

IMPACT REPORT LEO DUBLIN CITY 2021-2025



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Measuring the Impact of
Local Enterprise Office Dublin City
2021-2025



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



Enterprise
Ireland

#MakingItHappen

Local Enterprise Office 

Executive Summary

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Dublin City has stepped up in a big way over the last few years, strengthening its role as the first point of contact for businesses looking to set up, grow, or adapt. From 2021 to 2025, its work has been about more than just keeping things ticking over—it's been about giving businesses the practical backing they need to stay competitive, move with the times, and create real, lasting jobs.

Despite a difficult few years, shaped by the fallout of COVID-19, inflation, and Brexit, LEO Dublin City has stayed focused on solutions. It has shifted gears where needed, making sure businesses could keep pace with digital changes, sustainability demands, and shifts in consumer behaviour. The scale of what's been achieved is clear:

- **2,256 people** given the skills to start their own business
- **1,281 businesses** supported in going online
- **€20,307,247** spent supporting businesses in Dublin City

MEETING THE REAL NEEDS OF BUSINESS OWNERS AT EVERY STAGE

In partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and operating under a robust Service Level Agreement (SLA), the LEO carries out critical enterprise functions on behalf of Enterprise Ireland. This SLA ensures alignment with national policies, sets clear operational guidelines, and defines performance metrics for consistent service delivery. In recent years, LEO Dublin City has expanded its focus beyond early-stage entrepreneurs to include businesses with up to 50 employees, recognising that ambition and growth continue well past the startup phase. Through dedicated consultancy supports, there's now a stronger emphasis on improving energy efficiency, cutting costs, and building smarter operations. Financial supports have scaled to match this ambition—grants that were once limited to a single round can now be accessed multiple times, with some even doubling in value. These supports helped client companies create over **752 jobs**.



RICHARD SHAKESPEARE

Chief Executive Officer
Dublin City Council

Retail and hospitality businesses, which were particularly hard-hit by lockdowns and rising costs, now have targeted support through initiatives like the Energy Efficiency Grant. The push towards digital business has also taken a big step forward, with more funding and expertise available to help companies trade online and reach customers in new ways.

Looking ahead, the goal is clear—Dublin needs to remain a city where businesses, no matter their size or sector, can thrive. That means keeping support flexible and responsive, making sure funding meets real needs, and continuing to build a strong enterprise community.

Dublin City Council and LEO Dublin City are committed to making that happen.

Business has changed, and LEO Dublin City has changed with it. The work doesn't stop here. We continue to engage directly, listen and be responsive to business in the city's needs.

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LOOK FOR LOCAL

Foreword

The Local Enterprise Development Plan (LEDP) 2021 to 2025 has been the guiding framework for how the Local Enterprise Office Dublin City has expanded its reach, strengthened its impact, and redefined support for small businesses and ambitious entrepreneurs. From start-up founders taking their first steps to established business owners aiming to scale, our focus has remained on delivering meaningful, practical, and future-focused support. Over the five years, 17,920 individuals participated in our training programmes and 6,567 accessed one-to-one mentoring—substantial outputs that have helped enhance the quality, effectiveness, and accessibility of enterprise and entrepreneurship across Dublin City.

The demand for our core programmes has grown significantly. Business Advice Clinics and Start Your Own Business courses have been oversubscribed, reflecting a strong appetite for entrepreneurship. To meet this need, we expanded boot camps and introduced structured networks like SYOB Alumni and LEO Connect to support businesses at different stages as they grow. Our Women in Business Network grew significantly, particularly through accountability groups that provided ongoing peer support. Recognising the need for stronger international growth supports, we developed the Export Accelerator Programme, equipping businesses with essential skills to expand into new markets. At the same time, the Schools Enterprise Awards have nurtured a pipeline of young entrepreneurs, encouraging students to develop and present business ideas early on. These efforts ensure Dublin's business ecosystem remains vibrant and forward-looking. The highly subscribed and successful Trading Online Voucher scheme finished in December 2024 with revised support for Digital for Business and Grow Digital.

The past few years have also underscored the importance of adaptability. The pandemic accelerated the need for digital transformation, and businesses that embraced online sales and marketing found themselves in a stronger position. To meet this shift, we expanded our Trading Online Voucher scheme, significantly increasing both the number of businesses supported and the level of digital training provided.

Management development has also evolved, introducing longer-term mentoring programmes, giving business owners sustained access to



WARREN CRAY

Head of Enterprise
Dublin City Council

experienced advisors to help them navigate challenges and seize new opportunities.

During this period, LEO Dublin City also began a focused journey to align with national policy priorities around competitiveness by embedding Lean, Green, Digital, and Export supports into our service offering. These strategic pillars have shaped how we guide businesses toward greater efficiency, sustainability, innovation, and international growth. We have laid strong foundations to help local enterprises become more resilient, future-ready, and globally connected.

