

**Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 88  
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
15 September 2021 – MS Teams**

<b>Present:</b>	Tony Donohoe	Chair
	Jonathan McMillan	EI
	Breda O'Toole	IDA
	Vivienne Patterson	HEA
	Joan McNaboe	SOLAS
	Shauna Dunlop	SOLAS
	David Hegarty	DETE
	Stephanie O'Brien	DFHERIS
	Emma Kinsella	DFHERIS
	Aisling Soden	IDA
	Laura Bambrick	ICTU
	Marcus Breathnach	DETE

**Apologies:** William Beausang DFHERIS

**Presenters:** Catherine Murray AECOM  
Ciarán Maguire AECOM

**Secretariat:** Kevin Daly DETE  
Jesse Carley DETE  
Rhodri Lloyd DETE  
Ruth Morrissy DETE  
Don O'Connor DETE  
Alan Power DETE  
Harry Williamson DETE

## **1 Introductions, Minutes**

The Chair welcomed the members.

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

## **2. Skills for Zero Carbon**

This item was introduced by Alan Power. He welcomed Catherine Murray and Ciaran Maguire of AECOM, who provided a detailed breakdown of the report and its implications. Some of the information shared included:

- The report's objective was to identify emerging skillsets, and the changing landscape in different occupations to facilitate the transition to a zero-carbon economy
- Engage with stakeholders in each sector, undertake labour market analysis and identify pathways to facilitate the transition to a zero carbon economy over the next decade.
- The report used a bottom-up approach to quantifying and forecasting labour demand
- Renewables FTE Labour Demand to grow from 3,000 in 2020, to over **9,000 FTE by 2030**
- **Solar is the most labour-intensive** sector relative to capacity and will see the most growth, although there will also be **significant growth in offshore wind**.
- Indicates labour demand of **over 17,000 FTE** required to support the planned level of domestic retrofits
- Based on current retrofit targets, most of this labour will need to be in place by 2023, with modest increases thereafter due to maintenance requirements
- A Challenge - can be more than a decade between when the target needs to be met and when we need to do the training / education to prepare people with the necessary skills
- Difference between occupations in terms of when they will need to be trained – e.g., retrofit is front-loaded, wind turbines are back-loaded.

A question was raised about prioritisation of recommendations, and the challenges of timing the training and development of skills to meet demand.

Responding to a question on how long the demand for certain skills would persist, it was explained that while this is a forecast to 2030, stakeholders have suggested that demand would be leading us into the 2050s.

The Chair thanked the presenters for sharing the information with members.

The Group approved the report with minor modifications.

### **3. Work Programme 2022**

The Chair introduced the item for discussion.

- Global shortage in ICT skills that will never be 'solved', and affects every industry
- Traditionally the Group has done in-depth studies, propose to build a system to look at granular data in the short-term- e.g., CEDEFOP project.
- Automatically generate data on demand for ICT skills, using employment permits, hiring websites etc.
- Could forecast trends in programming languages.
- Feasibility study required.

A question was raised regarding regional breakdowns of skill gaps in future reports. Skills and labour force planning were among the most important issues for firms in a recent EI survey.

The difficulty in getting people to engage in areas of study in which increased demand has been identified.

### **4. AI Skills Progress Update**

- This project is examining Skills relevant to the Deployment, Management and Regulation of AI over the next 5-10 years.
- It is taking a broad approach to the AI-related skills that will be needed across the economy, including by non-experts, the general public, teachers, students, and so on.
- The AI Skills Steering Group has met four times and a broadly-based workshop was held on 29th June.
- A survey was carried out, which has received more than 370 responses.
- Currently, the Group's report is being drafted and initial comments are being incorporated.
- The Steering Group will next meet on 28th September and plans to have its final meeting in the last week of October.
- Once the Group has inputted into the draft, it will be circulated to stakeholders and interested parties more widely.
- It is intended that a final draft report will be submitted to the EGFSN at its December meeting.

#### **5.a Together for Design Progress Report**

- The progress report was published on Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>
- The Implementation Group have done a lot of work in the first year
- Good progress is being made across all of the actions
- Expanding students' knowledge of design is overall going positively
- There are two meetings left in the planned implementation phase.

#### **5.b Logistics and Supply Chain Implementation Update**

- The Logistics and Supply Chain Skills Group emerged from the EGFSN contribution to the Government's contingency planning for Brexit.
- Aimed at promoting career opportunities across logistics and supply chain occupations.
- Recently asked to advise and make recommendations on the Heavy Goods Vehicle driver shortage as a matter of urgency, aimed at ameliorating the supply issue without undermining working conditions or health and safety.
- EGFSN analysis has informed the development of education, training and labour supply interventions in this space, including a driver traineeship, a forthcoming Commercial Driver apprenticeship programme, and introduction of a General Employment Permit quota for HGV drivers from non-EEA countries.
- The immediate labour supply issues around HGV drivers persist, however; the promotional efforts of the Skills Group long term, aiming to address deeply embedded perceptions around the HGV role, encourage new entrants.
- Difficulty in achieving a unified approach across the sector.

#### **5.c Leading the Way Implementation Update**

- Leading the Way deals with Management Skills and Practices in SMEs in Ireland and was published in October 2020.
- The project Implementation Group, chaired by Adam Weatherly from ISME, has met three times in 2021, and will meet for a fourth time on 23rd September.
- Two subgroups are working on two key recommendations: an Online Management Skills Assessment Tool, and a Central Repository of Information on Management Training.

- Good progress is being made on both fronts; envisaged that they will be delivered by the end of the year.
- The Group has dealt with the two most substantial recommendations first, so the remaining recommendations will not take as much time.
- The Group may schedule a specific workshop before the end of the year to consider how Comms for the report can be done most effectively, and how cooperation from stakeholders can be leveraged in this context.
- The Chair will rotate to Sven Spollen-Behrens from SFA in 2022.

#### **6. AOB**

The chair noted that this was Kevin Daly's final formal meeting of the EGFSN and thanked him for all of his work over the past 4 years.

The Secretariat will contact members with details of the next meeting in December 2021.

EGFSN Secretariat  
September 2021