

Call for New Skillnet
Business Networks 2025

Application Form Guidelines



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Application Form Guidelines

This document provides information on making an application for funding for the establishment of new Skillnet Business Networks, commencing in January 2026 for a pilot period of two years. It also includes specific guidelines for each section of the application form.

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1. About Skillnet Ireland

Established in 1999, Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency of the Government of Ireland. Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Our mandate is to advance the competitiveness, productivity and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led talent development. In 2024, Skillnet Ireland and its 69 Skillnet Business Networks provided innovative upskilling to over 24,000 businesses and over 90,000 workers throughout the country.

Skillnet Ireland helps businesses to grow, compete and succeed in rapidly changing markets through enterprise-driven talent development. We work in partnership with businesses of all sizes to identify and effectively address their current and future talent needs. We put enterprises in control of the process, fostering a networked and partnership-based approach that leverages Ireland's uniquely open culture of collaboration.

This approach has created some of the most innovative workforce development initiatives seen in Ireland and has resulted in Skillnet Ireland being recognised as an international best-practice model by the EU Commission, the OECD and the ILO, among others.

What is a Skillnet Business Network?

A Skillnet Business Network is a collection of private-sector businesses that collaborate to address skills and talent needs within their sector or region, directed by a Steering Group and managed by a dedicated Network Manager. Skillnet Business Networks work with businesses in specific sectors or regions, developing bespoke solutions to meet existing and emerging skills needs within those sectors/regions/thematic area.

The essence of our model is about giving firms full control over how business challenges are overcome, and opportunities are maximised through talent development. Our model creates synergies between firms as they identify shared learning needs and jointly design learning solutions. Private sector companies of any size can participate in a Skillnet Business Network. Our Networks achieve significant economies of scale and provide the flexibility to respond rapidly to changing talent needs. Further information on how a Skillnet is structured and operates is available below.

Skillnet Ireland Statement of Strategy 2021 - 2025

Skillnet Ireland's strategy serves to support national economic growth and bring real results to enterprise at a regional and sectoral level. Skillnet Ireland goals are also closely aligned with national policy and contribute to the implementation of national workforce development aims and the effectiveness of Ireland's labour market. Skillnet Ireland's strategy is also closely aligned to Ireland's *National Skills Strategy 2025* and other relevant policies. Applicants for this Call are asked to ensure that applications are aligned to one or more of Skillnet Ireland's five strategic growth areas outlined below.

The strategy puts forward an ambitious roadmap for futureproofing Irish businesses through talent development

and is based on 5 strategic growth areas:

- **Digital Acceleration and Transformation:** Supporting the application of existing and new technologies to facilitate an increased adoption of digital technology.
- **Climate Action and Business Sustainability:** Equipping businesses with knowledge and skills that underpin the creation of new, sustainable business models, job types and career pathways.
- **SME Leadership Development:** Focus on the delivery of interventions that meet the defined needs of business leaders which are vital to SME productivity.
- **Supporting Ireland's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Talent Base:** Supporting FDI companies that are looking to attract, develop and retain talent to drive business growth.
- **Workforce Innovation:** Facilitating new business models, new forms of work organisation, delivery systems, customer engagement tools, approaches to learning, R&D, external collaboration, and the management of innovation.

The full strategy is available at <https://www.skillnetireland.ie/publication/statement-of-strategy-2021-2025/>

2. Call for New Skillnet Business Networks 2025

Skillnet Ireland is inviting proposals from groups of enterprises that are interested in addressing the major talent challenges in their businesses and are seeking funding to establish new Skillnet Business Networks, in sectors and regions with capacity for job growth. Applicants must demonstrate that the applications are enterprise-led, have been designed to prioritise effective learning interventions that are vital to the competitiveness and growth potential of enterprise, and deliver value for money for all stakeholders.

