

# Impact Report 2024

*Measuring the impact of  
Local Enterprise Office  
supports in 2024*

**#MakingItHappen**



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

In partnership with



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann  
Local Government Ireland





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The **Local Enterprise Office (LEO)** is the first stop shop for anyone thinking about starting or growing a business.

There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities across the country. Each is there to provide new and existing businesses with the expert advice, tailored training and financial supports they need to help them thrive.

Established in 2014, the network of Local Enterprise Offices operates in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, Local Authorities, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.





# Welcome

## The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are Ireland's frontline support system for small businesses and start-ups.

As the first port of call for thousands of entrepreneurs across the country, we work with ambition, agility, and a clear purpose — to help people turn good ideas into great businesses.

With 31 offices rooted in every local authority, and connected through a powerful national network, LEOs are uniquely positioned to deliver impactful, tailored supports that reflect local needs while unlocking national and global opportunities. We are with businesses every step of the way — from that first idea to launch, growth, scaling, and international success.

The LEO network is a flagship example of effective government partnership in action — where the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Enterprise Ireland, and Local Authorities work seamlessly together to deliver real, measurable outcomes for Ireland's SMEs. This collaboration ensures that the support provided by LEOs is strategic, joined-up, and responsive to the evolving needs of businesses across every region.

In 2024, more than ever, our mission has been focused on delivering measurable results, driving innovation, and empowering businesses to adapt, grow and lead. As we publish this year's LEO Impact Report, we reflect not only on the numbers, but on the real-world change those numbers represent — jobs created, businesses started, new products launched, and communities strengthened.

Impact matters. That's why we place such a strong emphasis on measurement, outcomes, and value-added support. From job creation and export growth to digital transformation and climate action, every programme we deliver is designed with a clear purpose: to help small businesses thrive, and to contribute meaningfully to the wider economic and social fabric of Ireland.

Through the LEOs' ever-expanding offer — from Start Your Own Business training and mentoring, to financial supports and our specialised initiatives in Lean, Green,

Digital and Exporting — our clients have access to a comprehensive, integrated pathway of support. We meet businesses where they are, and help them go where they want to be.

We are also proud to lead a number of flagship national programmes that showcase Ireland's entrepreneurial talent and celebrate enterprise across the country. From Local Enterprise Week to National Women's Enterprise Day, from the Student Enterprise Programme to the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships, these events give businesses the visibility, inspiration and confidence to grow and succeed.

The strength of the Local Enterprise Offices lies in our ability to turn local knowledge into national impact. This report shows how thousands of small actions across Ireland are adding up to big results. Impact isn't just about data — it's about lives changed, communities energised, and ambitions realised.

We are proud of what we've achieved in 2024 — but even more determined for what's next. The future of Irish enterprise is one of sustainability, digital readiness, innovation and inclusion — and your Local Enterprise Office will continue to walk that journey with you, with ambition, accountability, and purpose.

Let's keep building something great — locally, nationally, together.



**Kieran Comerford,**  
Chair of the Local Enterprise Offices



## At a glance: highlights from 2024



**7,104**

**new jobs** were  
created in 2024



**81%**

of new jobs created  
were outside the  
Dublin region



**7%**

**job increase**  
from 2023

Net  
employment  
gain of

**2,459**

in 2024



**81%**

of new jobs created  
were outside the  
Dublin region



**11th year**  
of consecutive jobs  
**growth for  
the Local  
Enterprise  
Offices**

Local Enterprise  
Offices now support

**39,541 jobs**

in **7,176 companies**





# Providing solutions tailored to small business

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

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

**Financial assistance and access to Microfinance loans**

**Training and development**

**Mentoring and advice**

**Lean, green and digital consultancy and grants**

**Signposting to relevant bodies and agencies**

**Networking opportunities**

*Find out more at*

 [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)  
 [/local-enterprise-offices](https://www.linkedin.com/company/local-enterprise-offices)  
 [@local\\_enterprise\\_offices](https://www.instagram.com/local_enterprise_offices)  
 [@Loc\\_Enterprise](https://twitter.com/Local_Enterprise)  
 [@LocalEnterpriseOffices](https://www.facebook.com/LocalEnterpriseOffices)



