Impact Report 2019
Measuring the impact of Local Enterprise Office supports in 2019
Welcome

Our Local Enterprise Offices play a really important role in fostering enterprise across the country.

Year on year they have shown just how important they are, not only in helping entrepreneurs start new businesses, but also in guiding existing small companies through challenging times, providing them with the right advice, training and funding to ensure they endure and grow.

2019 had its challenges, with the ongoing threat of Brexit and the impact it would have on our economy and society. Our Local Enterprise Offices were to the fore in communicating with and helping companies prepare for any eventualities and, indeed, despite these challenges, saw a net increase of 3,149 jobs created.

Local Enterprise Offices will continue to be at the heart of our small business communities and are a vital part of the Government’s strategy for jobs and economic growth now and into the future. I want to express my particular appreciation to all LEO staff for their professionalism and commitment. Your valuable work makes a real difference for our business community.

The LEOs are an outstanding resource for any small business.

In 2018, the Local Enterprise Offices continued to offer valuable advice, leadership and support to small business owners and operators throughout the country.

The 31 offices operate at the very centre of the business community in their locality and they bring an expertise that can help companies grow strongly, locally, along with experience that can ensure companies who have the ability and ambition, are able to scale nationally and internationally. The LEOs are an outstanding resource for any small business, whether you have a need for funding, a desire to upskill or simply require some sector specific guidance, the Local Enterprise Office is there for you.

The success of the LEOs is grounded in the skills and expertise of those who work within their offices, experience that has been honed by dealing with small businesses for many years. We will continue to fully support the work of the LEOs in 2020 and beyond as they help aspiring entrepreneurs and early stage start-ups reach their full potential.

Local Enterprise Offices played a crucial role in helping businesses respond to Brexit challenges.

Throughout 2018, the Local Enterprise Offices were helping small businesses embrace the digital economy and explore opportunities for trade in overseas markets in record numbers.

They did this primarily through the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which is funded under the National Digital Strategy, and the Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant. Local Enterprise Offices also played a crucial role in helping businesses respond to Brexit challenges and likely customs changes, ahead of the UK leaving the EU.

In 2020, it’s clear that Local Enterprise Office supports – such as the ‘Prepare Your Business for Customs’ workshops – will become even more important to small businesses as the UK plans to exit the Single Market and Customs Union.

And of course, following the OECD Roadmap for SMEs and Entrepreneurship Policy in Ireland, we will continue to support the LEO network as they help more companies embrace the digital economy, adopt digital technologies and win export sales through internationalisation.
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 just that, on a daily basis, to new and existing small businesses all over Ireland, including:

- financial assistance and access to microfinance loans
- training and development
- mentoring and advice
- signposting to relevant bodies and agencies
- networking opportunities

At the heart of Ireland’s entrepreneurial ecosystem

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

- Local authorities
- Enterprise Ireland
- Education and Training Boards
- Microfinance Ireland
- Fáilte Ireland
- Enterprise Europe Network
- Leader
- The Revenue Commissioners
- InterTradeIreland
- Bord Bia
- Skillnet Ireland
- Credit Review Office
- National Association of Community Enterprise Centres
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Dept of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
- Dept of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland

Celebrating and supporting enterprise

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

- Local Enterprise Week
- Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE)
- National Women’s Enterprise Day
- National Enterprise Awards
- Local Enterprise Village (Ploughing)
- Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase
- Food Academy and Food Starter
- Student Enterprise Programme

Find out more at:

@LocalEnterprise
@Loc_Enterprise
@LocalEnterpriseOffices
company/local-enterprise-offices/
@LocalEnterpriseOffice

“it wasn’t just the financial support, it was the opening of doors and the making of connections that the LEO provided, which helped us.”

Sharon Cunningham, Co-founder of Shorla Pharma and Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur of 2019

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Shorla Pharma on page 17.
In business, you have to keep innovating or you go backwards. The Local Enterprise Offices get that.

Brendan McGrath, founder of Merris Engineering.

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Merris Engineering on page 20.

Making an impact with the right support at the right time

Local Enterprise Offices provide a range of grant assistance to eligible businesses. Known as Measure 1 Supports, these are designed to help fund start-up costs, expansion plans, entry into new markets and jobs growth.

