

**Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 82  
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
December 2019**

**Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Kildare Street**

<b>Present:</b>	Tony Donohoe	Chair
	Keelin Fagan	EI
	Ray Bowe	IDA
	Joan McNaboe	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Shauna Dunlop	SOLAS
	Laura Bambrick	ICTU
	William Beausang	DES
	Kathleen Gavin	DES
	David Hegarty	DBEI
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Kevin Daly	DBEI
	Don O'Connor	DBEI
	Niamh Martin	DBEI
	Ruth Morrissy	DBEI
	Katie Griffin	DBEI
	Alan Power	DBEI
<b>Consultants:</b>	Cruinn - Seamus Carlin, Maureen O'Reilly and Dr. Nuala Rooney TU Dublin – Dr Deirdre McQuillan	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Vivienne Patterson	HEA

### **1.Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number 81**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **2.Presentation by Cruinn – Design Skills Demand Analysis Presentation**

The consultants charged with conducting the research into the Design Skills needs analysis presented their draft findings/proposals and set out the methodology used. Ireland is currently not producing enough design graduates to fill the openings that will arise to 2025. At the moment approx. there are 1300 graduates in design. The consultants observed that a lack of a 'design culture' still permeates Ireland's secondary and primary education system despite best efforts of DES, HEA, SOLAS, which is making the transition to FE/HE difficult. The rise in online education providers and courses in design poses threats to traditional design pathways. Therefore, the consultants suggest, HEIs/FEs need to offer alternative learning options to students. Ireland's design graduates need a better understanding about how design adds commercial/economic value.

Singapore is a leader in design education followed by the Scandinavian countries.

Between 2011 and 2016, 1.9% of Irish jobs as a total were in design sectors. (4 sectors under the SOC codes – approx. 44,000 jobs). With the forecasting models utilised by the consultants, they project that there will be 2.8% of jobs as a total of Irish jobs in these design sectors. They estimate that there will be approx 21,000 to 33,000 additional people employed in these occupations by 2025. Between 2011 and 2016, jobs in these four areas grew four times faster than in other sectors. Graduates in design fields will be required in the non-craft/traditional sectors.

The recommendations include: further collaboration between enterprise and education providers to meet the demand; examination of alternative pathways to gaining design skills – flexible learning methods (Skillnet/Sprinboard/apprenticeships etc); the establishment of a Design Champion – establishment of National Design Centre to help refine a collective ‘voice’ across design, academia and enterprise, so that emerging and urgent issues can be anticipated and met; embedding a design philosophy in education at an earlier stage (transition year).

Following on from the presentation, there was a Q & A with the members. Some of the issues highlighted were the need to tighten the language used in the report and to consider the classification of ‘design sector’ in a different way. Possible labels include ‘design community’; ‘design disciplines’, ‘design occupations’. A question that arose concerned the numbers of jobs in the 4 design sectors (digital and product). Over 20,000 of the 44,000 (Q3 2019) are classified as ICT or software designers. Does this cohort inflate the figures and therefore inflate the projected skills need to 2025?

Action: The EGFSN Secretariat undertook to look further into the issues addressed. The Secretariat will also send the revised Design Report with tracked changes (taking the above into account) well in advance of the National Skills Council meeting in February 2020.

### **3.SME Management Skills**

Dr Deirdre McQuillan, the project manager of the research project ‘Improving management development standards in SMEs in Ireland’ presented an outline of the methodology for the project and provided an update on progress so far. The objectives of the project are; ‘to contribute to institutional, administrative and growth-sustainable structural reforms in Ireland in line with SRSS Regulation’ and ‘to enhance the capacity of DBEI to analyse, formulate, develop and implement operational solutions for the optimal development of management skills in SMEs in Ireland’. The project team is using Skillnet’s Management Competency Framework as the template for mapping skills needs for SMEs in the medium term.

The literature review is currently being undertaken. A semi-structured interview with stakeholders has taken place. A survey questionnaire (online and face-to-face) is being finalised following the first steering group meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. It is hoped to launch the survey on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Members urged the project team to be mindful of framing the survey questions in the best way to avoid an imbalance in the findings. Further stakeholder focus groups will take place following the survey to validate the findings.