Driving greater enterprise participation is a strategic goal of Skillnet Ireland. We will focus our activities specifically in areas that are closely aligned with the Skillnet Ireland mandate and where skills deficits have been highlighted at national policy level. We wish to deepen our roots with employers to address national policy priorities relating to workforce development, workforce innovation and the need to increase firm competitiveness as a driver of national competitiveness.

This Call is facilitating Skillnet Ireland to develop new Pilot Skillnet Business Networks in areas that complement our existing group of 69 Networks and increase our enterprise reach.

The primary objectives of this Call are to encourage and invite applications which address ***one or more of Skillnet Ireland's 5 strategic growth areas*** as outlined above in Skillnet Ireland's Statement of Strategy 2021 – 2025.

All applications must:

- Address one or more of Skillnet Ireland's strategic growth priorities.
- Align with national workforce policy and relevant sectoral / regional policy;
- Present strategic plans and solutions to the talent needs of the relevant sector or region, based on a robust training needs analysis with relevant businesses and industry stakeholders;
- Facilitate an enterprise-led approach to learning and utilise the "Network" potential of our model and increase the participation of new firms with Skillnet Ireland;
- Address both technical competencies and behavioural competencies (including management development); and,
- Promote the value and importance of talent development to national competitiveness.

Who can form a Skillnet Business Network?

An industry federation, industry body or membership-based professional body based in the Republic of Ireland. Enterprises within the network can be of any size, including sole traders. (Public/voluntary sector entities are ineligible).

What does a Skillnet Business Network do?

A Skillnet Business Network (a 'Skillnet') is a group of companies that come together to carry out cross-organisational talent development activities which may not be possible on their own. The network can achieve a common purpose or address shared issues of importance to the development of skills and long-term competitiveness. The exact activities of the network are decided by the companies within the network. Collectively, our 69 networks are known as Skillnet Business Networks.

In general, the Networks carry out the following tasks:

- Analyse the talent development needs of companies within the network and identify skills requirements and priorities for action;
- Identify the most relevant learning solutions and delivery mechanisms to meet those needs;
- Design programmes to address the specific and future skills needs of companies within the Network;
- Develop Network structures and processes to establish the operation of the Network as a basis for specified training activity;
- Develop new programmes that meet business needs, build future skills and address gaps in current provision;
- Organise the delivery and implementation of talent development measures;
- Ensure the Network training plan addresses the business challenges of the sector/region and is aligned with national skills policy, and any other policy relevant to the sector or region;
- Promote collaboration and co-operative activity, sharing of knowledge and the exchange of best practice;
- Monitor and measure results, providing performance indicators and quality standards for training activity engaged in by firms;
- The development of collaborative partnerships between enterprises, academia, and industry bodies and;
- Provide feedback to Skillnet Ireland on the progress, outcomes and impact of network activities and processes.

How is a Skillnet Business Network structured?

Every Network funded by Skillnet Ireland is a group of companies based in a sector, geographical location or a combination of both. Network member companies provide 40% in matched funding to the grants approved by Skillnet Ireland. This approach allows companies to achieve economies of scale and significant efficiencies in the provision of training to their staff. Networks are comprised of a number of stakeholders:

- A contracting organisation will manage the activities of the Network and receive the funds from Skillnet Ireland on behalf of the network.

