



Enterprise-led learning networks

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Skillnets
Enterprise-led learning networks

The Training Networks Programme 2007-2009

Boosting Skills and Productivity

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



An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostalochta
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Message from the Chairman of Skillnets

In 2005 the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment granted a further five year mandate to Skillnets to provide increased funding and support for enterprises to meet their training needs in the period 2005-2010. Since that time, the effectiveness of the Skillnets model has been further acknowledged through its success with launching the Accel initiative (up to €16 million) and additional resources from the National Training Fund.

This has been made possible due to the excellent achievements of over 150 Training Networks already supported by Skillnets from 1999-2006. These networks have created and delivered training programmes and other learning activities across a broad range of industry and service sectors nationwide. Since 1999, they have helped over 10,000 Irish enterprises and enabled over 50,000 staff to improve and meet their skills needs.

Skillnets is an enterprise-led body, which receives funds from the National Training Fund, to support companies and their people. Training Networks allow enterprises to decide what training they need, as well as how, where and when it should be delivered thus allowing staff to take part in relevant, flexible, and cost-effective learning. Our role is to provide funding, advice and support to underpin the competitiveness of firms as well as increase the long term career opportunities and employability of employees.

This booklet is designed to provide you with all the information you need to become a part of the dynamic and successful network of enterprises which Skillnets supports. Irish business is facing many challenges as it continues to grow and adapt to change. Human resources are a vital cog in that process and may yet prove decisive in helping us to sustain a competitive edge. Skillnets will play its part in promoting not just more training, but excellence in learning at all levels.

In line with National policy, a particular area of focus for the next round of Skillnets funding will be the training needs of the **lower skilled**. Funding of **up to 90%** will be available for training aimed at this important group subject to specific certification and other criteria.

We invite you to join with us in boosting competitiveness, adaptability and employability through developing knowledge and skills in the work place.



Domhnall MacDomhnaill
Chairman
Skillnets Ltd

Contents

| | Page No. |
|--|-----------|
| Section 1 INTRODUCTION TO SKILLNETS | 3 |
| 1.1 The Skillnets Story | 3 |
| 1.2 Why Train? | 5 |
| Section 2 TRAINING NETWORKS | 6 |
| 2.1 What is a Training Network? | 6 |
| 2.2 Who can Form a Network? | 6 |
| 2.3 Network Features | 6 |
| 2.4 Network Activities | 8 |
| 2.5 Skillnet Networks | 9 |
| 2.6 Network Types | 12 |
| Section 3 THE TRAINING NETWORKS PROGRAMME 2005-2010 | 13 |
| 3.1 Programme Aim | 13 |
| 3.2 Programme Objectives | 14 |
| 3.3 Strategic Framework 2005-2010 | 14 |
| 3.4 Programme Funding | 15 |
| 3.5 Priority Areas | 15 |
| 3.6 Strategic Pillars | 15 |
| Section 4 MAKING AN APPLICATION | 17 |
| 4.1 General | 17 |
| 4.2 Eligible Activities | 17 |
| 4.3 Duration of Network Activities | 17 |
| 4.4 Network Funding | 18 |
| 4.5 Application deadlines & Procedures for Network Proposals | 18 |
| 4.6 Application Guidance & Network Development Support | 18 |
| 4.7 Submission of full Network Proposals | 19 |
| 4.8 2007 Assessment and Selection of Applications | 20 |
| 4.9 Contracts & Payments | 20 |
| Section 5 FURTHER INFORMATION | 21 |
| Section 6 APPENDICES | 22 |

Section 1 - Introduction to Skillnets

1.1 The Skillnets Story

Skillnets Role & Origins

Skillnets role is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and other learning activities, as a key element in sustaining national competitiveness. Its mission is to provide companies and their people with new relevant and flexible methods of upskilling staff and enhancing business performance.

The genesis of Skillnets is to be found in the 1997 White Paper on Human Resource Development which stated the Government's view that 'the primary responsibility for human resource development rests with the private sector itself.....the first approach of the state must be to facilitate the actions of business enterprises and of individuals to engage in human resource processes.... The state is prepared to back its support with adequate finance where the business sector takes a lead and responsibility.'

The establishment of Skillnets in 1999 provided new leadership by enterprise – both employers and employees – to an initiative which is funded by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment from the resources of the National Training Fund. This marked a new departure within the context of state funded support for human resource development. An industry board was appointed which brought together leading enterprise bodies to provide the new strategy and management of this initiative. They include Irish Business and Employers Confederation; Chambers Ireland, the Construction Industry Federation, the Small Firms Association and employee/trade union representatives from Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Skillnets 1999-2006

Since 1999, Skillnets has funded over 150 Training Networks and supported over 10,000 companies and 50,000 employees to meet their training needs.

Recognising that the enterprise-led approach has made a positive contribution to raising the profile of enterprise training in Ireland, the Government granted a new five year mandate to Skillnets for 2005-2010. Up to €55 million was made available from the National Training Fund. Since that time, the effectiveness of the Skillnets model has been further acknowledged through its success with launching the Accel initiative (up to €16 million) and additional

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

Accel 2006 -2008

In addition to the Training Networks Programme, Skillnets also manages the Accel Programme. Skillnets Services Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Skillnets runs this programme on behalf of DETE. It is part funded through the European Social Fund and the National Training Fund.

The objectives of the programme are to support enterprise groups to work collaboratively to provide training opportunities to workers at all levels as well as to support partnerships between enterprise and educational and training institutions for the development of skills frameworks.

The programme began formally in January 2006 and there are 55 Accel projects being funded in a wide variety of sectors and regions

Local enterprise bodies, employer and employee groups and groups of enterprises have formed training alliances which include the involvement of third level institutions in developing new skills and competency frameworks and standards as well as accredited courses and new approaches to training including e-Learning and m-Learning and other new flexible models for the delivery of in-company training.

Skillnets Strategy

Skillnets strategy is to support companies from all sectors in the economy to engage in training, but does so exclusively through networks of companies under the Training Networks Programme. The network approach allows companies to achieve economies of scale, increased efficiency, lower costs and training that is more relevant to individual sectors or types of companies.

Section 1- Introduction to Skillnets

“Skillnets funding is aimed at training people in employment and supports the training of existing employees in established companies that are part of Training Networks.”

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

Features of the Skillnets approach to Enterprise Training and Development

- ❑ The enterprise-led approach allows companies to address those skills that are relevant to their specific challenges
- ❑ All companies are eligible for Skillnets support. Companies can increase their training capacity by joining a Training Network
- ❑ Groups of companies working together can achieve greater buying power and influence
- ❑ Companies can design and develop the training methods, approaches and timing for training that suits their specific situation
- ❑ Employees have a greater range of training available to them if their firm is part of a Training Network
- ❑ Collaborative or group approaches allow companies to work together rather than in isolation
- ❑ Decision makers have new opportunities for exchange and information on developing skills
- ❑ Sectors can take the lead in deciding what training their sector needs
- ❑ Regional groups can develop locally - delivered solutions to training needs
- ❑ SME's have training that is suited to their particular needs.
- ❑ Companies have an opportunity to learn in many ways and are not confined to formal training programmes
- ❑ Companies can access funding quickly and flexibly to support their skills development plans
- ❑ Company networks can appoint experts such as project managers, industry experts, training consultants to help them develop and deliver training
- ❑ Sectors can develop new sectoral programmes, standards and certification
- ❑ Skillnets provides opportunities for partnerships between employees and employers to work together to develop training strategies

1.2 Why Train?

Regardless of company size or industry sector, the right training can have a positive effect on business performance, a measurable impact on the bottom line and greatly increase opportunities for staff. Trained staff are more productive, allowing firms to expand market share, quality and reputation. New skills can help manage and facilitate new strategies, technology, operations and work practices.

