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## Skillnets Mandate

Skillnets role is to act as an enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of enterprise training and workplace and workforce learning, as key elements in sustaining national competitiveness.

Skillnets has operated under a series of mandates since 1999 and is currently mandated by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Skillnets was furnished with a new mandate in 2011 that reflects the new strategic direction of the organisation. In summary:

- The primary aim of Skillnets should be to increase participation in enterprise training by firms to improve competitiveness and provide improved access for workers to skills' development.
- Skillnets should continue to foster and support an enterprise-led, networked and partnership approach to the provision of enterprise training and expand and develop that approach by supporting innovation and enhanced workplace and workforce retention/ activation-related learning.
- Skillnets should also aim to provide appropriate upskilling or reskilling training to those in the workforce who have been made redundant or who are employed on a part-time basis, on a networked, regional or local basis by engaging in the first instance with firms, sectors, social partnerships or trade associations.

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# Chairman's Message

## Domhnall MacDomhnaill



I am pleased to present Skillnets Annual Report for 2011 and an overview of the wide variety of work that was carried out by our networks across the country and at a strategic level by Skillnets staff. We are satisfied that we continue to fulfill our mission and mandate of promoting investment in training in business, particularly SMEs, with an increase in the level of investment by companies as a percentage of total cost relative to the earlier years of our programmes.

Over recent years, SMEs in particular have been severely impacted by declining demand at home and abroad and have endured difficult times, but it has been said and proven time and time again that in Ireland SMEs are the critical link between economic growth and employment growth. Therefore, Skillnets was delighted to secure funding again for the Training Networks Programme (TNP) and Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) in 2011 as 94% of companies funded by Skillnets are classified as SMEs and Ireland's economic recovery is more and more dependent on the quality of the skills of our workforce in SMEs.

Endorsing the impact of Skillnets training on strategic business needs, 97% of member companies in a 2011 survey agreed that Skillnets training helped them to fill skills gaps whilst 87% agreed that it has contributed to improved productivity. A high proportion of respondents also reported that Skillnets training has contributed to market developments such as enhancements to products and services (83%) and in some cases, expansion in existing markets (55%) or entry into new markets (49%).

Preliminary findings of an independent evaluation of our programmes in 2011 found that the Skillnets model is efficient, effective and is a strong learning organisation and that networks are enterprise-led. Companies and employees reported tangible results in terms of new skills, enhanced productivity and retained staff.

2011 further demonstrated Skillnets ability to react with agility to labour market needs. We saw the mainstream implementation of our Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) with approval from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) following a pilot in 2010 and a successful evaluation in 2011. The development of the Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP) responded to the need

to upskill people in six sectors identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the national economy by growing job potential.

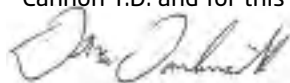
A combined investment of €12.1 million by Skillnets in grant support and €10.5 million from member companies supported over 42,000 people (employed and job-seekers) to avail of over 221,000 training days in 2011. Over 41,000 of those training days were delivered to job-seekers.

On behalf of the Board of Skillnets, I really want to commend and recognise the flexibility of our network community for their ability to respond and adapt to market conditions and subsequently make advancements in the training we deliver and how this training is best delivered. All of this work has had huge positive impacts on companies, employees and job-seekers across the country which you will see demonstrated throughout the report.

I wish to express my sincere thanks and acknowledgement to our Chief Executive, management and staff members for their continued dedication and commitment to the education and training of our workforce.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my fellow Board members and acknowledge the contribution and hard work of Mr. Sexton Cahill and Mr. John McDermott who resigned from the Board in 2011. I would like to welcome Mr. Eamonn Devoy (ICTU), Mr. Karl McDonagh (IBEC) and Mr. Mícheál Ó Fiannachta (DES), who joined the Board in 2011.

Skillnets works in partnership with our parent department, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and I would like to express our appreciation for their support and that we look forward with confidence to continuing and expanding on our relationship in 2012. Throughout the year we have also had the support of various Ministers in the Department, namely Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Ruairi Quinn T.D. and Minister of State for Training and Skills, Mr. Ciarán Cannon T.D. and for this we are very grateful.



**Domhnall MacDomhnaill**, Chairman

# CEO's Introduction

## Alan Nuzum



Skillnets was delighted to be allocated funding for the Training Networks Programme (TNP) and the Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) for 2011. Skillnets announced a new call for proposals for the establishment of training networks in March. Groups of private sectors companies were invited to apply for funding and 15 new networks came on board.

Much work commenced in the latter half of 2010 that produced the outcomes and direction for the organisation in 2011, which led to the launch of three new funding streams for Skillnets networks: the Job-seekers Support Programme fund (JSSP); New Certified Programme Development fund (NCPD) and the Future Skills Needs Programme fund (FSNP). This report features some really strong tangible examples of what networks achieved and delivered in these programmes, many of which have made a real impact on labour market activation which is now a key part of Skillnets ongoing strategic goals.

In response to delivering tomorrow's skills needs, networks addressed this challenge by introducing a range of innovative conversion programmes. You can see some examples of these courses in our JSSP section which demonstrates two networks responding to skills shortages and new emerging technologies in the ICT sector. Skillnets also actively engaged with supporting labour market activation measures such as JobBridge with a number of member companies providing internships to job-seekers.

In April we welcomed Mr. Ciarán Cannon T.D., Minister of State for Training and Skills to our offices to launch the evaluation report on the Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) piloted during the last quarter of 2010.

Networks continued to be very busy with a variety of events some of which you can view on pages 42-43. These included bringing business communities together at the 'Innovate or Stagnate' breakfast briefing in Galway, a new text book for the healthcare sector, a conference for people in radio 'Independent Radio... a strong voice' and a 'Women in Business' networking event in Cork.

In September news broke of the imminent redundancies for over 500 workers in TalkTalk. Skillnets initiated a

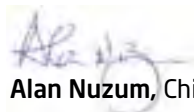
rapid response to this news by engaging with the human resources team in TalkTalk and invested €250,000 through two of our networks into the immediate provision of training for the former employees in 2011. Training programmes commenced immediately and most included work placements. Over 100 people have re-entered the labour market as a direct result of Skillnets early intervention.

The work of Skillnets was further endorsed by representation at European level through attendance at workshops and study visits in Europe and as a host organisation for study visits organised by Léargas around a number of themes.

Skillnets commissioned an independent evaluation of both programmes covering the activity of 70 networks; 66 from TNP and four from Finuas in November 2011. I would like to acknowledge the input of all networks, promoters, member companies, trainees and stakeholders for giving their valuable time to this evaluation.

In December we were very pleased to receive news of our funding for 2012 which remained at a similar level to the previous year. In light of the strained economic circumstances this really represented an immense endorsement of our work. I look forward to working with many other stakeholders including SOLAS and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI).

Sincere thanks to everyone involved, namely our Chairman and Board of Directors, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), our staff, network managers and enterprises across the country.



**Alan Nuzum**, Chief Executive Officer

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# Skillnets Strategy

Skillnets is a state funded, enterprise-led support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of training and upskilling as key elements in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness. Skillnets is funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

- Skillnets supports companies from any sector or region to engage in training by co-investing in the delivery of the training with member companies of networks.
- We work in partnership with enterprise, in particular SMEs, by supporting the development of flexible and effective training delivery methods.
- The key difference in the Skillnets approach is that enterprise has full decision-making power and can customise training to its specific needs.
- Skillnets supports networks with resources and expertise to design and deliver training solutions that contribute to competitiveness and employability.

In actively supporting enterprise to become involved in training, Skillnets networks deliver more experience-based, relevant and tailored training. Our primary aim is to increase participation in enterprise training by firms to improve competitiveness and provide improved access for workers to skills development. Skillnets also provides upskilling and reskilling training opportunities to job-seekers and those who have been made redundant or who are employed on a part-time basis.

Four key themes form the basis of the Skillnets strategy and inform our programme of activity. Please see pages 33 - 37 for a description of each theme and examples of networks delivering on these themes.

Leading employer and employee representative bodies - Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Chambers Ireland, Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Small Firms Association (SFA) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) are stakeholders.

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## Companies

- improving competitiveness and innovation with subsidised training

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## Employees

- opening up career progression paths

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## Job-seekers

- delivering free training in demand by industry

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# Training Networks Programme (TNP) and Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) Evaluation Report Summary 2011

In November 2011, Skillnets commissioned an independent evaluation of the Training Networks Programme (TNP) and Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas). The evaluation covered the activity of 70 networks, 66 from TNP and four from Finuas. The overarching aim of the evaluation was to understand the impact of Skillnets training programmes and therefore, of the network model and the extent to which these programmes deliver and generate outcomes that would not have happened if these enterprise-led programmes were not active.

The evaluation featured high response levels with c.4,000 stakeholders consulted. Stakeholders included promoters, network managers, member companies, employees and job-seekers. In addition, a study on the progression of job-seekers in the Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) determined how successful the programme has been in enabling the unemployed to progress into employment, self-employment and further education.

At the time of writing this annual report, all the outcomes of the evaluation were not concluded and final evaluation work was on-going.

Some of the high-level results from over 700 member companies who responded to the member company survey are detailed here.

- 93% of companies rated Skillnets training as good or very good in terms of how well it met their expectations, whilst 89% agreed that it met their business needs. Nine out of ten are satisfied with the quality (95%) and relevance (92%) of the training which is an extremely encouraging finding.
- Other categories also show high satisfaction rates, including the length of time required for the training (85%), flexibility and accessibility (85%), and cost (86%). 83% of respondents are satisfied with the level of accreditation that is attached to the training.
- 88% agreed that Skillnets training represented good value for money and has significantly reduced the difficulties in finding relevant training (75%).
- Over 93% agreed that they would recommend other companies to join a Skillnet network and 75% of companies believe their participation in Skillnets training improves their networking with other companies.
- The majority of companies agree that more of their staff are now being offered training (74%) and that they are now more likely to invest in training in the future (75%). Skillnets enabled companies to train some staff for the first time (67%).
- In terms of meeting strategic business needs, nearly all companies (97%) agreed that the training has helped them to fill skill gaps, whilst 87% agreed that it has contributed to improved productivity – nearly half of these companies said it made a significant or high impact in improving productivity (44% of respondents).
- A high proportion of respondents also reported that Skillnets training has contributed to market developments such as enhancements to products and services (83%) and in some cases, expansion in existing markets (55%) or entry into new markets (49%).

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# High Level Achievements 2011 across all programmes

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**72** training networks

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**€22.6m** total network investment  
of which €12.1m was invested by Skillnets in grant support  
and €10.5m was invested by member companies

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**10,151** member companies  
- 6,411 new companies, 3,740 existing companies

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**94%** of member companies were SMEs

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**42,113** employed and unemployed  
people trained

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**221,682** training days delivered  
to employed and unemployed people

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**5,696** training courses delivered

For the purposes of High Level Achievements 2011, all statistics reported relate to both employed and job-seekers across all programmes - TNP, Finuas, FSNP, NCPD and JSSP programmes.



## Upskilling the Employed

"The training provided was practical and very much work related, allowing me to directly improve my work performance."

Trainee 2011 (Trainee survey 2011)



### Training Networks Programme (TNP) Activity 2011

**68 networks**

**€18m total  
network investment**

of which €8.7m was invested by Skillnets  
in grant support and €9.3m was invested  
by member companies

**9,915 member  
companies**

**34,873 employed  
people trained**

across all programmes

**169,264 training  
days delivered**

to employed people across all  
programmes

**5,517 training  
courses delivered**

across all programmes

53 networks were approved for funding in 2011. As part of Skillnets ongoing strategic review, three new funding streams were launched for Skillnets networks: New Certified Programme Development fund (NCPD); Future Skills Needs Programme fund (FSNP) and Job-seekers Support Programme fund (JSSP). The objectives of these programmes and their outcomes are reported on in the relevant sections of this report.

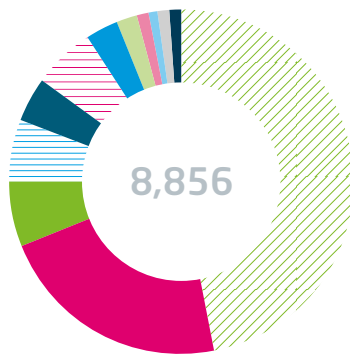
Skillnets announced a new call for proposals for the establishment of training networks in March. Groups of private-sector companies were invited to apply for funding and Skillnets welcomed 15 new networks, supporting a variety of new sectors, to the Training Networks Programme (TNP).

The results of the 2010 independent evaluation of the Training Networks Programme (TNP) and the Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) were finalised in 2011 and delivered very positive results on the effectiveness of the Skillnets model, which was strongly endorsed by employers, employees and job-seekers. Another independent evaluation of these programmes commenced at the end of 2011.

Networks continued to deliver training on a regional and sectoral level to a variety of companies and employees. Skillnets continued to focus much of its energy and support on facilitating networks to engage SMEs in the training process. These SMEs continued to invest in training due to the high levels of relevant, experience-based training that was available through the network structure.

For the purposes of Training Networks Programme (TNP) Activity 2011, all statistics reported on individuals relate to employees across TNP, FSNP and NCPD programmes. Statistics for job-seekers are reported on in the Upskilling the Unemployed 2011 section.

**Figure 1:**  
Breakdown of Companies by Sector

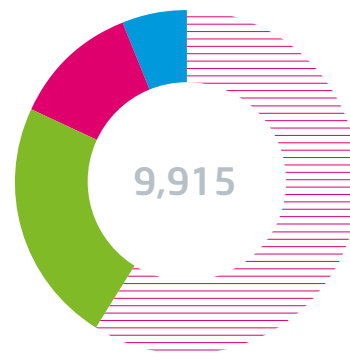


	Services	47%
	Agriculture	22%
	Retail Trade	6%
	Construction	6%
	Manufacturing Non-durables	4%
	Technology	6%
	Manufacturing Durables	3%
	Equestrian	2%
	Mixed	1%
	Transportation	1%
	Wholesale Trade	1%
	Hospitality	1%

**NOTE:** Based on a 89.31% sample of member companies, for which data was available.

Many member companies operate within the seven sectors identified as priorities by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). You can read more on pages 12-14 in the Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP) section.