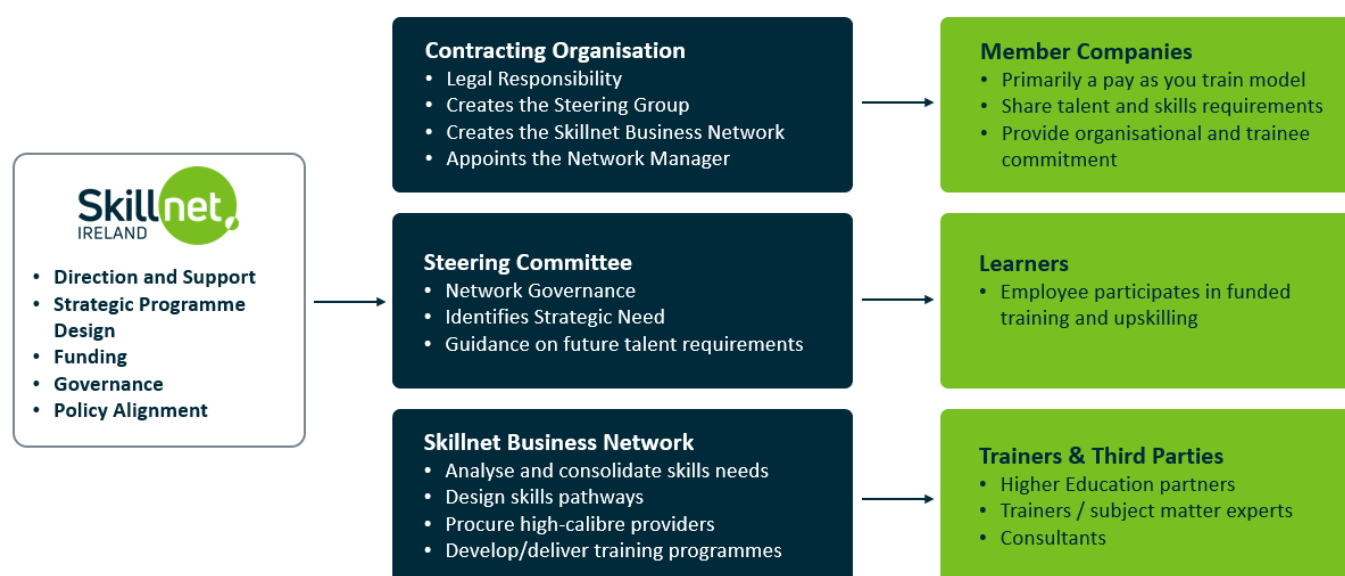
- An industry steering group oversees and directs the Network and is made up of representatives of businesses within the network.
- A network manager oversees the Network on a day-to-day basis.

Networks also interact regularly with a wide range of other bodies on behalf of the companies within the network, including training providers, higher education institutions, industry research centres and awarding bodies.

Figure 1 shows a typical Skillnet Business Network – the core of which are the companies within the network. In most of the Networks, a network manager is the key coordinator, providing the professional and developmental input. Others who may provide services to the Network include trainers, business advisors and third level or Further Education and Training providers.

Figure 1: Network Structure

Skillnet Business Network Model



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

Network Contracting Organisation

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

The contracting organisation:

- Must be a legal entity such as a company incorporated under the Companies Acts, a Friendly Society or similar body. This legal entity must be in existence for at least 2 years and must not include the word Skillnet or Skillnet Ireland as part of its corporate name.
- Is responsible for the custody and distribution of public funds and is required to demonstrate accountability for all expenditure under the programme.

The applicant must demonstrate the financial substance and stability of the proposed contracting organisation by providing unabridged financial accounts for the year preceding the application and full Management accounts for the period not covered by the end of year accounts to Skillnet Ireland by the week of the 18th of August 2025. The application should also be supported by letters of commitment from the steering group and companies from the sector/region (see Appendix 1 & 2).

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

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

Network Promoter

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

Network Steering Group

The Network steering group comprises representatives from companies within the Network. It plays an essential role in providing strategic direction and network governance. The key tasks undertaken by the steering group are to:

- Provide strategic direction and control for the Network and oversee Network performance;
- Ensure Network focuses on the delivery of skills that meet defined skills shortages vital for growth and competitiveness in the sector/region;
- Guide the network manager in managing the Network;
- Provide a link between the contracting organisation and network companies;
- Represent enterprise – the steering group composition should broadly reflect the profile of companies in the sector/region; and,
- Ensuring the Network has developed and implemented a governance structure and is compliant with

procurement, financial, brand and risk management requirements, as well as the setting and monitoring of Network performance objectives.

