experiencing skill gaps in their employees that made it difficult for them to meet market demands. Graduate engineers often need job specific skills to give them the ability to bring products through the whole development and manufacturing process. On the other hand, machine shop workers such as fitter/turners have advanced machining skills but a weaker theoretical basis for their work. A group of 20 companies, all involved in design and manufacture of mechanical, electro-mechanical or electronic products, came together to develop their workforces. Expansion of these businesses had been curtailed by the difficulty in retaining employees who, attracted by better prospects of training and promotion, were moving to larger companies. By offering further development to employees, it was felt that they would see a role for themselves in these companies and structured career prospects. The companies in the network fell broadly into two categories: those producing small volume, high value products and those producing medium volume, medium value products. As well as staff retention problems, they shared common technical issues such as product safety, quality, reliability and environmental considerations.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 120  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Technical Skills, Teambuilding  
 Certification Dundalk Institute of Technology

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Modern Engineering Product Design Skills Programme (Dundalk Institute of Technology)

Engineering Manufacturing Skills Programme (Dundalk Institute of Technology)

Management Skills Development Programme, including:

- Human Resources Management
- Communications
- New Product Introduction

**Network Name** English Language Teachers (MEI/RELSA) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation MEI-RELSA Ireland  
Address 107 South Circular Road, Dublin 8  
Telephone (01) 475 3122  
Fax (01) 475 3088  
Contact Ms. Gillian Nother

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 54  
Sector Mixed; Small Business  
Region National

## Network Overview

English language teaching is growing rapidly as a commercial activity in Ireland, especially in rural areas. It is no longer just a summer school phenomenon but a year-round activity. Because of this growth, language schools are finding that they have had to employ teaching staff that lack the required teaching skills or are under qualified. This research and practice project sought to identify the training needs of under-qualified and lesser-experienced employees of English language schools. It designed and delivered, on a pilot basis, an in-service training programme to meet these needs and to meet the needs for continuous development of all staff. Training was based on portfolio based methods and self-directed study. Experienced qualified staff were trained in teaching support and supervision skills to enable the training to take place; this in-service training capacity supports a self-sustaining training cycle in the schools. These training tools will form part of an industry framework for ongoing skills development in the sector.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 57  
Employee Type TEFL Teachers  
Focus of Training Train the Trainer, Mentoring  
Certification MEI RELSA

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Mentor Certificate Programme (MEI-RELSA) – areas covered include:

- The Reflective Process
- Mentoring Skills and Intervention Methods
- Feedback Techniques
- Formats for Staff Development

Research Report – “Teacher Development, a Team-Based Approach”

**Network Name** Enterprise Partnership (SIPTU College) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation SIPTU

Address SIPTU College, 563 South Circular Road, Kilmainham, Dublin 8

Telephone (01) 453 0199

Fax (01) 453 0194

Contact Ms. Shauna Nash

**Website** [www.siptu.ie/college/start](http://www.siptu.ie/college/start)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 20

Sector Mixed; Small Business

Region National

## Network Overview

For social partnership processes to work effectively within enterprises, new skills and approaches by employers and employees are required. This programme was carried out within a network of 20 companies from across the country and across sectors; all were developing partnership structures within their companies. The network facilitated the development of new partnership models of industrial relations at enterprise level. This benefited all the stakeholders in each participating enterprise by improving operational performance and the social environment of work. The needs of these companies led to the development of training and facilitation modules and materials. Participants enhanced their knowledge of work organisation, teambuilding, networking, managing change, business and problem solving. They were better able to identify and accurately interpret influences on the competitive position of their companies and to develop processes and methods for introducing change. Other outputs, such as case studies, a social benchmarking diagnostic tool and models of best practice were made available. The key learning from this training and development programme was disseminated to promote sustainable change processes in future networks and to develop social partnership companies nationwide.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 44

Employee Type Managers, Clerical Staff, Service Workers

Focus of Training Human Resources, Teambuilding, Understanding Enterprise, Competitive Environment & Business Technology

Certification City & Guilds, FÁS

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

The Enterprise Partnership Training Programme. Materials include:

- The Competitive Business Environment
- Changing Work Organisation
- Developing Enterprise Level Social Partnership

The Social Benchmarking Questionnaire and Survey

**Network Name** Fashion Industry Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Irish Fashion Industry Federation  
Address 14 Highfield Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6  
Telephone (01) 412 6040  
Fax (01) 412 6041  
Contact Mr. Terry Rowan

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 120  
Sector Textiles & Clothing  
Region National

## Network Overview

Machinists are critical to the operation of the fashion industry. There has been a distinct move away from manual labour as women, the traditional workforce, have opportunities for further education. In exercises to attract women into the clothing industry, it was found that many refugee women have well-developed seamstress and sewing skills. This research was aimed at discovering if and how refugee women could be integrated into the fashion workforce as machinists, cutters and seamstresses. This project worked with a network of interested manufacturers and a number of refugee agencies. There were three strands to the research. First, it determined the willingness of companies to provide training and support to refugee workers. Secondly, it discovered the interest of refugees in being employed as machinists, their skill levels and their training needs. And thirdly, it aimed to devise appropriate training and personal development programmes to fulfil the needs of both groups.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 200  
Employee Type Craft and Related Trades Workers, Managers  
Focus of Training Health and Safety, Technical Skills, Production Operative Training  
Certification FETAC

## Research Outputs:

Refugee Research Report, which includes:

- Refugee and Company Questionnaire
- Findings from Refugees and Companies

Proposed Training Programme for Integration of Refugees into the Clothing Manufacturing Industry, which includes:

- Personal Development
- Career Development
- Language Training

**Network Name** Fast Growth SME Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Fast Growth SME Skillnet  
 Address c/o Realtime Technology, Unit 2, Willsborough Cluster, Clonsbaugh Industrial Estate, Dublin 17  
 Telephone (01) 848 6112  
 Fax (01) 848 7861  
 Contact Mr. Paddy White

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 11  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

A group of owner-managers who participated in a fast growth programme for owner-managers with the Project Development Centre continued to network informally. The networking process was found to be so beneficial, it was decided to set up an formal training network to support shared interests as fast growing businesses and to extend networking to their employees as well. The training was highly facilitative and participative; it included discussions and case studies based on the actual issues of participating businesses. Training was fully integrated with the specific strategic development activities and process improvements within each company. For instance, each trainee worked with the owner-manager to apply new ideas, techniques and processes as they went through the training. An owner-manager cluster, a sales cluster, a marketing cluster and an operations cluster were formed with the specific training needs for each group identified. Involvement of all employees in a development process based on networking was a major factor in improving company performance. In 2001, the companies involved participated in training aimed at the award of the Foundation Mark from Excellence Ireland. The Foundation Mark is a business management approach that allows owners and managers to assess how well they are managing all key areas of their business and the quality of the results they have achieved.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 112  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Sales Staff  
 Focus of Training Sales & Marketing, Production/Operations, Information Technology