**Figure 2:**  
Breakdown of Companies by Size



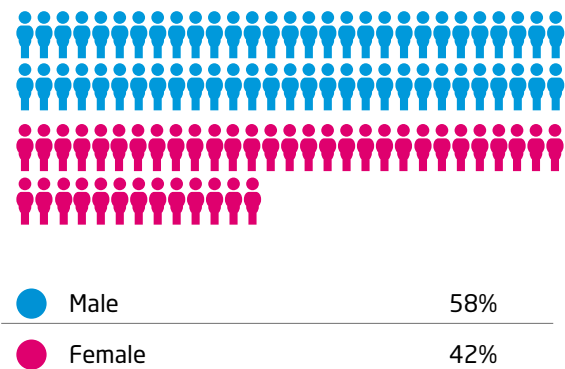
	0 - 9	59%
	10 - 49	23%
	50 - 250	12%
	250+	6%

SMEs accounted for over 94% ( $\leq 250$  employees) of the total number of companies funded by Skillnets with over 59% of the total number being micro companies ( $< 10$  employees). The percentage of member companies with less than 50 employees accounted for 82% of the sample.

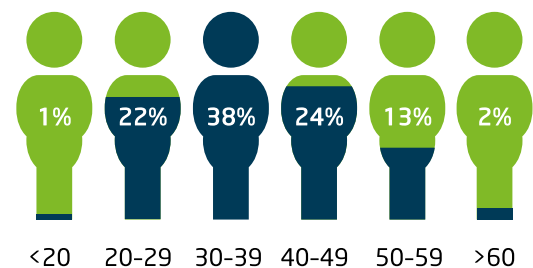
"We believe in the importance of the Skillnets programme. We believe in training staff at least once a year. Training is beneficial for both the business and morale for staff members. Skillnets assists us in doing this".

Member company 2011

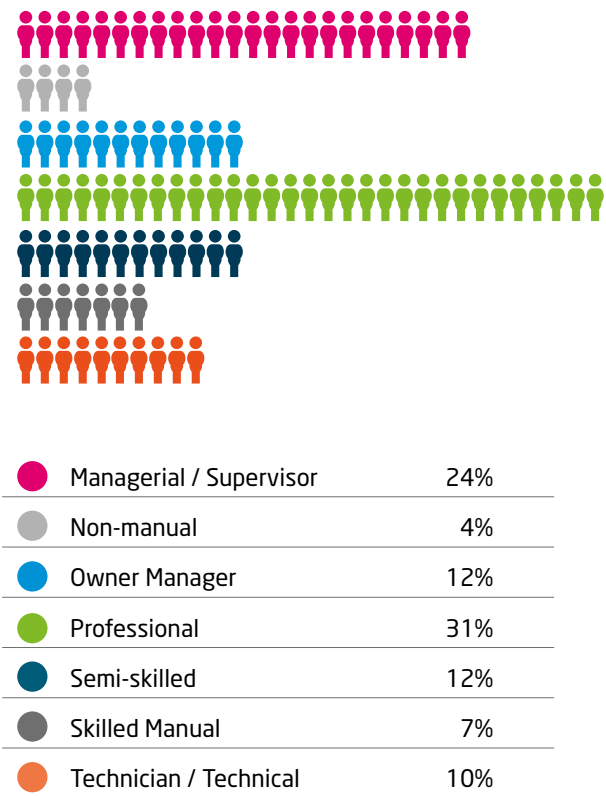
**Figure 3:**  
Breakdown of Trainees by Gender



**Figure 4:**  
Breakdown of Trainees by Age



**Figure 5:**  
Breakdown of Trainees by Occupational Category







12% of all Skillnets trainees were owner-managers, with 24% in the manager supervisory category, illustrating the importance of Skillnets training to management in the SME sector.

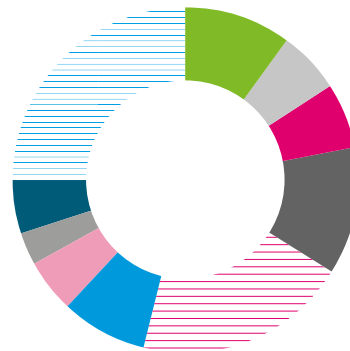
**“Skillnets opening up career progression paths for employees.”**











**Figure 6:**  
Extent of Customisation of Training  
Programmes Delivered



	Existing (off the shelf) course	49%
	Existing course significantly customised for network	22%
	Existing course with some customisation for network	17%
	New course developed by network	12%

**Figure 7:**  
Breakdown of Training Type



	Communication Skills	10%
	Finance	6%
	Health and Safety	6%
	Information Technology	12%
	Management Development	20%
	Organisational and Leadership Development	8%
	People Management	5%
	Planning and Strategy	3%
	Sales and Marketing	5%
	Technical Skills	25%

Management Development training accounted for 33% of courses delivered. This includes three training types above comprising of Management Development, Organisational and Leadership Development and People Management.

"Course was tailored to my specific needs and I learned a vast amount and will have no hesitation in using Skillnets to improve my skills in other areas."

Trainee 2011 (Trainee survey 2011)

### Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP)

**8 networks**

**€1,013,334**  
**total network**  
**investment**

of which €679,208 was invested by Skillnets in grant support and €334,126 was invested by member companies

**622 people trained**  
(57 unemployed people)

**61 training**  
**courses delivered**

**8,045 training**  
**days delivered**  
(1,489 training days to unemployed people)

**90%**  
of training days were either NFQ certified or certified by other industry bodies

Skillnets launched a new programme in 2011 for existing networks operating in six sectors identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) sectoral reports.

The strategic intent of the FSNP programme is to upskill current and future employees in these sectors in order to support the competitiveness of member companies, to sustain and increase market growth, maximise exports, enhance employment opportunities for job-seekers and to enable companies within the sectors to make a significant contribution to the national economy.

#### SECTORS

#### Networks

• Biopharma Pharmachem	PharmaChem Skillnet
• Green Economy	Summit Finuas Network
• Wholesale & Retail	IBEC Retail Skillnet
• Food & Beverage	Taste4Success Skillnet
• Medical Devices	Life Sciences Skillnet
• ICT	ICT Ireland Skillnet, ISA Software Skillnet, ITAG Skillnet

Networks developed nine new programmes (six of which were certified) that were in demand from enterprise and addressed gaps in current provision. Three of the new programmes were accredited at Level 9 from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Dublin City University (DCU).

Companies within these networks played a significant role in determining the content and strategic direction of these new programmes. Networks demonstrated excellent innovation in the design of the programmes which involved significant collaboration between industry and academic institutions to ensure that programmes met the needs of industry, were up-to-date and could be delivered in flexible ways to meet the needs of member companies.



### ISA Software Skillnet

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Product Management

ISA Software Skillnet developed a new Postgraduate Diploma in Product Management for the software and technology sectors with Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). This Level 9 programme addresses key recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Skills (EGFSN) ICT sector report, specifically recommendation 9, which refers to product management, business analysis and product development as specific skills needed within the sector.

This programme is designed to enhance and strengthen the product management capabilities and performance of product managers by strengthening the unique skill sets, knowledge and competence required to manage the product lifecycle. The diploma is highly practical and project work is an essential component of the programme, and involves active company-based assignments by participants which will lead to improved product management practices within software firms. 30 people took part in the programme availing of a total of 1,380 training days.

*Pictured at the launch of the ISA Software Skillnet/DIT Postgraduate Diploma in Product Management were Karl Flannery, Chairman ISA, MD Storm Technology, Paul O'Sullivan, Dean of School of Business DIT, Alan Nuzum, CEO Skillnets and Edel Creely, Chairperson Product Management Group, MD Trilogy Technologies. Picture courtesy of Nick Bradshaw.*

“The development of the postgraduate programme for product managers is the first of its kind in Europe, and can make a vital contribution to Irish software companies gaining a competitive edge in the global marketplace.”

Jonathan Boylan, Chief Technology Officer, Fineos Corporation.

### IBEC Retail Skillnet

#### Certificate in Business Studies

IBEC Retail Skillnet developed a Certificate in Business Studies certified by HETAC, that utilises Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) specifically to provide successful candidates with direct access into year three of the Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) BBS in Retail Management Practice programme.

This programme creates a retail specific management development programme, accessible to all SMEs that incorporates RPL, blended learning and workplace assessments. This programme addresses in particular recommendations 3, 4 and 6 of the EGFSN report for the retail and wholesale sector to increase management development and to utilise RPL. The BBS in Retail Management Practice programme sits at HETAC Level 6 within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and offers direct access to further programmes at Level 7 on successful completion.

The IBEC Retail Skillnet delivered this FSNP programme to 31 trainees who availed of 2,852 training days.

### Life Sciences Skillnet

#### Behaviour Based Quality (BBQ) Programme

Life Sciences Skillnet addressed the EGFSN Medical Devices report recommendation 2 - Upskilling Operators and Technicians. The network achieved FETAC Centre status in 2011 and developed three new programmes which will be accredited to FETAC Level 5 in 2012.

The Behaviour Based Quality (BBQ) Programme was developed by network members to specifically promote accountability, ownership and responsibility for achieving a desired quality and performance in the Medical Devices / Food & Beverage and/or Pharmaceutical sectors. While those in the industry are familiar with Behavioural Based Safety (BBS), a technique of goal setting and feedback used to improve safety behaviour, an opportunity was identified to employ similar techniques to the quality systems utilised by the Medtech companies. This course equips frontline employees and supervisors / team leads / managers with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead and manage quality and performance using a six-step behaviour-based quality process, problem solving, communication tools and techniques. In total, 32 trainees engaged and completed the programme, totalling 307 training days.

"I would like to thank our partners in this project, LYIT, in particular Billy Bennett and his team at the Institute who have embraced the innovative nature of the project and recognised the importance of working with industry to develop programmes which address clearly identified education and skills needs."

Sean Carlin, IBEC Retail Skillnet



## New Certified Programme Development (NCPD)

**11 networks**

**€564,695 total network investment**

of which €405,890 was invested by Skillnets in grant support and €158,805 was invested by member companies

**10 certified programmes developed**

**21 training courses delivered**

**340 people trained**

(57 unemployed people)

**6,453 training days delivered**

(616 training days to unemployed people)

**100%**

of training days were certified by NFQ

Fostering the development of new certified training has been an integral part of Skillnets strategy. However, development in this area diminished considerably as a result of the reduction of grant funding ratios in previous years.

The focus of the New Certified Programme Development (NCPD) is to cultivate new training programmes where there is a clearly identified gap in provision and a proven demand from enterprise. Training is NFQ certified or alternatively, has appropriate industry verification and is also accessible to job-seekers.

The overall aim of the programme is to provide a significant increase in the availability of new certified training to network member companies.

### 2011 networks

- Aviation Finance Finuas Network
- CCMA Ireland Skillnet
- CPA Ireland Skillnet
- Equal Ireland Skillnet
- First Polymer Training Skillnet
- Innovation and Lean Sigma Skillnet
- ISME Skillnet
- Law Society Skillnet
- Leading Healthcare Providers (LHP) Skillnet
- Travel Professionals Skillnet
- ULearning Skillnet

### Leading Healthcare Providers (LHP) Skillnet

#### **HETAC Level 6 Certificate in Understanding Behaviours in Older People developed with Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT).**

16 trainees took part in this programme: eight registered nurses and eight healthcare assistants, from a total of ten nursing homes. The programme covered principles of gerontology, normal and pathological changes in adulthood, identifying factors that contribute to physical decline and common age-related psychological changes. The mix of registered nurses and healthcare assistants worked extremely well in that the group shared work experiences and gained a better understanding of each other's roles in understanding and managing behaviours in older people. Participants reported the benefits of the practical nature of the training transferring back very successfully to the workplace. In total, participants received 270 training days.

### ISME Skillnet

#### **HETAC Level 7 Special Purpose Award in SME Sales and Marketing Management developed with Griffith College.**

Eight trainees took part in this programme, six employed and two job-seekers. The programme involved eight contact training days covering marketing strategy development, market planning, international marketing, e-marketing and sales management. Mentors were assigned to all trainees to assist for two working days with the implementation and write-up of their individual company projects. These projects covered areas such as creating a company marketing plan (including implementation), sales planning, branding and developing marketing materials. In total, each trainee received the equivalent of 15 training days per individual - eight training days, two mentoring days and five project days.

### CPA Ireland Skillnet

#### **Certified Tax Adviser awarded by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants.**

CPA Ireland Skillnet identified emerging opportunities in the professional accounting area and developed a Certified Tax Adviser qualification aimed at accountants and awarded by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. This qualification enables accountants to remain at the forefront of their profession, stay abreast of developments in tax and demonstrate to both clients and employers that they have enhanced their professional qualifications and expertise. The programme consists of eight modules, each six hours in duration with an assessment. This programme delivered 2,628 training days to 40 employed people and 504 training days to 7 unemployed people in 2011.

The Certified Tax Adviser designation is awarded by the CPA Institute to those who complete the Special Purpose Certificate in Advanced Taxation Planning and Advice provided by Griffith College. This HETAC validated programme is placed at Level 8 on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and consists of 15 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits and is in line with European higher education standards.

## Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) Activity 2011

**4 Finuas training networks**

**€1,730,309 total network investment**

of which Skillnets invested €784,747 (45%) and member companies invested €945,562 (55%)

**236 IFS member companies**

(137 new companies)

**179 training courses delivered**

**1,365 employed people trained**

**11,186 training days delivered**

to employed people

The Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) is dedicated to supporting the international financial services (IFS) sector through investment in the specialist skills and expertise of its workforce. The main areas of training are in banking/asset financing, corporate treasury, investment management, securitisation, reinsurance and related professional services.

Finuas delivered a wide range of programmes to the IFS sector, with a number of innovative new programmes being developed and launched in 2011 in the areas of green finance, Islamic finance, risk management and funds management.

Recognising the contribution of the Finuas programme, the 'Strategy for the International Financial Services Industry in Ireland 2011-2016', published by the Department of the Taoiseach in July 2011 stated that Finuas is a "*cost effective way of improving capabilities, encouraging additional higher-value activities to be based in Ireland, and is protecting jobs.*"

The report outlines opportunities for growth in areas including green financial services, Islamic finance, exchange-traded fund operations, aircraft leasing and payment services. Finuas networks delivered programmes within each of these areas and many others within the IFS sector including international banking, investment management, reinsurance and the funds industry.

The report also highlights the importance of enhanced engagement between industry and educational institutions to ensure a specialised skills pool is available within the sector. In 2011, Finuas networks also developed new industry-led programmes in partnership with a range of institutions including Dublin City University (DCU), the Institute of Bankers in Ireland and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) to address these aims. The quality of these programmes has benefitted from enterprise involvement to ensure they meet industry requirements.