Network Manager

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

- Promote the network and its offering, and the importance of talent development, to attract new companies;
- Engage with companies within the Network on an ongoing basis to diagnose current and future business and learning requirements;
- Implement the Network strategy and plan;
- Co-ordinate training programme development, design, delivery and customisation;
- Arrange networking events and other informal learning activities that strengthen the relationships of companies within the Network;
- Ensure the robust financial management and administration of the Network;
- Organise the Network training and networking activities to deliver contracted targets while adhering to the overall aims and objectives of both Skillnet Ireland and the individual Network; and,
- Manage the promotion and marketing of the Network activities to companies and trainees.

Skillnet Ireland provides a range of supports to network managers of newly approved Skillnet Ireland Networks.

Skillnet Ireland Support

Skillnet Ireland has a support team in place to assist interested applicants in preparing their application for submission. Please email funding@skillnetireland.ie or contact us on 01-207 9630 and a one-to-one meeting can be arranged with a member of the Skillnet Ireland support team. An information briefing on the application process will be held online via a video conference. Details will be available on www.skillnetireland.ie/funding.

Applicants can apply for the Training Networks Programme (TNP) funding stream in this application. Details on this Programme are outlined below.

Training Networks Programme (TNP)

The Training Networks Programme (TNP) offers up to 60% grant funding to fund pilot network budgets, supporting the co-ordination and promotion of Network activities and the delivery of training programmes. Skillnet Ireland funds Networks by co-investing with companies in the co-ordination and delivery of Network plans and activities.

Typically, participating enterprises fund the balance of these costs by contributing income to place employees on training and education programmes delivered by the Network

Match funding must be sourced from private sector contributions. Applicants are advised to discuss the proposed budget scale with the Skillnet Ireland Advisor.

Factors to consider with budget scale in year one includes Network development phase, Network readiness and capacity to deliver KPIs within 12 months on valid training and development.

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

Eligible activities that may be carried out by networks include:

- Delivery and customisation of training programmes for managers and staff within enterprise;
- Commissioning of providers to design, deliver and evaluate training for companies within the Network;
- Development of methodologies, tools and materials to support best learning practice;
- Development of learning and development plans, processes and people (decision makers, trainers and staff) within enterprises to improve the internal capacity of firms to identify and meet talent development needs;
- Development and publication of innovative learning materials and information;
- Provision of inter-firm mentoring, coaching and other knowledge transfer activities;
- Engagement of industry and learning and development experts to assist in the development and carrying out of learning activities within the Network;
- Development and delivery of online programmes or technology-enabled learning initiatives;
- Networking events and activities including workshops, seminars and conferences;
- Best-practice visits, case studies, and other inter-firm learning activities;
- Analysis of the training needs of individuals, enterprises, sectors or regions;
- Surveys, studies and evaluations of the impact of network activities on business performance and staff development;
- Development of collaborative partnerships between enterprises, providers, industry bodies and certification awards bodies;
- Marketing and promotion of Network activities and programmes to companies;
- Provision of staff and administration required for Network activities; and,
- Provision of overheads costs e.g., accounting services, office facilities.

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

Programmes proposed within the training plans should be:

- Reflective of the modern workplace and how adults learn;
- Optimised for maximum transfer of learning;
- Flexible and straight forward for employed learners to access;
- Designed to optimise the use of technology where relevant;
- Blended and highly integrated with work.

Duration of Network Activities & Funding Period

The proposed pilot funding period is for two years. Applications should include proposed activities and costs for a 12-month period¹ from commencement. The funding period for approved networks is from 1st January 2026 – 31st December 2027. In Q4 2025, funding offers issued to successful applicants will confirm grant levels for both years of the pilot. In Q4 2026, pilot Networks will be required to submit a detailed training plan for year two of their pilot period, funding for year two will be subject to Network performance and compliance with Skillnet Ireland requirements.

¹ ¹The provision of any funding in 2026 and 2027 is subject to the availability of funds to Skillnet Ireland.

