



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara  
Kildare County Council



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil  
Local Enterprise Office



# Business Development in County Kildare

A Business Owners Guide





The **entrepreneur** always  
searches for **change**,  
responds to it, and exploits  
it as an **opportunity**.

PETER DRUCKER | 1985



## Foreword

As Chief Executive of Kildare County Council and Chair of the Local Enterprise Office Evaluation Committee, I welcome this publication as a timely roadmap for our business community.

An appropriate balance of Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous business will be required to continue to develop a sustainable economy in an incremental fashion.

Kildare County Council continues to seek ways of removing barriers and supporting progress in an inclusive manner, and this publication makes accessible the support available to those with an entrepreneurial spirit, outlining the various options available in Kildare at all stages of the business cycle. In my role, I am fortunate to see how enterprise and job creation contribute to developing a strong, resilient, innovative, and diverse economy.

Kildare County Council recognises that there is huge appetite to facilitate regional enterprise development and grow job opportunities across our county. Kildare is one of the most attractive places in the country for doing business. With its proximity to Dublin, excellent infrastructure, skilled workforce, and strong economic sectors, Kildare has become a hub for entrepreneurs, startups, and established companies.

One of the key advantages of doing business in County Kildare is its strategic location. The county is situated just west of Dublin, making it an ideal location for businesses that want access to the capital without the high costs associated with operating there.

Over recent years, Kildare County Council has significantly increased investment in entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems to drive economic growth, including a county-wide hub strategy. Together with our Local Enterprise Office we will continue to strengthen our entrepreneurial ecosystem of entrepreneurs, innovators, educators, hubs, academic community champions and public body stakeholders, collaborating for the continued growth of business in our county.

This Business Owner's Guide has been developed to ensure that Kildare's business community takes advantage of the dynamic supports available to their business. The aim of this publication is to assist entrepreneurs in Kildare to navigate the range of financial and non-financial supports available at the various stages of business development. These stages are defined as Pre-start, Start-Up and Business Expansion. Our hope is that this guide will aid business development and, ultimately, job-creation in the region.

Whether that is through grant support, training, mentoring, R&D or export development. I would encourage every business owner and aspiring entrepreneur to work with our Enterprise, Tourism and Economic Development Team.

**Sonya Kavanagh**

**Chief Executive  
Kildare County Council**



# Introduction

The aim of this publication is to assist entrepreneurs in Kildare by navigating the wide range of financial and non-financial supports available at various stages of business development. These stages include Pre-start, Start-Up, and Business Expansion. We hope this guide will foster business growth and, ultimately, contribute to job creation within the region.

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are recognized as the ‘first-stop shop’ for individuals seeking to start or grow their businesses, particularly micro and small enterprises. Kildare County Council have invested heavily in integrating the function of the LEO into a Department of Enterprise, Economic Development, Retail, and Tourism, expanding the scope of available assistance.

The enterprise ecosystem in Kildare has evolved significantly over the past decades, driven by a combination of factors, including the development of state-supported programmes for enterprise growth and the region’s strong foundation in tertiary education and research. Kildare offers vast entrepreneurial opportunities for those with the vision, focus, and the right support to turn their ideas into reality.

We are particularly grateful to the entrepreneurs who have shared their experiences and insights with us. These are highlighted in the ‘Spotlights’ featured in each section of the guide. This publication is a work in progress, and it is our intention to revise it annually, incorporating new offerings and any changes within the enterprise ecosystem. We welcome feedback and contributions from those wishing to be included in future editions.

Remember, our door is always open for a chat. Feel free to drop us an email or give us a call — we are here to support you and your business in any way we can. You can phone us at 045 980838, or email us at [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)

**Jacqui McNabb**

**Head of Enterprise, Economic Development, Retail, and Tourism  
Kildare County Council  
W91 FE8V**



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## Kildare's Economic Outlook

County Kildare's economic profile exhibits significant structural strengths relative to other parts of Ireland. According to the results from 2022 Census, participation in the labour force and workforce is higher in County Kildare than is the case across the State and in most of the EMRA local authorities.

The lowest participation rates are in rural areas, which is partly due to the age profile of many rural communities, but it is also indicative of a poverty of opportunity in some parts of the county. Relative to the rest of the county, the north-east metropolitan area exhibits a stronger and more diversified economic profile. In contrast, the Athy MD exhibits the weakest economic profile. It has the lowest level of labour force and workforce participation in the county.

Results from Census 2022 indicate that in County Kildare, just under sixty-four percent of the resident population aged 15+ is in the labour force – two and a half percentage points higher than is the case across the State. Of those in the labour force, almost ninety-three percent are at work – one percentage point higher than the State equivalent and higher than both the EMRA and Eastern SPA average. The proportion of the labour force at work in Kildare is the fourth highest rate in the State.

Relative to the State, County Kildare has a higher proportion of the resident workforce employed in the following sectors: building and construction; manufacturing industries; commerce and trade; and public administration. Proportionately, there are fewer people working in agriculture; forestry and fishing; professional services; and the broad 'other' category.

## KILDARE'S LABOUR FORCE

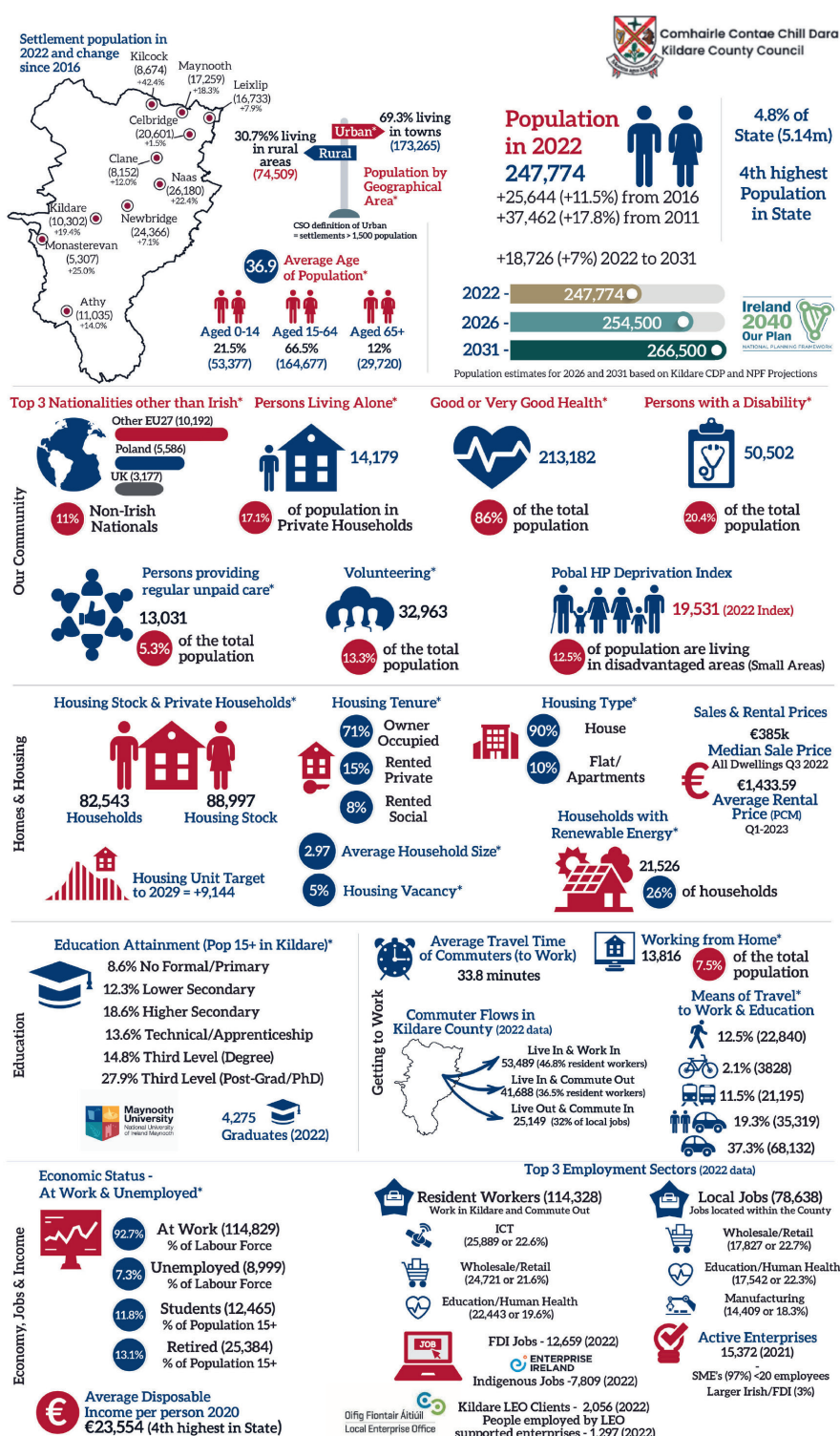
Kildare has a labour force of 123,828, which corresponds to 63.7% of the population aged 15+. Since 2016, the labour force in Kildare has increased by +14.4% (+15,584). The county's labour force participation rate is higher than that of the State (61.2%), but there are some geographical variations within the county. The highest labour force participation rates (>63%) are generally to the east and northeast of the county – including Maynooth, Kilcock, Naas, Straffan, Sallins etc. Indeed, Kilcock (73.2%) records the highest labour force participation rate of any settlement in the county – almost ten percentage points above the county value. The lowest labour force participation rates (<55%) are predominantly in the south of the county.

Just under ninety three percent (92.7%) of Kildare's labour force is at work. This level is one percentage point higher than is the case in Ireland as a whole and the fourth highest rate in the State. The number of people at work has increased by +19.7% (+18,882) since 2016 and the county, as per Ireland, has record levels of employment. The proportion of the labour force 'at work' is generally highest in areas that are well connected to the main employment centres, although they tend to be higher in suburban and peri-urban areas than in some of the towns.

The areas with the highest rates of the labour force being 'at work' (>93%) include Maynooth (94.6% or 8,451), Naas (93.8% or 12,802), Leixlip (93.8% or 7,896), Celbridge (93.7% or 9,965), Kill (93.9% or 1,800), Carragh (96.6% or 479) and Straffan (97.1% or 540).

## Key Facts:

- According to the 2022 Census, participation in the labour force and workforce is higher in County Kildare than is the case across the State and in most of the EMRA local authorities.
- 92.7% of Kildare's labour force is at work. The number of people at work has increased by +19.7% since 2016 and the county, as per Ireland, has record levels of employment.
- Relative to the State, County Kildare has a higher proportion of the resident workforce employed in the following sectors: building and construction; manufacturing industries; commerce and trade; and public administration.
- Since 2016, the largest sectoral increases (in employed persons) in employment by industry have been in 'transport and communications' (+27.7%); 'commerce and trade' (+21.1%); 'professional services' (+23.7%) and 'manufacturing industries' (+19.8%).
- Of the 114,328 resident workers in Kildare, 46.8% are employed within Kildare County while 36.5% commute out of the county to employment destinations (sixth highest rate). The remaining 19,151 (16.8%) have unknown work destinations or are classed as Mobile workers (construction sector, transport etc). In addition to this, Kildare is also a major employment destination for workers who



reside outside the county with 25,149 commuting to Kildare for employment.

(excluding mobile workers and those with unknown destinations).

- There are approximately 78,638 known job locations within Kildare County

# Starting a Business

## KEY INFORMATION

Businesses in the early stages of development should be concerned with product or service development, market research, the development of marketing and sales strategies and critically, the development of a business plan. Business development has changed significantly over the past number of decades. Historically best practice was to ensure that the perfect product or service was brought to market to potential customers.

Whilst some still subscribe to this approach, in more recent times, the customers are now considered central to product and service development.

Theoretical models continue to evolve in the business development process. 'Design Thinking' is currently taught in many business programmes as a systematic problem-solving approach. Attributed to Nobel Prize winner Laureate Herbert A. Simon, the evolution of Design Thinking in a business context challenges the entrepreneur to look at the product or service through the eyes of the potential customer.

Entrepreneurs must manage risk to be successful. While examples can be found of a business excelling with limited preparation, they are the exception rather than the rule.

There are some basic questions you need to ask at this stage, such as:

- ☐ Who is your target customer?
- ☐ Who are your competitors?
- ☐ How big is the market?
- ☐ What market share can you realistically capture?
- ☐ What is your unique selling point?
- ☐ Is there IP involved?
- ☐ How is your product or service sold?
- ☐ What are my start-up costs?
- ☐ Can I pay for the start-up myself, or do I need investors?

Members of Gather, Kildare's craft & creative cluster



## What skills do I have, and where do I need support?

Starting a business is exhilarating, but hard work and passion are not a guarantee for success.

Reasons for failure include:

- *Lack of market research.*
- *Being in the wrong market.*
- *Ineffective marketing.*
- *Insufficient Funds.*
- *Timing.*

### Don't register a legal entity too early.

This will create administrative and financial responsibilities which may also impact on your ability to access grant funding.

The criteria for grant funding are often determined from the date of company formation.

## STARTING A BUSINESS CHEAT SHEET

### I'm a New Business, Where Do I Start?

When deciding to start a business it is important to establish what kind of entity you will be, whether you intend to operate as a sole trader, a partnership, or a limited company.