€20,077,189 was approved in grant aid by Local Enterprise Offices for 1,341 applications in 2019 (see breakdown of grant types in the table below)

Training and Development
Local Enterprise Offices provide high-quality training and development designed to meet specific business requirements. 37,306 people were trained by LEOs in 2019 across 2,411 different programmes and initiatives.

Start Your Own Business
LED Start Your Own Business programmes help prospective entrepreneurs to assess their business idea and its viability, to help them decide whether or not to proceed. 4,351 aspiring entrepreneurs took part in 296 LEO-run Start Your Own Business programmes.

Mentoring
LED Mentoring matches small business owners with experienced business practitioners to provide practical and strategic one-to-one guidance. 10,756 mentoring assignments were managed by LEOs.

Lean for Micro
The Lean for Micro programme helps small businesses become more competitive and productive by adopting ‘lean’ business principles. A Lean expert works with the small business to undertake a specific cost reduction project and assists the company in benchmarking its performance. 278 companies were supported through the Lean for Micro programme.

Pathway to Enterprise Ireland
LEOs work with small companies looking to export or trade internationally, helping them to grow to a point where they can avail of Enterprise Ireland supports. 162 LEO clients were supported to transfer into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio to avail of further services.

Measure 1 Supports Grant Aid Approved in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure 1 Supports</th>
<th>Grant Aid Approved in 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priming Grants</td>
<td>€8,028,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Expansion Grants</td>
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<td>Feasibility Study Grants</td>
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<td>Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant</td>
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<td>Research, Development &amp; Innovation (12 applications approved in 2019)</td>
<td>€927,102</td>
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Total number of applications approved in 2019: 1,341

Total amount of grant-aid approved in 2019: €20,077,189

Helping to grow employment
7,408 new jobs (gross) and 3,149 jobs (net) were created by LEO-backed client companies, with jobs growth in every LED region, according to the LEO 2019 Annual Employment Survey.

38,535 people were employed by the 7,400 small businesses and start-ups that had received financial assistance from the Local Enterprise Offices by the end of 2019.

More than money!
These job numbers refer only to jobs recorded by those businesses that received LED financial assistance. Thousands more jobs are created by businesses which have received non-financial LED supports, such as expert advice, one-to-one mentoring or targeted training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Enterprise Office</th>
<th>2019 Number of LED Clients</th>
<th>2019 Client All Jobs Total (FT &amp; PT)*</th>
<th>2019 Gross All Job Gains (FT &amp; PT)*</th>
<th>2019 Net All Job Gains (FT &amp; PT)*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
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<td>7400</td>
<td>38,535</td>
<td>7,408</td>
<td>3,149</td>
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</table>

“More than money!”
These job numbers refer only to jobs recorded by those businesses that received LED financial assistance. Thousands more jobs are created by businesses which have received non-financial LED supports, such as expert advice, one-to-one mentoring or targeted training.

“FT stands for full-time and PT stands for part-time. The Annual Employment Survey was compiled by the Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland and was published in March 2020.”

“Making an impact with the right support at the right time.”

Brendan McGrath, founder of Merris Engineering.

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Merris Engineering on page 20.
Making an impact on entrepreneurship

Local Enterprise Offices promote entrepreneurship across all stages, sectors and regions. One way they do this is by working together in national committees to co-ordinate a series of flagship programmes and events.

Local Enterprise Week
370 enterprise initiatives were collectively organised by LEOs to mark Local Enterprise Week in March 2019, which saw over 12,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners take part. This high profile annual initiative showcases the full range of enterprise supports LEOs can offer existing and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as providing networking and training opportunities to small businesses locally.

National Women’s Enterprise Day
17 LEO-run regional events took place on National Women’s Enterprise Day 2019 (October 17th), designed to promote female-led businesses under the theme of ‘Making It Happen’. 1,681 attendees took part in events which featured advice and insights from some of Ireland’s most successful female entrepreneurs.

Local Enterprise Village
31 small businesses were supported by their Local Enterprise Office to exhibit their products and services inside the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships in Ballintrane, Fenagh, Co Carlow.

