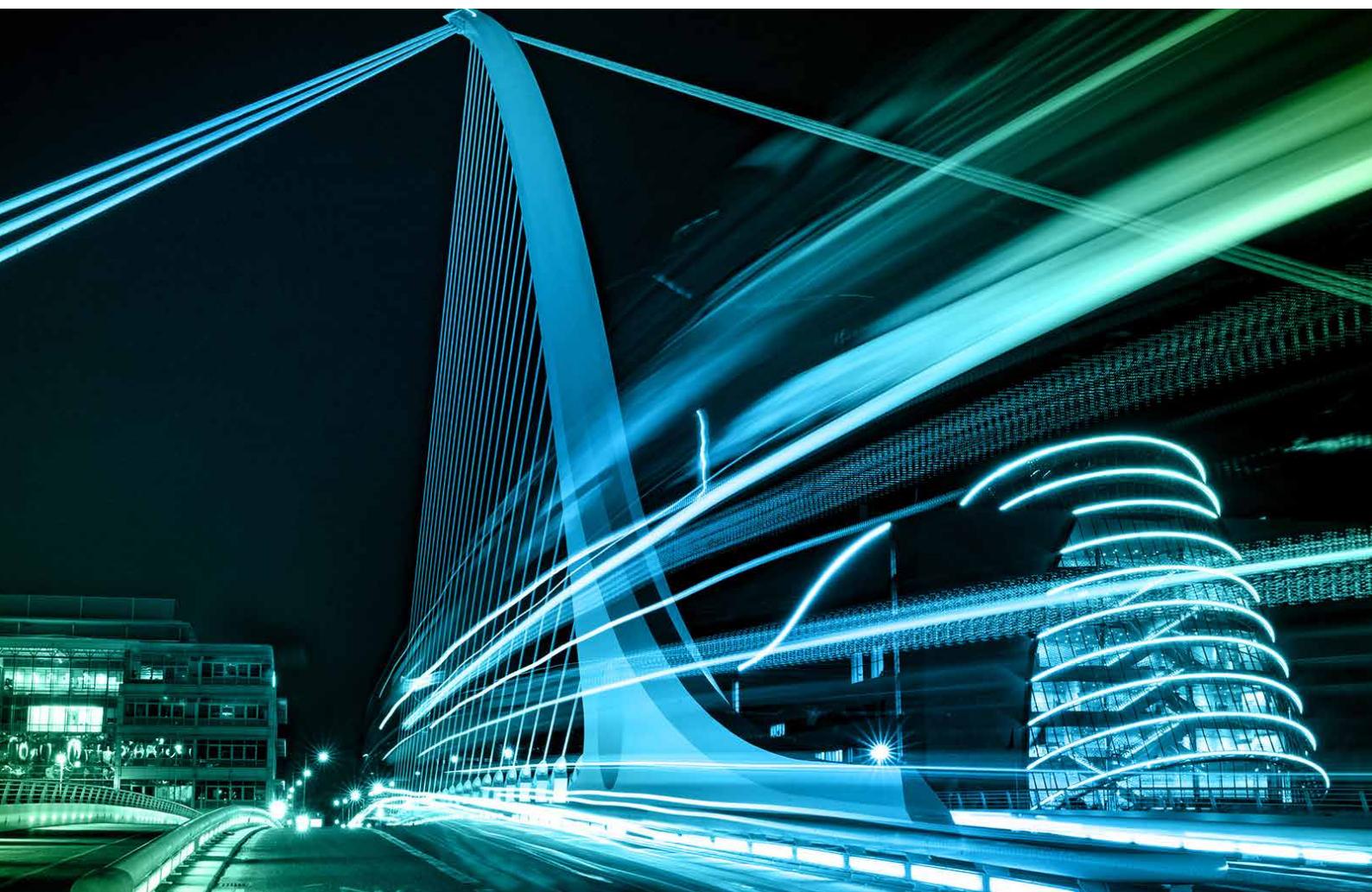


# **LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE DUBLIN CITY**

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2025**



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund

## A message From Owen Keegan - Chief Executive Dublin City Council

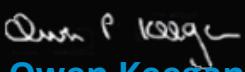
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The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Dublin City has thrived since 2014 due to the successful working relationship between Local Authorities, The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Enterprise Ireland and the LEO Network. Continuing to nurture and develop this working relationship will be key to realising the potential of this strategy over the coming years.

Dublin City faces significant challenges resulting from the impact of the COVID 19 and Brexit economic shocks. This has been particularly felt by local businesses across Dublin City with some sectors including hospitality, tourism and non-essential retail being disproportionately affected. Remote working has become the norm for many employees and students, but brings with it changes to how businesses operate in the City and indeed how Dublin City Council delivers its services. In order to gain greater insights into how our economy has been impacted we publish a quarterly edition of the Dublin Economic Monitor [www.dublineconomy.ie](http://www.dublineconomy.ie) providing key economic data that supports better understanding and improved decision making. We continue to support and promote Dublin as a great location to live, work, study and invest. The Dublin Place Branding team have run many successful campaigns supporting local businesses and attracting investment with relevant and updated content available through [Dublin.ie](http://Dublin.ie)

With every crisis there is opportunity, this strategy will bring with it new ideas for Dublin City, with potential additional capacity for growth with a focus on placemaking designed to improve the attractiveness of our city for new and existing talent and investment. The green agenda is growing and during this planning period we will support business who are adapting to a more sustainable way of working and doing business. We have a vision for a green and digital Dublin and the business community will play a key role in delivering this, with the support of the staff of LEO Dublin City and Dublin City Council.



  
**Owen Keegan**

Chief Executive  
Dublin City Council

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## FOREWORD

This Local Enterprise Development Plan is aimed at developing and sustaining a positive enterprise ecosystem in Dublin City that will in particular drive new added value start-ups, the further growth of small and micro enterprises and enhance the Dublin City economy.

In this plan the LEO Dublin City will be focusing on supporting those who wish to start a business, with its 'First Stop Shop' and provide the necessary advice and development programmes to do so. It has become apparent throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic that businesses will need to acquire new skills and adopt to new ways of working over the period of this plan and beyond. Within this plan there will be a strong focus on key areas that include Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness & Digitalisation, Green/Sustainability, Innovation, Exporting, networking and developing Management Capacity to assist the development of new and existing business to survive and to grow in an evolving work and economic environment.

The Enterprise Eco System is strong in Dublin City with a significant tech sector, professional services, education, food, creative industries, retail and tourism offerings. The Economic Development Office will identify the economic requirements of the City to ensure there is a proactive environment for business in the City.

LEO Staff are a key part of delivering this plan and Dublin City Council are committed to ensuring that the LEO office has a staff that have the necessary skills and resources, are highly motivated, client focused and enjoy addressing and meeting the challenges that entrepreneurs and businesses face.



**Greg Swift**  
Head of Enterprise and Economic  
Development  
Dublin City Council



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Local Enterprise Office Dublin City

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local Enterprise Office Dublin City (LEO), is an office of Dublin City Council and provides a "First Stop Shop" for anyone seeking information and support on planning, starting, sustaining or growing a business in Dublin. LEO Dublin City is driving the development of local enterprise, putting micro and small business at the heart of job creation in the city. LEO Dublin City provide expert support to business start-ups and work to increase the job potential of new and existing micro and small businesses with information, advice, training, mentoring, networking, seminars, awards and financial support.

Since 2014, LEO Dublin City has continued to meet and exceed annual targets due to the capacity and tenacity of the team to achieve and provide the best possible support to Dublin City based Businesses.

The LEO structure has been instrumental in supporting and guiding micro enterprises through the Covid-19 Pandemic. Products such as the Business Continuity Voucher and Trading Online Voucher introduced a whole new cohort of businesses to their Local Enterprise Office during 2020. LEO Dublin City now seek to build on the momentum gained through the provision of effective supports and solutions and continue to make Dublin City an excellent choice to start and grow a business.

Over the next four years, LEO Dublin City will strive to provide a first class support to the enterprise ecosystem in Dublin City.

A key focus will be to maximise opportunities for job creation and retention, attained through:

1. Creating and raising local enterprise awareness and developing an enterprise culture and community-based enterprise activity
2. Providing a single/ first point of contact service to the business community – providing business advice, direction and signposting , business counselling and mentoring
3. Providing support to private sector and community initiatives to secure the establishment and/or expansion of commercially viable micro-enterprise projects
4. Providing comprehensive pre- and post-start-up support to new and expanding micro enterprises
5. Influencing the allocation of resources for micro-enterprise from EU, private and public funding sources
6. Promoting the general economic development of Dublin City



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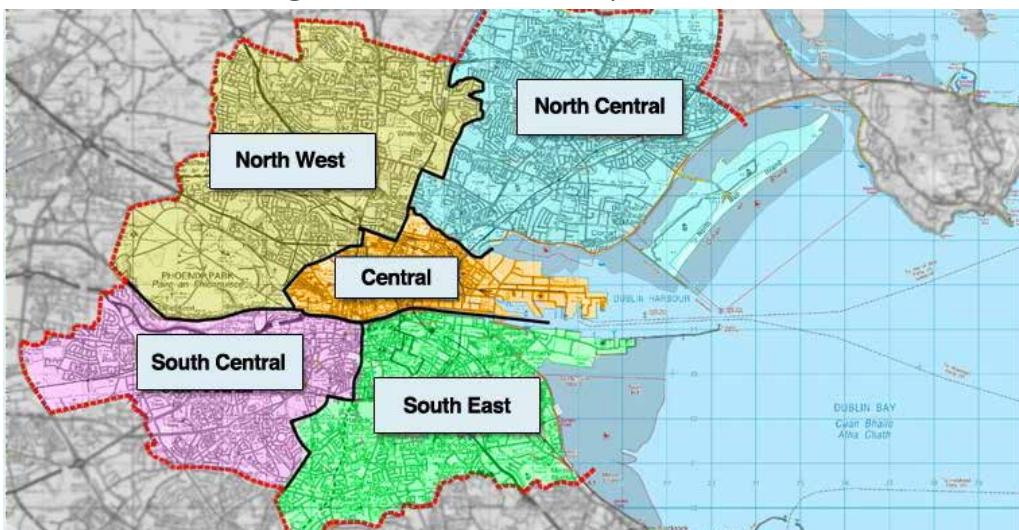
## SECTION 1: CONTEXT

Dublin is the capital of Ireland and its largest city. At the time of the 2016 Census it had a population of approximately 1.35 million people representing 28% of the national population. Since then, the population has been growing at an estimated average annual rate of 1.5%<sup>1</sup>. It generates 40%<sup>2</sup> of the GDP of the State. It is predominately a services' based economy with that sector accounting for c.81% of the total activity while Manufacturing and Construction combined accounting for c.19%<sup>2</sup>.

The Dublin City Council area is the most populous Dublin region with a population of 554,554 at the time of the 2016 census. The population is both young and diverse with 35% of people between the ages of 15 and 34 years and 22% of the population born outside Ireland<sup>3</sup>. It benefits from a highly educated workforce with 40% educated to third level or higher<sup>3</sup>. It is also a digitally connected city, where 95% of households have fixed broadband<sup>4</sup>.

As the State's capital, Dublin performs a significant economic, administrative and cultural role. It operates as a gateway to the European Union for many businesses - multi-national corporations as well as export-oriented local SMEs.