**Figure 8:**  
Breakdown of Companies by Sector



<span style="color: green;">●</span> Air Finance / Leasing	15%
<span style="color: blue;">▨</span> Banking and Capital Markets	20%
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> Financial Services	4%
<span style="color: darkblue;">●</span> Funds and Investment Management	19%
<span style="color: pink;">▨</span> Insurance / Reinsurance	9%
<span style="color: lightblue;">●</span> Investment Management	5%
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Professional Legal and Taxation Services	28%

**Figure 9:**  
Breakdown of Companies by Size



<span style="color: pink;">▨</span> 0 - 9	30%
<span style="color: darkblue;">●</span> 10 - 49	35%
<span style="color: lightblue;">●</span> 50 - 250	15%
<span style="color: green;">●</span> 250+	20%

**The Finuas Programme is a  
“cost effective way of improving  
capabilities, encouraging additional  
higher-value activities to be based  
in Ireland, and is protecting jobs.”**

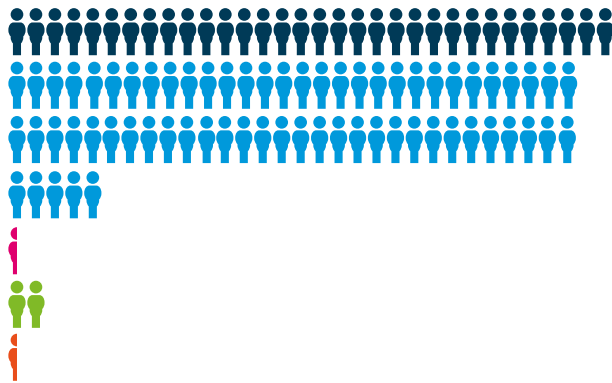
**Strategy for the International Financial  
Services Industry in Ireland 2011-2016**



‘Strategy for the International Financial Services Industry in Ireland 2011-2016’ document by the Department of the Taoiseach.

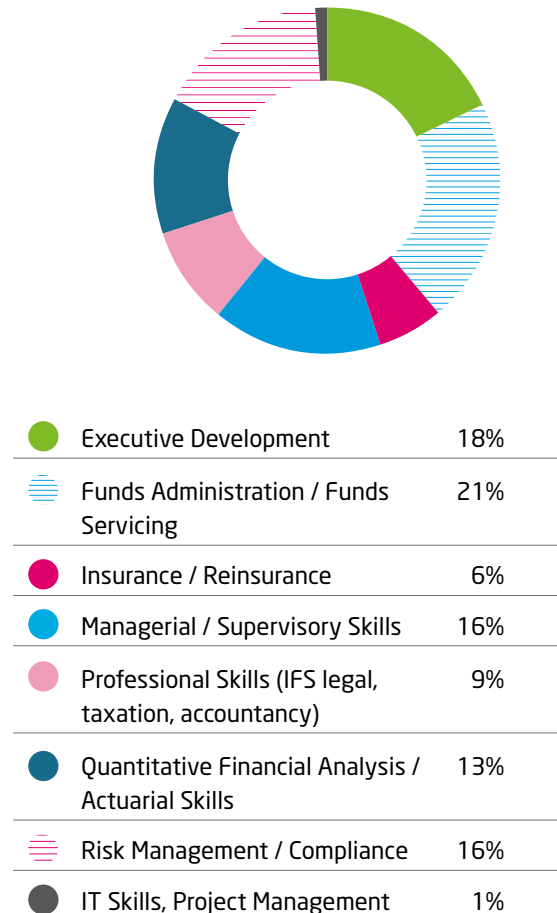
For the purposes of the Finuas Networks Programme Activity 2011 section all statistics reported on individuals relate to employees. Statistics for job-seekers are reported on in the Upskilling the Unemployed 2011 section.

**Figure 10:**  
Breakdown of Trainees by Occupational Category



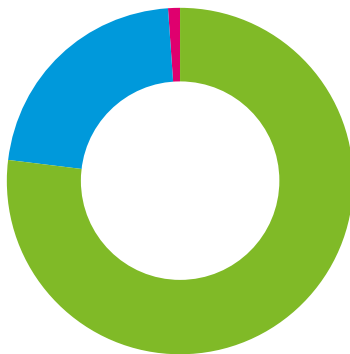
**NOTE:** Based on a 95% sample for which data was available.

**Figure 11:**  
Breakdown of Training Type



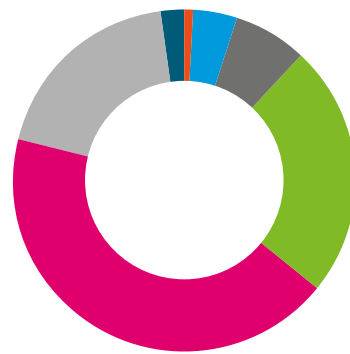
The Finuas networks delivered 179 programmes in 2011, which included a range of specialist finance programme such as Aircraft Asset Management, Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities (UCITS) for Hedge Funds, Over the Counter (OTC) Derivatives and management development and leadership programmes. One key area across the four networks was Risk Management. Summit Finuas Network delivered a series of four specialist masterclasses in Risk in the areas of Governance, Basel III, Enterprise-wide Risk and Operational Risk. Law Society Finuas Network designed an IFS Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance Symposium which was delivered by experts from both Ireland and UK and was attended by 72 member firms.

**Figure 12:**  
**Breakdown of Employed Training Days by Certification**



NFQ Certified	77%
Non-Certified	22%
Non NFQ Certified Courses	1%

**Figure 13:**  
**Breakdown of Trainee Educational Level Prior to Training**



Levels 1 - 4	1%
Level 5	4%
Level 6	7%
Level 7	24%
Level 8	43%
Level 9	19%
Level 10	2%

“This course draws together, for the first time in Ireland, the key elements of green finance in a comprehensive and practical way enabling the participants to play a central role in the evolution of this marketplace both in Ireland and internationally.”

Paul J. Harris, Head of Natural Resources Risk Management, Bank of Ireland Global Markets, speaking about the Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance.



### Innovation and New Programme Development

#### Green Finance

**Summit Finuas Network** in association with Dublin City University (DCU) Business School and the Green IFSC Initiative developed a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance, which makes a significant contribution to the green economy in Ireland. This Level 9 programme was designed to provide finance and related professionals with an understanding of climate change principles and policy responses, risk management and regulations, technologies and emerging markets, finance, carbon accounting and tax.

The programme is designed for companies seeking to develop specialist sustainable finance solutions in banking, project finance, treasury, asset management, fund services, insurance/reinsurance, carbon markets management, venture capital, private equity, including financing and holding company activities.

The programme development and delivery costs were funded by the Skillnets Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP). 21 trainees commenced this programme in September 2011 and will graduate in 2012. The Summit Finuas Network and DCU began the development of this programme to Masters Level in late 2011.

*Brian McMahon, Network Manager, Summit Finuas Network, Arlene Allen, General Manager, BNY Mellon Corporate Trust Ireland, programme participant Deirdre Barnicle, Solicitor Tax Advisor, McCann Fitzgerald and Tracey Donnery, Finuas Programme Manager, Skillnets at the launch of the Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance.*



#### Islamic Finance

**Law Society Finuas Network** delivered an Islamic Finance - Opportunities for Financial Services in Ireland collaborative learning academy with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). A panel of experts including Dr. Mohd Bakar, President of the Amanie Islamic Finance Learning Centre in Dubai and an international shari'ah scholar; Barry O'Leary, IDA and John Moran, Department of Finance addressed the academy. The academy attracted all the principal IFS firms within the banking and funds sectors.

The network also developed a Diploma in Islamic Finance in collaboration with CIMA for unemployed solicitors which included work placements within the IFS sector in Islamic finance roles. This was funded by the Skillnets Job-seeker Support Programme (JSSP). Of the 18 trainees that completed this programme five had secured full-time employment, five are completing work placements and seven are participating in advanced training as a consequence of the JSSP training.

*Fiona Hickey, Solicitor, Kevin Gahan, Past President of CIMA Republic of Ireland Council and Attracta O'Regan, Head of Law Society Professional Training, (Incorporating Law Society Skillnet and the Law Society Finuas Network) at the Islamic Finance academy.*



### Certification

The value of certification and the formal recognition of learning remains a key focus of Finuas networks to support quality assurance and facilitate career progression and transferability of skills within job roles. 77% of training days were certified from Level 6 - 9 on the NFQ.

**Aviation Finance Finuas Network** and the University of Limerick (UL) delivered year two of an MBA in Aviation Management in 2011. This programme was delivered to students from diverse disciplines within the airline, aviation and related asset leasing and financial sectors. The MBA focuses on five learning themes: internationalisation, managerial vision and competencies, entrepreneurship and innovation, strategic thinking and leadership, in addition to the specialist aviation finance focus.

**Summit Finuas Network** ran a number of certified programmes with the Institute of Bankers in Ireland, National College of Ireland (NCI) and others including a Certificate in Financial Regulation, Professional Certificate in Financial Crime Prevention and Professional Certificate in Complex Financial Instrument.

The network also developed a new Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance with DCU which is accredited at Level 9. Further information on this programme is available on page 21.



*David Guest, Chairman of the Green IFSC Steering Group, Department of the Taoiseach, Prof. Brian McCraith, President, DCU, Paul Harris, Course Co-Director, Bol Global Markets and Alan Nuzum, CEO Skillnets at the launch of the Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance.*

**Munster Finuas Network** ran several accredited programmes that were delivered by the Institute of Bankers in Ireland including a Diploma and Certificate in Investment Fund Services in Cork, Limerick and Waterford which addressed the business needs of funds management companies based in Munster.

**Law Society Finuas Network** won an Irish Institute of Training and Development (IITD) award in the Network and Groups category in recognition of its excellence in the design and delivery of its Postgraduate Diploma in International Financial Services Law in collaboration with the Commercial Law Centre UCD. Lecturers included international legal and taxation experts from both Ireland and England. Trainees from across the IFS sector both from legal firms, international banking and investment management took part in the programme.



## Upskilling the Unemployed

"I am very satisfied with the training course and work placement I undertook, the Healthcare Support FETAC Level 5, as I secured a suitable position within one month."

JSSP Job-seeker participant 2011



### TNP and Finuas Activity 2011

**5,875 job-seekers  
trained across all  
programmes**

**41,232 training  
days delivered**

to job-seekers across all programmes

**46% of trainees  
supported**

were long-term unemployed

**Over 61% of  
trainees**

were on Levels 1-6 of the National  
Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

Supporting job-seekers through the Skillnets model delivers training that is in demand by enterprise and assists job-seekers to maintain a connection with the workplace both by training alongside people in employment, as well as the opportunity to experience work placements in relevant companies within their sector/region under the Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP). Skillnets supports job-seekers to address perceived/potential barriers to re-employment.

#### Benefits include:

- Free training
- Access to courses in demand by companies
- Training with people in employment and other job-seekers
- Networking opportunities

"Job-seekers need training that is in demand by enterprise and that is what Skillnets provides: enterprise-led, industry-driven training.

Alan Nuzum, Skillnets CEO

For the Upskilling the Unemployed section, all statistics reported on individuals relate to job-seekers across all programmes - TNP, Finuas, JSSP, FSNP and NCPD programmes. Statistics for employees are reported on in the Upskilling the Employed and Finuas sections.

### Job-seekers can access training in two ways through the Skillnets network structure:

- Each network has a limited number of free places for job-seekers on their main programme of courses that are run for member companies of networks. There are many courses whereby no specific educational requirement is needed in order to take part in training, but in some instances a background in the discipline or related discipline is required.

General types of training that job-seekers can access through the Training Networks Programme (TNP) are technical skills, customer service skills, information technology, health and safety, communication skills, sales and marketing, social media, planning and strategy and finance etc. In the Finuas Networks Programme (Finuas) the main areas of training are in banking/asset financing, corporate treasury, investment management, securitisation, reinsurance and related professional services. A number of job-seekers also availed of training through two new funding streams in 2011: New Certified Programme Development (NCPD) and Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP).

- The second option through which job-seekers can access training is the Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP). 24 networks from TNP and Finuas took part in JSSP in 2011. This initiative is aimed solely at unemployed people, and includes free training in skills in demand by companies, combined with direct access to employers through meaningful work placements. Further details of the outcomes of this programme are on pages 29 – 32.

### Skillnets responding to tomorrow's skills needs

Delivering training in demand by enterprise is the key strategy employed by Skillnets to ensure our offering has an impact on labour market activation. Enterprise dictates the content of all training delivery, including Skillnets programmes attended by job-seekers.

As part of Skillnets strategy to respond to labour market needs and a changing employment profile in Ireland, the Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP) was launched in 2011. This was in direct response to the need to upskill people in six sectors identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the national economy by growing job potential.

Under the FSNP section (pages 12 – 14), you can read about the ISA Software Skillnet who developed a new Postgraduate Diploma in Product Management for the software and technology sectors with Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) addressing recommendation 9 of the EGFSN ICT sector report. Equally, the Life Sciences Skillnet addressed the EGFSN Medical Devices report recommendation 2 – upskilling operators and technicians by developing the Behaviour Based Quality (BBQ) Programme.

Employability is a key driver for both employed and unemployed people when deciding which course to study. Work placements in conjunction with training provide a valuable opportunity to develop marketability and gain a competitive advantage in the employment market. In addition, enabling job-seekers of one discipline to acquire a qualification in a different discipline in a vocational context and providing work placements has proven very successful in the conversion of job-seekers to employment or further education.

In 2011, networks addressed this challenge by introducing innovative conversion programmes. You can see some examples of these courses in action in our JSSP section which demonstrates two networks responding to skills shortages and new emerging technologies in the ICT sector. ICT Ireland Skillnet developed a Masters

in Applied Software Technology (MAST), which was developed to help unemployed computing and related graduates and those from an engineering background to become highly skilled and qualified in current and applied software technology competencies. ISA Software Skillnet provided both new graduates and those looking to change careers, with an intensive skills' conversion opportunity through their 'Cloud Careers' programme.

### Conversion Courses

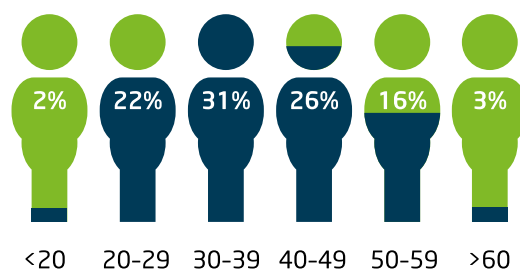
- Over 15 networks offered conversion courses in 2011
- Courses available in ICT, Medical Devices, International Financial Services, Polymer, Retail, Bio-Pharma, Agri-Food, Tourism & Travel, Media, Healthcare, Contact Centre and Entrepreneurship
- All included work placements
- NFQ and/or industry certification

Skillnets is also actively engaged in supporting labour market activation measures such as JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme. In the last quarter of 2011, a small number of networks assisted member companies to provide meaningful internships to c.50 job-seekers through the JobBridge scheme. It is envisaged that this number will triple to over 150 job-seekers in 2012.