In 2005, Skillnets commissioned a major study into the evaluation of training in Ireland. "Measuring the Impact of Training and Development in the Workplace". Skillnets worked with companies and networks to test the application of world-class methodologies developed by Jack Phillips. The report is available on www.skillnets.ie. In summary this report proved that the impact of training on business success can be established and there are now 14 case studies available showing the methods and results in action.

Regular training and learning opportunities are an investment in people, allow staff to prosper and develop their careers while giving firms a highly able and motivated workforce.

Staying competitive in a global market place requires businesses to continually change their work practices and human resource strategies. Training can be used to manage and facilitate the implementation of new technology, new products, new markets and new ways of working to stay ahead of the competition.

For employers - training can boost the bottom line through:

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

Trained and motivated staff are a sustainable competitive advantage.

High skills levels provide businesses with a competitive edge through improved performance, quality and higher output.

Research shows that companies which invest in continuous upgrading of the skills of managers and staff are more successful in developing new markets, new products and new services.

The most successful companies have high levels of participation in training and development for all employee groups and increase their flexibility and adaptability to changes in markets, consumer trends and new technologies.

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

- providing new relevant work qualifications,
- allowing employees to maximize their performance,
- opening up career progression and development paths
- acquiring the key skills for tomorrow's technology.

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

- They have confidence in them to do the job
- The business values them and wants to maximise the full potential of all its people
- The business is committed to supporting future employability and progression
- The business is enabling its employees to fully engage in the development of the enterprise

Research shows that employees' motivation is greatly enhanced and all staff respond positively to learning opportunities in terms of improved performance. Companies which provide excellent training and development opportunities attract and retain staff and experience lower levels of absenteeism.

Section 2 - Training Networks

2.1 What is a Training Network?

A Training Network (a 'Skillnet') is a group of enterprises that decide to cooperate in order to undertake a project over a sustained period that individual members of the group would be unable to undertake on their own. Skillnets Training Networks are comprised of groups of enterprises that come together to achieve a common purpose or address a shared issue of importance to the development of skills and their long-term competitiveness.

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

2.2 Who can form a Network?

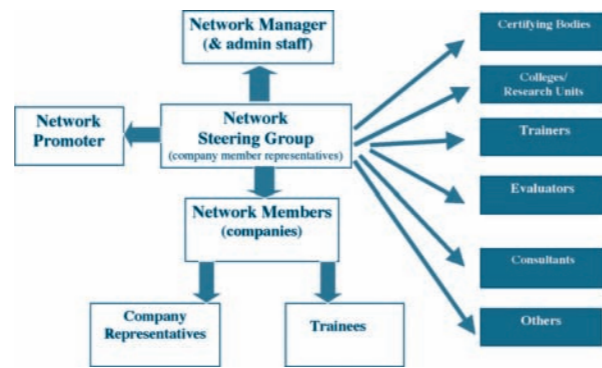
Any group of enterprises or any enterprise-led association can form a Training Network, provided that they have a strategic and long-term common interest to pursue in relation to the development of human resources.

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

2.3 Network Features

Figure 1 shows a typical Skillnets network – the core of which is the company members. In most of the networks, a network manager is the key co-ordinator, providing the professional, developmental input. Others who provide services to the network include trainers, business advisors and academics.

Figure 1: A Typical Network Structure



Network Promoters

Each network will have a network promoter who will manage the activities of the network and receive the funds from Skillnets on behalf of the network group.

Often network promoters are industry and enterprise organisations. In many cases industry associations, federations and Chambers (i.e. employer organisations) act as network promoters on behalf of their member companies. In other cases trade unions (employee organisations) have taken leadership of the process working with company management to facilitate a network. As a result of our experience with the Accel initiative, County Enterprise Boards and Third-level Institutions are also eligible to act as promoters.

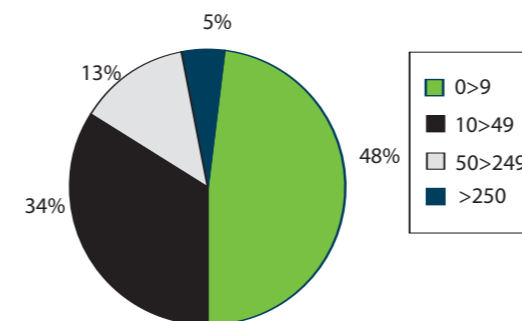
Individual companies can also act as promoters on behalf of the network members. Alternatively, network members can create companies (of which the network members are subscribers) in order to assume joint responsibility for the process.

In the Skillnets experience, support agencies, advisors, trainers, or consultants have often initiated the process and brought companies together to submit an application to Skillnets. These types of bodies are eligible to apply for development grants, provided they can show that they represent a core group of interested enterprises. However, they are not eligible promoters for a full application where it is essential that the direct legal and strategic ownership of the network is handed over to the enterprises themselves.

Network Companies

Network companies which are members of networks span the full range of industry sectors and can be enterprises of any size. However, Skillnets places a specific priority on small companies which face particular challenges in accessing training due to their small scale and restricted resources. 82% of all the companies participating in the previous Skillnet networks have employed less than 50 staff. However most networks formed to date have included a range of large, medium and small scale companies.

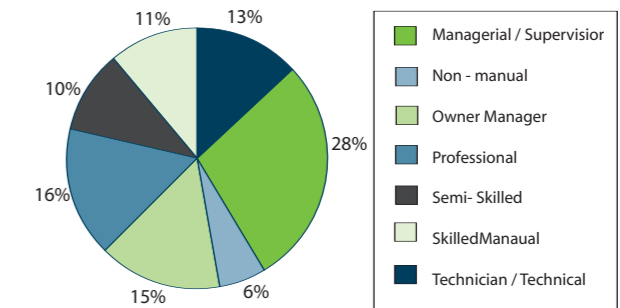
Figure 2: Size of Companies in Skillnet Networks 2004 - 2006



Network Trainees

Enterprises can include any employee groups in network activities. Many networks have supported the development of management and supervisory skills; others have adopted support strategies for owner managers and the development of marketing, sales, production and technical staff skills are common features of network plans. A particular area of focus for the next round of Skillnets funding will be the training needs of the **lower skilled**.

Figure 3: Types of employees in Skillnet Networks 2004 - 2006



Network Structure

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

Section 2 - Training Network

2.4 Network Activities

The exact activities of the network are decided by the company members. However in general the networks carry out the following tasks:

- ❑ Analyse the training and development needs of member companies, identifying skills requirements and priorities for action.
- ❑ Identify solutions and delivery mechanisms to meet those needs.
- ❑ Develop network structures and processes to establish the operation of the network as a basis for specified training activity.
- ❑ Organise the delivery and implementation of training measures.
- ❑ Promote collaboration and co-operative activity, sharing of knowledge and the exchange of best practice.
- ❑ Monitor and measure results, providing performance indicators and quality standards for training activity engaged in by firms
- ❑ Provide feedback to Skillnets on the progress, outcomes and impact of network training activities and processes.