One of our biggest strategic shifts has been moving beyond a reactive service model. Rather than simply responding to business challenges as they arise, we have taken a more hands-on, structured approach to managing our client portfolio. By proactively engaging with businesses, identifying their needs earlier, and offering support before issues become obstacles, we are ensuring that more enterprises have the right foundations to grow and thrive. This aligns closely with the LEDP 2021-2025, reinforcing our commitment to a sustainable, digitally empowered, and globally competitive business environment.

Dublin's business community is resourceful, innovative, and driven. As we look to the years ahead, LEO Dublin City will continue to evolve, ensuring that the right supports are in place for the entrepreneurs shaping the future of our city's economy.

Looking Back

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021 - 2024



17,920

participants trained



752

net jobs created



87%

increase of Women in
Business Network
members



6,386

students participated
in school enterprise
programmes



130

LEO clients transitioned
to Enterprise Ireland



(TOV Grants)

1,281

companies supported
to get online



2,256

Start Your Own
Business participants



6,567

businesses received
mentoring support



€20,307,247

total expenditure of LEO Dublin
City supporting businesses



79

Lean for Business
applications approved



BUSINESS INFORMATION ADVISORY SERVICES

FIRST STOP SHOP

The Local Enterprise Office Dublin City is the primary point of contact for entrepreneurs and small business owners seeking guidance and support in the Dublin City Council area. A comprehensive, inclusive service; LEO Dublin City provides entrepreneurs with streamlined access to state supports, expert guidance and vital connections to the broad enterprise eco system. No matter what stage of business, our experienced team accurately sign posts to the most relevant support.

Management development programmes enhance the leadership capability within the management team of the business in particular areas such as finance and marketing.

🕒 The **Business Advice Clinic** serves as the first step for aspiring entrepreneurs to explore their business ideas with experienced LEO advisers. 252 clinics were held during this period, supporting 4,187 participants with valuable one-to-one guidance. These weekly sessions help individuals validate their business concepts, assess the viability of self-employment, navigate post-Brexit trading complexities, and gain direction in the early stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

12,000+ phone enquiries received and
37,000+ emails handled

🕒 LEO Dublin City's **Start Your Own Business** course equips aspiring entrepreneurs with essential skills to evaluate and launch their business ventures. This comprehensive programme covers key areas such as business planning, sales and marketing, employment legislation, finance, taxation, and business plan development. A strong focus is also placed on testing the feasibility and market potential of each participant's business concept. Between 2021 and 2025, 2,256 clients availed of this programme, gaining the confidence and knowledge needed to take the next step in their entrepreneurial journey.

LEO Dublin City's **Mentor Programme** offers invaluable one-to-one guidance by connecting small business owners with experienced business practitioners. For 6,567 businesses in 2021 - 2025, these professionals served as dedicated advisors who listened, guided decision-making, identified areas for improvement, and assisted with business planning

LEO Dublin City provides a wide range of **Training** opportunities designed to meet the diverse needs of local businesses. These courses offer practical guidance at all stages of business development. Training programmes are heavily subsidised, and many are free of charge, ensuring accessibility for all. Between 2021 and 2025, 17,920 participants took part in training.

79

small businesses received approval for **Lean** initiatives

6,567

entrepreneurs benefited from **one-on-one mentoring** sessions

The **Lean for Business** programme helps small businesses become more competitive and productive by adopting 'lean' business principles. A dedicated Lean expert works directly with each business to carry out a targeted cost-reduction project and benchmark improvements. On average, participating businesses reported savings of €30,000— equivalent to the cost of an additional salary. Between 2021 and 2025, 79 clients were approved to take part in this impactful programme.

The **Green for Business** Programme stands at the forefront of LEO Dublin City's commitment to sustainable enterprise development. This initiative, launched in 2021, connects business owners with expert green consultants who provide practical guidance on implementing environmentally responsible practices. 127 clients availed of this programme during the 2021 - 2025 period.

The **Digital for Business** Programme, launched in 2022, equips LEO clients with the tools and expertise needed to thrive in today's digital marketplace.

Businesses receive comprehensive digital assessments that identify operational gaps and growth opportunities. 79 clients were approved in the 2022 - 2025 period.

2,256

individuals joined the Start Your Own Business programme

127

businesses secured approval for Green initiatives

SILVER WORKS



"To help us bring The Collective website up to scratch we have also just had 6 hours of LEO mentoring with a web expert, to help us become more of an exporting Ecommerce business... You cannot do everything on your own, and definitely not scale a business on your own."

Madeleine Blaine, Silver Works

17,920

businesses participated in training sessions aimed at enhancing key development and growth skills.



ENTERPRISE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

LEO Dublin City plays a vital role in fostering entrepreneurship across Dublin's diverse business community. Our comprehensive support services go beyond traditional business assistance, focusing on creating an environment where entrepreneurial thinking can flourish and innovative ideas can transform into sustainable enterprises. Through targeted programs, mentoring initiatives, and leadership development opportunities, we actively work to make entrepreneurship accessible and viable.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

-  **Feasibility Grants** are designed to assist with researching market demand for a product or service and examining its sustainability
-  A business start-up and salary support grant, the **Priming Grant**, is available to micro-enterprises within 18 months of start-up
-  The **Business Expansion Grant** is designed to assist the business in its growth phase after the initial 18-month start-up period, serving as a salary support grant.