## SOLE TRADER

If you are a sole trader, you set up the business in your name. All business decisions are made by you. You will not have any partners in your business, but you may have employees. You are responsible for keeping records of your business. As a sole trader, you will be personally liable to pay any business debts.

### Advantages of registering as a Sole Trader

- *Easy to set up and shut down.*
- *Less legal filings compared to a private company.*
- *Financial details are not available to the public.*

### Disadvantages of registering as a Sole Trader

- *There is no legal difference between you and your business.*
- *Unlimited liability - your assets can be used to settle debts.*
- *All your earnings (minus expenses) are taxed as your income, which can mean a tax rate of up to 55%.*
- *Credit required as a sole trader will be linked to your personal credit ratings.*

## PARTNERSHIP

A partnership is where you run your business with one or more people. A Limited Partnership (LP) can be registered in Ireland; however, they are uncommon.

LPs are governed by the Limited Partnerships Act 1907 and must consist of at least one General Partner and one Limited Partner. The partnership should not consist of more than 20 persons or, if carrying on the business of banking, of more than 10 persons. The general partner(s) is/are liable for all the debts and obligations of the firm. The limited partners contribute a stated amount of capital and are not liable for the debts of the partnership beyond the amount contributed. A partnership can be made up of individuals or corporate entities.

## LIMITED COMPANY

A company is a legal form of business organisation. It is a separate legal entity from those who own and run it. If you are trading as a company, you are not self-employed.

### Advantages of a Limited Company

- *Profits (after expenses) taxed at 12.5% (Corporation Tax).*
- *Limited liability - your personal assets generally cannot be used to settle the debts of the company.*
- *Setting up a separate legal entity - you can appoint yourself as a director and shareholder.*
- *Potentially more tax reliefs and benefits for directors.*

### Disadvantages Of Registering as a Limited Company

- *The public has access to the company's financial accounts.*
- *Large fines and penalties for non-compliance.*
- *Longer process and potentially more expensive to set up and close.*

## REGISTERING YOUR COMPANY

### Companies Registry Office

The CRO is the statutory authority for registering new companies in the Republic of Ireland. The Office also registers business names. A business name is a trading name which differs from the names of the persons or the company who own the business.

The CRO has several core functions:

- *The incorporation of companies and the registration of business names.*
- *The receipt and registration of post-incorporation documents.*
- *The enforcement of the Companies Act 2014 in relation to the filing obligations of companies.*
- *Making information available to the public.*

To Register with the CRO you must complete one of the following forms:

- *Form RBN1: for an individual.*
- *Form RBN1A: for a partnership.*
- *Form RBN1B: for a body corporate.*
- *There is also a registration fee of €40 for paper filing/€20 for electronic filing, which must be paid to the CRO within one month of adopting the business name.*

## REGISTERING WITH REVENUE

You must register for tax with Revenue when you:

- *Become a sole trader.*
- *Set up a trust/partnership.*

Registering online (eRegistration) is the fastest, cheapest, and most efficient way of registering for tax.

## BUSINESS TAX REQUIREMENTS

### Sole Trader

To set up a business as a sole trader, you must register as a self-employed person with Revenue if your net income is above €5,000. You will have to pay Income Tax (IT), Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) and Universal Social Charge (USC) on your net business profits.

You will also have to pay any employee Pay as You Earn (PAYE), employer PRSI, Value Added Tax (VAT) and Relevant Contracts Tax (RCT) due.

Use Revenue Online Service (ROS) to submit your annual tax return, which is called Form 11. Any salaries that you pay to employees are paid through the PAYE system. As a sole trader, your tax matters will always be dealt with under your Personal Public Service Number (PPSN).

### Partnership

Each partnership partner must pay IT, PRSI and USC on their share of business profits. You must include your share of the business profits in your tax return. The partnership must pay any employee PAYE, employer PRSI, VAT and RCT due where relevant.

You may also have employees. The employees' salaries are paid through the PAYE system. A partnership's annual return is called Form 1. The Precedent Partner must complete this form.

When you register the partnership, Revenue will issue a Tax Reference Number (TRN) for the partnership.

This number is used to register for employer PAYE, employer PRSI, VAT and RCT. Your personal tax matters will be dealt with under your PPSN.

### Company

The company must pay Corporation Tax (CT) on its business profits. The company's annual return is the Form CT1. This must be submitted through ROS. The company will have to pay any PAYE, VAT and RCT due.

All directors' salaries and fees are paid through the PAYE system. Revenue will issue a separate TRN for the company. Your personal taxes will be dealt with under your PPSN.

## Mentoring

Our Mentor programme has been designed to give you the benefit of an expert business practitioner's experience.

You'll be matched with a mentor who can provide both practical and strategic advice to help with decision-making.

LEO Kildare's Business Mentor Programme is designed to help businesses in the small/micro enterprise sector (i.e., less than 50 employees) identify and overcome obstacles to growth.

Through our mentoring service, LEO Kildare matches up experienced business mentors with owners/managers of businesses who need practical and strategic one-to-one advice and guidance.

A range of mentors with varied experience and skill sets is available, and every effort is made to match the mentor to the specific needs of client companies.

'Vacuum & Pressure Services has been in business for over 24 years, we are a true testament to how a small business can thrive with the help, mentoring and supports provided to us through the Local Enterprise Office.'

Find Out More



### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Vacuum & Pressure Services Ltd

Clane Business Park, Clane

*'The calibre of training programmes, mentoring and other services provided by the LEO give small companies like ours access to information, knowledge and supports that are vital to improve competitiveness, save money, up-skill and grow and develop our business.'*

[www.vps.ie](http://www.vps.ie)



## TRAINING PROGRAMMES

### Availing of Business Supports

“Measure twice and cut once” is an adage about preparing appropriately before engaging in an endeavour.

Starting a Business is no different.

Before embarking on your journey, we strongly recommend exploring available supports such as a Business Advice Clinic, a Start Your Own Business course, or exploring eligibility for a Feasibility Grant, all of which are offered by your Local Enterprise Office.

## BUSINESS ADVICE CLINICS

For businesses operating in the Kildare region or planning to operate in County Kildare, Local Enterprise Office Kildare offers free business advice clinics.

LEO business consultants can provide you with general business advice whether you are an entrepreneur, a new start-up or a growing and established small business with less than 50 employees based within the LEO Kildare region.

They can provide high level guidance on the steps and schemes that may support the growth of your planned or current business.

**See all our current courses and events at [localenterprise.ie/Kildare](https://localenterprise.ie/Kildare)**



- ▶ Exporting
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Social Media
- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Managing your Taxes
- ▶ Photography/Videography
- ▶ Branding
- ▶ Sustainability
- ▶ Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Management Development
- ▶ Networking Skills
- ▶ and more...



## START YOUR OWN BUSINESS COURSE

The Start Your Own Business Course is one of the LEO's most popular programmes, a typical course outline is:

- *The Concept of Entrepreneurship - introduction to what it means to be a business owner, the ups and downs, and how to deal with both.*
- *Legal Issues for Start-Up Businesses - the formal vehicles to use to conduct business, particularly the new Companies Acts and legislation, the self-assessment taxation system, responsibilities of self-employed to Revenue and protecting the business idea online.*
- *Market and Market Research - a solid professional grounding in the principles of marketing, leading up to developing a marketing plan.*
- *Sales and Networking - preparing the sales pitch and the networking pitch for immediate use, even if the business has not yet started.*
- *Administration and Bookkeeping - understanding the importance of good financial management which ranges from basic bookkeeping to the creation of internal controls and Revenue Commissioner-ready accounts, as well as how, why, and when to register for appropriate taxes.*
- *Finance and Financial Management - routes to finance available in current times, methods of costing, and other basic tools to ensure profitability.*
- *Business Planning - the importance of comprehensive planning for prospective business.*
- *Technology in Modern Business - the aids to small businesses that have evolved in recent times, social media platforms, financial technology.*
- *Sustainability - demonstrates the importance of creating a business that reduces its impact on the environment, and introduces the notion of sustainability to the business owner.*

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Global EPS

Unit J2, M7 Business Park,  
Naas, Co. Kildare

*'Entrepreneurship 101 provided essential insights into marketing and taxation in just one day, significantly enhancing my business knowledge.*

*The Tech Pre Accelerator was an excellent six-week program, offering valuable case studies and engaging talks from industry experts.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Both programs from LEO Kildare have been instrumental in advancing my business skills and strategies, providing practical knowledge and networking opportunities that have greatly benefited my business'.*

[www.globaleps.ie](http://www.globaleps.ie)



# Financial Supports

## PRIMING GRANT

Businesses that have been trading for less than 18 months and are employing less than 50 employees can apply for a priming grant from LEO Kildare.

### Eligible Businesses

- A business located, registered, and operating in the County Kildare region.
- A business employing up to 50 employees.
- A manufacturing or internationally traded services business, or a domestically traded services business that can demonstrate the potential to export.
- The enterprise must be in the commercial sphere.
- The enterprise must demonstrate a market for the product/service.
- The enterprise must have a capacity for growth and new job creation.

### Ineligible Businesses

- Retail enterprises, personal services, professional services (including consultancies), generic services or construction and local building services are not eligible for grant aid.
- Areas of enterprise which involve displacement of existing jobs or businesses: Builders, Hairdressers, Cafés, Pubs, Hotels, General Printers, Construction, Trades etc., would come within this category.
- Generally, where there are many operators within a sector, the Local Enterprise Office must have regard to the implications of grant aiding one or some, possibly putting the others at a competitive disadvantage.

### What Rules Apply?

- The maximum Priming Grant payable must not exceed 50% of the investment up to a maximum amount of €50,000, excluding VAT.
- Grants over €50,000 may be awarded in exceptional cases where projects clearly demonstrate the potential to graduate to the Enterprise Ireland portfolio / export internationally.
- Eligible costs include Capital items, Salary Costs, Utility Costs, Marketing Costs, Consultancy Costs, and Business Specific Training.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

## Aisling's Taste of Home

Doneaney House, Doneaney Cross, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare. W34HT93

*'LEO Kildare has been a great support so far.*

*My initial meeting was so encouraging and positive. LEO Kildare gave me the confidence and encouragement to apply for a Priming Grant.*

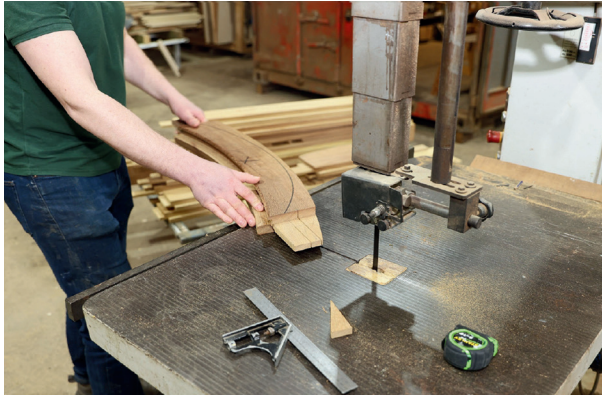
*I have since participated in the Meet the Buyer event with LEO Kildare for the Food and Nutrition sector, as well as having the opportunity to showcase my products to Minister Richmond and elected representatives at an official visit to MERITS.*

*It is very reassuring to have LEO Kildare as a support going forward as my business develops and grows'.*

[www.tasteofhome.ie](http://www.tasteofhome.ie)



- A maximum grant of up to €15,000 per full time job will apply to high-value jobs attracting over €40,000 salary. Appropriately scaled back grants will be offered in accordance with proposed salary for lower paid positions.



## Business Expansion Grant

A Business Expansion Grant is designed to assist businesses in the growth phase after the initial 18-month start-up period.

Find Out More



### Eligible Businesses

- A business located, registered, and operating in the County Kildare region.
- A business employing up to 50 employees. A manufacturing or internationally traded services business.
- A domestically traded services business that can demonstrate the potential to export.
- The enterprise must be in the commercial sphere.
- The enterprise must demonstrate a market for the product/service.
- The enterprise must have a capacity for growth and new job creation.

### Ineligible Businesses

- Retail enterprises, personal services, professional services (including consultancies), generic services or construction and local building services are not eligible for grant aid. Areas of enterprise which involve displacement of existing jobs or businesses: Builders, Hairdressers, Cafés, Pubs, Hotels, General Printers, Construction, Trades etc., would come within this category. Generally, where there are many operators within a sector, the Local Enterprise Office must have regard to the implications of grant aiding one or some, possibly putting the others at a competitive disadvantage.

### What Rules Apply?

- The maximum Business Expansion Grant payable must not exceed 50% of the investment up to a maximum amount of €50,000 (excluding VAT).
- Grants over €50,000 may be awarded in exceptional cases where projects clearly demonstrate the potential to graduate to the Enterprise Ireland portfolio / export internationally.
- Eligible costs include Capital items, Salary Costs, Utility Costs, Marketing Costs, Consultancy Costs, and Business Specific Training.
- A maximum grant of up to €15,000 per full time job will apply to high-value jobs attracting over €40k salary.
- Appropriately scaled-back grants will be offered in accordance with the proposed salary for lower-paid positions.
- Micro enterprises that have availed of a priming grant are ineligible to apply for a Business Expansion Grant until 18 months after the final draw-down date of the priming grant.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Burke Bros. Joinery

Corbally, Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare, W12 YN70

*'The support from LEO Kildare has played a transformative role for our business and has lead to improved efficiency, cost savings, improved quality and customer satisfaction as well as fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation'.*

[www.burkejoinery.ie](http://www.burkejoinery.ie)



## Expansion Funding for Businesses With 10+ Employees

Local Enterprise Offices work with micro and small businesses to drive further growth ensuring that they can realise their ambitions.