Despite the economic challenges of 2020 CRIF Vision Net reported that some 21,924 new companies were formed in Ireland. Dublin continues to be the most popular location for business formation accounting for 10,089 of new companies formed in 2020



At the end of 2020 the labour force in the Dublin region totalled c740,000 or 30% of the national total which is a marginal drop on the 750,000 seen pre-pandemic. In addition the overall numbers employed have fallen by 32,000 due to the pandemic the sectoral split is largely unchanged. In broad terms 88% of employees worked in Services with 7% in Industry and 5% in Construction. Only Admin, Construction and Hospitality have seen their proportion reduce. Retail & Wholesale has seen both its proportion of employment and the absolute numbers increase over the past year (+15% YoY) due to an increase in online activity.

The largest components of the Services Sector are the Public Sector (27%) (which includes health and education), Wholesale and Retail (14%), Information and Communications Technology (11%) and Professional Services (10%). Professional Services and ICT also saw the numbers of employees grow by 4% YoY in Q4 2020 with Public Service, specifically Health, the only other sector which saw employment grow.

<sup>1</sup> CSO – LFS estimates 2020

<sup>2</sup> CSO – GVA 2018

<sup>3</sup> CSO – Census 2016

<sup>4</sup> CSO – March 2020 Dublin Region

CRIF Vision Net

The unemployment rate in Dublin at the end of 2020 was 6.2% versus 5.7% nationally, both up from 4.5% at the end of 2019. However, this does not take into account those on income support. On a national basis the total on the live register and receiving the pandemic unemployment payment is 27%<sup>5</sup>.

Employment by Sector - Dublin		
	Q4	
	Q4 2019	2020
Admin	6%	4%
Construction	5%	4%
Hospitality	7%	5%
Logistics	6%	6%
Manufacturing	7%	7%
FIRE	8%	9%
Professional	9%	10%
ICT	10%	11%
Retail & Wholesale	12%	14%
Public Sector	26%	27%
Other	5%	4%

CSO: LFS Q4 2020

Enterprises by Sector, Dublin	
	2018
Manufacturing	3%
Other	4%
Hospitality	4%
Real Estate	5%
Financial & Insurance	6%
Arts and Entertainment	7%
Administration	7%
ICT	9%
Logistics	11%
Construction	12%
Wholesale & Retail	13%
Professional	18%

Source: CSO

## Enterprise Landscape<sup>6</sup>

The pre-pandemic sectoral split is reflected in the 2018 enterprise profile of Dublin, which is the latest data available. This shows that almost a third of all enterprises nationally are located in the city, a proportion that rises to over a half when it comes to Information and Communications enterprises (ICT) and two thirds for Financial and Insurance Services. The largest sector as measured by enterprise numbers is Professional Services, followed by Retail, Construction and logistics.

91% of enterprises in Dublin have between 0 and 10 employees with construction, logistics, ICT, real estate, professional services and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation showing average numbers per enterprise in that range on an aggregate basis.

## Implementing National Research and Policy at Local Level

Supported by Enterprise Ireland and within the policy and funding responsibility of the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation, LEO Dublin City will operate within the context of internal, national and regional enterprise policies and plans. While writing this plan, the following policy and plans were reviewed:

### 1. Regional Enterprise Plan

The nine Regional Enterprise Plans are an integral part of Ireland's enterprise policy, aimed at driving economic growth and sustaining better standards of living throughout Ireland.

The REPs provide perspective and ideas from the 'bottom-up'. They are informed by an understanding of unique local challenges, strengths and assets and enable more effective translation of national policy into regional and local impact. Each Plan has been created by regional stakeholders who have collectively identified a number of Strategic Objectives for enterprise development for their region. LEO Dublin City and the Dublin City Council have engaged in the development of the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan and strive to shape and implement its recommendations.

<sup>5</sup> CSO – January 2021 live register figures

<sup>6</sup> CSO Business Demography 2018

## **2. Project Ireland 2040:**

Informed by the Programme for Partnership Project Ireland recognises that economic and social progress go hand in hand and is supported by the National Planning Framework to 2040 and the National Development Plan 2018-2027.

One of the ten strategic outcomes outlined in the plan that is of particular relevance to LEO Dublin City is: *A strong Economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills.*

## **3. National Development Plan 2018-2027:**

The NDP sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the National Planning Framework.

Within the plan, LEO Dublin City will strive to achieve National Objective 5 – A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills it states that this element of the Plan will be achieved by:

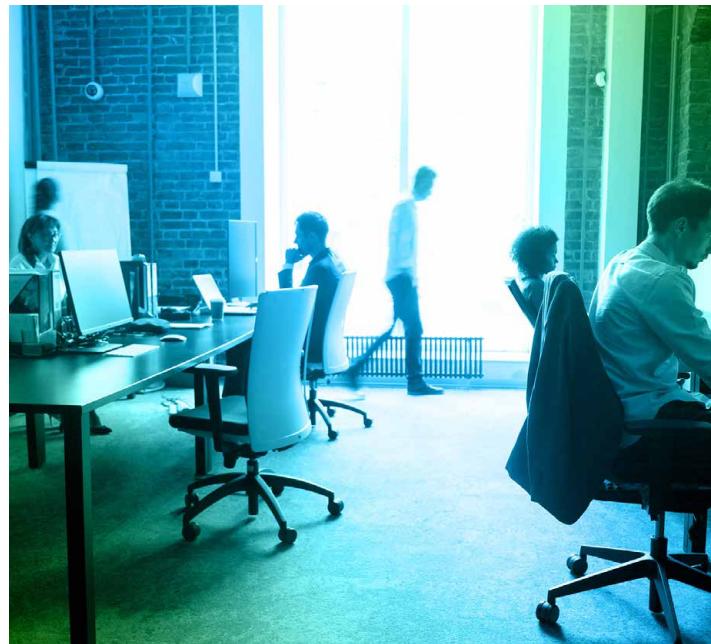
- Supporting entrepreneurialism and building competitive clusters in strategic sectors and activities;
- Through collaborative actions at regional and local level
- By realising a significant uplift in the performance of enterprises in terms of innovation, export potential and productivity; and
- By attracting further investment to the regions

## **4. Enterprise 2025 Renewed:**

Enterprise 2025 Renewed, is Ireland's national enterprise strategy with the stated vision to make Ireland "The best place to succeed in business". It aims to embed resilience in Irish Enterprises and contribute to strong economic performance over a longer term through a number of priorities.

These include:

- An increased emphasis on developing Irish owned enterprises – enhancing productivity and delivering quality jobs – and helping companies to navigate Brexit;
- Building on our existing strengths and seeking out new opportunities through collaboration and clustering within our distinctive foreign and Irish owned enterprise mix;
- Placing a spotlight on innovation (including disruptive technologies) and talent development, so that more enterprises are developing new products, services and solutions, and are more competitive internationally;
- Realising the full potential of our regions – developing places that are attractive for business investment and for people to live and work; and
- Raising Ireland's visibility internationally, protecting Ireland's reputation, and providing opportunities for our enterprises supported by the Global Footprint



## **5. Future Jobs Ireland: Preparing now for Tomorrow's Economy:**

At the national level, the Future Jobs Ireland 2019 initiative will, as part of a multiannual framework, give effect to national enterprise policy objectives and leverage a 'whole of Government' approach so that all policy levers at the national level, relevant to job creation and labour force participation, talent development, enterprise growth, innovation and competitiveness, and transition to a low carbon economy, are engaged on an agenda that will prepare for Ireland's future enterprise and economic needs.

A key challenge for the Local Enterprise Offices arising from this policy document is how they will address within their client base the issue of improving their productivity. This challenge calls for greater diversity in our enterprise base, the promotion of enterprise productivity, the enhancement of the framework conditions for firm creation and growth, an improvement in leadership and management skills in SMEs and for the need to encourage SMEs to use technology and business process improvement to increase productivity. LEO Dublin City continue to develop training and investment solutions to address such challenges.

## **6. The OECD Roadmap:**

The Report of the SME Taskforce: National SME and Entrepreneurship Growth Plan suggests clear deliverables to be implemented in the short, medium and long term, these include:

- Internationalisation
- Productivity, Digitalisation and Competitiveness
- Networks and Clustering
- Entrepreneurship

This strategy has been developed in line with the outputs of the SME taskforce. To achieve the objectives of the task force, a well-resourced and effective network of support agencies will be critical in reinforcing the role of SMEs as the backbone of the Irish economy, in every city, town and village across the country.

LEO Dublin City look forward to the establishment of the SME and Entrepreneurship Implementation Group to take the vision of this Growth Plan forward and form strong government policy in the area of Entrepreneurship.

The key findings of the OECD National Report on Entrepreneurship also point towards the requirement for more robust policy and greater entrepreneurship supports. LEO Dublin City identified the following findings as a key resource to guide this strategy:

- While attitudes to entrepreneurship are positive, business dynamism and the start-up rate are relatively low, Irish SMEs are not very active in international markets, and SME productivity growth is stagnant. There are also weaknesses in SME management skills, capital investment levels and technology adoption
- Ireland offers a favourable regulatory environment, low taxation, extensive R&D support and good physical infrastructure. However, access to finance remains problematic and incentives could be strengthened for investment in SMEs and entrepreneurship
- Ireland has a comprehensive and solid set of support programmes for SMEs and entrepreneurship. However, there is a danger of some traditional SMEs falling between the support offers of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), which mainly focus on smaller enterprises, and Enterprise Ireland, which primarily targets firms demonstrating export potential. The remit of the LEOs could be expanded to address this concern, with corresponding resources.

- There are large spatial variations in conditions for SME and entrepreneurship activity within Ireland. The LEOs play an important function in providing tailored support for SMEs and entrepreneurship in their areas in collaboration with other bodies working locally and regionally. However there is potential to enhance local level policies to build local networks of enterprises working on common skills and innovation projects, particularly in local industry clusters
- Ireland has many SMEs with low productivity compared to the frontier firms in their industry. A range of policy initiatives need to be applied to address this multifaceted issue. They include increasing take up by SMEs of Skillnet Ireland management training programmes, expanding vouchers for digitalisation processes in SMEs, integrating international standards adhesion in SME development programmes, and increasing SMEs take up of R&D incentives
- While there is a reasonable supply of business development services in Ireland, in particular through the LEO network and Enterprise Ireland, and while SMEs and entrepreneurs have good access to mentoring opportunities, there remains scope for improvement. A business diagnostic tool could be used more widely as an entry point to business development services, management training programmes and financial support for consultancy expanded, training and guidelines for external mentors improved and potential gaps in the provision of services assessed.

(Adopted from; OECD Report on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy in Ireland, 2019.)

### **The impact of Brexit and the Covid crisis on businesses, LEO clients, and the local economy of Dublin City:**

Dublin City faces significant challenges resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 and Brexit economic shocks. An additional 32,000 unemployed in the Dublin Region during the COVID crisis particularly felt by local businesses with some sectors including hospitality, tourism and non-essential retail being disproportionately affected. With 88% of employment working in the service sectors and remote working has become the norm for many employees. This new remote way of working brings with it challenges and changes to how businesses will operate in the City. It has become apparent throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic that businesses will need to acquire new skills and adopt to new ways of working over the period of this plan and beyond. With Brexit some businesses are facing difficulties with their supply chains so there will be an adjusting period while new norms of trading are being established.