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Submission Report for the Foundation Mark Award (Excellence Ireland)
- Sales Techniques for Telemarketing Representatives Programme
- Business Process Improvement Workshop Programme
- Design Development Process Programme

**Network Name** First Polymer Training Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Plastics Industries Association  
 Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (090) 647 1223  
 Fax (090) 647 1221  
 Contact Mr. Stephen O'Leary

**Website** [www.firstpolymer.com](http://www.firstpolymer.com)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 54  
 Sector Chemical, Ceramics and Rubber  
 Region National

## Network Overview

The plastics industry has suffered from limited training and development of staff because of the expense and time required to send them abroad for specific technical training and updating. This network provided systematic training based on needs identified within companies. It used practical demonstrations and hands-on methods, delivered by specialist trainers in a central learning centre. The First Polymer Training Skillnet was led by the Plastic Industry Federation and based in the Polymer Development Centre in Athlone. The network also developed an industry-wide certification scheme, providing qualifications for plastics workers which should support an improvement in staff retention and morale throughout the sector. To maintain skill levels in core technologies and materials, an ongoing training programme was scheduled for each year. Existing operatives and technicians could also avail of advanced updating of their skills and locally-delivered training. There was a focus on in-depth skills for production personnel. The network provided opportunities to benchmark for best practice as well as share the advantages of creating a high skills pool for the sector as a whole. They built a sustainable affordable specialist training organisation for the industry modelled on the British Polymer Training Association who also participated in this project.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 300  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Basic Operator Skills, General Management, Technical Skills  
 Certification FETAC

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Vocational Certificate in Polymer Processing (FETAC Level 2 – 4 modules)  
 Programme Curricula, Materials and Tools Covering 13 Key Subject Areas  
 Library of Technical Information for Polymer Sector Trainees

**Network Name** Food and Drink Federation

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Food and Drink Federation  
 Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (01) 660 1011  
 Fax (01) 638 1572  
 Contact Mr. Gerry Farrell

**Website** [www.ibec.ie/fdf](http://www.ibec.ie/fdf)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 88  
 Sector Food & Beverages  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Food and drink manufacturers and suppliers face critical problems in recruiting staff and retaining them in the industry. This network identified training as a key response. They aimed to improve the image of the industry to existing and potential employees, and to increase the skills of those already in employment. Certified training in hygiene was a requirement for employees and it gives them a skillset for further development. The network developed a system of in-house training that was certified and can be applied to both large and small companies. Training was aimed at food safety, especially for fulfilling the trading standards required in international markets. The other big area of training was in ECR (efficient consumer response), an approach to customer-focused quality. The networks actively consulted and shared their experiences of training needs and development.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 387  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Food Technicians, Sales Staff  
 Focus of Training General Management, Health & Safety, Train The Trainer  
 Certification FETAC

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

ECR Scorecarding Report by PriceWaterhouse Coopers, 2001  
 Trainer Skills in Food Safety & Hygiene Training Manual – including FETAC module descriptor and marking sheets for trainers; also available on CD-Rom. Training Pack designed for trainers delivering Level 1 & Level 2 Food Safety & Hygiene, and for those participants who have completed Trainer Skills in Food Safety & Hygiene. Information Pack Manuals:

- Programme Administration
- Food Safety & Hygiene Level 1
- Food Safety & Hygiene Level 2
- Food Safety & Hygiene Training Video
- Food Safety & Hygiene CD-Rom

Food Safety & Hygiene Video, Information Pack CD-Rom, Trainer Skills CD-Rom

**Network Name** Hotel Management Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Tourism Research Centre, Dublin Institute of Technology  
Address Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1  
Telephone (01) 874 6058  
Fax (01) 874 8572  
Contact Ms. Elizabeth Kennedy

**Website** <http://trc.dit.ie>

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 44  
Sector Hotels & Restaurants  
Region National

## Network Overview

The hotel industry was losing staff and expertise for a number of reasons. Research showed that providing a clear system of continuing professional development (CPD) could ameliorate these losses. A CPD programme would have to be developed for the sector as a whole and be based on known competencies. This research aimed to identify core competencies for middle managers in the Irish three-star hotel market. Forty-four hotels were involved throughout the country. A series of job analysis techniques were conducted to create the industry specific model. Once the competencies were identified, a series of competency-based tools were developed. These tools consisted of an interview manual, performance appraisal guide and personal development plan.

## Research Outputs:

Performance Management & Appraisal for Middle Managers – a toolkit for the hotel industry  
Middle Managers Personal Development Planner – a competency-based tool to assist Middle Managers in planning their personal development  
Interview Manual for Selecting Middle Managers in the hotel industry  
Report on the study of the development of a competency model for Middle Managers of three-star Irish hotels by IHCI and the Tourism Research Centre (DIT)

**Network Name** IBEC Retail Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation IBEC North West Region  
 Address 11-12 Mill Court, The Diamond, Donegal Town  
 Telephone (073) 22474  
 Fax (073) 22476  
 Contact Mr. Seán Carlin

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 36  
 Sector Wholesale and retail Trade; Small Business  
 Region Northern

**Network Overview**

The North west region of the country has a higher proportion of small independent retail outlets than much of the rest of the country. There is, therefore, a significant number of employers who need support to develop their employees and ensure continuing growth in the sector. Initially, the focus of the network was to develop occupational qualifications or standards specifically relevant to sales assistants and supervisors in the small retail sector. These qualifications covered those who worked in department stores, groceries, supermarkets, cooperatives and other distributive trades. The network recognised the importance of developing a career path for employees linked to industry-led quality standards and certification. Their commitment to training was very strong and the spirit of co-operation was striking. The Level 2 retail qualification received FETAC approval. This course was unique. It was the only work-based accredited course available to retailers in the country. IBEC Retail Skillnet worked with the CREST Network in formulating accredited courses which had wide implications for the retail industry nationally as other retailers around the country were able to use this model to train their staff as well. Over the life of the project, other training needs emerged such as the training needs of buyers in the industry. The value of networking was a new experience to most of the participants and one which they valued.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 82  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Retail Operative Staff, Sales Staff, Buyers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, Health & Safety, Information Technology, Customer Service, Team Development  
 Certification FETAC, University of Ulster

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

National Occupational Qualifications (FETAC Level 2) – CD, module descriptor, candidate logbook, resource materials, question bank, assessor booklet. Additional materials for the following modules –

- Retail Security
- Retail Merchandising
- Retail Stock Control
- Retail Effective Working Relationships
- Retail Customer Service
- Retail Payment Procedures

Certificate in Retail Management Practice (University of Ulster)

Assessor Programme (FETAC Level 3 – module descriptor, manuals, workbooks)

**Network Name** International Freight (IIFA) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Irish International Freight Association  
 Address Merchamp House, Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3  
 Telephone (01) 842 5844  
 Fax (01) 842 5883  
 Contact Mr. David Keane

**Website** [www.iifa.ie](http://www.iifa.ie)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 11  
 Sector Post, Communication, Transport & Storage  
 Region Eastern

## Network Overview

The freight forwarding sector had a history of training but realised that a more structured approach, taking into account the corporate needs of the companies, would be more beneficial. They wished to clearly evaluate the benefits of investing in training and to recognise the value of formal certification and accreditation. Networking across the different roles involved in the sector was a new and adventurous experience for the participants; there were often supplier/client relationships and had a history of complex interactions to overcome. The network was mixed in terms of company size and market niche; all were in the Leinster region. They identified skill deficits they held in common and pooled their training skills and facilities. Training was piloted in two areas: first, industry-specific induction programmes and second, job appraisal, performance assessment and evaluation (which included identifying training needs).

