

A smiling woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue denim shirt, holding a tablet and gesturing with her hand. The background is a blurred office setting.

Call for Funding New Networks 2019

Application Form
Guidelines

Call for Funding - New Networks 2020

Application Form Guidelines

This document provides information on making an application for funding for new Skillnet Ireland networks. It also includes specific guidelines for each section of the application form. Numbering in this part of the document corresponds to the relevant sections in the application form.

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Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills.



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



About Skillnet Ireland

Established in 1999, Skillnet Ireland is an enterprise-led agency that supports workforce learning to sustain national competitiveness. Skillnet Ireland is funded through the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and is principally aligned to Ireland's *National Skills Strategy 2025*. Skillnet Ireland funds over 60 individual Skillnet networks supporting over 15,000 companies and 50,000 trainees across the economy. Skillnet Ireland facilitates companies to actively participate in determining their own training needs and how, when and where training will be facilitated. Programmes are optimised to suit the needs of employed learners, through both formal and informal learning that spans further education and higher education provision. Our model fosters cohesive and collaborative enterprise networking and provides a flexibility and nimbleness to respond to ever-changing skill demands. Our networks are active across Ireland's sectors and regions.

What is a Skillnet Network?

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

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

Skillnet Ireland Statement of Strategy 2016-19

Skillnet Ireland' strategy serves to support national economic growth and bring real results to enterprise at a regional and sectoral level. Skillnet Ireland goals are also closely aligned with national policy and will contribute to the implementation of national workforce development aims. The Strategy was developed following a thorough consultation process with key stakeholders in 2016 and is closely aligned to Ireland's *National Skills Strategy 2025* and other relevant policies. In the coming years, Skillnet Ireland will be driven by three strategic goals:

Goal One

Make training effectiveness, impact and relevance core to Skillnet Ireland activities. Promote continuous improvement in the learning experiences provided to enterprise through our networks and be a model for training excellence in an enterprise context.

Goal Two

Play a pivotal role in maintaining a supply of the specific skills and future skills that impact the growth potential of Irish enterprise.

Goal Three

Drive increased participation of employers in our proposition. In doing so, we will be a key enabler in sustaining national competitiveness through the up-skilling of those in employment.

Skillnet Ireland Strategy 2016-19 is available to view at: <https://www.skillnetireland.ie/about/our-strategy/>

Call For Proposals for New Networks in 2020

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

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

This Call is facilitating Skillnet Ireland to develop new Pilot Skillnet Networks in areas that complement our existing group of over 60 Skillnet networks and increase our reach across the over 280,000 SMEs in Ireland.

The primary objectives of this Call are to encourage and invite applications which:

- Focus on the delivery of learning interventions that meet defined skills needs vital for the growth and competitiveness of enterprise.
- Align with the national workforce policy and relevant sectoral / regional policy.
- Present strategic plans and solutions to their joint training needs, that is based on a robust learning needs analysis with relevant enterprise groups.
- Increase the participation of new member firms with Skillnet Ireland.
- Are congruent with the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the sector/region/thematic area.
- Address both technical competencies and behavioural competencies (including management development).
- Design and deliver programmes that address transversal skills (or generic competencies), which are the cornerstone of career development and enterprise effectiveness.
- Enable enterprises, and SMEs in particular, to nurture and retain talented employees.
- Facilitate an enterprise-led approach to learning and utilise the “Network” potential of our model.
- Include new programme proposals to address specific/ future skills that include collaborations with Higher Education Institutions, NMQ and other awarding bodies to facilitate new formal accreditation (where appropriate).
- Promote the value and importance of lifelong learning (both formal and informal learning) to national competitiveness.

Who can form a Skillnet network?

Any group of private enterprises or any enterprise-led association can form a Skillnet learning network, provided that they have a strategic and long-term common interest to pursue workforce development. The network must be led by a contracting organisation ([see below](#)).

What does a Skillnet network do?

A learning network (a ‘Skillnet’) is a group of companies that come together to carry out cross-organisational training-related activities which may not be possible on their own. The network can achieve a common purpose or address shared issues of importance to the development of skills and long-term competitiveness. The exact activities of the network are decided by the network members.