LEO financial supports are available to manufacturing and internationally traded services businesses employing up to 50 full time employees with international ambition.

**To discuss these supports with a member of our team, please email [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)**

## GradStart

GradStart offers Local Enterprise Office client companies financial support to hire top graduate talent and develop a talent pipeline.

One Irish or International graduate can be hired at any one time for a two-year period by eligible companies.

During the placement, the company must define the project aligned with its growth plan for each graduate to complete. Graduates must also be assigned an in- company mentor to support their development.

### What Rules Apply?

- *English-speaking graduate: €30,000 (€15,000 per year) or 50% of individual graduate salary costs (whichever is lesser).*
- *Graduate with proficiency in another language: €42,000 (€21,000 per year on a maximum allowable salary of €30,000 per year) or 70% of individual graduate salary costs (whichever is lesser). The graduate role must have a clear requirement for language proficiency.*

### Eligibility

- *The application submission date for GradStart will also be the earliest date on which the new grant- aided employee may be recruited.*
- *Companies must be incorporated.*
- *Companies must operate in the manufacturing or internationally traded services sector.*

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Carve On

Kilcullen Industrial Estate, Naas Rd,  
Kilcullen, Co. Kildare

*Carve On create and design beautiful personalised leather accessories*

*'Partnering with the GradStart program through LEO Kildare has been a game-changer for us at CarveOn Leather. By bringing on board an additional graduate designer, we've boosted our creative team and our ability to deliver on key projects.*

*The support from GradStart has allowed us to compete for top talent and enhance our skills and competence across the company.*

*This type of backing has also been pivotal in helping us increase our exports from our base here in Kildare. A huge thanks to Jacqui McNabb and her team for their outstanding support as always. Their help has been crucial in helping us grow throughout the years.'*

[www.carveon.com](http://www.carveon.com)



- *Companies must employ a minimum of 5 staff.*
- *Roles in any discipline are eligible for support, except for direct sales and direct marketing positions.*



## START-UP LOANS

Microfinance Ireland was established to fund viable small businesses with fewer than 50 employees and turnover or total assets of no more than €2m that cannot get funding from the conventional banking market.

Start-up businesses often find it challenging to secure loans from the banks, and as a result, startups are an important source of applications for Microfinance Ireland.

Historically approximately 60% of Microfinance Ireland applications come from newly established businesses which are defined as being less than 18 months in existence. Given the percentage of applications received by MFI from start-up businesses, MFI's loan assessors are skilled in evaluating start-up businesses.

## THE CASHFLOW LOAN

Microfinance Ireland provides Cashflow Loans to established businesses to fund the increased cashflow requirements that may be encountered as a business seeks to expand.

The Cashflow Loan is a loan of up to €50,000 to fund the day-to-day cashflow requirements. The loan has a repayment period of up to 3 years and a fixed interest rate to provide certainty as to loan repayments. The loan can be repaid at any time if cashflow is better than projected.

## THE EXPANSION LOAN

Microfinance Ireland provides an Expansion Loan for established businesses for capital expenditure related to a business expansion. The maximum loan amount is €50,000 which can be repaid over 5 years. The interest rate on the loan is fixed, so borrowers have certainty as to the loan repayment amount. Loans can be repaid at any time without penalty if the business no longer needs the loan.

For both the Cashflow Loan and the Expansion Loan, Microfinance Ireland can offer free mentoring sessions to established businesses if there are business topics where the business owner requires up-skilling.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

## Swishhh Boutique Spin

Harbour View, Naas West,  
Naas, Co. Kildare

*'When I first made touch with the local enterprise office, I was looking at ways to improve my business. We had been operating for nearly 2 years and felt it was time to grow. I needed to invest and looked at applying for Micro Finance loan. I was unsure of the process and saw that LEO offer mentoring and help with applying. I met with Sean and he guided me through the application process.*

*His help was second to none. As a result of this I received the loan and was able to invest in more equipment for my business and upscale. Along with this I needed to get our new classes out there. My experience in the sales and marketing aspect of the fitness industry was Novice and needed help in this area also. LEO set up a meeting with Jane, she laid out a clear blueprint for increasing Sales, and marketing Swishhh to the correct people.*

*In the last 6 months I have made more progress with Swishhh than I had in the last two years. LEO have given me the supports, the confidence and assistance I needed to push on.'*

[www.swishhhspin.com](http://www.swishhhspin.com)





## Intreo Offices

The Department of Social Protection offers a range of supports for Employers.

### **JOBSPLUS**

Employer Incentive which encourages and rewards employers who employ job-seekers from the live register: Two levels of Incentive €7,500 and €10,000.

A prospective employee can apply on line at [www.jobsplus.ie](http://www.jobsplus.ie) to verify if they are an eligible employee under the incentive.

### **JOBS IRELAND**

Advertise job vacancies free on the internet or through their network of offices.

Get additional assistance from your local Employer Engagement team

**To advertise: Lo-call 0818 111 112**

### **EURES**

Advertise your vacancies throughout Europe via the Jobs Ireland service which provides specially tailored European recruitment projects for individual employers.

**Visit [www.eures.europa.eu](http://www.eures.europa.eu)**

### **WORK PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME**

The Work Experience Placement Programme (WPEP) is a work placement experience programme for job-seekers aged between 18 and 65 years of age on certain social protection payments and out of work for at least 6 months. It aims to provide job-seekers with work experience and the opportunity to develop new skills, through training and learning in a supportive environment.

The duration of a placement is 30 hours per week for six months. The costs will be fully funded by the State and participants will receive an additional payment on top of their weekly social protection payment. For further information visit [www.gov.ie/wpep](http://www.gov.ie/wpep) or register a WPEP on [www.jobsireland.ie](http://www.jobsireland.ie)

### **DSP DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT GRANTS**

#### **Wage Subsidy Scheme - WSS**

This grant offers financial support to employers to encourage them to employ a job-seeker with a disability where they have a shortfall in their productivity. Max €12,776 per annum.

#### **Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant - WEAG**

This grant is available to an employee with a disability who requires a more accessible workplace or piece of assistive technology to help them do their job. i.e. Wheelchair accessible toilets/ramps, Specialised Software. Current limit on grant €6,350 per annum.

### **JOB INTERVIEW INTERPRETER GRANT - JIIG**

This grant is available to someone who is deaf, hard of hearing or someone with a speech impediment who requires the assistance of an Interpreter for job interviews. This grant provides funding to cover the costs of the Interpreter.

It can be applied for as often as is required. It may also be used for a 3-hour induction period for new employees.

### **PERSONAL READER GRANT - PRG**

This grant is available to an employee who is blind or visually impaired who requires assistance with work related reading. 640 hours can be funded in a 12-month period, paid at the minimum wage.



## EMPLOYEE RETENTION GRANT SCHEME (ERGS)

This grant is available to an employee who acquires a disability and is in danger of losing their job. Funding is available to identify supports & accommodations necessary to retain them in their current post or have them retrained to take up another position in the same company.

## DISABILITY AWARENESS SUPPORT SCHEME (DASS)

This grant provides funding to employers to provide Disability Awareness Training to make Staff more disability confident & help eliminate some of the mistaken perceptions about people with disabilities. Max €20,000 or 90% of cost of training.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

This service is available to a Job-seeker with a disability who requires additional support in finding or retaining employment through the use of a Job Coach.

**For further information on any of these grants, please visit [www.gov.ie/intreo](http://www.gov.ie/intreo)**



## Leader Funding

The overall objective of the Rural Development (LEADER) programme is to provide funding, support, and resources to develop stronger, better-connected, more resilient and prosperous rural communities in Kildare.

It is a strategic process aimed at integrated socio-economic change based on the development of local, natural and human resources and does this by providing resources to stimulate rural economic and social development.

Over the past 25 years, LEADER has supported projects and initiatives in the areas of enterprise, farm diversification, tourism, community facilities, greater social inclusion, or climate action.

Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LAG) in partnership with County Kildare Leader Partnership is responsible for the delivery of the LEADER Programme in Kildare.

Further information is available from County Kildare Leader Partnership (CKLP) on 045-895450 or email [leader@countykildarelp.ie](mailto:leader@countykildarelp.ie)

**Visit [countykildarelp.ie](http://countykildarelp.ie)**



**County Kildare**  
LEADER PARTNERSHIP

Find Out More



# Productivity and Competitiveness Supports

Sustainability has become ever more important both in business and in the world around us. What you may not understand are the significant benefits that it can have for your company, on everything from efficiencies to cost savings.



Green for Business is a free programme that helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable, giving you access to a green consultant who'll

show you the small changes that can have a big impact on your company - and the world around you.

Developing a 'greener' policy can offer many benefits to your business, including:

- Increased cost savings.
- Improved resource efficiency (for example: using less energy, water, and materials).
- Reduced environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Opportunities for higher and additional value on products and services.
- Increased access to customers, improved corporate image and reputation.
- Increased resilience to climate change impacts.

## Eligibility

The programme is open to all micro-enterprises with up to ten employees, except those involved in activities that the Local Enterprise Offices consider as ineligible, for example, primary agricultural businesses - farms or as involving an unacceptable reputational risk: gambling, including 'gaming' (as defined in the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1956), adult entertainment, tobacco products and cannabis-based products which are not authorised as medicines).

- Turnover is more than €30,000 annually.
- The business has been trading for more than six months.

- Companies forming part of a holding group, franchise, linked companies etc., are only permitted to make one application.
- Multiple applications will not be considered.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

Kildare Brewing Company Ltd  
@ Lock 13  
Brewhouse

Canal View, Sallins, Co. Kildare

*'Green for Business was presented to us by our Local Enterprise Office in Kildare. It's a no brainer for any business to partake in. It educated us about the needs going forward for a business to make us more sustainable, to make us more environmentally friendly, but also the bottom line being financially stable then as well.'*

*I would wholeheartedly encourage all SME's or any businesses to go for the Green for Business programme because it will highly educate you in relation to what your business is putting out into the environment... it has helped us no bounds.'*

[www.kildarebrewing.ie](http://www.kildarebrewing.ie)





## Energy Efficiency Grant

The Energy Efficiency Grant supports investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises following on from a Green for Business Report, GreenStart Report or a SEAI Energy Audit with 75% of eligible costs from minimum of €750 to a maximum of €10,000.

The aim of the scheme is to reduce the impact of enterprises on the environment thereby increasing the agility and resilience of these businesses, to operate in a sustainable manner.

This scheme supports all aspects of sustainability project expenditure associated with the operation of an enterprise including water, energy, circular economy, etc.

Enterprises may apply for Energy Efficiency Grant support to a max of €10,000 over the lifetime of the scheme, where the projects/equipment/products applied for have been identified on their Green for Business, GreenStart or SEAI Energy Audit to continuously support their sustainability journey.

### Eligible Expenditure:

The Energy Efficiency Grant supports the investment in technologies; equipment and projects in environmental sustainability and circular economy measures as identified in or supported by a Green for Business; Green Start or a SEAI Energy Audit which are not already supported by the SEAI.

These projects may include but are not limited to:

- Meters (electricity, gas, diesel, oil, water, steam & loggers) and installation costs.
- Smart energy controls e.g., heating, cooling, lighting, automatic on/off systems, parasitic load controls.
- Upgrade lighting to LED (only as part of a package of eligible cost measures).
- Replacement/upgrade with more energy efficient system, e.g. Heat Pumps (including air, water and ground source) for manufacturing heating processes.
- Heat Recovery.



- Technology/Equipment replacement/upgrade must be more energy efficient than what was in place at time of application and can only be replaced/upgraded if it is greater than 5 years old. Examples of eligible technology/equipment include refrigeration units, electric steam boiler, electric oven and an industrial dishwasher.
- Small wind turbine & hydro generator.
- Investment in energy efficient and resource systems.
- Food Waste Systems e.g. anaerobic digestors Water Management Systems.
- Circular Economy Systems.
- Sustainable packaging equipment/technology.

### Ineligible Expenditure:

- Solar Panels: a Solar PV grant is available under SEAI Non-Domestic Microgen Scheme.
- Biomass and biogas boilers.
- Building energy upgrades e.g. heat pump for space lighting, insulation, pumps, heat recovery on ventilation systems, heaters, radiators.
- Waste treatment systems for regulatory purposes.
- Activities related to fossil fuels e.g. fossil fuel condenser boiler, gas boilers.
- Mobile assets such as electric forklifts, air compressors etc.
- Computer Systems/Equipment.

Visit [allinadayswork.ie/green](https://allinadayswork.ie/green)

## Lean for Business

Lean For Business is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase performance and competitiveness. Lean is for all companies, regardless of sector – it is not just for manufacturing companies.

Lean tools and techniques are helping companies across the globe to address competitiveness issues within their businesses by building the capability of their people to identify problems, improve operations and create a more innovative organisation. In a nutshell, Lean is about doing things quicker, better and saving costs. Lean strives to remove waste and to continually improve a company.

