

Statement of Strategy

2026-2028

Position Paper for Public Consultation

As Irish companies navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing global business environment, having a highly skilled workforce will be key to the future success of Ireland's economy. Workforce development takes centre stage for Ireland as businesses, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), face a host of challenges.

Developing a strong, digitally resilient, and sustainable talent pipeline will be crucial for businesses of all sizes to leverage the economic opportunities presented by high-tech innovation, digitalisation, the green transition whilst navigating inflationary pressures and evolving geopolitical dynamics.

Skillnet Ireland has now firmly established its position as one of Ireland's key business support agencies and is an internationally recognised model of best practice. We are pleased that the agency is playing a pivotal role in addressing future workforce challenges, promoting enterprise growth, and enhancing national competitiveness through collaboration, partnership, and shared vision. Our strengthened mandate from Government as the national workforce development agency for enterprise has enabled Skillnet Ireland to broaden its services, to engage more businesses in upskilling their teams, and to drive innovation in new and exciting ways.

In partnership with over 70 Skillnet Business Networks and National Talent Initiatives nationwide, Skillnet Ireland contributes to the development and implementation of Government policies across a broad range of areas. At Skillnet Ireland we commit ourselves to more ambitious actions in meeting Ireland's business and workforce challenges in the years ahead.

As part of this strategy development process, we are engaging in a public consultation to help develop a strategy and vision for the next three years, which will deliver an ambitious plan to empower enterprise through enterprise-led workforce development and help build a stronger culture of lifelong learning in Ireland.

Skillnet Ireland is seeking your views on three thematic areas that will be fundamental to the success of Skillnet Ireland's Statement of Strategy 2026-2028. The consultation aims to bring together the combined insights and perspectives of all our stakeholders to shape the organisation's next strategy.



Mark Jordan
Chief Executive
Skillnet Ireland

Submissions should be emailed to strategy@skillnetireland.ie with "Skillnet Ireland Strategy Submission 2026- 2028" in the subject line and should be submitted on or before 5pm on Thursday 8th January 2026.

Email: strategy@skillnetireland.ie

Post: Skillnet Ireland, 5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze House, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 E268.

The closing date for submissions is 8th January 2026.

Please note that any submissions may be published on the Skillnet Ireland website and will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Those making the submissions may have obligations under the Regulation of Lobbying Act.

Skillnet Ireland Introduction

Skillnet Ireland is the national agency responsible for spearheading workforce development for the enterprise sector on behalf of the Government of Ireland. Our deep roots with enterprise allow us to respond to policy and skills challenges in a proactive and agile manner.

In partnership with industry, we offer demand-led upskilling programmes that are innovative and flexible, to enhance the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of the Irish economy.

Skillnet Ireland prepares businesses and workers for the future of work through enterprise-led workforce development. We have two main programmes.

Skillnet Business Networks

Skillnet Ireland's 69 Skillnet Business Networks across all sectors and regions of the economy are the flagship of Skillnet Ireland's offering.

Skillnet Ireland's decentralised model generates highly specialised upskilling and training supports for businesses that align with labour market needs. The Skillnet Business Network Model has received international recognition as a best practice approach from the OECD, the EU Commission and the ILO, amongst others.

Skillnet Ireland supports talent development within sectors right across the economy and supports national policy imperatives. Skillnet Business Networks adopt an enterprise-led approach to learning where groups of enterprises can develop strategic solutions to their joint workforce development needs and improve the adaptability and long-term employability of workers, driving increased uptake in lifelong learning.

Through the development of innovative upskilling programmes and flexible methodologies, Skillnet Business Networks deliver effective and user-friendly upskilling solutions for companies and workers.

Skillnet Ireland's National Talent Initiatives

During the period of the last Statement of Strategy, Skillnet Ireland expanded its offering to a number of national talent initiatives, developed in partnership with industry. These initiatives support upskilling and business development across priority areas including SME competitiveness, innovation, offshore wind, modern methods of construction (MMC) and climate readiness.

You can find a copy of our 2021-2025 Statement of Strategy [here](#).

A full list of Skillnet Business Networks and National Talent Initiatives are available on pages 6 and 7.

Statement of Strategy Consultation 2026–2028

Skillnet Ireland is seeking your views on three thematic areas that will be fundamental to the success of the new Statement of Strategy 2026-2028:

Strengthening Enterprise Competitiveness


Skills and upskilling are central to enterprise competitiveness enabling businesses to innovate, improve productivity, and respond effectively to emerging opportunities and disruptions. As the Irish economy continues to evolve, skills needs are projected to become increasingly specialised in areas such as, advanced manufacturing, bioprocessing, big data analytics, robotics, and the green transition. Job roles will be redefined, and new roles will emerge that require new and different skillsets. Today's workforces have higher expectations from employers when it comes to career development and are actively seeking access to upskilling programmes, mentorship, and career growth opportunities. To maintain a competitive edge, businesses of all sizes must adapt to these challenges by investing in workforce development and lifelong learning, to reinforce Ireland's position as a leading destination for talent.

Accelerating Digitalisation and AI

The Harnessing Digital Strategy sets a goal for Ireland to become a digital leader both within Europe, and globally. The framework includes the aim of 90% of SMEs achieving basic digital intensity and 75% utilising Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing and big data by 2030. Skillnet Ireland has a series of targeted initiatives to support the acceleration of digital transformation with 14,000 workers benefiting from Skillnet Ireland supported digital skills programmes annually. With a two-pronged focus on developing specialised talent for new or emerging technologies such as AI, cybersecurity and enabling digital transformation within the SME sector, Skillnet Ireland is committed to building a highly skilled pipeline of employees equipped with AI and advanced digital skills. This is critical to achieving these goals and securing Ireland's reputation as a high-performing economy and a hub of innovation for emerging technologies.