## Signposting supports for Ireland's entrepreneurial ecosystem

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



## Celebrating Ireland's entrepreneurs

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

Local Enterprise Week

National Women's Enterprise Day

Local Enterprise Village @ National Ploughing Championships

Student Enterprise Programme

National Enterprise Awards

Local Enterprise Showcase @ Showcase



# Making an impact on employment

**7,104** new jobs

were created by LEO grant supported clients, however, there was a loss of **4,645** jobs resulting in a net gain of **2,459** jobs, a seven per cent increase on 2023.

**39,541**

people were employed

by **7,176** small businesses and start-ups that had received financial assistance from the Local Enterprise Offices by the end of 2024.

## More than money

The job numbers above refer only to jobs recorded by those businesses that received LEO financial assistance. Thousands more jobs are created by businesses which have received non-financial LEO supports, such as **expert advice**, one-to-one **mentoring** or targeted **training**.

Local Enterprise Office	2024 No. of LEO Clients	2024 All Jobs (FT + PT)	2024 Gross Total Job Gains	2024 Net Job Gains/ Losses
Carlow	219	1,106	314	102
Cavan	179	1,417	145	26
Clare	228	1,364	227	82
Cork City	177	763	143	-24
Cork North & West	283	1,381	286	70
Cork South	158	932	190	73
Donegal	272	1,713	243	129
Dublin City	433	2,005	494	129
Dublin Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	275	1,352	183	49
Dublin Fingal	282	1,264	309	197
Dublin South	276	1,288	274	95
Galway County/City	258	1,356	218	111
Kerry	238	1,104	156	-81
Kildare	277	1,438	323	163
Kilkenny	190	1,081	174	70
Laois	145	800	141	29
Leitrim	141	485	114	34
Limerick	313	2,183	403	178
Longford	258	1,379	201	38
Louth	217	963	136	25
Mayo	201	1,315	185	120
Meath	259	1,455	253	74
Monaghan	170	1,006	162	9
Offaly	198	1,188	250	55
Roscommon	164	1,038	153	91
Sligo	189	1,021	145	73
Tipperary	262	1,526	355	149
Waterford	259	1,269	203	54
Westmeath	272	1,737	288	178
Wexford	225	1,945	329	163
Wicklow	158	667	107	-2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,176</b>	<b>39,541</b>	<b>7,104</b>	<b>2,459</b>

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



# Supporting our clients

## Direct Financial Assistance

Local Enterprise Offices can provide different types of grant assistance to eligible businesses to help fund start-up costs, expansion plans, entry into new markets, and job growth.

In **2024** Local Enterprise Offices approved

**€20,235,547**

in grant aid to manufacturing and internationally traded sector businesses for **1,206** applications/projects (**1,067** clients) broken down into the following types of grants:

**€5,012,040**

**Priming Grants**

**167** approved applications (**166** clients)

**€10,460,754**

**Business Expansion Grants**

**323** approved applications (**322** clients)

**€2,366,614**

**Feasibility Study Grants**

**210** approved applications (**209** clients)

**€868,686**

**Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant**

**440** approved applications (**412** clients)

**€163,609/ €452,147**

**Research, Development & Innovation**

**2** Agile applications/clients approved in 2024

**6** R&D Fund applications/clients approved in 2024

**€833,000**

**Grad Start**

**27** applications/clients approved

**€58,860**

**IP Start**

**27** approved applications (**24** clients)

**€19,836.00**

**Green Start**

**4** applications/clients approved

Total number of applications in 2024: **1,206**

Total amount of grant-aid approved in 2024: **€20,235,547**



# Providing the right support at the right time

## Training

Local Enterprise Offices provide a wide range of high-quality training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. In 2024, LEOs trained **52,258** participants across different programmes. These included:



### Management Development Programme

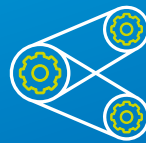
LEO's Management Development Programme is an in-depth training course for mid to senior managers coupled with a mentor to help the participants grow and maximise their business



### Mentoring

This programme matches the knowledge, skills, insights, and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners - the mentor - with small business owners and managers who need practical and strategic one-to-one advice and guidance for their business.