### Eligibility

- *The programme is open to all micro-enterprises with up to ten employees and non-Enterprise Ireland/IDA clients employing between 10 – 50 employees on a limited basis in consultation with the LEO, except those involved in activities that the Local Enterprise Offices consider as ineligible (primary agricultural, fishery or aquaculture, coal and steel sectors) and those involving an unacceptable reputational risk including gambling, 'gaming' (as defined in the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1956), adult entertainment, tobacco products and cannabis-based products which are not authorised as medicines).*
- *In general, start-up businesses do not avail of the lean programme; however, start-ups that are trading for a minimum of 6 months and have generated revenues of more than €30k may be considered.*
- *Companies forming part of a holding group, franchise, linked companies etc., are only permitted to make one application.*
- *Multiple applications will not be considered.*



### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY



### Lynam Painting

#### Professional painting and decorating company

*'Our journey with the Lean program has been nothing short of transformative. Initially, I was skeptical—I didn't know much about Lean until another business owner recommended it. We faced a major hurdle: our sales process was painfully slow, stretching from initial client inquiries to final quotations. With Lean's guidance, we created custom quotation software that slashed this timeline by half, saving us around 10-12 hours a week.*

*We also overhauled our scheduling system. The new integrated software we adopted streamlined everything from job scheduling to invoicing, all in one place. This efficiency boost didn't just simplify processes—it enhanced our job completion rates and overall client happiness.*

*Signing up for Lean through the Local Enterprise Office was a breeze, and the benefits have been clear.*

*Embracing this program has fundamentally changed how we operate, making our business much more efficient and responsive. I wholeheartedly endorse the Lean program; it's been a game changer for us.'*

[www.lynampainting.ie](http://www.lynampainting.ie)

## Digital for Business

Small businesses need to maximise every advantage - and implementing a digital strategy can give businesses a real edge.

Digital for Business is a pilot initiative from the Local Enterprise Office designed to give Local Enterprise Office funded clients\* that digital edge - from optimising processes to delivering a seamless digital customer experience. The aim is to help businesses prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the business.

Digital for Business provides support to obtain digital strategy, technical and/or advisory services for eligible businesses.

Our expert digital consultants help to develop a unique digital strategy that transforms businesses by identifying where you are on your digital business journey, developing a digital adaptation plan based on your identified need and assisting you in implementing your digital plan.

It is not intended to cover costs associated with digital marketing, or hardware but rather areas like business process optimisation, enhancing your digital customer experience or utilising data better.

Digital for Business is open to businesses with between 1 and 50 employees that:

- Are established and trading for at least 6 months, registered, and operate within the area of the Local Enterprise Office.
- This support is considered not to give rise to unacceptable dead-weight (where the project would have proceeded anyway).
- Are solvent as demonstrated in the financial statements supplied.
- Sporting bodies that carry on activities which would be chargeable to tax under Case I or II of Schedule D but for an exemption set out in section 235 TCA are eligible to apply to Digital for Business.
- Charities that carry on activities that would be chargeable to tax as trading income, but for an available tax exemption under section 208 TCA, are also included within the scope of Digital for Business.

Find Out More



## Ineligible Businesses

- ❑ Companies with charitable status, commercial semi- state companies, “not for profit” organisations – which do not meet the above criteria, trade associations, company representation bodies such as Chambers of Commerce, Sporting Bodies – which do not meet the above criteria and other non-commercial bodies or associations are not eligible to avail of the Small Capital Grants.
- ❑ Are operating in the coal or steel sector.
- ❑ Are active in the primary agricultural, fishery or aquaculture sectors.
- ❑ Are involved in activities that Local Enterprise Offices considers as ineligible or as involving an unacceptable reputational risk. Ineligible activities include activities relating to:
  - » The gambling sector, including ‘gaming’ (as defined in the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1956), Adult entertainment, Tobacco and tobacco related products, Cannabis-based products which are not authorised as medicines.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

## NJB Packaging

Unit F6 Maynooth Business Campus,  
Straffan Rd, Maynooth, Co. Kildare,  
W23 F9F4

Founded in 1983, NJB Group has been at the forefront of the packaging industry in Ireland for over 35 years.

*‘At NJB, the Digital for Business support from the Kildare Local Enterprise Office has allowed us to streamline our order processing system by creating a live link between the office and production floor. This allows smooth processing of orders and workflow across teams and locations, leading to reduced errors and cost savings.*

*Digitising the process frees up the staff to focus on more value-add activities. Partnering with Kildare LEO for this support was a great success and we would recommend you go for it to help your business move forward’.*

[www.njb.ie](http://www.njb.ie)





The Grow Digital Voucher supports small and medium-sized enterprises with up to 50 employees in their Digitalisation journey by leveraging digital tools following on from a Digital for Business report.

Funding will be in the form of a grant. The grant aid will be 50% of eligible costs with minimum grant aid of €500 up to a maximum grant of €5,000 per application.



The aim of the scheme is to support small businesses by fostering digitalisation. Its main objectives are:

- *Boost Productivity and Growth: By embracing digital tools and practices, these businesses can streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and gain a competitive edge.*
- *Expand Reach and Customer Base: Digitalisation opens doors to new markets and customer interactions, allowing SMEs to connect with a wider audience beyond their locality.*
- *Bridge the Digital Divide: The White Paper acknowledges the potential gap in digital adoption between smaller and larger businesses. The aim is to equip SMEs with the resources and know how to bridge this gap and compete effectively in the digital landscape.*
- *Strengthen Locally Trading Businesses: The plan recognises the significance of local businesses to employment and regional development. By supporting their digital transformation, the government aims to solidify their contribution to the economy.*

Enterprises can be approved a maximum of two Grow Digital Voucher projects up to a maximum cumulative grant value of €5,000 as identified in their Digital for Business project to support their digitalisation journey.

Approval of a second Grow Digital Voucher is dependent on the demonstrated achievement of the progression of the business as outlined in the Digital for Business report.

Allowable expenditure will be towards supporting the Digitalisation progression of the applicant.

### Eligible Expenditure:

#### Software subscription fees

for eligible business software that is NEW to the business for a maximum of one year subscription (the business must incur the annual subscription cost before the grant can be paid).

- 1. that are “off the shelf”.
- 2. expanding on the number of existing software licenses for software systems already in use does not qualify.

Eligible software examples include:

- E-commerce software or software for customer relationship management.
- Online booking, payments, or appointments.
- Job tracking including field service management software.
- Order management or stock control software.
- Industry specific cloud SaaS software (where new to the company).
- Field management or workflow management software.
- Electronic invoicing or electronic signature software.
- Standard office software (for email, documents, spreadsheets, etc.) where not already in use by the company.
- Cyber security software (if new to the company).
- Cloud based accounting or payroll software (if moving to the cloud for these systems).
- 3D modelling software (including building information modelling).
- Analytics software (including AI systems) Website Development.

### Training and/or IT Configuration

- Where the business requires expert assistance in the set up; and/or integration of new software systems or ICT processes or where the business management or team require training to engage with/maintain the new system to allow for ease of use and to garner most benefit for the business. (Training and Configuration amount combined can be no more than 50% of the overall project cost).

### Ineligible Expenditure:

- Custom or bespoke software is not eligible for grant support.
- Systems for regulatory compliance do not qualify.

# Feasibility Study Grant

Feasibility/Innovation Grants are designed to assist the promoter with researching market demand for a product or service and examining its sustainability.

## Eligibility Criteria

- ❑ The enterprise must not employ more than 10 people.
- ❑ The enterprise must be established, registered, and operate within the geographic location of the Local Enterprise Office.
- ❑ The enterprise must operate in the commercial sphere.
- ❑ The enterprise must demonstrate a market for the product/service.
- ❑ The enterprise must have potential for growth in domestic and/or export markets and potential for new job creation.
- ❑ Expenditure may be considered under the following headings:
  - » Innovation Costs. E.g., Prototype development, research costs, and patent costs.
  - » Own Labour Research. Costs under this category may include own labour involved in carrying out research/prototype development. The maximum amount chargeable under this category is €400 per week, subject to the overall maximum under this category not exceeding 20% of the overall grant draw-down.
  - » Consultancy Costs. These include design fees and other consultancy fees.

## WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

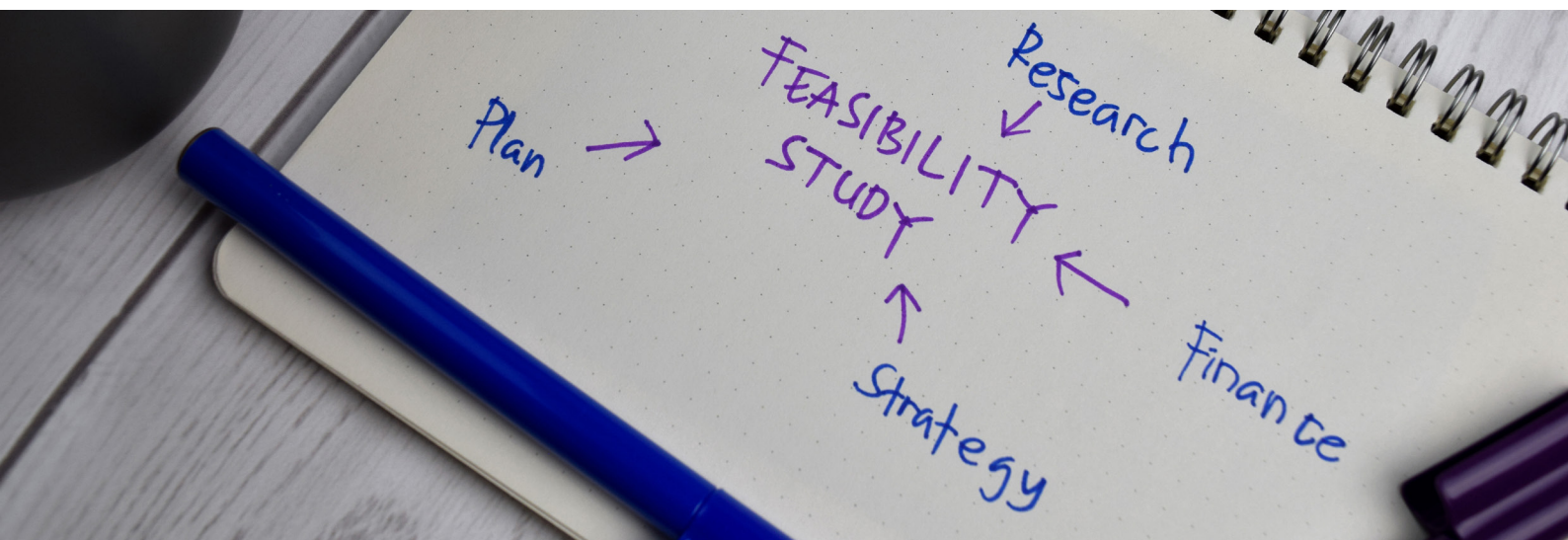
### Moon & Mellow

7 Millbridge Court Mill Lane,  
Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 Y7YY

*'The Feasibility Study enabled Moon and Mellow to work with specialist textile designers to develop samples for a new luxury apparel collection.'*

*We worked on sustainable production techniques and the prototyping of luxury products in sustainable fabrics. The Feasibility Study helped me to make informed strategic decisions on design and production.'*

[www.moonandmellow.com](http://www.moonandmellow.com)



## IP Strategy Offer

The IP Strategy offer is to incentivise companies to develop an IP strategy which is focused on capturing, managing and exploiting their R&D results to greater effect.

This offer is primarily targeted at SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) who are R&D performing and client companies of the Local Enterprise Office. It supports companies to work with an external advisor in order to address immediate IP issues related to R&D activity e.g. prior-art research in support of an RD&I Technical Feasibility study or IP Audit of existing R&D. Assignments will follow a short term (max 3 days over 4 months) external advisory methodology.

### Applicant companies must:

- Identify their main IP related challenges and opportunities.
- Justify how the IP Strategy assignment adds value e.g. by supporting the RD&I goals, reinforcing future RD&I performance, enhancing the potential to access new markets, enhancing the company's ability to sustain jobs and build international growth scale etc.
- Identify the external IP advisory service required.

### Programme: IP Start

#### Eligible Cost elements:

External IP Advisory service. (Comprising: Consultancy @ maximum €900 per day for a maximum of 3 days and "official fees", if applicable).

#### Eligible Expenditure:

Maximum €2,700 in total eligible expenditure.

#### Eligible Grant:

Maximum Grant of €2,160\* (80%) SMEs only.

### Eligibility

The grant is open to small companies (with between 1 and 50 paid employees) that meet the following criteria:

- Operate as manufacturing or eligible internationally traded services businesses.
- Operate commercially and are established, registered, and carrying on activity within the area of the Local Enterprise Office.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

## Waggi Connected Pets

MERITS, Devoy Quarter,  
Naas, Co.Kildare

*'We were encouraged by Local Enterprise Office Kildare to apply for the IP Start Grant. It has been critically important to us as multiple investors have asked if Waggi Connected Pets owns it's intellectual property.'*

*Using the IP Start Grant gave us a clear IP Strategy. This meant that we had time and opportunity to commercialise our R&D, knowing that our IP was protected.'*

[www.waggi.com](http://www.waggi.com)

## Innovation Vouchers

The Enterprise Ireland innovation voucher is a €5,000 voucher for use with any third-level research institute in Ireland, including MTU and UCC, to explore and work on a business innovation challenge.

