

**Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 75
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
28th March 2018 at 3pm
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Kildare Street**

Present:	Tony Donohoe	Chair
	Mark Christal	Enterprise Ireland
	Selen Guerin	SOLAS
	Kathleen Gavin	Department of Education & Skills
	David Hegarty	DBEI
	Ray Bowe	IDA
	Vivienne Patterson	HEA

Apologies:	Bryan Fields	SOLAS
	Peter Rigney	ICTU
	Mary Doyle	Department of Education & Skills
	Kevin Daly	DBEI

In Attendance from Secretariat:	Alan Power	DBEI
	Don O'Connor	DBEI
	Niamh Martin	DBEI
	Katherine Griffin	DBEI
	Ruth Morrissy	DBEI

1. Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number 74

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. EGFSN Work Programme 2018 – Project Updates

2.a ICT Action Plan Demand Analysis

Alan Power from the EGFSN Secretariat gave an overview on the status of this analysis. The research will feed into the revised ICT Skills Action Plan currently being drafted by the Department. The Chair commented on the recent CAO application figures which pointed to a decrease of 16% in applications for ICT-related courses. It was confirmed that the report covers high level ICT skills. A discussion followed amongst the Group. The DES representative outlined that the Report will be presented to the NSC at its next meeting in April alongside an update on the ICT Action Plan. It was pointed out that the ICT Action Plan being drafted will take account of the issues of supply and the current evidence showing there is a limited pool of candidates from the high-achieving cohort in the CAO process applying for courses, and these will inform the recommendations. It was suggested that the outcomes from STEM-led initiatives may not be evident for another few years. The review of Career Guidance

commissioned by DES is due to be completed by July 2018 and it was suggested that the DBEI, EI, IDA etc could meet with the consultants to provide input into this review. The Group approved the report for presentation to the NSC.

ACTION: A one- to -two page synopsis with the key messages of the ICT Report should be made available to Min for Education in advance of the April NSC meeting. There should be emphasis put on the fact that the Report addresses skills in the high-level ICT areas. The findings should not be framed as recommendations.

2.b Brexit – Skills Impact

Alan Power of the EGFSN Secretariat presented the findings of the Brexit Report. The research focused on trade diversification (skills needed to break into non -UK markets) and also trade facilitation skills in areas such as customs clearance, supply chain management and logistics. One of the main issues cited by enterprises surveyed for the research was a 'lack of preparedness'. The Report concludes by putting forward 8 suggested actions to prepare for Brexit. The Group discussed the findings. The EI representative confirmed that further input into the Report would be provided by his colleagues. Further discussion took place with a number of observations. More discussion was required on recommendation 6 - *Establish a National Logistics/Supply Chain Skills Group, to manage a coordinated response from the Logistics/Supply Chain sector, education and training providers and Government to promote the sector and its skills needs.* Following the meeting, it was agreed that this recommendation would be revised and the report presented to the NSC at its April meeting.

ACTION: Further input from EI to be collected and considered for inclusion in the Report in advance of the NSC meeting in April.

2.c Early Childhood Education

Don O'Connor from the EGFSN Secretariat provided an overview of the project to construct a supply forecasting model for the Childhood education sector. The model will forecast supply of, and demand for, skilled staff in the sector out to 2030, providing an estimate of the likely skills gaps that will arise at the relevant NFQ levels.

The Skills Forecast will feed into a Workforce Plan for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector to be carried out by DES and DCYA in early 2018. This project will examine the impact of a rapidly changing policy and practice landscape in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector in Ireland on future skills requirements so that Government can ensure that a high-quality workforce is in place over the next decade. Clear challenges are already emerging in relation to the recruitment, attraction and retention of qualified staff into the workforce.

Work on the forecasting model on behalf of the EGFSN is being finalised. The Group was informed that it is a complex undertaking. DES and DCYA are carrying out further testing of the model to ensure reliability. Currently, the model is using data from the 2011 census but 2016 census data will provide clearer insight into population forecasts. It is intended that a report on the updated model will be presented to the EGFSN at the June 2018.

ACTION: Further work on the Forecasting Model will be carried out. Outputs will be presented to the EGFSN at its next meeting in June 2018.

2.d Skills for the Digital Economy

Ruth Morrissy of the EGFSN Secretariat provided an overview of the status of the research into skills for the Digital Economy. She began by describing the definition of 'digital skills' and mentioned that a job's susceptibility to automation is a key part. She described how following a tender process, IDC were appointed consultants in March 2018. A Project Steering Group will oversee this study. A first meeting of the steering group took place in early April 2018. The appointed contractor will be required to present the draft findings developed, at the end of each deliverable to this Project Steering Group. The consultants will be required to actively seek inputs from the Project Steering Group at these junctures within the overall project schedule and attend the Project Steering Group meetings in Dublin. It is anticipated that there will be further meetings of this Group.