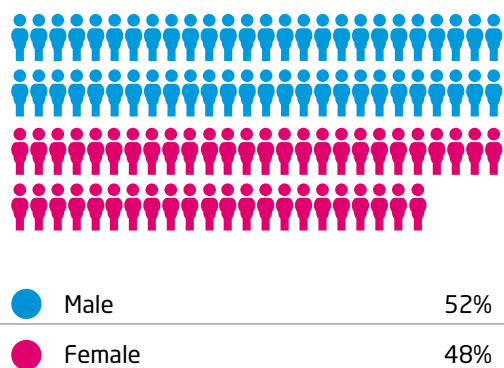
In addition, JobBridge interns not affiliated to a network can also attend free training subject to approval from their host company, allowing them to further develop their skills while completing their internship.

In 2011, Skillnets supported the establishment of Worklink, a not-for-profit organisation set up to provide practical advice and assistance to companies wishing to avail of labour market schemes and to help job-seekers transition into employment.

**Figure 14:**  
**Breakdown of Trainees by Age**



**Figure 15:**  
**Breakdown of Trainees by Gender**



Skillnets provided valuable supports in 2011 for job-seekers, with 5,875 trainees undertaking 41,232 training days. 52% of those job-seekers who trained with networks in Skillnets-funded programmes were male, and 48% were female. This is broadly similar to the gender profile of employed trainees. Similarly there was little variation in the age profiles of job-seekers in comparison to employed trainees.

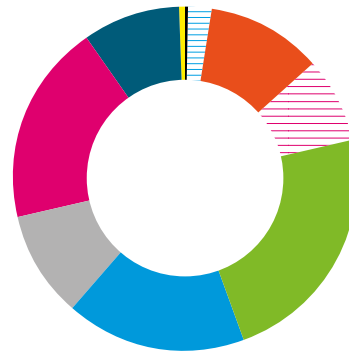
**Figure 16:**  
Breakdown of Job-seeker Training Days  
by Certification



<span style="color: green;">●</span> NFQ Certified	49%
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Other Certification	17%
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Non-Certified	34%

66% of all job-seeker training days in all Skillnets funded programmes were certified by either the NFQ or by other professional bodies.

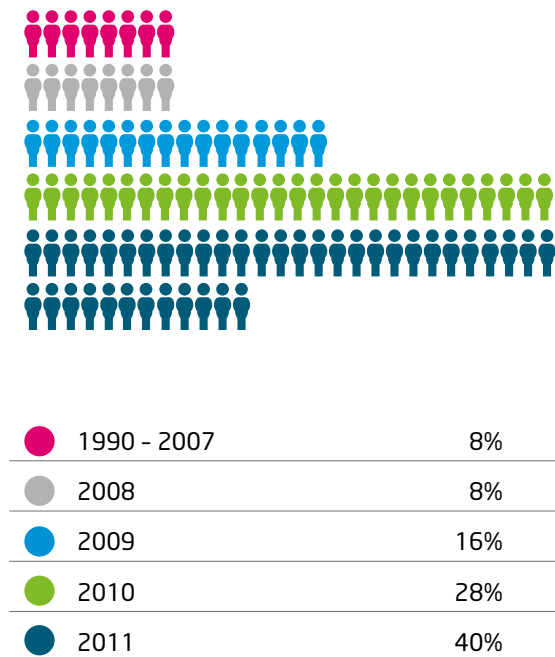
**Figure 17:**  
Breakdown of Trainee Educational Level  
Prior to Training



<span style="color: black;">●</span> Level 1	0.5%
<span style="color: blue;">▨</span> Level 2	2%
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Level 3	11%
<span style="color: pink;">▨</span> Level 4	8%
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Level 5	23%
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Level 6	17%
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> Level 7	10%
<span style="color: magenta;">●</span> Level 8	19%
<span style="color: darkblue;">●</span> Level 9	9%
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Level 10	0.5%

Just over 61% of unemployed trainees were on Levels 1-6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It should be noted that by taking the Finuas trainees separately for trainee educational level prior to training, the vast majority, 93% of Finuas unemployed trainees were at Level 6-9 prior to training.

**Figure 18:**  
Breakdown of Date Job-seekers Joined Live Register



46% of unemployed trainees in 2011 were long-term unemployed, i.e. they were unemployed for over a year. This figure is above the national average of 42.5%.

*Caoimhseach Connolly at the Learning Waves Skillnet 'Independent Radio... a strong voice' conference.*



## Job-seeker Success Story Radio: Get your Foot in the Door

Learning Waves Skillnet launched its 'Radio - Get your Foot in the Door' workshop in 2010. The aim of this workshop was to give people who are interested in pursuing a career in radio the opportunity to meet professionals from the industry and to hear from them on 'what it takes to make it in radio'.

The workshop was run twice in 2010 and once in 2011 and a total of over 50 people attended. A number of the participants went on to complete further training programmes through Learning Waves Skillnet.

Caoimhseach Connolly was one of those participants. She secured a number of work placements; the first with the 98FM newsroom in 2010 on the back of the workshop and later with Newstalk, Today FM and a second placement with 98FM. Throughout her work placements she continued to undertake a number of training programmes with Learning Waves Skillnet. Following the success of her work placement with 98FM, Caoimhseach was offered freelance work with the radio station. She is now a weekend reporter for a number of stations and is still a regular participant in Learning Waves Skillnet courses.

According to Caoimhseach the most beneficial part of the workshops and training was "getting to ask the experts questions and also getting the opportunity to meet the experts". She would encourage anyone who is interested in working in radio to attend the training courses the network has on offer and to benefit from meeting people from the industry. Gaining some work experience and following up on contacts made on the courses is an important next step. On recommending Learning Waves Skillnet to others, Caoimhseach commented that "it's where everyone in radio goes to learn and where the people who know what they are talking about go to train".

### Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP)

**24 networks**

**€2.8m total  
network investment**

of which €2.6m was invested by Skillnets in grant support and €202,000 was invested by member companies

**202 courses  
delivered**

**1,875 unemployed  
people trained**

**27,065 training  
days delivered**

**70%**

of training days were either NFQ certified or certified by other industry bodies

The Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP), first piloted by Skillnets in 2010, is aimed solely at supporting unemployed people. Key features include the provision of skills in demand by industry combined with direct access to employers through meaningful work placements. The key objectives of the JSSP are as follows:

- Increase employability by up-skilling/cross-skilling job-seekers to re-enter previous employment sectors and transfer into alternative sectors
- Blend training with workplace experience so as to embed the learning and give the unemployed access to employers
- Assist member companies, particularly SMEs, to develop a talent pool of skilled people for the purposes of recruitment
- Leverage the relationships network managers have with companies within their network to organise high quality work placements for the trainees

Skillnets prioritises support for the following groups of job-seekers within the JSSP:

- Persons unemployed for more than 12 months
- Persons at Level 5 or less on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
- Persons under the age of 35
- Persons formerly employed in the construction, manufacturing and retail sectors
- Persons wishing to enter the ICT sector



## Upskilling the Unemployed



### Launch of Evaluation Report on 2010 Pilot Skillnets Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP)

An evaluation report on the pilot Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) was launched on 7th April 2011 in Skillnets offices by Mr. Ciarán Cannon T.D., Minister of State for Training and Skills. The programme, piloted at the end of 2010 for 279 job-seekers, reported that one in five trainees secured employment within 4-8 weeks of completing the programme. Nine networks who took part in the programme attended the launch along with member companies, trainees, as well as Skillnets staff and Board members.

At the launch, Minister Cannon said *"The unique advantage Skillnets has is the ability for network companies to group together and source the training actually needed. Skillnets has recognised early on the role they can play in adapting their successful training model to cater for the unemployed as well as the employed. The pilot Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) blended training with workplace experience and gave unemployed trainees greater access to potential employers. A core strength of the programme was its ability to draw on the excellent relationships built up over time that network managers have with their member companies and which enables them to organise high quality work placements for the trainees"*.

Skillnets funded 24 networks to provide 202 JSSP programmes in 2011. 70% of the programmes delivered were accredited either on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or by industry. The vast majority of accredited programmes were at Levels 5 and 6 on the NFQ.

*Ciarán Cannon T.D., Minister of State for Training and Skills with Kirsty McLaughlin, one of the trainees in the pilot Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP)*



### ICT Ireland Skillnet

ICT Ireland Skillnet developed a Masters in Applied Software Technology (MAST) which commenced in September 2011. MAST was developed to help unemployed computing and related graduates and those from an engineering background to become highly skilled and qualified in current and applied software technology competencies. MAST is a unique, fast-track, high level, intensive initiative for the sector.

As a direct result of undertaking this conversion programme, the vast majority of participants have been guaranteed employment with blue-chip companies who are members of the Skillnet. As well as a guarantee of employment, participants will secure an NFQ Level 9 qualification and work experience in member companies, who made a significant cash matching investment in the programme.

50 people are currently participating and they have each undertaken 64 training days in 2011 alone. A concurrent placement in participating companies, delivered throughout the full year, fulfils part of the MSc content requirements. Participants undertook c.3 weeks of work placement in total in 2011, and will undertake a further 8 weeks work placement in 2012.

*Gerard Doyle, ICT Ireland Skillnet, Anne O'Connell, LM Ericsson, Domhnall MacDomhnaill, Skillnets, Ruairi Quinn, T.D., Minister for Education and Skills, Emer Cusack, LM Ericsson, Paul Sweetman, ICT Ireland, Alan Nuzum, Skillnets and Paul O'Sullivan, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) at the launch of the MAST programme supported by JSSP. LM Ericsson is sponsoring 25 participants as part of this initiative.*





### ISA Software Skillnet

ISA Software Skillnet provided both new graduates and those looking to change careers, with an intensive skills' conversion opportunity through their 'Cloud Careers' programme. VMware, based in Ballincollig in Cork, was the main company sponsor supporting the programme. *"With the growth of cloud computing and the international accreditations and the work experience that participants will receive, this scheme is a stepping stone to a real prospect of employment"* said Gordon O'Reilly, Technical Development Manager at VMware.

Other companies such as Quest and TrendMicro provided work placements. Over the course of the 12 week programme, participants gained two international accreditations recognised across the software sector as well as work experience which opened up opportunities for roles as triage engineers and in technical support. The most recent update on the participants is that over 45% (11 people) are already in jobs and 54% (13 people) are completing work placements.

24 trainees took part in the programme, with each trainee receiving 12 weeks training (60 training days) followed by a 24 week JobBridge internship (120 days).

Pictured at the launch of the ISA Software Skillnet Cloud Careers programme are: *Paul Sweetman*, Irish Software Association (ISA), *John Dolan*, VMware and *Domhnall MacDomhnaill*, Skillnets.



### Life Sciences Skillnet

This network operates in the Life Sciences sector and delivered an Engineers Conversion Programme (NFQ Level 7) which was developed to enable unemployed engineers of traditional disciplines to convert to the Medical Devices/Pharmaceutical sectors. 25 trainees took part, over half of whom had a construction background.

The network offered a mix of blended learning i.e. approximately 10 days of tuition and 40 days of online learning, distance learning etc, followed by a 120 day (24 week) work placement in a range of indigenous and multinational companies operating in the sector. Some of the companies involved included DePuy, Vistakon, KCI, Boston Scientific, Covidien, Vitalograph, Nypro, Metal Improvement, Abbott, Neuravi, Biotrin and BMR Galway.

Approximately 60% of the trainees availed of placements through JobBridge - the National Internship Scheme, and over 80% of these trainees had a construction background. At the time of reporting, 44% of the trainees are in employment with the remaining continuing their work placements, which are likely to significantly increase the job prospects and employability of these trainees.

*Aidan Harney*, CPD Engineers Ireland, *Sharon Higgins*, Director IMDA, *Joan Burton*, T.D., Minister for Social Protection, *Alan Nuzum*, Skillnets, *Eoghan Ó Faoláin*, IMDA/IBEC and *Pauline O'Flanagan*, Life Sciences Skillnet at the launch of the Engineers Conversion Programme for unemployed engineers to convert into the medical devices/pharmaceutical sectors.

### Skillnets responds to redundancies in TalkTalk

"As soon as Skillnets learned of the job losses, two of our networks undertook training needs analysis with TalkTalk employees and identified relevant skills in demand by industry. This also involved working closely with the human resources team at TalkTalk to rapidly identify the skills sets which could help move some of the redundant workforce into alternative jobs in the contact centre sector. Not all former employees at TalkTalk wished to seek re-employment in a contact centre and, for this reason, a diverse range of training courses were designed to enable people to work in other sectors or even establish their own businesses".

Alan Nuzum, CEO Skillnets

Following the announcement of the closure of the Waterford operation, Skillnets invested €250,000 into the immediate provision of training for former TalkTalk employees in 2011. Training programmes commenced in October 2011 and most included work placements.

Training was delivered through two of Skillnets' training networks: the CCMA Ireland Skillnet and Waterford Chamber Skillnet. A number of contact centre companies including Taxback.com, Intellicom, South Western, VoxPro, UPC and VHI Kilkenny offered work placements to former TalkTalk staff as part of the Skillnets training programme package. Training programmes were offered in entrepreneurship and business skills for people interested in pursuing careers in alternative fields.

Both networks engaged with TalkTalk to determine re-training needs. CCMA Ireland Skillnet along with its member companies held a jobs fair in September to advertise approx. 150 job vacancies to TalkTalk staff. Waterford Chamber Skillnet held a similar event in mid-October. Skillnets worked in conjunction with FÁS nationally and regionally to ensure a joined up approach.

Courses on offer included Customer Service, Broadband Service Skills and Frontline Technical Support for contact

centres. Courses on offer for those looking for a career change included Creativity for Entrepreneurship, Start your own Business and Project Management.

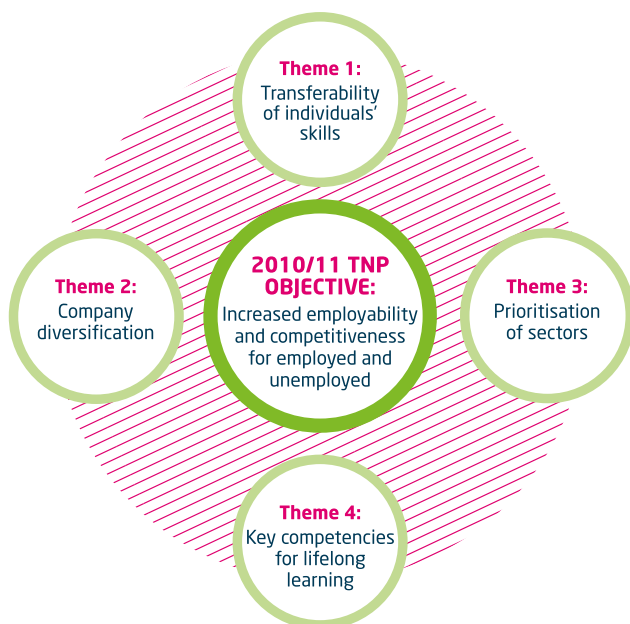
As a result of training delivered by CCMA Ireland Skillnet, 114 job-seekers secured employment in the sector. These trainees were all hired by member companies of the network, including BioWare, Intellicom, Eistech, Taxback.com, Rigney Dolphin, UPC, Voxpro and Sage. A further 30 trainees supported by the network in 2011 went on to establish their own businesses.

