

IMPACT REPORT 2017

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE SUPPORTS DURING 2017



MAKING AN IMPACT ON LOCAL ENTERPRISE

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Acknowledgements

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WELCOME



This Government has a clear focus on regional jobs, investment and on helping companies prepare for Brexit, and the LEOs play a crucial role in this effort.

In a challenging business environment, LEO clients have contributed substantially to economic development throughout the country, especially outside of the main urban centres.

I want to pay tribute to the achievements of small businesses, microenterprises, and LEO teams, as they work together, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the Local Authorities, to develop local enterprise opportunities and create sustainable jobs.

HEATHER HUMPHREYS T.D.

Minister for Business,
Enterprise and Innovation



As Minister for Small Business, I am fully committed to the creation of new jobs in every region across the country.

I am a strong believer in doing everything we can at local and regional level to help us to create strong companies and good quality jobs all around the country.

A home-grown enterprise culture is a perfect complement to attracting and growing larger businesses.

The Local Enterprise Offices have a key role to play in both supporting jobs and in strengthening the potential for local businesses and entrepreneurs to create more jobs.

I want to congratulate the LEOs, the LEO staff and all those that contribute to the LEO vision on another tremendous performance in 2017.

PAT BREEN T.D.

Minister for Trade, Employment, Business,
EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Hubs of expert advice, information and practical supports – accessible locally

As ‘hubs’ of expert advice, information and practical supports, dedicated Local Enterprise Office teams help small businesses and micro-enterprises to grow and create jobs through:

[Enterprise-focused training and development programmes](#)

[Business mentoring and advice clinics](#)

[Financial assistance and access to microfinance loans](#)

[Sign-posting service with referral to other bodies and state agencies](#)

[Networking with peers, potential suppliers and prospective clients](#)

To find out more about how Local Enterprise Offices support small businesses and micro-enterprises, please visit www.localenterprise.ie or follow @Loc_Enterprise on Twitter



Established in 2014, the 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are the ‘**first stop shop**’ for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in Ireland.

LEOs are operated on a partnership basis by Enterprise Ireland and the Local Authorities and their parent Departments – the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

LEOs connect small businesses with their Local Authority, with Enterprise Ireland, and with bodies that can help businesses. These include:

[Education & Training Boards](#)

[Microfinance Ireland](#)

[Fáilte Ireland](#)

[Enterprise Europe Network](#)

[Leader](#)

[The Revenue Commissioners](#)

[Department of Social Protection](#)

[Skillnets](#)

[Credit Review Office](#)

[National Association of Community Enterprise Centres \(NACEC\)](#)

[Udarás na Gaeltachta](#)

[Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment](#)

To drive entrepreneurship and foster a more enterprising culture in Ireland, LEOs manage key flagship programmes locally and nationally throughout the year, such as:

[Local Enterprise Week \[#localenterprise\]](#)

[Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur \[#IBYE\]](#)

[National Women’s Enterprise Day \[#NWED\]](#)

[National Enterprise Awards \[#NEAwards\]](#)