With 91% of all enterprises employing less than 10 people in the Dublin Region, the role of the Local Enterprise Dublin City and its services to businesses will be critical over the coming years to address the fallout from the crisis.

With every crisis there is opportunity, for example Retail and Wholesale business have increased by 15% YOY with the increase in online activity and professional services and ICT are seeing an increase of 4%. This Local Enterprise Development Plan will bring with it new opportunities for Dublin City with potential additional capacity available for business to expand, grow and the opportunity for businesses to concentrate on attracting and retaining top talent and investment into the City. The green agenda is growing part of the response and during this planning period LEO Dublin City will support business who are adapting to a more sustainable way of working and doing business.

LEO Dublin City and the wider Economic Development unit will monitor the trends over the next 12 months and beyond to measure the true impact of the pandemic as government payment supports begin to be phased out. Only then will the true impact of the pandemic begin to emerge, with businesses in specific sectors such as hospitality and tourism having little or no cash flow over the previous 12-18 months.

Dublin City Council publish a quarterly edition of the Dublin Economic Monitor [www.dublineconomy.ie](http://www.dublineconomy.ie) providing key economic data to that supports better understanding and improved decision making on the effects of COVID and Brexit.



## SWOT Analysis of LEO Dublin City

As part of the plan preparation a detailed SWOT analysis was carried out internally by LEO Dublin City. This brought the entire team together to look holistically at LEO Dublin City and consider where strengths exist but also what weaknesses are present in LEO. This exercise has aided LEO Dublin City to produce a strong SWOT analysis that prepares the team to look forward to the next four years with a strong sense of, unity purpose and direction.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated LEO team</li> <li>• Agile and flexible approach to support clients</li> <li>• Streamlined online application and evaluation processes</li> <li>• Strong word of mouth Brand Awareness</li> <li>• Effective collaborators with enterprise networks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No integrated CRM system</li> <li>• Grant applications and drawdown processes can be overburdening for micro enterprises</li> <li>• New products Launched without procurement and design in place</li> <li>• Staff turnover and new staff induction time LAG</li> <li>• A busy office environment leaves little time to plan effectively</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of integrated CRM systems and increase functionality of a new LEO website</li> <li>• Simplify and automate the application and drawdown process for financial supports</li> <li>• Outsource some offerings such as trading online vouchers and Centralised Procurement</li> <li>• Supporting of larger size companies without provision of training and upskilling</li> <li>• Develop top of mind brand awareness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘First Stop Shop’ being duplicated by other agency offerings</li> <li>• Potential that too many products and services could be overwhelming the current staff compliment</li> <li>• The imposition of unrealistic targets post Covid could have an impact in the quality of service delivery</li> <li>• Impact of Covid-19 and Brexit to the Business Community</li> <li>• Adapting to the pace of technological change and LEOs keeping up to date with new technology</li> </ul>

## Dublin City Council: *Promoting Economic Development to Support a City of Opportunity that Encourages an Inclusive and Sustainable Economy*

The Economic Development Unit (EDU) is responsible for the promotion of Economic Development in the Dublin City Council administrative area. The remit of the EDU derives from the introduction of the Local Economic & Community Development Plan (LECP) as part of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The Economic Development Unit is the sister office and closely aligned to the operation and the activities of the Local Enterprise Office Dublin City

The vision above sets out the overarching objective, which involves using resources, knowledge and expertise, to make a positive difference for those who live, work, visit and invest in Dublin City. The mission of the Economic support offices within Dublin City Council is;

- To support initiatives that will improve the quality of people's lives.
- To enhance the ability of the City to attract and retain world-class talent through Placemaking.
- To promote Dublin as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.
- To foster a culture of creativity and innovation in a globally connected City.
- To engage with economic stakeholders to maximise the alignment and impact of resources.

This is achieved by engaging, promoting, facilitating and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders, across a specific range of interventions designed to deliver on this vision. These interventions will be identified and assessed with reference to the 4 pillars of Economic Development, which have been selected to offer clarity and focus to the work. These pillars were identified following consultation with a range of stakeholders and the completion of a SWOT analysis.



The Economic Development Unit deliver on these four pillars under 4 priority areas of Policy, Projects, Research and Events and are fact driven and embedded in data and research.

The Economic and Enterprise eco-system in Dublin city is strengthened, through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, designed to improve and support various policy initiatives, projects, events and research documents. The Economic Development Unit have identified a number of high level projects under each of the Pillars that when delivered, will result in positive change.

The Economic Development Unit have identified a number of high level projects under each of the Pillars that when delivered, will result in positive change.

## 1. Human Development:

- Summit Series: Dublin Re-set Summit: (Research, Promotion, Future of Dublin)
- Skills - Future of Work (Dublin Region Skills Forum - FutureScope)
- Your Dublin Your Voice: (Dublin Survey Panel)

## 2. Place Making and Clusters:

- Enterprise Space: (Research, Dublin Region Enterprise Plan)
- Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor: (Engagement with eight local authorities and two universities)
- Dublin Region Enterprise Plan: DREP

### 3. Promotion & Investment

- Dublin Economic Monitor: DEM
- Dublin Place Brand
- DCC EU Programme Participation Strategy

### 4. Climate and Innovation

- Social Enterprise: (Responsible Innovation Summit, Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards)
- Green Business: Responsible Innovation – MODOS
- Smart Dublin: Dublin as a Test Bed for Smart Innovation

Dublin City Council's Economic Development Strategy 2022 – 2028 is being developed in 2021 in response to the COVID 19 Global Pandemic, the Roadmap to Reopening Ireland, the recent Reset Summit for the city and the National Recovery & Resilience Plan.

## 1.2 Review of 2017-2020

The LEO support mechanism is working effectively and with new economic and business challenges continually emerging, there is no room for complacency. LEO Dublin City is and will continue to be a key constituent of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and is a key delivery agent of business supports.

The outputs highlight that the model is working effectively. The LEO enterprise support mechanism is a key constituent of the national and local entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

### No. of clients supported



2014-2020 3323

### Net new jobs



2014-2020 1765

### Measure 1 Payments



2014-2020 €5,984,839

### Training Participants



2014-2020 14,093

### Mentoring Participants



2014-2020 8,305

### IBYE Applications



2014-2020 569

### Trading Online Vouchers Issued



2014-2020 1,705

### MFI Applications Submitted



2014-2020 156

## SECTION 2 - VISION/MISSION AND OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

### **LEO Vision:**

To develop and sustain a positive enterprise ecosystem throughout Dublin City that will in particular drive new added-value start-ups, the further growth of small and micro enterprises and enhance local economies.

### **Mission Statement:**

We aim to promote entrepreneurship, foster sustainable business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high-quality supports for your Business ideas. Entrepreneurs and Businesses are supported to:

- Increase exports
- Build resilience
- Increase productivity
- Prepare for the Low carbon economy
- Embrace the Digital economy
- Innovate
- Be managed by ambitious & capable individuals
- Fuel regional growth

### **Business Information & Advisory Services:**

#### **First Stop Enterprise & Business Support Solution**

Over the period 2014-2020, the First Stop Shop has been developed to be a key support mechanism within LEO Dublin City. The Local Enterprise Office Dublin City will continue to function as the local first-stop shop for new entrepreneurs and existing micro-enterprise and small business owners. The LEO is the front door through which all information on State supports for small and micro-businesses can be accessed and signposted to other supports and bodies with programmes relevant to small business as well as important local services and compliance requirements can be provided.

#### **Provide enhanced and nationally recognised First Stop Shop (FSS) referral and advisory service in Dublin City**

Objectives 2021-2024	Actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To Develop and Enhance the First Stop Shop Services of LEO Dublin City</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with our strategic enterprise partners at local and national level to deliver a seamless local support and referral system.</li><li>• Maintain and develop the knowledge base of LEO staff.</li><li>• When developed, implement an online business diagnostic tool as an entry point to the LEO services.</li><li>• Integrate the FSS service of LEOs with the other enterprise agencies and local development organisations.</li><li>• With the support of the CoE in Shannon carry out on-going local promotion of LEO Dublin City as providers of the FSS service.</li><li>• Provide the necessary resources to provide a dedicated FSS service at local level.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement a new CRM system to capture all LEO client information and enhance engagement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement a new CRM system when developed by the LEO Centre of Excellence.</li></ul>

## Make it Easier to do Business

### Improve the competitiveness and productivity of small and micro enterprises through enhancing SME management capabilities

Objective	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Drive competitiveness with small and micro enterprises to enable them become more productive and compete internationally.</li><li>Develop local sectoral networks and clusters to drive productivity, knowledge sharing and competitiveness at local level.</li><li>Improve competitiveness, productivity and sustainable business practices of micro enterprises through enhancing SME management capabilities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase LEO one-to-one client engagement to identify ongoing client needs.</li><li>Continue to promote and develop the LEAN for Micro programme to LEO clients with an enhanced focus on carbon –reduction within firms.</li><li>Implement new measurable productivity management development programmes for LEO clients.</li><li>Encourage productivity improvements through relevant training and development investments.</li><li>Deliver the LEO non-financial supports to firms up to 20 employees.</li><li>Work with EI to drive scale within identified LEO enterprises.</li><li>Develop and deliver clusters, sector initiatives and networking programmes at local level to maximise local strengths and ambitions.</li><li>In collaboration with other state agencies (incl. SEAI) support the development of a suite of services to enable small and micro businesses futureproof their businesses from an environmental perspective.</li><li>Implement prescribed environmental sustainability programmes for the LEO Dublin City client/portfolio base in particular with a focus on the circular economy, the green agenda and carbon-reduction.</li></ul>



LEO Dublin City will endeavour to promote and support an accessible enterprise ecosystem that actively supports entrepreneurs to make the most of their time, a precious resource for any business. LEO Dublin city will continue to engage with portfolio clients to promote new and existing products which may assist them to manage their business more effectively.