Skillnets received widespread media coverage on the rapid response to the redundancies.

*"It is commendable that Skillnets, its member networks and TalkTalk staff have been able to bring their experience and their resources together and develop a realistic co-ordinated plan to up-skill and re-skill former staff. My earnest hope is that this initiative will enable the TalkTalk workers to compete for existing and emerging vacancies in both current and alternative sectors. I understand there has also been a strong demand for courses in entrepreneurship and starting a business which the Skillnets networks will be providing."*  
Mr. Ciarán Cannon T.D., Minister of State for Training and Skills.

\_\_\_\_\_

### Strategic Themes in Action



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

The primary focus of this theme is on upskilling, reskilling and cross-skilling of individuals across sectors and/or regions. Training delivered under this theme promotes the adoption of incremental skills which are required to facilitate increased mobility, employability and enhanced business performance of network members.

#### **Theme 1 in action:**

**First Polymer Training (FPT) Skillnet** is the training network for the Irish plastics industry. A FETAC accredited injection moulding and manufacturing skills programme gave successful participants the skills to successfully start employment as injection moulding operators/apprentice technicians. The programme also provided instruction in essential general skills needed to work in the industry. This meant that trainees were

ready to commence work in a competent manner. The programme targeted younger job-seekers with a technical background but with no experience in injection moulding or the plastics industry. Given the multiple challenges facing the manufacturing sector, the programme had a strong impact on participants, with almost two thirds (i.e. 60%) progressing from the training into employment or further education.



**CCMA Ireland Skillnet** is the training network for the contact centre industry. The network delivered a Major Award FETAC Level 6 programme in sales and client relationship management made up of eight minor awards. The areas covered by the programme included customer services, consultative selling, standardised soft skill sales and team leader training, giving the option of incremental skills to employees in the sector over time. This programme supported mobility in the contact centre industry by giving customer care and billing agents a qualification in frontline technical support skills required now and in the future by agents due to the pace of technology changes.



**The Outsourcing Skillnet** commenced in 2011 and is the training network for the outsourcing industry. The network developed two Level 8 awards; a CPD Diploma in procurement tendering and supplier management and a CPD Diploma in SME business development. The areas covered by the programme included procurement tendering and supplier management, managing outsource performance, delivering effective sales, how to win public sector tenders, legal HR & IT consideration when outsourcing and managing logistics and social media. Each learner had to complete five individual European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) awards and each diploma modular class was mixed with learners

from both diplomas. Incremental skills and mobility of skills was achieved not only by the programme content but by mixing learners from the buyer and seller outsourcing market which allowed for excellent mobility of skills through project work and networking.



**The Wind Skillnet** is highly sector specific focusing on wind energy. The wind energy sector needs to ensure it is aligned to national policy to ensure that the expansion and upgrading of the electricity grid infrastructure can be delivered. This requires a detailed knowledge of complex policy issues such as 'The Treatment of Wind Generation in the Single Electricity Market' which is fundamental to the sector. In 2011, 46 trainees took part in this course, while a 'Member Policy Workshop' also attracted 93 participants. Such high level courses aimed at senior management in the sector provide a detailed understanding of the obstacles hindering productivity, and thus allowing the sector to work at a strategic level to resolve issues which impact the future of the sector overall.



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

The primary focus of this theme is facilitating the acquisition and transferability of skills to allow companies to diversify within their sector, or to secure the transformational change of their business offering to a completely new sector.

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#### **Theme 2 in action:**

**Innovation & Lean Sigma Skillnet (ILSS)** provides training and networking activities to companies who are currently embracing innovation and Lean & Six Sigma methodologies as a means to increase productivity, profitability and competitiveness in the face of increasing global competition. During 2011, ILSS organised a range of best practice site visits to enable member companies to '*come, see, hear and tell*' various aspects of their lean transformation journey to date. The concept behind the best practice visits was that companies were not alone in their lean journey and that there was a wide body of knowledge within the network member companies that could be accessed and shared. Over 100 companies attended these best practice visits. It enables them to apply learnings and have a valuable support network to call on, if and when required.

The network also delivered the Training within Industry (TWI) programme which contains learning disciplines and problem solving tools that change how employees think about their jobs. Companies who took part in the programme reported real Return in Investment (ROI) as a direct result of this training solution to problem operational areas – a reduction in the number of accidents and scrap levels, an increase in productivity, efficiency and quality and improved employee morale and attendance due to employee engagement. An after training service was supported through e-mail and conference calls.



**IPFMA Skillnet**, a new network in 2011, provides training for property management and facility management companies throughout Ireland. The economic downturn has led to increased competition in the property management sector, placing pressure on companies and employees to differentiate their services and respond quickly to new business opportunities. It was in this context that IPFMA Skillnet identified a need for certified mediator training, with a particular focus on property-related dispute resolution. Mediation skills are highly saleable and highly transferable both within and outside of the property management sector, but very few property professionals had completed certified training. The network ran a training course which was certified and tailored specifically for property professionals. The first group of nine trainees, including two job-seekers, completed the programme in November 2011 and went on to qualify as certified mediators in 2012 with Friarylaw, one of the six accredited bodies under the Civil Liability and Courts Act 2004 and the Multi-Unit Developments Act 2011.



**69% of networks**

in 2011 operated under themes 1 & 2.

### **Theme 3:** **Facilitating increased performance and growth in priority sectors.**

The primary focus of this theme is on upskilling individuals in the key skills necessary to enter into or expand within certain priority sectors which have been identified as high potential growth sectors by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN).

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#### **Theme 3 in action:**

**Taste4Success Skillnet** is a national network supporting the priority food and beverage sector. In November 2009, the EGFSN launched a report entitled 'Future Skills Requirements of the Food and Beverage Sector'. Within this report a number of recommendations were highlighted, including the need to provide operative and supervisor accredited up-skilling programmes. Following this, Taste4Success Skillnet commissioned its own research to compare the macro viewpoint in the EGFSN Report with current day-to-day training and development practices and challenges facing the sector, and to provide practical recommendations that would adequately address this recommendation. Their report, titled 'Up-skilling - A Skills Strategy for Operatives & Supervisors in the Food and Beverage Industry', was launched in July 2011 by Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

The network consulted nationally with members (including micro and SME companies) and various stakeholders to ensure it was a proper fit with industry. Consequently, five new pilot programmes were developed by Taste4Success Skillnet in 2011, which were certified by IMPROVE, the Food and Drink Skills Council in the UK. This standard was selected as it is the most current standard for the Food & Drink Sectors (launched January 2011) and is also aligned to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The standard promotes continuous learning by providing horizontal and vertical progression paths for learners. The standard is focused on both 'on the job' learning and the timely assessment of that learning so as to enable successful application of learning to the job. 82 participants,



including some job-seekers, undertook 868 training days in the five pilot programmes in 2011.



**Summit Finuas Network** provides a strategic lead and focus to meet current and new skill requirements in the International Financial Services (IFS) sector, ensuring Irish companies remain competitive internationally and continue to create employment. The network developed a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance in association with Dublin City University (DCU) Business School and the Green IFSC Initiative. This Level 9 programme was designed to provide finance and related professionals with an understanding of climate change principles and policy responses, risk management and regulations, technologies and emerging markets, finance, carbon accounting and tax. The programme is designed for companies seeking to develop specialist sustainable finance solutions in banking, project finance, treasury, asset management, fund services, insurance/reinsurance, carbon markets management, venture capital, private equity, including financing and holding company activities. 21 trainees commenced this programme in September 2011 and will graduate in 2012.



**19% of networks**

in 2011 operated under this theme.

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

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

#### Theme 4 in action:

**Leading Healthcare Providers (LHP) Skillnet** provides a centre of excellence for training and networking while delivering quality accredited programmes for hospitals, nursing homes and care agency companies. The ongoing provision of the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support and individual component certificates were identified as required for a large number of care support staff, due to the minimum qualification requirements outlined in the HIQA Standards (HIQA, 2009).

The certificate consists of eight Level 5 FETAC modules and provides the way forward to improve the quality of care delivered to residents/patients, while also securing a recognised qualification for learners with the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies. This also provides a defined career progression path for a substantial cohort of the learners, who came into the programme with either a lack of a previously recognised qualification or a lower NFQ level. This cohort includes workers previously employed in the healthcare sector, and also job-seekers and workers previously employed in other sectors looking to transfer into a profession in healthcare. In 2011, 889 learners completed at least one minor Level 5 module, while 202 completed the full certificate and received a Major FETAC Level 5 Award.



**12% of networks**

in 2011 operated under this theme.

### Certification

There have been unprecedented changes within the qualifications and training environment nationally. These changes included the current merger of the NQAI/FETAC/HETAC & IUQB into the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI) and the publication of legislation for the dismantling of FÁS and the setting up of SOLAS.

Work in the certification arena continued with the completion of the migration of the Awards Plan encompassing the migration of existing award standards and the development of new award areas to the FETAC Common Awards System (CAS). In the process some awards have been harmonized and others deactivated.

As part of Skillnets enterprise-led ethos, we need to be in a position to support and respond quickly to the changing needs of enterprise. This often requires that we develop and deliver some short courses where certification is not possible or the required certification may not exist at the time of delivery. It is worth noting that many of these non certified programmes have gone on to become certified programmes.

Equally, in recognising the importance of certified learning, it is clear that there are many challenges ahead to ensure that further education, training and higher education is aligned with economic and enterprise skills needs and adaptable to changing sectoral priorities. Skillnets believes in the need for a balance of academic rigour in the development and the accreditation of workplace training, with the demands of enterprise for speedy solutions and flexible learning models. Certification as a currency in enhancing job opportunities and employment potential for job-seekers has further underpinned the value of certification for life-long learning.

In 2011, the Training Networks Programme (TNP) continued to facilitate networks in developing and/or attaining certification for new and existing standards through the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) awarding bodies. The Skillnets Certification Group, made up of network managers, advised and provided resources to the broader group of network managers on the pertinent routes to certification via a number of certification bodies. The group organised a workshop for network managers in June 2011 which included the launch of their updated 'Guide to Certification for Skillnet Networks'. Attendees included network managers, FETAC, private training providers and Skillnets staff.

The group provides regular policy input, including specific input at operational level by representation on the Standards Development Groups and the FETAC Standards Advisory Board up to the end of 2011 when this process was completed. The group is also involved with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the university sector. Skillnets looks forward to working at various levels with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI) and SOLAS.



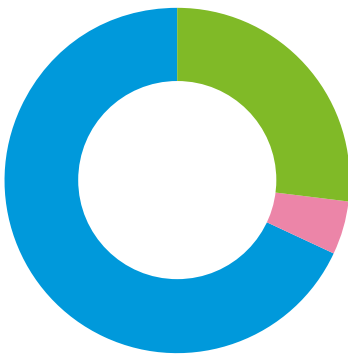
**Figure 19:**  
**Breakdown of Training Days by Certification**



NFQ Certified	55%
Other Certification	6%
Non-Certified	39%

**NOTE:** Graph reflects breakdown of training days by certification for the employed. Figures for unemployed on page 27.

**Figure 20:**  
**Breakdown of Courses by Certification**



NFQ Certified	27%
Other Certification	5%
Non-Certified	68%

**NOTE:** Refers to courses delivered to employed trainees.

### Some examples of network achievements in certification in 2011:

**IBEC Retail Skillnet** delivered a FETAC Level 3 Minor Award in Retail Customer Awareness. This training was developed specifically as a conversion programme to the retail sector for those with no previous retail experience. Retail customer awareness focuses on the role that consumer awareness programmes play in the creation and retention of satisfied customers. It teaches participants the techniques by which existing and potential customers acquire knowledge about products and services. This course equips participants with the necessary information regarding customer rights, obligations, responsibilities and duties. The programme consists of a mixture of theory and practice through project work. 14 trainees participated in the programme resulting in 252 training days.

**Life Sciences Skillnet** developed an Applied Continuous Improvement (Applied CI) FETAC certified programme specifically to promote the application of Continuous Improvement programmes and to accelerate lean initiatives in the Medical Devices/Food and Beverage/Pharmaceutical sectors. Applied CI focuses on the practical application of CI throughout a facility. It teaches participants techniques to successfully gather, assess and implement lean improvements and demonstrates a step by step path through the process. This course equips leaders and project team participants with the necessary knowledge and skills on project management, flow, problem solving and managing CI and uses company-specific examples and opportunities in an applied learning environment. The programme consists of a mixture of theory and practice through project work. 11 trainees participated in the programme resulting in 113 training days.

### Low Basic Skills (LBS)

Skillnets continues to promote the agenda of the lower-skilled (defined as trainees at NFQ Levels 1-5) through our main programmes and also make trainees with Level 5 or less on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) one of our key priorities in our Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP). Many networks developed and rolled-out certified learning activities below NFQ Level 5 during 2011. This is in line with national strategy around the lower-skilled. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) Statement of Activity 2011 referred to progress on the National Skills Strategy 2020 targets (Ref: Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy 2007). Action is required at a number of levels around the lower-skilled:

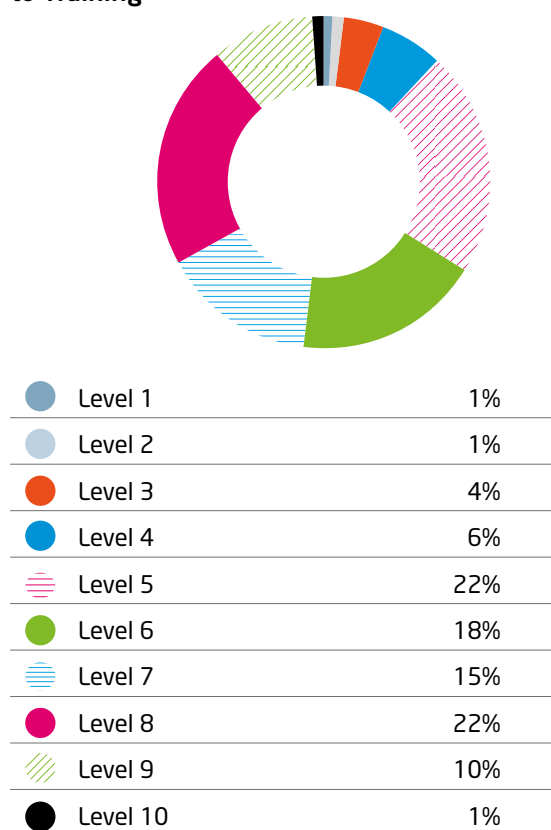
- An additional 500,000 individuals within the workforce will need to progress by at least one level on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- More specifically, the targets will entail upskilling 70,000 from NFQ Levels 1 & 2 to Level 3; 260,000 up to Levels 4 & 5.