The Skillnets Company Satisfaction Survey 2006 has confirmed very high levels of satisfaction among companies participating in training networks supported by Skillnets.

- 80% of companies stated that their training network **met** or **exceeded** their expectations;
- 98% stated they would recommend becoming a member of a training network to other companies;
- 55% of companies stated that their participation in their Skillnets training network had a direct positive impact on their **profitability**;
- 75% of companies stated that their participation in their Skillnets training network had a positive impact on levels of **customer satisfaction and employee morale**;
- 90% of companies stated that staff training as part of a network was more **flexible**, more **accessible**, more **effective**, better **quality** and lower **cost** in meeting their training needs;
- Of companies that participated in networking events organised by their network, 70% stated they were of benefit in establishing key business **contacts** and generating **ideas for development**. Almost 90% found that these events were of benefit in **sharing learning opportunities**;
- Overall, 99% of companies stated that the Skillnets Training Networks Programme was an effective model for the delivery of training for networks.

2.5 Skillnet Networks

A complete list of networks supported by Skillnets from 1999-2005 is provided in Appendix 1.

Figure 4: Skillnets Networks 2006 - 2007

Further details on each Skillnet can be obtained from specific network websites or the central Skillnets site at www.skillnets.ie

| Network Name | Sector | Region | Website |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| ACIST Skillnet | Mixed | Mid-West | www.skillsacist.com |
| ADR (Altern. Dispute Rsln) Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.ibec.ie/adrskillnet |
| BizNetCork Skillnet | Mixed | South West | www.biznetcork.com |
| BME Skillnet | Mixed | Border Region | www.bmetraining.com |
| Business Excellence Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.icbe.ie |
| Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet | Mixed | South East | www.cktraining.ie |
| Chamber Learning Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.chambers.ie |
| Crest Retail Excellence Skillnet | Retail | National | www.crestireland.com |
| Design Shannon Skillnet | Mixed | Mid-West | www.designshannon.ie |
| Designers' Training Skillnet | Services | National | www.designireland.ie |
| Digital Media Forum Skillnet | Services | National | www.digitalmediaforum.net |
| Enterprise Partnership Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.siptucollege.ie |
| Fingal Skillnet | Mixed | Dublin & Mid-East | www.fingalskillnet.com |
| First Polymer Training Skillnet | Manufacturing | National | www.firstpolymer.com |
| Fresh Produce Skillnet | Food | Dublin & Mid-East | www.freshproduceskillnet.ie |
| FSI International Life Insurance Skillnet | Services | Dublin & Mid-East | www.fsi.ie |
| FSI Securitisation Skillnet | Services | Dublin & Mid-East | www.fsi.ie |
| Galway Executive Skillnet | Mixed | West | www.galwayexecutiveskillnet.com |
| Greasan na Mean Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | West | www.greasannamean.ie |
| Hospitality Management Skillnet | Hospitality & Tourism | National | www.ihl.ie |
| HotBed Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.hotbedskillnet.com |
| IASC Skillnet | Food | National | www.iasc.ie |
| IBEC Retail Skillnet | Retail | National | www.ibecretailskillnet.com |
| IFA Skillnet | Food | National | www.ifaskillnet.ie |
| Impact Measurement Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.impactmeasurement.org |
| Irish Greyhound Skillnet | Services | National | www.greyhoundskillnet.com |
| ISIT Skillnet | Services | National | www.isitskillnet.ie |
| ISME Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.isme.ie |
| ITAG Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | West | www.itag.ie |
| KTN Skillnet | Mixed | South West | www.ktn.ie |
| Learning Waves Skillnet | Services | National | www.learningwaves.ie |
| Learning World Construction Skillnet | Manufacturing | National | |
| Limerick Chamber Skillnet | Mixed | Mid-West | |
| MidMed Skillnet | Pharma/Medical/Biomed | Border Region | www.midmed.ie |
| NETS Skillnet | Mixed | National | |
| Northside Business Skillnet | Mixed | Dublin & Mid-East | www.nbsl.ie |

Section 2 - Training Networks

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| PharmaChem Skillnet | Pharma/Medical/Biomed | National | www.pharmachemskillnet.ie |
| Positive2Work Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.positive2work.ie |
| Private Healthcare Skillnet | Services | National | www.phskillnet.ie |
| Refrigeration Technology Skillnet | Mixed | National | www.refrigerationskillnet.ie |
| ROLE Skillnet | Mixed | North West | www.roleskillnet.com |
| SLM Skillnet | Food | South East | www.slmskillnet.com |
| Software Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | National | www.softwareskillnet.com |
| South Dublin Kildare Skillnet | Mixed | Dublin & Mid-East | www.sdchamber.ie |
| South East Micro Skillnet | Mixed | South East | |
| Space Industry Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | National | www.spaceskills.net |
| The Creative Industry Skillnet | Manufacturing | South East | www.creativeskillnet.com |
| The Engineers Skillnet | Mixed | National | |
| The Print & Packaging Skillnet | Manufacturing | Dublin & Mid-East | www.printpacktraining.ie |
| Waterford Chamber Skillnet | Mixed | South East | www.waterfordchamber.ie |
| Western ICT Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | Mid-West | www.westernict.com |
| Wicklow Skillnet | Mixed | Dublin & Mid-East | www.wicklowskillnet.ie |
| Wireless Skillnet | Technology/Knowledge | National | www.wirelesskillnet.ie |

Figure 5: Accel Projects 2006 – 2007

Further details on each Accel Project can be obtained from specific project websites or the central Accel site at www.acceltraining.com