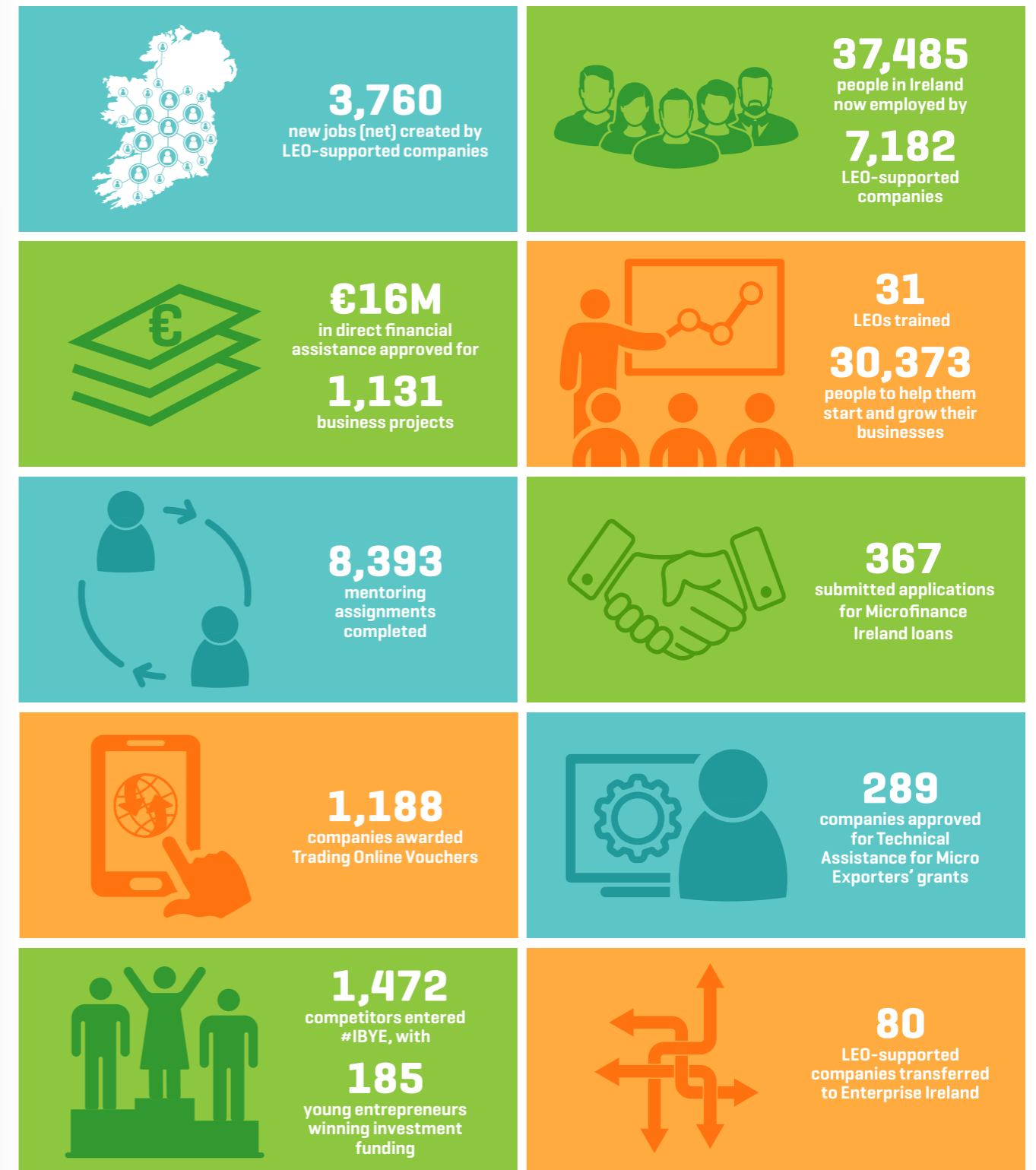
[Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships \[#localenterprise\]](#)

[Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase \[#localenterprise\]](#)

[Food Academy \[#foodacademy\]](#)

[Student Enterprise Programme \[#studententerprise\]](#)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017: A SNAPSHOT



DELIVERING JOBS

The 2017 Annual Employment Survey shows that **7,135 new jobs (gross)** and **3,760 jobs (net)** were created by LEO-backed client companies, with jobs growth across every LEO area.

As the LEO-by-LEO table below shows, at the end of 2017, there were **37,485 people employed** by **7,182 small businesses and start-ups** that had received financial assistance from the Local Enterprise Offices.

| LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE | 2017 CLIENT ALL JOBS TOTAL (FT & PT)* | 2017 GROSS ALL JOB GAINS (FT & PT)* | 2017 NET ALL JOB GAINS (FT & PT)* |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Carlow | 1,128 | 187 | 95 |
| Cavan | 1,252 | 207 | 100 |
| Clare | 1,339 | 251 | 149 |
| Cork City | 739 | 128 | 93 |
| Cork South | 1,487 | 154 | 102 |
| Cork North & West | 1,098 | 209 | 114 |
| Donegal | 1,193 | 255 | 100 |
| Dublin City | 1,947 | 445 | 248 |
| Dublin DLR | 1,561 | 338 | 167 |
| Dublin Fingal | 970 | 226 | 162 |
| Dublin South | 1,410 | 351 | 132 |
| Galway County/City | 1,039 | 192 | 95 |
| Kerry | 2,067 | 267 | 88 |
| Kildare | 967 | 282 | 128 |
| Kilkenny | 1,361 | 232 | 101 |
| Laois | 568 | 93 | 71 |
| Leitrim | 454 | 104 | 39 |
| Limerick | 1,907 | 279 | 130 |
| Longford | 1,154 | 177 | 111 |
| Louth | 906 | 200 | 118 |
| Mayo | 1,224 | 242 | 182 |
| Meath | 1,112 | 284 | 162 |
| Monaghan | 1,052 | 207 | 142 |
| Offaly | 995 | 193 | 76 |
| Roscommon | 794 | 131 | 77 |
| Sligo | 969 | 152 | 51 |
| Tipperary | 1,595 | 467 | 262 |
| Waterford | 1,620 | 182 | 121 |
| Westmeath | 1,497 | 300 | 129 |
| Wexford | 1,348 | 238 | 143 |
| Wicklow | 732 | 162 | 72 |
| TOTAL | 37,485 | 7,135 | 3,760 |

*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 and was published in March 2018.

SUPPORTING OUR CLIENTS

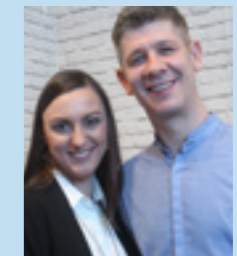
Direct Financial Assistance

Local Enterprise Offices can provide different types of grant assistance to eligible businesses to help fund start-up costs, expansion plans, entry into new markets, and job growth. These types of grants are known as 'Measure 1' supports.

In 2017, Local Enterprise Offices approved **€16,640,340.81 in grant aid** for **1,131 applications** under 'Measure 1', broken down into the following types of grants:

| MEASURE 1 SUPPORTS | GRANT AID APPROVED |
|---|---|
| Priming Grants (299 approved applications in 2017) | €6,431,905.90 |
| Business Expansion Grants (358 approved applications in 2017) | €8,114,155.58 |
| Feasibility Study Grants (185 approved applications in 2017) | €1,589,536.37 |
| Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant (289 approved applications in 2017) | €504,742.96 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF APPROVED APPLICATIONS IN 2017: 1,131 | TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT-AID APPROVED IN 2017: €16,640,340.81 |

How my LEO helped my business...



BRENDAN MCEVOY

Founder
My Name is Ted

Brendan's business benefitted from a Feasibility Study Grant, through LEO Westmeath.

"The Feasibility Study Grant from our Local Enterprise Office in Westmeath enabled us to research the market opportunity for our products, and supported the prototype process which has led to our first collection of luxury tech bags and accessories, addressing a huge gap in today's fast growing market."



How my LEO helped my business...



PAUL MERRIMAN
Founder
ClearChoice

Paul's business benefitted from mentoring, through LEO Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

"We found the mentoring service from our Local Enterprise Office in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to be invaluable in terms of learning about the potential pitfalls and the must do's and don'ts of establishing a software company."

This was not a core strength of ours in our early stage, and it was great to tie in our own industry expertise with an accessible enterprise expert."

LEO INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND (LIIF) PILOT PROGRAMME

The LEO Innovation Investment Fund (LIIF Programme) was launched as a pilot initiative in 2017 to target investor-ready LEO clients that wanted to start, grow, or develop innovative micro-enterprises.

470 applications were received and following a shortlisting process, **135 applicants were invited** to participate on a regional investor ready programme to help test and validate their proposition. At the end of the pilot, **63 LEO client projects were approved** for funding of **€25,000 each**, to a total value of **€1,575,000** (www.liif.ie).