SUMMARY OF GRANTS APPROVED

Type	No. Approved	Approved Amount
Feasibility Grant	155	€1,511,563
Business Expansion	109	€3,530,153
Priming	55	€1,642,687
Total	319	€6,684,403

These supports not only improved competitiveness but also had a clear economic impact—helping to create **752** new jobs during the period.

THE EVALUATION AND APPROVALS COMMITTEE (EVAC)

The Evaluation and Approvals Committee, the powerhouse behind all the grant approvals, is the volunteer committee that meets to review and approve grant funding. The committee is made up by several highly experienced members, including: a Chair (City Assistant Chief Executive Officer delegated by the City Council CEO); an Enterprise Ireland representative; and five individuals with specific areas of business expertise. The LEO recognises the significant commitment the committee makes to supporting the work of the office and Dublin City's entrepreneurs, providing transparency and oversight on grant allocation and often reading business plans and financial information after their day jobs or over their weekends.



MEMBERS

Anthony Flynn	Deputy Chief Executive Officer Planning, Property and Economic Development and EVAC Chair Dublin City Council
Patrick Lynch	Former Chair of the Dublin City Enterprise Board
Megan Henry	Bank of Ireland - Business Banking
Mark Fielding	Accountant - Retired CEO ISME
Margaret Halligan	Enterprise Ireland
Gerry Breen	Entrepreneur and Former Lord Mayor of Dublin
Alp Türkmen	International Business & Technology Strategist

142

businesses submitted applications for
Microfinance Ireland loans to support
their ventures



ANTHONY FLYNN

Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Planning, Property and Economic
Development and EVAC Chair
Dublin City Council



Through close collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, LEO Dublin City identifies and develops companies ready to scale their operations internationally. This structured pathway ensures that growing businesses receive seamless support as they transition from local to global markets. Our coordinated approach helps ambitious Dublin businesses access the right resources at the right time to achieve their export and growth objectives.

LEO Dublin City regularly supports 385 clients from a variety of sectors, including the Technology and ICT Sector, Creative and Craft Sector, Food Sector, Manufacturing and internationally trading businesses.

TRANSFERS TO ENTERPRISE IRELAND

Year	Clients Transferred
2021	22
2022	17
2023	33
2024	32
2025	26



"LEO Dublin City has really helped us grow the business and expand the team. In 2021, we got the Business Expansion grant for three new hires, allowing us to grow the three parts of the operation in parallel. Without this, we would have introduced bottlenecks."

Donal Byrne, Hatched Analytics

③ The **Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOV)** was designed to get small firms trading online, opening up markets at home and abroad. The initiative involved training, advice, and financial assistance to increase their online trade. 1,281 businesses were supported in going online during the 2021 - 2025 period.

③ The **Grow Digital Voucher** programme, launched in 2024, supports small and medium enterprises in streamlining operations, reaching new customers online, and maintaining competitiveness in the digital marketplace. The initiative provides grant funding towards software, training, and IT configuration. A total of 9 clients were approved in 2025.

③ The **Energy Efficiency Grant** Programme, launched in Q3 of 2023, provides vital financial support to small enterprises committed to improving their environmental performance. This comprehensive funding supports various sustainability improvements across water conservation, energy efficiency, and circular economy initiatives. 11 clients in total were approved during the 2023 - 2025 period.

③ The **Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant (TAME)** part-funded the cost of investigating and researching export markets e.g., exhibiting at trade fairs, preparing marketing material, and developing websites specifically targeting overseas markets. 78 businesses were supported in the 2021 - 2025 period. This grant ties in well with the Export Accelerator Programme, equipping businesses with essential skills to expand into new markets.



"The Local Enterprise Office played a significant role in the growth of my business, particularly through supports like the TAME Grant, the Trading Online Voucher, and mentoring. It has all been amazing for my business."

Laura McCarthy, Drink Botanicals Ireland

1,281

business ventures had their Trading Online Voucher projects approved to boost digital commerce capabilities.

ENTERPRISE PROMOTION & AWARDS

-  The **Dublin City Enterprise Awards** celebrate the achievements and innovation of local businesses within the Dublin City Council area, such as VRAI & Drink Botanicals. Outstanding enterprises compete for recognition and valuable support to further their growth and development each year. The Dublin City winner advances to represent the region at the National Enterprise Awards, joining champions from other Local Enterprise Offices across Ireland

33 applications submitted

-  This annual **Local Enterprise Week** initiative showcases the full range of enterprise supports LEOs can offer existing and aspiring entrepreneurs. A week-long programme of mentoring, advice and networking shines a spotlight on the services and supports available to SMEs and startups, as well as providing a selection of events and workshops, tailored to inspire and inform. The Local Enterprise Week offers a wealth of opportunities to learn, share, inform and contribute to the thriving start-up and enterprise community in Dublin City.