However, in general the networks carry out the following tasks:

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

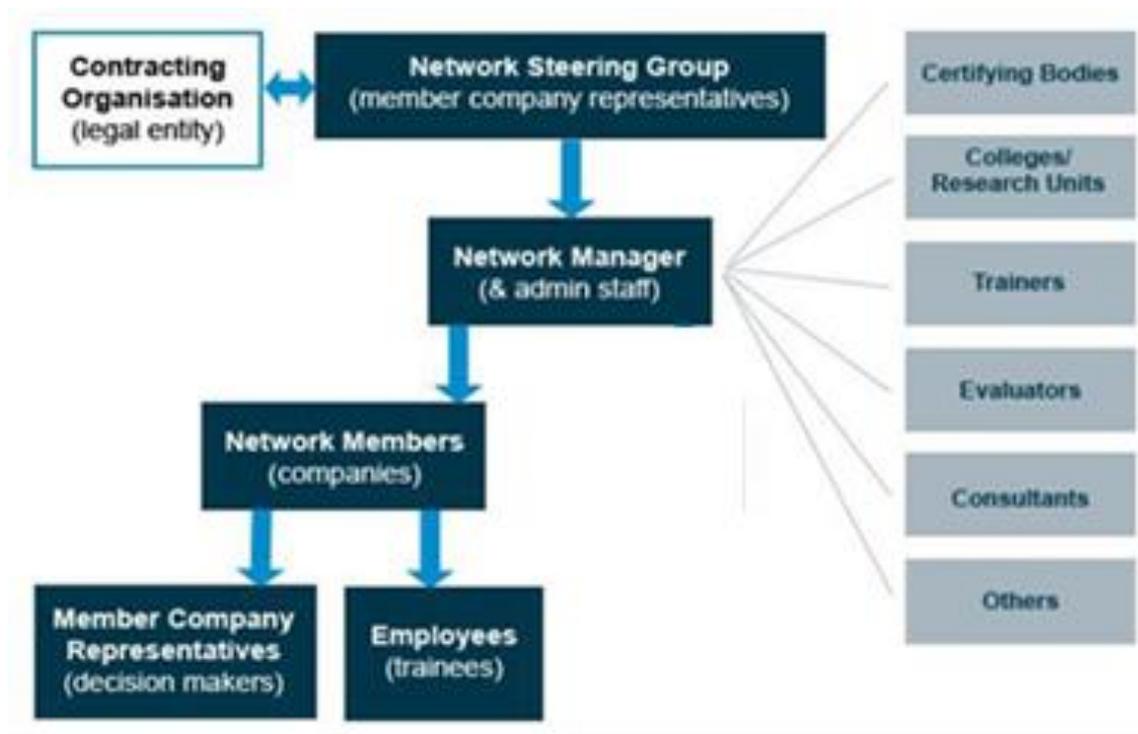
How is a Skillnet Ireland Network Structured?

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

- A contracting organisation will manage the activities of the network and receive the funds from Skillnet Ireland on behalf of the network.
- An industry steering group oversees and directs the learning network and is made up of representatives of member businesses.
- A network manager oversees the learning network on a day-to-day basis.

Networks also interact regularly with a wide range of other bodies on behalf of their members, including training providers, higher education institutions and awarding bodies. Figure 1 shows a typical Skillnet Ireland network – the core of which is the company members. In most of the networks, a network manager is the key coordinator, providing the professional and developmental input. Others who may provide services to the network include trainers, business advisors and third level or FET providers.

Figure 1: Network Structure



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

Network Contracting Organisation

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

Network Promoter

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

Network Steering Group

The network Steering Group comprises of representatives from participating network member companies. It plays an essential role in providing strategic direction and network governance. The key tasks undertaken by the Steering Group are to:

- Provide the strategic direction and control for the network and oversee network performance
- Ensure network focusses on the delivery of skills that meet defined skills shortages vital for growth and competitiveness in the sector/region
- Guide the network manager in managing the network
- Provide a link between the contracting organisation and member companies
- Represent enterprise – the steering group composition should broadly reflect the profile of companies in the sector/region
- Oversee procurement, financial and risk management, as well as setting and monitoring of network performance objectives

Network Manager

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

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

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

Skillnet Ireland Support

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

Applicants can apply for two Skillnet funding streams in this application. The main programme is the Training Networks Programme that all applicants must apply for. In general, pilot networks focus on the TNP programme only in year one. However, the Future Skills Programme is available for applicants to apply for. Further details on both are below.