TRAINING

Local Enterprise Offices provide a wide range of high-quality training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. In 2017, LEOs trained **30,373 participants** across **1,891 different programmes**. Of these, **3,755 participants** took part in **280 LEO-run 'Start Your Own Business'** programmes.

MENTORING

This programme matches the knowledge, skills, insights and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners - the mentor - with small business owners and managers who need practical and strategic one-to-one advice and guidance for their business. In 2017, LEOs managed **8,393 mentoring assignments** between experienced mentors and client companies.

LEAN FOR MICRO PROGRAMME

Lean for Micro helps LEO clients to adopt 'lean' business principles within their businesses to increase performance and competitiveness. Companies also avail of consultancy services from a qualified practitioner, who works with the company to introduce lean principles, undertake a specific cost reduction project, and assist the company in benchmarking performance. In 2017, LEOs supported **179 companies** through the programme.

PATHWAYS

One of the key objectives of Local Enterprise Offices is to accelerate the growth of businesses that will, in time, progress into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio. In 2017, LEOs supported the progression of **80 clients** into Enterprise Ireland, enabling these businesses to avail of further support services.

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

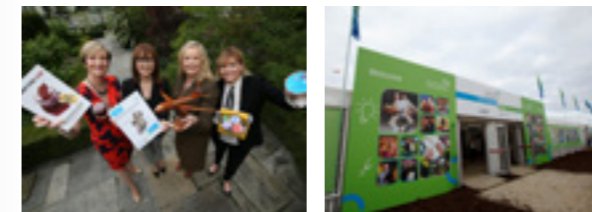
Through national committees, Local Enterprise Offices co-ordinate a series of enterprise programmes and events nationally that promote entrepreneurship across all sectors and regions. These include:

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK

LEOs collectively organised **300 enterprise events** to mark Local Enterprise Week in March 2017, to showcase the range of enterprise supports on offer and to provide networking and training opportunities to small businesses within their regions.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE VILLAGE

31 small businesses were supported by their Local Enterprise Office to exhibit their products and services inside the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore, Co. Offaly. The three day event in September 2017 attracted a record attendance, with **291,500 visitors***. LEO clients were also supported with specialist training and photography services, to enable them to maximise selling and marketing opportunities during the ploughing championships.



How my LEO helped my business...



DÓNAL BYRNE
Director
BigRedBarn

Dónal's business benefitted from a Business Expansion Grant, through LEO Mayo.

"It was with the help of the Business Expansion Grant from our Local Enterprise Office in Mayo that we were able to start to manufacture in-house."

Before then, we had to outsource manufacturing. With their help, we purchased the equipment and took on a full-time fabricator."

*Source: National Ploughing Association.

How my LEO helped my business...



JOANNE DAVEY

Founder
Absolute Nutrition

Joanne's business benefitted from the Food Academy programme, through LEO South Dublin.

"Participating on the Food Academy programme with SuperValu, the Local Enterprise Offices and Bord Bia was a major step in the right direction for us. We were opened up to a network of professional mentors, workshops and financial advice, as well as practical information about running a business, scaling a business and opening new accounts."

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DAY

15 LEO-run regional events took place on National Women's Enterprise Day 2017 (October 12th) with the theme of 'open doors to new markets', to encourage more female-led businesses to explore export opportunities. **1,300 attendees** took part in NWED events which featured advice and insights from 60 successful female entrepreneurs.

FOOD ACADEMY

Food Academy is a training programme to support and nurture early stage food businesses, and is run by the Local Enterprise Offices in partnership with Bord Bia and SuperValu. Modules include market and consumer understanding, product positioning and branding, food law and labelling requirements,

pricing and financials, and marketing management. It is estimated that the **329 Food Academy suppliers** to SuperValu support **1,275 full time and 561 part time** jobs, based on data from the 2017 Annual Employment Survey.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE SHOWCASE AT SHOWCASE

Showcase, an initiative of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland which is promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland, is Ireland's international creative expo and takes place annually in the RDS. To support the Irish craft and design sector, Local Enterprise Offices supported **112 companies** to exhibit within the 'Local Enterprise Showcase' in January 2017, to connect with national and international trade buyers. The inaugural Local Enterprise Showcase awards were also presented in January 2017 to highlight excellence and innovation.

NATIONAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS

To celebrate the achievements of Ireland's micro-enterprises, 31 companies were shortlisted by the Local Enterprise Offices for the National Enterprise Awards in 2017 after a series of country-wide competitions. **12 winning companies** shared a **€40,000 prize fund** at an awards ceremony in the Mansion House in May 2017.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS 2017

An initiative of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Local Enterprise Offices joined **29 other state bodies**, agencies and service providers at Taking Care of Business in November 2017 in Dublin Castle. **Close to 500 business owners**, managers and entrepreneurs accessed information about enterprise supports at the event.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Building for the future, Local Enterprise Offices support youth entrepreneurship through two national programmes, which support and nurture the next generation of business owners and leaders.

STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

23,635 students from 483 secondary schools took part in the 2016/2017 Student Enterprise Programme, which began in September 2016. 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.

The National Final for the 2016/2017 Student Enterprise Programme took place in May 2017 in Croke Park, involving **200 teenage entrepreneurs** from **77 student enterprises**. These national finalists won their places through Local Enterprise Office-run finals in every county.

Teacher materials and resources are also distributed to schools, free of charge, by Local Enterprise Offices.

www.studententerprise.ie

IRELAND'S BEST YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

Aimed at 18 to 35 year-olds, Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) is a **€2 million investment competition** run by the network of Local Enterprise Offices. The competition is an initiative of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and supported by Enterprise Ireland. There were **1,472 applications** for IBYE in 2017 (for the 2018 competition) across three categories:

[Best Business Idea](#)

[Best Start-Up Business](#)

[Best Established Business](#)

Through the county and city stages of the IBYE competition, **185 young entrepreneurs** secured investments of between **€3,000 and €15,000 for each of their businesses** in November and December 2016.

The IBYE 2016/2017 National Final took place in March 2017 in Google's European Headquarters in Dublin with six winners sharing a **€100,000 investment fund**.

www.ibye.ie

How my LEO helped my business...



CIARA CLANCY

Beats Medical
and IBYE
National Winner
2017

Ciara's business benefitted from the IBYE programme, through LEO Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

"I got so much support from the IBYE Programme; the advice, workshops, funding and, above all, benefitting from a great network of like-minded entrepreneurs. The programme helped our business share its message with people diagnosed with Parkinson's, and to scale up our research and development to enhance our impact in the marketplace."



