



RURAL FOOD SKILLNET

Training and Development Programme 2026 -2028

Request for Tender (RFT) for provision of Training
Services to Rural Food Skillnet

Direct Contract

November 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

Rural Food Skillnet was established in 2006 and is a training network serving the food and hospitality sector throughout the Republic of Ireland. In 2026, funding will be received from Skillnet Ireland to provide training and skills development programmes for member companies. The network is promoted by the Rural Food Company Training Network Ltd. and managed by North East West Kerry Development an integrated local development company based in Áras an Phobail, Tralee, Co Kerry.

The objective of this request for tender (RFT) is to establish a direct contract award for delivery of various training programmes for the Rural Food Skillnet and its member companies, once specific needs arise and availability of funding for 2026-28.

The total value of the training initiative for 2026–2028 will be contingent on the relevant funding stream(s) available through Skillnet Ireland — which may include the Training Networks Programme (TNP), Skills Connect, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and/or other Skillnet Ireland budget allocations. Annual amounts will be confirmed via yearly programme planning.

This contract will be established as a single party agreement, per the training programme, with the tenderer selected based on the published award criteria. The training programmes expected to be run over the duration of the period are outlined in **Appendix I – Specification of Requirements.**

2. INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERER

The detailed instructions regarding the format and requirements of this RFT are set out in **Appendix II Instructions To Tenderer.** These instructions must be observed to ensure the completeness and eligibility of the tender.

3. AWARD CRITERIA

The contract will be awarded to the qualifying tender on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, using the following awarding criteria:

Criterion	Maximum Score Available	
Existing relationship within Skillnet network	200	20%
Relevant Experience	300	30%
Methodology and Approach	400	40%
References	100	10%
Total Maximum Score Available	1000	100%

Note:

1. Rural Food Skillnet may shortlist tenderers for interview on the basis of the written tender before making a final decision for contract award;
2. Rural Food Skillnet may decide, following evaluation of tenders, not to proceed or to proceed with a limited number of elements of the tender;
3. Rural Food Skillnet reserves the right to cancel a training programme.



4. DURATION AND SCOPE OF THE CONTRACT

This contract is a framework agreement, and the duration of the contract is for a period of three years from the date of its awarding, subject to demand, availability of funding and the performance of the appointed service provider.

The contract may be extended to incorporate additional services depending on the requirements of the programme, the performance of the successful service provider/s and the availability of funding.

The scope of the contract includes the design, delivery and evaluation of the training programme and performance of the following administrative duties on behalf of/in conjunction with the network:

- Liaison with the network manager/administrator and member company representative(s) and/or trainee(s) in advance of programme commencement where required and/or requested.
- Preparation, including printing, of all programme materials.
- Ensuring that the trainee profile form and daily attendance sheet (templates to be provided by Rural Food Skillnet) is completed and signed by all trainees.
- Conducting training evaluation among all programme participants on behalf of the network (template to be provided by Rural Food Skillnet).
- Returning all completed documentation to the network within 5 working days after the completion of the programme.
- Working with trainees and/or facilities providers to resolve any minor issues arising during the training programme in relation to facilities required/provided.
- Communicating any material issues to Rural Food Skillnet during the programme to allow for speedy resolution.
- Providing the network with a brief written Trainer Report upon conclusion of selected training programme outlining comments on areas such as participation, venue, facilities, catering, issues that arose during the training, suggestions for improvement etc.

The number of participants attending these training programmes is expected to range between 6 – 20, subject to demand. The selected training provider may be required to respond directly to queries from interested participants regarding programme content, their eligibility etc.

This training programme may be run a number of times throughout the programme of the contract. Details of the actual dates and the number of times that the programme will be run are currently not known, as it will be subject to demand and availability of funding. Training may take place in a specific company premises or online depending on training requirements. Venue arrangements may be handled by training provider or Rural Food Skillnet.



5. INELIGIBILITY UNDER EU RULES

Tenderers to whom any of the circumstances listed in paragraph 1 of Article 20 of EU Council Directive 93/36/EEC (co-ordinating procedures for the award of public supply contracts) apply, will be excluded from this competition (Broadly, these circumstances are bankruptcy, professional misconduct and failure to pay taxes or social security contributions) Tenderers are requested to declare that none of these circumstances apply to them – use the declaration form enclosed in **Appendix IV**.

6. TERMS & CONDITIONS

6.1 Tender Format & Delivery. Tenders must be completed in accordance with the format specified in **Appendix II & III**. Incomplete tenders or tenders that do not follow the prescribed format will be rejected.

6.2 Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC). A valid TCC is a pre-condition for contract award Tenderers are, therefore, requested to provide a copy of a valid tax clearance certificate and/or provide Rural Food Skillnet with your Applicant Name, Applicant PPSN/Tax Reference Number & Access Number to enable Rural Food Skillnet to confirm you have a tax clearance certificate

6.3 Insurance: All tenderers must provide evidence of relevant professional insurance.

6.4 Confidentiality and Intellectual Property. Rural Food Skillnet requires that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender be treated in strict confidence by tenderers.

6.5 Freedom of Information Act. Rural Food Skillnet will endeavour to hold confidential any information provided in this tender, subject to its obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act.

