



Local
Enterprise
Office

Making It Happen

IMPACT REPORT 2021

Measuring
the impact of
Local Enterprise
Office supports
in 2021

#MakingItHappen

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A Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is the 'first stop shop' for anyone thinking about starting or growing a business, anywhere in Ireland. There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices spread across the country, all focused on a single mission: to provide new and existing businesses with the expert advice, tailored training and financial supports they need to help them thrive.

Since they were set up in 2014 LEOs have operated in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, Local Authorities, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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Welcome



Leo Varadkar, T.D.,
Minister for Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Ireland's Local Enterprise Offices have been a lifeline for thousands of businesses across the country, especially over the past, particularly turbulent, couple of years.

Throughout Brexit and the pandemic, no matter what challenge a business is facing, business owners know they will receive a knowledgeable, sympathetic ear, ready to help, when they call their Local Enterprise Office. No problem or opportunity is too big or too small.

Each office is also a bountiful source of practical advice. Whether it is help with getting online, through the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, or help to become more sustainable through the Green for Micro Scheme, the LEOs run several grant and mentorship schemes which can help businesses, no matter what stage they are at.

2021 saw 2,999 new jobs created by LEO-backed client companies. That's a 9% increase on 2020, with growth across almost all counties. Those figures don't include companies that received non-financial help from their LEO, either.

That's remarkable. An incredible success by any standard.

Thank you to all the staff in each of the offices. You do invaluable work every day, that is having a real impact on communities across the country. Businesses will need your help more than ever as we face the challenges ahead.



Damien English, T.D.,
Minister for Business,
Employment and Retail

The network of Local Enterprise Offices is the engine that drives entrepreneurship and small business growth right across Ireland.

Located in 31 offices across the country, they foster innovation and entrepreneurship throughout Ireland's regions.

In doing so they support not just individual business success but the kind of job creation that helps communities throughout Ireland to survive and thrive.

From the sole trader starting out to the existing business looking to develop international exports, the Local Enterprise Office has a suite of tried and tested tools to help small business owners realise their growth ambitions.

The high esteem in which the network is held by members of Ireland's business community is a testament to the way in which it fulfils its mission, providing an invaluable resource to anyone keen to start or grow a business.

Last year saw more than 60,000 people receive training specially designed by the Local Enterprise Offices to help them achieve their business goals. It's just one of the ways in which the network plays such a vital role in helping Ireland Inc to grow and prosper.

Highlights from 2021: A Snapshot



#MakingItHappen

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICES
NOW SUPPORTING

7,158
SMALL BUSINESSES AND
35,729
JOBS

85%

OF EMPLOYMENT
IN BUSINESSES
SUPPORTED BY LOCAL
ENTERPRISE OFFICES
IS OUTSIDE DUBLIN

9%

JOB INCREASE
FROM 2020

NET EMPLOYMENT
GAIN OF

2,999
IN 2021

7,440

NEW JOBS
CREATED
IN 2021

8TH YEAR
OF CONTINUOUS
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH
FOR THE LOCAL
ENTERPRISE OFFICES

Making an impact at every stage

Every business is different but each can benefit from the right support at the right time, whether it's starting out or looking to grow.

LEOs provide a range of supports to new and existing small businesses all over Ireland, including:

- financial assistance and access to microfinance loans
- training and development
- mentoring and advice
- signposting to relevant bodies and agencies
- networking opportunities

The heart of Ireland's entrepreneurial ecosystem

LEOs help their clients to navigate organisations that can help their business grow, including:

- Local Authorities
- Enterprise Ireland
- Education and Training Boards
- Skillnet Ireland
- Microfinance Ireland
- Credit Review Office
- Fáilte Ireland
- National Association of Community Enterprise Centres
- Enterprise Europe Network
- Udarás na Gaeltachta
- Leader
- Dept of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
- The Revenue Commissioners
- Dept of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- InterTrade Ireland
- Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
- Bord Bia

Celebrating and supporting Ireland's businesses

LEOs drive Ireland's entrepreneurial culture through high profile initiatives such as:

- Local Enterprise Week
- Look for Local
- National Women's Enterprise Day
- National Enterprise Awards
- Local Enterprise Village [Ploughing]
- Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase
- Food Academy and Food Starter
- Student Enterprise Programme

Find out more at:

-  LocalEnterprise.ie
-  [@Loc_Enterprise](https://twitter.com/Loc_Enterprise)
-  [@LocalEnterpriseOffices](https://www.facebook.com/LocalEnterpriseOffices)

Helping to Grow Employment

Helping to grow employment

7,440 new jobs were created by LEO-backed client companies, according to the LEO 2021 Annual Employment Survey. However there was a loss of **4,441** jobs, resulting in a net gain of **2,999** jobs, a **9%** increase on 2020.