**LEO Dublin City have identified the following objectives and actions**

Objectives	Actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support new and existing entrepreneurs to maximise their potential via simplified and accessible supports</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support entrepreneurs, owners and managers in accessing the resources required to plan, grow and sustain productivity, innovation and competitiveness</li><li>• Improve the conversion rate of ideas to fully-formed businesses</li><li>• Make it easier for potential entrepreneurs to start-up business encourage greater technology uptake among businesses throughout Dublin City</li><li>• Develop online resources such as Grant Application portals That support the ongoing digitalisation of business processes</li></ul>

**Enterprise Support Services:  
Maximise Business Potential**

2020 was a challenging year with the sudden onset of Covid-19 and the ongoing concern of a no deal Brexit. Despite this, LEO Dublin City provided all services remotely and approved 79 applications for M1 support in 2020 (including TAME grants). Associated with these approvals is the potential to create 130 new sustainable jobs. The capacity of the LEO to adapt to the needs of the business community makes it a key cog in the enterprise support ecosystem. In order to continue to maximise the potential of LEO Dublin City clients, innovation and digitalisation will be a priority focus. The following objectives and actions have been identified:



## Increase the level of innovation within micro and small businesses

Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the level of innovation, technology adaption and digitalisation within LEO client Firms</li> <li>● Enable more client firms develop internal innovation management processes</li> <li>● Develop and drive connections between Client firms and local innovation Ecosystem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase LEO client engagement to identify innovation and technology challenges within LEO client firms</li> <li>● Identify develop, and deliver innovation management programmes suitable for micro enterprises to suitable LEO client firms</li> <li>● Work with EI in maximising the opportunities arising from the Agile Innovation funding and adapting its innovation toolkit To the needs of small and micro enterprises</li> <li>● Through the development of new engagement models, drive greater interaction between local FDI, larger firms, the third level and LEO clients to transfer knowledge and skills and to create local synergies.</li> </ul>

## Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland

Collaboration and engagement with Enterprise Ireland (EI) continues to be prioritised. With 21 companies transferred from LEO Dublin city EI in 2020, a strong pipeline of LEO clients are being supported towards a transition to EI supports. This is being achieved via ongoing communication and engagement between EI and LEO Business Advisors. LEO Dublin City will continue to work collaboratively with Enterprise Ireland to identify clients with growth and export potential. Approving LEO Clients for Enterprise Ireland supports is one such approach that has proven effective. The following objectives and actions will support this area of work:

### Increase the export capabilities of small and micro enterprises, beyond the UK in particular

Objective	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the export capability of suitable LEO client firms.</li> <li>● Increase the levels of exporting from within LEO clients to and outside the UK.</li> <li>● Support local firms to effectively respond to BREXIT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access export readiness tool to assist LEO executives identify suitable clients for export support.</li> <li>● Access early-stage export capability development Programme for LEO clients, measure outputs through the annual employment survey and integrate with the services of Enterprise Ireland.</li> <li>● Access inward buyer visits to identify new sales and export opportunities and maximise the Enterprise Europe Network in pursuing this action.</li> <li>● Assist firms engage in market entry visits to increase market knowledge and identified new market opportunities.</li> <li>● Integrate the LEO export supports with those of EI, in particular though increased engagement with Enterprise Ireland overseas offices.</li> <li>● Integrate the LEO supports to provide firms with comprehensive response to BREXIT challenges.</li> <li>● Deliver Customs Readiness and new Market Opportunity workshops at local level.</li> </ul>



## Entrepreneurship Support Services:

### Promote a Best Practice Enterprise Culture

LEO Dublin City will act as the catalyst and advocate for the establishment of a best practice enterprise culture among start-ups, micro and small businesses; while promoting enterprise and self-employment as a viable career option among the wider population. This will be achieved by implementing the following:

#### Foster, promote and support local entrepreneurship

Objective	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create strong local enterprise support ecosystems.</li><li>• Support new business start-ups at local Level</li><li>• Continually monitor and seek to increase the number of added value start-ups year on year.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an integrated local and pro-active enterprise support ecosystem at local and regional levels with active and committed key stakeholders such as EI, ETBs, Third Level etc</li><li>• Examine all current programmes such as SYOB, Schools Enterprise Programme and IBYE, and where necessary develop improved or alternative models at local and/or national level.</li><li>• Consider new approaches to promoting local entrepreneurship.</li><li>• Consider new models for engaging new promoters in start-ups e.g. females, youth, migrants.</li><li>• Continually review the suitability and eligibility criteria relating to the LEO financial instruments and recommend improvements.</li><li>• Continually monitor LEO data to identify emerging trends and challenges and respond accordingly.</li><li>• Critically evaluate the number and outputs from the current SYOB programmes.</li><li>• Adapt the existing financial supports to address the needs of new start-ups from emerging sectors.</li></ul>

#### Enhance the confidence, ambition and leadership skills of small and micro enterprises

Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the confidence and drive the ambition of local firms to scale and compete internationally.</li><li>• Increase the leadership capabilities of small and micro enterprise owner/managers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver client-focused, needs-based, management development programmes targeted at LEO portfolio clients.</li><li>• Maximise the LEO mentoring programme to increase ambition and capabilities.</li><li>• Increase LEO client engagement to identify export ready clients.</li><li>• Facilitate local business networks with a particular focus on peer learning and enhancing capabilities.</li><li>• Deliver annual International Leadership programme/s to identified LEO portfolio clients.</li></ul>

## **Local Economic Development Services: Environment for Start-Ups**

LEO Dublin City will aim to leverage the full range of potential enterprise support/economic development promotion mechanisms across Dublin City Council's economic development remit, including enterprise space, rates framework, economic development, etc to start-ups and small businesses in city.

### **Promote economic development at local level**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximise the contribution of LEO Dublin City to local and national policies.</li><li>• Create a positive and enterprise-focused infrastructure at local level.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contribute to three year local enterprise plans.</li><li>• Inputting in to key national and local enterprise and economic strategies, plans and projects.</li><li>• Accessing EU and other sources of funding to support enterprise and economic development at local level.</li><li>• Develop partnerships with relevant agencies to address key development issues/challenges at local level.</li><li>• Promoting and marketing of local areas as locations for investment in conjunction with the appropriate national body e.g IDA.</li><li>• Identifying and developing projects and programmes for Enterprise and economic development - including leveraging resources from non-core resources.</li><li>• Development and maximizing of appropriate enterprise infrastructure at county/city level.</li><li>• Management of local authority enterprise infrastructure or assets e.g. enterprise parks.</li></ul>

## **SECTION 3 - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### **3.1 Strategic Priorities for LEO Dublin City 2021-2024**

#### **How LEO Dublin City will work with Portfolio Clients:**

One of the key components of the Local Enterprise Development Plan is the work that LEO Dublin City will do with its client portfolio. There are approximately 400 clients in the client portfolio. The main aim is to manage and grow the businesses in the clients portfolio and generate a net jobs increase across the portfolio.

Clients in the Portfolio are Measure 1 financially assisted businesses. LEO Dublin City has two Business Advisors who will actively manage their clients to develop them to their true potential. The portfolio will be divided into Performing, Start Up, Stagnant and Divesting. The business advisors will work with those business who have started and are stagnant to get them to perform. During each year of the plan new clients will be added to the portfolio at each Evaluation Committee meeting. Clients who are not engaging will be recommended for divesting at the end of each year.

The LEO Dublin City Business Advisors will use the LEO support services, Dublin City Enterprise ECO system to encourage and advise client companies to become more Competitive, Digitised, Green and Sustainable, Innovative, increased Exporting and Internationalisation, Improve their Management Skills and Leadership and engage in more Networking. A new Consultancy Panel of Experts in these areas is being formed.

LEO client Portfolio management aims to:

- To grow the LEO client businesses
- To increase the full time equivalent net jobs in the portfolio on an annual basis
- To transfer clients who are ready for further growth and expansion to Enterprise Ireland
- To provide mentoring and advice as required
- To engage portfolio clients with consultancy panel services
- To engage clients and inform them of opportunities available to them in the Dublin City Enterprise ECO System

## **Entrepreneurship**

The Entrepreneurship eco-system is critical to the Dublin City Economy. LEO Dublin City will endeavor to nurture and encourage entrepreneurship and to increase the conversion rate of participants on the start your own business courses. Through implementing the Business Supports process LEO Dublin City will ensure a robust screening process, that will direct clients to the supports required and will assist in identifying potential HPSU clients.

LEO Dublin City will tailor courses to the needs and aspirations of participants. All programs are open and inclusive designed to provide participants with the essential skills required to prepare them to succeed in a highly competitive landscape.

LEO Dublin City will continuously support third parties in the delivery of programs tailored for specific clients' needs such as those with a disability and/or in long-term un-employment.

LEO Dublin City will actively continue to engage with Enterprise Ireland and other support agencies to ensure their client's potential is maximised. A client first policy is in place to ensure that client's needs are carefully considered in partnership with Enterprise Ireland to ensure they are receiving the right level of funding and support.

Dublin City is a well connected in terms of broadband and the council has a broadband officer to monitor and improve digital connectivity. It is envisaged that the rollout of 5G will be an additional draw to attract and grow the vital tech sector in Dublin City.

LEO Dublin City works closely with key business interest groups to understand the needs of the business community. This coupled with ongoing engagement with trainers and mentors provides an up to date analysis of the skills and training requirements of local entrepreneurs.

Encouraging youth entrepreneurship is also key to ensuring a pipeline of new entrepreneurs. It has been established that Ireland lags behind in youth entrepreneur figures so the following actions will be used to address this:

1. An active schools program culminating in schools competition for the best business. This program plants the seeds which may encourage future school leavers to follow an entrepreneurial path.
2. The IBYE program, (Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur) is designed to encourage younger entrepreneurs, while positioned as a competition there is a very important training and networking element to this program which has real impact.

## **Competitiveness and Digitalisation**

LEO Micro and Small business clients demonstrated great agility when faced with the challenge to survive and sustain their businesses during 2020 in particular. Many businesses embraced the opportunity to add digital capability such as on-line trading, and virtual meetings capacity to ensure continued engagement to sustain and in many cases expand and or pivot their business operations during the COVID pandemic. Having the opportunity to explore and adopt these initial changes, many business owners have been awakened to the fact they need to introduce further digitalisation, in order to better serve their customers' on one part and become more efficient and productive on the other.

The four Dublin region LEOs will continue to support all client companies to face challenges in boosting productivity, rapidly adopting digitalisation and actively pursuing innovation to increase competitiveness. LEO Dublin City will continue to work closely with Enterprise Ireland to maximise client take up of relevant Enterprise Ireland products and services to drive competitiveness, accelerate the adoption and implementation of sustainable business practices and develop local sectoral networks and clusters to drive productivity, knowledge sharing and competitiveness at local and regional level.

### **Key actions reflect wider LEO National Strategy and include:**

- Increase LEO staff one-to-one client engagement to identify on-going client needs.
- Continue to promote and develop the LEAN for Micro programme to LEO clients to drive efficiency and improve productivity.
- Develop new, measurable productivity management development programmes for our LEO clients.
- Drive productivity improvements through capital and skills funding.
- Deliver the LEO non-financial supports to firms up to 20 employees.
- Work with EI HPSU Section to drive scale within identified LEO enterprises.
- Develop and deliver sectoral initiatives/networking programmes at local level to maximise local sectoral strengths and ambitions.
- Promote MODOS and the new Green for Micro programme to promote enable small and micro businesses future-proof their businesses from an environmental perspective.

### **Green / Sustainability**

#### **1. Green for Micro:**

The 'Green for Micro' initiative will help small businesses decarbonise and become more sustainable. Making businesses more sustainable is not just the right thing to do from an environmental point of view, it also makes good business sense. The Triple Bottom line will become a consideration for many businesses considering not just profit but their impact on people and the planet also.

Recent survey results \*show that 33% of respondents plan to switch to businesses which are doing more about sustainability, while 49% also said they intend to become better informed about the impact their purchasing has on the planet. With climate change, changing regulations, rising resource costs and changing customer expectations, adopting a more eco-friendly approach is the best way forward for business. The Green for Micro Programme will begin the journey to greater sustainability for many micro businesses and lead to further initiatives and investments over the 2021-2024 period.

(\*Survey source: AIB Sustainability Index, December 2020)

**2. MODOS** is a circular economy training programme for micro, small and medium size enterprises. It emerged as a joint initiative of the Economic Development Office (EDO) of Dublin City Council and the Eastern Midlands Waste Region Office (EMWRO). MODOS has garnered interest from stakeholders countrywide and will be a key resource to assist businesses meet their obligations under the green/sustainability agenda.