| Project Name | Sector | Region | Website |
|--|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 315 Food Accel Project | Wholesale and retail | Border | |
| Accel Food & Drink Export Project | Wholesale and retail | National | www.irishexporters.ie |
| Accel Life Sciences Ireland Training Programme | Mixed | National | www.irishexporters.ie |
| Accel Quality Management | Mixed | National | |
| Athlone Chamber | Mixed | Midland | |
| Atlantic Training & Development | Mixed | West | |
| Beacon Training & Development Programme | Mixed | Dublin | www.sandyfordprc.com |
| BESTNet Accel Project | Mixed | West | |
| Business and Leadership Development Project | Mixed | South West | |
| Business Skills for Female Entrepreneurs | Mixed | Border | www.winireland.com |
| Childcare Business Development | Services/Professional | Midland | |
| CIF/BICC - Building In-Company Capacity | Construction | National | |
| Club Management Training and Development | Services/Other | National | |
| Donegal Design Directorate Accel Project | Services | Border | |
| Drumshanbo Enterprise Accel Project | Mixed | Border | |
| Elevator Project - Raising Skills in the Irish Restaurant Sector | Hotel/Tourism | National | www.raii.ie |
| ENGNET | Construction | South East | |
| Food Accel Project | Wholesale and retail | National | |
| Furniture and Wood Products Network | Construction | National | www.fwpm.org |
| Graduate Development Programme | Mixed | National | www.ictireland-accel.com |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Grow Your Own Company IQ | Mixed | Dublin | |
| GT Skills: Geothermal Skills Accel Project | Construction | Dublin | |
| Highway to Learning | Mixed | Dublin | www.H2L.ie |
| ICBE - Success through Knowledge | Mixed | National | www.icbe.ie |
| ICOS Accel Project | Mixed | National | |
| Inishowen Accel Hospitality Skills | Services Tourism | Border | www.visitinishowen.com |
| Innovate West | Mixed | Mid West | www.innovatewest.org |
| Irish Coaching Development Network (ICDN) | Services Professional | National | |
| Irish Egg Association Accel Training Programme | Wholesale and retail | National | |
| Kaizen Project | Mixed | National | |
| Learning West Limited | Mixed | West | |
| Lionra Horizons Project | Services Tourism | Border | |
| Managing Diversity in Construction | Construction | National | |
| NEART | Social Partners | National | |
| North East Accel Programme | Mixed | Border | www.neap.ie |
| Plato Accel Programme | Mixed | National | |
| Programme in Science & Technology Studies | Mixed | West | |
| Priority Learning for Change (PLC) | Mixed | Mid West | |
| RAISER - Raising Skills Levels in the Craft Bakery Industry | Manufacturing (non Durables) | National | |
| Renewable Energy Installers Training Programme | Construction | Midland | |
| Renewable Energy Skills | Construction | Mid West | www.renewableenergy.ie |
| Rural Enterprise Training Partnership | Mixed | South West | www.ruralsme.com |
| Rural Food Company Training Network | Mixed | South West | www.ruralfoodcompany.ie |
| Rural Tourism Skills Development (RTDS) | Mixed | Border | |
| SIMI Dealer Principal Development Programme Services | Automotive | National | |
| South Kerry Networks | Mixed | South West | |
| TARGET (Travel Agents Reaching Goals through Enterprise Training) | Services Tourism | National | |
| The BRITE Programme | Mixed | Dublin | www.brite.ie |
| The Craft Butcher Development Project; A Platform for the Future | Wholesale and retail | National | www.craftbutchers.ie |
| The Digital Media Forum | IT | National | |
| The Irish Pest Control Accel Project | Services other | National | |
| The Value Model Accel Project | Services Professional | National | http://xcelerate.ipos.ie |
| Upskilling the workforce of SME's in Ballyhoura Country | Mixed | Mid West | |
| Virtual Micro-Business Development Centre -pilot Project | Construction | Southeast | |
| Western Organic Network Training Programme | Agricultural | Border | |

Section 2 - Training Networks

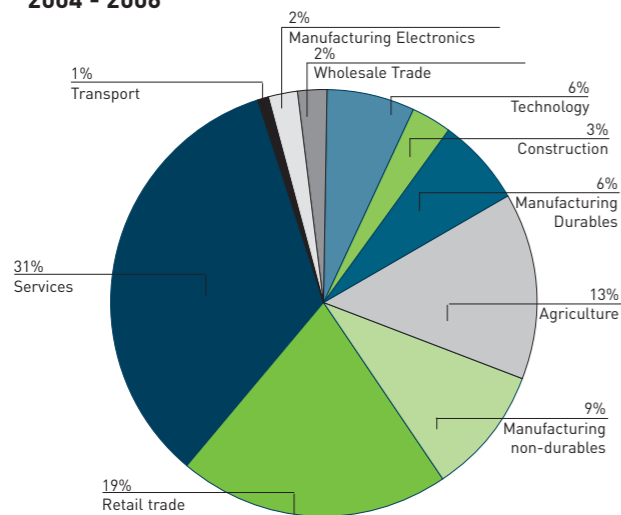
2.6 Network Types

Networks for Sectors

A special feature of Skillnets has been the predominance of the sectoral approach to the formation and development of Training Networks. This was not a requirement imposed by Skillnets but a trend that emerged from the companies themselves. Working together to meet common training needs with other firms from within the same sector makes good sense for a variety of reasons but it has not always been easy for Irish companies to collaborate along these lines.

It is often assumed that firms are reluctant to work with their close competitors for fear of losing competitive advantage through sharing sensitive information and knowledge, and some companies are also concerned at the prospect of "staff poaching". However for the last 7 years sectoral networks have become the most popular form of networks chosen by enterprises. This positive experience of companies in the sector-based Skillnets so far augurs well for greater collaboration among firms across a wide range of functions in the future.

Figure 6: Sectors of companies in Skillnet Networks 2004 - 2006



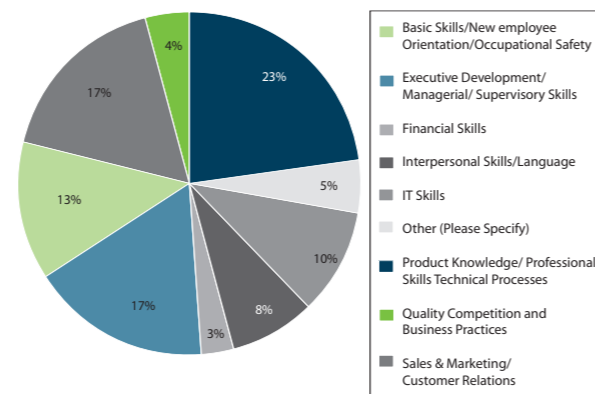
Networks for Small Business

Over 82% per cent of the participating companies in the Training Networks programme are either small (less than 50) or micro (less than 10) enterprises. For many of these firms their involvement in Skillnets is their first significant involvement in training and often it is their first time to be involved in making real

and informed decisions about what training to provide. Training Networks can assist small firms to access training more easily, more quickly and more cost effectively.

This experience is helping to de-mystify training for small companies by developing practical tools to analyse and meet training needs, quickly, locally and effectively. An interesting feature is the collaboration in most networks between large and small firms and the active partnership between owner-managers and employees within the companies.

Figure 7: Types of Training in Skillnet Networks 2004 - 2006



Skillnets for Regions

The Skillnets concept of formalised networking is built on a strategy of achieving objectives through broad based alliances. Therefore the collaboration at network level is not only between network members but also between networks and other bodies who can add value, expertise or services to the network.

Creatively forging alliances is a feature of almost every Skillnet and this allows the networks to play an important role in expanding and focusing resources on skills development at regional level. Skillnets networks maximise the use of resources in a region, by creating a single point of contact for participating companies with potential training providers.

Because of the substantial numbers in the combined workforce, the network can attract high quality trainers from outside the region to bid for work and form a critical mass to enable training to be delivered where the firms are located. This gives firms in the network a position of strength in terms of purchasing power.

Section 3 - The Training Networks Programme 2007-2009

3.1 Programme Aim

The aim of the Training Networks Programme is to promote and support the development of Training Networks as a strategic response to existing and emerging competitive challenges facing the enterprise sector. Through the development of Training Networks Skillnets aims to increase participation in enterprise training by firms to improve competitiveness and provide improved access for workers to skills development.

“The Skillnets vision is to improve learning activity in industry leading to enhanced skills, employability and competitiveness.”

The principles behind the programme include an enterprise-led, networked and partnership approach to the provision of enterprise training and expansion and development of that approach by supporting innovation and enhanced workplace learning.