3. Assessment and Approval of Application Process

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

Applications for this new funding under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) will be assessed under the key criteria outlined below.

There is a minimum threshold of 60% in both the Strategic and Operational Criteria sections. There will be an automatic disqualification if marks fall below this in either section. Depending on the scale of demand, proposals which exceed the minimum score are not guaranteed funding.

The two key criteria are:

- 1. Strategic Criteria** are the core guiding principles of Skillnet Ireland and address the key performance factors of successful enterprise-led Skillnet Business Networks that align with Skillnet Ireland priorities and other relevant strategies and policies.
- 2. Operational Criteria** look at the process and methods of achieving network strategies, including all key network management and performance factors.

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

| Key Criteria – TNP | | Sub Criteria | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|-----|
| Strategic Criteria | Company Engagement | KPI suitability: the extent to which proposed KPI's (Number of companies) are appropriate | 15% |
| | | Quality of company engagement strategy: | |
| | | Value for Money Costs of Training/Management and operational costs | |
| | Alignment | Calibre of network strategy includes clear objectives and deliverables, developed with key industry/regional stakeholders | 30% |
| | | Alignment of the proposed training plan with the network's strategy and Skillnet Ireland's strategic priorities. | |
| | | Complements existing portfolio of networks, with evidence of innovation | |

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----|
| Operational | Operational Efficiency and compliance | Proposed Management Structure | 15% |
| | | Evidence of capacity of the promoting organisation and management/ administrative controls and systems | |
| | | Evidence of ability to generate financial contribution from participating companies. | |
| | Quality Training Portfolio | KPI Suitability: the extent to which proposed KPI's (employed trainees and employed training days) are appropriate | 40% |
| | | Quality of the proposed training plan: Duration, type of training, delivery mode, content, award level, and impact for business and future skills supply | |
| | | Value for money: Costs of training in the context of quality | |
| | | Value for money: The adequacy of management, overheads, marketing and consultancy costs | |

To complete the application – the Undertaking Section within the Word Document must be completed and signed by an authorised signatory of the contracting organisation. The authorised signatory must be a director of the contracting organisation or have a letter of authority signed by a director allowing them to sign all Skillnet Ireland documentation on behalf of the contracting organisation.

4. Application Deadlines and Procedures

The application process will be managed through the Skillnet Ireland Portal, potential new Networks who are eligible (have been processed and deemed eligible through the due diligence evaluation) will be provided with a link and login details on 3rd September 2025.

Due Diligence Evaluation Requirements

- As part of our due diligence evaluation process, the following documentation and information must be submitted by **18th of August 2025**. This will assist us in conducting a comprehensive review of your company's financial, corporate, and legal standing:

Financial Information

- Management accounts for the current year
- Business plan and/or one-year financial projection (if applicable)
- Audited annual financial statements for the past three years (if applicable), including:
 - o Profit and Loss statement
 - o Balance Sheet
 - o Cash Flow Statement

Corporate Structure

- Overview of the company's corporate structure, including holding company details (if applicable)
- Company printout and B10 forms reflecting all director changes (if registered with the Companies Registration Office – CRO)
- List of current directors (if not registered with the CRO)

Legal and Regulatory Matters

- Disclosure of any ongoing or past (within the last five years) legal proceedings
- Details of any violations of legal or regulatory requirements, if applicable.

Key dates

- Expression of interest
- Information briefing session 23rd July
- Application workshop 13th August
- Submission of Financial requirements (unabridged accounts, and management accounts for the previous 2 years) 18th August.

The closing date for applications is **3 pm, September 30th, 2025**. Applicants must submit the following by the application deadline:

- A signed soft copy of the completed Application to be uploaded onto the Skillnet Ireland funding portal.

The soft copy must be signed by an authorised representative of the applicant organisation and must include all relevant extra documentation (see Appendix 3 for a full checklist). This must be signed by a director (as per the CRO/Friendly Society list) of the contracting organisation.