Climate Change and Sustainability

One of the key factors for Ireland to halve carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, is access to the right skills and talent. For Irish businesses, the climate transition is both an opportunity and a challenge, requiring significant investment in workforce upskilling. Addressing the talent challenges associated with climate change has been a focus for Skillnet Ireland for some years. Over 7,000 employees benefit from climate and sustainability upskilling programmes delivered by Skillnet Ireland covering energy management, offshore wind, water stewardship, biodiversity management, sustainable finance and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting, all aimed at helping businesses tackle decarbonisation.



Skillnet Ireland has commenced a wide-ranging strategy consultation process with its industry partners and stakeholder groups including enterprise, Government Departments and agencies, education sector and representative groups to help set out a clear vision for future growth, transformation and development of the agency.

We invite you to engage in our consultation and share your thoughts on how Skillnet Ireland can deliver for Ireland's enterprises, workforce, regions and society over the next strategy timeframe up to 2028.

Skillnet Ireland is seeking your views on three thematic areas that will be fundamental to the success of the new Statement of Strategy 2026-2028:

- **Theme 1:** Strengthening Enterprise Competitiveness
- **Theme 2:** Accelerating Digitalisation and AI
- **Theme 3:** Climate Change and Sustainability

Skillnet Ireland, together with our industry partners, look forward to working with businesses to meet the skills and talent demands of both enterprises and the workforce.

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Sectors Skillnet Ireland Supports



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

- First Polymer Training Skillnet
- ICBE Advanced Productivity Skillnet
- ICBE Business Excellence Skillnet
- Irish Medtech Skillnet
- MIDAS Electronic Systems Skillnet

AGRI-FOOD

- Farm Business Skillnet
- Food Drink Ireland Skillnet
- ICOS Skillnet
- Macra Agricultural Skillnet
- National Organic Training Skillnet
- Rural Food Skillnet
- Taste4Success Skillnet
- XL Vets Skillnet

BIO-PHARMACEUTICALS

- BioPharmaChem Skillnet
- Irish Medtech Skillnet

CONSTRUCTION

- CitA Skillnet
- Construction Professionals Skillnet
- Industry 4.0 Skillnet
- Skillnet MMC Accelerate

DIGITAL / TECHNOLOGY

- itag Skillnet
- MIDAS Electronic Systems Skillnet
- Tech Industry Alliance Skillnet
- Tech Northwest Skillnet
- Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet
- Technology Ireland DIGITAL Skillnet
- Skillnet Innovation Exchange

ENGINEERING

- Aviation Skillnet
- Engineering Skillnet
- MIDAS Electronic Systems Skillnet
- Space Industry Skillnet

FINANCIAL SERVICES

- Chartered Accountants Ireland Skillnet
- International Financial Services (IFS) Skillnet

- Law Society Skillnet

FOOD & DRINK

- Food Drink Ireland Skillnet
- National Organic Training Skillnet
- Rural Food Skillnet
- Taste4Success Skillnet

GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES

- Next Level Skillnet
- Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet

GREEN / ENERGY

- Green Tech Skillnet
- Sustainable Enterprise Skillnet
- Skillnet Climate Ready Academy
- Skillnet Offshore Wind Academy

LOGISTICS & TRANSPORT

- CILT Mobility & Supply Chain Skillnet
- SIMI Skillnet

MEDIA

- Cultural & Creative Industries Skillnet
- Design Skillnet
- Design, Print & Packaging Skillnet
- Gréasán na Meán Skillnet
- Learning Waves Skillnet

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

- Connected Health Skillnet
- Irish Medtech Skillnet

Sectors Skillnet Ireland Supports



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Chartered Accountants Ireland Skillnet
- Employment & Recruitment Federation (ERF) Skillnet
- IRDG Innovation Skillnet
- ISME Skillnet
- Law Society Skillnet
- L&D Skillnet
- Sustainable HRM Skillnet
- MentorsWork

RETAIL

- ISME Skillnet
- Retail Ireland Skillnet

SERVICES

- IMAGE Skillnet
- ISME Skillnet
- Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet
- Midland Border East Skillnet

TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

- Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet
- Leisure, Health & Fitness Skillnet
- Restaurant & Hospitality Skillnet

MIXED SECTOR BUSINESS NETWORKS

- Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet
- Cork Chamber Skillnet
- County Tipperary Chamber Skillnet
- County Wexford Chamber Skillnet
- Duhallow Skillnet
- Dundalk Chamber Skillnet
- Fingal Chamber Skillnet
- Galway Executive Skillnet
- Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- M1 Drogheda Chamber Skillnet
- Midland Border East Skillnet
- Next Level Skillnet
- Positive2Work Skillnet
- Rural Enterprise Skillnet
- Shannon Chamber Skillnet
- Sligo Chamber Skillnet
- South Kerry Skillnet
- South West Gnó Skillnet

- Tech Northwest Skillnet
- Waterford Chamber Skillnet

NATIONAL TALENT INITIATIVES

- MentorsWork
- Skillnet Climate Ready Academy
- Skillnet Innovation Exchange
- Skillnet MMC Accelerate
- Skillnet Offshore Wind Academy



Building Competitiveness Through **Skills.**

To learn more about the Skillnet Ireland model
and business supports we offer visit:

www.skillnetireland.ie

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Riadas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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