The Training Networks Programme is focused on improving the level and quality of training and development activities in enterprises which already invest in training. It also aims to increase the level of training in enterprises and sectors where little training has taken place to date.

3.2 Programme Objectives

The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To promote an enterprise-led approach to learning through the establishment of Training Networks where groups of enterprises can develop strategic answers to their joint training needs.
- To promote increased active participation in training and development by enterprises, especially within small and medium sized firms, to address the reluctance to invest in human resource development and learning.
- To improve the adaptability and long term employability of workers, especially through addressing the basic skills requirements of workers with lower qualifications.

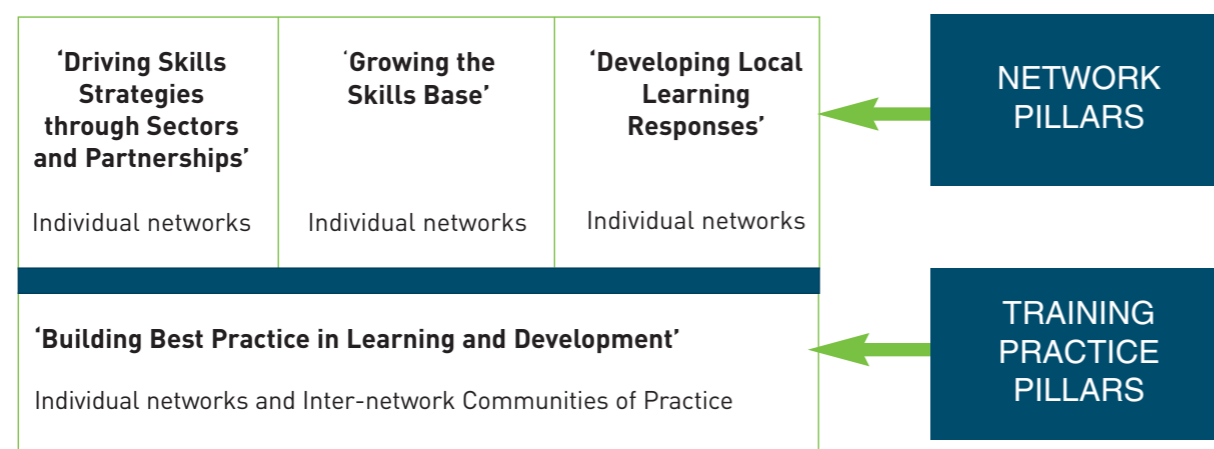
- To facilitate the provision of quality customised training by supporting the development of new, innovative and flexible methodologies to deliver more effective and user-friendly training solutions to enterprises
- To enable enterprises to expand and access more training options by addressing gaps in current provision, rather than duplicate existing activity.
- To create value-added training by promoting best international practice within networks, including impact measurement, benchmarking, accreditation of new and prior learning, and strategic approaches to learning and development.
- To contribute to the development of national policy on the development of in-company training by working with all stakeholders, including employer bodies and trade unions, training and education providers, awards bodies, support agencies, and policy groups

Section 3 - The Training Networks Programme 2007-2009

3.3 Strategic Framework 2005-2010

The Training Networks Programme approach 2007 – 2009 will continue the overall direction which has been successfully adopted by Skillnets since 1999. This will continue to be developed within the 4 pillar framework, first introduced in 2005. This includes three network pillars which span the different types of networks that enterprises can establish. Underpinning all network types is a Training Practice pillar which allows all networks to improve training processes and practice.

Figure 8: Skillnets Strategic Pillars



In continuing to implement the new strategic framework the allocation of funding under the Training Networks programme 2007-2009 will:

- Involve a broadly based approach and support the uptake of training in a range of sectors from those with high growth potential, to workers in vulnerable sectors.
- Continue to place a special emphasis on the needs of small and medium sized companies.
- Seek to involve a wide range of employees including those which have had less access to training in the past.
- Continue to expand existing networks as well as support the development of new Training Networks.

- Support companies from all regions in Ireland including those regions where there is a lower amount of local training provision.
- Continue to meet gaps in current provision to ensure that insofar as possible all employee groups and firms can access training relevant to their specific needs. This includes defined gaps in the provision of accredited training solutions.
- Encourage the shared participation of employers and employees in approaches to skills development

3.4 Programme Funding

Skillnets expects to receive in excess of €50m from the National Training Fund for the period 2008-2009. This will be made available to enterprise groups on the basis of competitive calls for proposals.

In addition, development grants of up to €25,000 will be available to new applicants to assist in the preparation of a full application. This funding is not available to existing Skillnets or Accel networks.

Applications will be invited in 2007, and funding commitments for up to 2 years (2008 and 2009) will be made to approved Training Networks. A wide range of learning, skills development and networking activities are eligible for support under the Training Networks Programme.

3.5 Priority Areas

There are 4 main areas, or Pillars, which Skillnets will prioritise for the 2007 – 2009 period:

- Driving skills strategies through sectors and partnerships to encourage training participation at sector level.
- Growing the skills base by giving workers access to lifelong learning opportunities.
- Developing local learning responses to allow enterprises to develop training opportunities for employees at local level.
- Building training and development methods in enterprises by continuously identifying and promoting best practice and quality in all aspects of the design, delivery, evaluation and dissemination of enterprise training.

3.6 Strategic Pillars

Each of the individual strategic pillars are expanded below.

Pillar 1: Driving Skills Strategies through Sectors and Partnerships

The primary focus of this pillar will be on enhancing skills and achieving best practice competence within industries and sectors. This pillar will support enterprises in any economic area to lead sector skills development. This may involve sector based partnerships for training between employees and the enterprises, enterprises and enterprises, and between enterprises and others engaged in the world of learning.

Pillar 2: Growing the Skills Base

The aim of this pillar is to foster the development of new and higher levels of knowledge, skills and competence across the workforce. This will support life-long learning for employees as well as increasing the competitiveness of companies in a rapidly changing and increasingly knowledge based economy. This pillar will enable employees at all levels within enterprises to move 'One Step Up' to raising their skill and employability options. This Pillar will be guided by four themes:

Theme 1 – Facilitating Access to Learning and Adaptability

This theme will support training networks activity focused on workers who have traditionally had less access to training or who may need the skills to adapt to a changing workplace. It may include employees with lower basic skills, those at risk of becoming unemployed in areas of the economy encountering rapid change, workers in declining sectors, non-national employees, part-time workers, women workers, and older workers.

Theme 2 - Building Management Capacity in SMEs

This theme will support training activity within networks of SMEs and micro enterprises to develop the leadership, management and operational capacity of owner-managers and other key staff in the enterprises.

Section 3 - The Training Networks Programme 2007-2009

Theme 3 – Increasing Adaptability of Workers to the Knowledge Economy

This theme will support companies and workers to implement training activity focused on helping workers to adapt to technological change and respond effectively to the challenges of the knowledge economy.

Theme 4 - Adopting Advanced Business Practices for Increased Productivity

This theme will support training networks to implement leadership and organisational development and change management programmes in enterprises and to develop related skills. Areas may include, for example, high performance work practices (team-working, gain sharing, communications etc), diversity/equality, computer integrated manufacturing (CIM), business awareness, sales and marketing, product development, cost reduction programmes etc. Any skills related to the development adoption of advanced strategic, operational and management processes required to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace of the future will be supported.