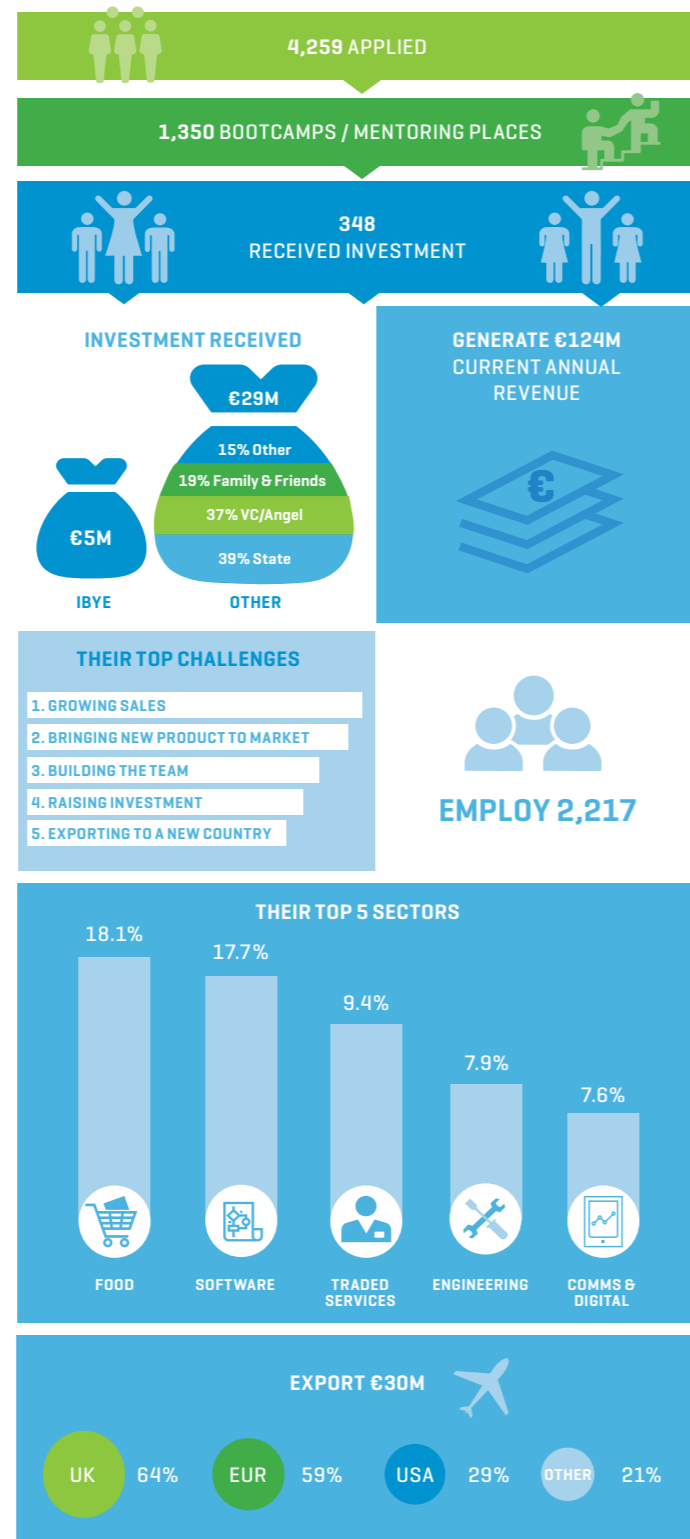
IMPACT OF IBYE FROM 2014 TO 2016

Research was carried out by Set2Grow, commissioned by Enterprise Ireland, which highlighted the impact that Irish entrepreneurs have made in 2014, 2015 and 2016 through the IBYE programme.

Between 2014 and 2016, 4,259 young entrepreneurs applied for IBYE, of which 1,350 received business bootcamp training and one-to-one mentoring.

348 of those entrepreneurs won IBYE investment funding of between €3,000 and €50,000 from their Local Enterprise Office, and they in turn now generate €124 million in sales per year and employ 2,217 people.

The total investment by Local Enterprise Offices across the three years in the IBYE programme was €5 million.



COLLABORATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Collaboration is key to enterprise success and Local Enterprise Offices worked closely with many stakeholders to roll out supports in 2017, 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 €25,000 to commercially viable businesses that employ fewer than ten 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 2017, LEOs assisted client companies with **367 applications for loans**.

www.microfinanceireland.ie/success-stories/

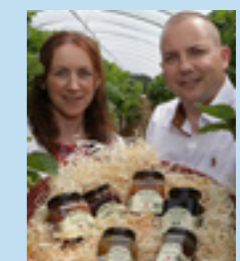
TRADING ONLINE VOUCHERS

Designed to assist small businesses to 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, where the maximum amount payable is €2,500 or 50% of the eligible cost (whichever is the lesser). In 2017, **1,188 approvals** were secured by Local Enterprise Offices under the Trading Online Voucher scheme, supporting the creation of **356 new jobs in 2017**.

www.dccae.gov.ie/tradingonlinevoucher



How my LEO helped my business...



KIERON & CLAIRE MORAN
Founders
Moran's Mega
Jam Ltd

Kieron and Claire's business benefitted from the Trading Online Voucher scheme, through LEO Cavan.

"The website gave us a new revenue stream. We are selling quite a bit online and we have our more unusual products only available on line so customers are returning again and again."



