

**Minutes of Meeting No. 69  
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 at 1pm  
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Kildare Street**

<b>Present:</b>	Una Halligan	Chair
	Inez Bailey	NALA
	John Burke	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
	Liz Carroll	ISME
	Ned Costello	Irish Universities Association
	Mark Christal	Enterprise Ireland
	Bill Doherty	Cook Medical
	Tony Donohoe	IBEC
	Bryan Fields	SOLAS
	Paul Healy	Skillnets
	Kathleen Gavin	Department of Education & Skills
	Declan Hughes	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Brendan Murphy	CIT
Vivienne Patterson	HEA	

<b>Apologies:</b>	Ray Bowe	IDA Ireland
	Peter Rigney	ICTU
	Margaret Cox	I.C.E. Group

<b>In Attendance from Secretariat:</b>	Aisling Penrose	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Catherine MacEnri	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	Gerard Walker	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
	John McGrath	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Jasmina Behan	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Nora Condon	SLMRU, SOLAS
	Ivica Milicevic	SLMRU, SOLAS

**1. Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number 68**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, were approved.

**2. Updates since the last meeting**

**a) Membership Changes**

William Parnell, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has departed as Head of Secretariat to the EGFSN. The Chair, on behalf of all the Members, thanked William for managing the work of the Group and wished him well in his new role within the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The process to find a replacement to fill the position of EGFSN Head of Secretariat is in train.

Kathleen Gavin, Department of Education & Skills, has taken over a number of skills related responsibilities from Deirdre McDonnell and will represent DES on the EGFSN (in conjunction with Peter Baldwin).

#### **b) Lifelong Learning Report Published**

The Lifelong Learning report, approved at the June meeting, was published in July. A Press Statement highlighting the importance of Lifelong Learning, as discussed at a previous EGFSN meeting, accompanied the release of the report.

#### **c) Biopharma Skills Report Published**

The EGFSN's Biopharma Skills report was approved at the June meeting. The report was published in August. A presentation on the key findings from the report was provided by the Secretariat at the Biopharma Skills Forum on 8<sup>th</sup> September. The Forum welcomed the report's findings and recommendations. BioPharmaChem Ireland (BCPI) has compiled a Strategic Action Plan based upon each of the recommendations contained in the EGFSN's report. The Action Plan will be further refined to include named individuals responsible for driving industry input on the implementation of each of the actions. The finalised document will be presented for approval at the next BPCI Strategy Meeting in October.

#### **d) Meeting with Minister DJEI**

The Chair met with Minister Mitchell O'Connor on 1<sup>st</sup> September to discuss the work of the EGFSN and skills issues of importance. The Chair highlighted the importance of the continued independence and autonomy of the EGFSN within the new structures outlined in the National Skills Strategy. Minister Mitchell O'Connor undertook to raise the matter with the Minister for Education and Skills.

#### **e) New Skills Architecture**

DES provided an update on the establishment of the National Skills Council, which is referenced in the National Skills Strategy 2025. The NSC was included as a Quarter 4 deliverable in the Action Plan for Education published on September and a Ministerial decision on the establishment of the Council is expected over the coming weeks. .

The recently published Action Plan for Education (DES) includes an action to review the mandate for the EGFSN, with a timeline of Q4 2016 indicated. DJEI and DES are engaged in discussions on a new mandate for the EGFSN and it is hoped that this will be agreed at Ministerial level in the coming weeks. The EGFSN looks forward to working closely with the National Skills Council, and continuing to provide rigorous analysis and evidence-based research, to inform the work of the Council.

#### **f) Review of the Food Sector**

Action 87 in the Dept. Agriculture's Food Wise 2025 report, published in July 2015, requested that the EGFSN produce an update on the Food and Drinks sector (following on from the 2009 report). Scoping work has commenced by the Secretariat, including consultations with stakeholders identified in the 2009 report as implementation leaders. A brief overview on the scope of the research and progress to date was provided at the meeting, and guidance sought from the Group as to how to proceed.

