

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICES PROJECT SECURES ALLOCATION FROM €2.5MILLION COMPETITIVE FUND



Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation Heather Humphreys TD announced the results of the new €2.5 million Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Competitive Fund.

Sixteen projects have received funding. Among those receiving €191,392 in funding is a collaborative project by the Local Enterprise Offices from the Dublin Region, LEO Wicklow with Dublin Business Innovation Centre.

The project is targeted at established small to medium enterprises, to train the management of these companies, to be able to conduct an 'Innovation Audit' of their respective companies.

Applications were open to individual LEOs; collaborative projects between two or more LEOs; and LEOs working with other local groups like Chambers, Community Enterprise Centres, Education or Training bodies, Local Authorities or colleges.

Announcing the successful applicants at a special event in the Council Chamber of Monaghan County Council, Minister Humphreys said: *"The successful applicants demonstrated a real intent to collaborate, not only with neighbouring County LEOs but also with other stakeholders such as ITs, Innovation Centres, Local Authorities and others. So, while sixteen of the LEOs will lead on the projects, the vast majority of the LEOs throughout the country will also be part of these projects through collaboration."*

"There is a wonderful array of projects in the winning sixteen and they are spread right across the country. I am particularly pleased to see projects in areas like digital technologies; green and environmental activities; e-commerce; and e-hubs and remote working. This is proof that our LEOs are looking to the future, and tackling the challenges of tomorrow, today."

The successful applications were selected through a rigorous evaluation process based on criteria, which included economic impacts and value for money, collaboration and participation, Future Jobs orientation, collaboration and building regional strengths and viability and sustainability.

Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection Pat Breen TD said: *"I very much welcome Minister Humphreys' announcement and want to commend all those who have participated in the competitive process. These successful projects will be rolled out through the Local Enterprise Offices, which are very well-placed to reach companies and entrepreneurs in even the most rural areas. I particularly welcome the focus on collaboration and networking in support of regional and local micro-enterprise capability building, growth and job creation."*

Through this funding and other funding initiatives such as the Regional Enterprise Development Fund and the Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund, the Government is, even with Brexit and other international challenges on the horizon, determined to plan ahead and to prepare for the future jobs of tomorrow."

Mark Christal, Manager, Regions and Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Ireland, said; *"This is a significant investment by the Minister and her Department in the ideas and ability of the Local Enterprise Offices to deliver results across the country. This will hugely benefit companies and the enterprise eco-system in all regions, an investment that will help to drive enterprise and support the business objectives of entrepreneurs and small businesses. It shows that Local Enterprise Offices across the country are committed to improving the business environment and supports for their client companies and the entrepreneurs of the future and Enterprise Ireland will continue to work with them to support this aim."*

Oisín Geoghegan, Chair of the network of Local Enterprise Offices, said; *"This announcement by Minister Humphreys is a great boost to Local Enterprise Offices across the country. They have shown their creativity and innovation in proposing a range of projects that will solve a number of issues in their regions, whether it's moving businesses towards a low carbon economy, boosting smart e-hub usage, increasing innovation or helping companies target new markets, they will all make a significant impact. This funding highlights the impact that Local Enterprise Offices are making and shows that they continue to be best placed in driving innovation and enterprise in towns and villages across the country."*

ENDS

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