

**Minutes of Meeting No. 67
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
6th April 2016 at 1.00pm
DIT, Grangegorman**

Present:	Una Halligan	Chair
	Inez Bailey	NALA
	Vivienne Patterson	HEA
	Ray Bowe	IDA Ireland
	John Burke	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
	Liz Carroll	ISME
	Margaret Cox	I.C.E. Group
	Paul Healy	Skillnets
	Tony Donohoe	IBEC
	Bryan Fields	SOLAS
	Peter Baldwin	Department of Education & Skills
	Mark Christal	Enterprise Ireland
	Peter Rigney	ICTU
	Declan Hughes	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
William Parnell	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	
Apologies:	Frank Mulvihill	Former President IGC
	Ned Costello	Irish Universities Association
	Brendan Murphy	CIT
	Bill Doherty	Cook Medical
	Joe Hogan	Openet
In Attendance from Secretariat:	Aisling Penrose	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Gerard Walker	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Catherine MacEnri	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Don O'Connor	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Jasmina Behan	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Nora Condon	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Joan McNaboe	SLMRU, SOLAS

The Chair welcomed the Members to the new DIT Grangegorman campus and thanked DIT for hosting the Group's meeting.

1. Presentation by DIT Grangegorman

Dr. Noel O'Connor and Professor Brian O'Neill, DIT, provided an overview of the campus and the activities of DIT, Grangegorman.

2. Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number 66

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 2nd December 2015, were approved, subject to the correction that apologies had been received from Peter Baldwin, Department of Education and Skills.

3. Developments since last meeting

The Chair advised of a number of membership changes since the last meeting. Mark Christal has replaced Colm MacFhionnlaoich as Enterprise Ireland representative on the Group, Paul Healy has replaced Alan Nuzum as Skillnets representative and Vivienne Patterson has replaced Tom Boland as HEA representative.

A new National Skills Strategy was published by Government in January 2016. The report covers the period to 2025 and is an important landmark in the skills environment. An overview of the Strategy was provided by the Department of Education and Skills later in the meeting.

The latest Springboard Call for proposals closed on 11 March. The HEA advised that 498 applications were received, a large number in the ICT area. Other areas included cross-enterprise and manufacturing skills. Proposals received are being assessed, and the Evaluation Panel has scheduled to meet on 27 April to make decisions on applications.

The establishment of a Hospitality Skills Oversight Group was a key recommendation contained in the EGFSN's report on the sector published in 2015. The Secretariat reported that the Oversight Group had been established and held its first meeting on 15 March. A further meeting was scheduled for 21 April. The objective of the Group is to drive implementation of the EGFSN's recommendations. The Group includes industry and relevant Government Departments and Agencies. SOLAS has agreed to initially Chair the Group, while DJEI is providing Secretariat services. The Chair noted that this represents a new approach in collaborating to implement the recommendations of an EGFSN report.

4. National Skills Strategy 2025 and new Architecture

The Department of Education and Skills provided an overview of the new National Skills Strategy. The Strategy provides a more holistic view of skills development than heretofore, from early years to quality learning, and encompasses Higher Education, Further Education, Primary and Post-Primary levels. Active inclusion is also an important point of the Strategy. The Strategy contains specific targets based around six key pillars, and a range of linked actions. An Implementation Plan is being developed to set out the actions to deliver the objectives set out in the Strategy.

The National Skills Council referenced in the Strategy will be enterprise focused and will comprise high-level representatives from Government Departments and State Agencies. It will have a role in advising on prioritisation of provision. A new unit, to be established within the Department of Education and Skills, will be the interface between the National Skills Council and the Regional Skills Fora. It will be important to take account of the EGFSN and the SLMRU's work to ensure the Regional Skills profiling facilitates an informed debate. The importance of retaining the horizon-scanning work of the EGFSN was recognised by the Department of Education and Skills. The exact formation of relationship within the new architecture will be determined by discussions with the relevant Government Ministers.