This could be a new product idea, innovation on an existing product or a business challenge.

Each Innovation Voucher provides the applicant company with €5,000 worth of time with an expert third-level researcher to help you tease out an idea, develop a new product, or solve an important business or technical challenge.

Innovation Vouchers are available to all small and medium-sized limited companies registered in Ireland. Applications are not restricted to Enterprise Ireland client companies, but applicants must be limited companies.

Each applicant can access up to four vouchers.

See [www.innovationvouchers.ie](http://www.innovationvouchers.ie)

Find Out More



## Research, Development and Innovation Fund

The Research, Development, and Innovation (RD&I) and the application of knowledge are critical drivers for the future success of Irish industry.

The Enterprise Ireland RD&I Fund is designed to provide support for research, development, and technological innovation relevant at all stages of company development, and which will enable companies to progress from undertaking an initial research project to high level Innovation and R&D activity.

Eligible LEO Client Companies (sole traders are not eligible) can apply to the fund for support to develop new or improved product, services or processes under the following offers:

- RD&I Funding.
- IP Strategy Offer (IP Start and IP Plus).
- Innovation Partnership Programme.
- Innovation Vouchers.



### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### NutraCoPack

Croghan House, Celbridge Industrial Estate, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, W23 NH34

NutraCoPack offers a wide range of contract filling and packing services at their state of the art purpose built food grade facility is BRC Grade A accredited and Organic Certified.

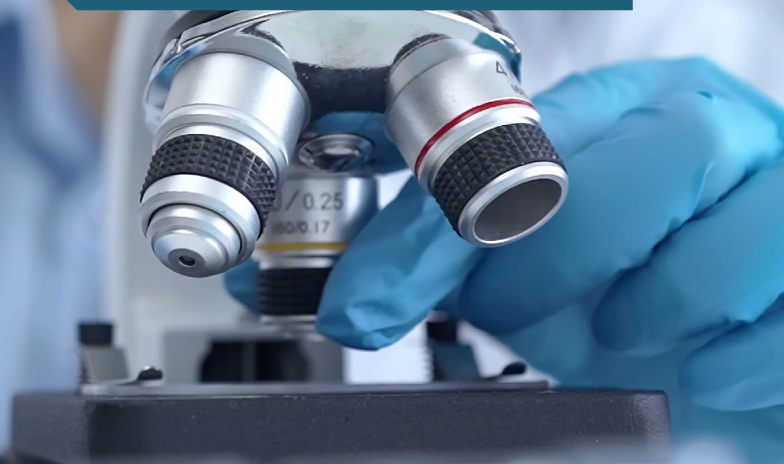
*'The RD&I grant from Kildare LEO was an amazing support to our business. We spent over 14 months researching & developing new concepts, automation techniques & packaging formats. The end result is a custom built fully automated packing process with high value health foods.*

*The support allowed us to deep dive into new processes, trial new material & in the end achieve a major success on several fronts.*

*Our process is the first of its kind in Europe and we have now secured a major contract as a result. The process and support from LEO gave us invaluable learnings to push the boundaries of our business. We now have extensive innovation and IP developed in the company which can be used as a major stepping stone for 2024 onward.*

*It wouldn't have been possible without the assistance from the amazing team at Kildare LEO.'*

[www.nutracopack.com](http://www.nutracopack.com)





## Export Specific Mentoring

Local Enterprise Office Kildare provides 1-1 mentoring support for first-time exporters, and for those already selling into international markets.

This 1-1 mentoring support can assist with technical customs-based questions in 1 session.

Or delve deep into market research, market identification and entry strategies over a number of months.

Mentors provide invaluable expertise and guidance on navigating complex export processes, helping small businesses avoid common pitfalls and costly mistakes.

Additionally, mentors can offer insights into market research, identifying and maximising lucrative opportunities, and tailoring strategies to target specific international markets effectively.

Through personalised support and advice, export mentoring empowers small businesses to expand their global reach, increase sales, and ultimately achieve sustainable growth in the competitive global marketplace.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### The Carpentry Store

Unit D4, Newhall, M7 Business Park,  
Co. Kildare, W91 XH68

Woodworking courses, supplies, tools  
and machinery store.

*'What I expected when I started the Export workshop and the outcome 12 weeks later are completely different. I have to say that I'm glad I signed up.*

*Deirdre and Louise are a wealth of knowledge, support and they question everything to ensure it benefits the business.*

*As we start our export journey we are better equipped to research, action and grow. That said everything that was covered on the workshop was thought provoking and has also enriched our domestic business'.*

[www.thecarpentrystore.com](http://www.thecarpentrystore.com)



## Market Explorer Grant

The Market Explorer Grant is open to small enterprises (with between 1 and 50 paid employees) that meet the following criteria:

- *Operate as manufacturing or eligible internationally traded services businesses and are solvent as demonstrated in the financial statements supplied and have current tax clearance from Revenue.*
- *Are not currently clients of Enterprise Ireland or IDA.*
- *Operate commercially and are established and trading for at least 12 months, registered, and carrying on activity within the area of the Local Enterprise Office.*
- *Have demonstrated intention to internationalise i.e.*
  1. *have completed Export Accelerator or*
  2. *similar LEO Exporter Programme or*
  3. *have developed an internationalisation plan or*
  4. *have initial small-scale exports that can be increased (suggestion is <10K).*

The amount of the grant is to a maximum of €10,000 or 50% of eligible costs. Support for the Market Explorer for Business grant applies when eligible companies seek to explore either a new geographic market for an existing product/service or an existing geographic market for a new product/service.

The grant will support first time and small-scale exporters to undertake essential market research and to support the development of viable and sustainable market entry strategies in new geographic markets for businesses. The financial assistance proposed will provide support towards costs incurred in researching new market opportunities for products and services. The eligible activities supported under the Market Explorer grant can be supported under the following cost categories:

- *Market Research.*
- *In Market Consultancy.*
- *Trade Fair Attendance.*
- *Trade Fair Exhibition.*
- *Overseas Travel.*
- *Subsistence.*

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Prelude Content

Bridgefield House, Jigginstown,  
Naas, Co. Kildare W91WRF9

Paul FitzSimons is an award-winning and IFTA-nominated film producer from Naas. Prelude Content is on the way to being a leading provider of film and television content for audiences around the world, working with industry leaders, and availing of current and emerging production and broadcasting methodologies.

*'LEO Kildare's Export Grant greatly helped my film production company Prelude Content. I attended the Tech Pre-Accelerator course in April/May 2023 which helped clarify and focus the company's mission and direction. It also directly contributed to the success of my business and its upcoming projects by supporting me to attend a prominent film industry event in the US in 2023. This bolstered my knowledge of the more technical elements of my industry, such as Virtual Production and post-production processes.'*

[www.preludecontent.com](http://www.preludecontent.com)



Please contact your Local Enterprise Office for further information, email [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)

## Customs Training

Local Enterprise Office Kildare's Customs Compliance programme will help participating companies to understand the urgent tasks and applications needed to mitigate costly customs delays and penalties.

They will learn how tariffs work and the need to correctly classify goods.

As much as possible, we aim to tailor this workshop to meet the specific sectors of participating companies and the challenges they face.

The training programme will cover 5 modules:

- *Understanding Customs – background to the role of customs and details of customs-business partnership.*
- *Customs Concepts: Compliance and Risk – Rules of Origin, Tariffs, Valuation.*
- *Customs Clearance Processes in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the UK.*
- *Understanding Special Customs Procedures Customs Authorisations – what is needed in your business and what is best to outsource.*

In addition, participants will gain an understanding of:

- *Free Trade Agreements.*
- *The Union Customs Code.*
- *Rules of Origin, Valuation, Classification Customs Declarations.*
- *Transit Declarations.*
- *Becoming an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO).*
- *Tariffs, Duty and VAT.*
- *Deferred Payments and Returned Goods Relief.*
- *UK Post-Brexit Rules Changes on Goods of Animal Origin.*

**This full-day programme is targeted at businesses importing or exporting goods who need to up-skill their team.**

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Kildare Candle Barn

Kildare Candle Barn, Doneaney, Kildare. Co. Kildare. R51HY51

Kildare Candle Barn creates an extensive range of luxury home fragrance products.

*'At Kildare Candle Barn I produce high quality hand poured candles, reed diffusers and home fragrance gift sets.*

*I had the opportunity to exhibit at Showcase with Local Enterprise Office Kildare. As a result I have just confirmed a repeat order from a large US retail chain who have ordered a full shipping container of product.*

*The customs training and advisory support I received around customs compliance taught me how tariffs work and the need to correctly classify goods. I am now confident in shipping my product internationally, at scale, knowing I have the correct processes and declarations in place'.*

[www.kildarecandlebarn.com](http://www.kildarecandlebarn.com)



## Selling Into Northern Ireland



InterTradelreland supports businesses across the island to grow through trading cross-border, innovating, collaborating, attracting investment, and making connections.

Their aim is to support your business to engage in efficient and effective trade between Ireland, Northern Ireland, and GB. The Trade Hub covers the latest customs, VAT, employment, and regulation advice as well as voucher support up to the value of £2,000 / €2,300 to accelerate export growth.

InterTradelreland's innovation pathway enables you to:

- *Explore what innovation is and what opportunities are available across the island to help your business develop new or improved processes, products or services.*
- *Plan and prioritise what will work best for your business at your stage of development.*
- *Collaborate with all-island innovation specialists, academics, and other businesses across the island to implement your innovation project.*

Learn more at [intertradeireland.com](http://intertradeireland.com)



## Enterprise Europe Network



The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) helps ambitious SMEs innovate and grow internationally. The EEN offers support and advice to SMEs, helping them make the most out of business opportunities.

It is delivered as part of a consortium with Enterprise Ireland, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, and the Local Enterprise Office.

The EEN helps businesses grow through customised support, new business and technology partnerships, commercial opportunities, licensing deals, and partner searches for EU funded R&D. Most of the services we provide are free of charge.

**For more information see [een.ec.europa.eu](http://een.ec.europa.eu) or the Local Enterprise Office [www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)**



## Export Development Programmes

For many Local Enterprise Office Kildare clients, their market is local or regional, for others, particularly in the technology, manufacturing and services sectors, the market potential is global. The Irish domestic market may simply be too small or underdeveloped, and selling internationally is the next step. Local Enterprise Office Kildare's Export Accelerator has the express aim of helping clients to strategise and plan for export sales and international business.

The Export Accelerator is ideal for those enterprises who;

- Are reaching market saturation in Ireland.
- Need economies of scale to be competitively priced.
- Have a truly innovative offering with global appeal.
- Have demand from international customers.
- Are seeing more competition from international companies.
- Can reach global markets with their digital marketing.

We are now in a world of global competition and global markets, so why not go global? There are many challenges when selling overseas, from language and culture to regulations and standards, from currency concerns to commissions, packaging to promotion, so do we stay or do we go?

First export sales are often accidental. Or markets are targeted because of connections or language without research or due diligence.

A lack of resources and understanding of what's required can limit ability to scale or realise value, or worse, can bring a good business down.

The Export Accelerator gets companies on their way to address the challenges by giving them, the tools to;

- Do the Market Research - to pick the optimal export market.
- Validate market demand, verify product/market fit.
- Develop a differentiated value proposition for competitive advantage.
- Consider the impact of culture, language and demographics.

- Learn about standards and regulations.
- Consider different business models and routes to market.
- Work on a Go To Market Strategy.
- Optimize sales process, channel management, customer experience.
- Learn how to manage performance – set targets, track progress.
- Consider resources required – finance, people, skills, business software, tools etc.

The outcome of the Accelerator will be a well-researched and validated Export Plan.

**The Export Accelerator combines workshops and 1-1 mentoring over a 4-6 month period.**

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### Hestio Limited

Riverview Business Centre,  
Hazelhatch Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare  
W23H0X6

Hestio helps enterprise cloud customers with IAC adoption through skill building, competency development and enablement.

*'The Export Development Programme transformed how we communicated our business value to potential customers both in-person and online by giving us access to experienced professional mentors and a collaborative environment of fellow entrepreneurs in which to create and develop a viable export strategy'.*

[www.hest.io](http://www.hest.io)





## Connecting Kildare: The Kildare Diaspora Network

The Kildare Diaspora Engagement Strategy (KDES) (2022 - 2026) outlines Kildare County Council's commitment to develop and foster its social, cultural and business ties with Kildare natives living abroad.

Global Ireland's Diaspora Strategy (2020 – 2025) recognises that Ireland's diaspora comprises varying degrees of connections to Ireland.

Kildare is a county rich in heritage and history including equine, military, music, literature, sport and much more. It is the birthplace of St Brigid, the patroness Saint of Ireland; her life and legacy are being celebrated and commemorated through the 'Brigid 1500' programme of events.

It is the birthplace of the global brand Guinness, its founder Arthur Guinness, and the great explorer Ernest Shackleton. The County has a long association with Ireland's Defence Force at The Curragh and is known as the 'thoroughbred county' given its vibrant equestrian sector.

Kildare's people are not limited by current geographical location and Kildare County Council wishes to help connect Kildare's global population, the diaspora, through relevant and interesting stories, events and news relating to Kildare's international connections.

**We look forward to hearing from Kildare's diaspora, please email [diaspora@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:diaspora@kildarecoco.ie)**





## Market Research Centre

Enterprise Ireland's Market Research Centre is an information service that provides Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Office clients access to extensive and authoritative market research resources. These include country reports, global company profiles, multi-sector reports, trend forecasts, global market analysis, as well as online trade and business journals.