A record breaking 287,000 visitors attended the Championships in 2019*. *source: National Ploughing Association

Local Enterprise Showcase
80 craft and design businesses were supported to take part in the LEO ‘Local Enterprise Showcase’ in January 2019, as part of Showcase - Ireland’s international creative expo.

An initiative of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, Showcase takes place annually in the RDS and is promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland. It’s an invaluable opportunity for LEO client companies to connect with national and international trade buyers.

National Productivity Challenge
200 Productivity Challenge Vouchers, valued at €2,500 each, were approved in 2019, to the value of €500,000. The National Productivity Challenge was a competitive initiative, designed to help small businesses become more productive, efficient and streamlined.

National Enterprise Awards
31 companies were shortlisted by LEOs for the National Enterprise Awards in 2019, the culmination of a high profile series of country-wide competitions. The final took place in Dublin’s Mansion House where 12 winning companies shared a €40,000 prize fund.

Taking Care of Business: Athlone 2019
25 State bodies and agencies, including the Local Enterprise Offices, took part in Taking Care of Business, an initiative of the Government of Ireland, and run by Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, in October 2019.

“Making an impact in 2019”

Local Enterprise Office

Making an impact in 2019

National Productivity Challenge

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“Making an impact in 2019”

Local Enterprise Office
Making an impact through collaboration

An ability to collaborate with key partners underpins Local Enterprise Office success. In 2019, LEOs worked closely with a range of stakeholders to build out its enterprise supports.

Microfinance Ireland

Microfinance Ireland (MFI) is a not-for-profit lender established to deliver the Government’s Microenterprise Loan Fund. It provides loans of between €2,000 and €25,000 to commercially viable businesses that employ fewer than 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. 327 LEO client companies were assisted to apply for Microfinance Ireland loans. Of these, 159 were successful in securing loan approval, supporting the creation of 327 jobs.

www.microfinanceireland.ie

Making an impact by preparing for BREXIT

Brexit Seminars

Local Enterprise Offices organised Brexit information events in 2019 for both existing and potential clients. These sessions enabled small businesses, start-ups and micro-enterprises to learn about the potential impacts and opportunities posed by the UK’s imminent departure from the EU. They encouraged businesses to engage in a process of strategic planning to ensure their companies had a robust Brexit strategy in place. Thousands availed of the LEO SME Scorecard, an online readiness-check, and participated in the Enterprise Ireland Brexit Roadshow, a series of regional events. 2,986 participants attended Brexit Information events in 2019.

Customs Training

As businesses readied themselves for Brexit, getting to grips with its implications on customs procedures, tariffs and taxation as well as the possibility of regulatory divergence became increasingly pressing for small businesses in 2019. The Local Enterprise Offices created the ‘Prepare Your Business for Customs’ training workshops, which were open to every business across every sector. 1,585 participants attended customs training in 2019.

Trading Online Voucher Scheme

Many businesses revisited their online strategy in 2019, to help diversify into new markets after Brexit. The Trading Online Voucher Scheme is designed to get small firms trading online, opening up markets at home and abroad. The initiative involves training, advice and financial assistance. Designed under the National Digital Strategy to assist small businesses to increase their online trade, the scheme is funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, and delivered by Local Enterprise Offices. In 2019 it was based on 50-50 matched-funding, where the maximum amount payable was either €2,500 or 50% of the eligible cost, whichever was the lesser.

1,218 approvals were secured by LEOs under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme.

www.dccae.gov.ie/tradingonlinevoucher

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters

Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Exporters (TAME) incentivise LEO clients to explore and develop new market opportunities, especially after Brexit. These grants, worth €2,500, are used to part-fund the cost of investigating and researching export markets. It can include expenditure incurred by exhibiting at trade fairs, preparing marketing materials, or localising websites for export markets. In 2019 the purpose of these grants was to increase the number of LEO clients developing new export opportunities, in particular supporting those clients with high levels of exposure to Brexit risks.