- Training Networks Programme (TNP)
- Future Skills Programme (FSP)

Training Networks Programme (TNP)

The Training Networks Programme (TNP) offers up to 60% grant funding to pilot networks for the delivery of training programmes for member companies and their employees for the first 12 months.

Please note: After year one this would change to a max of 50% grant funding when the pilot network forms part of the mainstream 60+ networks.

The activities listed below are eligible for inclusion in network applications. The list is indicative rather than prescriptive. In principle, the delivery of any activity which provides learning, skills, knowledge development and networking between enterprises can be supported by TNP in 2020.

Eligible activities that may be carried out by networks include the:

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

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

Programmes proposed within the training plans proposed should be:

- Reflective of the modern workplace and how adults learn.
- Optimised for maximum transfer of learning.
- Flexible, and straight forward for employed learners to access.
- Blended and highly integrated with work.
- Enable increased mobility and employability for the learner.

Management Development within TNP training plan

Enhancing SME management capacity is a national policy imperative and a priority for Skillnet Ireland. Often SME owner-managers may not recognise the need for an objective skill gap analysis for their employees or indeed themselves. This points to the pivotal importance of supporting SME owner-managers to identify and address not only their business needs but their workforce development needs. Applicants are encouraged to include some programmes that support the provision of management development for SMEs within the TNP training plan, where relevant. Skillnet Ireland defines management development programmes in this context as follows:

- Programmes that are grounded in a competency-based approach to management development and is clearly defined in terms of the specific competencies and level of competency being addressed.
- Learning outcomes should be reasonably well aligned with the opportunities/ challenges facing managers in the relevant sector/ region where the network operates.
- The programme should be of a scale (duration of interventions, complexity of design, blended learning elements, application of learning etc.) to deliver meaningfully on the objectives outlined
- The programme must be capable of being evaluated to assess the impact versus the planned learning outcomes

Training Networks Programme Funding

Skillnet Ireland funds networks by co-investing with network member companies in the delivery of network plans and activities. Up to 60% of the costs of network activities are eligible for grant funding under the main Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2020. The network provides funds to match the Skillnet Ireland investment.

The level of grant and cash matching budget is decided on an individual network basis. Matching funds must be sourced from private sector contributions. Applicants are advised to discuss the proposed budget scale with the Skillnet Ireland Advisor.

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

Future Skills Programme (FSP)

Developing new and innovative training programmes remains vital for the ongoing success of the Skillnet network model. The Future Skills Programme (FSP) offers up to 80% funding for the design and development of new certified/non-certified training, or significant customisation of existing provision and up to 60% TNP grant funding for training delivery costs in Year One.

Programmes to be developed being proposed must meet a clear demand from enterprise, address a proven gap in the market and represent an innovative response in terms of programme design and effectiveness.

Objectives of FSP

The strategic intent of the Future Skills Programme is to upskill current and future employees in order to support the competitiveness of member companies, sustain and increase market growth, maximise exports, and to enable companies make a significant contribution to the national economy.

The following objectives have been identified for the FSP programme. These are to:

- Make available new or revised industry-specific course materials, programmes, modules and awards that are aligned to identified business/market needs
- Design new innovative programmes to address key skills gaps and increase competitiveness
- Enhance industry-academia collaboration and foster collaboration between networks and other relevant bodies
- Develop specialised new innovative certified programmes (NFQ or industry verified)
- Develop new programmes that are aligned to, and address gaps identified in the recommendations of the National Skills Strategy, or other relevant sector-specific policy.

Future Skills Programme Funding

The FSP programme offers funding of up to 80% for the design and development of new training, or significant customisation of existing provision. The FSP budget is for the design and development of new programmes only.

In addition to development, the delivery of FSP training in 2020 is a key requirement for FSP funding. The delivery of FSP programmes (including pilot courses) is funded to a maximum grant rate of 60% within the TNP training plan. The delivery of FSNP training programmes should be entered into the training activity section of the Excel application form.

FSP Business Case in Application

The FSP questions on the Application Form Word Document provide the applicant with the opportunity to demonstrate how the proposed new certified/non-certified training development and budget shall address the objectives of the FSP programme and are aligned to relevant skills policy.