### Outputs

12% of networks identified the fourth of Skillnets' strategic themes – key competencies for lifelong learning – as a priority area of focus for 2011. However, the majority of other networks also incorporated elements of this theme into their training plans. In terms of outputs, 34% of the TNP trainees in employment had a highest recognised qualification at NFQ Level 5 or below. For the job-seeker community, the proportion of lower-skilled unemployed trainees was significantly higher at 45%.

These figures are well above industry norms, where the lack of both training provision and take-up among the lower-skilled remains a serious obstacle. These figures show that the continuing promotion of the lower-skilled agenda among networks is having a positive impact, both in terms of highlighting awareness of the issue at macro-economic level, and also at a micro level where network member companies and their employees are accruing the benefits of upskilling.

**Figure 21:**  
**Breakdown of Trainee Educational Levels Prior to Training**



40% of NFQ certified training courses run in 2011 for employed trainees were at NFQ Level 5 or below, which again would be well above industry norms. These figures would not include the progression onto Level 6 or above by some trainees whose previous highest qualification was NFQ Level 5.

### Network example

Some of these courses were also newly developed in 2011 with Skillnets funding. For example, the Taste 4 Success Skillnet developed and rolled out five certified courses at Level 5 or below under the Future Skills Needs Programme (FSNP). These courses, which were specifically targeted at operatives and supervisors in the food and beverage sector, promote continuous learning by providing horizontal and vertical progression paths for learners in line with national policy.

### Quality Assurance

Internal evaluation processes are supported by the Skillnets Programme Operations team, and throughout 2011 a number of additional improvements to internal processes were made as part of our ongoing systems evaluation.

Each network had a compliance visit to review and quality assure their 2011 activity. Quality assurance and unannounced spot checks on training were conducted throughout the year, with the vast majority of networks having 2011 training activity sampled. These are key elements of programme monitoring by the Programme Operations team.

An internal QA audit was undertaken during 2011 to provide assurance on the training activity data recorded during Q1 & Q2, 2011 for 53 Training Networks Programme (TNP) networks and four Finuas Network Programme (Finuas) networks. The project focused on the corroboration of details of courses delivered by training providers. A systematic approach was adopted for sampling training providers.

Overall the findings of the project were positive. Based on the testing results, the following was noted:

- All courses recorded did take place
- Overall the recording of training days was accurate.
- The general awareness of the Skillnets model with member companies had improved
- Discussions with member companies and trainees indicated that the courses were of good quality and made a positive contribution to enterprise

No material issues were identified during this review.

### External Evaluation

In November 2010, Skillnets commissioned an independent evaluation of TNP and Finuas covering the 2010 activity of 66 networks; 62 from TNP and four from Finuas. Substantial work was undertaken in early 2011 on this evaluation with networks, promoters, member companies, trainees and stakeholders. The results of this evaluation were communicated at government and network levels.

Towards the end of 2011, Skillnets procured again for the services of an external evaluator to evaluate the impact of TNP and Finuas in 2011. The research operated on three main levels: network level, programme level and training activity level.

The study also includes detailed analysis of the newly piloted funding strands in 2011, namely JSSP, NCPD and FSNP. The outcomes and findings of this external evaluation will be available in mid-2012.

# Additional Training Network Activity 2011

In 2011 networks continued to place a strong emphasis on additional activities. This included events (seminars, conferences, networking), developing numerous reports, print and online publications and delivering training in innovative ways. A number of training networks were also recognised through a variety of awards.

## A roundup of some network events

1

Law Society Skillnet wins 2011 IITD Award for Networks and Groups. *Michelle Nolan*, Law School, *Edward McDermot*, Law Society, *John Gorman*, President, Irish Institute of Training & Development (IITD), *Attracta O'Regan*, Law Society Skillnet and *Tracey Donnery*, Skillnets pictured at the IITD National Training Awards.

2

*Philip Kelly*, HPSU Skillnet, *Alan Nuzum*, Skillnets, *Adele O'Meallaigh*, Galway Executive Skillnet (GES), Minister *Ciarán Cannon* T.D., Minister of State for Training and Skills, *Dee Timoney*, ITAG Skillnet, *Carl Blake*, Skillnets and *Christine O'Connor*, Gréasán na Meán Skillnet at the 'Innovate or Stagnate' breakfast briefing in Galway.

3

*Dave Flynn*, Skillnets, *Alan Nuzum*, Skillnets, *John Purcell*, Irish Distillers Ltd., *Simon Coveney*, T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, *Michael Slevin*, Rosderra Irish Meats, *Stephen Hennessy*, Country Cooking Company and *Bridie Corrigan-Matthews*, Taste4Success Skillnet at the launch of 'Up-skilling - A Skills Strategy for Operatives & Supervisors in the Food and Beverage Industry' in the Department of Agriculture.

4

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, *Pat Rabbitte*, T.D. addresses 'Independent Radio... a strong voice'.

5

*Emma Walsh*, Biznetcork Skillnet and *Niall Hartnett*, Biznetcork Skillnet Steering Group, at the 'Meet the Biznet Trainers' event in Cork.

6

*Adele O'Meallaigh*, Galway Executive Skillnet (GES), guest speaker *Terry Prone*, Communications Clinic, *Bernadette Turley*, Goodman Medical and *Liz Cassidy*, Irish Time Design at 'Positive Thinking and Motivation' run by Galway Executive Skillnet (GES).

7

*Tracey Donnery* and *Mick McHugh*, Skillnets and *Imelda Duffy*, Network Manager LHP Skillnet with the authors of 'Concepts of Care - A Text Book for Health Care Assistants'.

8

*Mark Fielding*, ISME, *Denis O'Callaghan*, AIB and Minister for Small Business, *John Perry*, T.D. at the launch of ISME Skillnet Advance Business Programme for Owner Managers.

9

*Shiera O'Brien*, Zenith Training, *Irene Canavan*, Inspire, *Margaret Wilson*, Inspire, *Noreen Fitzpatrick*, Skillnets and *Jane McNicholas*, EAP Consultants at the CPA Ireland Skillnet 'Women in Business' networking event in Cork.

10

Pictured at the Law Society Skillnet collaborative networking dinner with the Irish Women Lawyers' Association (IWLA) and the Bar Council of Ireland were *Tracey Donnery*, Skillnets, *Ann Harnett O'Connor* BL, IWLA Chairperson, The Hon. Ms. Justice *Maureen Clark*, IWLA President, *Attracta O'Regan*, Law Society Skillnet, *Máire Whelan* SC, Attorney General, *Michelle Ní Longáin*, Solicitor, Chair of the Law Society Skillnet Steering Committee and *Maura Butler*, Vice-Chairperson of IWLA.





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### Programme Operations

Best practice advice on training, network management, quality assurance and compliance visits were part of the monitoring and support service provided by the Programme Operations team in 2011.

A variety of special projects were also managed within the Programme Operations team focussing on specialised functions and subject areas. These included:

- Professional Development Programme and Diploma for Network Managers (PDP)
- SAM (Skillnets Activity Management): Skillnets online bespoke software management information system for networks
- 2010 Evaluation (involved extensive liaison with network stakeholders and the facilitation of the external evaluators who produced an independent report)
- Network Manager focus groups continued to operate in 2011. These groups were: Certification Group, Supporting the Unemployed Working Group and a Procurement Working Group. Each group played a vital role in providing feedback and feeding into Skillnets and national policy on relevant subject matters.

Joint winners of Student of the Year (CPD Diploma in Managing Business Networks) *Liz Carroll*, ISME Skillnet and *Brenda Sheridan*, Skillnets pictured with *Noreen Fitzpatrick*, Skillnets.

Photo courtesy of Jason Clarke Photography.



### 2011 Professional Development Programme (PDP)

The Professional Development Programme (PDP) is part of the support structure provided to network managers to ensure that productive results-based learning networks are developed which can meet the needs of member companies and their employees. The programme facilitates the sharing of best practice and learning among networks.

1. Two plenary events were held in bi-locations in January and October 2011
2. 23 PDP events in total including plenaries, clusters groups and workshops
3. Five CPD Diploma Modules leading to the graduation of 14 students under the DIT/Skillnets Continuing Professional Diploma (CPD) Award in Managing Business Networks
4. Three optional workshops were held on the following subjects, identified by network managers as key focus areas for 2011:
  - Supporting job-seekers
  - Certification
  - Driving traffic to your website and social media



## Overview of Key Departments



### Contribution to European Policy

In 2011, the work of Skillnets was represented at European level through attendance at workshops and study visits in Europe and as a host organisation for study visits organised by Léargas around a number of themes.

*'NFQ and EQF, Frameworks for Lifelong Learning' group.  
Dave Flynn and Mat Kujawa, Skillnets and Attracta  
O'Regan, Law Society Skillnet / Law Society Finuas  
Network and Teresa Hanratty, Learning Waves Skillnet  
hosted the study group.*

### Events hosted by Skillnets in 2011:

- 'Opportunities in education and training for workplace learning'
- 'NFQ and EQF, Frameworks for Lifelong Learning'
- 'New Opportunity Measures for Workers with Low Skills within the EQF'

### Representation in Europe:

- 'Fostering skill development and innovation in enterprises: Good practice examples' CEDEFOP Workshop - Greece
- 'Diversifying vocational education and training to amplify employment possibilities' study visit to Spain



### Communications

The Communications team is responsible for the creation and implementation of a strategic communications plan for Skillnets, targeting policy makers, stakeholders, companies, employees, job-seekers and media through a variety of channels such as advertising, promotion (print and digital), PR and publicity on corporate stories, corporate publications and policy reports, website development and public event management.

The team continued to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), collating responses to numerous queries and parliamentary questions and producing regular updates and reports as requested.

Skillnets announced a new call for proposals for the establishment of training networks in March. This was promoted through advertisements in national press and online.

The *Evaluation of Skillnets Training Programmes (TNP and Finuas) 2010 Report* was furnished to all Ministers and Ministers of State in the relevant departments, namely the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), Department of Social Protection (DSP), Department of Education and Skills (DES) and members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Social Protection and Education.

Skillnets' programmes for job-seekers were promoted in 2011 through the presentation of a number of seminars at career events. One of the key events was Career Zoo (www.careerzoo.ie), which took place in September in the Mansion House in Dublin. As well as delivering a seminar at the event - *Getting the skills and experience that you need and that employers want. Free industry-led training through Skillnets* - Skillnets also took a stand for the weekend. There was a large attendance and a huge interest from job-seekers in Skillnets and the courses provided.

A range of national print and radio media covered the announcement of Skillnets investment in training for redundant TalkTalk workers.

### Publications:

The team published a bi-annual newsletter *Skillnets News*, detailing the progress of networks across all programmes, marketplace issues and the ongoing activities of Skillnets corporately and distributed the newsletter to a wide variety of stakeholders. National and regional print and radio media covered the publication of the 2010 Annual Report in July.

[Skillnets Banners](#)  
[Skillnets Annual Report 2010](#)  
[Skillnets News September 2011](#)



## Overview of Key Departments

### Support to Networks:

Advice in the production of marketing collateral (pop-ups, brochures, reports, flyers, newsletters etc), advertising (TV, radio, print, digital), direct mail, website and apps development and PR and media relations was a key support function provided by the Communications team to over 60 networks in 2011. All networks were also monitored in terms of brand compliance for all collateral, publications and training materials produced on behalf of the network in line with our guidelines to acknowledge funding.

During 2011, the Communications team undertook a number of new initiatives, to assist networks in promoting their work and to promote networks through the Skillnets website. These initiatives were funded by Skillnets and included a variety of targeted advertisements through social media, local radio advertising and a banner advertisement on a prominent job recruitment website.

### Digital marketing

- A corporate trial job-seeker ad campaign was run through Facebook. Traffic increased to our job-seeker Find a Course page by 450% over a two week period. Based on this success, a longer campaign was run later in the year which had similar results. The ability for Facebook advertising to directly target individuals by age, location and education status made it a valuable tool and cost effective method of reaching potential trainees.
- Networks funded under the Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) were offered two week trials of Facebook advertising for their JSSP courses.
- A corporate trial campaign was also run on LinkedIn aimed at HR staff.

### Local radio advertising pilot

- The Communications team co-ordinated the writing, booking, recording and airing of the advertisements, on behalf of the network.
- Ten networks participated in this local radio advertising pilot.
- Adverts were focused on: recruitment of trainees for a specific training course, recruitment of job-seekers in general and the recruitment of member companies etc.

### Workshop - 'Driving Traffic to your Website'

With the growing importance of online promotion, a workshop for network managers, entitled *Driving Traffic to your Website*, was run by the Communications team in June as part of the Professional Development Programme (PDP). It encompassed a wide range of topics including devising a web strategy, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), web analytics and website design and usability.

### Online Promotion Guide for Networks

This guide was produced in November and included in depth, network-specific instructions on best practice guidelines for websites, interacting with social media/marketing, Google Analytics, monitoring conversations online and setting up network pages and ads on platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook.

A customised training session for Skillnets staff on websites, social media and digital marketing was also held in December.

### Finance and Services

The Finance and Services team is responsible for the financial management of the organisation and the provision of financial support to the wider network community under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) and Finuas Networks Programme. The team also ensures the provision of capacity and services needed by the organisation as a whole to deliver its key objectives.

In 2011, funding from the Government was reduced, however, with continued focus on the efficient use of scarce resources and a reduction in administration costs, the team managed to ensure a greater level of financial support for training initiatives undertaken by the organisation and the wider network community.

In 2011, the team played an active role in successfully completing a new network development phase, a full call for new programme entrants and engaged in several new programme initiatives, all designed to promote better training in enterprise and harness Skillnets engagement with enterprise to support job-seekers.

The team continues to play a support role working in a more integrated fashion with the Programme Operations team by providing support for networks in the context of tighter resources.

Internal audit resources continued to focus on providing corroborative assurance on the quality of courses run by networks and the record of programme achievements. Further methods of providing additional assurance were developed with the involvement of the Finance & Services and Programme Operations teams.