506 clients were approved for TAME grant assistance in 2019.

www.dccae.gov.ie/tradingonlinevoucher

“Customs training helped me figure out all eventualities so that, from best case to worst case scenarios, I knew what I needed to plan for. As a result, my business is more robust.”

Pamela Laird of Moxi Loves in Dublin City

Read the full story about how Local Enterprise Offices helped Moxi Loves on page 18.
The €2.5m LEO Competitive Fund was designed to encourage LEO projects that align with the pillars of Ireland’s Future Jobs Strategy and the Regional Enterprise Plans.

It supported LEOs to collaborate within their network, and their enterprise eco-systems, to deliver projects that variably:

- Embrace innovation and technological change
- Improve SME productivity
- Enhance skills and develop and attract talent
- Increase participation in the labour force
- Transition to a low carbon economy

In 2019, it fostered Regional Enterprise Plan-focused projects that promoted increased collaboration, networking and a joined-up approach to national, regional and local micro-enterprise capability building, growth and job creation.

It sought to strengthen microenterprise locally, regionally and nationally in order to create jobs, grow enterprise and support the progression of LEO clients to Enterprise Ireland.

Priority was given to new approaches that built on and strengthened the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the country.

A prerequisite for proposals, which were made online, was the need to demonstrate innovative solutions to supporting and creating employment.

30 applications were received with 16 projects approved.

Successful examples included:

- €230,375 for the Food Coast project to increase the number of added value food producers in Donegal, in conjunction with Letterkenny IT, Udaras na Gaeltachta, Enterprise Ireland, Failte Ireland, Donegal County Council, Bord liscas Mharaigh and Teagasc.
- €191,392 to a training project aimed at established SMEs to enable them conduct an ‘Innovation Audit’, in partnership with Dublin Business Innovation Centre, Guinness Enterprise Centre and Futurescope.
- €250,000 for the Engenuity Engineering Midlands Project, to enhance competitiveness and resilience as well as respond to market opportunities arising out of Brexit. It included Education Training Boards, the Regional Skills Forum, Enterprise Ireland, Athlone IT, the Irish Manufacturing Research Centre, Irish Centre for Robotics and the National Cleanroom Training Centre.

Local Enterprise Offices support youth entrepreneurship through two national programmes, each designed to foster Ireland’s next generation of business owners and leaders.

Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE)

This €2 million investment competition was open to existing and aspiring entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35. It was run by the LEOs and supported by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and Enterprise Ireland.

From 24 national finalists, three category winners were selected across: Best Business Idea; Best Start-up Business and Best-Established Business, with one overall winner.

1,644 applications for IBYE across all three categories. www.ibye.ie

Student Enterprise Programme

Helping to seed the idea of entrepreneurship in secondary schools, the Student Enterprise Programme encourages young people to research, establish and run their own businesses, with the help of student enterprise coordinators from their Local Enterprise Office.

Running over the course of a school year, professional rugby player Josh Van Der Flier – a former participant in the programme while a student in Wesley College in Dublin - was ambassador for the 2018/19 Programme, which culminated in a National Final in Croke Park in May.

25,531 students from 515 secondary schools took part in the 2018/19 Student Enterprise Programme. www.studententerprise.ie
Making an impact on start-ups

The country’s 31 Local Enterprise Offices are the first port of call for Ireland’s aspiring entrepreneurs.

The LEO’s flagship Start Your Own Business course has helped individuals all over the country to take their first steps on the road to business success.

Honed over many years, this highly accessible 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. Undertaking it equips participants with the tools they need to assess and understand their target market, their own capabilities and their chances of success.

SYOB courses are many people’s first introduction to their Local Enterprise Office. As they progress with their venture, LEOs offer an invaluable sign-posting service both to other LEO supports, and to those of other state agencies which can help them.

For many participants the SYOB programme is the first step on a proven path from start up to growth and even internationalisation.

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


Helping businesses in 2019....

from idea
€1,940,761 approved for Feasibility Study Grants
to start-up
€8,028,790 approved for Business Priming Grants
to growth
€8,269,703 approved for Business Expansion Grants
€20m+ approved in grant aid in 2019

Client success stories

Again in 2019, the Local Enterprise Offices went above and beyond for their clients and you can read a selection of these client stories in this section.