Pillar 3: Developing Local Learning Responses

This Pillar will support training networks with a local or regional focus to implement training aimed at reducing the relative disadvantage in current provision at local level. This action will encourage the development of training networks to create dynamic, flexible, systems in all regions of the country. It is expected that networks will form strategic links and partnerships with local training providers, educational establishments, and regional bodies to enable proximate and accessible support for workplace learning for enterprises.

Pillar 4: Building Best Practice in Learning and Development

Pillar 4 is a practice development strand which aims to develop, transfer and promote best training and development practice across enterprises engaged in Skillnets networks.

This Pillar will

- promote the increased up-take of training in enterprises;
- support the introduction of techniques for companies to determine value and return on investment in training;
- support benchmarking systems for companies to assess and improve training practice (such as Excellence Through People);
- support methods of aligning training to business goals;
- support capacity-building among in-company and external training providers;
- provide support to networks seeking to create sector-relevant standards, modules or awards for independent certification and accreditation;
- support the development of methods to enable individual trainee development, career planning and lifelong learning

Section 4 - Making an Application

4.1 General

Skillnets will support private enterprises in addressing individual and organisational learning needs. Such support to enterprises will be aimed at people in employment. Skillnets will co-fund enterprise training and networking or other learning activities which support and encourage participation in enterprise training.

Support for existing and new networks will be on the basis of open and competitive calls for proposals combined with transparent and equitable assessment systems. Skillnets will seek confirmation from promoters in receipt of grant support from Skillnets that training funded by Skillnets is either not currently available from public sources or current provision does not meet the needs of the enterprise group.

Full proposals for Training Networks must be submitted to Skillnets in September 2007. This allows time for groups of companies to develop network plans and decide on the members, strategy and priorities for the Training Network. A number of support activities (as well as seed funding in the form of development grants) will be provided prior to September to allow promoters to explore ideas and fully develop comprehensive proposals.

4.2 Eligible Activities

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

Eligible activities that may be carried out by Training Networks include:

- The engagement of network companies
- The provision of staff, office facilities and administration required for network activities
- The provision of accounting services necessary to manage and administer network grants and network matching funds
- The analysis of training needs of individuals, enterprises, sectors or regions
- The provision, development and customisation of training programmes for managers and staff within enterprises

- The commissioning of trainers to design, deliver and evaluate training for network members
- The engagement of industry and training and development experts to assist in the development and carrying out of learning activities within the network
- Best practice visits, case studies, networking events and other inter-firm learning activities
- Networking events and activities including workshops, seminars and conferences
- The provision of inter-firm mentoring, coaching and other knowledge transfer activities
- The publication of new training materials and information
- The promotion of network training activities and programmes
- The development and administration of certification within the context of the National Qualifications Framework
- The development of methodologies, tools and materials to support best training practice
- Surveys, studies and evaluations of the impact of network activities on business performance and staff development
- The development of strategic partnerships between enterprises, providers, industry bodies and certification awards bodies
- The development of training and development plans, processes and people (decision makers, trainers and staff) within enterprises to improve the internal capacity of firms to identify and meet training needs
- The development of processes at sectoral or regional level to provide strategic support and direction for skills development to meet future market needs and competitive challenges.

4.3 Duration of Network Activities

Skillnets will fund Training Network plans for 2 year periods. After the completion of a 2 year network plan, the network can reapply to Skillnets for further funding (subject to the overall availability of funds within the programme). This allows Training Networks to implement long-term development processes and achieve sustainable and strategic impact in their sector, region and enterprise membership.

Section 4 - Making an Application

4.4 Network Funding

Skillnets funds networks by co-investing with network member companies in the delivery of Training Network plans and activities. Under the Training Networks Programme 2007-2009, up to 70% - 90% of the costs of all eligible network activities (listed in section 4.2) will be provided for a two year period. This allows enterprises to carry out a wide range of learning, development and networking activities to achieve a step change in performance and skills. Networks that have a particular focus on training for the lower-skilled are likely to receive higher levels of funding, subject to certain terms and conditions around acceptable levels of certification. Skillnets wishes to encourage training in this area and will work with interested parties to ensure that the training provided meets best-practice criteria.

The Training Network provides funds to match the Skillnets investment. The specific mix of funding between Skillnets and network members is decided on an individual network basis. Matching funds must be sourced from private sector contributions. In general, networks which have significant numbers of small companies (i.e. employing less than 250 staff) are more likely to attract higher levels of co-financing from Skillnets.

4.5 Application Deadlines & Procedures for Network approvals

Two key deadlines should be noted in 2007:

1. **Applications for development grants - 5pm Monday, 30th April 2007**
2. **Applications for full network proposals - 5pm Monday 24th September 2007**

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

2007 Procedures - New Networks

- Information briefings 13th March - 4th April
- Applications for development grants: Deadline 30th April
- Decisions issued on applications for development grants: By 23rd May
- Registration with Skillnets of full network proposals under development: May/September

- Seminar for new networks in development: Late May / Early June
- Thematic seminars for promoters: Dates to be posted on Skillnets website
- Applications for full 2 year network proposals: Deadline 24th September
- Decisions issued on network proposals: By 16th November
- Contracting and payment approval: November/December
- Networks commence: By January 2008

2007 Procedures - Existing Networks

- Registration with Skillnets of network proposals under development: April/September
- Seminar for existing networks developing new proposals: June
- Thematic seminars for promoters: Dates to be posted on Skillnets website
- Applications for full 2 year network proposals: Deadline 24th September
- Decisions issued on network proposals: By 16th November
- Contracting and payment approval: November/December
- Networks commence: By January 2008

4.6 Application Guidance and Network Development Support

- **Information events:** A number of public information events will be hosted by Skillnets over the period March-April 2007. These will provide interested parties with information on the programme and future opportunities as well as enabling them to meet and talk to members of current Training Networks. We can also accommodate groups which are already coming together for workshops, seminars or conferences by providing information, presentations or other inputs on request.
- **Development grants:** A 'development grant' provides seed funding for promoters seeking to develop full network proposals and make an

Section 4 - Making an Application

application to Skillnets in September 2007. The 'development grant' is made available to support companies in meeting the resource needs of a network development process. This usually involves bringing companies together, identifying the Network objectives, developing the Network plan, investigating training needs and developing plans to meet these training needs.

- **Application forms and criteria for network development grants** are available from the Skillnets office or can be downloaded from the Skillnets website www.skillnets.ie

The closing date for development grants in 2007 is 30th April.

- **Registration of Networks under Development.** Promoters can register at any time between March and September to notify Skillnets that they are in the process of developing a network proposal. All promoters of network proposals under development which have registered with Skillnets will be provided with ongoing information and support from the Skillnets office for the network development period March - September 2007. Promoters will also be able to access information on other networks under development that may be working in similar areas or offer opportunities for collaboration or synergies between networks.

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

- Promoters and groups of enterprises which have received development grants
- Promoters and groups of enterprises which have not received development grants.
- Existing Training Networks (TNP & Accel)
- Other existing Networks

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

- **Network development workshops:** A number of development workshops will be hosted by

Skillnets from May - August to assist network promoters in the development of full network proposals. All details of development workshops will be posted on the Skillnets website. To attend workshops promoters should register as a network under development. An initial one day introductory workshop will be held in late May/early June.