Over the coming years the Dublin region will be able to continue to develop such programmes in a collaborative way to best meet the needs of businesses. When firstly launched in 2019, MODOS was the first Circular Economy Training Program for micro, small and medium enterprises ever developed in the country. While initially targeting Dublin-based businesses, the program rollout has subsequently been successfully promoted nationwide and has grown to include circular economy events and webinars, a mentoring service and a CE Innovation Award.

While Green for Micro and MODOS are two key approaches, the Dublin LEOs will also be working closely with key representatives within their Local Authority structure to consider how sustainability can be continuously be promoted and implemented.

## **Innovation**

Innovation in product, service, management and selling is increasingly important in the connected environment that Irish Businesses operate in. There is a challenge in raising the awareness of the need to be innovative as a starting point and to get companies to take the steps to be innovative, this often requires reflection, change and financial/ time risk, which is not always embraced. LEO Dublin City are committed to raising the level of innovation of companies in the region and will do so by;

- Ensuring that the supporting and promoting innovation is a key delivery of the offices
- Promoting feasibility study funding for early stage companies and Agile Innovation funding for more established companies which are the two primary LEO funding mechanisms which will be used to encourage innovation
- On a broader economic front continued partnership with EI on delivering seminars/ information sessions on innovation
- Breakthrough Innovation Program in partnership with Dublin BIC will be widely publicised and participation will be encouraged with other programs to follow where appropriate (subject to the successful completion of the Pilot)
- Innovation in business thinking and processes will be supported by the LEAN for micro program and other management programs TBC
- Mentors will be encouraged to signpost innovative clients to the most appropriate supports and will be made aware of these supports as they develop to ensure they are receiving the highest level of encouragement
- Mentors will be supported in improving their mentoring skills through initiatives such as [www.mentorsupport.ie](http://www.mentorsupport.ie) once COVID allows
- Engagement with third level environments will continue to seed fund innovative companies coming out of this system where they are close to market. DLR have strong ties with UCD Nova and IADT and have funded several companies from these institutions
- LEO Dublin City have strong ties with Trinity, TU Dublin, National College of Art and Design, UCD and National College of Ireland
- IDI- Institute of Designers Ireland. Design and Innovation go hand in hand and LEO Dublin City

## **Exporting/Internationalisation**

The four Dublin region LEOs will continue to work together to increase the potential to their clients to export. The LEOs will work closely with Enterprise Ireland to maximise client take up on relevant Enterprise Ireland export products and services.

Small businesses continue to express interest in the TAME grant, these businesses are looking to export or expand into new markets. Any business approved for a TAME will be travelling overseas to develop new market opportunities. LEO offices will seek to assist these businesses with links to EI research and overseas offices, as appropriate.

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly enhanced consumer confidence in E-commerce and the capacity of business owners to take their business online and continue to meet consumer demand, where possible. While writing this strategy, LEO (Dublin City) approved (1221) Trading Online Vouchers over 11 months, showing the resilience and capacity of businesses in the Dublin region to pivot and develop their business online. These businesses are now in a prime position to attract new customers and continue to grow their business online, to a potential global market.

LEO business advisors will continue to review their portfolio of LEO supported clients on a regular basis and identify initiatives that will help these clients with their exporting activities

Over the next four years support will be provided to capitalise on the growth of e-commerce and assist entrepreneurs to exploit such opportunities. LEO Dublin City will achieve this via the following strategic actions:

- Development of tailored management Development Programmes
- Monitoring of portfolio Clients to establish those with greater potential
- Provision of online workshops with high potential clients and EI Advisors
- Promotion of TAME to encourage greater participation at international trade events
- Creation of a Micro Exporters network to support best practice and knowledge exchange
- Staff development to assist with identifying LEO clients with greater export potential

### **Networks and Clustering**

Networking is a valuable and productive activity for owner/managers. Networking puts clients in contact with like-minded people whose experience and knowledge can help greatly in solving the day-to-day problems of business and exploit the opportunities. Within networks, there are shared experiences, friendships to be made and also new opportunities to develop your business, make sales or find new suppliers.

LEO Dublin City recognise the importance of business networks and the clustering of relevant stakeholders within a specific industry and actively support the following networks and clusters:

#### **The Women in Business Network:**

This network is an initiative of LEO Dublin City to encourage and support women who are starting a business or are already up and running and provides access to a supportive network, expert speakers, entry to event and awards and works to maximise the success and growth potential of female entrepreneurs. Membership of the network increased under Covid 19 restrictions demonstrating the value of networking and the accessibility of on line events.

#### **Dublin Food Chain:**

Dublin Food Chain is a collaborative initiative of Local Enterprise Offices in the Dublin area, and supported by Bord Bia. The Dublin Food Chain is part of an ongoing effort to harness the power of the 'collective', in order to ensure that Co. Dublin's unique food heritage benefits from the attention it deserves. Throughout the county, a diverse selection of crucial food training and food marketing initiatives are underway. Now, through the Dublin Food Chain brand, these programmes can enjoy better linkages and cross-promotion.

Whether, it is through training, networking or collective marketing, the key aim is to work together towards promoting and expanding our valuable food sector. Ultimately, the goal of the Dublin Food Chain is to help the county nurture its enviable status as an iconic food brand.

#### **ENFUSE:**

ENFUSE is a new initiate developed by the Economic Development Unit and LEO- Dublin City. After a successful pilot in 2020, this collaborative approach to bringing third level institutions and the business community together will be developed over the next programme period.



## 3.2 Capacity and Capability Development

### REDF Projects

The Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) supports major new collaborative and innovative initiatives that can make a significant impact on enterprise development nationally to build the unique USP capabilities to grow the regions around Ireland. A co-financing approach is taken to achieve the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative projects that can sustain and add to employment at a national, regional and county level. The overarching aim of this Scheme is to drive enterprise development and job creation in each region throughout Ireland.

The Scheme also seeks to stimulate enterprise clustering initiatives, which are defined as structures or organised groups of independent parties designed to stimulate innovative activity through promotion, sharing of facilities and exchange of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the connectivity.

REDF Projects support the development of initiatives that help strengthen the regional ability to adjust and cope with the potential effects of international economic changes that may impact on regions or sectors performance nationally.

In Dublin City, the following projects have received REDF Funding:

Name	Description
Ghala DAC/ Trinity Technology and Enterprise Centre (TTEC)	Development of a new innovation centre at the Tower at TTEC, located beside Grand Canal Dock in central Dublin to encourage post graduate entrepreneurship.
Dublin Enterprise and Technology Centre: A 30,000 sq ft extension to the Guinness Enterprise Centre,	The Guinness Enterprise Centre (GEC2) gives physical expression to government policy in support of the entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing a world-class enterprise and co-working centre of excellence for start-ups.
St Paul's Enterprise Centre: A 7,000 sq ft. extension to The SPADE Centre	The SPADE Kitchen Incubator facility is following best international practice for design, operations and value added services. This will give small and nascent food entrepreneurs access to an innovative Food Kitchen Incubator on grounds within the current SPADE Enterprise Centre, North King Street, Dublin 7.
Innovate Dublin Communities	A Social Innovation Hub#2 – creating a dynamic ecosystem to foster innovation with the next wave of entrepreneurs. providing access to co-working space to design and develop your offer, a community living lab to prototype and test your product or service in the local market, and an internal market place to undertake a soft launch.
Business Process Outsourcing Cluster	Scaling the development of the Irish-owned BPO sector to drive regional and national employment.

## Management Development Capability

The COVID 19 Pandemic greatly challenged the founders and promoters of our Micro and Small client businesses and highlighted deficits in their general management capability. Key challenges including Financial Management (Cash Flow and Management Accounting), IT Management/ Digitalisation (to support home working / off-site management and e-Commerce capability), HR and Sales and Marketing (including Digital Marketing) emerged as areas of particular concern.

The LEOs in the Dublin region continue to be committed to meeting the management development needs of modern businesses and recognise the need to review and enhance management and leadership development programmes to meet this need. This will aim to:

- Build the confidence and drive the ambition of local firms to scale and compete internationally
- Build and strengthen the leadership skills and capabilities of small and micro enterprise owner/managers.
- Establish specific micro-credentials for entrepreneurs in these key areas of finance, digitalisation, human resources, etc.

LEO Dublin City has a strong panel of trainers and has consistent engagement with them to understand the opportunities and deliver programmes to increase the level of skills and management development of the local business community. LEO Dublin City will also partner with Enterprise Ireland and introduce client companies for appropriate EI Leadership programmes such as HPSU.

Over the next four years a broad programme of supports will be provided to develop entrepreneurial skills and future business leaders. LEO Dublin City will undertake to take the following strategic actions:

- Deliver client-focused, needs-based, management development programmes targeted at LEO portfolio clients. This to include new measurable programmes.
- Maximise the LEO mentoring programme to increase ambition and capabilities.
- Increase LEO staff one-to-one client engagement to identify export ready clients.
- Facilitate local business networks with a particular focus on peer learning and enhancing capabilities.
- Strengthen relationships and networking opportunities with Local Chamber and larger multinational companies
- On a Regional or National basis deliver annual International Leadership programme /s to identified LEO portfolio clients.
- Deliver accredited modules of client-focused management development programmes



### 3.3 National LEO Programmes

#### LEO Dublin City's involvement in National LEO programmes

##### Local Enterprise Week:

Local Enterprise Week is a National event that takes place annually during the first week of March. The week highlights the supports and services available to micro/ small businesses and the self-employed through the 31 Local Enterprise Offices nationwide. Operational for 6 years in 2021, Local Enterprise Week delivered 400+ events to close to 15,000 people.

Local Enterprise Week offers a wealth of opportunity to learn, share, inform and contribute to the thriving start up and micro enterprise community in Dublin City. The week long programme of mentoring, advice and networking highlights the services and supports available to SME's and start-ups, as well as providing a selection of events and workshops, tailored to engage, inspire and inform.

Entrepreneurs from all sectors, including food, tech and craft, have the opportunity to participate in predominately FREE workshops, seminars, networking events, advice clinics and 1 to 1 mentoring on every aspect of business, including: starting a business, trading online, finance, digital marketing, scaling your business, exporting, green business, social enterprises and being Brexit-ready.

Anyone who is interested in starting up a business or has an established business should get involved and benefit from the programmes that are on offer. Local Enterprise Week showcases all that is available to entrepreneurs bringing them together for one action packed week.



Local Enterprise Week offers a wealth of opportunity to learn, share, inform and contribute to the thriving start up and micro enterprise community in Dublin City.

Due to the pandemic in 2021, Local Enterprise Week evolved into a virtual event. This new format grew participation by 65%. Larger events hosted up to 400 participants simultaneously. Participants restrictions on both time and location have been eradicated or greatly reduced, increasing the number of sessions that entrepreneurs could participant in and maximising their time.

10 spotlight events took place and LEO Dublin City hosted the first of these, opening Local Enterprise Week with the launch of Green for Micro.

Adding virtual events provides a workable new event model beneficial to both entrepreneur and LEO's into 2024. The entrepreneur can participate in a greater range of workshops. Time, distance and cost are no longer barriers to participation. The LEO's have opportunity to enhance collaboration and therefore cost efficiencies, while continuing to provide cutting edge relevant content to entrepreneurs when planning, starting, sustaining and growing their businesses.