Following discussions it was agreed that the lack of a coordinated process appeared to be the main barrier to the full implementation of recommendations contained in previous reports on the sector. In addition the potential effects of Brexit on the sector are unknown at this stage, and require to be monitored as the situation evolves. While there are some emerging gaps in relation to middle management capability and production operatives, there does not appear to be evidence of significant skills shortages from consultations undertaken with stakeholders.

In conclusion it was agreed that the shorter term issues of middle management capability in the sector, and the lack of a lead organisation to coordinate and drive implementation, should be highlighted and addressed. On a more longer term outlook the EGFSN will re-look at the sector mid-2017 when the potential implications of Brexit for the sector are clearer.

**Action: EGFSN Secretariat to liaise with EI Food Division in relation to reported emerging gaps in middle management areas. The lack of an existing lead coordinating body is to be highlighted as a priority action to be addressed. The EGFSN to re-look at the sector in mid-2017.**

### **3. Regional Labour Markets Bulletin 2016**

A presentation on the report's main findings was provided at the meeting. Members were complimentary of the research, which is extremely useful in informing the work of the newly established Regional Skills Fora.

Approval of the report to proceed to publication was sought.

**Action: The report was approved to proceed to publication.**

### **4. National Skills Bulletin 2016**

A presentation on the report's main findings was provided at the meeting. The latest edition highlights continued improvements in the labour market, with more difficult to fill vacancies in evidence and new areas of shortages appearing. A new traffic light system has been incorporated into this year's report to assist in identifying areas of skills shortages within the 135 occupations covered by the analysis.

Approval of the report to proceed to publication was sought.

**Action: The report was approved to proceed to publication.**

### **5. Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply 2016 – Progress Update**

Due to a delay in receipt of required datasets from the CSO, which are vital for the compilation of the report, a draft report was not available for circulation. A progress update was provided at the September meeting and a draft report will subsequently be produced and circulated for approval.

With the economy recovering and growth in construction rising, the skills requirements of the sector are emerging as a significant issue to be addressed. The Springboard initiative has experienced difficulties in filling available places on construction related training courses.

The feasibility of linking data to the HEA First Destination data was raised. The SLMRU advised that it is exploring administrative data systems to link and track data. The HEA also advised that a new graduate output study is being developed, for 2018 roll-out, which will encompass a longitudinal aspect.

The question of whether data on the number of individuals over 25 years of age with upper second level could be broken down to illustrate those who obtained the qualification through the school system, and those who obtained the qualification via an intervention or initiative. The SLMRU agreed to explore the feasibility in future editions of the report.

**Action: Final report to be circulated to Members via email for approval in advance of the December meeting.**

### **6. Skills for Design – Progress Update**

A presentation on the scope of the study and research progress to date was provided at the meeting. The Design area is multi-faceted and difficult to define in terms of the skills requirements for the non-design intensive sectors of the enterprise base. A small number of representative bodies exist, however, in terms of recognition as a key part of the innovation process and strategies for growth, it is still an emerging area and remains fragmented with no cohesive organisation to promote design in enterprise.

The next steps outlined to progress the research to identify gaps and policy options included further meetings with industry and representative bodies, a company survey, research to identify best practice internationally, and validation of research findings via a stakeholder workshop. A draft final

report will be compiled in advance of the December EGFSN meeting for review and agreement of the recommendations.

**Action: Final report to be circulated for December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for discussion and approval.**

**7. Review of EGFSN Recommendations, 2008 - 2015**

Due to time constraints this item was not discussed at the meeting. The Chair requested that Members review the document circulated and input any feedback to the Secretariat. An updated report, incorporating Members' comments, is to be circulated for discussion at the next meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December.

**Action: Updated report to be circulated to December meeting for approval.**

**8. Any Other Business**

There being no other business the meeting ended.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 1.00pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016.