119 events and **5,100+** participants

-  The **National Women's Enterprise Day** initiative is an annual event designed to celebrate women in business in various regions, creating greater networking opportunities. Events in the programme are free of charge and include workshops, panel discussions, facilitated networking to connect more entrepreneurs with advice and insights from some of Ireland's most successful female entrepreneurs. LEO Dublin City also marks International Women's Day each year with tailored events that spotlight women-led enterprises and provide further opportunities for knowledge-sharing and peer support.

273 members in 2025



National Women's
Enterprise Day

Local
Enterprise
Week 2026
Making It Happen

Student
Enterprise
PROGRAMME

National
Enterprise
Awards

"There is something for everyone and those who maybe always had that ambition to start on their own business, or a great idea, this is the week to see how to get started and make it happen"

Greg Swift, Head of Enterprise for Dublin City Council

-  The **Student Enterprise Programme** helps to nurture the idea of entrepreneurship in secondary school and encourages young people to research, establish and run their own businesses, with the help of student enterprise coordinators from the Local Enterprise Office. A number of participants have gone on to establish successful businesses as a result of testing their concept and participating in this programme.

6,386 students in **147** schools



DUBLIN CITY ENTERPRISE AWARDS WINNERS

Year	Company
2021	VRAI
2022	The InkSpot
2023	Lovin' From the Oven
2024	Drink Botanicals Ireland
2025	JANDO



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

LEO Dublin City creates an environment where start-ups and small businesses can establish, grow, and thrive. We do this by providing access to enterprise space, strategic funding opportunities, and a wide range of tailored supports. Our approach ensures local enterprise development is closely aligned with city priorities and national economic policy, building a strong foundation for long-term, sustainable growth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (EDO)

The **Economic Development Office (EDO)** is a collaborative office within Dublin City Council closely aligned with the operation and activities of the Local Enterprise Office Dublin City. EDO has responsibility for the promotion of Economic Development in Dublin City.

This office plays a central role in advancing enterprise and economic growth within Dublin City. Between 2021 and 2022, the EDO operated as part of the **Local Enterprise Office Dublin City**, before transitioning under the **Culture, Recreation and Economic Services (CRES)** department in 2023–2024.

The remit of the EDO is guided by the **Economic Development and Enterprise SPC (2019–2024)**, composed of elected members of Dublin City Council. Its goal is to contribute to and shape a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable economic landscape for Dublin City. In alignment with this, the **Dublin City Corporate Plan 2020–2024** served as the Council's overarching strategic framework, shaping the delivery of services and priorities in line with national and European policy objectives. The work of the EDO is also supported by the **Dublin City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**, established in 2014, and comprised of representatives from Dublin City Council, key state agencies, and social and economic partners.

The LCDC is supported by the Community and Social Development section within the Council and plays a critical role in advancing coordinated local development. The EDO's efforts also complement the **Dublin City Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021–2024**, which aims to foster a vibrant enterprise ecosystem that supports high-value start-ups and the growth of small and micro businesses. Looking ahead, the newly launched LEO Strategy / Policy Statement 2024–2030 provides a clear direction for the future of the LEO Network, reinforcing its commitment to innovation, collaboration, and inclusive economic development across Dublin City.

The Mission of the Economic Support Offices within Dublin City Council is:

- To support initiatives that will improve the quality of peoples' lives.
- To enhance the ability of the city to attract 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.

Projects are undertaken under four pillars

Pillars of Economic Development

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

PLACE MAKING AND CLUSTERS

PROMOTION & INVESTMENT

CLIMATE AND INNOVATION

The **Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC)** Partnership is a local Government network formed by eight Councils including Dublin City Council, and two universities located along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. The key activities being progressed are 1: Sustainable and Innovation Led Growth, 2: Skills Development, 3: Engagement and brand development. The DBEC Strategy and Action Plan outlines the vision of the Partnership as follows: "DBEC to be a leading economic corridor in Europe, achieving sustainable growth through collaborative R&D, a highly skilled workforce, and enabling infrastructure".

The **Dublin Economic Monitor** is a joint initiative on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities to track developments in the capital's economy, that is led by Dublin City Council. While there is significant information available on developments in the national economy, the Monitor, which has been running since 2015, is intended to address the absence of a regular bulletin on trends in the Dublin economy. The Monitor also includes a MasterCard SpendingPulse and S&P Global's Dublin PMI, to deliver unique insights for spending and business activity in Dublin. The website dublineconomy.ie has a comprehensive list of economic indicators from the quarterly monitor and boasts 3000+ views per month.