In 2024, LEOs mentored **16,207 participants**.



### Lean for Business

Lean for Business helps LEO clients to adopt 'lean' business principles to increase performance and competitiveness. Businesses also avail of consultancy services from a qualified practitioner, who works with the business to introduce lean principles, undertake a specific cost reduction project, and assist the business in benchmarking performance.

In 2024, LEOs supported **550** clients through this programme.



### InterAgency Transfers

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

In 2024, Local Enterprise Offices supported **152** clients to transfer into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio.



# Promoting entrepreneurship

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

## Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase



Showcase, an initiative of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, which is promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland, is Ireland's international creative expo and takes place each January in the RDS. To support the Irish craft and design sector, Local Enterprise Offices supported more than 100 companies to exhibit within the 'Local Enterprise Showcase' in January 2024, to connect with national and international trade buyers. They also introduced the Business of Craft Awards to celebrate the businesses behind these exceptional craft and design companies.

## National Enterprise Awards



The National Enterprise Awards are held each year to celebrate the best of small businesses in Ireland, with 31 businesses, one from each Local Enterprise Office, shortlisted for the awards.

The 2024 awards ceremony were held in the Mansion House, Dublin in May, and saw businesses awarded across the categories of best start-up, best export business, an innovation award, a one-to-watch award, a sustainability award and overall National Enterprise of the Year.

With finalists elected by their Local Enterprise Office as the most exceptional company in their local area, they represent a diverse range of businesses from all across the country. The winners were Cytidel (LEO Mayo) for Innovation, Eskimo Software (LEO Carlow) for Exporting, The Black Stuff (LEO DLR) for Start-Up, Living Green (LEO Donegal) for Sustainability, Drink Botanicals (LEO Dublin City) for One to Watch and the overall winner was DreamDev Technologies (LEO Kildare).

## Local Enterprise Week

LEOs collectively organised hundreds of enterprise events to mark Local Enterprise Week in March 2024. This high-profile annual event showcases the full range of enterprise supports LEOs offer existing and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as providing networking opportunities to small businesses within their regions.



## National Women's Enterprise Day



Ireland's largest female enterprise event promotes, encourages and stimulates female entrepreneurship across Ireland. It is designed and led by women and is an annual high point in promoting entrepreneurship to women in Ireland. It took place in October 2024 with Local Enterprise Offices, along with Enterprise Ireland, showcasing a wide range of supports, incentives, and training and development programmes to female entrepreneurs.



# Building for the future

Local Enterprise  
Offices support youth  
entrepreneurship  
to nurture the next  
generation of business  
owners and leaders.



## Student Enterprise Programme

**30,453 students**

Students from **497** secondary schools took part in the 2023/2024 Student Enterprise Programme, which began in September 2023. The programme encourages students to research, set-up and run their own businesses with the help of student enterprise co-ordinators from the Local Enterprise Offices.



# Partnering for success

Collaboration is key to enterprise success and Local Enterprise Offices worked closely with many stakeholders to roll out supports in 2024, including:



## Microfinance Ireland

Microfinance Ireland (MFI) is a not-for-profit lender established to deliver the Government's Microenterprise Loan Fund. It provides loans of between €2,000 and €50,000 to commercially viable businesses that employ fewer than 10 people, with an annual turnover of less than €2 million. Local Enterprise Offices assist client companies with their MFI loan applications, which attract a discount on standard loan rates.

In 2024, LEOs assisted client companies with **435** applications for loans. Of these, **242** applications were successful in securing loan approval, supporting the creation of **480** jobs.



## Customs Training

Local Enterprise Offices ran **13** 'Prepare Your Business for Customs' online workshops throughout 2024.