LEO COMPETITIVE FUND

The objective of the LEO Competitive Fund was to strengthen microenterprise locally, regionally, and nationally to help create jobs and grow businesses. Through collaborating with other Local Enterprise Offices by region or cluster, LEOs were able to bid for funding to support job creation initiatives in their areas. In 2016, 16 projects to the value of **€1,913,600** were awarded on a competitive basis through this fund and 10 of these projects were completed by the end of 2017.

CO-INNOVATE AND INTERREG

The Co-Innovate programme is a cross border research and innovation [R&I] initiative funded under the European INTERREG VA Programme. It brings together key development agencies to deliver a programme aligned with each government's strategic priorities.

In the border region of Ireland, this support will be delivered by the Local Enterprise Offices in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. In Northern Ireland, key elements of Co-Innovate will be delivered by Enterprise NI and its member agencies.

BREXIT SUPPORTS

Working in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, Local Authorities, and other state agencies and bodies, Local Enterprise Offices offer a range of supports to help micro-enterprises and small businesses prepare for the challenges posed by Brexit.

In 2017, these supports and programmes were focused on innovation, export market diversification, competitiveness, and information sharing as follows:

LEO INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND (LIIF)

In the context of Brexit, the LEO Competitive Fund for Innovative Micro-Enterprises was a new scheme that incentivised LEO clients to engage in innovation to develop new product, processes or markets. It targeted LEO clients to assist them in securing investment and scaling their businesses in international markets.

In 2017, 470 applications were received and 63 micro-enterprises were approved for grant funding of €25,000 each. The overall investment under LIIF was €1,575,000.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR MICRO EXPORTERS

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters [TAME] provided 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 was to increase the number of LEO clients developing new export opportunities, with a focus on supporting those clients with high levels of exposure to Brexit risks.

289 LEO clients were approved for assistance under TAME in 2017.

How my LEO helped my business...



JOANNE O'REILLY
Founder
Kinvara Skincare

Joanne's business benefitted from the LEO Innovation and Investment Fund, through LEO Galway.

"Success is rooted in our drive to invest in innovation in order to stay ahead of the competition and bring our customers products which exceed their expectations. Innovation funding from Galway Local Enterprise Office has been instrumental in making this possible."

LEAN FOR MICRO

The Lean for Micro offer was developed by the Enterprise Ireland Lean Department in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Offices, tailoring the existing programme to micro-enterprises. Pilot programmes were carried out in Donegal and Galway in 2015 and in 2016; and 20 LEOs were involved in the programme with 53 LEO clients engaging in projects.

In 2017, €800,000 was allocated to Local Enterprise Offices, funding the participation of 179 LEO client companies in the programme.

BREXIT SEMINARS

Local Enterprise Offices organised over **40 Brexit-themed information events in 2017** for both existing and potential clients. These sessions enabled small businesses, start-ups and micro-enterprises to learn about the potential impacts and opportunities posed by Brexit, and to engage in a process of strategic planning to ensure their companies had a robust strategy in place. Local Enterprise Offices also encouraged clients to take part in the Brexit SME Scorecard online and to participate in the Enterprise Ireland Brexit Roadshow, which included a series of regional events.

FUNDING

A total of €32,931,000 in funding was allocated to the Local Enterprise Offices in 2017. This funding was provided by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, through Enterprise Ireland.



HOW TO CONTACT US

There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices all around the country and in every Local Authority area with dedicated teams on hand to help.

The national website for the Local Enterprise Offices is www.localenterprise.ie and the Twitter account is @Loc_Enterprise.

CARLOW

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Facebook: Search LEOCarlow

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SOUTH CORK

Local Enterprise Office South Cork, Business Growth Hub, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork.

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CORK NORTH & WEST

Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West.

Cork West: 8 Kent Street, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

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Facebook: Search
LocalEnterpriseOfficeKilkenny

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Facebook: Search LE0Laois

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Facebook: Search LE0Leitrim

LIMERICK

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Facebook: Search LimerickLE0

LONGFORD

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Twitter: @LeoLongford
Facebook: Search Local-Enterprise-
Office-Longford

LOUTH

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OFFALY

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WATERFORD

Local Enterprise Office Waterford

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Dungarvan:
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