5. EGFSN Work Programme 2016

It was noted that, in the context of the establishment of the National Skills Council, and the refreshing of the EGFSN's mandate, some changes to the work programme may be necessary. A review of the work programme for the latter part of the year will take place following the completion of that process. The current proposed Work Programme for 2016 is as follows:

- Statement of Activity 2015 (April)
- Lifelong Learning in Ireland 2015 (April)
- Vacancy Overview 2015 (June)
- Review of skills needs for BioPharma (June)
- Regional Labour Markets Bulletin (June)
- National Skills Bulletin (June)
- Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply (June)
- Review of EGFSN Recommendations, 2008-2015 (June)
- Development of a new Communications Strategy (June – September)
- Review of Design Skills for the economy (September)
- Springboard 2017 Guidance document (December)

An update on the Biopharma Skills study was provided orally at the meeting. The study builds on the research undertaken by the EGFSN in 2010. Two workshops have been organised (Cork on 12 April and Dublin on 18 April) to obtain inputs from companies within the sector, and education and training providers. In addition a survey of approximately 30 companies was conducted to further garner feedback. The Secretariat is currently compiling the draft final report, which will be circulated to the June EGFSN meeting for approval.

The development of a revised Communications Strategy for the EGFSN will be a key focus once clarity is received on the role of the EGFSN within the new architecture referenced in the National Skills Strategy 2025. It is proposed to bring a more detailed Communications Strategy back to the Group for discussion at a later meeting.

The proposed work programme for 2016 was adopted by the Group. The Department of Education and Skills indicated that it had requested the SLMRU to carry out some work for the Regional Skills Fora and this may impact on the proposed publication dates of other SLMRU reports.

6. Statement of Activity 2015

The Statement of Activity for 2015 was approved for submission to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation and the Minister for Education and Skills, and subsequent publication on the EGFSN website. The Chair will request a meeting with the two incoming Ministers, on their appointment, to discuss important skills issues, based on the Activity Report.

7. Lifelong Learning in Ireland 2015

A paper on Ireland's participation in Lifelong Learning was presented at the meeting. The findings show that Ireland lags behind most EU countries in Lifelong Learning participation, and has a particularly low rate in the area of non-formal learning. Participation by those in employment is also low compared to the EU average. Based on Ireland's current overall participation rate of 7.2% (Q4 2015), it is unlikely that we will achieve the EU target rate of 15% participation by 2020.

The findings of this Lifelong Learning paper are of interest in the context of the new National Skills Strategy 2025 which highlights the importance of Lifelong Learning and outlines a number of actions aimed at promoting and supporting participation, particularly amongst people in employment.

The paper was approved to proceed to publication. It was also agreed that a Press Statement on the findings of the paper, highlighting the positive aspect of engaging in Lifelong Learning, should accompany the published report.

8. Vacancy Overview 2015

A presentation on the Vacancy Overview report was provided at the meeting. This year's edition of the report presents the data by sector, rather than by occupational groups as previous editions. A number of additional labour market indicators have also been incorporated, including CSO Job Vacancy rates, and data profiling recent job hires by sector (including breakdown by age/educational attainment level/full or part-time employment).

The report was approved to proceed to publication.

9. Review of EGFSN Recommendations, 2008 - 2015

A high-level review of the implementation of recommendations made in EGFSN reports in recent years is included on the work programme for the Group in 2016. The objective of this piece of work is to identify progress which has been made generally in implementing recommendations and to identify key outstanding recommendations which may still merit attention.

An outline of the methodology and a presentation on the initial findings from a review of thirteen reports, published between 2008 and 2015, was provided at the meeting by the Secretariat. A number of common

themes were identified throughout the reports, including the need for better alignment of education and training provision with industry's requirements, establishment of structured work placements, development of career paths and communication of career opportunities.

A more detailed paper on this item will be circulated to the June EGFSN meeting, for discussion.

10. Any Other Business

The hosting of a consultative event by the NCCA on 10th April in relation to the proposed Junior Cycle Modern Language Framework was brought to the attention of the Members for their information.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 1.30pm on Wednesday 15th June 2016 in the John Hume Boardroom, Maynooth University.