35,729 people were employed by **7,158** small businesses and start-ups that had received financial assistance from the Local Enterprise Offices by the end of 2020.

Much more than money!

The job numbers above refer only to jobs recorded by those businesses that received LEO financial assistance.

Thousands more jobs are created by businesses which have received non-financial LEO supports, such as **expert advice**, one-to-one **mentoring** or targeted **training**.

*FT stands for full-time and PT stands for part-time. The Annual Employment Survey was compiled by the Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland.

Local Enterprise Office	2021 No. of LEO Clients	2021 All Jobs (FT + OT)	2021 Gross Total Job Gains	2021 Net Job Gains/Losses
Carlow	203	1,015	265	47
Cavan	188	1,327	243	139
Clare	230	1,330	278	153
Cork City	185	735	186	37
Cork North & West	286	1,373	306	130
Cork South	173	739	136	-27
Donegal	244	1,374	262	103
Dublin City	377	1,728	408	147
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	293	1,313	350	181
Dublin Fingal	235	896	137	11
Dublin South	260	1,345	242	37
Galway County/City	277	1,187	221	148
Kerry	285	1,272	313	145
Kildare	238	1,156	254	96
Kilkenny	179	1,059	217	81
Laois	138	689	106	47
Leitrim	142	417	84	13
Limerick	298	1,825	327	179
Longford	258	1,245	191	65
Louth	232	898	174	50
Mayo	210	1,164	172	46
Meath	277	1,509	421	205
Monaghan	174	1,050	198	26
Offaly	212	1,047	173	29
Roscommon	167	940	208	104
Sligo	216	995	212	99
Tipperary	268	1,345	236	81
Waterford	330	1,252	207	-186
Westmeath	280	1,199	289	108
Wexford	254	1,272	249	181
Wicklow	231	1,630	465	288
Grand Total	7,158	35,729	7,440	2,999

The right support at the right time

Local Enterprise Offices provide a range of grant assistance to eligible businesses. Known as Measure 1 Supports, these are designed to help fund start-up costs, expansion plans, entry into new markets and jobs growth.

In 2021 **€24,041,848** was approved in grant aid by Local Enterprise Offices for **1,088** applications/projects (see breakdown of grant types in the table below)

Training and Development

Local Enterprise Offices provide a wide range of high-quality training and development supports designed to meet specific business requirements. In 2021 **60,344** people were trained by LEOs across different programmes. These include:

Start Your Own Business

LEO's flagship Start Your Own Business programmes help potential entrepreneurs to develop their business idea and assess its viability, to help them make informed decisions about whether, and how, to proceed.

5,854 aspiring entrepreneurs took part in **394** LEO-run Start Your Own Business programmes in 2021.

Pathway to Enterprise Ireland

LEOs work with small companies looking to export, helping them to develop to a point where they are ready to avail of Enterprise Ireland supports.

114 LEO clients were supported to transfer into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio to avail of further services.

Mentoring

One to one LEO Mentoring matches small business owners – the mentee – with the knowledge, skills, insights, and entrepreneurial capability of seasoned business practitioners – the mentor. It provides them with practical and strategic guidance for their business.

14,149 mentoring assignments were managed by LEOs in 2021.

Lean for Micro

Lean for Micro helps boost competitiveness and performance among LEO clients through the adoption of 'lean' business principles within their businesses. Companies avail of consultancy services from a qualified practitioner, who works with the company to introduce lean principles, undertake specific cost reduction projects, and assist them in benchmarking performance

449 companies were supported through the Lean for Micro programme in 2021.



"The guys at LEO Fingal feel like friends now... I can't praise them enough"

says **Nigel O'Leary** of Dimension88 in Fingal.

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Nigel on page 16.