## National Women's Enterprise:

In October of each year 2017 to 2019 the four LEOs in the Dublin region organised and promoted a major networking event as part of "National Women's Enterprise Day". In October 2020, owing to COVID-19, the event was held online as a single National event. Post-COVID, LEO Dublin City will continue to support the regional initiative which will rotate annually between each of the 4 x Dublin LEOs for the period 2021-2024.

## Student Enterprise:

Organised by the Local Enterprise Office Dublin City, the Student Enterprise Programme was established to help create an enterprising culture within secondary schools, encouraging students to set up innovative businesses with their classmates, as part of a nation-wide competition.

The aim of the programme is to equip students with the opportunity to set up and run a business and to enter that business into an Awards programme. The experience offers a valuable exercise in teamwork and problem solving as well as an opportunity to network and present themselves and their businesses in a public forum.

Students can enter the Student Enterprise Programme individually or in groups but must register through a teacher and as part of a school within the Dublin City catchment area.

The Student Enterprise Programme also offers The Enterprise Encounter Programme for Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme students. This programme gives students a chance to experience entrepreneurship on a very personal level through meetings with successful business people.

## Enterprise Awards:

Dublin City Local Enterprise Office holds the Dublin City Enterprise Award competition annually as part of the Local Enterprise Offices National Enterprise Award. Applications are invited from LEO clients and the winner is selected based on the strengths of the application in the following areas: **1. Business Plan, 2. Marketing, 3. Finance, 4. Entrepreneurial skills of the promoter and 5. Technical Innovations.** The Dublin City Enterprise Award Winner is awarded a prize by the Lord Mayor and goes on to represent LEO Dublin City at the National Enterprise awards held later in the year. In previous years the LEO Dublin City winner has acted as a strong ambassador for the work of the office and has been profiled through press release, participation in events and in panel discussions or through other promotional opportunities.



## Ireland Best Young Entrepreneur: IBYE

LEO Dublin City encourage entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35 that have a business idea or existing business, enter Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) for their chance to win a share of the county investment fund as well as an opportunity to represent the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Dublin City at the Regional Finals and possibly the National Finals.

With a national investment fund of over €2million, targeted business supports and promotion opportunities, IBYE offers clients the opportunity to develop their business as well as expand their skills. [www.ibye.ie](http://www.ibye.ie)

### CATEGORIES

#### 1. Best Business Idea (Pre Trading)

To enter the Best Business Idea category you must have a new idea or concept for a business that has not yet commenced trading at time of application. This can be an original or unique concept, a new idea for a product/service offering or an innovative approach to delivering an existing product/ service.

#### 2. Best Start-Up Business (Up to 18 months)

A start-up business for the IBYE competition is a business which has started trading (i.e. is generating revenue from sales.) and is less than 18 months in existence. This stage of the business may be focused on research, product/service development, market growth, and has potential to grow. It is important that the promoter(s) have a clear milestone development plan in place.

#### 3. Best Established Business (Over 18 months)

An established business for the IBYE competition must be trading for more than 18 months. An established business must also be able to demonstrate a satisfactory track record of success to date and be in a position to further develop the existing business. This may include a new product/service offering, new market opportunity identified or an innovative approach to changing or adapting the existing business model.

### Showcase:

Showcase at the RDS is the first major trade event of each year, organised by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland. The dedicated Enterprise Zone on the balcony area, co-ordinated by the Local Enterprise Offices, has become known as the home for emerging designers and craftspeople in recent years. A wide range of creative sectors is represented within the Enterprise Zone, such as ceramics, knitwear, jewellery, interiors, skincare and giftware. A number of LEO Dublin City clients will participate in this initiative each year. Owing to COVID-19, the trade show was held online in January 2021. It is hoped that the event can proceed in the RDS in January 2022 and each year thereafter, so that Dublin City craft and artisan producers have an opportunity to market themselves on a global stage.



## **Food Academy:**

Three National initiatives are currently offered through the 31 Local Enterprise Offices and will continue to be provided to encourage and enable food production start-ups:

- Digital School of Food: an online learning resource to assist individuals to learn about how to set up a successful food enterprise.
- Food Starter: A "Start Your Own Business" programme aimed at food sector.
- Food Academy: The Food Academy is an initiative designed collaboratively with Bord Bia, Musgraves/SuperValu and the Network of Local Enterprise Offices. It aims to "Give Small Producers a Big Chance". The Food Academy works with and nurtures small businesses through their journey from start up to getting their products on SuperValu shelves.

### Food Academy Core Objectives

- Develop an in-depth knowledge of the tools which can be used to assess market gaps for your product
- Understand core technical issues facing your food or drink business
- Learn how to grow sales for your product range through better branding and packaging design
- Gain all of the tools and knowledge necessary to launch and build a successful food business in Ireland

LEO Dublin City will continue to support and promote the Food Academy

## **Micro-Finance Ireland:**

Microfinance Ireland provides small loan facilities to businesses that have difficulty raising finance from other sources. LEO Dublin City works very closely with MFI and has a dedicated resource to ensure that start-up and existing businesses have access to this source of funding, regardless of the business sector. In 2020 the numbers of applications for MFI loans processed by LEO Dublin City increased significantly (from an average of 21 in 2014 – 2019, to 50 in 2020). It is envisaged that the volume of applications will return to "normal" levels post COVID-19.

## **Lean For Micro:**

In conjunction with EI, LEO Dublin City will continue to roll out the LEAN programme to enable small businesses with real growth potential to streamline their business processes and give them an opportunity to enhance competitiveness. It is anticipated that the numbers of participants will grow year on year in the period 2021-2024.

## **Trading Online Vouchers:**

In recognition of the increasing importance for local small businesses to exploit online sales opportunities, LEO Dublin City will continue to roll out the Trading Online Voucher scheme, actively promoting the programme to eligible small businesses with a view to maximising online sales among local suppliers. In the period 2017 through 2020, some 1,705 TOVs were approved by LEO Dublin City. Of these, 1094 were approved in 2020.

This phenomenal growth was a direct consequence of COVID-19, whereby the scheme saw huge demand as small businesses focused on online selling. As well as continuing to provide the TOV scheme to Dublin City businesses during the period 2021-2024, LEO Dublin City will focus on identifying previous TOV recipients that have strong potential to accelerate their digital marketing strategy.

## SECTION 4: ASSOCIATED ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### 4.1 Protocols

The following protocols govern dissemination of information, information signposting and inter-organisation referrals. Local Enterprise Office Dublin City will continue to implement these protocols on an on-going basis and review locally as required. The aims of the Protocols are:

- To establish a structured link between the Local Enterprise Offices and Protocol Partners to support the provision of information and guidance measures for enterprise development;
- To provide for an efficient customer service in response to LEO clients' queries;
- To provide for informing and updating staff from both organisations of respective programmes and services;
- To provide for cooperation on awareness and promotion activities;
- To provide for exchanges between the parties on the uptake and operation of the measures and levels of demand for information/guidance by clients of the LEOs;
- To provide for periodic review of the operation of the protocol;
- To Provide for collaboration and efficiencies in the provision of training programmes where appropriate.

#### **Department of Social Protection**

Agreed between the Department of Social Protection and The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). This protocol aims to maximise the recruitment of appropriately skilled persons from the Live Register by enterprise agency client companies.

#### **Credit Review Office**

Agreed between the Credit Review Office and The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). The Credit Review Office provides a simple, effective review process for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, including sole traders and farm enterprises, who have had requests for credit refused or existing credit facilities reduced or withdrawn.

#### **Fáilte Ireland**

Agreed between Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. Fáilte Ireland. is the National Tourism Development Authority, whose role is to support the tourism industry and work to sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination. Fáilte Ireland also works with other state agencies and representative bodies, at local and national levels, to implement and champion positive and practical strategies that will benefit Irish tourism and the Irish economy.

#### **Microfinance Ireland**

Agreed between Microfinance Ireland and The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). Microfinance Ireland, as a not-for-profit lender, has been established to deliver the Government's Microenterprise Loan Fund. All business sectors are eligible to apply. Companies may be Sole Traders, Partnerships and Limited Companies with fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover of less than €2 million. Loans may be used to fund the start-up of a business, the purchase of stock, equipment, machinery, and business vehicles and are also available to established enterprises.

#### **Skillnets**

Agreed between Skillnets and The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). Skillnets actively supports and works with businesses in Ireland to address their current and future skills needs on the basis that training and up-skilling are key elements in keeping Irish companies competitive. Skillnets funds groups of companies in the same region/sector, and with similar training needs, through training networks that deliver subsidised training to Irish businesses.

## **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)**

Agreed between Enterprise Ireland and Education & Training Boards Ireland. The ETBs are statutory authorities which have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. ETBs manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges, multi-faith community national schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes. Further education and apprenticeship training is also provided through 16 training centres nationally. ETBs are active in local communities through the direct provision of training and education programmes delivered in training centres, colleges and other training and educational settings.

## **Revenue**

Agreed between The Revenue Commissioners and The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). The role of the Revenue Commissioners is "to serve the community by fairly and efficiently collecting taxes and duties and implementing customs controls". Specifically, in relation to business, Revenue provides information and support under three headings:

- A comprehensive range of information and guidance on taxation issues, customs and Revenue requirements relating to starting and running a business, including the Revenue Online Service
- Tax Simplification Initiatives for Smaller Businesses
- Supporting Job Creation and other Enterprise Supports.

## **National Association of Community Enterprise Centres (NACEC)**

Agreed between Enterprise Ireland and The National Association of Community Enterprise Centres. The National Association of Community Enterprise Centres is a strong representative body of 120 community enterprise centres in the Republic of Ireland. Its primary role is to support and develop the interests of community enterprise centres on a national basis.



## 4.2 Other Initiatives

### **Breakthrough Innovation Programme:**

During 2020 LEO Dublin City collaborated with the other three LEOs in the Dublin region and Dublin Business Innovation Centre (DBIC), to provide the "Breakthrough Innovation Programme" to small businesses that are seeking to adopt strong innovative practices and processes in their business. This programme, funded by the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, will continue to be provided to suitable businesses employing 3 to 50 staff in the period 2021-2024.

### **Dublin Food Chain:**

Dublin Food Chain is a collaborative initiative of the four Local Enterprise Offices in the Dublin region, supported by Bord Bia. It offers a network of food producers, wholesalers, foodservice operators and food retailers, and is part of an ongoing effort to harness the power of the 'collective'.

### **Dublin Tech Summit:**

The Dublin Tech Summit (DTS) is an international technology conference held in Dublin annually. The first summit took place on 15 and 16 February 2017, at the Convention Centre. In light of Covid-19 restrictions the, DTS has gone virtual. The 2021 event will see some 5000 attendees from 60 countries come together to share their experience and expertise. The Economic Development Unit and LEO in Dublin City will continue to support and participate at the Dublin Tech Summit.

### **ENFUSE:**

ENFUSE is collaborative project between third level institutions and the Economic Development Unit/ LEO Dublin City. ENFUSE matches enterprises and social enterprises in Dublin with teams of Masters - University Students. During semester 2 (January-May) as part of a module, students work in teams of 4-6 with selected enterprises. The students help provide insights, propose solutions and ultimately present a bespoke and tangible plan that sets out how challenges and opportunities could be addressed by the enterprise.

