

## **Minister Mitchell O'Connor launches report on the skills needs of the Biopharma industry**

### **Up to 8,400 job openings to arise in the sector to 2020**

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D., today Monday 8th August, launched a new report by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) on the *Future Skills Needs of the Biopharma Industry in Ireland*. The objective of the study is to review the supply of, and demand for, skills for the Biopharma industry in Ireland up to 2020.

Launching the report, Minister Mitchell O'Connor said, "The Biopharma industry makes an important contribution to the Irish economy in terms of employment and manufacturing exports. The sector employs over 28,000 people and creates significant secondary employment in construction and other services when investment in new plants is under way. A significant number of Biopharma investment announcements have been made recently by IDA Ireland across the regions, with a potential capital value in the order of €4 billion. The availability of people with the right skills and talent to work in Biopharma will be critical to the continued growth of the industry as these investments come on stream. The report by the EGFSN into the future skills needs of the sector is therefore timely, and will help industry and Government to take the necessary steps to ensure that skills supply to the sector can be met."

The Minister for Training Skills and innovation, John Halligan T.D, said, "The Biopharma industry provides a range of excellent employment opportunities across all levels of the manufacturing process, from technicians, engineers, and scientists, to management and support staff. I would encourage students to consider the many rewarding career opportunities available in this growing industry. It is anticipated that 8,400 potential job openings will arise in the Biopharma industry in the period to 2020, between expansion and replacement demand. The Expert Group's report suggests that the quantity of skills supply required to meet the needs of the industry should be available, through a mix of graduate intake, upskilling of those seeking employment, and continuous professional development of those already working in the sector."

Speaking at the launch of the report, the Chairperson of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, Una Halligan, said "The Biopharma industry is undergoing rapid change at a global level, particularly with the growth in the development and manufacture of new and complex Biologic drugs. For Ireland to maintain its position as a key hub for Biopharma manufacturing, we need to ensure that we anticipate the changing skills requirements of the sector and ensure that there is a close alignment between industry's needs and the skills being taught in the education and training system."

Ms. Halligan added "We have worked closely with the Biopharma industry in preparing this report on the future skills needs of the sector, and the Expert Group has produced a set of recommendations which can serve as an Action Plan for addressing the skills needs of the

sector up to 2020. The successful implementation of the recommendations will require the full commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders. Regular reviews of the programmes in Third Level Institutions should be held to ensure that they are market-informed and relevant, while there is also a need for a greater number workplace training opportunities to be made available to students by the industry.”

The full report, *Future Skill Needs of the Biopharma Industry in Ireland*, is available on the website of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, [Link Here](#)

Recommendations in the report are grouped under the following themes:

1	Raising awareness of the range of careers within the Biopharma Industry, including through the development of new communication tools and increased industry presence at Career Fairs and Open Days.
2	Improving the alignment of education and skills provision with the needs of the Biopharma industry - particularly for Biologics manufacturing.
3	Improving the work-readiness of Graduates, including through the increased provision of work placements of 6-9 month duration and experiential learning in the final year of study.
4	Attracting, developing and retaining Biopharma Talent, including through companies increasing the scale of their Graduate Entry Development Programmes.
5	Investing in the continuing professional development of the workforce, including through making maximum use of the Skillnets Network training model.
6	Maximising available Jobseekers programmes such as Springboard+ to consolidate skills supply. A new Biopharma Apprenticeship and Career Traineeship could also be developed.

**ENDS**

**Further information**

Contact Press Office, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation 01-6312200, or [press.office@djei.ie](mailto:press.office@djei.ie).

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**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

It is estimated that 28,200 people were employed in the Biopharma Industry in 2015. Of these, some 21,500 were engaged in Pharma manufacturing and related services while 6,700 were employed in Biologics manufacturing. The primary difference between Biologics drugs and Pharmaceuticals drugs is the method by which the drugs are produced. The former are manufactured in living organisms, whereas the latter are manufactured through a series of chemical synthetic steps.

Nine of the top ten global Biopharma companies are located in Ireland. The Biopharma industry exported products to the value of €30.2bn in 2015 and contributed €1.7bn in payroll. It creates significant secondary employment in construction and other services while new plant construction is under way. The Biopharma industry is regionally based, with main operations located in the South-West, Dublin, Mid-East, and West regions.

Global and domestic drivers of growth are impacting on Biopharma skills demand. These include the challenge of achieving innovation and operational excellence, maintaining global standards of product and process compliance, and delivering on the specific skills required for both Pharma and Biologics manufacturing. The Biopharma Industry is highly regulated with stringent clean and safe operational requirements.

Given recent investment announcements, it is anticipated that an additional 5,000 staff will be employed in Biologics manufacturing in Ireland over the next five years. Another 3,400 job openings will arise due to retirements and people leaving the sector. Total anticipated employment in the Biopharma industry will reach 33,200 in 2020. Of the 5,000 increase in Biologics manufacturing, it is estimated that around 1,000 positions will be for roles such as facility maintenance, supply chain/logistics, human resources, finance, legal and warehousing. The remaining 4,000 roles will require more specific Biopharma science and engineering skillsets.

Approximately 810 graduates from a range of discipline areas enter the Biopharma industry each year from the education and training system. The Government has also approved 935 Biopharma related Springboard+ training places for 2016. These are free upskilling training courses open to unemployed jobseekers. Both enterprise and Higher Education are involved in the design and delivery of these programmes. Recruitment for Springboard + courses which are available around the country is currently underway. Interested jobseekers can apply for courses via the Springboard+ website: [www.springboardcourses.ie](http://www.springboardcourses.ie)

### **About the EGFSN**

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on related labour market issues. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met. Established in 1997, the EGFSN reports jointly to the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, in conjunction with the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit in SOLAS, provide the EGFSN with research and analysis support.