2019 saw an increase in supports provided and a record investment of funding in small businesses.

It was not a year without its challenges as Brexit loomed large over the Irish economy but the Local Enterprise Offices worked with companies to provide mentoring, training and workshops to ensure small businesses were as prepared as they could be for any outcome.

As we move forward, the Local Enterprise Offices continue to build trust in towns and cities across the country as the key resource for anyone looking to start or grow a business. In these uncertain times, this continues to be true as we provide that reassuring voice and additional business experience to help small businesses in the good times and the bad.

In 2020, we aim to go even further in our support for small businesses. If there is an entrepreneur out there with a great idea, a start-up looking to grow or a small company needing to overcome new challenges, we will continue to help them make it happen.

In mean-time, take a look at how the Local Enterprise Offices have been helping to ‘make it happen’ for these companies...

Oisín Geoghegan,
Chair of Network of Local Enterprise Offices

16 Pestle & Mortar: why awards and supports can help realise global ambition

17 Shorla Pharma: how start-up supports are a springboard for success

18 Moxi Loves: using Customs Training to get Brexit-ready

19 Purpledecks: taking the Productivity Challenge to boost performance

20 Merris Engineering: how the Agile Innovation Fund helps businesses stay ahead
"LEOs understand the mindset of the entrepreneur"

It can even facilitate entry to overseas markets. "We are in 32 countries now and, when it comes to meetings with distributors, we find that in countries such as China, they love awards, so it's a huge help." Pestle & Mortar's export success has also been assisted by a grant from Local Enterprise Office Kildare. "We used it to send a team of four people abroad, four times to Australia, eight times to China and eight times to Dubai. These on the ground trips enabled us to do our due diligence on distributors. We are now seeing the benefit of all that work starting to land."

"Every bit of exposure we got led to an increase in business, whether direct from consumers or from stockists."

"It's a long way to Tipperary but the Local Enterprise Office had one, which provided, which helped us" or "it was the opening of doors and the making of connections that the LEO provided, which helped us"
“LEO Customs Training helped me figure out all eventualities so that, from best case to worst case scenarios, I knew what I needed to plan for.”

CUSTOMS TRAINING & BREXIT PREPAREDNESS

Beauty brand found the route to export success - through Brexit and beyond

Moxi Loves is a much-loved beauty brand that has succeeded by innovating clever products at an affordable price. For founder, Pamela Laird, 2019 was a big year. Not alone did she star on hit BBC TV show The Apprentice but she got her business ready for Brexit. The brand sells hit products such as facial cleansers and dry shampoo sheets into the UK, as well as to Spain, Germany and the US. Along with being stocked in bricks and mortar stores such as Boots, she sells online through platforms such as Amazon and Ocado.

Starring in a hit TV show helped boost her in market profile in the UK, “it gave me a Business Priming Grant which allowed me to take on my first member of staff and we have grown ever since. We have a great relationship with LED, they have helped me with various projects all along the way.”

In 2019 that included a Productivity Challenge Voucher. At the time the business was exploring new strategic directions, including areas such as connected health.

“Connected health brings certain compliance and regulatory standards. We needed assistance to explore what our core technical direction should be and the expertise it would require. The Productivity Challenge Voucher helped me bring in the right advisors to critically and analytically look at what we were doing. I found it immensely valuable.”

The business also benefited from the Lean for Micro programme. “It looked at absolutely everything we do, from the way we are set up, to how we make decisions, to the workloads we manage, the way we sell, our management structures, decision making processes and business continuity plans. It was about boosting the efficiency of the whole business.”

The Productivity and Lean programmes helped him put in place the systems and processes to support growth. “When you are a start-up founder you tend to do everything and juggle a bit of balls. That’s okay for a while, but at some stage, it has to stop.”

The company also benefited from a Trading Online Voucher. “Everybody thinks that going online is just about building a website or starting ecommerce. But everybody is on the internet now, so you need to target the right people. We’re not a marketing company. We are a software technology company. To build out our digital marketing strategy we needed help.”

All along the way LED Longford has provided just that.