This information can help companies and entrepreneurs validate a market opportunity, understand the competitive landscape, develop their value proposition, understand their target markets and refine their product/market fit. Access is by prior appointment via your Local Enterprise Office Business Advisor.

See [enterprise-ireland.com/en/market-research-centre](https://enterprise-ireland.com/en/market-research-centre)

## HIGH POTENTIAL STARTUP FUNDING (HPSU)

Enterprise Ireland's Innovative HPSU Fund is an equity investment for Enterprise Ireland HPSU clients on a co-funded basis to support the implementation of a company's business plans. HPSUs are start-up businesses with the potential to develop an innovative product or service for sale on international markets and the potential to create ten jobs and €1m in sales within three years of starting up.

Enterprise Ireland is keen to work with innovative, internationally-focused start-ups interested in becoming HPSUs.

To understand more about high-potential start-ups, the eligibility criteria and how to access the HPSU offer, see [globalambition.ie/hpsu/](https://globalambition.ie/hpsu/)

## PRE SEED START FUND

One of Enterprise Ireland's key ambitions is to deliver a support structure for early-stage companies and entrepreneurs to meet their business development needs.

With the Pre-Seed Fund, they are supporting early-stage companies in reaching the key technical and commercial milestones required to attract future seed funding.

What is provided?

- *A €50k or €100k investment in the form of convertible loan note instrument.*
- *The support of an Enterprise Ireland Development Advisor.*
- *10 mentoring sessions through the Enterprise Ireland panel of mentors.*
- *Access to the Enterprise Ireland Market.*
- *Research Centre for market sector insights.*

Who is the Pre-Seed Start Fund for?

- *Ideally the start-up would have a Minimal Viable Product (MVP) or be live in Beta and have early demonstrable customer validation.*
- *A validated customer proposition with market research conducted.*
- *A clear execution plan identifying key milestone to be achieved.*
- *Evidence of innovation, internationalisation potential and employment capacity.*
- *A team with experience, domain knowledge and a balance of skills.*
- *Early-stage companies in the Manufacturing & Internationally Traded Services sectors.*
- *An existing or potential client of Enterprise.*
- *Former Competitive Start Fund (CSF) investee companies may apply for a maximum of €50,000 if they are suitable.*

**To learn what the Pre-Seed Fund can be used for, see [enterprise-ireland.com/en/supports/pre-seed-start-fund](https://enterprise-ireland.com/en/supports/pre-seed-start-fund)**

## Social Enterprise

Social enterprises are businesses which work primarily to improve the lives of people. Their core objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact.

They frequently work to support disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, etc., or to address issues such as food poverty or environmental matters.

There is a wide spectrum of social enterprises in Ireland, from local community-based enterprises to larger enterprises, some of which trade internationally. They create employment and support many government policy objectives in areas such as labour market activation, health care, and the environment.

Like other businesses, social enterprises pursue their objectives by trading in goods and services on an ongoing basis. However, any surpluses generated by social enterprises are re-invested into achieving social objectives, rather than maximising profit for their owners.

Their primary focus on social impact sometimes makes it difficult for social enterprises to gain access to the type of supports that are available to other enterprises to develop and grow.

The Irish Social Enterprise Network is a National Body for Social Enterprise in Ireland. ISEN aim



to point people in the right direction to get their social enterprise off the ground or their organisation to the next level. They partner and collaborate with existing organisations to ensure you have the supports you need to thrive as a social enterprise. Anyone can join through [socent.ie](http://socent.ie) and avail of the services. These include operating a National Social Enterprise Helpline through 089-2550289 or by email [info@socent.ie](mailto:info@socent.ie). They provide news and information through regular newsletters and the website.

## RETHINK IRELAND

Rethink Ireland provides cash grants and business support to charities and social enterprises working in Irish communities across the country. These organisations are not just thinking differently but are putting their ideas into practice and building a more just, equal, and sustainable Ireland. Rethink Ireland works with companies, families, individuals, foundations, and the Irish Government who understand that new thinking in Ireland is needed. Since the first year of operations in 2016, Rethink Ireland has created a €96 million Social Innovation Fund. They have partnered with companies, trusts, foundations, families, and individuals to create funds tackling issues such as inequality and educational disadvantage. 415 social innovations have been supported, which have reached over 82900 people. Over 667 jobs have been created and over 2700 people have been helped into employment.

### PRE START-UP

Rethink Ireland was delighted to launch the “Start a Social Enterprise Business Course” as part of the Social Enterprise Development Fund in 2022.

Running again in 2024 and 2025, the course takes place over six weeks and supports those with an idea for a social enterprise. This course takes the emerging idea and gives the participants the tools to take the idea to the next stage. It will be the launch pad for the idea and also, importantly, a pathway to additional supports. Upon successful completion of the course, participants will be given a chance to apply and pitch for an Award worth €10,000.

### START-UP

Building on the success and learnings of the Social Enterprise Start-Up Fund, which ran in 2021 and 2022, as well as insights from the Social Finance project, Rethink Ireland, together with Community Finance Ireland and funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, launched an innovative financial product for the social enterprise sector in 2023; the Hybrid Social Finance Loan.

## Social Enterprise

This model combines a non-repayable cash grant, business supports and a zero-interest loan for social enterprises which are first-time borrowers.

### BUSINESS EXPANSION

Rethink Ireland currently operates three funds supporting social enterprises to scale their business and increase their sustainability.

- *The Social Enterprise Development Fund completed its sixth year in 2023 and supported 8 Awardees to further grow and solidify their social enterprise.*
- *The Social Enterprise Step-Up Fund will support established, mid-stage social enterprises over two years to get ready for the next stage of growth.*
- *The Growth Fund currently supports one social enterprise operating at a nationwide level and will increase this number in 2024.*

Example: Impact of their €4.4m Social Enterprise Development Fund

The Social Enterprise Development Fund was created in 2018 by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund to find and back social enterprises that add to the social and economic fabric of their community by way of social impact. It was the first social enterprise-specific Fund at Rethink Ireland and has created an impact in the sector ever since.

Since 2018:

- *The Fund has supported 118 social enterprises through cash grants and non-financial supports.*
- *Supported over 200 social enterprises from all 31 Local Authorities areas.*
- *Awardees delivered services to over 400,000 people throughout Ireland.*
- *Awardees mobilised 16,600 volunteers across the areas of Employment, Green Transition and Equality.*

- *Over 2022 and 2023, the Social Enterprise Business Course supported 200 social enterprises at idea stage to join a six-week course equipping them with the key information and tools to set up their social enterprise.*
- *Over 219 jobs have been created within the sector.*

Social Enterprise Trends Over the Past 6 Years:

- *The sector has matured: the applications received have consistently improved in calibre, and there are more large organisations 'incubating' social enterprises.*
- *There is a need for early-stage supports. Over the years, many applications to the SED Fund were disqualified because they were deemed too early stage at the time of application. This increased from 22% in 2020 to 34% in 2021. This spurred the creation of the Social Enterprise Start-Up Fund and the addition of the 'Start a Social Enterprise Business Course' to the Social Enterprise Development Fund.*
- *Impact Measurement has been strengthened in the sector overall: increasing numbers of organisations have a strong evidence base, have tested their social innovations, and have developed theories of change before the application stage.*
- *Social Enterprises are looking to scale, expand their offering and replicate, looking for supports to do so sustainably.*

For more information, go to [www.rethinkireland.ie](http://www.rethinkireland.ie)



## Shopfront Improvement, Universal Accessibility and Age Friendly Grant

Kildare County Council established the Shop Front Improvement, Universal Accessibility & Age Friendly Grant as part of its Retail Support Scheme to financially assist and support independent business owners to improve the appearance of their shop fronts or commercial properties.

We encourage an emphasis on works to enhance accessibility and/or add age-friendly elements to the premises.

This funding is being provided in recognising a building's facade makes a big impact on our town centres. They help form people's first impressions of a town centre, so their condition can really affect a town's image. Smart shop fronts will make a town feel more prosperous, improve its image, and contribute towards a stronger sense of identity.

Your proposals do not have to involve a significant or expensive change. Simple jobs like repainting a shop front or seasonal window dressing may qualify. Each application will be assessed on its own merits and any job that will enhance the town's character may qualify for grant aid.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

#### The Castle Inn

##### Carbury Village

*'The Kildare County Council Shopfront & Accessibility Grant Scheme has been excellent for our business. The grant allowed us to make our premises fully accessible through the installation of a wheelchair ramp.*

*As a result we have been able to extend our customer base. We also received grant funding to repaint the outside of the building. The fresh look helps to attract patrons and also enhances the visual impact of the building as the focal point of our small rural community in Carbury - I would certainly recommend other businesses apply for this grant funding in the future'.*

Find Out More



## Retail Window Merchandising Grant

The Retail Window Merchandising Grant provides financial support to retailers and businesses, in our town centres, to design and enhance their window displays. An attractive and inviting street-scape plays a pivotal role in enhancing the retail experience across County Kildare.

The Retail Window Merchandising Grant is administered through Kildare County Council and has the right to use their discretion in regard to processes and the development of terms and conditions that are appropriate for the County's street-scapes and businesses.

All applicants will be required to comply with planning codes, legislative requirements, and other compliance requirements.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

The grant can be used for general internal displays including lighting and shelving and can be employed in conjunction with festival days and public holidays (e.g. St Brigid, St Patrick, Easter, Hallowe'en and Christmas) and local events (e.g. sporting events and race meetings).

To find out more and submit an application, visit [www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)

Find Out More



#### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

### Square Coffee

3 Market Square, Kildare Town.

*'As a small local business we were very fortunate to have been able to avail of the Shop Front Grant from LEO Kildare for our newest shop in Athy. The whole process from start to completion was seamless and well supported by the brilliant team over at Kildare Leo with a particular thank you to Kiera who was always at hand to help with any questions we had.'*

*The support of the grant allowed us to upgrade the shopfront to the level we aspired it to be and it has greatly enhanced the street view and beautiful river corner where it is situated. We love that our customers love it as much as we do.'*

[www.squarecoffee.ie](http://www.squarecoffee.ie)





## Business Clusters & Supports by Sector

This is a place for creative startups and established crafts businesses to inspire you to excellence, by promoting stronger cross-border collaboration and initiatives between entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, and entrepreneurial support organisations.

This creative cluster is designed to teach those who work in or with the creative business industry various internationalisation tactics, business growth skills, and to ensure that they have relevant information.

Kildare Creates assists creative business owners in acquiring the abilities necessary to internationalise their network and create a more successful business.

### GATHER

A series of selling and retail-focused opportunities for creative brands which have originated in Kildare.

The objective is to inspire and support collaboration between brand owners, creating unique and impactful events that raise awareness of the creative talent within Kildare.

Located in the Old Courthouse in Kildare Town to be redeveloped as the proposed Craft, Creativity and Design Hub for the County's entrepreneurs in this space.

As a 'self-sustaining growth town' with a growing tourism footprint, Kildare Town is primed to be the home of Craft for the County's growing and mature enterprising and creative industry.

Join our network or find out more at [www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)

#### SPOTLIGHT



### Design Hub

Southwells, Market Square, Kildare Town.

Located in the Old Courthouse in Kildare Town to be redeveloped as the proposed Craft, Creativity and Design Hub for the County's entrepreneurs in this space.

As a 'self-sustaining growth town' with a growing tourism footprint, Kildare Town is primed to be the home of Craft for the County's growing and mature enterprising and creative industry.

[www.instagram.com/gatherkildare](https://www.instagram.com/gatherkildare)



Find Out More





## Food & Beverage Cluster

The objective for the Food and Beverage Cluster is to create a unique food and drink eco-system where local people are proud of their local produce, where companies have the capabilities and supports to create world-class hospitality and product experiences, where scaling and exporting is enabled, whilst respecting nature and our environment.

Our Food and Beverage Cluster aims to promote consumption, exports and engagement through education, marketing and business supports.

From 2025, County Kildare's Food, Beverage & Skills Innovation Hub in Athy will be home to the County's food and beverage entrepreneurs.

The hub, situated at the refurbished old Model School in Athy Town, will provide entrepreneurs a dynamic and flexible space to develop their products as well as the soft supports and training required for their businesses to flourish in Ireland's competitive landscape.

### SPOTLIGHT



## Food, Beverage & Skills Innovation Hub

From 2025, County Kildare's Food, Beverage & Skills Innovation Hub in Athy will be home to the County's food and beverage entrepreneurs.

The hub, situated at the refurbished old Model School in Athy Town, will provide entrepreneurs a dynamic and flexible space to develop their products as well as the soft supports and training required for their businesses to flourish in Ireland's competitive landscape.

It will also provide an up-skilling and apprenticeship platform for new entrants, younger people and the unemployed to learn the skills needed to enter the food and beverage space thus safeguarding elements of Kildare's hospitality sector for years to come.



Mary O'Sullivan, Beara Bitters





The Engage@Teagasc Team support a wide range of industry engagements and entrepreneurship including accessing collaborative research or consultancy to solve business challenges, adopt intellectual property opportunities, develop, and up-skill potential entrepreneurs to bring new ideas, technologies and talent to businesses that will result in new products, processes or services.