The applicant will need to demonstrate how any new training development proposed will address a key need of this sector/region/thematic area, what research was carried out into the availability of similar programmes, address how the proposed programme is unique relative to existing provision and outline how such programmes shall provide a sustainable benefit for the relevant group of enterprises.

Applicants are requested to specify the stage of development of any new programmes and indicate any support from member companies for programme delivery and participation. Please also indicate collaboration with relevant stakeholders to determine the training needs. FSP applicants will also need to demonstrate how the FSP proposal is aligned to the National Skills Strategy, or other relevant research on skills needs within a given sector, and demonstrate the value-add of the training plan proposed in the application.

Duration of Network Activities & Funding Period

Applications should include proposed activities and costs for a 12-month period¹ from commencement.

The funding period for approved networks is from 1st January 2020 – 31st December 2020.

¹The provision of any funding in 2020 is subject to the availability of funds to Skillnet Ireland.

Application Form and Guidelines

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

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

Above all, Applicants will need to demonstrate how the training proposed will address a skills gap that has been identified within the sector/network, how the training will impact on the competitiveness of enterprise, and how the network proposes a plan which includes new and specific skills that address current, emerging and future skills needs of enterprise which are vital to the competitiveness and growth potential of the Irish labour market.

It is imperative that network resources are only channelled towards training activities that impact on the capacity of companies to sustain and/or increase their competitiveness. Applicants must demonstrate that the applications are enterprise-led and have been designed to prioritise training interventions that deliver concrete business impacts, whilst delivering quality training and value for money for all stakeholders.

1. General Information

The Application Form for Skillnet Ireland funding is an Excel document that must be completed by all those intending to apply for Skillnet Ireland funding. All sections must be completed before submission.

Please read carefully the instructions on the first sheet of the application form.

- You must save the document to your PC before entering data.
- You must not cut and paste data into the application form as doing so will corrupt the formulas and may result in you having to complete a new form.
- You only need to enter data into the BLUE cells.
- All white cells will populate automatically.

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

1.1 Contracting Organisation

Each network will have a network contracting organisation that will take responsibility for the activities of the network and receive funds from Skillnet Ireland on behalf of the network. They are often industry or enterprise organisations. In many cases employer organisations e.g. industry associations, industry representative bodies/federations and Chambers act as network contracting organisations on behalf of their member companies. In other cases, employee organisations e.g. trade unions have taken leadership of the process, working with private companies to establish a network. Third-level institutions and individual private companies are also eligible to act as contracting organisations on behalf of the network members.

The contracting organisation:

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

1.1.1 Provision of Contracting Organisation Financial Accounts & TCC

The applicant must demonstrate the financial substance and stability of the proposed contracting organisation by providing financial accounts for the year preceding the application to Skillnet Ireland by 20th September 2019. The application should also be supported by letters of commitment from the steering group and member companies (see Appendix 1 & 2).

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

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

1.2 CRO Registration Name and Number

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

1.3 Contact Person for the Application

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

1.4 Network Name

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

1.5 Word Document Questions

The application contains an embedded Word document which asks the questions below and must be completed and attached as an appendix.

1.5.1 Please describe the network and its structure

In this section, we ask you to describe your network and its structure. Please include details of all parties to be involved in the network and explain how the network will be managed and describe the different roles of those involved in providing direction and managing your network. Each network will have a steering group and a contracting organisation. Please outline why your organisation seeks to act as the contracting organisation and promoter of this network. (see Section One)

1.5.2 What are the proposed aims and objectives of the network?

In this section please describe in detail the aims and objectives of your network. The answer should demonstrate an enterprise-led approach to learning, through the establishment of learning networks, enabling groups to develop strategic solutions to their joint training needs. Please include information on the following; the target companies for the network; the level of engagement with those companies; the business challenges that the network seeks to address and related training requirements of the member companies within the sector/region or thematic area.

1.5.3 How did you identify the learning needs of companies within your sector and/or region?

In answer to this question, the applicants should explain how the training needs for their sector/region were identified in detail. Applicants should outline who conducted the research, when it took place, how many companies responded and what the outcomes of the research are. Evidence of the methodology used for the Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) and the key results identified should be provided. Applicants should clearly explain how the training identified will respond to enterprise needs. Please explain how the training needs have been prioritised within the proposed plan.