The team also provides corporate governance support to the Chief Executive, the Board and Board committees, to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Toward the end of the year, the team dedicated resources to planning and establishing capabilities for the New Year to ensure continuity of support for networks in early 2012.

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# Corporate Governance

Skillnets Limited is a company limited by guarantee established in 1998 under the Companies Acts. The company has 19 employees and a board of 13 non-executive directors representing various enterprise stakeholders. It operates on a not for profit basis within the mandate described overleaf.



The company received a new Mandate and Funding Agreement from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in February 2011; the previous mandate having expired on 31st December 2010. The Funding Agreement makes provision for funding from the National Training Fund (NTF) at the discretion of DES within the annual budgetary estimates process.

In 2011, the company completed the second year of its two-year programme of network based, enterprise-led training, the Training Network Programme (TNP) 2010/11 (TNP Round 5). The company held a public call for proposals and as a result successfully incorporated 15 new networks into this programme. Skillnets also completed a third year of the Finuas Networks Programme, an initiative for the International Financial Services (IFS) sector.

Following a successful pilot programme in 2010, Skillnets implemented a full Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) in 2011. Two further initiatives aimed at supporting priority sectors identified by the Expert Group for Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and new course development were also run, both in conjunction with the Training Networks and Finuas Programmes.

The Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) aimed to provide access to job-seekers to relevant training in demand by enterprise coupled with on the job work experience. This programme has enabled the company to respond to the increasing numbers of unemployed and take advantage of Skillnets positioning within the enterprise-led training sector.

In the year ahead, Skillnets will start a further two-year programme of network-based enterprise led training, the Training Network Programme 2012/13, (TNP Round 6) and the Finuas Programme for 2012. Both the TNP and Finuas programmes will continue to make available training opportunities to job-seekers. The company intends to continue to leverage these two programmes and make further progress with Job-seekers Support Programme (JSSP) and other initiatives in support of priority sectors and new course development.

The company has committed to developing a pilot programme to support the Management Development needs of SMEs in 2012.

# Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

Corporate governance in Skillnets comprises all the systems and procedures employed to direct and manage our operations. The Board is primarily responsible for setting a broad range of policies and ensuring they are implemented. The executive management is responsible for the implementation of policy.

Skillnets adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies in conjunction with the renewal of its Mandate and Funding Agreement with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and affirms the terms of the Code are being complied with as follows:

### Section 13.1 (ii):

Appropriate procedures have been put in place for financial reporting, internal audit, travel, procurement, and asset disposals and the requirements of these procedures are being complied with.

### Section 13.1 (iii):

Internal Financial control – The Board is responsible for Skillnets system of internal financial control and it exercises this responsibility with the assistance of the Audit and the Finance & General Purposes Committees of the Board. The system of internal control adopted by the company provides reasonable assurance against material error.

The key procedures put in place to provide effective internal financial control include:

- Adequate division of duties
- Review by the Audit and the Finance & General Purposes Committees
- Approval by the Board of all grants and material contracts
- Approval by the Board of the annual budget and the assessment of performance against budgets and targets set

- Liaison of the Audit Committee with both external and internal auditors at the start and conclusion of audits
- Regular meetings of the board and the oversight of all payments made

### Section 13.1 (iv)

Skillnets has a comprehensive set of policies and codes covering the conduct of its directors and employees.

### Section 13.1 (v)

Whilst Skillnets is not a state body, the Board affirms that the pay for the Skillnets Chief Executive and employees is within the limits prescribed in Government policy on the pay of Chief Executives and state body employees.

### Section 13.1 (vi)

Fees paid to the Chairman and Directors are within the rates authorised by the relevant Minister.

### Section 13.1 (ix)

Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals in the Public Sector are being complied with.

### Section 13.1 (x)

The Government travel policy requirements are reflected in Skillnets travel and expenses policies which are being complied with. The Board of Skillnets has also reviewed and agreed to a set of identifiable risks for ongoing examination by the Board at its scheduled meetings and has also agreed a Risk Management Policy which is also the subject of ongoing review and amendment. The Board has conducted a review of its own performance and held a strategic planning meeting aimed at developing its strategy for the next 3 to 5 years. The Board has in place a specific and well defined set of Terms of Reference for its four Board committees.

## Directors & CEO

Attendance of directors at Board meetings during the year was as follows:

Name	No. of meetings
Mr. Domhnall MacDomhnaill (Chairperson)	7
Mr. Sexton Cahill	1
Ms. Mairéad Divilly	5
Mr. George Hennessy	3
Mr. Terry Hobdell	5
Ms. Nuala Keher	5
Mr. John Mc Dermott	2
Mr. Brendan McGinty	4
Mr. Henry Murdoch	6
Mr. Peter Rigney	3
Mr. Niall Saul	2
Mr. Eamon Devoy	1
Mr. Mícheál Ó Fiannachta	4
Mr. Ian Talbot	7

NOTE: The following directors resigned from the Board in 2011:

John McDermott - 7th June 2011

Sexton Cahill - 31st August 2011

The following directors were appointed to the Board in 2011:

Mícheál Ó Fiannachta - 9th June 2011

Eamon Devoy - 8th December 2011

Karl McDonagh - 8th December 2011

The following expenses were paid to directors in 2011.

Name	Amount
Mr. Domhnall MacDomhnaill (Chairperson)	2,361
Ms. Nuala Keher	1,613
Mr. Henry Murdoch	116

NOTE: The salary of the Chief Executive has not increased since April 2008 and he has voluntarily foregone entitlement to performance-related bonus payments.

In February 2011, the Chief Executive undertook a voluntary reduction of 10% of salary to €119,135. The salary paid to the Chief Executive in 2011 was €120,243. A contribution of €13,237 was made to the Chief Executive's pension scheme as employees of Skillnets Limited do not have access to any public sector pension arrangements.

### Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and Standards in Public Office Act, 2001.

All Skillnets Board members and staff holding designated positions have completed statements of interest in compliance with the provisions of the Acts.

### Freedom of Information Acts, 1997, & 2003.

Skillnets operates in accordance with the Acts. Requests for information should be addressed to the FOI Officer, Skillnets Ltd., Q House Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

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# Financial Information & Statement of Results

## Skillnets Limited Reports and Financial Statements

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## **Skillnets Limited** **Directors and Other Information**

### **DIRECTORS**

Domhnall MacDomhnaill (Chairman)  
Terry Hobdell  
Nuala Keher  
Henry Murdoch  
Niall Saul  
Mairead Divilly  
Brendan McGinty  
Peter Rigney  
Ian Talbot  
George Hennessy  
Karl McDonagh  
Eamon Devoy

### **SECRETARY**

Alan Nuzum

### **REGISTERED OFFICE**

5th Floor  
Q House  
76 Furze Road  
Sandyford  
Dublin 18

### **REGISTERED NUMBER**

298694

### **AUDITORS**

Deloitte & Touche  
Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors  
Deloitte & Touche House  
Earlsfort Terrace  
Dublin 2

### **SOLICITORS**

Philip Lee Solicitors  
7/8 Wilton Terrace  
Dublin 2

### **PRINCIPAL BANKERS**

Bank of Ireland  
Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

### Skillnets Limited Directors' Report

The directors submit their annual report, together with the audited financial statements, for the year ended 31 December 2011.

#### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The company was incorporated on 17 December 1998. The company was formed to provide grants for the promotion, formation and successful operation of enterprise-led training networks under the Training Networks Programme. This is funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

#### RESULTS FOR THE YEAR

Surplus for the financial year amounted to: Nil

#### FAIR REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE BUSINESS AND PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Company's Mandate and Funding Agreement with the Department of Education and Skills makes provision for funding from the National Training Fund within the annual budgetary estimates process. The company has contracted with a number of promoter organisations to fund training networks. This commitment has been made contingent upon the funds being made available to the company. In this regard, we draw your attention to the disclosures set out in Note 1 to the financial statements.

A subsidiary company, Skillnets Services Limited, formed in 2005, provided professional services to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. This company ceased trading on 31 December 2008.

#### DIRECTORS

The current directors and secretary are listed on page 2. On the 9 June 2011, Mícheál Ó Fiannachta was appointed to the Board and on 8 December 2011 Karl McDonagh and Eamon Devoy were appointed to the Board.

The following directors resigned from the Board:

Sexton Cahill	31 August 2011
John McDermott	7 June 2011
Mícheál Ó Fiannachta	31 January 2012

#### € BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the company's obligation to keep proper books of account are the use of appropriate systems and procedures and employment of competent persons. The books of account are kept at 5th Floor, Q House, 76 Furze Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

#### AUDITORS

The auditors, Deloitte & Touche, Chartered Accountants, continue in office in accordance with Section 160(2) of the Companies Act, 1963

Signed on behalf of the Board:

Director

Director

Date: 22nd March 2012

### **Skillnets Limited** **Statement of Directors’** **Responsibilities**

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the result of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and comply with Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Independent Auditors’** **Report to the Members of** **Skillnets Limited**

**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND  
NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL)**

We have audited the financial statements of Skillnets Limited for the year ended 31 December 2011 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Statement of Accounting Policies and the related notes 1 to 17. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

This report is made solely to the company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors’ report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

#### **Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors**

The directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements, as set out in the Statement of Directors’ Responsibilities in accordance with applicable law and accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

Our responsibility, as independent auditor, is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

*Continued on next page*

# Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of Skillnets Limited

(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL)

*Continued from previous page*

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, and are properly prepared in accordance with Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company and whether the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purpose of our audit and whether the company's balance sheet and income and expenditure account are in agreement with the books of account.

We also report to you if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and directors' transactions is not disclosed and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

We read the Directors' Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatement within it. Our responsibilities do not extend to other information.

### Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

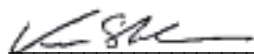
### Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the affairs of the company as at 31 December 2011 and of its result for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009.

We have obtained all the information and explanations we considered necessary for the purpose of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company. The company's balance sheet and its income and expenditure account are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements.



Kevin Sheehan  
For and behalf of Deloitte & Touche  
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors  
Dublin

Date: 22 March 2012

# Skillnets Limited

## Statement of Accounting Policies

The significant accounting policies adopted by the company are as follows:

### **BASIS OF PREPARATION**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards generally accepted in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009. Accounting Standards generally accepted in Ireland in preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view are those published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and issued by the Accounting Standards Board.

### **ACCOUNTING CONVENTION**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in Ireland and are expressed in Euro (€).

### **DEPARTMENT FUNDING**

Funding from the Department of Education and Skills is received to meet both revenue and minor capital expenditure. This is credited to deferred income on receipt and is transferred to income and expenditure account to match expenditure as it is incurred.

### **PROGRAMME COSTS**

Programme costs represent programme support and grant payments made to fund the operations of projects on behalf of the company for the formation and successful operation of enterprise-led networks.

### **DEFERRED TAXATION**

Deferred taxation is provided for all timing differences that have originated but not reversed at the balance sheet date where transactions or events that result in an obligation to pay more tax in the future or a right to pay less tax in the future have occurred at the balance sheet date.

Timing differences are temporary differences between profits as computed for tax purposes and profits as stated in the financial statements which arise because certain items of income and expenditure in the financial statements are dealt with in different years for tax purposes.

Deferred taxation is measured at the tax rates that are expected to apply in the years in which the timing differences are expected to reverse, based on tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantially enacted by the balance sheet date. Deferred taxation is not discounted.

### **TANGIBLE ASSETS**

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is charged for leasehold improvements over the term of the lease obligation. Depreciation is charged for all other fixed assets at a rate of 33% using the straight line method.

## Skillnets Limited

### Income and Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31 December 2011

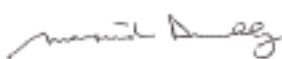
	Notes	2011 €	2010 €
<b>INCOME</b>	2	<b>14,504,938</b>	14,648,951
Programme costs		(12,385,777)	(12,168,908)
<b>GROSS SURPLUS</b>		<b>2,119,161</b>	2,480,043
Administration costs		(2,127,784)	(2,486,970)
<b>OPERATING DEFICIT</b>		<b>(8,623)</b>	(6,927)
Interest income		11,498	10,232
<b>SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION</b>	3	<b>2,875</b>	3,305
Taxation	4	(2,875)	(3,305)
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>		<b>-</b>	-

Income and expenditure arose solely from continuing activities. There were no recognised gains or losses other than those dealt with in the Income and Expenditure Account.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 and signed on its behalf by:



Director



Director


# Skillnets Limited

## Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2011

	Notes	2011 €	2010 €
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Financial assets	5	1	1
Tangible assets	6	10,549	16,153
		<b>10,550</b>	<b>16,154</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	7	92,743	39,584
Cash at bank and in hand		92,906	766,735
		<b>185,649</b>	<b>806,319</b>
<b>CREDITORS:</b>	8	<b>(135,996)</b>	<b>(757,332)</b>
(Amounts falling due within one year)			
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>49,653</b>	<b>48,987</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>60,203</b>	<b>65,141</b>
<b>DEFERRED INCOME</b>	9	<b>(60,203)</b>	<b>(65,141)</b>
		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>			
Members' funds		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 and signed on its behalf by:



Director



Director

## Skillnets Limited

### Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 31 December 2011

	Notes	2011 €	2010 €
Cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	10	(676,006)	424,799
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	11	11,498	10,232
Capital expenditure and financial investment	11	(4,106)	(23,046)
Taxation paid		(5,215)	(1,391)
(Decrease)/increase in cash	12	(673,829)	410,594

### Reconciliation of Net Cash (Outflow) / Inflow to Movement in Net Funds

	Notes	2011 €	2010 €
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year		(673,829)	410,594
Net funds at 1 January		766,735	356,141
Net funds at 31 December	12	92,906	766,735



## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

#### 1. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2011 records a breakeven position, consistent with previous years. Net current assets were €49,653 as at 31 December 2011 (2010: €48,987).

The Mandate and Funding Agreement with the Department of Education and Skills ("DES") was revised on 11 January 2011 and will continue for the foreseeable future until such time as the Minister for Educational and Skills shall deem otherwise. The Company has contracted with a number of promoter organisations to fund training networks. The commitment has been made contingent upon the necessary funds being made available to the Company by the Department.

#### 2. INCOME

This represents amounts received from the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with the accounting policy set out on page 59.

#### 3. SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION

2011  
€

2010  
€

Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation has been arrived at after charging:

Staff costs

- wages and salaries	1,241,936	1,440,433
- Social welfare costs	120,764	131,428
	<b>1,362,700</b>	<b>1,571,861</b>

Gain on disposal of fixed assets

(150) (100)

Auditors' remuneration

12,000 12,000

Depreciation

9,860 84,896

Directors' remuneration is disclosed separately in Note 15.