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

Receipt acknowledgements will be issued by Skillnet Ireland to confirm that applications have been submitted and

will proceed to assessment.

Skillnet Ireland reserves the right to invite applicants for interview to clarify any aspect of the submission.

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

5. Completing Your Application Documents

5.1 Introduction

Applicants must ensure that they read and understand all the call for proposal documents and guidelines issued by Skillnet Ireland. Contracting organisations should contact the Skillnet Ireland office if they have any questions or queries on any information issued by Skillnet Ireland (within this or other documents), or if they require further clarification or additional information.

Skillnet Ireland is committed to supporting applicants in the development of their understanding of the model and the application process

Applicants must primarily demonstrate how the proposed training will address identified business needs and skills gaps within the sector or network. They should also show how the training will enhance enterprise competitiveness and outline a clear plan that incorporates new and specific skills targeting current, emerging, and future needs. These skills must be essential to strengthening the competitiveness and growth potential of the Irish labour market.

Applicants must demonstrate that the applications are enterprise-led and have been designed to prioritise training interventions that deliver concrete business impacts, whilst delivering quality training and value for money for all stakeholders.

Application documents for Skillnet Ireland funding consist of Business Case (Word document) and Application Form (online application portal). Both must be completed by all those intending to apply for Skillnet Ireland funding.

5.2 Business Case

The Business Case form provides an opportunity for the applicant to provide details of their strategy and plans, as well as rationale for the new Network to be formed. The document consists of the following five sections:

- **Business Network:** applicant is required to answer several questions about the Network's operations and its strategy.
- **Sector/Industry:** applicant is required to answer several questions about the Network's sector and/or region.
- **Talent Development Plan:** applicant is required to provide details of its talent development plan, and how it responds to the needs of the sector and/or region.
- **Undertaking/sign off:** This must be signed by a director (as per the CRO/Friendly Society list) of the contracting organisation. In signing the Application Form, they are confirming that the information contained is true and accurate. NB: Please don't forget to sign the application as it will only be processed with a valid signature.

5.3 Application Form (Online Application Portal)

Key tips:

1. You must save information in the online application by selecting the save icon.
2. - It is not possible to copy and paste into the application portal forms.
3. - Several validations will be run when trying to submit your application form, if any validations fail a message will be displayed on the screen explaining the issue

Clear instructions for completing your application are detailed in the Online Portal.

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

5.3.1 Network Details

Network Name

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

Contracting Organisation Details

Each network will have a network contracting organisation that will take responsibility for the activities of the network and receive funds from Skillnet Ireland on behalf of the network. Please insert the details of your contracting organisation.

CRO Registration Name and Number

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

Contact Person for the Application

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

Network Sector/Region

In this section, we ask you to select the sector or region that best describes your network companies from the drop-down menus. The Republic of Ireland is split into nine regions for this purpose. Please select the region from the drop-down list. If your training will be in more than one region, please select national.

5.3.2 Network Membership (Business Case Document)

Company target

Please specify how many companies you plan to work with in 2026. This is the target for the expected number of companies that will undertake training with the network by the end of the first 12 months of operation.

Company commitments to date

Complete a table summarizing number of companies committed to Network by size and indicate how many from each category provided letters of commitment. Ensure you attach relevant support letters.

Company Details

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

A Skillnet Business Network should consist of a minimum of thirty companies. Only private sector or commercial semi-state enterprises can be companies that avail of the training. The Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2023 covers the Republic of Ireland only. For the purposes of this programme, only trainees from companies within the Republic of Ireland can be considered.

Steering Group

In this section, please list all members of your Steering Group, an upper limit of 10 members is recommended, including the company name and size, contact person details. Please note that a signed letter of commitment to act as a steering group member must be provided for each member as outlined in Appendix 1. Companies can add further comments to the template to fully demonstrate their commitment to the proposed new network. Please attach these letters in the appendices of your application.