1.5.4. Provide a rationale for the TNP training plan proposed for 2020.

Applicants should refer to the training plan outlined in section 3.3 of the Excel document when answering this question. Applicants should outline how the training plan impacts on the competitiveness of enterprise and employability of the workforce within your sector or region. Indicate how the programmes proposed will address the specific and future skills needs of the Network's member companies, and how this plan is aligned to relevant sectoral or regional skills policy. Outline how the activities proposed are designed to best meet the needs of employed learners within your sector/region, through both formal and informal learning that spans further education and higher education provision.

1.5.5 How will the network be developed during its first year of operation?

Outline how your network intends to promote the network to potential member companies. Applicants should also clearly outline how they intend to recruit new member companies into their network. For example, if the network is part of an already established association or group of companies this would be an obvious avenue to recruiting members to the Skillnet. Please use examples where possible and refer to who will be responsible for the task of recruiting and securing the commitment of member companies. Applicants should also describe how participating firms will be encouraged to participate in overseeing and directing the networks activities.

1.5.6 Describe how the training offered by the network will support Skillnet Ireland' strategic goal to be a model of training excellence.

Training effectiveness, impact and relevance are core to Skillnet Ireland activities. Clear focus is given at all times to value for money, efficiency and effectiveness of Skillnet Ireland training and upskilling. Applicants need to demonstrate how the training plan proposed is customised for the specific need of the networks target sector or region and has been designed to facilitate the maximum transfer of learning for adults in the workplace. Outline any innovative approaches proposed and demonstrate an understanding of best practice in learning and development.

1.5.7 If your network is proposing to develop a new programme within the Future Skills Programme (FSP), please explain the approach used.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how any new training development proposed will address a key need of this sector/network, what research was carried out into the availability of similar programmes and provide evidence of how enterprise was involved in determining the need and level of demand for the programme/s. Applicants should outline how the programme will address skills gaps and how it differs from any existing provision. Applicants also need to give details for planned certification (NFQ or industry accreditation), proposed timeframe and highlight any innovative features of this new programme. FSP Applicants will also need to demonstrate how this FSP proposal is aligned to relevant skills policy research and will provide a sustainable benefit to the sector/region/thematic area.

1.5.8 Is your organisation in receipt of any other form of public funding?

If the proposed contracting organisation is in receipt of public funding from any other source, please explain.

1.5.9 Has your organisation any current applications with other agencies for public funding?

Please include details of other applications for public funding such as SOLAS, Enterprise Ireland, Springboard, etc. by the contracting organisation, if applicable. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

2. Network Details

2.1 Steering Group Members

In each Skillnet, representatives of the member companies form a steering or management group to oversee and direct the network. It meets on a regular basis and makes management decisions. An upper limit of 10 members is recommended. A balance of business skills in the steering group is recommended, for example enterprise expertise in the relevant sector/region and finance, governance, learning and development, HR, marketing or other relevant functions.

Please note that a signed letter of commitment to act as a steering group member must be provided for each member as outlined in Appendix 1. Companies can add further comments to the template to fully demonstrate their commitment to the proposed new network. Please attach these letters in the appendices of your application.

When appointing steering group members, it is important to remember that steering group members cannot benefit financially from the network activities. The network must avoid any conflicts of interest which may arise with members of the steering group. Please enter the required details for each person who has agreed to serve on the Network's Steering Group.

2.2 Member Companies

Table 2.2 will automatically populate as you complete Table 2.7 Company Details. The only exception is the target for the expected number of member companies at the end of the first 12 months of operation. This number must be entered into the blue cell in Table 2.2 The application should also be supported by letters of commitment from member companies (see Appendix 2).

2.3 Network Sector

In this section, we ask you to select the sector that best describes your network companies from the drop-down menu. If your network caters for a very wide range of sectors you can select "mixed" as your sector in this section. This may apply to networks that are regional rather than sectoral.

2.4 Region

In this section, we look for the region that will be the focus of the training. The Republic of Ireland is split into nine regions for this purpose. Please select the region from the drop-down list. If your training will be in more than one region, please select national.