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 320  
 Employee Type Managers, Clerical Staff, Warehouse Operatives  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Clerical Skills, Information Technology, Personal Development, Operator Training, Induction to Industry  
 Certification FETAC, ECDL, Joint Education Board UK

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Programme in Customs Documentation & Clearance Procedures for Clerical Staff (FETAC Level 2) – Trainers Manuals, Trainee Workbooks, Video Case Studies  
 Introduction to Warehouse & Logistics (FETAC Level 2) – Trainers & Trainees Workbooks & Course Descriptor  
 Trainers Diploma in IT – Programme for in-house staff to become IT Trainers – Textbooks, Trainer & Trainee Manuals

**Network Name** IT Industry HR Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation National University of Ireland  
Address Maynooth, Co. Kildare  
Telephone (01) 708 4522  
Fax (01) 708 6024  
Contact Mr. Justin Wallace

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 80  
Sector Business, Computer & Related Services  
Region National

**Network Overview**

The IT Industry HR Skillnet was a research project promoted by the National University in Maynooth. The network consisted of 80 firms in the IT industry throughout Ireland. The aim of the research was to examine, identify and record the best HR management practice in high technology companies in Ireland in order to identify the organisational learning needed to adapt to ongoing change within the industry. Overall the research sought to clarify the 'people' factors, which to date have contributed to economic prosperity within the industry and how this positive trend could be maintained on the long term. HR managers in this industry have in the past participated in informal networks. However the changing face of the industry has meant that this informal arrangement is no longer adequate to meet the needs of the growing membership. The research set out to promote a more formal approach to networking by satisfying the information needs of the industry primarily through the construction of a benchmarking/networking database. The purpose of this database was to enable the ongoing development of networks throughout the industry for the purpose of continued organisational learning. It is planned to maintain the database to provide ongoing reference material to HR managers in high-technology industry.

**Research Outputs:**

Defined HR issues relevant to the IT industry  
Benchmarking Database (allowing members compare themselves with industry norms)  
Researched relevant HR strategies

**Network Name** it@cork Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Cork Business Innovation Centre  
 Address NSC Campus, Mahon, Cork  
 Telephone (021) 230 7005  
 Fax (021) 230 7020  
 Contact Mr. Michael O'Connor

**Website** www.corkbic.com

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 9  
 Sector Business Services; Small Business  
 Region Southern

**Network Overview**

The outstanding performance of the IT sector in Ireland is one that requires support to maintain excellence. Typically, information technology professionals are technically highly competent and innovative, but have limited or no strategic management expertise. Often entrepreneurial skills are highly evolved but companies, many of which are start-ups, are developing very quickly with all the attendant short deadlines and huge work pressures. Staff retention can be a problem. To manage this situation managers must acquire core management skills to back up their technical expertise. Management development modules were developed in the areas of human resource development, some IT specific areas of management and customer development skills. Emphasis was on using international best practice from companies with a proven track record and practical examples. Training requirements were technologically highly demanding. Traditionally, software developers, content providers and information managers each work separately, often in different companies. This network was originally established to bring all these players together to define their shared learning needs and preferences. A number of local multinational computer companies were members of the network. Transfer of expertise from them greatly enhanced the benefits of networking for large and small companies alike.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 83  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Service Workers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Technical Skills, Customer Service, Teambuilding, Clerical Skills

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Team Building in Fast Growing Companies Course – for Owner/Managers  
 Understanding and Managing People Course  
 Project Management Course for Software Programmers  
 Sales and Marketing Programme  
 External Evaluation Report on it@cork Skillnet

**Network Name** Leinster Engineering & Technical (TEEU) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Technical Engineering and Electrical Union  
 Address 5 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1  
 Telephone (01) 878 0988  
 Fax (01) 878 0990  
 Contact Mr. Steve Tegart

**Website** www.teeu.ie

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 22  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region Eastern

**Network Overview**

Maintenance skills in manufacturing companies were traditionally learned by craft workers as part of initial training or apprenticeships. However, changes in technology meant that diagnostic skills for sophisticated equipment were often underdeveloped. Workers required a broader range of technical competencies and a deeper understanding of whole production processes. A needs analysis was carried out on a subset of the companies in the network, that correlated the skill needs as outlined by management with the competence and relevance as perceived by the workers. Measured levels of required competence were also brought into the equation to identify key areas for training. The aim of the network was to create a learning culture. This made it possible for craft workers with technically specific skills to gain system or process-specific skills. The commitment of the companies to lifelong learning ensured that enterprises maintained competitiveness and workers renewed and updated valuable skills.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 245  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Craft Workers, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Health & Safety, Technical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding  
 Certification FETAC, PEMAC, FÁS

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Course materials and module descriptors for –
- Training & Coaching Skills (FETAC Level 3)
- PLC Technology Course (FETAC Level 3)
- Basic Electrical Skills Course (FETAC Level 3)
- HV/LV Operation & Control (ESB Certified)
- Preventive Maintenance (FETAC Level 2)
- Food Safety & Hygiene (FETAC Level 2)
- The LETS Skillnet – A Collaborative Training Initiative – Final Publication
- Course Workbook

**Network Name** Leisure & Amenity (ILAM) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation ILAM – Institute of Leisure & Amenity Management  
 Address 5 College Way, Clane, Co. Kildare  
 Telephone (045) 861 201  
 Fax (045) 893 195  
 Contact Ms. Brenda Sheridan

**Website** [www.ilamireland.ie](http://www.ilamireland.ie)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 150  
 Sector Recreational, Cultural and Sporting Services; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

The institute has been instrumental in formulating an agreed industry standard for the operation of leisure and amenity facilities. The Operation Standards for Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities has the potential to change the focus of the industry in terms of management systems, quality assurance and staff training. The challenge was to support the operators in implementing these standards. While a minority of those in the industry had formal management or physical education qualifications, the majority were less well qualified and had little opportunity for training or advancing through a career structure. Work-based leisure management training was offered regionally by the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management. Training was aimed at a level equivalent to college-based qualifications and was accredited. A Train the Trainers programme was instigated to support the scheme. A key element in this move was to provide a clear model of career structures to employers, educators and employees in this sector. The network provided exchanges of best practice including input from large corporate providers in the hospitality sector. By supporting professionalism in the sector, network members are better prepared to take advantage of the expanding leisure market.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 200  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Receptionists, Gym Instructors, Membership Sales Staff, Sports Development Officers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, General Management, Health & Safety, Teambuilding, Marketing, Customer Service  
 Certification FETAC, ILAM Ireland, National Coaching & Training Centre