These one-day interactive workshops, run regionally by Local Enterprise Offices, provided businesses with a better understanding of the potential impacts, formalities and procedures to be adopted when trading with a country which is outside the Single Market and Custom Unions (a "Third Country"). Open to all businesses, these workshops covered areas such as export and import procedures, tariffs and the correct classification of goods.

**155**  
*participants attended  
customs training in 2024.*



# Supporting growth

Local Enterprise Offices have a comprehensive suite of supports designed to help businesses at various stages in their development.



## Trading Online Voucher Scheme

The Trading Online Voucher was a €2,500 financial incentive designed to help small businesses and micro-businesses develop or enhance their ability to trade online. The Trading Online Voucher scheme closed for applications on Friday 13th December 2024.

*In 2024,  
**2,397**  
applications were  
approved by Local  
Enterprise Offices  
under the Trading  
Online Voucher scheme*



## Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters (TAME) provide an incentive for LEO clients to explore and develop new market opportunities. These grants, with a maximum value of €2,500, were used to part-fund expenditure to investigate and research export markets. For example: costs incurred exhibiting at trade fairs, preparing marketing materials, and developing websites specifically targeting export markets. The purpose of these grants was to increase the number of LEO clients developing new export opportunities.

From the 1st January 2025, The Market Explorer Grant replaced the Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters.



**412**  
*LEO clients were  
approved for TAME  
grant assistance in  
2024.*



# Green and digital supports



## Grow Digital Voucher

Launched in late 2024 the aim of the Grow Digital Voucher is to help small businesses with between 1 and 50 paid employees to improve efficiency, expand reach, and compete effectively through the purchase and implementation of new digital software.

It is a grant covering 50 per cent of eligible costs, subject to a minimum grant of €500 up to a maximum grant of €5,000. It can be used for new software subscriptions for a period of 12 months, such as for e-commerce, CRM, accounting or cyber security, as well as training and configuration of the software.

**6** clients were approved in **2024**.

## Energy Efficiency Grants:

The Energy Efficiency Grant supports SMEs (1-50 employees) in implementing sustainability projects, following a Green for Business, Green Start, or SEAI Energy Audit. It aims to support businesses to reduce environmental impact and operational costs, fostering innovation and competitiveness. Eligible projects include energy-efficient equipment upgrades, smart controls, and waste reduction systems, with a 75 per cent grant covering costs between €750 and €10,000.

**289** clients were approved in **2024**.





## Green and digital supports



**1,016**  
*clients were  
approved in  
2024.*



### Green for Business

The objective of Green for Business is to help small businesses prepare for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. It supports clients to engage a consultant to avail of advice and technical support, covering topics such as resource efficiency, understanding your carbon footprint, developing a sustainability plan or implementing an environmental management system. Eligible applicants must be trading for at least six months, tax compliant, and not be clients of Enterprise Ireland or IDA.



**293**  
*clients were  
approved in 2024.*

### Digital for Business

The Digital for Business initiative provides SMEs with access to expert digital consultancy. A qualified consultant will analyse existing digital systems, identify improvement opportunities, and develop a practical digital action plan.

This support aims to enhance online presence and operational efficiency, enabling businesses to expand their reach and remain competitive in the digital marketplace. Eligible applicants must be trading for at least six months, tax compliant, and not be clients of Enterprise Ireland or the IDA.



# The Business of Food

To strengthen Ireland's position as a 'food island' Local Enterprise Offices offer particular supports. These include:

## Food Academy

To support the development of Ireland's artisan food industry, the Local Enterprise Offices and SuperValu collaborated to create the 'Food Academy'.

This programme provides small food business with a solid foundation to progress to the shelves of retailers. All participants are given the opportunity to pitch their product to a panel of SuperValu representatives including the local SuperValu owner.

It is aimed at those businesses in the early to mid-stages of developing a food or drink business who have already developed a product, trialled it in the marketplace and are looking to scale up and grow their business by progressing to the shelves of retailers.

In 2024,  
**27**  
businesses  
successfully completed  
the Food Academy  
programme.