#### **4. Spotlight on Skills – EI presentation**

The Chair agreed with the suggestion to postpone the presentation on this until the next EGFSN meeting due to time constraints.

#### **5. Explore Programme Evaluation**

- EXPLORE was aimed at a cohort of older workers (over 35), majority male (70:30 male: female), with lower skills levels, working in manufacturing, who hadn't previously or recently participated in training programmes.
- The programme was delivered to 254 participants, from 70 companies, over a 6 week period, with a focus on non-formal modes of learning, and included day release class time, work based project, personal project, off site visits and included elements of personal development and well-being.
- The evaluation was to assess relevance, effectiveness and illustrate the impact (positive or otherwise) of the pilot project.

#### **Programme Outcomes**

- 98% of participants who responded reported that the impact had been positive and nearly all would recommend the programme.
- Participants were asked to rate their skills pre and post programme in the areas of; digital skills, teamworking skills, awareness of further education and training and interest in further education and training options.
- The participants say their digital skills have improved by 29%, and their team working, communication and presentation skills have risen by 56%.
- In the 6 month evaluation 46% of respondents had availed of further education and training options and 9% said not yet (54 respondents).
- Technology questionnaires were completed before and after the programme in the Dublin and Mid-West regions. Increases were shown in each of the digital technology attributes, with Dublin showing an overall increase of 41% and the Mid-West an increase of 24%.

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

Joan McNaboe gave a brief overview of the findings of the 2019 National Skills Bulletin. The 15th edition will help inform skills policy development in Ireland. The report notes that the greatest increases in employment in 2018 were observed in the professional and skilled trades. Shortages in high skilled occupations continued to exist and the demand for chefs and construction workers was high.

Action: EGFSN members to email Joan McNaboe for hard copies of the report.

#### **7. Skills for the Construction Industry**

Alan Power updated the EGFSN on the study on the demand and nature of the Irish Construction sector's skills needs in the period to 2030.

Following the September meeting of the EGFSN, it was agreed that an updated terms of reference- informed by the detailed findings of DPER Construction Sector Productivity Analysis- would be

circulated for approval by the Group. These revised terms of reference were circulated and approved in mid-October, and a tender issued for a study focused on determining the demand for skills within Ireland's construction sector to 2030.

Arising from this tender competition, AECOM Ireland Ltd have been appointed as project consultants, and have committed to delivering a final report by May 2020. To guide the progress of the study, a Project Steering Group has also been established and will be chaired by Caroline Spillane, Director General of Engineers Ireland. This steering group will meet for the first time on 19<sup>th</sup> December, and its membership is composed of public and private sector Construction sector stakeholders.

## **8. ICT Skills Action Plan Implementation**

DES provided a brief verbal update on the progression of Technology Skills 2022, the ICT Skills Action Plan. Following engagement with the High- Level Steering Group for the Technology Skills 2022 plan, DES committed to delivering a summary presentation on the Plan's progress to a future meeting of the EGFSN.

## **9. Brexit Implementation**

Since the last meeting of the EGFSN, the inaugural meeting of the Logistics and Supply Chain Skills Group, first proposed in 2015, and revived in the Brexit report of last year, took place under the Chairmanship of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

The terms of reference for the group, as well as its work programme for the next two years, both of which were signed off by the group at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, were pre-circulated to the EGFSN for information. The group has been established for an initial period of two years.

The group includes representatives from the Departments of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Education and Skills and Employment Affairs and Social Protection, as well as the range of the sector's representative organisations.

Arising from the first meeting, two agile sub-groups, led by industry representatives, have now been established to advance two objectives of the group in particular, and will report on their progress to the quarterly meetings of the main group.

## **10. Communications**

The Group was informed that the website was up and running for two months and there has been no issues. The EGFSN LinkedIn and Twitter accounts are operating and are gaining followers. In the new year, a social media communication plan will be completed.

### **AOB/Next Meeting**

1. The Group discussed the report 'Proposal for the development of a joint research programme on Irish labour market demand and skills' prepared by the ESRI. The document identifies a series of research projects that could be considered under a number of thematic areas identified during preliminary discussions with DES. The paper was presented to the Group for information. The Group's comments were welcome. Any further comments on the paper could be submitted to DES.

2. The next meeting date will be finalised early in the new year.

EGFSN Secretariat  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2019