- **Information and resources:** A list of resources for developing networks is listed at the back of this document. Further information will be published on the Skillnets website during 2007 to provide guidelines and other information which can assist promoters and enterprises in developing ideas, plans and costed proposals for submission to Skillnets in September.

- **Individual support from Skillnets staff:** Skillnets has a number of advisors on staff that can assist enterprise groups in developing ideas and proposals. Advisors can be contacted by phoning the Skillnets office or sending an email request or query to info@skillnets.com.

- **Peer support from existing Training Networks:** A number of existing networks have agreed to provide peer support to networks under development. In the past peer support has been highly beneficial to networks under development. It provides an opportunity for new networks to examine directly how other networks work, talk to the companies involved in the network, identify pros and cons of different network models and processes and learn from the experience of other enterprises. It is also an invaluable tool in the recruitment of members for new networks as many companies involved in Training Networks are willing to talk to other groups of enterprises about the benefits of the process.

4.7 Submission of full network proposals

The deadline for submission of full network proposals in 2007 is 24th September.

Applicants can download application forms from the Skillnets website or request the documents by post from the Skillnets office.

All applicants must submit paper and soft copies of their proposals to the Skillnets office. These must be signed by an authorised representative of the applicant organisation and must be received by the Skillnets office on or before the stated application

Section 4 - Making an Application

deadline. It is the sole responsibility of promoters to ensure that hard copy applications are received by the deadline date. No failure of postal, courier or other transportation services will be considered as a reason to make an exception to these conditions. Receipt acknowledgements will be issued by Skillnets to confirm that applications have been submitted on time and will proceed for assessment.

Promoters should consult the Skillnets website www.skillnets.ie for full details of all eligibility criteria and application forms. Ineligible proposals will not be submitted for assessment. Applicants must ensure that they read and understand all the call for proposal documents and guidelines issued by Skillnets. These will be sent to all networks under development which have registered with Skillnets. All necessary information will also be available on the Skillnets website.

Any questions or queries on information issued by Skillnets, further clarification or additional information that is required by promoters can be forwarded to the Skillnets office. Responses and clarifications on eligibility or application requirements will be posted on the Skillnets website.

4.8 2007 Assessment and Selection of Applications

All full network proposals submitted to Skillnets by the application deadline will be assessed against structured criteria. Final decisions on allocations of funding are made by the Skillnets board. The key objectives of the Skillnets strategy 2005-2010 will guide the selection of network proposals to be funded.

A sub-committee of the Skillnets Board oversees the assessment process to ensure that fair, transparent and equitable consideration of all applications received is applied throughout the process. Overall assessment criteria are outlined above.

General Criteria guiding the assessment of Training Network Applications may include –

- Enterprise-led Approaches
- Collaboration and Networking
- Needs Driven Plans
- Business and Employee Impact
- Small Company Focus
- Lower-Skills Focus
- Innovation & Partnership

- Additionality rather than Duplication
- Contribution of Matching Funds
- Operational Effectiveness
- Key Outputs and Value for Money
- Best Training Practice

4.9 Contracts and Payments

Skillnets can only enter into a contract with promoters fulfilling the following minimum conditions:

- Promoters holding an appropriate legal status to allow a contract to be issued
- Promoters providing an up-to-date tax clearance certificate
- Promoters that are enterprises, an organisation whose membership is comprised of enterprises, or an organisation representing enterprise stakeholders
- Promoters who have been issued 'letters of offer' by Skillnets and have adequately fulfilled any conditions of funding set by Skillnets
- Promoters who have structures in place to enable enterprises to make key decisions in relation to the network processes and activities

Payments are made on a phased basis and networks are provided with a schedule of payments on the commencement of the network. In general, payments are issued in advance of activities, to allow networks immediate access to the funds they require to deliver plans. In general, when a network has spent 80% of a previous payment, a further payment will be issued to the network.

Payments are made by interbank transfer to a dedicated account established by the Training Network. Payments may be associated with reports on network activities and key performance indicators.

Skillnets has developed a web-based system called SAM which allows networks to easily track and manage all financial and other information associated with network activities. The SAM system also allows for automatic requests and processing of network payments.

Section 5 - Further Information

A list of resources is provided at the back of this document. Further resources, application forms, guidelines and other information as they are issued will be posted on the Skillnets website www.skillnets.ie. All registered networks under development will be directly notified of information as it is issued.

A Frequently Asked Questions section will be provided on the Skillnets website to provide promoters with answers to queries that have been submitted to Skillnets.

Skillnets will also respond to suggestions for additional information or seminars. We welcome any ideas on how Skillnets can assist developing networks or other interested parties.

Section 6 - Appendix 1

Figure 9: Skillnets Networks 1999-2002

| Network Name | Sector | Region |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Bakers & Confectioners (FCBA) Skillnet | Food & Beverages | National |
| Build Services Skillnet | Building Services | South East |
| Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Carlow, Kilkenny |
| Ceramics Skillnet | Ceramics | National |
| Chamber Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| Chambers Research Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| Change Management Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| CIF CON_ECT Skillnet | Construction | National |
| Clé Book Publishers Skillnet | Publishing | National |
| Clothing & Textiles (ICATA) Skillnet | Textile & Clothing | National |
| Coach Tourism Skillnet | Transport | National |
| Construction IT (CIF) Skillnet | Construction | National |
| Consumer Food Skillnet | Food & Beverages | National |
| Co-operative Societies (ICOS) Skillnet | Food & Beverages | National |
| Córas Gnó Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Donegal |
| County Waterford Micro Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Waterford |
| Craft Brewers Skillnet | Brewing | National |
| Craft Butchers Skillnet | Butchers | National |
| CREST Retail Skillnet | Wholesale & Retail | National |
| EB-ETI Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| E-Business (FEII) Skillnet | Communications & Informatics | National |
| Engineering Design Skillnet | Engineering | Eastern |
| English Language Teachers (MEI/RELSA) Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| Enterprise Partnership (SIPTU College) Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| Fashion Industry Skillnet | Clothing | National |
| Fast Growth SME Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| First Polymer Training Skillnet | Plastics | National |
| Food & Drink Federation Skillnet | Food & Beverage | National |
| Hotel Management Skillnet | Hotels & Tourism | National |
| IBEC Retail Skillnet | Wholesale & Retail | North West |
| International Freight (IIFA) Skillnet | Transport | Leinster |
| IT Industry HR Skillnet | IT | National |
| it@cork Skillnet | IT | Cork |
| Leinster Engineering & Technical (TEEU) Skillnet | Mixed | Leinster |
| Leisure & Amenity (ILAM) Skillnet | Leisure | National |
| Leitrim Good Food Skillnet | Food & Beverage | Leitrim |
| Medical Devices (IMDA) Skillnet | Medical Precision & Optical Equipment | National |
| MIDAS – Micro Electronic Design Skillnet | Micro Electronic Design | National |
| MUSTEL – Call Centre Skillnet | Call Centres | Cork |
| National Partnership Training Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| New Product Introduction Research Skillnet | Food & Beverage | Cork |
| New Product Introduction Skillnet | Food & Beverage | Cork |
| North Mayo Skillnet | Manufacturing | Mayo |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| Pharmachem (IPCMF) Skillnet | Pharmaceutical & Chemical | National |
| Plato Skillnet | Small Business | National |
| Printers (IBEC) Skillnet | Printing | Cork |
| Refrigeration Technology Skillnet | Refrigeration | National |
| Restaurants Association Skillnet | Hotels & Restaurant | National |
| Security Employers Skillnet | Security | National |
| SLM Food & Beverage Skillnet | Food & Beverage | East & South |
| Small Business (SFA) Skillnet | Small Business | National |
| South East HR (IBEC) Skillnet | Mixed | South East |
| South East Micro Skillnet | Small Business | South East |
| South East Technology Training (SETTS) Skillnet | Mixed Sector | South East |
| South Kerry Food Producers Skillnet | Food & Beverage | Kerry |
| Supply Network Shannon (SNS) Skillnet | Manufacturing | Limerick |
| Wicklow & District Chamber Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Wicklow |
| Women in Business Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |

Figure 10: Skillnets Networks 2002-2005

| Network Name | Sector | Region |
|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| Arrow Skillnet | Mixed | National |
| Associated Food Producers (AFPS) Skillnet | Food & Beverage | National |
| Bakers & Confectioners (FCBA) Skillnet | Food & Beverage | National |
| BizWest Skillnet | Mixed Sector | West |
| Border, Midlands, East (BME) Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Border, Midlands, East |
| Brewing Skillnet | Brewing | National |
| Carlow Kilkenny Training Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Carlow, Kilkenny |
| CAT Net Skillnet | Construction | National |
| Ceramnet Skillnet | Ceramics | National |
| CIF West Skillnet | Construction | West |
| Consumer Food SME Skillnet | Food & Beverage | National |
| Craft Butchers Skillnet | Butchers | National |
| CREST Skillnet | Retail | National |
| Designers Training Skillnet | Design | National |
| Digital Forum Skillnet | Digital Media | Dublin |
| Enterprise Partnership (SIPTU College) Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| FICTA Skillnet | Services | National |
| First Polymer Training Skillnet | Plastics | National |
| Fresh Produce Skillnet | Food Production | Dublin & Mid East |
| Galway Executive Skillnet | Small Business | Galway |
| Gréasán na Mean Skillnet | Media | Connacht Gaeltacht |
| Hospitality Management Skillnet | Hotels | National |
| Hotbed Skillnet | Small Business | National |
| HPI Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Dublin & Mid East |

SECTION 6 - Appendix 1

| Network Name | Sector | Region |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|
| IASC Skillnet | Seafood | National |
| IBEC Retail Skillnet | Retail | National |
| IFA Skillnet | Agriculture | National |
| IIFANet Skillnet | Transport/Logistics | Dublin & Mid East |
| Irish Fashion Industry Federation (IFIF) Skillnet | Clothing | Dublin |
| Institute of Packaging (IOP) Skillnet | Packaging | National |
| Irish Software Association (ISA) Skillnet | Software | National |
| ISME Owner Manager Skillnet | Small Business | National |
| ITAG Skillnet | Technology | Galway |
| Learning Waves Skillnet | Radio | National |
| Leisure & Amenity Skillnet | Leisure Sector | National |
| Mallow Chamber Skillnet | Mixed Sector | South West |
| Medical Devices (IMDA) Skillnet | Medical Devices | National |
| MIDAS Skillnet | Micro-electronic Design | National |
| National Engineering Training Skillnet (NETS) | Engineering | National |
| National Partnership Training Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| North Mayo Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Mayo |
| North West Regional Food Skillnet | Food & Beverage | North West |
| Northside Business Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Dublin |
| Plato Ireland Skillnet | Mixed Sector | National |
| Refrigeration Technology Skillnet | Refrigeration | National |
| Renewable Energy Skillnet | Construction | West |
| SLM Food & Beverage Skillnet | Food & Beverage | National |
| South East Micro Skillnet | Small Business | South East |
| Southern Corridor Skillnet | Mixed Sector | South |
| SRMD Skillnet | Mixed Sector | South West |
| TsunaMat Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Mid West |
| Waterford Chamber Skillnet | Mixed Sector | Waterford |
| Western Credit Union Skillnet | Credit Unions | West |
| Western Organic Network (WON) Skillnet | Agriculture | West |
| Westmeath Manufacturing Skillnet | Manufacturing | Westmeath |

“ We have made huge progress this past year in creating a unity of purpose and focus within the Coaching profession in Ireland, and I can genuinely say that without the funding support/network approach of Accel and Skillnets this would not have happened.

GERRY RYAN
DIRECTOR - COACHING & DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS LTD
(IRISH COACHING DEVELOPMENT NETWORK ACCEL PROJECT)

“ Having to focus on the day job getting products or services out to the customer, we have often neglected the development needs of our employees. The networking environment created through Accel will ensure that people development remains high on the business agenda and will create lasting benefits in our region.

ALAN MOLLOY
HR MANAGER - STIEFEL LABORATORIES
(ATLANTIC TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACCEL PROJECT)

“ The network has supported co-operation amongst competitors in order to raise standards and make our whole industry more professional. It has opened up new avenues of communication for us, and increased our awareness of new legislative, environmental and safety issues.

SEAMUS KERR
DIRECTOR - RSL IRELAND
(REFRIGERATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLNET)

“ In the past we have found other trainers were well short of the standards we require, but using the Skillnet has added to our quality service we provide to our client base, and we have benefited in no short measure from the added advantages of the network.”

JIM BRADY
OPERATIONS MANAGER - PROVINCIAL SECURITY SERVICES LTD.
(IRISH SECURITY INDUSTRY TRAINING SKILLNET)

“ The Skillnet training has improved our competitiveness in the highly specialised space industry. Staff from all levels have benefited, and we have won 2 major technology development contracts with ESA since becoming involved in the network.”

FERGAL BONNER
MANAGING DIRECTOR - ACRA CONTROL LTD.
(SPACE INDUSTRY SKILLNET)

“ First Polymer Skillnet training sessions have not only reduced our change-over times and scrap rates, but they are also structured and scheduled to match our shift patterns, giving a great degree of flexibility not offered by other training providers.”

MARIE O'TOOLE
QUALITY MANAGER - TREND TECHNOLOGIES
(FIRST POLYMER SKILLNET)

Resources Available for Networks

Skillnets has a variety of resources available to assist new networks to take advantage of the programme. Some of these are available to download at the Skillnets website www.skillnets.ie.

The Skillnets Story

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

The Training Networks Programme 2007 – 2009

A brochure which outlines the history and operation of Skillnets and the Training Networks Programme. The strategic framework for Skillnets 2007-2009 is explained and procedures for making applications, developing Networks and accessing assistance for Networks under Development are detailed.

Building Skills and Competitiveness – Training Networks Programme Report 2002-2005

A summary of the outputs and achievements by the Skillnet networks approved under the Training Networks Programme 2002-2005.

Directory 06/07

A list of the Skillnet networks approved under the current Training Networks Programme 2006-2007, complete with their contact details and a summary description of each.

Skillnets Network Series

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

Selecting the Right Trainer

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

Training Courses and Programmes

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

Case Studies

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

Measuring Return on Investment

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