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Certificate in Supervisory Management (CSM) for the Leisure Industry (ILAM Certificate)  
 Safety Management in the Leisure Industry (FETAC Level 3 Module Descriptor)  
 Leisure Marketing Management Course  
 Leisure Finance & IT Course (ILAM Certificate)  
 Presentation, Communications, Planning & Evaluation (NCTC Certificate)

**Network Name** Leitrim Good Food Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Country Cooking Company Ltd  
 Address Carrick-on-Shannon Business Park, Dublin Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim  
 Telephone (078) 50700  
 Fax (078) 50800  
 Contact Mr. Stephen Hennessy

**Website** www.leitrimgoodfood.com

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 20  
 Sector Food & Beverages; Small Business  
 Region Western

**Network Overview**

A cluster of food companies worked together on a shared set of problems: those of peripherality, lack of staff development and the need to increase export sales. Their involvement in the Good Food Skillnet from Leitrim, branding and working together with the Leitrim Enterprise Board on a number of promotional activities, afforded them the opportunity to grow into a strong network. An analysis of training needs determined specific training needs but the network also created an audit of each member to determine their competitive position across a range of key indicators. This acted as an initial benchmark against which the impact of training was measured. Overall training objectives included: implementation of mandatory food handling, safety and hygiene standards, improved staff retention, increased export sales, increased internet and IT capability and the development of new products. Train-the-trainer modules were also included in some subjects to build local training capability.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 105  
 Employee Type Owner Managers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, Health & Safety, Technical Skills, Clerical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding, HACCP Training  
 Certification FETAC

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Food Safety & Hygiene Programme (FETAC Levels 1 & 2) – manuals & workbooks
- Train the Trainer in Food Safety & Hygiene Course – materials
- Directory of Food Industry Suppliers
- Leitrim Good Food Website
- A Self-help Benchmarking Guide for network members

**Network Name** Medical Devices (IMDA) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Irish Medical Devices Association  
 Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (01) 660 1011  
 Fax (01) 638 1564  
 Contact Ms. Sharon Higgins

**Website** [www.ibec.ie/imda](http://www.ibec.ie/imda)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 31  
 Sector Electrical & Electronic Components, Medical Precision & Optical Equipment  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Ireland is recognised as a prime international centre for the manufacture of medical devices and diagnostics. This reputation requires the sector to continuously improve standards and meet the increasing demands of the regulatory agencies. Companies must be able to adapt and perform to exacting regulatory requirements. Therefore, they must be in a position to develop adaptable, capable employees. This requires recognisable transferable standards. Many companies in this sector deal with short-term product life cycles, so the workforce must be able to respond to that need. Other companies, with more stable long-term product life cycles, need to meet the needs of employees for job enrichment or enlargement as motivational tools so they can retain employees. The network developed strategic approaches to these and other training and development challenges. Clusters were used to define and pilot competencies for operational personnel in a number of areas. The network is continuing this work currently and is aiming for a national certification process for the sector.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 270  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, General Operatives  
 Focus of Training Health & Safety, Customer Service, Teambuilding, Basic Operator Skills, Technical Skills  
 Certification FETAC

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Description of Industry Standards for Work-based Training in the Medical Devices Sector  
 CD-Rom process documentation requirements and standards  
 Assessor Training Course – descriptor & materials  
 Manager Training Course for Assessing Competence – materials

**Network Name** MIDAS – Micro Electronic Design Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Microelectronics Design Association Industry  
 Address c/o Analog Devices, Raheen Business Park, Raheen, Limerick  
 Telephone (061) 229 011  
 Fax (061) 302 117  
 Contact Ms. Katherine Barry

**Website** [www.midasireland.ie](http://www.midasireland.ie)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 13  
 Sector Electrical & Electronic Components, Medical Precision & Optical Equipment  
 Region National

## Network Overview

Given the nature of IT markets worldwide, continuous improvement and high standards of skill development are essential if Ireland is to build on its competitive position. Companies that design microelectronics such as integrated circuits or systems, particularly those at the centre of internet activities, are experiencing an acute shortage of skills. This skills shortage has been the primary factor hindering growth in the sector. The sector is now helping itself by working together to develop regional training activities including workshops, train-the-trainer programmes and networking for best practice and feedback. Training was provided in three broad areas: skills extension to update the skills of highly-qualified people; entry level for recent graduates to quickly learn the basics of IC design; and workshop tutorial learning. The network identified seven specific training programmes that met the needs of the network members. These needs are reviewed regularly. The trainers were all world-class experts from the US, the UK and the rest of Europe. The MIDAS network benefited from working together, not only to share concerns as a sector, but by providing reasonable priced training, designed to their specific needs and delivered locally using recognised international experts as trainers.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 258  
 Employee Type Professional & Technical Personnel  
 Focus of Training Technical Skills

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Programme Descriptors and Materials for:

- ARM System Design
- CMOS/BiCMOS Analogue IC Design
- Advanced Analogue IC Design
- Techniques for Designing Testable Devices
- Design of State-of-the-Art Embeddable Data Convert

**Network Name** MUSTEL – Call Centre Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation MUSTEL Skillnets Ltd.  
 Address Unit 14, Penrose Wharf, Cork City  
 Telephone (021) 463 4528  
 Fax (021) 455 2628  
 Contact Mr. Seán Ware

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 19  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region Southern

**Network Overview**

The call centre industry is a relatively new and rapidly growing sector driven by improvements in telecommunications and IT. The skill requirements for these posts are expanding while the labour supply for call centre agents is becoming more limited. The evolution of this sector seems to be towards a broader customer contact industry. Businesses wish to reduce the volume of direct calls and increase the use of other contact technologies, especially web-enabled technologies. Training needs were identified in three areas: customer service skills, team leader, supervisory and management skills, and lastly technical expertise in IT and telecommunications. Specialised training for call centre staff was only available abroad in large blocks. By grouping the training needs of the network, it was possible to up-skill employees to meet the specific needs of the Irish call centre industry and to do so in local training centres.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 150  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Technical Skills, Customer Service, Information Technology, Personal Development

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Contact Centre Management Training Programme
- Team Leader/Supervisor Training Programme
- Contact Centre Agent Training Programme
- Web Enabling Call Centres Training Programme
- Evaluation Report on the MUSTEL Call Centre Skillnet

**Network Name** National Partnership Training Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation National Partnership Training Skillnet  
 Address c/o An Post, G.P.O., O'Connell Street, Dublin 1  
 Telephone (01) 705 7863  
 Fax (01) 705 7207  
 Contact Ms. Maureen Brogan