## Food Starter Programme

The Food Starter Programme runs as a precursor to the Food Academy Programme. LEOs ran these programmes on a regional basis to accommodate client interests.

**10** Food Starter Programmes were completed over the course of 2024.



## Digital School of Food

Digital School of Food is a free to use learning hub that has been designed to support food manufacturing businesses from start-up to growth phase.

The Digital School of Food material is broken into six themes, each containing two or three courses. These include initial planning, route to market, finance, sales, growing your business and additional support from experts in the food sector.



# Starting strong

The LEO Start Your Own Business course has helped people all over the country to take their first step on the road to business ownership.

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

It includes modules on business planning, sales and marketing, employment legislation, business finance and taxation.

It is designed to equip participants with the tools they need to assess and understand their target market, their own capabilities and their chances of success.

Start Your Own Business courses are often a person's first introduction to their Local Enterprise Office. As they progress, Local Enterprise Offices offer a sign-posting service to additional supports, and to other state agencies which can help them, such as Enterprise Ireland and Microfinance Ireland.

LEO Start Your Own Business programmes are aimed at those:



with a business idea they want to develop, or



who are looking at self-employment as a realistic career option, or



who have recently started a business



## 5,132

people took part in  
360 LEO-run Start Your Own Business programmes in 2024.



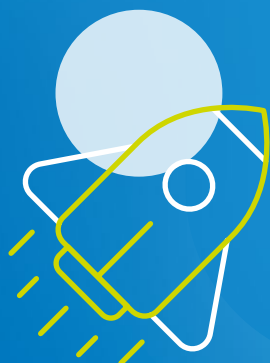
# Helping businesses in 2024



*from idea...*

**€2,366,614**

*approved for Feasibility  
Study Grants*



*to start-up...*

**€5,012,040**

*approved for  
Priming Grants*





to growth...

**€10,460,754**

approved for Business  
Expansion Grants

**€20,235,547**

total approved in LEO  
grant aid in 2024





## FUNDING SUPPORT – PRIMING GRANT

### How a LEO Business Priming Grant helped serve up growth for TrustDish

TrustDish is a digital allergy management solution for both food service businesses and allergen sufferers alike.

It was co-founded by Shannen O'Reilly and her father Sean, both of whom have extensive experience in food retail. The driver behind it was the experience of Shannen's sister Rachel, who has a severe peanut allergy, and the difficulties she regularly faced when eating out of home.



***“Being able to hire people was so important because I just couldn’t do it all myself”***

At one stage, a miscommunication with a restaurant server led to Rachel being hospitalised. It was a life-threatening event that prompted Shannen to research the management of food allergies in the restaurant sector as part of a master's degree in food business and innovation in 2022.

She discovered that there are 500,000 people in Ireland with either a food allergy or an intolerance, and that many avoid eating out as a result.

She set up TrustDish to remedy that, developing an app that allows all diners to eat out with confidence.

To date hundreds of people have downloaded it to their phone and use it to quickly assess the menus of participating restaurants, using a traffic light system to show what dishes they can and can't eat. As well as restaurants and canteens, it is increasingly being used at deli counters by convenience and forecourt retailers too.

An express version of TrustDish is now also available, a tablet device in a console that sits in-store and allows customers to quickly assess what's best for them to eat at the hot and cold deli counters, without even having to download the app.

Having identified the problem and developed a solution, Shannen turned to her Local Enterprise Office, Cork North & West, for help commercialising it. Thanks to LEO Priming Grants, she was able to cover the salary costs of taking on her first two employees.

“Being able to hire people in sales was so important because I just couldn't do it all myself. To be able to get people out there, on the ground, onboarding retail and hospitality clients, and installing the tablets, basically transformed our business,” says Shannen.

“I was also able to use one of the Priming Grants to pay myself, which is really important because a lot of founders actually forget that you need to keep going too.”

As a result, the number of convenience stores, hotels and restaurants signing up to TrustDish is growing fast. Exports are the next step.