Should the tenderer wish that any of the information supplied in this tender not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, the tenderer should, when providing the information, identify the sensitive information and specify the reason for its sensitivity. Rural Food Skillnet will consult with the tenderer about this sensitive information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

If third parties request information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, unless this information has been identified as being sensitive, with supporting reasons, then it is likely to be released in response to a Freedom of Information request.

6.6 Conflicts-of-Interest. Any conflicts-of-interest involving a tenderer must be fully disclosed to Rural Food Skillnet. Failure to disclose a conflict-of-interest may disqualify a bidder or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict-of-interest comes



to light. If no conflict of interest exists, tenderers must indicate that in the declaration form, enclosed in **Appendix IV**.

6.7 Payment Arrangements. Payment for provided services will be made on the submission of appropriate invoices after each assignment has been completed, i.e. when the training has been delivered, assessment (where applicable) has been completed, and all required documentation (trainee profile form, daily attendance sheet and evaluation form) has been submitted to the network.

6.8 Right of Cancellation. The award of a tender does not give rise to any enforceable rights by the successful tenderer. Rural Food Skillnet may cancel the tender process at any time, prior to a contract being entered into.

6.9 No Additional Fees or Costs. No additional fees or costs, other than those originally quoted by the firm for the goods and services, will be paid and any additional fees or costs will be borne by the provider themselves. Rural Food Skillnet will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by providers in the preparation of tenders, or any associated work effort.

APPENDIX I: Specification of Requirements

1. Training providers must be leaders within their respective fields and have relevant qualifications in their areas of expertise.
2. A separate framework agreement application form needs to be completed for each training programme applied for.
3. The name of the training programme being applied for has to be stated on the front cover of the Framework Agreement Application Form.
4. Training may be delivered on an open or in-company basis. "Open" means that the participants may be from various companies. "In-company" means that the participants are from one specific company.
5. Training may be delivered on-site in a specific company, or in a neutral location.



Training Programmes

Farmhouse / Advanced Cheese Production
Microbiology for non-Microbiologists
Introduction to New Product Development
Management of New Product Development
Introduction to Sensory Principles
"Shelf Life of Food & Drink"
Fundamentals of Meat Science
Butchering of Beef, Pork & Lamb
Small-Scale Meat Production / Calculating Meat Content
Advanced Pastry Techniques
Manufacture of Chocolate & Chocolate Confectionery
Plant based ingredients
Sustainable Food Management and Auditing Systems Training L3 to L6
Food Safety Systems Training - Traceability
Wellbeing and Nutrition, Allergen Awareness, Food Safety and Legislation
Refresher HACCP & Allergen Awareness & Communication
Food Factory Hygiene and Control: Practical Skills Workshop
Operating Machinery Sustainably - Green Driving Training Counterbalanced FLT & PPT
Assistant Chef / Culinary Skills
Restaurant Service & Bar Operations
Trainee Hospitality Manager Development Programme Level 7 and Level 8
Regenerative Tourism L9
Lean Finance
Bookkeeper Certification and Business Connect Programme
Business Referral Networking / Business Development

Note:

- These courses may be run once, more than once or not at all, depending on the demand and availability of funding.
- Expected number of participants attending each course will range from 6 to 15.
- Envisaged timeframe for the delivery of these programmes is throughout 2026-28.



APPENDIX II - Instructions to Tenderers

Tender Format and Content

In submitting the proposal, tenderers must respect all instructions, forms and terms and conditions contained in this RFT.

Tenderers must complete the accompanying Framework Agreement Application Form for each programme applied for IN FULL and electronically. Please observe all notes provided.

Failure to submit all required information within the specified deadline may lead to rejection of the tender.

Tenderers are required to enclose a copy of a valid tax clearance certificate with their tender submission and/or Applicant Name, Applicant PPSN/Tax Reference Number & Access Number to enable Rural Food Skillnet to confirm you have a tax clearance certificate. Failure to do so may lead to rejection of the tender.

Tenderers must sign declarations provided in APPENDIX IV, stating their acceptance of terms and conditions of this tender process. Tenderers are also required to disclose any potential conflicts-of-interest in delivering this assignment. Failure to disclose a conflict-of-interest may lead to tender rejection or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict-of-interest comes to light.

Tender Submission

Complete, unbound, dated and signed tender (2 hard copies) to be enclosed in a sealed envelope and sent to the following address:

John Moriarty,
Project Manager,
Rural Food Skillnet,
Áras an Phobail,
Croílár na Mistéalach,
Tralee, Co. Kerry.



A digital copy of the tender must also be submitted to info@ruralfoodskillnet.com with the subject line saying TENDER plus the name of the training programme being applied for

Late and/or faxed tenders will not be accepted.

The tender will be considered incomplete if only hard or soft copy is submitted by prescribed closing date.

The administrative deadline for tender submission is 4.00 pm, Tuesday, 2nd December 2025.

This contract will remain in place for a period of three years.

Queries

Every effort has been made to ensure that this RFT contains all the necessary information for completion of tenders. However, in the interests of equity for all tenderers, requests for additional information, clarification on the contents of this RFT and all other queries of substance (other than those relating to purely factual or procedural matters) must be directed through the e-tenders website.

In submitting the proposal, tenderers must respect all instructions, forms and terms and conditions contained in this RFT. Failure to submit all required information within the specified format may lead to rejection of the tender.

APPENDIX III - Framework Agreement Application Form

Please complete separate attached document.

APPENDIX IV - Declaration

Please complete separate attached document.