**Website** [www.anpost.ie/about/partnership.html](http://www.anpost.ie/about/partnership.html)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 10  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region National

## Network Overview

Partnership is becoming a major tool for change management in Irish enterprises, especially in large commercial organisations that were originally state supported. The partnership process requires expert facilitation, usually provided by external facilitators who are well versed in the issues and process involved. However, as the partnership process diffuses through an organisation, it may sometimes be effective to deploy in-house facilitation. The objective of this training network was to train work-based facilitators for enterprise-based partnership. The network provided standards-based accredited training while also creating an environment in which expertise and experience could be shared and sustained. This training had two dimensions to it, that of partnership training, based on the Working in Partnership Training programme, and secondly, partnership facilitation skills training.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 365  
 Employee Type All Employees  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Partnership Facilitation Training  
 Certification FETAC

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Partnership Facilitation Skills Training  
 National Partnership Evaluation Report  
 Training Needs Analysis Tool  
 Partnership Facilitator Competency Model

**Network Name** New Product Introduction Research Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Golden Vale Plc.  
Address Charleville, Co. Cork  
Telephone 086 223 1072  
Contact Mr. Donal O'Leary

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 18  
Sector Food & Beverages  
Region Southern

## Network Overview

To compete globally, organisations must perform not only as well as their nearest rivals, but must match or surpass the best in the world. To do so, it is proposed that key benchmarks can be selected to enable an organisation to identify and subsequently bridge the gaps between their current practices and recognised 'best practices'. Early discussions on benchmarking in the New Product Introduction Skillnet prompted interest in carrying out this research. This subset of food companies identified benchmarks pivotal to the development and introduction of new products, defined them quantitatively and developed a model which enabled companies to identify the discrepancies between their own practice in the area and recognised best practice. The network disseminated the developed process and findings. The application of this research will facilitate the identification of critical company training requirements.

## Research Outputs:

Benchmarking Model (an analysis of current company practices against recognised best practices)  
Benchmarking Research Report  
Train for Gain – an information leaflet describing the NPI training project and benchmarking project

**Network Name** New Product Introduction Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Golden Vale Plc  
Address Charleville, Co. Cork  
Telephone 086 223 1072  
Contact Mr. Donal O'Leary

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 13  
Sector Food & Beverages  
Region Southern

## Network Overview

New food products are coming to market daily, most of them value-added products rather than the traditional commodity products upon which our food industry is based. To compete successfully, food companies are faced with the difficulty of developing and introducing new products while maintaining existing operations. A sectoral network in the food industry worked together to develop training modules based on the skills needed to effectively introduce new products. Modules included strategic communications, IT, continuous improvement, project management, regulatory requirements and process technology. Most of the companies in the network were small, so the challenge of new product development was very pronounced. Because the development of new products is by its nature a confidential process, there was fear that company secrets might be at risk when working with competitors. The strength and benefits of the network have successfully overcome these concerns.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 184  
Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Administrative Staff, Service & Sales Staff  
Focus of Training Human Resources, General Management, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Critical Thinking, Marketing, Product Development  
Certification ECDL, FETAC

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Presentation Skills and Customer Relations Course (FETAC Level 3 Module Descriptor)  
Process Management within the New Product Introduction Process  
Development of Business Plans Course  
Idea Generation Course  
Project management Course  
Managing Change Through Team Working Programme

**Network Name** North Mayo Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation North Mayo Skillnet  
 Address c/o Dekko Heating Technologies Ltd., Bunree Industrial Estate, Ballina, Co. Mayo  
 Telephone (096) 21461  
 Fax (096) 21701  
 Contact Mr. Carl Blake

**Website** www.northmayo.ie

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 13  
 Sector Other Manufacturing  
 Region Western

**Network Overview**

Small manufacturing industries in geographically remote areas like north Mayo face serious challenges in providing development and training opportunities to their workforces. While some of the companies in the network were multinationals with human resource expertise, sourcing high-quality relevant training was a major obstacle. Thirteen companies worked together to identify areas of common interest and to create training programmes tailored to meet the needs identified in their network. Because they purchased training as a group they were able to obtain economic benefits, attract best trainers and reduce high travel and subsistence costs. A key element was the focus on increasing competitiveness through training for short-term skills shortages and long-term strategic skill requirements. By identifying specific measurements of success within each enterprise, they ensured that training made an impact on company performance.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 310  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Craft Workers, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Health & Safety, General Management, Technical Skills, Customer Service, Clerical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Operator Training  
 Certification Health & Safety Authority, AUTODESK, City & Guilds, DIT

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Internal Quality Auditing Course
- Management & Human Resource Skills Course
- Maintenance Multi-Skilling Programme
- Final Evaluation Report on North Mayo Skillnet
- North Mayo Skillnet brochure & directory of members

**Network Name** Pharmachem (IPCMF) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Irish Pharmaceutical and Chemical Manufacturers Federation  
 Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
 Telephone (01) 660 1011  
 Fax (01) 638 1563  
 Contact Ms. Ciara D'Arcy

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 41  
 Sector Chemicals, Ceramics, Rubbers & Plastics  
 Region National

## Network Overview

Chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing is a strong industrial sector in Ireland but it is being seriously challenged in the global marketplace. To remain competitive, the industry needed to continue a process of developing a competence-based system of employee development. The issues facing the sector included skill shortages and labour market competition challenges. Extensive development had already taken place in this regard. However, it was essential to continue developing a consistent system that also met the requirements of a stringent regulatory environment. The network built on an existing network in the pharmachem sector with the addition of companies from biotechnology, raw materials and a group of medical and hospital product producers. It grew to include more small companies who could benefit from networking with the larger organisations. Local clusters worked on a regional basis. With the Cork Institute of Technology, the network developed an approved competency-based framework for supervisors and management personnel at diploma and degree level – the first ever industry-specific diploma programme. A degree level programme was also developed. The qualifications were based on proof of competence, so attendance at college was not necessary; much of the learning happening in the workplace. A new joint academic/industry board was established to oversee this unique programme. The system included accreditation of prior learning and incorporated individual business roles, as they existed in small businesses.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 232  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors  
 Focus of Training Assessor Training, Training on Accreditation, General & First Line Management, Health & Safety, Information Technology, Teambuilding, Basic Operator Skills  
 Certification HETAC, CIT

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Materials on Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Process  
 Assessment Process Training  
 National Diploma in First Line Management for the Pharmachem Sector (HETAC/CIT)  
 Degree in Management for the Pharmachem Sector (HETAC/CIT)  
 Work-based Assessment Workbooks

**Network Name** Plato Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation IBEC/Chambers of Commerce of Ireland  
 Address c/o Plato Ireland, South Ring Business Park, Kinsale Road, Cork City  
 Telephone (021) 432 0466  
 Fax (021) 432 0468  
 Contact Mr. Alf Smiddy