“Ireland's Local Enterprise Offices don't get nearly enough recognition for how much they actually help small businesses. Even now that TrustDish has grown to become an Enterprise Ireland client, they still keep in touch. They're just really, really good.”



## FUNDING SUPPORT – DIGITAL FOR BUSINESS



### How LEO Digital for Business helped Grain & Groove find its groove

Grain & Groove is one of Leinster's best known flooring companies. The family business is run by Suzie and Fergal Flavin in Navan and provides an extensive range of quality tiles and timber.

They set up the business in 2015, with Fergal, a flooring expert with decades of installation experience, looking after the hands-on operations of the business and Suzie managing its online presence, website, marketing and finance.

Early engagement with their Local Enterprise Office, Meath, helped to provide the couple with valuable mentor support as the business grew. Today it employs eight people full time.

In 2024 the company signed up for Digital For Business, a LEO initiative designed to help small businesses enhance their digital capabilities. It provides support including free consultations with digital advisors, to help businesses streamline operations and leverage digital tools for growth.

***“LEOs want to understand your business and stay with you the whole way”***

The programme aims to help businesses reduce administration time, improve project management and ultimately increase sales and marketing effectiveness.

A Digital for Business consultant helped the Flavins identify the right customer relationship management package for their business.

“Basically it's project management software that we have broken down in such a way that once anyone gets a quote or is doing a job, we can capture all the details,” says Fergal.

“If we do a quote for someone and don't hear anything back for example, the system automatically gets back in touch with them. When a job is booked it helps us know exactly when to order materials in, and when someone is going out on a job it sends them the Eircode so they know exactly where they are going as well as all the job details.

***“LEOs are 100 per cent looking to help you”***

It not only makes everything run much more efficiently, but it ensures a much more professional looking service for clients too, he points out. “When I go to someone's house now to measure up, I simply press send and all that information goes into the office so the team can start working on the quotation straight away,” he explains.

Fergal recommends all small business owners get in touch with their Local Enterprise Office to see what supports they can provide, particularly those, like him, who started out as tradespeople.

“I'm a firm believer that a good tradesperson doesn't necessarily make a good business person, so any help you can get is invaluable,” he explains. “The LEOs are 100 per cent looking to help you, they want to understand your business and they stay with you the whole way.”



## FUNDING SUPPORT – LEAN FOR BUSINESS



### How LEO lean business supports helped Profix Maintenance Services

Profix Maintenance Services was set up by Stephen Hartnett in 2007. The Cork based company provides maintenance services to commercial clients predominantly in the health and education sectors.

“We’re a problem solver for facilities management,” says Stephen, whose clients have the company on speed dial whenever they need anything done, moved or repaired in their buildings.

The company’s tag line, “Problem Solved”, says it all.

But in order to provide the kind of efficient response its clients have come to expect, the company must first have efficient systems in place.

It’s why Stephen has been on a journey of continuous improvement since he started the business.

With support from his Local Enterprise Office, Cork City, he has worked with lean business consultants to optimise his business processes.

Over time this eliminated the paper-based systems, replacing them with digital systems that can be accessed and updated by staff via mobile phone.

***“I can take a holiday now and things run smoothly without me”***

The introduction of a digital note taking app allows staff to collect job details, generate work instructions and even send annotated photographs.

It has speeded up scheduling, boosted productivity and reduced the margin for error. Having data at his fingertips also provides better job efficiency analysis, he says.

Using a web-based communications app has replaced phone calls and emails for staff, while a web-based quote tracking system has improved process efficiency.

Migrating from Excel and paper to a web-based system means staff can complete site surveys on their mobile phone. “The workflow is all handled online. It’s faster, easier to use and provides more professional reports for our clients,” says Stephen.

Staff no longer spend time filling out time sheets, which was often done the night before. Not alone does this make for a nicer work environment but it means the risk of billable hours being missed through human error is reduced.

Profix went on to win a Lean Micro Business of the Year award in recognition of how it had improved its business operations and service delivery.

Efficient systems and processes have supported growth too. Staff has increased from four people just a few years ago to 16 today. “Now that we have introduced a lean business culture, staff come to me with solutions for ways we can do things better too,” he points out.