#### **Teagasc Supports for Food: Industry Development**

Teagasc supports the Irish Agri-food industry through the provision of advice, consultancy, and specialist technical services. These services include new product development and reformulation, scale-up processing, product testing and sensory analysis. Teagasc deliver in-company and public training programmes to address specific industry needs and skills gaps and work with food companies providing consultancy services to ensure the highest standards of food safety and quality are achieved.

The Food Works programme is an accelerator programme for high potential, ambitious food, and drink start-ups run by Teagasc, Bord Bia and Enterprise Ireland.

#### **Training opportunities offered by Teagasc can be viewed at [www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)**

The National Prepared Consumer Food Centre (NPCFC) is located at the Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre, Dublin, Ireland. It is a leading-edge research and development facility dedicated to supporting food companies and research providers in piloting collaborative projects, to maximise value creation opportunities and to address challenges across the food sector.

The Centre incorporates a large food processing pilot plant, a dedicated meat unit, a food packaging facility, development kitchens and a sensory analysis suite. It also encompasses access to modern analytical laboratories to characterise foods in terms of nutritional, compositional, microbial and sensory profiles allowing complete product and process development.



Sustainable growth is fundamental to the continued success of the Irish food, drink, and horticulture industry. Working closely with Irish companies, Bord Bia helps to build the capability of businesses to evaluate, plan and deliver growth in strategically selected priority markets.

**Learning Zone:** A digital platform to enhance and develop skills, support existing business, and enhance new opportunities. There are over 20 modules, such as 'Diversification into Foodservice', 'Market Planning and Market Execution', 'Preparation for Buyer Meetings', 'Supporting your Export Listing', and 'Getting Ready to Export', just to mention a few. Each module offers concise and comprehensive insights while providing the necessary skills and learnings to apply to everyday decision-making. These modules enable businesses to up-skill in key business competencies at a time and place suitable to each one, accessible on desktop, tablet, or phone.

Specialised teams from Bord Bia's overseas offices work closely with a client company to assess export market potential. First steps in this process include market readiness assessments and market study visits to better understand the target market before progressing to the next level, which will include bespoke buyer meetings and market activation. Participating in Trade Shows or Trade Missions will enable Bord Bia clients to enhance their export potential with existing and new buyers.

Brand development services and Marketing Assistance Grants are also available for eligible brand owner companies.

**For more information visit [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)**



## Focus on Women in Business

Kildare Local Enterprise Office is committed to empowering Kildare's Women in Business, providing a space for collaboration, learning, development, and business opportunities.

She Succeeds events take place each month and focus on different areas of business development.

She Succeeds aims to:

- Increase the number of women-led Kildare based companies growing internationally.
- Increase the number of women becoming entrepreneurs.
- Increase the number of women-led start-ups with high growth potential.

She Succeeds works closely with Network Ireland (Kildare Branch), supporting female entrepreneurs through networking and mentoring.



Join our network or find out more at  
[www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)





Quarterly events, site visits and trade missions to accelerate digital transformation of Kildare's manufacturers, ensuring their competitiveness in international markets.

The objectives and supports of this cluster align to the Future Jobs Strategy Pillars including embracing innovation and technological change, improving productivity, enhancing skills and accelerating internationalisation.

Specifically, this cluster aims to:

- *Engage all stakeholders in the manufacturing ecosystem and value chain in County Kildare (including LEO clients, non-LEO clients, large/ international firms, and R&D/ academia).*
- *Enhance the competitiveness and resilience of member companies to respond to changing market challenges and opportunities.*
- *Deliver R&D collaboration between cluster members, education institutions and support agencies in the region utilising the advantage of Maynooth Works/ Maynooth University and the Kildare ETB, to build stronger linkages with our research institutes and to increase the average investment in R&D.*



Our Retail Series supports the bricks and mortar retail businesses of Kildare with a programme of training and mentoring annually.

Kildare County Council funds a grant support scheme to assist our local businesses in enhancing the exteriors of their premises playing a vital role in bringing a vibrant and attractive feel to the street-scapes of the towns and villages county-wide.

The Shopfront Improvement, Universal Accessibility & Age-Friendly and the Retail Window Merchandising grant schemes provide an excellent opportunity for businesses on our main thoroughfares to paint, install new doors and windows, enhance their signage and merchandising ultimately making the County's street-scapes more attractive to passers-by. KCC provides 50% matched funding to its businesses to invest in their premises and sustain their presence; 75% can be awarded when businesses invest in enhancing access points under the principals and guidelines of Universal Accessibility and Age-Friendliness.

KCC's Commercial Incentive Grant, Online Property Portal and one-to-one proactive engagement with premise owners and new entrants to Kildare assists greatly with connecting enterprise with opportune space in which to do business.

Join our network or find out more at [www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare)





Nurturing Kildare's emerging and established tech innovators, this Tech Cluster brings tech companies, start-ups, innovators and educators together with a collective goal to stimulate the tech sector across Kildare and into the mid-east region.

The cluster driven by Kildare LEO works closely with: MERITS, Enterprise Ireland, Maynooth University, Carlow IT; Kildare Wicklow ETB; Wicklow and Meath Local Enterprise Office and the IDA.

Across the regions of Kildare, Wicklow and Meath, the 'Mid East Tech Cluster' is driven by MERITS (Mid East Regional Innovation Thinkspace) and the Kildare Local Enterprise office.



## CREATECH @ MERITS



Our newest sub-cluster, building on the Digital Creative Industries Ireland Roadmap for the Mid-East Region, places focus on innovative content creation. CreaTech brings together creative skills and emerging technologies to create new ways of engaging audiences and to inspire business growth and investment. Building on the Creative Ireland Roadmap, CreaTech embraces the commercial and cultural possibilities of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, 5G, and other developing fields.

**This Tech Cluster incubates new startup technology businesses by providing flexible desk space, along with bespoke business supports and training and by hosting industry specific networking opportunities.**

The 10 week MERITS Tech Pre Accelerator programme catapults these startup businesses to the next stage by helping founders secure their first customers, build an MVP and structure their revenue models.

**The quarterly Tech Cluster meet ups provide inspiration from founders who have built, sold, or currently run some of Ireland's most successful companies in the technology sector.**

For scaling business, the supports are tailored for international trading, market expansion and financial assistance, along with fully serviced office space and access to smart meeting rooms.

These events also provide tech professionals and business leaders with regular opportunities to meet and network, before listening to presentations by indigenous and international technology companies.

To find out more [www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/)



## Textiles & Circular Economy

Building on County Kildare's long and fine history in fashion and textiles, Kildare County Council acquired an old bank building in Monasterevin (pictured right) and undertook a feasibility study for it to be redeveloped as the proposed Fashion and Textile Design Hub for the County's entrepreneurs in this space.

It is envisaged that the Hub will be a not-for-profit social initiative to support newly graduated designers, established designers and SMEs in the Fashion and Textile industry of Kildare and the Mideast of Ireland.

The circular economy will provide the foundations of the Hub's operating model by way of using waste material from the textile industry as the tools for product development and training of the next generation of creators.

As well as assisting the County's community of creators, KCC will support the training and upskilling of new entrants, school-leavers and the unemployed to enter this vibrant sector.



If you are interested in finding out more, please email us at [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)



## Kildare's Thriving Ecosystem

Kildare is making the most of its young population and booming economic profile with a hugely successful working hubs network.

Kildare's population has rapidly increased in recent decades, with a level of growth far ahead of the national average.

Kildare is now the fifth-highest populated county in Ireland, with Census 2022 showing numbers had grown by 11 per cent to 247,774, an increase of 25,270 in four years.



ACDAL Project Centre

It also has the highest proportion of young residents (under 24 years) in the state at nearly 37 per cent, which amounts to 81,000 young people, the fifth- highest number nationally.

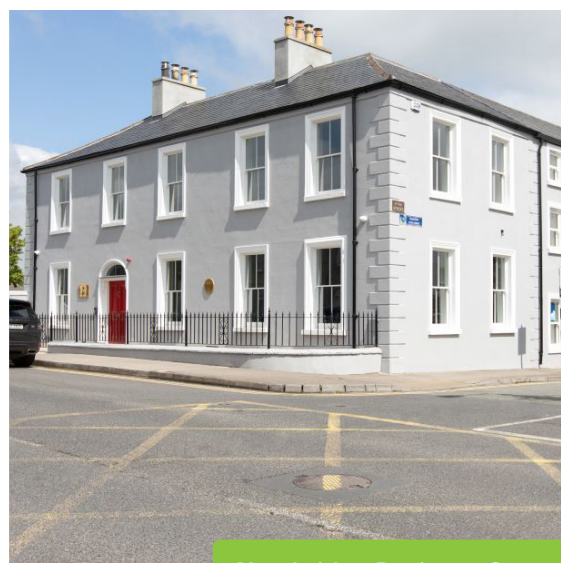
Over the next 20 years, the population is expected to increase by 18.6 per cent, meaning the county will continue to experience significant growth.



Ballymore Hub



Athy Community Enterprise Centre



Newbridge Business Centre

## The K-Hub Network

### Conduits for entrepreneurship, enterprise creation and innovation

Hubs and Co-working spaces have an expanded and important role to play in this new flexible work model by providing entrepreneurs and workers with office or desk space and shared facilities close to their homes and when they need them.

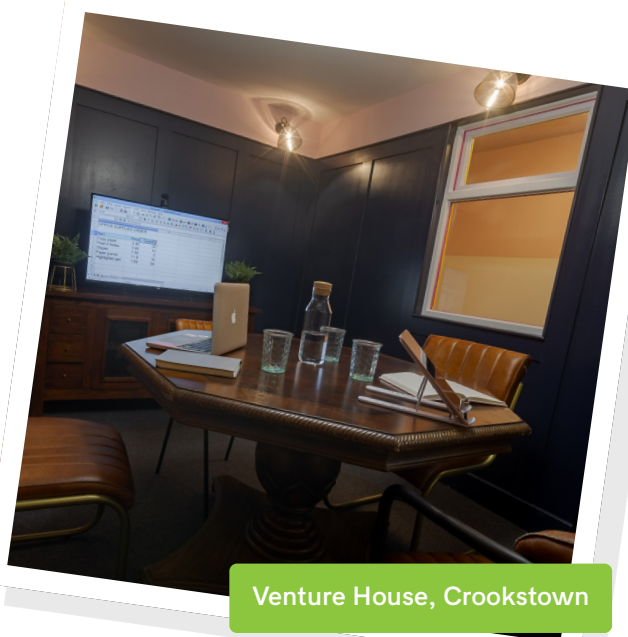
Hubs also provide aspects of the social entrepreneurial network or the 'ecosystem' for clients and their staff and valuable services such as reception, meeting rooms, canteen facilities, storage and parking.

Hubs also play an important societal function in promoting a quality of life and healthy work / life balance for individuals and families.

Hubs are much more than workspaces for remote workers. They are the conduits for entrepreneurship, enterprise creation and innovation and a key instrument in enterprise and industrial policy. The incubation cycle means that our enterprise hubs can continuously produce high value employment as clients start, grow, scale and exit. Hubs are a primary instrument in stimulating indigenous enterprise and promoting innovation across the local SME base.



MERITS, Naas



Venture House, Crookstown



National Equine Innovation Centre

Hubs can also play a useful role in the enterprise ecosystem by building partnerships with FDI operators and HEI's to create second sites for expansion projects or placing teams in an innovation and collaboration environment.

## K-Hubs

Kildare county has a strong county-wide spread of hub facilities.

These hubs have emerged over time through a wide and diverse set of partners, stakeholders and users.

Ownership structures vary from community organisations to local authorities, HEI's, statutory agencies and also private ownership and partnership models.

The hubs can be found in both urban and rural settings and often reflect the sectoral make up of industry in the subject location.

In total 15 hubs exist in Co. Kildare with a combined gross floorspace of circa 14,200 sq.m. This does not include 5 existing libraries which have some remote working desks and capacity and the two BCP's with same offering.



## Find a Hub

### MERITS

Devoy Quarter, Naas – W91 FE8V  
joinus@merits.ie | 045 818960

### ALLENWOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Station Road, Allenwood – W91 F141  
reception@acdal.ie | 045 870804

### ATHY FOOD, DRINK & SKILLS INNOVATION HUB

localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie | 045 980838

### THE NATIONAL EQUINE INNOVATION CENTRE

Irish National Stud, R51 DD56  
joinus@merits.ie | 045 818960

### MAYNOOTH WORKS

Business Innovation Centre, Maynooth University - W23 F2H6  
Maynoothworks@mu.ie | 01 7086589

### BALLYMORE HUB

Market Square, Ballymore Eustace - W91 XER2  
manager@ballymorehub.com | 087 6715 261

### VENTURE HOUSE

Crookstown, Ballitore - R14 K125  
hello@venturehouse.ie | 085 7466566

### BUSINESS BARN

Kellytown Leixlip.  
<https://businessbarn.net>

### DIGITAL OFFICE CENTRE

Maynooth Business Campus.  
info@docentre.com | 01 5413700

### COUNTY KILDARE CHAMBER IHUB

Naas Town Centre - W91 KV4H  
info@countykildarechamber.ie | 045 894074

### OSPREY HUB

Osprey Hotel, Naas - W91 X40K.  
info@osprey.ie | 045 881111

### NEWBRIDGE BUSINESS CENTRE

Newbridge - W12 CY98  
info@newbridgebusinesscentre.ie | 045 833 600

### ATHY COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Woodstock South Industrial Estate, Kilkenny Road Athy  
localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie | 059 8634534

### CLANE PROJECT CENTRE

Clane Business Park - W91 ATP8  
info@claneprojectcentre.ie | 045861500

### MONASTEREVIN FASHION & TEXTILES DESIGN HUB

Monasterevin - W34 TF40  
localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie | 059 8634534

## Innovation Partners



Maynooth University is an internationally recognised institution located 25 kilometres outside of Dublin. One of four constituent universities of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth University in 2023 ranked # 1 in Ireland (85th in the world) in the latest Times Higher Education (THE) Best Young University Rankings.