2.5 Network Management Team Costs

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

The costs quoted in this section must be inclusive of all payroll taxes if the individual is an employee and all VAT (if not entitled to a recovery of VAT) if the individual is a consultant. The maximum management team cost is up to 35% of total expenditure. This percentage includes travel and subsistence, staff recruitment/training which are included under management team costs. Travel and subsistence and staff recruitment/training costs are entered directly into Table 5.1.

2.6 Overheads

A breakdown of overheads (inclusive of VAT) of the network is required outlining each cost to be incurred by the network. All costs included must be justified by an explanation of the methodology used in the calculation of that cost which will be requested at grant approval stage. Examples of overheads include (list is not exhaustive):

- Rent
- Stationery and printing
- Utilities
- Equipment not exceeding €1,200
- Maintenance
- Insurance
- Bank fees (excluding interest charges)

2.7 Company Details

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

If you need additional lines in this section, please contact the Skillnet Ireland office at 01 207 9630.

The first section of this table will populate automatically with the details of steering group members (section 2.1).

A Skillnet network should consist of a minimum of thirty companies. Only private sector or commercial semi-state enterprises can be member companies that avail of the training. The Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2020 covers the Republic of Ireland only. For the purposes of this programme, only trainees from member companies within the Republic of Ireland can be considered.

Network member companies span the full range of industry sectors and can be enterprises of any size. However, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which face challenges in accessing training due to their small scale and restricted resources, have traditionally represented a strong majority of the Skillnet Ireland member companies.

3. TNP Application

3.1 Trainee Target

This cell will populate from the data entered into Table 3.2.

3.2 Trainee Profile

Please enter the required data into the blue cells provided. Companies can include any employee groups at all levels.

3.3 TNP Training Plan and Training Costs

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

Name of Training Course

Please list the names of all the training courses. A training course should be based on identified training needs of the network member companies and employees.

Training Days and training costs.

This section has three parts.

1. *Contact training days* are days such as classroom days or on the job training days where there is direct contact between the trainees and the trainer. The costs associated with this type of day include the trainer cost and associated costs such as travel and subsistence (see example 1 below)



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

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

The equivalent of one training day is six contact hours of training. Contact hours are the time spent with the trainer and/or undertaking a training activity/exercise or engaging in online learning or project work.

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

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

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

Number of times training courses will be run

Please enter the number of times the course will be delivered.

Planned No. of Employed Participants per course

You are required to estimate how many employed participants will attend each individual training course.

Certifying Body

Applicants should note that Skillnet Ireland values the accreditation of training. This is reflected in the assessment criteria. For certified training, please select the organisation that will certify the training from the drop-down menu. If your training will be certified under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), please state the level to which it will be accredited. More information on the ten levels within the NFQ and the awarding bodies is available from their website www.qqi.ie. Training that is certified by Professional Bodies is encouraged. If your training is not on the NFQ, or certified by Professional Bodies, please select 'no' in the drop-down list for certified.

Networked Learning & In-Company Learning

The emphasis in the TNP model is on learning in a network context. This maximises the potential for learning as participants from different firms can share perspectives and experiences. It is possible for a limited amount of a networks activity to be directed towards one company only. Please note that no more than 20% of the total training cost may go towards in-company training (training planned and delivered for one company only). In-company training must be training which provides transferable qualifications and substantially improves the employability of the trained worker and excludes the costs of training specific to a single enterprise.

3.4 TNP Planned Certification & Programme Development

If the Network is proposing to develop new certified programmes, these training programmes and the related certification costs should be shown in this table. The costs of delivering the programmes should have been included in Table 3.3 where the numbers of participants etc. will also have been included for the proposed new programme.

3.5 Other Networking Events

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

3.6 Consultants (Other)

Please list the costs associated with all other activity here. You are not expected to name the consultants at this stage, as each successful network must use a tendering process based on Skillnet Ireland procurement guidelines for any consultants employed. Networks may engage the services of consultants for many reasons such as web design, marketing, PR and so on.

3.7 Marketing & Promotion Costs

In this section, the network will indicate the costs associated with the promotional activities of the network. Examples could include printing, digital marketing costs, advertising etc. All Skillnet Networks must adhere to the Skillnet Ireland brand guidelines and the Communications Operating Guidelines. Skillnet Ireland provides all approved networks with a designed logo and suite of branded templates including pop-ups/stands, network brochures, advertisements and a fully designed WordPress website template to ensure that network marketing materials are both brand compliant and reflective of Skillnet Ireland new style. These templates can be further developed by designer/s of each network's choice.