The student teams present the plan directly to the enterprise and also submit it to their module lecturer for academic assessment. Shortlisted student teams then go on to compete as finalists at the ENFUSE pitch competition. The teams represent their university and compete by pitching in front of industry / expert judges on how their assigned enterprise could address challenges and realise opportunities.

ENFUSE aims to:

- Support micro / small-medium enterprises by providing bespoke plans to address challenges and develop opportunities.
- Provide participating masters students with real-world consultancy and enterprise experience.
- Develop enterprise ecosystem links and synergies between stakeholders and enterprises.



**Inspiring & Fusing - Enterprises & Students**

## SECTION 5: RISKS AND NEW INITIATIVES

### IDENTIFIED RISKS:

Risks that can adversely affect the achievement of the objectives outlined	Actions to mitigate this risk
Adapting to the pace of technological change and LEOs keeping up to date with new technology	Proactive engagement with LEO unit to adapt new technology to support effective and efficient administration and service delivery.
Premature launch of LEOs new products without adequate procurement	Recommend an oversight group to pilot and trial new products to mitigate risks
Staff turnover and consequent skills loss	Policies that help with staff retention such as training and develop and progression structures in the LEO
Black Swan Events such as Covid-19	These events can and do happen, LEO Dublin have a resilient team that will continue to be able to adapt to significant events

## SECTION 6: DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### Funding

LEO Dublin City is funded annually by Government through Enterprise Ireland from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). LEO Dublin will continue to work with Enterprise Ireland and DETE on its annual funding and resourcing requirements to drive our strategy. LEO Dublin City commits to maximising its budget allocation ensuring value for money in fulfilling its objectives and strategic priorities.

### Training

LEO Dublin City commits to the 2021-2024 Learning and Development plan for LEO staff and managers to ensure we have the necessary business development skillset to support our clients evolving needs to survive and thrive in the ever-changing business environment. A collaborative approach between Enterprise Ireland and the LEO's is taken to design programmes to support us in achieving the strategic priorities across Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness and Digitalisation, Green/Sustainability, Exporting/Internationalisation and Innovation. A best practice approach is adopted to deliver programmes such as the Professional Business Advisor programme, Green for Micro, Finance, Social Media and other business pillar programmes accordingly.

## Customer Service Charter- LEO Dublin City

LEO Dublin City's Customer Service Charter is a commitment to the quality of service delivery to all clients and sets out what LEO Dublin City will do for you, how we propose to do it, and in what time scale. Your LEO is committed to continuously monitoring and improving the quality of service delivery to clients.

(Please see Appendix 3 for full LEO Customer Service Charter).

## Communications

Local Enterprise Office Dublin City communications strategy will be fully aligned with the national 'Making It Happen' marketing and communications strategy for the Local Enterprise Offices, as set out by the LEO Communications Committee and LEO Communications Team in Enterprise Ireland.

This strategy will focus on four key pillars:

- Promoting LEO-led programmes, supports and initiatives and those open to LEO clients from local authorities, Enterprise Ireland, protocol partners and other stakeholders
- Showcasing LEO and client announcements, regular profiling through case studies and thought leadership
- Rolling-out brand communications campaigns locally, to include 'Pre-Start,' 'Start' and 'Grow' themed campaigns
- Increasing the LEO's digital footprint online and enhancing social media presence and reach

The Local Enterprise Office Communications Strategy will continue to support National Initiatives such as those focused on Exporting, Innovation, Green, Digitalisation and Look for Local'.

## APPENDIX 1: LEO DUBLIN CITY - PERFORMANCE METRICS

Note: Metrics will be reviewed and agreed with the LEO Unit on an annual basis over the next four years.

<b>Progression Pathway:</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
Number of Clients transferred to E.I.	21	20

<b>Measure 1</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
<b>Number of Clients Approved Funding:</b>		
Feasibility: Number:	34	23
Priming: Number:	13	21
Business Expansion: Number:	27	16
TAME: Number	5	20
No. of projected potential new jobs associated with Approvals (Priming & Business Expansion)	130	109

<b>Trading On Line Vouchers:</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
No. of Trading Online Vouchers approved	1094	500

<b>Agile R &amp;D</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
No. of Companies approved Agile R & D	0	2

<b>EI Grant Support Measure administered through the LEO (e.g. Grad Start, IP Start, etc.)</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
No. of Companies supported	0	2

<b>Measure 2</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
<b>Training/Development Programmes (All Training and Networking events)</b>		
Total No. of All Programmes (Training/Networking/Events/Seminars)	130	120
Total No. of all Participants participating in above Programmes	3000	3000
No. of SYOB Programmes	16	13
No. of Participants attending SYOB Programmes	374	221
No. of Management Development Programmes	5	5
No. of Business Coaches assigned to Clients	0	0
<b>Mentoring:</b>		
Total Number of individual mentoring – (participants availing of one to one mentoring – one to one engagement by a Mentor with one client)	712 (ex MFI, BAC)	500
Total Number of group mentoring participants – (are all group mentoring engagements or clinics where a mentor engages with a group of clients.	49 clinics, 849 participants	48 clinics, 500 participants

Total Number of Mentoring Participants (both one to one and group)	1561	1000
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<b>Schools Entrepreneurship:</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
Number of Schools Participating (Secondary schools only engaged in school enterprise programmes)	31	20
Number of Students Participating	1254	800

<b>Competitiveness</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
No. of Companies who have undertaken a Lean for Micro Assessment by a Lean Expert *	20	12
No. of Companies who will undertake Green Start Programme	0	5

<b>Export Enterprise Development Programme</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
No. of clients undertaking Export Enterprise Development Programmes in Enterprise Ireland	0	5

<b>MFI:</b>	<b>Output 2020</b>	<b>Target 2021</b>
Number of Applications submitted	50	40

## APPENDIX 2: KOPPER KREATION; CASE STUDY



### #MakingItHappen together with Kopper Kreation



Emmet Bosonnet of Kopper Kreation in Dublin City

#### IN AN AGE WHEN THE NEED TO BE SUSTAINABLE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE RELEVANT, DUBLINER EMMET BOSONNET HAS SET UP A COMPANY MAKING BEAUTIFUL THINGS OUT OF RECYCLED PRODUCTS.

Set up in 2018 and backed by Local Enterprise Office Dublin City, Kopper Kreation is an industrial design brand that uses reclaimed and recycled material to create homeware products. Born out of an idea Bosonnet had while working as an engineer in the renewables sector, the business epitomises the notion that 'one person's trash is another person's treasure'.

"I create unique and eye-catching homeware products from recycled materials and currently have a range of tableware and lighting products," says the entrepreneur.

"I love to work on bespoke projects and am always interested in ideas which homeowners or companies may have for an interesting project."

#### #MakingItHappen

Located in a rented studio space in The Chocolate Factory in Dublin city centre, Bosonnet says while the current crisis affected his business to a degree, he has managed to build up a growing customer base online.

"The pandemic made people rediscover their locality and encouraged people to shop small and local," he says. "People are now seeking out locally produced items and connecting with designers - and hopefully these new relationships can be nourished and continue to flourish for years to come. Also, the complete shift to online purchasing has been good for me as I built up quite a strong online customer base."

"But Brexit has had a negative effect. I was purchasing a lot of intricate electronic components for making my lamps from the UK along with a lot of packaging materials and this has had to stop due to the increased costs and delayed deliveries. So now I am focusing my efforts on finding these products in Ireland."

With a positive mindset, Bosonnet hopes to expand his business and take on some staff soon.

"Sales have been strong and encouraging throughout and I am excited about reopening," he says.

**"I WANT TO EXPAND MY SHOP, BRING IN SOME NEW DESIGNERS AND PUSH KOPPER KREATION INTERNATIONALLY. I MISS CONNECTING FACE-TO-FACE WITH PEOPLE AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING BACK TO MARKETS AND TRADE FAIRS. AND I WOULD ALSO LOVE TO BE IN A POSITION TO EMPLOY A COUPLE OF PEOPLE."**

"The Local Enterprise Office and also the Design and Crafts Council Ireland have been hugely instrumental in helping me to set up and grow my business," he says. "I recently received a Business Priming Grant and have learned the importance of networking and connecting."

*To find out more about Local Enterprise Office supports for your business, please visit [LocalEnterprise.ie/MakingItHappen](http://LocalEnterprise.ie/MakingItHappen)*



In partnership with



## MOXI LOVES: CASE STUDY

Pamela Laird, Founder, Moxi Loves

## Start: Moxi Loves

### Making It Happen: Irish beauty brand prepares for customs, thanks to LEO Dublin City

Despite suffering a setback which would have been fatal to most businesses, Dublin entrepreneur and BBC's *The Apprentice* contestant Pamela Laird has successfully pivoted, launched new products and has plans to re-enter the UK market in the coming months. Her company, Moxi Loves, is an innovative beauty business which currently sells its products through Penneys and over 900 pharmacies and retail outlets in Ireland.

"We have just launched in Primark and Dunnes, and we are also selling into Germany through the QVC shopping channel, and into Spain through an online retailer," says Pamela.

The company's quite unusual name is a reflection of both of its owner and the target market she has in mind for her products. "In America, if you've got determination and drive you've got moxie," she explains. "It's quite a feminine word over there. It can apply to a woman who knows what she wants and isn't afraid

to bend the rules. I took the 'e' off to make it a unique word for the business."

She established the company in 2016 and got going in earnest the following year. "I really started off in 2017 when I got a stocking loan," she says. "I had been working on my first product called Eye Catcher for about a year. It was a liquid-filled cotton bud which allowed you to cleanse and touch up make-up on the go, wherever you are."

The product proved a hit straightaway and was soon selling in retailers across Ireland as well as Primark and Boots in the UK. But trouble was around the corner.

"When the new EU rules on single-use plastics were announced, it meant we had to phase out the product," says Pamela. "The rules won't come in until 2020, but I decided to move early. I used it as an opportunity to pivot the range."



**Local Enterprise Office**  
*Making It Happen*

# STARTUP STORIES: GYM + COFFEE

**OFF TO A FLYING START: HOW LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE DUBLIN CITY HELPED IRISH ATHLEISURE BRAND GYM + COFFEE GET FIT FOR SUCCESS**

**WHEN FRIENDS DIARMUID MCSWEENEY, NIALL HORGAN AND KARL SWAINE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR GYM + COFFEE, AN ATHLEISURE CLOTHING COMPANY, IT WASN'T THEIR FIRST ATTEMPT.**

"We were always bouncing ideas off each other, not just for businesses but for scripts, screenplays, books, plays. We always had some sort of itch," says McSweeney.

McSweeney and Horgan are from Cork, and studied at UCC together. They met Swaine when they moved to Dublin.

McSweeney worked in advertising and had lived in Australia. Horgan worked in IT and had travelled frequently to Silicon Valley. In both places they saw a growing trend among young people not just to exercise but to combine it with

socialising. "It was all about going to the gym and grabbing a coffee afterwards," he says.

That gave them the idea not just for an online business – but its name.

They spent the first year working on the business after work. "That was one of the keys to our early success. If we were hoping to make a living from it from Day One it would have placed too much stress on the business," he says.

Having no experience in either ecommerce or the clothing industry didn't stop them. "There was a great luxury in being naive in that we weren't aware of the pitfalls."

They were highly innovative – and frugal – in how they promoted it. "We started a Summer Stretch series, running outdoor

group exercise classes over the weekend. The response we got was unbelievable. People liked that we were walking the talk. For us it's all about having a healthier weekend, not 'buy our gear'."