Maynooth University celebrated its 25th birthday in 2022, having been formally established as an autonomous university in 1997. Yet, it traces its origins to the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795, drawing inspiration from a heritage that includes over 200 years of education and scholarship.

Today, Maynooth University is a place of lively contrasts - a modern institution, dynamic, rapidly- growing, research-led and engaged, yet grounded in historic academic strengths and scholarly traditions.

With over 15,000 students from more than 100 countries, Maynooth offers a range of programmes at undergraduate, Master's and PhD level in the humanities, science and engineering, and social sciences, including business, law, and education. The University also offers a range of international programmes and partnerships.

Find Out More



Through inclusive education and high-quality research, South East Technological University Carlow drives innovation, empowers communities, and delivers transformative impact for the south east of Ireland.

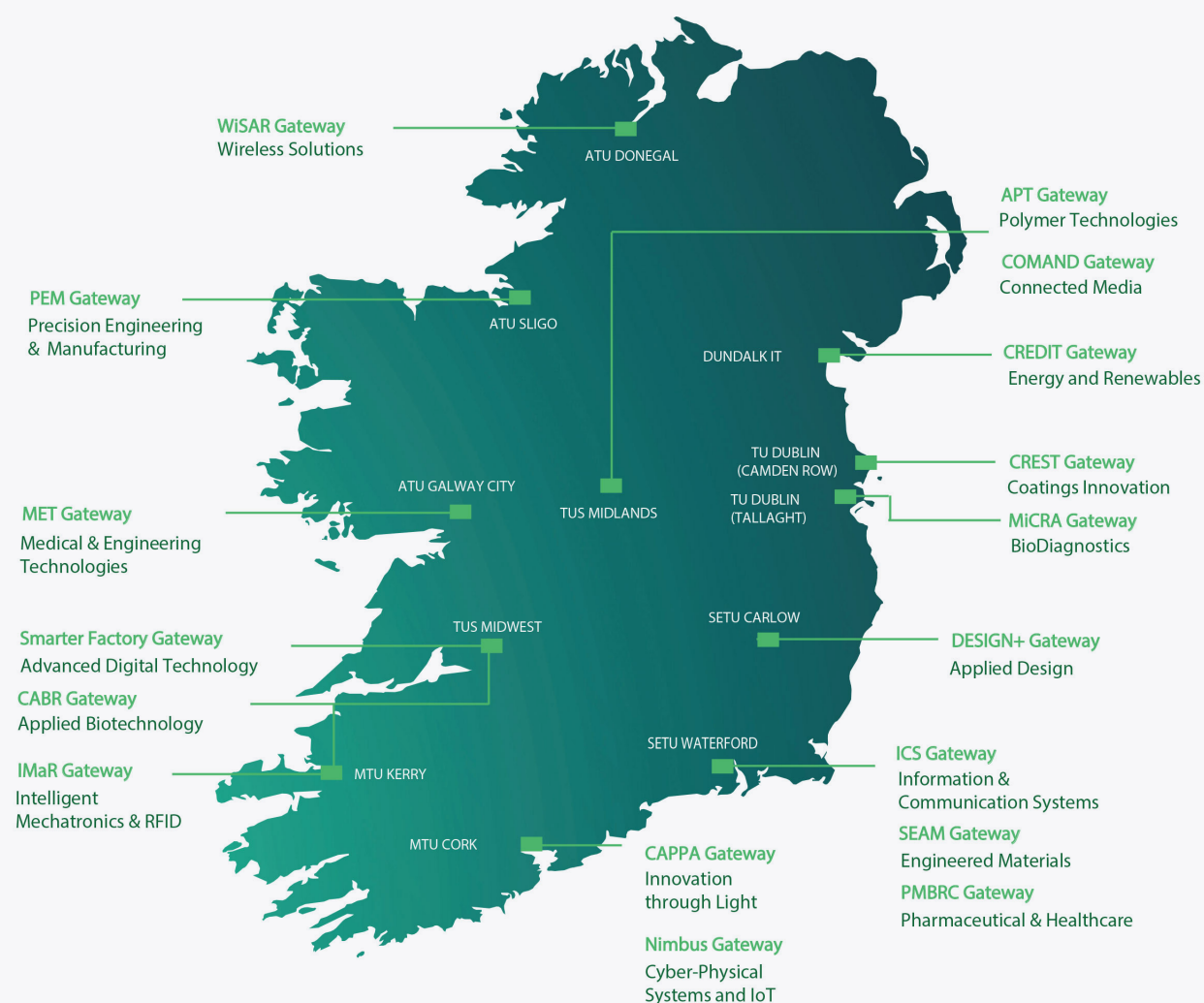
SETU, as a leading Technological University, will continually elevate and enhance its performance across teaching, research & innovation, and engagement, supported by robust governance, management and operational excellence.

In this way, the University will create, enable and sustain the south east as a world-class innovation region and will have transformative impact on our community, our region, and the wider world.



Find Out More





## Technology Gateways

Enterprise Ireland Technology Gateways works in partnership with Technological Universities and Institutes of Technology across Ireland.

Their 17 specialised Gateways and 3 sectoral clusters deliver innovation expertise and solutions for Irish industry.

The Technology Gateway Network focus on key technology areas, aligned to industry needs in areas such as mobile, polymers, photonics, coatings, industrial design, mechatronics, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, wireless technologies and precision engineering. Each centre works in conjunction with industry to

aid the research and development of innovative products and services through a dedicated team of full-time researchers and engineers.

Each Gateway acts as a portal to the industry focused capability across the network and beyond to the wider research infrastructure in Ireland. Gateway staff are always happy to discuss potential collaborations with industry.

**For more information contact the Technology Gateway Support Office;**  
[www.technologygateway.ie](http://www.technologygateway.ie)

Find Out More





# County Kildare Chamber

Advancing business together

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation in Kildare, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 38,000 employees across the county, County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland.

Given the significant breadth and depth of its membership, and their representation on various bodies at local and national level, County Kildare Chamber constitutes the representative voice for business in Kildare.

Visit [countykildarechamber.ie](http://countykildarechamber.ie)



## Business Networks



**Network  
Ireland**

**Kildare**

*Leading  
Supporting  
Collaborating*



Network Ireland Kildare Branch has over 100 members and organises monthly events for members and guests to support women in their professional and personal development.

They support their members and assist them in networking through introductions and interactions with other women in a supportive environment which offers training, mentoring and an opportunity for women to call on other members with specialist expertise for help.

It also provides a forum for established women to develop professional contacts.

Membership fee is 195 euro per annum.

**For more details on how to join or for any other queries, please contact [kildare@networkireland.ie](mailto:kildare@networkireland.ie)**

Skillnet offers a variety of training courses and up-skilling opportunities to members.

### Learning and Development

Skillnet has the knowledge, expertise, and resources available to guide you on the right path to learning & development.

Skillnet will help you identify skills gaps, source trainers, adapt content and provide funding to help you get the most out of your training.

**For more details on how to join or for any other queries, please contact [info@skillnetireland.ie](mailto:info@skillnetireland.ie)**





## Events & Programmes

Each year the Local Enterprise Offices run a series of programmes and events to promote entrepreneurship across all sectors and regions...



### LOCAL ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES AT SHOWCASE

Showcase, an initiative of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland is Ireland's international creative expo and takes place annually. To support the Irish craft and design sector, Local Enterprise Offices support companies to exhibit within the 'Local Enterprise Showcase' at the event, to enable them to connect with national and international trade buyers.

Local Enterprise Showcase highlights the best up and coming new craft and design businesses from across the country.



### LOCAL ENTERPRISE AT THE NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Each year a select number of small businesses from across the country will have an opportunity to promote themselves at one of Ireland's biggest events, as part of the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships. 31 small businesses, one from each LEO, take a stand in the Local Enterprise Village in the heart of the Ploughing Championships, opening their businesses up to almost 300,000 prospective customers across the 3 days of the event.



### NATIONAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS

The National Enterprise Awards, highlight the best small businesses from across the country. With each Local Enterprise Office nominating a business for the awards, it's a chance to see some of Ireland's best start-ups. The Awards include categories for Exporting, Innovation, and Sustainability along with an overall award.



## National Women's Enterprise Day

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DAY

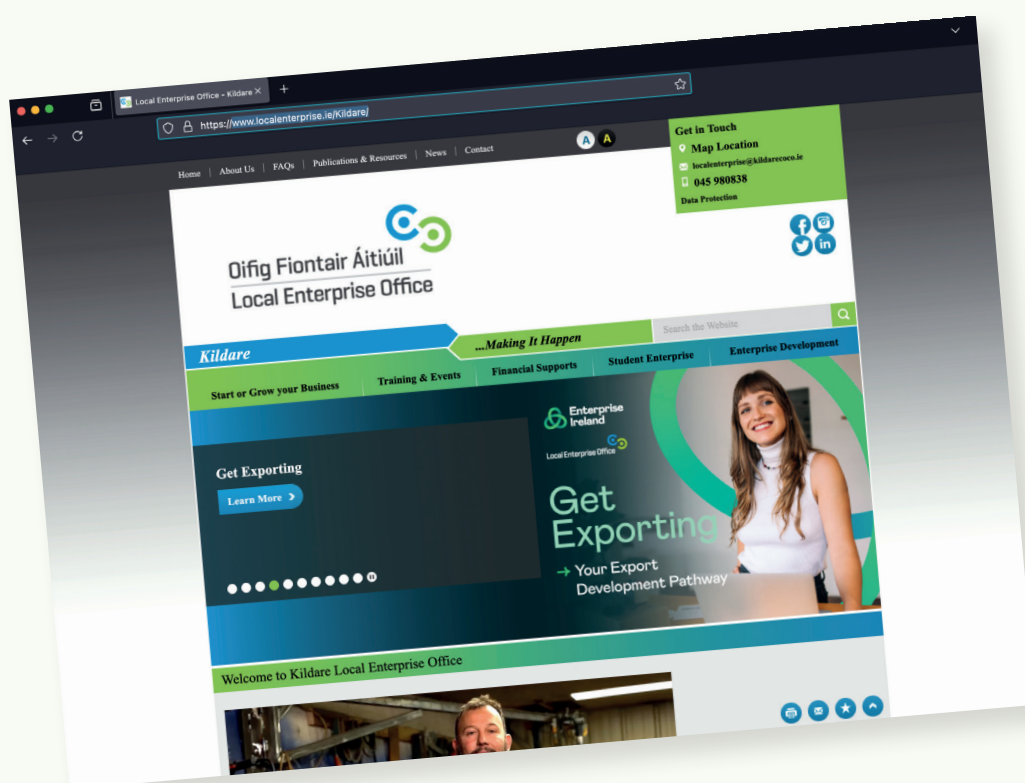
National Women's Enterprise Day, Ireland's largest female enterprise event is a full day programme to promote, encourage, and stimulate female entrepreneurship across Ireland. It is designed and led by women and is an annual high point in promoting entrepreneurship to women in Ireland. The events feature a range of speakers including some of Ireland's best known women in business and female entrepreneurs who have been on the start-up path. The day also allows business women to strengthen their networks and also learn what key supports are available to their business.



## STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

The Local Enterprise Office champions youth entrepreneurship through the Student Enterprise Programme, which supports and nurtures the next generation of business owners and leaders. The programme is the largest enterprise initiative for students in the country. Since the programme began in 2003 over 300,000 students have taken part, with many continuing on their businesses into adulthood and others beginning new businesses on the back of their Student Enterprise experience.

**For more information on the above programmes and events visit [localenterprise.ie/Kildare](https://localenterprise.ie/Kildare)**





**Are you a business in Kildare who  
wants to save time, money and energy?**

**All in a days work with your Local Enterprise Office.**

**Visit [allinadayswork.ie](http://allinadayswork.ie)**



## **Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil** **Local Enterprise Office**

We know that for small businesses, every day is a busy day with new challenges.

But keeping your business competitive and productive is much easier with the help of your Local Enterprise Office.

**Our lean, green, and digital  
supports will help you save time,  
money and energy.**

*It's All in a Day's Work for Local  
Enterprise Office Kildare!*

**#MakingItHappen**



*Local Enterprise Office Kildare*



*LEO\_Kildare*



*facebook.com/LEOKildare*



*@kildareleio*

To see all the supports, events and training opportunities available from Kildare County Council's Local Enterprise Office, please visit [LocalEnterprise.ie/Kildare](http://LocalEnterprise.ie/Kildare)



**Comhairle Contae Chill Dara**  
**Kildare County Council**

## Notes





Comhairle Contae Chill Dara  
Kildare County Council



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Find Out More