**Website** www.plato.ie

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 184  
 Sector Mixed; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Small businesses often have little human resource development expertise so they face serious difficulties when it comes to managing issues such as staff retention and development. The Plato Ireland Skillnet focused primarily on the development of human resource skills of owner managers of small businesses throughout the country. It aimed to address the needs of this group who had little or no formal training in management and needed to gain human resource development skills so they could keep up with company growth and expansion. Individual needs, such as family business management for succession, were also targeted. The Plato model was based on a network principle where large companies would help and support small companies in their area, and also where there was a structure for small companies to co-operate with each other. All training had an owner manager focus and costs were low. Emphasis was on relevancy and local delivery of training. This strongly-developed networking concept was key to the Plato Skillnet. Skill needs that had been identified were: recruitment and staff selection, staff motivation, staff training, employment law, performance management, industrial and employee relations and leadership. These needs were addressed through formal training seminars, mentoring, as well as one-to-one consultations. Group learning approaches involving experts from large companies contributed to the development of best practices.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 224  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, General Management, Teambuilding, Marketing, Customer Service, Information Technology

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- CAM Benchmarking Tool
- Marketing Programme Materials
- Advanced General Managers Programme
- Management Development Programme
- Group Leader Training Materials

**Network Name** Printers (IBEC) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation IBEC Cork  
 Address Knockree House, Douglas Road, Cork  
 Telephone (021) 429 5511  
 Fax (021) 429 5534  
 Contact Mr. Donagh Corcoran

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 16  
 Sector Paper, Publishing & Printing  
 Region Southern

**Network Overview**

Printing companies in the Cork area found themselves falling behind in terms of skills in new technology, advanced methods of printing and graphic work. While, in the past, there had been formal training available locally, since 1992 it was only available in Dublin. Customer requirements had changed. For the sector to flourish, it needed to add value and innovate. The Cork Master Printers Association identified two streams of training need; firstly, non-craft personnel in their companies acquired introductory and pre-press skills to make them more flexible. Secondly, craft personnel upgraded their skills and acquired new ones to reflect changes in technology. Skills such as graphic design, image preparation, image conversion and compatibility were all important new skills.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 37  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical & Sales Staff, Service Workers, Craft Workers  
 Focus of Training Technical Skills, Customer Service, Information Technology, Operator Training  
 Certification FETAC; HETAC/CIT

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Graphic Design and Applications (FETAC Level 1 Descriptors)
- Graphic Design and Applications (FETAC Level 2 Descriptors)
- Advanced Course in Design and Print Technology (HETAC/CIT, National Certificate)
- 10-Day Advanced + Course in Design and Print Technology (Cork IT, National Certificate)

**Network Name** Refrigeration Technology Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Applied Technology Services, Dublin Institute of Technology  
 Address Dominick Court, 41 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1  
 Telephone (01) 878 3773  
 Fax (01) 872 9126  
 Contact Mr. Enda Hogan

**Website** [www.refrigerationskillnet.ie](http://www.refrigerationskillnet.ie)

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 115  
 Sector Mixed  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

In a new training departure for the sector, refrigeration businesses worked together to update employee skills. Refrigeration companies tended to recruit finished apprentices either from the refrigeration or electrical trades. There was no training standard specifically for refrigeration available in the industry beyond basic introductory level. It was recognised that there was an urgent need for post-apprenticeship follow-up training to keep these employees up to date on technologies, regulations and specialist skills for specific clients or business areas. For small businesses, the owner manager was usually the sole leader of training and development. They benefited from accredited standards of training because skill levels were then easily ascertained. Employees were more motivated now that they could see a clearly defined career path where set qualifications were achievable along the way. For most of these companies, this was the first investment in training they had made for this group of employees. Twelve different training topics were identified for the post-apprenticeship group of workers. Modules, designed in consultation with the Dublin Institute of Technology, were delivered in Dublin. Within the network, the benefits of networking have now been recognised as being of equal value to those of training.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 520  
 Employee Type Managers, Sales Staff, Service Workers, Craft Workers  
 Focus of Training Marketing Skills, Technical Skills  
 Certification City & Guilds, DIT, FÁS

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Continuing Professional Development Course (DIT, Certificate)  
 Air Conditioning Course Materials – Castlerea College of Higher Education  
 General Refrigeration – Training Manuals  
 Training & Certification Standards Materials

**Network Name** Restaurants Association Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Restaurants Association of Ireland  
 Address 11 Bridge Court, City Gate, St. Augustine Street, Dublin 8  
 Telephone (01) 677 9901  
 Fax (01) 671 8414  
 Contact Mr. Henry O’Neill

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 32  
 Sector Hotels & Restaurants; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

There was an emerging culture of dining out in Ireland in recent years that resulted in phenomenal growth in the number of restaurants in the country. Competition forced individual businesses to become more professional and made staff retention a critical issue. In addition, new regulations made it necessary that all staff have basic training in hygiene systems, a difficult feat with high staff turnover. A small group of restaurants formed an informal network for local promotion and then, realising the potential of collaborative training, they took the idea to their professional association to form this training network. Initial training needs were in the areas of health and hygiene, professional wine service and IT. The aim was that training be formulated by the group and brought to them at a reasonable cost. Trainers were, by preference, practicing or retired restaurateurs. They were trained to train by experts such as environmental health officers and CERT. IT training supported participants in his or her own environment.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 400  
 Employee Type Managers, Chefs & Other Professionals, Service Workers, Elementary Occupations  
 Focus of Training Health & Safety, Information Technology, Operator Training  
 Certification CERT, EHO, Computer Training Institute

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

Primary Course in Food Hygiene (EHO, Certificate)  
 Professional Wine Service (CERT Level 1 Descriptors)  
 Information Technology Course (Computer Training Institute)

**Network Name** Security Employers Skillnet

### Promoter

Promoting Organisation National Union of Security Employers  
 Address Phase 2, The Donnelly Centre, Cork Street, Dublin 8  
 Telephone (01) 872 8148  
 Fax (01) 872 9963  
 Contact Mr. William Brown

### Key Network Data

No. of Companies 27  
 Sector Business Services; Small Business  
 Region National

### Network Overview

Indigenous companies supplying manned security services were faced with two issues. There were standards governing how the industry works; these included an Irish industry standard, a national standard and an industry inspection scheme. Secondly, there was a general need for a guarantee of quality if a company was to succeed in an increasingly more sophisticated marketplace. The National Union of Security Employers therefore formulated a training plan with their network members. From this they created a course in security and a course in training and coaching skills. A person from each company became a trainer for the other employees and delivered the training programme to them. This strategy resulted in tailored accessible training at a reasonable cost. Training followed a standard curriculum and was accredited by FETAC. The existence of a recognised training qualification has greatly benefited quality standards within the sector.

### Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 38  
 Employee Type Managers, Security Personnel  
 Focus of Training Training Principles, Security Industry Trainers, Workplace Coaching Skills, Induction & Quality Standards  
 Certification FETAC, Security Institute of Ireland

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Security Industry Trainer – trainers manual & descriptor (FETAC Level 2)  
 SIMS 2000 Compliance Management Programme – module descriptor & draft inspection lists (FETAC Level 3)

**Network Name** SLM Food & Beverage Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Galtee Meats Ltd. and Glanbia Plc.  
 Address Cahir Hill, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork  
 Telephone (053) 27519  
 Fax (053) 27519  
 Contact Mr. Mick McHugh

**Website** [www.etst.ie/eu\\_slmfbs.html](http://www.etst.ie/eu_slmfbs.html)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 19  
 Sector Food & Beverages  
 Region Southern

## Network Overview

The supply-chain in the food and drink sector had to respond quickly to the need for food safety compliance and the specific requirements of multinational customers. They faced challenges in retaining staff and in finding those with the right skills. Ongoing training in this network was based on the partnership approach to the training cycle. Employers, employees and trade unions worked together at each stage to ensure ownership of the process. The specific groups identified for learning were operators, craft workers and front-line supervisors. As well as specific skills development, they were all learning teamwork skills. True to the continuous improvement concept, training processes were evaluated in terms of measured improvement rather than just delivery. A list of approved training service providers was accumulated based on the experiences of the trainees and employers. In addition, where identified training needs could not be met by existing courses, new modules were designed and submitted to FETAC for certification.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 332  
 Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Craft Workers, Plant & Machine Operators  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Health & Safety, Technical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding  
 Certification FETAC, ECDL

### Selection of training programmes and products developed:

Pneumatics – Industrial (FETAC Level 3 module descriptor)  
 Programmable Logic Controllers (FETAC Level 3 module descriptor)  
 Food & Safety Hygiene (FETAC Levels 1 & 2 module descriptors)  
 Supervisory and Management Skills (FETAC Level 3 module descriptor)  
 Teamworking (FETAC Level 2 module descriptor)  
 Team Leadership Skills (FETAC Level 3 module descriptor)

**Network Name** Small Business (SFA) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Small Firms Association  
Address Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2  
Telephone (01) 660 1011  
Fax (01) 638 1633  
Contact Mr. Pat Delaney

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 770  
Sector Mixed  
Region National

**Network Overview**

The Small Firms Association conducted a major integrated research and development project on training in small business in Ireland. The study developed an analytic model applicable to training within SMEs. It also reviewed recent research on the extent of SME training in Ireland and benchmarked training performance relative to competitor countries. The study was led by Paul Tansey of Tansey, Webster, Steward and Co, and involved the Market Research Bureau of Ireland survey of 500 small businesses. This was followed by in-depth interviews and consultation with SME owner managers. A final report on the findings was published in the autumn of 2001.

**Research Outputs:**

Small Firms – The Training Imperative – A Four Volume Report:  
Volume 1 – Situation Report  
Volume 2 – Developing a Model for SME Training in Ireland: – Irish and International SME Training Compared  
Volume 3 – Small Firms: – Survey of Current Training Experiences within SMEs  
Volume 4 – SME Training Perspectives, Prospects and Proposals: – Interviews with 50 SMEs

**Network Name** South East HR (IBEC) Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation IBEC South East Region  
Address Confederation House, Waterford Business Park, Cork Road, Waterford  
Telephone (051) 331 260  
Fax (051) 331 261  
Contact Mr. John Farrell

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 24  
Sector Mixed  
Region Southern

**Network Overview**

The southeastern region of the country has no discernable sectoral clusters to support networks, nor does it compare favourably with other regions in terms of employment levels, income levels or attainment of educational standard. This Skillnet was based on the premise that effective human resource management strategies were the key to competitive advantage in this region. A pilot network of human resource practitioners from larger companies in the region researched and disseminated best practice in the area; once this was firmly established, smaller companies became involved. Seminars, publications and conferences were open to wider audiences where possible. The network identified areas of HR research that focused on long-term competitiveness. They were particularly engaged with the themes of staff retention and team working. Modules were designed on other areas such as performance management, design of work pattern and workplace change initiatives. The aim was to improve the capacity of the participating small companies to engage in strategic thinking on human resource management and to support the formation of HR plans and policies that integrated with their business plans.

**Research Outputs:**

HR Strategy Network Research Report – Includes literature review on HR best practice, questionnaire & survey of network member practices and overview of HR management strategy & application

<b>Network Name</b>	South East Micro Skillnet
<b>Promoter</b>	
Promoting Organisation	South East Micro Skillnet Ltd.
Address	c/o Montip Engineering, Drangan, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Telephone	(052) 52208
Fax	(052) 52007
Contact	Ms. Karma Farrell

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies	7
Sector	Mixed; Small Business
Region	South Eastern

**Network Overview**

A network of micro enterprises, all employing between two and nine people, came together in the south Tipperary and Waterford area to develop skills and ideas for improving performance. The companies in the network were all within a 30-mile radius; few had any management experience and most had minimal financial expertise. Because of their small size, they did not have specific human resource, training or recruitment specialists; the owner manager, as well as being the driving force of the business, assumed these roles as well. Pressures on the labour market meant that it was imperative that employees felt they were being valued and rewarded. This network identified special skills held by individuals within it that could be usefully shared; it became a forum where problems could be safely explored. Much of the learning that took place was about relationships within small enterprises. They formulated models that made the most of these relationships. Each company identified its training needs. A facilitated needs analysis exercise, carried out with each individual employee, resulted in a large list of training needs. It was recognised that the needs identified should directly match the needs of the individual business. Because most participants had never been in formal training situations before, a significant amount of work went into designing training that was open and collaborative such as peer learning and activity-based learning.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees	73
Employee Type	Owner Managers, Supervisors, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, General Operatives
Focus of Training	Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Customer Service, Clerical Skills, Teambuilding

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

South East Micro Skillnet Newsletters

Descriptors of training modules for owner-managers and staff in:

- Business/Commercial Awareness
- Personal Development
- Customer Relations
- Developing Your Human Resources

Case studies on network members

'Flying with Eagles' – the network from a member's view

South East Micro Skillnet Final Evaluation Report

Measuring Impact – Operating Model for Business Information and Measurement

**Network Name** South East Technology Training (SETTS) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation South East Technology Training Skillnet Ltd.  
Address c/o Bausch & Lomb Ltd., Unit 424, Industrial Park, Cork Road, Waterford  
Telephone (051) 355 001  
Fax (051) 355 639  
Contact Mr. Noel Wilson

**Website** [www.settskillnet.com](http://www.settskillnet.com)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 15  
Sector Mixed  
Region Southern