“What I like about the LEOs is that they are available. I can pick up the phone or call in and have a chat, to see if they can help us with some issue we’re having and get a bit of advice. But what I really like is that with the LED you are dealing with someone local, ‘someone who knows who you are and what your business does. That sense of familiarity is really important.”

Find out more about Moxie Loves at: moxiloves.com

PRODUCIVITY CHALLENGE VOUCHER

How a Local Enterprise Office helped Purpledecks get lean and punch above its productivity weight

When Brian Egan moved home to Longford to start his software technology business, Purpledecks, in 2012 one of his first ports of call was his Local Enterprise Office. “I wanted to see how they could help me. I’m a software engineer, a techie, I needed to learn how to run a business,” he said.

Today, Purpledecks helps international enterprise clients with their digital transformation, including Mungrove Group, ResMed and Sage. Since that first visit, LED Longford has supported Purpledecks to continually “punch above our weight”, he says.

“It gave me a Business Priming Grant which allowed me to take on my first member of staff and we have grown ever since. We have a great relationship with LED, they have helped me with various projects all along the way.”

In 2019 that included a Productivity Challenge Voucher. At the time the business was exploring new strategic directions, including areas such as connected health.

“Connected health brings certain compliance and regulatory standards. We needed assistance to explore what our core technical direction should be and the expertise it would require. The Productivity Challenge Voucher helped me bring in the right advisors to critically and analytically look at what we were doing. I found it immensely valuable.”

The business also benefited from the Lean for Micro programme. “It looked at absolutely everything we do, from the way we are set up, to how we make decisions, to the workloads we manage, the way we sell, our management structures, decision making processes and business continuity plans. It was about boosting the efficiency of the whole business.”

The Productivity and Lean programmes helped him put in place the systems and processes to support growth. “When you are a start-up founder you tend to do everything and juggle a bit of balls. That’s okay for a while, but at some stage, it has to stop.”

The company also benefited from a Trading Online Voucher. “Everybody thinks that going online is just about building a website or starting ecommerce. But everybody is on the internet now, so you need to target the right people. We’re not a marketing company. We are a software technology company. To build out our digital marketing strategy we needed help.”

All along the way LED Longford has provided just that.

“What I like about the LEOs is that they are available. I can pick up the phone or call in and have a chat, to see if they can help us with some issue we’re having and get a bit of advice. But what I really like is that with the LED you are dealing with someone local, ‘someone who knows who you are and what your business does. That sense of familiarity is really important.”

Find out more about Purple Decks at: www.purpledecks.com
Client success story

AGILE INNOVATION FUNDING

How a Local Enterprise Office engineered a new direction for Merris Engineering

Brendan McGrath bought a business in the UK and brought it home to Ireland in 2009. Based in Galway, today Merris Engineering provides mixing, shaking and vibrating machines for everything from paint manufacturers to laboratories.

In recent years, the business responded to the entry into the market of low cost competitors from China by developing premium, specialist products. While that created a strong niche business, it didn’t provide an opportunity for exponential growth, and “I’m hungrier than that,” he says.

It was watching the demolition and construction of new houses near his office four years ago that prompted a new departure for the business. He saw how time consuming, costly and wasteful it was to have the buildings demolished and the rubble carted off for landfill.

He got in touch with LEO Galway which advised him to apply for research and development support through Enterprise Ireland’s Agile Innovation Fund, to help him turn his idea into a reality.

“We started with a clean sheet of paper, designed the product, and the Agile Innovation Funding allowed me to build a prototype and get it tested.”

TAME funding supported the cost of bringing the prototype to a trade fair in Munich in 2019, which proved invaluable. “We got a terrific response which validated the market opportunity and complemented our research. We came away with over 80 enquiries and were able to use the suggestions we got at the fair to redesign the product.”

“The people in my Local Enterprise Office are helpful and proactive. When I went to them they understood exactly what I was trying to do and they were as enthusiastic about it as I was. It’s so nice to have that behind you.”

They understood too how innovation was critical for his business. “In business, you have to keep innovating or you go backwards. The LEOs get that.”