Applicants are advised to conduct some research on the potential costs of applying these to your network, message and own network identity.

Applicants are advised to budget for a minimum of €8,000 expenditure for the 2020 Marketing & Promotion budget. Where that budget is not fully spent on branding/marketing/promotions in the course of 2020, this budget can be spent on training costs.

4. FSP Application

4.1 FSP Training Plan and Training Costs

The FSP programme offers funding for the design and development of new training, or significant customisation of existing provision. This section gives details of any planned new training programme to be developed by the network. You will be asked to provide the training course title and certification details. We also require information on several aspects of the courses planned, including training type, training methodology, course duration, etc. You will be asked to use the drop-down menu in several places to choose a category that best describes the course.

Name of Training Course

Please list the names of all the training courses. A training course should be based on identified training needs of the network member companies and employees, and a proven gap in existing provision. The FSP budget is for the design and development of new programmes only.

Certifying Body

Applicants should note that Skillnet Ireland values the accreditation of training. This is reflected in the assessment criteria. For certified training, please select the organisation that will certify the training from the drop-down menu. If your training will be certified under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), please state the level to which it will be accredited. More information on the ten levels within the NFQ and the awarding bodies is available from their website www.qqi.ie. Training that is certified by Professional Bodies is encouraged. If your training is not on the NFQ, or certified by Professional Bodies, please select 'no' in the drop-down list for certified.

In addition to development, the delivery of FSP training in 2020 is a key requirement for FSP funding. The delivery of FSP programmes (including pilot courses) is funded to a maximum grant rate of 60% within the TNP training plan.

NOTE: The delivery of FSP training programmes **MUST** be entered into the TNP training activity section of the Excel application form.

5. Summary of Income and Expenditure Budgets and Targets

5.1 2020 Summary Budget

The budget should be prepared for a 12-month period. The budget is outlined per budget line and the network should complete the blue tabs in the budget as follows:

2020 REQUESTED GRANT RATE	The maximum grant rate is 60% for TNP and 80% for FSP.
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NOTE: The Grant ratio of 60% max funding for Pilot Networks during the initial 12-month Pilot Phase.

2020 EXPENDITURE: Network Management Expenditure

Network Management team costs	automatically populated from section 2.5
Travel & subsistence Network Management Team	enter costs here
Staff recruitment/Training	enter costs here
Management Team Costs total	this should <u>not exceed 35%</u> of the overall expenditure
Overheads	automatically be populated from section 2.6
Audit	enter costs relating to end of year independent audit
Overheads Costs Subtotal	automatically calculated
Maximum Management %	Maximum is 35%
Maximum % Requested	automatically calculated from data entered and will turn red if it exceeds 35%



2020 EXPENDITURE: Training Expenditure

Consultants (Other)	automatically populated from section 3.6 & 4.1
Trainers	automatically populated from section 3.3
Training Materials/Facilities	Enter facilities costs e.g. training room hire, manuals/handouts, refreshments etc.
Events	automatically populated from sections 3.5
Training Development/Certification	automatically populated from section 3.4
Marketing & Promotion	automatically populated from section 3.7
Total Training Costs	automatically calculated
TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURE	automatically calculated

2020 GRANT INCOME

Requested Grant – Management Costs	this will be automatically calculated from the previous sections
Requested Grant – Training Costs	this will be automatically calculated from the previous sections
Total Requested Grant	this will be automatically calculated

2020 CASH INCOME

All income for the network must come from non-publicly funded sources.

Cash – Membership Fees	If the Network proposes to charge a membership fee to member companies, the total projected amount of membership fees for the year should be entered here
Cash - Programme fees	Programme fees are derived from the fees the Network may charge participating member companies for participation on the programmes listed in Table 3.3. The total projected amount of programme fees for the year should be entered here
Cash – Sponsorship	If the Network anticipates receiving sponsorship of its activities from non-state funded sources, the total amount of such sponsorship should be entered here.
Cash – Other	If the Network has other sources of cash income planned, these should be entered here. An explanation of any such income will be required.
Sub Total Cash Matching	this will automatically be calculated
TOTAL NETWORK INCOME	this will automatically be calculated
Matching %	This will automatically be calculated

NOTE – If the message appears that total expenditure is not equal to total income please recheck your budget. Clarification on any aspect of the budget can be sought from your Skillnet Ireland Advisor.