Introducing lean business systems has improved the work life balance within the company, including for Stephen. “I can take a holiday now, and things run smoothly without me,” he says.

Help from LEO has been instrumental throughout his lean business development journey.

“When I first started I felt I was struggling alone. What LEO’s lean programmes do is introduce you to likeminded people who are also trying to organise their business in a way that works better.”



## FUNDING SUPPORT – BUSINESS EXPANSION GRANT

### How a LEO Business Expansion Grant helped Nualach Automation expand

Friends and former workmates Kealan O'Connell and Evan Rourke set up Nualach Automation in 2021, having spotted a gap in the market for the expert servicing of automated manufacturing equipment.

They were aged just 25 when they started the business and their Local Enterprise Office, Cavan, helped them to start strong, with Business Priming Grants that supported salary and equipment costs.

***“LEO has been a gamechanger for us”***

The business grew quickly, helped by a growing roster of Irish and international clients in the food, beverage and industrial sectors.



In 2024 their Local Enterprise Office supported them with a Business Expansion Grant, which helped to turbo charge growth.

“The Business Expansion Grant was great. It enabled us to make two key hires - a designer and a new technician - as well as support our move into a new premises,” says Evan.

“We’re still based in Virginia but have moved into a former car garage on the Dublin Road which, at 5,500 sq ft, is many times bigger than the shed we started out in.”

Today the business employs 13 people in a beautifully fitted out office suite with meeting rooms, as well as a workshop, and ample space to grow.

The launch of the new premises was the perfect opportunity to host an event for new and existing clients, an invaluable marketing exercise which quickly paid dividends in the form of work.

“We saw a great benefit from having done it, way better than going to any trade show, because it allowed our key customers to come and see how serious we are about what we do,” he says.

The Business Expansion Grant helped cover some of the event costs, as well as public relations and marketing work to support it. “It also covered our first six months’ rent,” he adds.

With growth firmly on their horizon the company has since made another key hire, a business development manager based in the UK who knows both that market, and their sector, extremely well.

“We were introduced to the person we hired by one of our LEO mentors. He’s really getting us in shape in terms of developing our own products and preparing for export,” says Evan.

As part of that the duo also participated in LEO Lean business programme, putting in place the systems and processes that will allow them to scale up with ease.

“I’d recommend all start-ups and small businesses get in touch with their Local Enterprise Office. It’s a no-brainer,” says Evan. “The LEO Lean for Business programme has been a gamechanger for us.”

***“The Business Expansion Grant was great. It enabled us to make key hires as well as support a move into new premises”***



In 2024 the Local Enterprise Offices also celebrated 10 years since their inception. Over that time they have helped thousands of businesses to start and grow. Here are some of the highlights:



LEOs have directly helped clients create over

**72,000 jobs**

in towns, villages and communities across the country



**€136 million**

in grant aid to LEO clients to help them start and grow



Over **10,000**  
**applications**

for funding processed and approved





Over **400,000**  
**business**

owners have availed or  
training from the Local  
Enterprise Offices since 2014



**42,000**  
**people**

took part in Start Your Own Business  
programmes, looking to make their  
business dream a reality



**108,000**

mentoring interventions by LEOs  
with clients helped those clients  
get the right advice at the right  
time to help them to grow



**1,096**

Local Enterprise  
Office clients grew  
and moved on to  
Enterprise Ireland,  
bringing their  
businesses global



Over **400,000**

secondary school students  
have had their minds opened to  
the world of entrepreneurship  
through the Student Enterprise  
Programme



## CARLOW

Local Enterprise Office Carlow,  
Enterprise House, O'Brien Road,  
Co. Carlow  
☎ 059 912 9783/5  
💻 [www.localenterprise.ie/carlow](http://www.localenterprise.ie/carlow)  
✉ @carlowleo  
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## CAVAN

Local Enterprise Office Cavan,  
Cavan Innovation  
& Technology Centre,  
Dublin Road, Co. Cavan.  
☎ 049 437 7200  
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## CLARE

