

**Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 78  
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 3pm  
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Kildare Street**

<b>Present:</b>	Tony Donohoe	Chair
	David Hegarty	DBEI
	William Beausang	Department of Education & Skills
	Helen McMahan	EI
	Vivienne Patterson	HEA
	Peter Rigney	ICTU
	Ray Bowe	IDA
	Joan MacNaboe	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Alan McGrath	SOLAS

<b>Apologies:</b>	Kathleen Gavin	Department of Education & Skills
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<b>In Attendance from Secretariat:</b>	Kevin Daly	DBEI
	Alan Power	DBEI
	Don O'Connor	DBEI
	Katherine Griffin	DBEI
	Ruth Morrissy	DBEI

### **1. Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **2. Digital Transformation**

Ruth Morrissy gave an update on the report 'Digital Transformation: Assessing the Impact of Digitalisation on Ireland's Workforce', which was published Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December. While there are no actions requiring immediate implementation, the report does contain policy recommendations for Government. The Group welcomed the report and acknowledged the media interest it had earned. The Secretariat pointed to its recent Communications Plan, which was executed with the release of 'Digital Transformation', as the driver behind the widespread media uptake.

### **3. ICT Skills Action Plan**

An update was provided on the plans for publication of the ICT Skills Action Plan. It is envisaged that the Plan will be published in sequence with other press opportunities in

January to maximise its impact. The EGFSN Secretariat confirmed that the ICT Skills Demand Forecast will be published in conjunction with the Action Plan.

It was noted that the ICT Skills Action Plan is similar to the Action Plans for Jobs as it cuts across different Government bodies and external stakeholders, and that this should be reflected in its implementation.

#### **4. Brexit Update**

This study, after approval by the EGFSN in March, was published in mid-June. Following publication, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation committed to pursuing the implementation of its recommendations, by working with the relevant stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

DBEI has established a cross-Government Brexit Oversight Implementation Group to actively pursue and monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the EGFSN study. The implementation group has been an effective method of stakeholder engagement as it presents the opportunity for sharing best practice and raising awareness of Brexit-related issues. This engagement also feeds into the quarterly progress report, the second of which will be completed in advance of the next meeting of the National Skills Council.

#### **5. Design**

The EGFSN Secretariat updated the members on this item. Following the publication of 'Winning by Design' in November 2017, the EGFSN has been monitoring the implementation of the Design Skills Report Action Plan and all the 8 recommendations are progressing. Additionally, reports are now being presented at the National Design Forum.

Ruth Morrissy gave an overview of the first action listed in this report, which reads: "Commission a review of enterprise demand and the provision of higher and further education design courses across all education institutions."

This action was not progressed this year due to funding limitations, however it will be carried out in 2019 as a design skills demand report. This outsourced study will address design as a discipline which cuts across sectors, as opposed to a sector itself. A steering group will be formed to guide this report, and members' participation was welcomed.

The EGFSN noted the importance of capturing the prevalence of design and communicating the importance of 'design thinking' for enterprises.

#### **6. National Skills Bulletin**

The SLRMU presented on the upcoming National Skills Bulletin, to be published Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December.

In the discussion, the EGFSN highlighted the importance of the National Skills Bulletin to Guidance Councillors and ensuring further engagement and the accessibility of the data

presented to all relevant stakeholders, through strong online presence and use of infographics.

## 7. 2019 Work Programme

### 7.a Construction

Alan Power presented on the proposed EGFSN Construction project for 2019. A construction report was carried out by the EGFSN in 2008. It is proposed that the study will comprise of three sections, which were presented as follows:

**Part A** - The first part of the study is to undertake a review of the existing reports available on the sector as completed by both government and industry in the last ten years. This initial step of desk-based research will be carried out in-house. It is expected that it would be completed by July 2019.

**Part B** – The second part of the analysis will consist of a productivity review of the sector. On the whole the Irish economy has 34% higher productivity than the euro area average – but construction is 5.4% lower – by far the largest sectoral drag on productivity. The focus of the review will be on both commercial and residential output. Such an analysis is likely to be commissioned and undertaken by the Investment Projects and Programmes Office (IPPO) in DPER in Q2/Q3 2019; the EGFSN Secretariat has liaised with the IPPO on this potential work. It is proposed that the EGFSN leverage this piece of work. It is intended that a member of the Secretariat be represented on the steering group for this piece of analysis.

**Part C**- Following the completion of the previous sections, it will then fall to the EGFSN to consider whether a third part- an EGFSN demand forecast and recommendations study, incorporating Parts A and B, should be undertaken.

Discussion followed. It was noted that the current productivity data presented is from 2014, which has context which impacted productivity levels in Ireland. This should be addressed in the Secretariat's engagement with the IPPO in DPER.

It was decided that, as part C depends on the completion of parts A and B, the work on parts A and B are approved for 2019. Part C will be considered following their completion, which is expected to be in Q3 2019.

**Action:** The Secretariat will commence work on the first two sections of this Project In 2019.

### 7.b SME Management Skills

The Secretariat updated the Group on the Proposal for the 2019 work plan.

The proposal has been submitted to the EGFSN in June 2018 as an important piece of work for the 2019 Work Programme.

At the previous meeting, it was explained that an application has been submitted for European Commission funding for the work (€150,000). The decision for this funding will

be announced in the coming weeks. With the funding, the EGFSN secretariat would be able to carry the complete proposed methodology, to include, *inter alia*, additional workshops and focus groups, and possibly to access international expertise on best practice. Without the funding, the EGFSN secretariat will carry out the initial methodology without additions.

In the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that the focus of the project should be directly on management skills, rather than the supply and demand for training. Knowing how Ireland currently performs is an important first step and, in this context, good data will be central. It was noted that Ireland ranks relatively low on existing measures, such as the World Management Survey, but these are now some years old. The Secretariat indicated that the project will take stock of existing data available on this topic and will collect new primary data, subject to budget constraints.

The Chair suggested that the project objectives should be further refined. The extent of good management practice and international benchmarking should be prioritised as the main elements of the project.

**Action:** The Secretariat will refine the project proposal to reflect the points raised by the EGFSN. If the project receives European funding, the revised project proposal will be circulated to the Group electronically for observations and approval. If the project does not receive funding, the Secretariat will revise the proposal to present at the next meeting.

The Secretariat will engage with the Central Statistics Office on data availability on this matter.

### **Any Other Business/Next Meeting Date**

The Secretariat asked DES representatives to submit the National Skills Council 2019 calendar of meetings to it as soon as it was prepared so that EFGSN meetings can be scheduled appropriately.

The Chair closed the meeting and confirmed that the next meeting of the Group will take place in advance of the next National Skills Council meeting.