By the end of its first year trading they were making six figure revenues but not profitable. "We knew we needed to up our game."

They got in touch with Local Enterprise Office Dublin City. "They were really helpful. They outlined all the supports they could offer us and told us how they could help. We applied for a Business Priming Grant which enabled us to take on our first staff member, which freed us up to expand further."

Dundrum, the shopping centre, invited them to open a pop up shop for two weeks.

## APPENDIX 3: CUSTOMER CHARTER

# *Putting the customer at the centre of our work...*



### OUR MISSION

We aim to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high quality supports for your business ideas.

### SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO):

- Providing a first point of contact for all enterprise related enquiries in the county/city.
- Working with entrepreneurs, promoters, businesses and other relevant stakeholders in the county/city to foster entrepreneurship.
- Delivering enterprise training, management development and mentoring to entrepreneurs and businesses.
- Providing direct funding and funding options to entrepreneurs, promoters and viable businesses to support the growth and development of micro enterprises.
- Working to create and maintain client centred business networks.
- Developing a progression pathway to Enterprise Ireland's High Potential Start Up (HPSU) and Established Industry Departments.
- Where your LEO cannot deal with your enquiry it will provide a referral service to the appropriate agency.

**Your LEO is committed to providing the highest levels of customer service as embodied in our Customer Service Charter and in line with the principles of quality customer service as adopted by all Government Departments and Public Service Bodies.**

### WHAT IS A CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

This Customer Service Charter is a commitment to the quality of our service delivery to you and sets out what your LEO will do for you, how we propose to do it, and in what time scale.

**Your LEO is committed to continuously monitoring and improving the quality of our service delivery to you.**

### HOW CAN YOU HELP US

You can help us by:

- Treating our staff courteously.
- Providing feedback to enable us to improve our service.
- Providing accurate information in your dealings with us.
- Being punctual, prompt and professional.

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR LEO?

We will endeavour to ensure that our staff:

- Have the relevant knowledge and experience, responsibility and authority, to deal with your enquiries or refer you to someone who can.
- Deliver our services in a friendly and inclusive manner.
- Treat you with courtesy and professionalism.
- Give you clear, accurate and helpful information.
- Deal with your requests, enquiries and concerns promptly.
- Treat all customers equally and without discrimination.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Continually explore new and better ways of delivering our service.

**Where your LEO cannot deal with your enquiry it will provide a referral service to the appropriate agency.**

**The Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation and Enterprise Ireland have agreed protocols with the relevant agencies to ensure an efficient customer service in response to LEO clients' enquiries.**

### ACCESSIBILITY

- Your LEO will provide a meeting room where appropriate in order to conduct business in a confidential manner.
- Your LEO will ensure that all of our offices, facilities and resources are fully accessible in line with the Disability Act 2005. Any queries in relation to accessibility should be directed to the Head of LEO.

### EQUALITY

In our dealings with customers we will ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation are upheld. The LEO does not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, family status, race, religious belief, sexual orientation and membership of the traveller community.

### PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All information, both personal and business, provided by you, will be dealt with in total confidence and in a manner that respects your dignity.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Your LEO will deal with your enquiry promptly and in a helpful, courteous and responsive manner.

- We will identify ourselves by name on answering the phone.
- Where a client seeks to meet a LEO staff member as far as is practicable this will be facilitated within 5 working days.
- All written communications from clients will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- All emails received will be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt.
- All telephone enquiries will be responded to within 2 working days. A mailbox recording facility will be in operation at all times.
- Written communications from the LEO will contain the name and contact details of the staff member dealing with your query/issue.

**Your LEO is committed to providing quality client services. To ensure that our clients are satisfied with our service delivery standard we commit to undertaking regular reviews and to publish indicators of customer service, in particular, application processing times, referral of cases to other agencies and response times.**

**We will also publish an Annual Client Survey.**  
These indicators will help us to understand how we are doing, to find out what our clients think of our service delivery and to identify if there are things that we need to improve.

### HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Our staff are dedicated to providing a professional service and getting things right first time. Despite our best endeavours we recognise that things may not always meet customer expectations. We have a standard procedure in place to ensure that we investigate your complaint fully and fairly.

- Some complaints can be dealt with immediately. Where this is not possible we will acknowledge your complaint in writing or by telephone to confirm that we have understood your concerns correctly.
- We will investigate your complaint and respond within 5 working days of receipt. We will also inform you of any actions and endeavour to try satisfying your complaint.
- If you are not satisfied with this response you may raise your concerns at a more senior level by writing formally to the Head of the Local Enterprise Office.

## SECTION 7: LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE DUBLIN CITY 2025 OBJECTIVES

The framework service level agreement between Enterprise Ireland & Dublin City Council 2026 - 2028 sets out that the period Jan - Dec 2025 will be covered with a one year extension to the existing LEDP 2021 -2024. (Reference: Section 3. Service Delivery 3.1.1. Measuring the impact of LEO's).

2025	Month	Project	Purpose
QUATER 1	Jan	Showcase 2025	Craft businesses exposure to trade buyers/Export.
	Feb	St Brigid's Day Women in Business Event	Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship.
		Student Enterprise Awards	Fostering Entrepreneurship among Students in Dublin City.
QUATER 2	Mar	Local Enterprise Week 2025 (+30 events)	Promotion of LEO supports to support companies to Start, Scale & Grow.
		International Women's Day Event (Dublin Region)	Celebrating Female Entrepreneurship and creating peer to peer networking opportunities.
		National Enterprise Awards (Dublin City Finalist)	Open competition and winner to represent Dublin City at the National Awards.
QUATER 3	Apr	Business Training Programme for Creative Sector	Build business knowledge and competence.
	May	Dublin Tech Summit	Promotion of LEO Supports to Tech Entrepreneurs.
		National Enterprise Awards Finals	Competition and selection of national winners from the 31 LEO's nationwide celebrating the best companies in each category.
QUATER 4	Jun	Bloom	Trial a cohort of Creatives at Bloom 2025.
	Sept	Diversity in Tech Awards	Promotion of LEO supports to Tech Sector.
		National Ploughing Championships	Craft / Food Sectors exposure to target consumers.
	Oct	National Women's Enterprise Day (Dublin Region)	Dublin City wide event celebrating women in business creating greater peer to peer networking opportunities.
	Nov	Dublin Docklands business Forum sustainability Awards	Promotion of LEO Sustainability supports & Energy Efficiency Grant.
		Employment Survey	Job creation metrics.
	Dec	Women in Business Network Awards Night 2025	Awards for the winner of entrepreneur of the year & rising star categories.

## SECTION 8: 2025 CORE ACTIVITIES - ONGOING

**2025**

Activities	Metric	Purpose
Financial Supports	70 grants	Grants - Feasibility & staffing supports.
GRAD Start	2	Graduate talent for scaling.
IP Start	2	IP Advisory.
Technical Assistance Micro Enterprises	0	New markets, preparing to export: Product ended 2024 administration of final contract completed 2025.
Trading online vouchers	0	Digitalization improvements for SME's: Product closed for new applications Dec 2024 by Closing date 268 received and processed in 2025.
Market Explorer Grant	5	New export markets research, preparing to export to new markets.
RD&I	2	Competitiveness & innovation driver.
Over 10's	N/A	SME's & HPSU's.
Transfers to EI	8	Progression pathways.
Jobs	175	Job creation - creating prosperous vibrant economies & community. Results captured in the Annual Employment Survey.
Evaluation Committee Meetings (EVAC)	N/A	Independent oversight of grant allocation 8 EVAC meetings in 2025.
Craft Programmes/ Training	N/A	Craft sector stimulus. Training programme in conjunction with Visual Arts Ireland.
Tech Programmes	N/A	Tech sector stimulus.
Food Programmes: Dublin Food Chain, Digital School of Food, Food Starter, Food Academy	N/A	Food sector stimulus and support for startup food/drink businesses.
Workshops and Clinics	N/A	Informational workshops and clinics with Guinness Enterprise Centre and Spade.
Portfolio Management	N/A	Management of +350 to 400 LEO supported client companies to maximise their potential.

## First Stop Shop: Management of quality first interaction with LEO. Relevant signposting to the most relevant service by stage of business development.



<b>Calls</b>	Management & quality process of on average 14,000 first interactions of entrepreneurs planning, starting, sustaining & growing businesses in Dublin City.
<b>Emails</b>	
<b>Drop in appointments</b>	
<b>National Enterprise Hub</b>	Building a mutually beneficial relation & working in partnership to ease the clients journey between relevant state organisations.

## Grants - pipeline development for M1. Processing enquiries related to grant funding to receipt of completed application.



Activities	Metric	Purpose
M1 Pipeline (Business Request support forms)		Average of 300 grant applications received per annum. Initial assessment for measure 1 grant eligibility.
Microfinance Ireland	21	Promotion & assistance to clients to complete MFI applications. Suited to clients not eligible for M1 supports.

## Mentoring: Project Management - Plan, implement, measure & promote.



Activities	Metric	Purpose
Business Advice Clinic	575 hours	Assisting SME's with strategic and operational challenges & opportunities within their business, guided by an experienced mentor.
One to one & Mentoring		

## Training - Project Management: Plan, implement, measure & promote.



Activities	Metric (Participants)	Purpose
Training (combined target)	1750	Providing relevant, timely training courses, in a variety of formats & durations, to benefit entrepreneurs at each stage of their businesses development.
General	1400	
Start Your Own Business	175	
Start Up Bootcamp		
Management Development Participants	175	
Libraries		

## Networks - Project Management: Plan, implement, measure & promote.

Networks	Stage	Purpose
Next Steps Network (alumni of the LEO SYOB) Start your Own Business Programme	Early	Creating & managing relevant supportive networks for entrepreneurs to benefit from support, networking & collaborative opportunities.
LEOConnect (Network) in Pilot	Mid	
Women in Business Network	Female early to mid	

## Ecosystem and Stakeholder Engagement

Eco System	Purpose
Hubs	Engagement with relevant stakeholders to create a productive environment in which entrepreneurs / SME's can flourish - research, education, training, enterprise space.
Universities	
Live-Google Maps Project	



## Consultancy - Project Management: Plan, implement, measure & promote.

Activities	Metric	Purpose
Green for Business	30	Enhancing SME's resilience, competitiveness, efficiency, adaptability, sustainability, digitalization and export readiness.
Energy Efficiency Grant	30	
Lean for Business	25	
Digital For Business	25	
Grow Digital	10	
Export	5	



## Communication - Integrated Marketing Communications strategy plan, implement, measure for internal & external communications.

Activities	Purpose
Social Media Account Management	
Newsletter Development & Distribution	Promotion of LEO supports & services to mass market & target relevant sector holder groups. Ongoing Market education. Internal & external communications.
Report Writing	
DETE/EI/Parliamentary question response	
Case study development	
Website Maintainence	
Media Relations	
Survey development & distribution	
Event Management	
National Campaign support activity	



Enablers	Activities
Tendering	
Good Governance	Audits as requested.
Financial Management	Projections, cashflow management, grant draw down, refundable aid - Ongoing.
HR Management	Sufficient staffing, induction, training, ongoing upskilling, support & supervision - Ongoing.



# Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil

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# Local Enterprise Office

*Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Local Enterprise Office Dublin City*