5.2 Summary targets

This will be automatically calculated from the previous sections. The key training activity targets proposed by networks within the application form for 2020 are;

- 2.2 Member Companies
- 3.1 Employed Trainees
- 3.3 Employed Training Days
- 3.5 Non-Formal Events

5.3 Undertaking/sign off

This must be signed by a director (as per the CRO/Friendly Society list) of the contracting organisation. In signing the Application Form, they are confirming that the information contained is true and accurate.

NB: Please don't forget to sign the application as it will only be processed with a valid signature.

Successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of valid Tax Clearance in the name of the Contracting Organisation specified in Section 1.1 before contracts can be issued.

THIS IS THE END OF THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Process for Assessment and Approval of Applications

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

Applications for this new funding under the Training Networks Programme (TNP) 2020 will be assessed under the key criteria outlined below. There is a minimum threshold of 60% in both the Strategic and Operational Criteria sections. There will be an automatic disqualification if marks fall below this in any area.

The two key criteria are:

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

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

Key Criteria – TNP	Sub Criteria	Weighting	
Strategic Criteria	Enterprise Engagement	200	60%
	Impact on Competitiveness & Career Mobility of the Learner	150	
	Supplying Future Skills	150	
	Clarity of aims and objectives - goal alignment	100	
Operational Criteria	Capacity to deliver (Management expertise)	100	40%
	Quality & Relevance of Training Plan	150	
	Financial Efficiencies/Match Funding/Value for Money	100	
	Accreditation/Innovation	50	
Total		1000	

Key Criteria - FSP		Sub Criteria	Weighting	
Strategic Criteria	Identified Business Need & Enterprise Support		200	60%
	Addressing Future Skills		200	
	Goal Alignment (Skillnet Ireland & National Policy)		200	
Operational Criteria	Capacity to deliver		200	40%
	Accreditation/Innovation		100	
	Financial Efficiencies/Match Funding/Value for money		100	
Total			1000	100%

Application Deadlines and Procedures

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Monday, 30th September 2019.

Applicants must submit the following by the application deadline:

- A signed soft copy of the completed Application Form to be emailed to funding@skillnetireland.ie

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1 - Letter of Commitment: Steering Group members

This letter MUST be printed on your Company headed letterhead. Encourage companies to outline the reason that they support this network and why is it will be of value to their company/sector

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

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

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

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Contact telephone number:

Contact email address:

Signature:

Appendix 2 - Letter of Commitment: Member Companies

If possible please print this page on company headed paper

Date:

Addressee (Contracting organisation):

Letter of commitment

I wish to confirm that it is our intention to be a part of the XXX Skillnet and commit the necessary financial resources towards the network's cash matching. I also commit to release the relevant staff of our organisation to participate in the training programmes organised by the network.

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

Company:

Name:

Position in Company:

Contact telephone number:

Contact email address:

Signature:

Appendix 3 - Application Checklist

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

STEP ONE: CONTRACTING ORGANISATION ACCOUNTS

by cob 20th September 2019

Provide a copy of the financial accounts of the proposed contracting organisation for the year preceding the application submission date to Skillnet Ireland by emailing to funding@skillnetireland.ie.

Please submit these accounts as early as possible to Skillnet Ireland.

STEP TWO: APPLICATION FORM

by cob 30th September 2019

Check that each section of the application form is fully completed – both the excel spreadsheet and the embedded word document. This will form **Appendix 1** of the application.

A soft copy of the form signed by a director (as per the CRO/Friendly Society list) of the contracting organisation. The Email must be submitted by director of the contracting organisation or alternatively the director must be formally copied on the submission email.



Steering Group Letters of commitment / financial support (1 copy of each). This will form **Appendix 2** of the application.

Member Company Letters of commitment / financial support (1 copy of each). This will form **Appendix 3** of the application.

Any other relevant supporting documentation e.g. Learning Needs Analysis process and findings. This will form **Appendix 4** of the application form.