

PLATO EBR: A Network of Networks

The power of the PLATO approach also extends beyond the local programme. There are active PLATO Programmes elsewhere in Ireland with PLATO Dublin and Cork highly active for many years. PLATO Programmes are also delivered in the UK, and many countries throughout Europe (Belgium HQ) and as far away as New Zealand.

The collaboration between the local project leaders in the different regions and countries opens enormous perspectives for the SMEs. The local project leaders know their own network very well and can act as perfect intermediaries between other PLATO regions. Plato therefore can be a practical way to Europe and beyond for SMEs.

Is there a financial cost for participating in the programme?

PLATO EBR is non-profit-making; however participants will be expected to pay a small membership fee which will contribute to the ERDF Matched funding requirement.

Interested in Joining? What to expect ...

Facilitated monthly group meetings where SMEs can network and share ideas with other owner managers and Parent companies to achieve sales growth

Engagement with Parent companies

Guest Speaker events

Mentoring sessions and opportunity to attend training events

Opportunity to attend regional network trade events

Potential to access to new markets and networking opportunities with other PLATO groups across the Eastern and Border Region and the PLATO Ireland network and the European PLATO network



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To Find Out More...

To find out more about the programme, please contact us to register your interest or visit www.platoebr.com to download a copy of the application form.



PLATO EBR Programme

The PLATO EBR Programme aims to strategically assist any growth-seeking micro, small to medium sized enterprise located within the Eastern and Border Region area of the Republic of Ireland. With the assistance of larger parent companies who have been through the growth trajectory, smaller companies can join a safe learning environment to share their problems and gain sound advice at critical decision points in their personal or business lifecycle. Through the PLATO EBR network, small growth-oriented companies can achieve emotional and financial stability and sustainability.

WWW.PLATOEBR.COM

The PLATO EBR Programme is a partnership between the four Local Enterprise Offices of Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan with their respective County Councils. This project was part-financed by the European Union's INTERREG IVA Cross-border Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

Is PLATO EBR for you...can you answer YES to any of the following?



About PLATO EBR

The PLATO EBR Programme is a business development programme providing opportunities for networking and management development to SME's (includes micro-scale enterprises and sole traders).

The programme offers owner managers a business support forum where they can network and discuss business ideas with established large 'parent' companies in the region. These 'parent' companies are leaders in their industry sectors, and support the programme by sharing their skills and experience within the network.

The programme also provides participant companies with an opportunity to work through a 12-18 month dedicated improvement plan for their business with the support of key leaders in local industry, growth-aspirational entrepreneurs in micro and small-scale enterprises and mentors.

Participants: Who is this programme suitable for?

SME Companies who:

- Require help in facing the challenges associated with business development
- Wish to share with other owner/managers how to tackle mutual SME issues

- Wish to develop their management skills and expertise
- Are willing to participate in an active way
- Are willing to pay a small membership fee

PLATO EBR will provide SME owner managers with:

- Facilitated group learning
- Specialist expertise and advice
- Networking opportunities
- Business development training
- Unique partnership with large Parent companies
- Access to new markets

PLATO EBR research shows that 91% of owner/managers would recommend PLATO to others highlighting it was value for money; 76% suggested the network had improved their business performance, with over 81% feeling better equipped to implement practices to enable growth. (Source: Sustaining Collaborative Networks March 2015)

Eligibility:

- Businesses in all areas of commercial activity
- Companies with senior management support who can demonstrate a clear commitment to the programme

Company Testimonials

I have been working on my own for the last 12 years...being part of PLATO EBR feels like being part of a team.

PLATO EBR has given us the confidence to form a new company, invest €800K and drive a strong marketing campaign.

I actually did a lot of business through the Network through contacts I made – capitalising on the opportunities that were provided to us.

Parent Companies

PLATO EBR enjoys a unique partnership with large local companies that offer PLATO participants access to the full range of management expertise. Each participating parent company will nominate a company representative to serve as a PLATO Facilitator at the monthly meetings and offer expert advice to the PLATO group. Parent companies benefit from the following;

- New linkages to local supply sources for products and services.
- Help to improve the public image and profile of his/ her company in the local business community and in the community generally.
- Contribute in a direct and tangible way to the growth of indigenous industry and increased employment.
- Unique insight and experience into the challenge facing manager/owners of business and how to respond to them.

Parent Company Perspective

"I have been involved in leading a PLATO Group with 18 companies in South Monaghan...I found we had a lot to offer each other, the group. I find as entrepreneurs we spend a lot of time in the business but not necessarily on the business and the PLATO network allows owner-managers time to themselves to take a step back from the business and think about the bigger picture."

Martin McVicar CEO, Combilift

"There was a lot of information sharing amongst the Group members and this knowledge was leveraged back at base in their own company. We reviewed progress on an ongoing basis where members were encouraged to take action secure in the knowledge they would be held accountable at the next meeting...acting as a sounding board. Although companies were from diverse industry sectors there tended to be common issues to everyone which proved to be a rich learning network environment."

Joe Hughes, Development Manager, Glen Dimplex Ireland