



1 WHO WE ARE

The Dublin Regional Skills forum (DRSF) is part of a national network supported by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) focused on fostering stronger links between enterprise and education and training providers (ETP).

2 WHY WE EXIST

The creation of the DRSF reflects the strong focus on the skills agenda as part of Government policies such as the National Skills Strategy and Dublin Action Plans for Jobs (DRAPJ), which focus on enhancing regional economic growth and increasing job opportunities.

2.1 NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY 2025

Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 states that the Regional Skills Fora "*will facilitate ongoing employer-educator dialogue to match identified needs with sustainable provision in each region, thereby optimizing the return on Irish investment in education and training*". The Strategy seeks to achieve '*improved translation and mediation of skills 'intelligence' into provision through the Regional Skills Fora*' and the following actions within the strategy involve delivery by the Regional Skills Forum (RSF):

1.1) 21st CENTURY SKILLS – TRANSVERSAL SKILLS AND SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

- Promote the development of transversal skills at all levels of education and training system and increase the visibility and understanding of the skills developed at each level among stakeholders

1.3) DIVERSITY OF PROVISION BEYOND SCHOOL

- Improve the dissemination of skills requirements and labour market intelligence, nationally and regionally, to inform dialogue between providers and employers to underpin the provision of relevant skills development opportunities

2.1) EMPLOYER COLLABORATION IN DEVELOPING RELEVANT SKILLS

- While employer engagement is not currently consistent across regions and across sectors, we will seek to build on good practice already underway and ensure that structures are developed to foster a more systemized approach through Regional Skills Fora.
- Use the structures and processes established by the Regional Skills fora to

- Ensure external partners can easily access the broad range of opportunities available from education and training providers,
- Build on good practice across institutions and in the Momentum, Springboard, traineeships and apprenticeship programmes and increase employer participation in curriculum design and review.

2.2) CAPABILITY OF SMES WILL BE ENHANCED THROUGH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Education and Training Providers will work with SMEs to identify and address training needs.

2.2 ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION

The central vision of the Statement of Strategy and action plan for Education is that Irish Education and Training System should become the best in Europe over the next decade. This is achievable as we are already a high performer in many fields, but it is also a challenge towards which many stakeholders in education and training can work together.

Being the lead in Europe mean and ambition to be the best at:

- Harnessing Education to break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion
- Delivering a learning experience to highest international standards
- Equipping learners of all ages and capacities to participate and succeed in a changing world
- Allowing Ireland to be the leader across a broad range of fields, scientific, cultural, enterprise and public service.

2.3 DUBLIN ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2015-2017

The Governments 2015 Action Plan for Jobs places an emphasis on developing the jobs potential of the regions and includes a commitment to develop and publish a suite of Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The Dublin Regional Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017, published by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) aims to build on the strengths of the region, to support business startup, grow and generate exports. It assigns the following actions to the DRSF: (some specific skills)

- 61) Establish the process to develop the Dublin Regional Skills Forum to foster better engagement between education providers, employers and other regional stakeholders, on an ongoing basis, to collaborate in building the skills of the region
- 62) Establish an annual Education & Enterprise Conference to discuss and plan for future skills needs in the enterprise sector
- 63) Organise and host an international conference on engagement between HEI's, Industry and Community aimed at identifying new, and improving existing, models and approaches to stakeholder engagement
- 64) Implement the steps necessary to create the new Technological University for Dublin
- 65) Contribute to meeting national target for international students to represent that reflects HEI's situation and national needs
- 66) Through greater enterprise collaboration, deepen HEI's role in promoting diversity, deepen knowledge creation and HEI's position to act as sources of vibrant creativity in the region

- 67) Create a Dublin region network of start-ups incubators and accelerators aimed at boosting the number of success rate of technology enterprise among university students and graduates.
- 68) Increase entrepreneurial behaviors by HEI postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers by implementing practical initiatives and sector specific training initiatives
- 69) Assess the potential to expand the MAKESHAPECHANGE schools programme to 38 schools in Dublin city
- 70) Raise Dublin's profile as a hub for Hackathons to stimulate innovation and as a catalyst for start-ups
- 71) Develop an engagement model with enterprise that will shorten the time-to-work of learners as we as time-to-delivery for sectoral-specific education and training needs.
- 72) Increase apprenticeship and traineeships in Dublin linked to defined enterprise needs as part of the National Skills Strategy.

3 WHAT WE DO

In establishing the work of regional skills fora and funding the appointment of a regional skills forum manager, the Department of Education and Skills has stated that the network will:

1. Provide a cohesive education led structure for employers and the further and higher education system to work together in building the skills needs of their regions;
2. Help employers better understand and access the full range of services available across the education and training system;
3. Enhance links between education and training providers in planning and delivering programmes, reduce duplication and inform national funding decisions.

It is hoped that the new skill structures will contribute to better outcomes for learners, and support enterprise development and job creation by providing:

- More robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs;
- Better alignment of education and training provision with the skills needs of each region;
- Greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system and enhancement of progression routes for learners;
- Maximisation of employment, career progression and entrepreneurs opportunities available to learners in each region.

It must be noted that the fora are intended to provide a framework to support and facilitate, not replace or cut across, the implementation of actions by individual education and training providers.

The Regional Skills Forum Manager, has been tasked by the Department of Education and Skills to:

- Facilitate the involvement of enterprise stakeholders in a collaborative framework with education and training partners in the identification, development and delivery of skills development responses.
- Manage the establishment, development and operation of the Regional Skills Forum, in furtherance of delivering the objectives of the Forum.

- Lead on the development and delivery of an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) to cover all aspects of education sector and employer engagement and in alignment with National Policy initiatives.
- Establish and manage a strong network of working relationships between the stakeholders in the region, with particular focus on liaison between enterprise and education and training stakeholders in advancing the objectives of the Skills Forum.
- Be part of a National Forum Manager network to share views and best practice across the region.
- Identify, monitor and report on appropriate measures of success in consultation with the Skills Forum and in line with National reporting requirements as they emerge across the Fora network.
- Represent the Regional Skills Forum on local/national groups including those that may be established to progress activities on a network wide basis.
- Provide on-going progress reports on key project activities and outcomes for the Skills Forum and meetings of the national Project Advisory Group.
- Work with the Education and Training Provider Group to develop an integrated approach to implementation of actions that ensures the co-ordinated achievement of objectives and the cross-sectoral sharing of best practice.
- Working in cooperation with SOLAS/CSO, in order to provide regular data updates to ensure a strong evidence base for decisions.
- Conduct periodic project evaluation and review to ensure success, including annual reviews of progress in achieving Forum objectives
- Identify and implement the most effective means for sharing and disseminating information to external stakeholders
- Actively promote the activities and achievements of the Regional Skills Forum.
- Become familiar with the full range of pertinent data sources relevant to the skills development needs of the region and manage the input of the Forum to the analysis and further development of such data.
- Become familiar with the broad range of current offerings from the education and training providers in the region, in terms of disciplines, levels and current practices.
- Act as an enabler for the provision of collaborative solutions to skills needs across the region; whether this is done via joint awards or training provision, or via progression arrangements.

In summary the Regional Skills Forum has three key functions:

- ▶ Engage with relevant regional/local stakeholders
- ▶ Identify and disseminate regional/local skills gaps
- ▶ Identify and disseminate regional/local responses

4 HOW WE WILL DO IT

The Regional Skills Forum Manager is tasked with creating annual operating plans. Please see separate attachment with proposed work plan for 2016/2017.