ENFUSE, Led by Dublin City Council, the Economic Development Office and the Local Enterprise Office in Dublin, the pioneering and award winning programme ENFUSE, connects local enterprises and social enterprises with Master's level university and college students. As part of a module, students work in teams to conduct research and ultimately provide bespoke plans for participant businesses. The plans set out innovative solutions for addressing challenges and developing opportunities. From 2021 to 2025 ENFUSE included 367 enterprises, many of which were LEO supported companies and 1609 students.

Your Dublin Your Voice, a Dublin opinion panel created by Dublin City Council and managed by the Economic Development team, which elicits feedback from citizens and others on challenges and opportunities facing Dublin. There have been 30 surveys completed as of December 2025, with 5,665 current panellists and 29,625 responses received. The survey findings are widely disseminated and available on www.dublincity.ie and help to inform decision-making and policy development. Some of the survey topics to date have focused on themes including: Dublin City Development Plan, Night Time Economy, Irish Language Usage and Attitudes, Active Travel and Tourism.

The **Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards** aim to support social enterprise creation and development in Dublin City. The awards programme provides grants, mentoring, promotion, and other supports to successful applicants to enable them to further develop their activities, increase their social impact and benefit more individuals and communities. 2024 was the 10th anniversary of the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards with a celebration held at City Hall to recognise the previous ten years and the 2024 awardees. The Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards were established by Inner City Enterprise (ICE) and Dublin City Council with support of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Dublin City and the Department of Rural & Community Development.

MODOS circular economy training programme for Small and Medium Enterprises, was created by and is led by the Economic Development Office and the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Planning Office. The two offices work together to support enterprises in becoming more sustainable, reducing waste and unlocking opportunities. The programme which is now provided nationally, comprises dynamic training and online classes on the topic of circular economy principles, sustainable supply chain, resource efficiency, design thinking and customer engagement, and is further supported by networking events, exhibitions and webinars.

Night Time Economy - In 2024 Dublin City Council unveiled an ambitious and innovative plan designed to revitalise the city's night-time economy, enhancing safety, mobility, and cultural vibrancy as one of a series of pilots supported under the government task force on the Night Time Economy. This initiative reflects a steadfast commitment to creating a dynamic and inclusive nightlife that enriches the lives of both residents and visitors. Led by Ray O'Donoghue, Dublin City Council's new Night Time Economy Advisor, the plan highlights DCC's commitment to enriching the city's nightlife and developing a forward-looking strategy to position Dublin as one of Europe's premier night-time destinations. This work involved wide ranging engagement across Dublin City Council and with key city stakeholders, organisations and agencies.

Tourism - Dublin is the most important overseas tourism destination in the country and tourism is a central pillar of the city's economy. Dublin City Council recognises it plays a pivotal role in the ongoing development of the tourism industry for the city, but also as a driver for tourism nationally. Within the Dublin City Council Tourism Strategy 2024 to 2028 we identified 3 goals: Human: serves a people-centered and community-based growth agenda. Sustainable: is proactive, accountable and measurable toward our climate goals. Innovative: is future-facing, creative, collaborative and digitally-advanced. People, Places and Spaces, Culture, Climate Action and Sustainability, Innovation, Data and Insights are the 6 strategic tourism pillars that will set the foundation of our new Tourism Strategy 2024-2028). Dublin City Council successful bid to become the European Capital of Smart Tourism in 2024 delivering a rich and varied programme of engagement which had led to a number of successful legacy projects.

Dublin Place Brand - Dublin.ie is an award-winning website that acts as a city branding website and promotes living, working, learning and events in Dublin. The site is designed for both national and international audiences. We aim to attract skilled talent, global investment, start-ups and students, whilst promoting sustainability and inspiring those already living here to make the most of their Dublin experience. Dublin Place Brand team supported the launch of the Night time Economy strategy and host Dublin Nights on the website for all upcoming Night Time Economy news and events. We are now working with the Dublin region to promote common objectives and to agree campaigns to promote key themes driving engagement with local and international stakeholders.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

LEO Dublin City has successfully executed its strategic vision for supporting and growing Dublin's enterprise ecosystem. Managing a diverse portfolio of businesses, our focused approach has delivered measurable results across key priority areas - from digital transformation to sustainability initiatives. Through targeted business advisory services and our newly established Consultancy Panel of Experts, we've enhanced our ability to guide companies through critical growth stages while adapting to evolving market challenges.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Our **School Enterprise Programmes** have been key in fostering entrepreneurship among secondary school students across the city. Designed to encourage creativity and innovation, the programme allows students to set up and run real businesses as part of a nationwide competition. The initiative is supported through in-school workshops, dedicated resources, and mentoring throughout the academic year. Finalists from the Dublin City competition go on to represent the region at the National Final.



Our inclusive support programmes have assisted entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds—including people with disabilities, those who are long-term unemployed, members of new communities, and Irish language speakers—reflecting our commitment to making entrepreneurship accessible to all.