Auditors' remuneration disclosure (excluding Value Added Tax)

- Audit	12,000	12,000
- Tax advisory services	1,500	1,500
- Other assurance services	-	-
- Other non audit services	1,200	1,200

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

#### 4. TAXATION

	2011 €	2010 €
<b>Current tax:</b>		
Irish corporation tax on passive income	4,829	1,351
<b>Deferred tax:</b>		
Origination and reversal of timing differences	(1,954)	1,954
Deferred tax charge for the year	(1,954)	1,954
Total tax charge for the year	2,875	3,305

The current tax charge for the year is different to the current charge that would result from applying the standard rate of Irish corporation tax to surplus on ordinary activities. The differences are explained below:

	2011 €	2010 €
Surplus on ordinary activities before tax	2,875	3,305
Surplus on ordinary activities multiplied by the standard rate of Irish corporation tax for the year of 12.5% (2010: 12.5%)	359	413
<i>Effects of:</i>		
Loss of relief not available	-	1,613
Timing differences on deposit interest received	1,954	(1,954)
Passive income at higher tax rate	2,516	1,279
Current tax charge for the year	4,829	1,351

There are no known factors which may affect future tax charges.

It has been agreed with the Revenue Commissioners that Skillnets Limited is not subject to corporation tax on its principal activities but is subject to corporation tax on its other income including deposit interest income.

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

#### 5. FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets represent a 100% holding in its subsidiary Skillnets Services Limited, a company incorporated in Ireland on 5 July 2005. Skillnets Services Limited provided professional services for the Department of Education and Skills. Skillnets Services Limited recorded a loss after taxation of €22 in 2011 and at 31 December 2011 had net assets of €161,076. Skillnets Services Limited ceased to operate following the completion of the Accel Programme at the end of 2008.

#### 6. FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment €	Fixtures and Fittings €	Computers €	Total €
<b>Cost:</b>				
At 1 January 2011	15,023	121,386	451,814	588,223
Additions	744	-	3,512	4,256
Disposals	(171)	(250)	(7,482)	(7,903)
<b>At 31 December 2011</b>	<b>15,596</b>	<b>121,136</b>	<b>447,844</b>	<b>584,576</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation:</b>				
At 1 January 2011	13,317	121,258	437,495	572,070
Disposals	(171)	(250)	(7,482)	(7,903)
Charge for the year	1,102	128	8,630	9,860
<b>At 31 December 2011</b>	<b>14,248</b>	<b>121,136</b>	<b>438,643</b>	<b>574,027</b>
<b>Net book values:</b>				
<b>At 31 December 2011</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,201</b>	<b>10,549</b>
At 31 December 2010	1,706	128	14,319	16,153

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

<b>7. DEBTORS:</b> (Amounts due within one year)	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	€	€
Grant debtor	59,154	-
Prepayments and other debtors	32,203	39,332
Corporation tax	1,386	252
	<b>92,743</b>	<b>39,584</b>
<b>8. CREDITORS:</b> (Amounts falling due within one year)	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	€	€
Amounts payable to the Department of Education and Skills (Note 9)	-	666,735
Accruals	135,996	72,642
Finance lease	-	13,227
Value added tax	-	2,774
Deferred tax	-	1,954
	<b>135,996</b>	<b>757,332</b>
<b>FINANCE LEASES:</b> maturity and security	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	€	€
Future minimum payments under finance leases are as follows:		
In one year or less	-	13,518
In more than one year, but not more than five years	-	-
	<b>-</b>	<b>13,518</b>
Total gross payments	-	13,518
Less finance charges included above	-	(291)
	<b>-</b>	<b>13,227</b>

The lease financed certain fixtures and fittings which remain in the legal ownership of the lessor.

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

<b>9. DEFERRED INCOME</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Opening balance	65,141	380,827
Received during year	14,500,000	15,000,000
Credited to income and expenditure account	(14,504,938)	(14,648,951)
Commitment to return to the Department of Education and Skills (Note 8)	-	(666,735)
Deferred at 31 December	<u>60,203</u>	<u>65,141</u>
<b>10. RECONCILIATION OF OPERATING DEFICIT TO OPERATING CASH FLOW</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Operating deficit before interest income	(8,623)	(6,927)
Depreciation	9,860	84,896
Increase/decrease in debtors and prepayments	(52,025)	21,801
Decrease/increase in creditors	(625,068)	325,129
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	(150)	(100)
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	<u>(676,006)</u>	<u>424,799</u>
<b>11. ANALYSIS OF CASH FLOWS FOR HEADINGS NETTED IN THE CASH FLOW STATEMENTS</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Returns on investment and servicing of finance		
Interest received	11,498	10,232
Capital expenditure and financial investment		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(4,256)	(23,146)
Sale of tangible fixed assets	150	100
Net cash outflow for capital expenditure and financial investment	<u>(4,106)</u>	<u>(23,046)</u>

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

#### 12. ANALYSIS OF NET FUNDS

	At 31 December 2010 €	Cash Flow €	At 31 December 2011 €
Cash at hand and in bank	766,735	(673,829)	92,906

#### 13. MEMBERSHIP

The company is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Every member is liable for the debts and liabilities of the company in the event of a winding up, for such amount as may be required but not exceeding €1 each. The number of members at 31 December 2011 was 13 (2010: 13), being each of the directors.

Skillnets Limited and its subsidiary Skillnets Services Limited combined meet the size criteria for a small sized group and Skillnets Limited is therefore exempt from the requirements to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue of Regulation 7 of the European Communities (Companies: Group Accounts) Regulations, 1992.

#### 14. FINANCE COMMITMENTS

The Company has an annual commitment of €292,203 on the occupational lease of the premises in Sandyford. The lease is for 9 years and 11 months with a break clause on the 5th anniversary of the commencement date of 14 July 2008.

#### 15. DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION

	2011 €	2010 €
Fees	48,195	47,250

In addition, a number of directors have waived their fee entitlement and instead opted to have a similar amount paid to their representative organisations. During the year, payments of €17,010 (2010: €31,500) were made on this basis.

## Skillnets Limited

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2011

#### 15. DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION (continued)

Name	Payment Details	
	2011 €	2010 €
Domhnall Mac Domhnaill	8,505	9,450
Terry Hobdell	5,670	6,300
Sexton Cahill	5,670	6,300
Niall Saul	5,670	6,300
Mairead Divilly	5,670	6,300
Brendan McGinty	5,670	6,300
Henry Murdoch	5,670	6,300
Nuala Keher	5,670	-
	<b>48,195</b>	<b>47,250</b>
Nuala Keher to Irish Congress of Trade Unions	-	6,300
George Hennessy to Construction Industry Federation	5,670	6,300
Ian Talbot to Chambers Ireland	5,670	6,300
Peter Rigney to Irish Congress of Trade Unions	5,670	6,300
Sean Heading to Education, and Training Organisational Services (ETOS)	-	6,300
	<b>17,010</b>	<b>31,500</b>

Out of pocket expenses paid to directors in the year amounted to €4,090 (2010; €5,949).

#### 16. EMPLOYEES

	2011 Number	2010 Number
The number of full time equivalent persons employed by the company during the year was as follows	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>

#### 17. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There are no post balance sheet events to be disclosed.



# Skillnets Board and Committees 2011

## Business & Employers Representatives



**Domhnall MacDomhnaill**  
(Chairperson)  
Irish Business & Employers  
Confederation (IBEC)

Committee:  
Chair: Finance & General  
Purposes



**Brendan McGinty**  
Irish Business & Employers  
Confederation (IBEC)

Committee:  
Policy, Research  
& Communications



**Sexton Cahill**  
Irish Business & Employers  
Confederation (IBEC)

Committee:  
Chair: Policy, Research  
& Communications



**Niall Saul**  
Irish Business & Employers  
Confederation (IBEC)

Committees:  
Audit and Finance  
& General Purposes

Resigned 31.08.2011



**Karl McDonagh**  
Irish Business & Employers  
Confederation (IBEC)

Appointed 08.12.2011



**Ian Talbot**  
Chambers Ireland

Committee:  
Evaluation & Performance  
Monitoring



**George Hennessy**  
Construction Industry  
Federation (CIF)

Committee:  
Policy, Research  
& Communications



**Mairéad Divilly**  
Small Firms Association  
(SFA)

Committees:  
Chair: Audit and Finance  
& General Purposes

### Employee Representatives



**Nuala Keher**  
Irish Congress of Trade  
Unions (ICTU)

Committee:  
Policy, Research  
& Communications



**Peter Rigney**  
Irish Congress of Trade  
Unions (ICTU)

Committees:  
Audit and Finance  
& General Purposes  
Evaluation & Performance  
Monitoring



**Eamon Devoy**  
Irish Congress of Trade  
Unions (ICTU)

Appointed 08.12.11



**Alan Nuzum**

### Ministerial Representatives



**John McDermott**  
Committees:  
Audit and Finance  
& General Purposes

Resigned 07.06.11



**Mícheál Ó Fiannachta**  
Committees:  
Audit and Finance  
& General Purposes

Appointed 09.06.11



**Terry Hobdell**  
Committee:  
Evaluation & Performance  
Monitoring



**Henry Murdoch**  
Committee:  
Chair: Evaluation &  
Performance Monitoring

# Appendices

## 1. Advisory Bodies

In 2011 Skillnets participated in, and were represented on, many national bodies, committees and advisory groups, including the following:

- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN)
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- FETAC Standards Advisory Board  
FETAC Standards Development Group (Business)
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- Léargas - selection committee
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- CEDEFOP  
Skillnets have participated in and helped to facilitate various CEDFOP projects.
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## 2. TNP 2011 Network Listing

Skillnet	Region	Sector
<b>A</b>		
ACIST Skillnet	Mid West	Mixed
<b>B</b>		
Biznet Cork Skillnet	South West	Mixed
Business Excellence Skillnet	National	Mixed
<b>C</b>		
Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet	South East	Mixed
CCMA Ireland Skillnet	National	Call Centre & Shared Services
CITA Skillnet	National	Construction
CPA Ireland Skillnet	National	Business
Crè Compost Skillnet	National	Environmental Goods & Services
<b>D</b>		
Design, Print & Packaging Skillnet	National	Manufacturing, Services, Design, Print & Packaging
Developing Enterprises Skillnet	Border, West, Midlands	Mixed
Digital Media Forum Skillnet	National	Technology
Donegal Digital Skillnet	Border	Mixed
<b>E</b>		
Entrepreneur Skillnet	National	Mixed
Equal Ireland Skillnet	National	Mixed
Equestrian Skillnet	National	Agriculture, Equestrian
<b>F</b>		
Farm Business Skillnet	National	Mixed
Fingal & North Dublin Skillnet	Dublin	Mixed
First Polymer Training Skillnet	National	Engineering, Life Sciences, Manufacturing
<b>G</b>		
Galway Executive Skillnet	West	Mixed
GMIT Innovation Skillnet	Border	Engineering, Manufacturing, Technology
Gréasán na Meán Skillnet	West	Media/Audiovisual, Digital, Online & Print Media
<b>H</b>		
HPSU Skillnet	Border, West, Midlands, Mid West, Mid East	Mixed
<b>I</b>		
IBEC Retail Skillnet	National	Retail
ICOS Skillnet	National	Agriculture, Food & Drink, Retail
ICT Ireland Skillnet	National	ICT Manufacturing & Services
Innovation & Lean Sigma Skillnet	National	Mixed
IPFMA Skillnet	National	Services
Irish Franchising Skillnet	National	Services
ISME Skillnet	National	Mixed
ITAG Skillnet	West	Technology

## Appendices

Skillnet	Region	Sector
<b>L</b>		
Law Society Skillnet	National	Financial Services, Services, Legal
Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet	National	Health
Learning Waves Skillnet	National	Independent Commercial Radio
Life Sciences Skillnet	National	Food & Drink, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical
Limerick Chamber Skillnet	Mid West	Mixed
<b>M</b>		
Management Development Skillnet	National	Business
MBE Skillnet	National	Mixed
<b>N</b>		
National Organic Training Skillnet	National	Agriculture
<b>O</b>		
Outsourcing Skillnet	National	Mixed
<b>P</b>		
PharmaChem Skillnet	National	Life Sciences, Pharmaceutical
Positive2Work Skillnet	National	Mixed
Procurement and Supply Management Skillnet	National	Mixed
Project Management Skillnet	National	Mixed
PRO Skillnet	West	Mixed
<b>R</b>		
R&D Skillnet	National	Life Sciences
Refrigeration Skillnet	National	Engineering
RIAI Skillnet	National	Construction
Role Skillnet	Border, West	Mixed
Rural Enterprise Skillnet	Border, West, Midlands	Agriculture
Rural Food Skillnet	National	Food & Drink
<b>S</b>		
Social Media Skillnet	National	Mixed
Software Skillnet	National	ICT Manufacturing & Services
South East Micro Skillnet	National	Mixed
South Kerry Skillnet	South West	Mixed
South West Gnó Skillnet	National	Mixed
Southern Tipperary Skillnet	South East	Mixed
Space Industry Skillnet	National	Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology
<b>T</b>		
Taste4Success Skillnet	National	Food & Drink
Tech Northwest Skillnet	Border	Mixed
The Innovation Skillnet	Dublin	Mixed
Trainers Learning Skillnet	National	Services
Travel Professionals Skillnet	National	Tourism & Travel
<b>U</b>		
ULearning Skillnet	National	Mixed
Union Learning Skillnet	National	Mixed
<b>W</b>		
Waterford Chamber Skillnet	South East	Mixed
Wind Skillnet	National	Mixed
Women At Work Skillnet	National	Mixed
<b>X</b>		
XLVets Skillnet	National	Agriculture, Business, Veterinary

### 3. Finuas 2011 Network Listing

Skillnet	Region	Sector
Law Society Finuas Network	National	Professional Services
Munster Finuas Network	Munster	Banking & Capital Markets, Investment Management, Insurance, Specialist Services, Technology
Summit Finuas Network	National	Banking & Capital Markets, Investment Management, Insurance, Specialist Services, Re-Insurance, Fund Administration, Asset Finance, Corporate Treasury
Aviation Finance Finuas Network	National	Aviation Finance & Leasing

### 4. Regional Glossary

<b>National:</b>	Nationwide
<b>Border:</b>	The counties of Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo
<b>West:</b>	The counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon
<b>Midlands:</b>	The counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath
<b>Mid East:</b>	The counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow
<b>Dublin:</b>	The city of Dublin, and the areas of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin
<b>South East:</b>	The counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary (South), Waterford and Wexford
<b>South West:</b>	The counties of Cork and Kerry
<b>Mid West:</b>	The counties of Clare, Limerick and Tipperary (North)







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