Measure 1 Supports - Grant Aid Approved in 2021

Measure 1 Supports	Grant Aid Approved
Priming Grants [242 approved applications in 2021]	€6,789,874
Business Expansion Grants [425 approved applications in 2021]	€11,994,385
Feasibility Study Grants [219 approved applications in 2021]	€2,317,201
Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant [148 approved applications in 2021]	€270,523
Research, Development & Innovation [21 applications approved in 2021]	€1,417,352 Agile/€452,759 R&D
Grad Start [27 applications approved in 2021]	€286,750
Total number of applications in 2021: 1,088	Total amount of grant-aid approved in 2021: €24,041,848

Promoting Entrepreneurship

Local Enterprise Offices promote entrepreneurship across all stages, sectors and regions. One way they do this is by working together in national committees to co-ordinate a series of marquee events. These include:

Local Enterprise Week

300+ enterprise initiatives were collectively organised by LEOs to market Local Enterprise Week in March 2021.

This high profile annual event showcases the full range of enterprise supports LEOs can offer existing and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as providing networking and training opportunities to small businesses locally.

National Women's Enterprise Day

National Women's Enterprise Day is designed to promote female-led businesses. It took place on 7th October 2021 with a virtual event themed "Build the Future".

1,006 online attendees took part, with an average of **737** attendees present throughout the day to hear advice and insights from some of Ireland's most successful female entrepreneurs.

Local Enterprise Showcase

89 small craft and design businesses took part in the LEO 'Local Enterprise Showcase' in March 2021, as part of Showcase - Ireland's international creative expo.

An initiative of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, Showcase takes place annually in the RDS and is promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland. It is an invaluable opportunity for LEO client companies to connect with national and international trade buyers.

The event was held virtually with clients able to create their own bespoke display online to attract and engage with buyers.



Building for the future

Local Enterprise Offices support youth entrepreneurship through the Student Enterprise Programme which supports and nurtures the next generation of business owners and leaders.

Student Enterprise Programme

23,970 students from **427** secondary schools took part in the 2020/2021 Student Enterprise Programme, which began in September 2020.

The programme encourages students to research, set-up and run their own businesses with the help of student enterprise co-ordinators from the Local Enterprise Offices.



Making an impact through collaboration

Collaboration is key to enterprise success and Local Enterprise Offices worked closely with many stakeholders to roll out supports in 2021, including:

Microfinance Ireland

Microfinance Ireland (MFI) is a not-for-profit lender established to deliver the Government's Microenterprise Loan Fund. It provides loans of between €2,000 and €50,000 to commercially viable businesses that employ fewer than 10 people, with an annual turnover of less than €2 million.

Local Enterprise Offices assist client companies with their MFI loan applications, which attract a discount on standard loan rates.

In 2021, LEOs assisted client companies with **378** applications for loans. Of these, **234** applications were successful in securing loan approval, supporting the creation of **404.5** jobs.

www.microfinanceireland.ie

Customs Training

Local Enterprise Offices ran 'Prepare Your Business for Customs' online workshops throughout 2021.

These one-day interactive workshops, run regionally by Local Enterprise Offices, provided businesses with a better understanding of the potential impacts, formalities and procedures to be adopted when trading with a country which is outside the Single Market and Custom Union (a "Third Country").

Open to all businesses, these workshops covered areas such as export and import procedures, tariffs and the correct classification of goods.

1,286 participants attended customs training in 2021.



Promoting Entrepreneurship



“I can’t stress enough if you have a business idea or product, how important it is to take that first step into your Local Enterprise Office.”

says Mailo Power of Monkey Cups in Galway

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Mailo on page 18.

Trading Online Voucher Scheme

Designed to assist small businesses trade more online under the National Digital Strategy, the Trading Online Voucher Scheme offers training and advice, along with financial assistance of up to €2,500.

The scheme, which is funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, and delivered by the Local Enterprise Offices, is based on matched-funding.

4,450 applications were approved by Local Enterprise Offices under the Trading Online Voucher scheme in 2021.

www.dccae.gov.ie/tradingonlinevoucher

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters [TAME] provide an incentive for LEO clients to explore and develop new market opportunities. These grants, with a maximum value of €2,500, are used to part-fund expenditure to investigate and research export markets.