COMPETITIVENESS

LEO Dublin City's micro and small business clients faced extraordinary challenges in 2020, but rose to the occasion with impressive agility. Many seized the opportunity to enhance their digital capabilities, understanding this was crucial to staying competitive and, in some cases, simply surviving. In response, LEO Dublin City rolled out targeted supports, including the Business Continuity Voucher, to help businesses assess immediate risks, develop contingency plans, and adapt operations during the COVID-19 crisis. Alongside this, the Client Stimulus support helped businesses continue to operate and plan for recovery in the face of significant disruption. LEO Dublin City remains committed to supporting client companies with the supports needed to boost productivity and thrive in an evolving business landscape.

DIGITALISATION

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a powerful catalyst, pushing business owners to embrace digitalisation at an accelerated pace. After making initial pivots, many were awakened to the immense potential of digital tools to streamline operations, transform customer engagement, and foster growth. LEO Dublin City recognised the importance of building on this momentum and prioritised initiatives that enabled client companies to more fully leverage technology. Through targeted training, access to expert guidance, and a suite of financial supports, LEO Dublin City helped businesses harness the power of digital to sharpen their competitive edge and position themselves for success in the post-pandemic era.

GREEN

LEO Dublin City's **Green for Business** initiative empowers small businesses to embrace sustainability and decarbonisation, aligning with evolving consumer expectations and regulatory demands for industries such as retail and hospitality.

Through the **Energy Efficiency Grant**, eligible small enterprises with 1-50 employees can access 75% funding (€750-€10,000) for sustainable technology investments after completing a Green for Business Report, GreenStart Report, or SEAI Energy Audit. The grant supports various improvements including energy meters, smart controls, LED lighting upgrades, heat pumps, and water management systems. To qualify, businesses must operate from a commercially rateable premises or be Fáilte Ireland approved, be established for at least 6 months, not be clients of Enterprise Ireland or IDA, and meet the EU SME definition with annual turnover or balance sheet total of €10 million or less. This comprehensive support helps client companies navigate the crucial transition to eco-friendly practices, positioning them to thrive in a future where environmental impact is increasingly prioritised alongside traditional metrics of success.

INNOVATION

- 🕒 The **Agile Innovation Fund** helped small businesses rapidly respond to market opportunities through targeted research and development support. This flexible funding mechanism enabled LEO clients to undertake innovative projects with total costs under €300,000, with grant support ranging from 25% to 45%.
- 🕒 The **Breakthrough Innovation Programme**, managed by Furthr, provided established businesses with a structured pathway to identify and unlock transformative growth opportunities. Designed for companies with at least three years of trading history, 3-50 employees, and a minimum turnover of €250,000, this intensive program combined strategic workshops with personalised mentoring to help businesses systematically approach innovation.
- 🕒 The **Research, Development & Innovation Fund** represents a strategic investment in the future competitiveness of Dublin's enterprises. Targeting internationally trading companies in manufacturing and eligible service sectors, this comprehensive funding program supports businesses undertaking non-routine technical challenges that significantly advance their R&D capabilities

EXPORT / INTERNATIONALISATION

- 🕒 The **Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters (TAME)** Grant supported Dublin businesses in their international growth ambitions by part-funding crucial market entry activities. This targeted funding helped companies conduct market research, participate in international trade fairs, and develop export-focused marketing materials. The **Export Accelerator Programme** equips businesses with essential skills to effectively explore and establish their presence in new overseas markets.

47

companies accessed Research, Development, and Innovation supports, fostering new ideas and growth.

NETWORKS

The aim of the **Next Steps Network [SYOB Alumni]** which was launched in July 2024 is to foster a dynamic and supportive network for new entrepreneurs who have already completed a Start Your Own Business (SYOB) programme with LEO Dublin City, enhancing their journey towards successfully launching and/or developing their early-stage business. 9 events were held in 2024 and 2025 with a total attendance of 150.

LEO Connect is a pilot support network launched by LEO Dublin City in September 2024 for client businesses trading for over three years and actively pursuing growth. Starting out with 10 members, the network has continued to expand, meeting on a bi-weekly basis to share insights, challenges, and opportunities as members progress on their business journeys.

The **Women in Business Network** in Dublin City has seen remarkable growth and engagement in recent years despite the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, expanding from 146 members in 2021 to 273 members by the end of 2025. The network's approach focuses on a more diverse mix of engagement opportunities, including expert Coffee Zooms, in-person events, and accountability group meetings. The overall attendance has remained strong, increasing from 1283 in 2021 to 1285 in 2025.

This thriving community offers female entrepreneurs in Dublin valuable opportunities to connect, share expertise, and support each other's business growth through structured networking events, specialised sessions with industry experts, and collaborative accountability groups, all designed to foster success in an encouraging environment for both startups and established small businesses.

The **Dublin Food Chain** is a collaborative initiative of Local Enterprise Offices in Dublin, supported by Bord Bia, designed to promote the region's distinctive food heritage. This network serves food businesses across production, supply, foodservice, retail, and distribution sectors by providing specialised training, networking events, and collective marketing opportunities. During the 2021 - 2025 period, the network created **62 events**.