## Network Overview

Manufacturing companies in the south east acquired an AMT (advanced manufacturing technology) unit, incorporating six workstations, housed in a purpose-built training facility on the Waterford Industrial Estate. The unit can be adjusted to simulate manufacturing environments within the firms so that hands-on technical training can be delivered at all levels near the workplace. This network of companies built a foundation for the continuing expansion of technological skills in their local enterprises. Using the expertise of the Waterford Institute of Technology and the AMT training unit, the network designed modules for on-site training. A training progression was designed, in collaboration with the Institute of Technology, which incorporated various entry levels and allowed trainees to reach various stages of certification up to graduate level. The network worked towards a self-sustaining cycle of review and expansion of shared technology training, not just in AMT but other areas such as robotics, and areas not specifically related to technology.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 350  
Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Plant & Machine Operators  
Focus of Training General Management, Health & Safety, Information Technology, Technical Skills, Teambuilding, Operator Training  
Certification WIT

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

CDs and online course manuals and trainee materials for:

- Engineering with Materials – a Mechanical Engineering Programme
- Hand Tools & Measuring Equipment Programme

SETTS Network Brochure

Final Evaluation Report on the SETTS Skillnet

**Network Name** South Kerry Food Producers Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation South Kerry Food Producers Group Ltd.  
 Address c/o F & F Foods, Main Street, Killarney, Co. Kerry  
 Telephone (064) 30977  
 Contact Mr. Charlie Farrell

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 14  
 Sector Food & Beverages; Small Business  
 Region Southern

**Network Overview**

Small food companies in the south Kerry area traditionally worked in isolation, so the development of the capacity to work collaboratively to the benefit of the local food sector was a strong strategic move. Shared marketing of quality food products, particularly to the tourism market, enhanced the identity of the whole region. Having worked together to develop a food business development plan, this network came together again to strengthen the development of their businesses through shared training. They also collaborated with other food networks in the country to deepen their understanding of networking opportunities. The group identified shared needs such as the ability to network, manage marketing and business activities, use computers and meet food safety requirements. The establishment of a recognised quality base line and shared membership of European food and hospitality groups consolidated the network further.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 47  
 Employee Type Owner/Managers, Craft Workers, Administrative Staff  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Information Technology, Clerical Skills, Teambuilding, Business Development  
 Certification FETAC

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Case studies on Network Members
- Evaluation of South Kerry Food Producers Skillnet
- Materials for owner/manager programmes in:
  - Business Planning & Marketing
  - Product Costing & Packaging
  - Food Labelling
  - Time Management

**Network Name** Supply Network Shannon (SNS) Skillnet

## Promoter

Promoting Organisation Supply Network Shannon Ltd.  
Address c/o Gentech Electronics Ltd., Unit 59, Innovation Centre, Plassey, Limerick City  
Telephone (061) 316 077  
Fax (061) 310 995  
Contact Mr. Maurice McLernon

**Website** [www.snshannon.com](http://www.snshannon.com)

## Key Network Data

No. of Companies 6  
Sector Other Manufacturing  
Region Western

## Network Overview

To compete successfully, sub-suppliers to multinational or large indigenous OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) need to be recognised as preferred sources in the market. They must develop not only an identity synonymous with high quality goods, but also the ability to work together strategically to benefit the sector. A network of sub-suppliers came together to pool their resources for training and knowledge sharing in the Shannon region. Two distinct clusters developed; one vertical cluster dedicated to the electronics sector, and a horizontal cluster of companies involved in precision engineering. Within each, a wide range of training needs were identified, both generic and specific; courses were developed to meet these needs. It is planned, in the longer term to obtain accreditation for this training programme and to eventually create a scheme for sub-supply certification at industry level.

## Key Training Data

No. of Trainees 212  
Employee Type Managers, Supervisors, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Plant & Machine Operators  
Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Health & Safety, Technical Skills, Teambuilding, Operator Training  
Certification IRCA

## Selection of training programmes and products developed:

SNS Management Development Course  
SNS Employee Enhancement Programme  
Network Brochure  
Directory of Member Companies  
Supervisors Toolbox

**Network Name** Wicklow & District Chamber Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Wicklow & District Chamber of Commerce Ltd.  
 Address Wicklow Enterprise Centre, The Murrough, Co. Wicklow  
 Telephone (0404) 66433  
 Fax (0404) 66464  
 Contact Mr. Ivan Cooper

**Website** www.wicklowchamber.ie

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 56  
 Sector Mixed; Small Business  
 Region Eastern

**Network Overview**

The Chamber of Commerce in Wicklow has been very active in supporting enterprise and in formulating strategic plans for business development in the area. This long-standing relationship with the business community was extended to managing enterprise-led training in collaboration with the Vocational Education Committee (VEC). An analysis of training needs based on the FÁS TNI approach was carried out locally. Based on those needs, modules were designed or sourced for delivery in local centres by the VEC and independent training providers. Modules identified included the areas of information technology, business and financial management, professional skills and personal development, as well as specialist skills such as auditing and chemical handling. The network benefited from having the training they needed delivered locally at a reasonable price with recognised qualifications. The aim was to improve competitiveness and increase the ability of firms to attract and retain high quality employees.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 400  
 Employee Type Managers, Professional & Technical Personnel, Clerical Staff, Service Workers, Sales Staff, Elementary Workers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, Health & Safety, Information Technology, Clerical Skills, Teambuilding, Operator Training, Customer Service  
 Certification Health & Safety Authority; Microsoft

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Case studies on network members
- Trainee Evaluation Report – Centre for Creative Change
- Information Technology Programme
- Business & Financial Management Programme
- Marketing, Professional Skills & Personal Development Programme
- Specialist Skills Programme

**Network Name** Women In Business Skillnet

**Promoter**

Promoting Organisation Network Ireland Ltd.  
 Address Old Head Golf Shop, Old Head Golf Links, Kinsale, Co. Cork  
 Telephone 021 477 8444  
 Contact Ms. Anne O'Brien

**Key Network Data**

No. of Companies 150  
 Sector Mixed; Small Business  
 Region National

**Network Overview**

Women in the early stages of running their own business often do not have the support or role models they need in the business community. Typically, in a micro enterprise, the manager of the business must manage all the functions – it is rare that one person has the expertise to do so. Women can feel isolated and under skilled in some of their roles. Network Ireland facilitated women in the promotion and development of their careers in management, business, the professions and the arts. The network assisted interaction between micro enterprises and established businesses for the benefit of the small companies; these mentoring relationships were incorporated into business development training modules. The business development course that was developed included modules on a range of management topics as well as targeted modules to meet specific needs, such as website management. Depending on local needs, different modules were delivered in different areas of the country. In addition, an online mentoring and business development learning site was developed to give added access to network members.

**Key Training Data**

No. of Trainees 150  
 Employee Type Owner Managers  
 Focus of Training Human Resources, Marketing, General Management, Customer Service, Clerical Skills, Information Technology, Teambuilding

**Selection of training programmes and products developed:**

- Business Development Course for SMEs – trainer manuals, trainee manuals & workbooks
- External Evaluation Report on Women in Business Skillnet
- Women in Business Galway Network – directory of participant companies
- Training Needs Questionnaire
- Mentor Programme Pack for Online Mentoring System for SMEs