For example: costs incurred exhibiting at Trade Fairs, preparing marketing materials, and developing websites specifically targeting export markets. The purpose of these grants is to increase the number of LEO clients developing new export opportunities, including those clients with high levels of exposure to Brexit.

148 LEO clients were approved for TAME grant assistance in 2021.

Green For Micro

The Local Enterprise Office network is constantly innovating. To this end 2021 saw the launch of Green For Micro.

The objective of this new programme is to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient, economy of the future. It supports clients employing 10 or less to engage a consultant to avail of advice and technical support in areas such as resource efficiency, understanding their carbon footprint and implementing an environmental management system.

In 2021 **293** Green For Micro projects were approved.

Supporting start-ups



“LEO funding assistance is so important... it’s in that early stage that you need a leg up”

Brendan McGrath
Merris Engineering,
Galway

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Brendan on page 17.

The country’s 31 Local Enterprise Offices are the first port of call for Ireland’s aspiring entrepreneurs. The LEO’s flagship Start Your Own Business course has helped individuals all over the country to take their first step on the road to business success.

Honed over many years, this highly accessible training course provides participants with the skills and knowledge they need to assess the viability of their business idea.

It includes modules on business planning, sales and marketing, employment legislation, business finance and taxation. Undertaking it equips participants with the tools they need to assess and understand their target market, their own capabilities and their chances of success. SYOB courses are many people’s first introduction to their Local Enterprise Office.

As they progress with their venture, LEOS offer an invaluable sign-posting service both to other LEO supports, and to those of other state agencies which can help them.

For many participants the SYOB programme is the first step on a proven path from start up to growth and even internationalisation.

LEO Start Your Own Business programmes are aimed at those:

- with a business idea they want to develop, *or*
- who are looking at self-employment as a realistic career option, *or*
- who have recently started a business

5,854 people took part in **394** LEO-run Start Your Own Business programmes in 2021.



Helping Businesses in 2021...



from *idea...*

€2,317,201
approved for
Feasibility
Study Grants

€6,789,874
approved
for Priming
Grants



to *start-up...*



to *growth...*

€11,994,385
approved
for Business
Expansion
Grants

€24m+ approved in
grant aid in 2021



Padraic McElwee,
Chair of Network of Local
Enterprise Offices

2021 was a year of continuing challenges for businesses.

While many companies had pivoted and adapted from the year previous, the sand continued to move under businesses feet. The challenges changed, but small business resilience remained the same.

Despite those challenges, 2021 delivered growth across the Local Enterprise Office network, with every county demonstrating increased engagement with their Local Enterprise Office leading to a net increase in people employed.

This increased level of engagement demonstrates the key role Local Enterprise Offices play in developing early-stage enterprises and supporting those micro businesses with an ambition and desire to grow.

The continuing support provided by the Local Enterprise Offices in every County ensures our many small businesses have the supports to move forward with confidence enabling them to grow their businesses, enter new markets and enhance their digital capability to compete in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Challenges will remain but with the support of your Local Enterprise Office we can ensure businesses have the supports required to overcome those challenges underpinning a key component in the success of our local economies.

Client success stories

Again in 2021, the Local Enterprise Offices went above and beyond for their clients and you can read a selection of these client stories in this section.

- 16** **Dimension88:** how Funding supports helped bring them to a whole new level
- 17** **Tom Crean Brewery:** How Green for Micro helped it set off on a sustainable footing
- 18** **Monkey Cups:** How Trading Online Vouchers helped the company to succeed online
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Client Success Story

“I went to LEO hoping they could help me with some money for equipment, and they said we can help you with staff too”

*Nigel O’Leary
Dimension88, Fingal*



FUNDING SUPPORT

How Funding supports from Local Enterprise Office Fingal helped bring Dimension88 to a whole new level

Nigel O’Leary was working in the software development sector when he spotted an opportunity to set up in business himself.

He was working on a project identifying and assessing emergent technologies. What he learned about the rise of virtual, augmented and mixed reality – often referred to as the ‘metaverse’ – prompted him and his wife and business partner Catriona to set up Dimension88, in October 2018.

“I saw something, an opportunity, and knew I’d kick myself if I didn’t do it,” he says.

He left his full-time job and went contracting, to keep an income while he got the business off the ground, working from the kitchen table.

The potential for metaverse applications was vast. “I had to look at where we could hit the ground now,” he says.