The network aims to increase consumer awareness of local products, enhance brand recognition for members, optimise market access for producers, foster innovation, promote food tourism, and create sustainable employment in Dublin's food sector.



87%

increase in members of the Local Enterprise Office Dublin City Women in Business Network between 2021 - 2025



1,691

Dublin Food Chain members by 2025



CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

REDF PROJECTS



The **Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF)** stands as a cornerstone initiative in fostering collaborative innovation across Ireland's enterprise landscape. Through strategic co-financing, this comprehensive program supports transformative projects that strengthen regional economic resilience and drive sustainable employment growth.

The fund specifically champions enterprise clustering initiatives, creating dynamic environments where businesses can share facilities, exchange expertise, and build robust networks. By supporting these collaborative ecosystems, REDF enables regions to adapt effectively to international economic changes while fostering innovative activity that benefits both individual enterprises and the broader business community.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

LEO Dublin City offers a comprehensive portfolio of leadership development initiatives designed to meet the diverse needs of Dublin's entrepreneurs. Working in partnership with leading institutions and industry experts, we deliver a range of programs that help business leaders navigate modern challenges - from digital transformation to sustainable practice implementation.

Our flagship programs include the **One360** pilot programme, with 11 participants at the end of 2024, the **Leadership for Business Acceleration** programme in collaboration with *LEO Fingal*, which ran 6 times since 2023 with a total of 66 participants, and our cornerstone **Let's Talk Creative Business Programme** in collaboration with *Visual Artists Ireland (VAI)*, launched in 2024 with 23 participants at the end of 2025. Each initiative is carefully structured to build both technical capabilities and strategic leadership skills, enabling Dublin's businesses to compete effectively in international markets.

ENTERPRISE SPACES

- Located in the heart of the Liberties, Dublin 8, The **Guinness Enterprise Centre**, managed by Furthr, is home to over 160 companies. The Guinness Enterprise Centre provides office space, advice, national and international reach and a community for start-ups and scaling companies to learn and grow.

The Local Enterprise Office Dublin City works with the Guinness Enterprise Centre to build awareness of the supports available to the SMEs through the Local Enterprise Office and Enterprise Ireland. This includes workshops and delivering one-to-one clinics with clients.

- SPADE** Enterprise Centre is a Not for Profit organisation with a charity status, they offer a supportive environment for growing businesses in North King Street, in the heart of Dublin City.

In 2023 they opened their shared commercial kitchen which serves as an incubation space for early stage food producers. The facility spans some 5,600 square feet, including kitchen and storage facilities, providing capacity for 24 businesses.

They also offer a number of individual kitchens for growing food businesses and a range of office space options from dedicated desks for individual workers to larger offices accommodating business teams.

Spade offer a collaborative working environment and provide a range of business supports including mentorship and networking.

LEO Dublin City works with Spade to build awareness of the supports available to SME's through the Local Enterprise Office and Enterprise Ireland, including delivering one to one clinics and workshops to their members.

- Inner City Enterprise (ICE)** is a not for profit charity which was established in 1992 to help unemployed individuals to establish their own businesses in Dublin's Inner City. Since opening they have helped over 3250 clients set up their own businesses. ICE run regular Start Your Own Business courses for young people and in 2022 partnered with LEO Dublin City to deliver SYOB programmes to the Ukrainian Community.

They also helped to found the Dublin City Social Enterprise awards in 2014 alongside the Economic Development Office and LEO Dublin City. In the last two years ICE have opened the Hub on The Hill a hub for social enterprises with the support of Dublin City Council





NATIONAL LEO PROGRAMMES

SHOWCASE

- 🎯 **Showcase** - Ireland's Creative Expo represents a vital platform for emerging designers and craftspeople in Dublin City. Held annually at the RDS, this prestigious trade event features a dedicated Enterprise Zone, coordinated by Local Enterprise Offices, where innovative creators showcase their work to international buyers. The curated space highlights the diversity of Dublin's creative sectors, from contemporary ceramics and jewelry to cutting-edge skincare and interior design.

Each year, LEO Dublin City clients present their products in this dynamic environment, gaining invaluable exposure to global markets and establishing vital trade connections.

FOOD ACADEMY

- 🎯 The **Food Academy Initiative** represents a pioneering collaboration between LEO Dublin City and SuperValu, creating a comprehensive pathway for food entrepreneurs to bring their products from concept to retail shelves. Through a structured program of workshops, one-to-one mentoring, and direct retail opportunities, participants gain essential skills in food safety, market research, branding, and sustainable business practices.

The program encompasses three distinct elements: the Digital School of Food's online learning resources, the focused Food Starter program, and the flagship Food Academy, which has helped Dublin producers successfully launch their products in SuperValu stores. This multi-faceted approach ensures food entrepreneurs receive the right support at every stage of their journey, from initial concept through to national distribution.