5.3.3 TNP Training Plan (Online Portal)

5.3.3.1 Summary of TNP Budget and Income 2025

TNP Income Overview

This section consists of:

- Requested grant amounts table which is automatically calculated based on calculated fields from across the form.
- % of the TNP Grant requested – please enter the grant ratio percentage the network is seeking. This is up to 60% for TNP.
- Match funding income table – please enter the breakdown of match funding across three categories - programme fees, sponsorship and other. All income for the network must come from non-publicly funded sources.
- Total Expenditure amount which is automatically calculated based on information entered in the previous sections of the application

Programme fees are derived from the fees the Network may charge companies for participation on the programmes listed the training plan. The total projected amount of programme fees for the year should be entered here.

If the Network anticipates receiving sponsorship of its activities from non-state funded sources, the total amount of such sponsorship should be entered. If the Network has other sources of cash income planned, these should be entered here. An explanation of any such income will be required.

NOTE: It would be advisable to enter this AFTER you have completed the expenditure costs.

The summary table would then show the total expenditure – and the Grant Amount applied for.

5.3.3.2 TNP Budget 2026 Breakdown

a) Overheads

A breakdown of overheads (inclusive of VAT) of the network is required outlining each cost to be incurred by the network. All costs included must be justified by an explanation of the methodology used in the calculation of that cost which will be requested at grant approval stage. The following costs might be apportioned to the Network:

- Office/premises based on square footage used by Network staff/Utility bills based on the number of Network staff as a % of all staff within the contracting organisation

Examples of overheads include (list is not exhaustive):

- Rent;
- Stationery and printing;

- Utilities;
- Equipment not exceeding €1,200;
- Maintenance;
- Insurance; and,
- Bank fees (excluding interest charges).

b) Consultants (Other)

This section relates to consultancy costs not directly related to Network management such as programme development, web design, evaluation and report writing. Please enter the costs associated with all other activity here. You are not expected to name the consultants at this stage, as each successful network must use a tendering process based on Skillnet Ireland procurement guidelines for any consultants employed.

c) Marketing & Promotion Costs

In this section, the network will indicate the costs associated with the promotional activities of the network. Examples could include printing, digital marketing costs, advertising etc. Applicants are advised to conduct some research on the potential costs of applying these to your network, message, and own network identity.

Applicants are advised to budget for a minimum of €8,000 expenditure for the 2026 Marketing & Promotion budget. Where that budget is not fully spent on branding/marketing/promotions in the course of 2026, this budget can be spent on training costs.

d) Non-Formal Networking Events

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

e) Training Facilities and Materials Costs

Please enter the total training facilities and materials costs into the categories provided.

f) TNP Management Team Costs

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

The costs quoted in this section must be inclusive of all payroll taxes if the individual is an employee and all VAT (if not entitled to a recovery of VAT) if the individual is a consultant. **The maximum management team cost is up to 35% of total expenditure.** This percentage includes travel and subsistence, staff recruitment/training which are included under management team costs.

5.3.3.3 TNP Training Plan and Training Costs

TNP Training Plan and Training Costs

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

a) Name of Training Programme

Please list the names of all the training programme. A programme should be based on identified training needs of the companies within the network and employees.

If the Network is proposing to develop new certified programmes, these training programmes and the related certification costs should be shown in this table.

b) Skillnet Ireland Growth Priority

Please select one of the Skillnet Ireland Growth Priorities that best describes your programme. If your programme does not fit these please select Industry/Regional priorities option.

c) Training Delivery

Select from one of the following categories best describing the main mode for the programme delivery: in-person, virtual, blended, on-the job.

d) Programme Certification

This section has three parts:

- *Certifying Body.* Applicants should note that Skillnet Ireland values the accreditation of training. This is reflected in the assessment criteria. For each programme, please select whether the training is certified by NFQ Awarding Body, Non-NFQ Awarding Body (e.g., professional association) or non-certified.
- *NFQ Level or equivalent.*
 - If the programme will be certified under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), please state the level to which it will be accredited. More information on the ten levels within the NFQ and the awarding bodies is available from their website www.qqi.ie
 - If the programme is not on the NFQ, or certified by Professional Bodies, please select 'N/A' in the dropdown list for certified.
 - If the programme is certified by a Professional Body, please state the name of the body in the next column.