The answer was property. He began working with developers to create digital twins of everything from new housing estates to apartment blocks.

Providing a VR-enabled digital twin of showhouses saves home builders money, for example. With apartment blocks, the use of drones means he can even provide the view from windows of yet to be built units.

Today he works with some of the biggest names in the property sector, but the applications for digital twinning lie far beyond property marketing.

Digital twinning also helps facilities managers to identify and fix issues that lie within a building’s skeleton, such as wiring and pipework. It can provide health and safety training for construction workers, and fire drills for residents.

“There are loads of ways we can add value to our existing clients,” he adds.

But to capture all that opportunity, O’Leary first had to get Dimension88 up and running.

“When I first said I wanted to do this, I hadn’t a notion where to start,” he says. A Google search led him to LEO Fingal. “I went to LEO hoping they could help me with some money for equipment, and they said we can help you with staff too,” he explains.

He received both a Priming Grant and a Business Expansion Grant, which enabled him to invest in the high-tech equipment he needs, and the skilled personnel to use it.

Today he employs 10 people full time and reinvests constantly to grow the business. “LEO was fantastic. To be able to hire staff and get going was just amazing. The work I did around the Priming Grant application helped me to figure a lot of things out on paper, which was great too,” he adds.

It wasn’t just funding. “The guys at LEO Fingal feel like friends now. If there’s anything going on, whether it’s an awards initiative or an event, they will include you, and they promote us on their Twitter feed. I can’t praise them enough,” he says.

“Now I tell people that if they have an idea for a business, your LEO is the first place to go.”

Client Success Story

GREEN FOR MICRO

How Green for Micro helped Tom Crean Brewery set off on a sustainable footing

Antarctic explorer Tom Crean will be forever remembered for his epic adventures so it's no surprise to find that over a century later his descendants are still inspired to do what they can to protect the planet.

Aileen Crean O'Brien, Crean's granddaughter, and her husband Bill Sheppard launched the Tom Crean Brewery in Kenmare, in 2019.

"We wanted to produce a beer that doesn't cost the earth," explains Sheppard.

To that end their first port of call was their Local Enterprise Office in Kerry, which advised them to participate in its Green for Micro programme.

"That allowed us access to a consultant who could look at the business and give us a break down of our carbon footprint," he says.

It's a sad fact but much of the polar icecap that would have been so familiar to Tom Crean is at risk as a result of global warming, a lot of which is caused by the burning of carbon based fuels. Sheppard and Crean O'Brien wanted a more sustainable energy alternative for their business.

"Right back when we were looking at building our building, in 2018, we went to LEO because sustainability was important to us from the get-go," he says.

"With all the biggest decisions we faced, we asked ourselves, what is the environmental impact. For example, our product is all natural with just four

ingredients, and vegan. We installed solar panels on our roof which supply our chillers, lights and computer. When we are brewing we use a green energy supply. Every light is LED. We operate 'free air conditioning', which is like a reverse bathroom extractor that takes in cool air at night and releases it during the day to keep our beer cooled. We built a poly tunnel at home, importing a biodigester from America, which we can use for waste hops and yeast, as well as for household waste."

The pair is currently working on a project which sees spent grains turned into silage, which they feed to their own flock of sheep. Sheep waste is added to the biodigester and used as fertiliser for grass, and as compost for the poly tunnel. "It also gives us two hours of gas to run a ring in the kitchen," he says.

Today they run tours and give talks about beer brewing and the environment, "to help educate others and spread the word, that's a huge part of all of this," he says.

For the future they are looking at carbon capture technologies suitable for their brewery.

All in all it has been an epic adventure, with Green for Micro providing a useful map.

"For any business looking to improve its sustainability LEO's Green for Micro is a good place to start," says Sheppard. "LEOs are accessible to everybody and we have a really good rapport with ours in Kerry."



"For any business looking to improve its sustainability LEO's Green for Micro is a good place to start"

Bill Sheppard
Tom Crean Brewery
Kerry

Client Success Story



“LEO helps my business not just to survive but to thrive”

Mailo Power
Monkey Cups,
Waterford

TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER SUPPORT

How Trading Online Vouchers helped Monkey Cups to succeed online

Mailo Power spent years as a hotelier in Waterford. While she loved the industry it bothered her that when guests asked for barista coffee to go, she had no choice but to use disposable cups.

