

**Press Release****6 March 2007**

Skills Road Map to 2020 Identified

The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr Micheál Martin TD, and the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin TD, today (6 March 2007) jointly launched a new national skills strategy, *Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy*. The Strategy was prepared by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). It identifies Ireland's current skills profile, provides a strategic vision and specific objectives for Ireland's future skills requirements, and sets out a road map for how the vision and objectives can be achieved. The implementation of the Strategy will help to secure the future competitive advantage of enterprises in Ireland and enhance future growth in productivity and living standards.

For the first time the Strategy sets out clear long-term objectives for our education and training requirements to develop Ireland as a knowledge-based, innovation-driven, participative and inclusive economy with a highly skilled workforce by 2020. The Expert Group believes this vision is achievable. The Expert Group recommends that 93 percent of the Irish labour force should have qualifications at, or above, leaving certificate level by 2020, and that 48 percent should have a third or fourth-level qualification by then.

Minister Martin said, "This report provides a comprehensive vision for Ireland's future skills requirements and also provides a strategic framework from which the relevant Government Departments and State Agencies can build. The strategy launched today is complementary to the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation launched in 2006."

Minister Hanafin said, "The report identifies central challenges in ensuring a continuing supply of the skills needed for our future competitiveness and prosperity. It brings into sharp focus the long-term importance of many elements of the policies we are pursuing to advance access, participation, quality and attainment at all levels of the education system."

Anne Heraty, Chairperson of the EGFSN said, "To date education and training policy has served Ireland well. Ireland now has an opportunity to drive economic development through building our skills capability. This report provides an overarching policy framework for the development of coherent education and training strategies to meet current and future skills needs."

Key Proposals for 2020:

- 48 percent of the labour force should have qualifications at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Levels 6 to 10 - from National Certificate to PhD level;
- 45 percent should have qualifications at NFQ levels 4 and 5 - Awards equivalent to Leaving Certificate Examination;
- The remaining seven percent are likely to have qualifications at NFQ levels 1 to 3 (i.e. below Junior Certificate) while aiming to transition to higher levels.

Skills Road Map to 2020 - Achieving the Vision

- An additional 500,000 individuals within the workforce will need to be upskilled and to progress by at least one NFQ level over and above their current level of education and training;
- The Leaving Certificate retention rate for young people should rise to 90 percent;
- By 2020, the proportion of the population aged 20-24 with NFQ level 4 or 5 qualification (Leaving Certificate or equivalent), should be increased to 94 percent;
- The progression from second- to third-level education should increase from 55 percent to 72 percent; and
- The report also highlights the need for:
 - Integration of immigrants into the education and training system, at all levels;
 - Career guidance and mentoring for those at work;
 - Assistance for individuals and companies in identifying their skills needs;
 - More awareness programmes that highlight the benefits of education and training; and,
 - Education and training provision needs to be flexible and responsive to the needs of employers and employees

Ends

For further information please contact:

Máirin Delaney, Communications Department, Forfás Tel: (01) 6073020 / (087) 2319471, or
Martin Shanahan, Forfás/Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Tel: (01) 6073133.

Notes to Editors

The **Expert Group on Future Skills Needs** is a body appointed by the Irish Government, under the aegis of Forfás, to act as the central national resource on skills and labour supply issues for the enterprise sector, and on overall strategy for enterprise training in Ireland. The Group was established in 1997 and is composed of representatives of business, employees, education, Government departments and state agencies.

Anne Heraty is the Chairperson of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. She is also founder and CEO of CPL Resources Ltd. <http://www.skillsireland.ie>

Forfás is Ireland's national board responsible for providing policy advice to Government on enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation in Ireland. Among Forfás' functions are: industrial policy development and co-ordination of State bodies such as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland; the promotion of scientific research and innovation in close association with Science Foundation Ireland and the Advisory Council on Science, Technology and Innovation; and research, analysis and policy advice on competitiveness and economic development, through the National Competitiveness Council and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.

<http://www.forfas.ie>

The research which underpins this report was led by Forfás.

Background papers were prepared by:

- The FÁS Skills and Labour Market Unit - The future likely supply of Skills and Qualifications
- Forfás - The Changing Nature of Generic Skills
- ESRI - Current Trends in Occupational Employment & Forecasts 2010 & 2020
- Publica Consulting - The Changing Nature of Selected Occupations
- University College Cork - Human Capital and Productivity in the Irish Context

The full text of this report and background documents is available at www.skillsstrategy.ie

The report uses the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as a basis for its projection. The NFQ comprises ten levels of qualifications, with each level based on nationally agreed standards, skills and competence. These standards define the learning outcomes to be achieved by learners seeking qualifications at each level. The ten levels include qualifications gained in settings from schools, to places of work, the community, training centres and to colleges and universities, from the most basic to the most advanced levels of learning. Information on the NFQ is www.nfq.ie