- *Total costs of certification.* Please state the costs of certification for each of your certified programme if applicable.

e) Training Days and Training Costs

This section has four parts.

- *Contact training days* are days such as classroom days or on the job training days where there is direct contact between the trainees and the trainer. The costs associated with this type of day include the trainer cost and associated costs such as travel and subsistence (see examples below). The equivalent of one training day is six contact hours of training. Contact hours are the time spent with the trainer and/or undertaking a training activity/exercise or engaging in online learning or project work.

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

- *Non-contact training days* are days such as online learning days or distance learning days. The trainer is typically not in direct contact with the trainees. An example of a cost associated with this would be the cost of the online learning platform

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

- *Number of times training programme will be run* - Please enter the number of times the programme will be delivered. The equivalent of one training day is six contact hours of training. Contact hours are the time spent with the trainer and/or undertaking a training activity/exercise or engaging in online learning or project work.

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

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

f) Planned No. of Employed Participants per Programme

In this section, please enter number of participants you aim to have in each training programme.

Networked Learning & In-Company Learning

The emphasis in the TNP model is on learning in a Network context. This maximises the potential for learning as participants from different firms can share perspectives and experiences. It is possible for a limited amount of a Network's activity to be directed towards one company only. Please note that no more than 35% of the total training cost may go towards in-company training (training planned and delivered for one company only). In-company training must be training which provides transferable skillsets/qualifications and substantially improves the employability of the trained worker and excludes the costs of training specific to a single enterprise, such as training on a bespoke system developed by that enterprise.

Appendix 1 - Letter of Commitment: Steering Group

*This letter **MUST** be formatted on the company's letterhead. Encourage companies to outline the reason that they support this network and why it will be of value to their company/sector.*

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

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

I understand that Skillnet Ireland may contact me as part of this application process, and I consent to my contact details (set out below) being utilised for this purpose.

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Contact telephone number:

Contact email address:

Signature

Appendix 2 - Letter of Commitment to Companies

If possible, please format this page on the company's headed paper

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

I wish to confirm that it is our intention to be a part of the XXX Skillnet and commit the necessary financial resources towards the network's match funding budget, by investing in the development of our employees. I also commit to releasing the relevant staff of our organisation to participate in the training programmes organised by the network.

I understand that Skillnet Ireland may contact me as part of this application process, and I consent to my contact details (set out below) being utilised for this purpose.

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Contact telephone number:

Contact email address:

Signature

Appendix 3 - Application Checklist

Please use this checklist to ensure that your application is fully complete before you send it into the Skillnet Ireland office.

| Step | Requirements / Documents | Details | Checkbox |
|---|--|---|----------|
| Step One: Due Diligence Documents <i>(Due 18th August 2025)</i> | Financial Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management accounts for the current year - Business plan and/or one-year financial projection (if applicable) - Audited annual financial statements for the past three years (if applicable), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Profit and Loss statement - Balance Sheet - Cash Flow Statement | |
| | Corporate Structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the company's corporate structure, including holding company details (if applicable) - Company printout and B10 forms reflecting all director changes (if registered with the Companies Registration Office – CRO) - List of current directors (if not registered with the CRO) | |
| | Legal and Regulatory Matters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disclosure of any ongoing or past (within the last five years) legal proceedings - Details of any violations of legal or regulatory requirements, if applicable | |
| Step Two: Online Portal Application Process <i>(3rd to 30th September 2025)</i> | Application Submission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure each section of the online portal application is fully completed - Upload the Word document and letters of support | |
| | Letters of Commitment/Financial Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering Group Letters (Appendix 2) - Company Letters (Appendix 3) | |
| | Training Needs Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upload process and findings to the portal | |