She tried to find a reusable alternative but couldn't find an Irish made one that would fit under the group head of her coffee machines. From talking to other hoteliers and coffee shop owners, she knew it was a common complaint. “With the growth of the coffee industry came the growth of this problem,” says Power.

With a background in design, which she studied before going into the hotel sector, she got to work designing a solution herself.

The result was Monkey Cups, barista standard coffee cups that customers could buy, keep, and reuse time and again.

One of the first steps she took was to call her Local Enterprise Office, back when all she had was an idea. It provided her with the feasibility funding to develop a prototype. A LEO Priming Grant enabled her to create the mould for her lids and sliders, which are manufactured locally in Waterford.

She launched Monkey Cups at the LEO Enterprise stand at Showcase, where the stylish and colourful range was an immediate hit. Orders flooded in from hotels and coffee shops, her target market.

“Then Covid came and in two weeks our market went from a full order book to zero, it was cancellation after cancellation,” she says.

Getting fit helped her cope with the shock. It was while out running that she noticed how many vans were delivering goods bought online. It sparked in her

an interest in ecommerce. She began researching the sector and found personalisation was a key driver of online sales.

She went back to her Local Enterprise Office and, with the help of a Trading Online Voucher “and Emagine Media” transformed her existing brochure website and developed instead a direct-to-consumer ecommerce one with a special tool that allows people to choose their own Monkey Cup from 1144 different colour combinations.

It was an instant hit. She sold more on the weekend that the website launched than she had in the previous three months. Corporates loved it too and bought in bulk for staff working from home, sustainability initiatives and as corporate merchandise with their own branding and colours.

Today 70 per cent of her enquiries come via the website. “The website saved the business,” says Power, who went on to launch a range of Monkey Bottles too.

“In so many ways the LEO helps my business not just to survive but to thrive,” she adds.

“It has helped us to stay ahead of trends, and to increase our reach in the marketplace. I can't stress enough if you have a business idea or product, how important it is to take that first step into your Local Enterprise Office. It's a partnership and a journey you go on together - I'm still taking part development programmes with them today. The next step for us is getting export ready.”

FUNDING SUPPORT

How LEO funding supported innovation at Merris Engineering

The right funding at the right time helped Brendan McGrath of Merris Engineering in Galway, a maker of mixing machines, to develop an entirely new business, KrushTech.

KrushTech is a range of mobile compact crushers that recycle demolition waste, solving a major environmental problem.

Construction and demolition waste is one of the most difficult waste streams to deal with around the world.

A KrushTech mobile crusher allows builders to crush it on the building site, for reuse in roads, drainage and other construction projects.

Not alone does this support the circular economy, but it reduces the need for diesel fuelled lorries to cart the waste away, typically to landfill.

The EU wants to ensure 70% of all demolition material is recycled for use in construction, so the business potential was clear.

But bringing a range of KrushTech machines to market required serious investment.

LEO Galway helped, advising McGrath to apply for Agile Innovation Funding from Enterprise Ireland, which gives small companies rapid access to research, development and innovation funding.

That funding enabled him to develop a prototype. "With machines that cost up to Euro 150,000, developing a prototype is a huge undertaking," he explains.

He brought the prototype to a major international trade show in Germany in 2019, helped by a Local Enterprise Office



TAME [Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters] Grant, which supports the cost of a display stand and accommodation.

KrushTech got a terrific response at the show, including invaluable feedback that saw him completely redesign the original model to make it even better.

While the pandemic held up sales, preventing him from travelling to trade shows and from bringing potential customers into Ireland, interest in the product has started to grow, with particular demand in the UK and across Europe.

McGrath's machines are the only one of their kind that are a part diesel, part electric hybrid, an important environmental advantage. "On building sites with power you can simply plug it in," he says, which is amazing given the power of these machines. "It's how we differentiate ourselves in the market," he says.

These big ticket items are built to order at his premises in Galway. Building for stock is not yet an option, so the biggest challenge the business has faced so far is funding. "That's why LEO funding assistance is so important," he explains. "Once you get orders in you can take deposits, so it's in that early stage that you need a leg up."

"LEO funding assistance is so important... it's in that early stage that you need a leg up"

Brendan McGrath
Merris Engineering,
Galway

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