LEO DUBLIN CITY SHOWCASE CLIENTS

Year	Number of Clients
2021	2
2022	6
2023	5
2024	4
2025	7



NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIP

The **National Ploughing Championships Trade Exhibition** represents one of Ireland's largest consumer showcases, offering LEO Dublin City clients an unprecedented opportunity to reach over 250,000 visitors in the Local Enterprise Village. This flagship event, held annually every September in the midlands, transforms 50 acres into a dynamic exhibition space where local enterprises can showcase their products and services to a national audience. Through the Local Enterprise Office's dedicated village space, Dublin's innovative manufacturers and service providers gain valuable exposure, with each participant receiving a professionally equipped 3x2 meter stand, comprehensive exhibition support, and access to valuable PR opportunities.

This strategic platform has proven valuable for Dublin businesses in building brand awareness and establishing crucial market connections.



OTHER INITIATIVES

The **ENFUSE Innovation Partnership** connects Dublin's enterprises with master's-level talent from leading universities, creating a dynamic collaboration that benefits both businesses and students. Through this innovative program, companies receive fresh perspectives and actionable solutions to their business challenges, while students gain invaluable real-world consulting experience. Teams of 4-6 students work closely with assigned enterprises over a semester to develop comprehensive strategies across various business areas, from digital marketing to machine learning. This zero-cost initiative culminates in a competitive pitch final where the best student teams present their enterprise solutions to industry experts, fostering a vibrant connection between academic excellence and business innovation.

Dublin Tech Summit (DTS) represents a cornerstone event in Europe's technology calendar, bringing together global innovators, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders in Ireland's capital. As Europe's fastest-growing tech festival, DTS has established itself as a crucial platform for exploring cutting-edge developments in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, digital transformation, and sustainable technology. The summit creates a dynamic environment where industry pioneers share insights, startups connect with investors, and attendees gain valuable perspectives on the future of technology. Attracting thousands of participants from across the globe, DTS showcases Dublin's position as a leading European technology hub while fostering meaningful discussions about the responsible development of emerging technologies.



"ALL IN A DAY'S WORK"



- The **"All In A Day's Work"** campaign showcased practical supports that helped small businesses transform how they operated. Focusing on Lean, Green, and Digital programmes, the campaign highlighted how these services can drive real improvements in productivity and competitiveness. Since its launch, the Lean for Business programme alone has saved Irish companies over €28 million, with participating businesses reporting an average cost saving of €34,000 and a 31% increase in output. The campaign encouraged businesses to engage with their Local Enterprise Office to identify the most relevant supports for their current stage of growth.



LEAN FOR BUSINESS



DIGITAL FOR BUSINESS



GREEN FOR BUSINESS

LOOK FOR LOCAL



- The **Look for Local** campaign was launched to promote small businesses in the lead-up to Christmas as the country emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative encouraged consumers to support local products, services, and experiences, highlighting that every euro spent locally helps sustain jobs, strengthen communities, and boost the local economy. By using the #LookForLocal hashtag and an online business directory, the campaign made it easier for people to discover and support businesses in their area—proving that looking local truly worked for everyone.



Appendix - LEO Dublin City Performance Metrics

Progression Pathway	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of clients transferred to EI	22	17	33	32	26

Measure 1	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of clients approved for funding					
Feasibility	27	22	31	28	47
Priming	13	15	5	12	10
Business Expansion	26	25	25	18	15
Number of new jobs created associated with approvals	752				

Trading Online Voucher (TOV)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Trading Online Vouchers approved	13	15	5	12	89

Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant (TAME)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters applications approved	9	22	26	17	4

Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of companies approved for RD&I	2	2	3	0	4

Measure 2	2021-2025
Training/Development Programmes	
Number of all programmes	17,920
SYOB	2,256
Mentoring	
Number of businesses availing of one-to-one mentoring	6,567

School Entrepreneurship	2021-2025
Number of schools participating	147
Number of students participating	6,386

Appendix - LEO Dublin City Performance Metrics

Productivity Supports	2021-2025
Number of companies approved for Lean for Business	79
Number of companies approved for Green for Business	127
Number of companies that undertook the Digital for Business Programme	79

Microfinance Ireland (MFI)	2021-2025
Number of applications submitted	142

CUSTOMER SERVICE 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.

www.localenterprise.ie



We would like to express our sincere thanks to Enterprise Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, the LEO Unit, and the wider LEO Network for their continued partnership and guidance.

We are also grateful to our colleagues across Dublin City Council for their ongoing collaboration and support. Special thanks go to the LEO Dublin City Grant Evaluation and Approvals Committee for their time and expertise.

We acknowledge the incredible LEO Dublin City Staff (Award Winners, Dublin City Council Three Castles Staff Awards 2023 and 2024), who consistently go above and beyond to support our clients with dedication, professionalism, and care. Their commitment is the foundation of everything we achieve, and we are proud to include a staff photo in recognition of their outstanding work.



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Local Enterprise Office
#MakingItHappen



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

In partnership with

