



FIERE Survey Report Ireland 2015



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Executive Summary

The FIERE (Furthering Innovative Entrepreneurial Regions of Europe) project aims to support regional organisations' employees to behave more entrepreneurially and innovatively within their work environment. The primary aim of the FIERE Skill Needs Analysis survey was to identify the skills required by employees and their organisations in order for individual employees to behave more entrepreneurially, innovatively and creatively within their organisations. For instance the survey explored the skills required by the respondents' organisation, the skills that respondents consider as valuable for their role and the specific skills that they considered should be included in the training programme. Furthermore, the survey also determined the level of empowerment that employees have in decision making processes within their organisations and whether organisations encourage individual employees to seek out new opportunities.

In Ireland, the FIERE survey was administered via an on-line survey tool and coordinated CEDRE¹ by Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and Tipperary County Council (TCOCO). In total 50 responses were collected from 31 organisations of which 60% were from the public sector, followed by private sector organisations at 22%, community & enterprise groups at 16% and voluntary organisations at 2%.

This report addresses a number of key themes including demographics, entrepreneurial background, skills needs analysis and the value and benefit of accreditation of a skills training programme. The key findings from Ireland in relation to the demographics section were as follows:

- Overall, the education attainment of respondents was high as 60% hold a post graduate qualification.
- Generally, males are working longer within their roles than females (from the private and community & enterprise sectors), however longevity of employment is higher among females within the public sector (73% of female working 10 years and more);
- There were more senior management positions among male respondents and more administrative positions among females.

The entrepreneurial background section identified past entrepreneurial activity of the employees and the level of freedom and entrepreneurial behaviour within the respondents' organisations. The key findings include:

¹ Centre for Enterprise & Regional Development

- The majority of respondents (60%) indicated that they had some past entrepreneurial background, where males (72%) tend to behave more entrepreneurial than females;
- The survey results indicated that private and voluntary sector respondents have more freedom and greater empowerment from their organisation to think and behave entrepreneurially;
- In Ireland 36% of respondents owned a business in the past and this was evenly distributed between males and females.

The Skills Needs Analysis section helped to build a complete picture of priorities, opinions and preferences in relation to the entrepreneurial skills required for the respondent's role and required by their organisation. Also which skills the respondents felt were important for them to be trained in.

- Overall, there was consensus among all respondents (both females and males) that the most valued skills were: project management (58%); employee resourcefulness (56%), problem solving (52%) and being proactive (52%);
- The top two very important skills for all respondents to be trained in were proactivity (54%) and project management (52%);
- Leadership and self-efficacy skills were not considered by respondents from the public sector as essential skills to be included in any training program (21% of males and 25% of females).

In relation to the benefit and accreditation section, the vast majority of respondents (94%) agreed training would be beneficial for their organisation and 80% thought the training should be accredited by an educational organisation. However, there were many additional suggestions from respondents about the value of the programme and the format the programme should adopt such as the need to make a distinction between "training programmes and educational programmes" and that the encouragement of employees is more important than accreditation. Overall, the most preferred mode of delivery of the programme was a workshop (70%) format.

Based on the main key findings, the private and voluntary sectors were more entrepreneurially orientated than the public sector. Another interesting fact is that nearly half of the respondents did not engage in entrepreneurial activity in the past (40%) which may support the need for further training within these sectors (public, private, community & enterprise and voluntary), regardless of gender. It is also important to take into consideration when designing and implementing a skills training programme particular regional, gender, sector and occupation nuances that may influence the effectiveness of programme delivery. Another important aspect to consider when designing a programme is the appropriateness of the curriculum, which responds to the challenges of how to package

all the important skills into one programme that addresses the needs of different stakeholders.

The FIERE skills needs analyses survey will support the development of an entrepreneurial skills training programme which will be delivered in each FIERE partner country during 2015. Each FIERE partner conducted the survey in their region and produced a detailed individual country report which is available on the FIERE website². The objective of this report is to provide an overview of the data collected for Ireland and to summarise the key findings.

² <http://www.fiереproject.eu/>