DBEI will be responsible for day-to-day liaison with the contractor/consultants, ensuring that all aspects of the Terms of Reference are being addressed and that the project timetable is being met.

ACTION: The Chair requested that the Terms of Reference of the project be recirculated to the EGFSN for information. It is expected that the consultants guided by the project steering group and the EGFSN secretariat will carry out research over the next few months based on the terms of reference. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in advance of the July meeting of the NSC. A final report will be submitted to the EGFSN by the end of June 2018.

2.e Design Skills

Ruth Morrissy from the EGFSN Secretariat provided an update into the progress on implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report 'Winning by Design'. The Report was published in November 2017 and set out the rationale for conducting further research into the developing area. Ruth informed the group that more quantitative analysis is required into the demand and supply side.

The first recommendation of the report called for a review of enterprise demand and the provision of higher and further education design courses across all education institutions to provide a deeper understanding in this area.

The report had put forward several other recommendations to enhance and develop design in Ireland in the areas of design education provision, design training for businesses and designer upskilling and funding of design.

Recommendation number 1 is a sizeable undertaking and it was further agreed that the recommendations numbered 2 -8 can be progressed while recommendation 1 will depend on the agreement of DBEI management on the scope of the research.

ACTION: The EGFSN Secretariat will continue work on implementing the recommendations of the Report. A second progress report is expected to be finalised within the year

3. 2017 EGFSN Annual Activity Statement

Niamh Martin of the EGFSN Secretariat provided the Group with an overview of the achievements of the EGFSN in 2017 as outlined in the draft Annual Activity Statement.

ACTION: It was suggested that the EGFSN Annual Activity Statement be tabled as an item 'for information' on the agenda of the National Skills Council Meeting.

4. Hospitality Skills Oversight Group Two Year Review

Niamh Martin of the EGFSN Secretariat apprised the Group of the progress of the work of the Hospitality Oversight Group. The Group was told that DBEI's involvement in the Group will cease following the publication of the end-of-term report. It is hoped that the report will be ready to be presented to the Oversight Group at its next meeting. While DBEI's involvement in the Group ceases, a decision as to the future of the Group has not been made. The Group was informed that there was much willingness to continue with the Group to progress the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2015 Report.

The Group was established in March 2016 following the publication of the EGFSN Report 'Assessment of Future Skills Requirements in the Hospitality Sector in Ireland, 2015-2020'.

In 2017, a mid-term progress report on the work of the Hospitality Group was published and it outlined significant progress made on implementing the recommendations contained in the 2015 Report. Significant progress has been reported on Hospitality Career promotion and development, a Hospitality Transition Year programme, development of new chef apprenticeships and Traineeships, two new Hospitality Skillnet Programmes - in December 2016 the Board of Skillnets approved the new Restaurant & Hospitality Skillnet, which is promoted by the RAI and in April 2017 a second hospitality-sector network was approved, the Tourism & Food Skillnet. Promoted by Ballyhoura Development CLG, this network was developed to address the skills needs of tourism and food businesses in a rural catchment area in the south-west region. Springboard + Hospitality Skills provision, Employer Hospitality Quality employer programme and audits underway of Higher Education and Further Education & Training (FET) hospitality course content and facilities to ensure relevance and optimised use.

ACTION: The EGFSN Secretariat will continue to work on the publication of the end-of-term Report. The final report on the outcomes arising from the work of the Oversight Group will be published in the second quarter of 2018.

5. NSC Discussion items

5.a Workplace of the Future

The DES representative raised this item as something which is to be considered by the NSC in the Autumn. It is a key priority area. The EGFSN had prepared a one page document on this topic.

5.b Productivity

This item was raised as it is a priority area for the NSC and is tabled for discussion at the Autumn meetings. This concerns the skills required in the digital economy to assist productivity. The DES representative referenced a McKinsey Report, which rated Ireland positively in this space (automation/workings of the future). The DES offered to circulate it to the Group.

ACTION: The EGFSN to consider facilitators for the discussion into these topics for the future NSC meetings. DES to provide McKinsey report for circulation to EGFSN members.

6. Any Other Business/Next Meeting Date

Arising from the foregoing discussions at the meeting, the Chair suggested that an item on 'Data' be put on the agenda for the EGFSN at a future meeting. The Chair pointed to all the sources of data from the PLSS/FE/HE/DES/CSO etc. The imminent coming into force of the GDPR also was highlighted.

ACTION: To consider tabling an agenda item 'Data' for a future EGFSN meeting. The EGFSN Secretariat will confirm with members, the dates for the next EGFSN meeting by email. It is intended that the next meeting will take place at 3pm on the 28th June in DBEI offices.