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Co. Clare.  
☎ 065 682 1616  
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## CORK CITY

Local Enterprise Office Cork City,  
Room 101, City Hall Building,  
Anglesea Street, Cork.  
☎ 021 496 1828  
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## SOUTH CORK

Local Enterprise Office South Cork,  
Business Growth Hub,  
Cork County Council,  
County Hall, Cork.  
☎ 021 428 5200  
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## CORK NORTH & WEST

Local Enterprise Office  
North & West Cork  
8, Kent Street, Clonakilty,  
Co. Cork.  
☎ 023 883 4700 (Clonakilty office)  
  
**Cork North:** Ground Floor,  
Blackwater House  
Mallow Business Park, Mallow,  
Co.Cork.  
☎ 022 432 35 (Mallow office)  
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The Enterprise Fund Business Centre,  
Ballyrairie, Letterkenny, Co.Donegal.  
☎ 074 916 0735  
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## DUBLIN CITY

Local Enterprise Office Dublin City,  
Civic Offices, Block 4, Floor 1,  
Wood Quay, Dublin 8.  
☎ 01 222 5611/2  
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## SOUTH DUBLIN

Local Enterprise Office South Dublin,  
County Hall, Tallaght,  
Dublin 24.  
☎ 01 414 9000  
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## DUBLIN DLR

Local Enterprise Office Dún  
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Aras Cill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas,  
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## KILKENNY

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny,  
42 Parliament Street,  
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## LAOIS

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Portlaoise Enterprise Centre,  
Clonminam Business Park, Portlaoise,  
Co. Laois  
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## LEITRIM

Local Enterprise Office Leitrim,  
Aras an Chontae, Carrick on  
Shannon,  
Co. Leitrim.

☎ 071 965 0420

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## LIMERICK

Local Enterprise Office Limerick,  
7/8 Patrick Street,  
Limerick City.

☎ 061 557 499

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Local Enterprise Office Longford,  
Aras an Chontae, Great Water Street,  
Co. Longford.

☎ 043 334 3346

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✉ @LongfordLEO

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## LOUTH

Local Enterprise Office Louth,  
Town Hall, Crowe St., Dundalk,  
Co. Louth.

☎ 1890 202 303

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## MAYO

Local Enterprise Office Mayo,  
Cedar House - 2nd Floor, Moneen,  
Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

☎ 094 906 4299

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## MEATH

Local Enterprise Office Meath,  
Navan Enterprise Centre,  
Trim Road, Navan, Co. Meath.

☎ 046 909 7000

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## MONAGHAN

Local Enterprise Office Monaghan,  
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Co. Monaghan.

☎ 047 718 18

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## OFFALY

Local Enterprise Office Offaly,  
Offaly County Council, Aras an  
Chontae, Charleville Road,  
Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

☎ 057 935 7480

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## ROSCOMMON

Local Enterprise Office Roscommon  
Roscommon County Council  
Aras an Chontae,  
Co. Roscommon.

☎ 0906 626 263

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## SLIGO

Local Enterprise Office Sligo,  
City Hall, Quay St,  
Co. Sligo.

☎ 071 911 4417/4408

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## TIPPERARY

Local Enterprise Office Tipperary,  
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Co. Tipperary.

☎ 0761 065 000

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## WATERFORD

Local Enterprise Office Waterford,  
32 The Mall, Waterford City,  
Waterford.

☎ 0761 102 905

### Dungarvan Office:

Civic Offices,  
Dungarvan,  
Co. Waterford.

☎ 0761 102 905

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Mount Street,  
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Co. Westmeath.

☎ 044 933 8945

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Carricklawn,  
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## WICKLOW

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Wicklow Local Campus,  
Clermont House,  
Rathnew,  
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## Local Enterprise Office

*#MakingItHappen*

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-  [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)
-  [/local-enterprise-offices](https://www.linkedin.com/company/local-enterprise-offices)
-  [@ local\\_enterprise\\_offices](https://www.instagram.com/local_enterprise_offices)
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