

FIRST STEP Regional Micro- Enterprise Networks

(Delivery contractor Quality Education Development Limited)

A Labour Market Activation Fund Project
From The Department of Education



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



FIRST-STEP
www.first-step.ie



Business Start Up Assistance & Loans for Jobseekers

- ✓ Are you trying to start a new business or become self employed?
- ✓ Have you been unemployed for at least the last three months?
- ✓ Are you in receipt of a payment of: Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or Back to Work Short Term Allowance?
- ✓ Are you confident that with the right support including mentoring your business could commence formal trading within the next 5 months?
- ✓ Have you prepared a business plan?
- ✓ Would access to First Step loan funding help your business?

If the answer is YES then FIRST-STEP can provide that assistance to you. First-Step (supported by the Labour Activation Fund) is setting up regional micro-enterprise networks where you will receive training, mentoring and access to start up loans for self-employment (subject to terms and conditions).

NETWORK LIFECYCLE (JULY TO DECEMBER)

- Recruitment of companies & assessment of business plans
- Coaching, Mentoring & Workshops
- Start Up Mentoring, Workshops & Networking
- Mentoring & Troubleshooting

Programme Coordinator: Dorothy Keegan: dorothy@qedtraining.ie

Programme Manager: Joanne Hession: joanne@qedtraining.ie

Quality Education Development Limited, E8 Calmount Business Park, Ballymount, Dublin 12

Tel: +353 (0)1 419 7000 Fax: +353 (0)1 4604889 Website: www.QEDtraining.ie



WHO IS LEADING THIS PROGRAMME

Joanne Hession Managing Director of QED

Joanne Hession has run her own business since 1998 and currently owns two businesses: (i) QED Training (www.QEDtraining.ie) which provides training to start up and growing enterprises around Ireland and (ii) Quality Education Development Ltd (www.QEDinternational.ie) that provides consultancy across Europe and Asia to top international Universities. Together with her team of enterprise trainers, Joanne delivers Start Your Own Business Programmes and Management and Business Development workshops to clients across Ireland. Joanne is well positioned to advise and train people on coming up with new ideas, entering new businesses and growing their businesses successfully.

Joanne has extensive project, training, financial and enterprise development experience having worked both in education and with start-up companies since 1997. During this time she has been involved in the design and delivery of innovative strategic management, consultancy and training programmes in the SME and micro-enterprise sector. Joanne established QED in 1998 and has grown the company from a micro enterprise of two persons to a professional training and consulting company with 15 associate trainers and consultants.

Joanne has been listed as one of the top 100 All-Island Business Women by Irish Entrepreneur and You Business (October 2009) as one of the top entrepreneurs in Ireland by Prudence magazine. At the Business and Finance Awards she was highlighted as one of the future young entrepreneurs in Ireland. Joanne was quoted in the Sunday Times as an up and coming female entrepreneur and as testament to this was a finalist in the IMAGE Businesswomen of the Year Awards in 2008 (Entrepreneur of the Year Category). Joanne is frequently invited to write articles for business magazines and media and is a mentor at the annual Enterprise Board's National Women's Enterprise Day (www.nwed.ie).

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Joanne has a real understanding of small and start-up businesses and testament to this she recently appeared on RTE television to speak about starting up a new business in the current environment.

Joanne spent a number of years as Programme Manager of the largest postgraduate Master of Business Studies Degree Programme in Ireland, at the Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, University College Dublin, following a period of accountancy training with Ernst & Young Chartered Accountants.

Joanne Hession holds a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from University College Dublin, specialising in Finance and a Master of Business Studies Degree in Management from the Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business, University College Dublin. Joanne holds a certificate in Training from NUI Maynooth.

BACKGROUND & FAQ

Q1. What is the Labour Market Activation Fund, 2010?

A1. The Labour Market Activation Fund was established as part of Budget 2010. The Fund will be used to support skills, training and education programmes for the unemployed who want to improve their education and skills or who want to become self employed by starting their own business. The Department of Education and Skills are managing the Activation Fund.

Q2. Who is providing the training and education programmes and how do I find out more about them?

A2. The Activation Fund is supporting twenty-six independent projects around the country running training or education programmes for the unemployed. First Step is one of the supported projects and uniquely is aimed at getting a person currently receiving Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance to business start-up. This can also include loan funding to help with the business start-up.

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Q.E.D. ■■■
Quality Education Development



Q3. What do I get and how can it help me?

A3. This is a great opportunity to work with 10 microenterprise networks of people who want to start a business (approximately 20 participants per network) all beginning in July/August/September 2010. Participants will be assisted to set up their own business (by the end of November) through a range of active interventions such as:-

- Targeted training and mentoring
- Business Plan "stress testing"
- Mentor network assistance
- Business start-up loans (through First Step)
- Peer support through networking and business opportunity exchanges
- On-going learning inputs through active coaching

Q4. Am I eligible to take part in these programmes?

A4. To be eligible to participate you must be in receipt of a Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance (some recipients of Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or Back to Work Short Term Allowance may also qualify) for at least three months in a row before joining the programmes - at this moment we have been told that you must be in receipt of a payment such as Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance, also considered are recipients of Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or Back to Work Short Term Allowance.

Time spent on training or education programmes will count towards this three-month period. First Step also has some modest minimum requirements for applicants such as a draft business plan, have successfully completed a Start Your Own Business course, and the commitment to engage in the First Step Regional Micro-Enterprise Networks.

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Q5. Will I get welfare payments while I'm on a course?

A5. If you plan to go this Regional Micro-Enterprise Network and if you have questions about your welfare entitlements and income support while on courses please contact your nearest Department of Social Protection Office.

Q6. What Role Does QED play in all this?

A6. QED Training is an expert training, business consultancy and management training specialist. QED is a contracted company who has been chosen to operate and lead this network.

Q7. What do I do next?

A7. You need to complete the application form on page three of this circular and return it to Dorothy@QEDtraining.ie or Antoinette@QEDtraining.ie with your business plan. An interview will be scheduled to address any queries and to sign the agreement to participate in the First Step Regional Micro-Enterprise Networks

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APPLICATION FORM – CORK/KERRY NETWORK

Name		
Address		
PPS Number		
Email		
Phone(s)		
Where Did You Hear About this Microenterprise Network		
Business Name		
Business Address		
Brief Business Description		
Start Date (of business) if started		
Supporting Organisations if any (i.e. FAS, County Enterprise Board etc)		
	YES	NO
Receiving: Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or Back to Work Short Term Allowance. (this is a must have requirement)		
Are you unemployed for the last 3 months or more		
Completed SYOB Course		
Business Plan Ready		
Would Benefit from First Step Loan (not required to participate)		
Ready to Start Business		
Would Benefit from Tailored Assistance & Mentoring		

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