Find out more about Merris Engineering at merris-international.com

There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities all over the country. You’ll find contact details for them here, with dedicated teams on hand to help.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARLOW</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Carlow, Enterprise House, Oldtown, Co. Carlow</td>
<td>T: 059 812 9783/5 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/carlow Twitter: @carlowLEO Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeCarlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORK NORTH &amp; WEST</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West Cork West: 8 Kant Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry</td>
<td>T: 026 883 4700 (Tralee office) Cork North: Ground Floor, Blackwater House, Mallow Business Park, Mallow, Co. Cork T: 022 432 35 (Mallow office) W: LocalEnterprise.ie/corknorthwest Twitter: @LEOCorkNW Facebook: Search localenterpriseofficecorknorthwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORK CITY</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Cork City, 31 O’Connell Street, Cork City</td>
<td>T: 061 227 630 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/corkcity Twitter: @LEOCorkCity Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeCorkCity</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLARE</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Clare, Aras an Chuntai, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare</td>
<td>T: 065 682 1616 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/clare Twitter: @LEOCountyClare Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeClare</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUBLIN CITY</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Dublin City, Civic Offices, Block 4, Floor 1, Wood Quay, Dublin 8</td>
<td>T: 01 220 5611/2 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/dublinity Twitter: @LEODublinCity Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeDublinCity</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUN LAOGHAIRE &amp; DUBLIN</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, County Hall, Marine Road, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin</td>
<td>T: 01 204 7083 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/dr Twitter: @LEODLR Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeDunLaoghaire</td>
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<td>DUNGARVAN</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Dungarvan, Ballymorris House, Clonakilty, Co. Cork</td>
<td>T: 023 883 0600 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/dungan Twitter: @LEODungarvan Facebook: Search LEODungarvan</td>
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<td>GALWAY</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Galway, First Floor, County Buildings, Prospect Hill, Galway City T: 091 509 050 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/galway Twitter: @LEOGalway Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeGalway</td>
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<td>KERRY</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Kerry, County Buildings, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry</td>
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<td>KILDARE</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Kildare, Aras Cill Chara, Dooye Park, Naas, Co. Kildare</td>
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<td>KILKENNY</td>
<td>Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny T: 056 775 2662 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/kilkenny Twitter: @LEOKilkenny Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeKilkenny</td>
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<td>Local Enterprise Office Kilmoran, Aras an Chuntai, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim</td>
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<td>Local Enterprise Office Leitrim, Aras an Chuntai, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim</td>
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<td>LIMERICK</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office, The Engine, Upper Cecil St, Limerick T: 061 557 149 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/limerick Twitter: @LEOLimerick Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeLimerick</td>
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<td>LONGFORD</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Longford, Aras an Chuntai, Great Water Street, Co. Longford</td>
<td>T: 049 334 3496 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/longford Twitter: @LEOLongford Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeLongford</td>
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<td>LOUTH</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Louth, Town Hall, Clondalkin, Co. Dublin T: 1800 202 303 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/louth Twitter: @LEOLouth Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeLouth</td>
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<td>MAYO</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Mayo, Cedar House - 2nd Floor, Monasterevin, Co. Meath</td>
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<td>MEATH</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Meath, Ballyboden, Dublin 11, Co. Meath T: 048 899 1760 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/meath Twitter: @LEOMeath Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeMeath</td>
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<td>SLIGO</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Sligo City Hall, Quay Street, Co. Sligo T: 071 911 4417 / 4408 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/sligo Twitter: @LEOSligo Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeSligo</td>
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<td>Local Enterprise Office Tipperary, Nenagh: Civic Offices, Linricker Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary T: 0761 665 000 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/tipperary Twitter: @LEOTipperary Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeTipperary</td>
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<td>WATERFORD</td>
<td>Local Enterprise Office Waterford, Waterford City Office: 52 Truva House, Waterford, Co. Waterford. T: 07611 129 305 W: LocalEnterprise.ie/waterford Twitter: @LEOWaterford Facebook: Search LocalEnterpriseOfficeWaterford</td>
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There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities all over the country. You’ll find contact details for them here, with dedicated teams on hand to help.

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Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

To contact your Local Enterprise Office, please visit LocalEnterprise.ie

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