Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

National Trading Online Voucher Scheme for Small Irish Businesses

Trading Online Voucher Application Form

Applicable 8 April to 30 September 2020

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Trading Online Voucher Scheme

With the trend ever increasing towards online spending it is estimated that only 23% of small Irish businesses are engaged in any meaningful way in eCommerce sales. For businesses employing less than ten people this percentage could be even lower. It is now believed that, of online purchases made in Ireland, up to 70% of these are done in overseas markets.

There is now an urgency to ensure that businesses recognise that this is happening and that they are encouraged and supported to correctly respond to this digital reality.

In order to support this goal, the National Digital Strategy aims to get more businesses trading online. To this end, the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (DCCAE) launched a Trading Online Voucher Scheme and teamed up with the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) to deliver this to Irish business. A limited number of vouchers are now available to eligible businesses.

What is it?

The voucher is a financial incentive to small businesses to develop or enhance their ability to trade online. Under the scheme a qualifying business may apply for funding to a maximum value of €2,500 or 90% of eligible expenditure (exclusive of VAT), whichever is the lesser. Following approval of their application, a successful applicant can engage suppliers and upon completion of the work, submit a request for payment to the LEO in line with the terms and conditions of their voucher.

Information seminars will be made available online or by conference call to prospective applicants to support them in their application process and it will be a condition of applying for the vouchers that applicants participate in one of these seminars. At each seminar attendees will be informed of the purpose of the scheme and how best to use and get value from the application of the voucher.

The application process for the vouchers will be a competitive process.

What are the eligibility criteria?

The vouchers are targeted at businesses with the following profile:

- Limited or no e-commerce presence;
- 10 or less employees;
- Turnover less than €2m;
- Applicant business must be trading for at least 6 months;
- Business must be located in the area covered by the LEO to whom they make their application i.e. LEOs cannot accept applications from businesses located outside their jurisdiction.

Previous voucher recipients may apply for a second voucher

****applicant business must provide clear proof of trading for a minimum of 6 months to their Local Enterprise Office***

What are ineligible projects for this scheme?

- Companies with charitable status, commercial semi-state companies, trade associations and company representation bodies such as Chambers of Commerce are not eligible to participate in the scheme;
- "Not for profit" and social entrepreneurship applicants unless they operate in a commercial domain;
- Professional services specialising in IT type services who are already capable of trading online using existing in-house systems;
- Conferences and Seminars;
- Projects which are contrary to public policy;
- Duplication of support for projects which would be eligible for assistance from other State Agencies of EU funded Operational Programmes;
- Projects with employees in excess of 10 people;
- Projects deemed to be capable of proceeding in any event without scheme assistance i.e. deadweight;
- Projects essentially comprising importation and distribution.

What can the vouchers be used for?

- IT consultation;
- Development or upgrade of an e-commerce website;
- Implementing Online payments or booking systems;
- Purchase of Internet related software;
- Developing an app (or multiplatform webpages);
- Development of a digital marketing strategy;
- Implementing a digital marketing strategy;
- Training/skills development specifically to establish and manage an online trading activity.
- Subscriptions (excluding transaction costs) to low cost online retail platform solutions, which would allow applicants to quickly establish a retailing presence online.
- Purchase of online advertising (this purchase cannot make up any more than 30% of all other approved Voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase);
- Purchase of Professional Photography (this expenditure cannot make up any more than 80% of all other approved voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase)

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What are the things the vouchers cannot be used for?

- Development of brochure websites*;
- Purchase of non-internet related software;
- Anything other than e-commerce trading related activity.

**** A brochure website is digital version of a printed brochure. They show the products or services your company provides, however, unlike an e-commerce website, they do not sell the product or service online or have an interactive booking function. With a brochure website, the goods and services are only displayed, so customers will have to contact the company to place an order.***

What else do I need to know about vouchers?

- Voucher approval must be gained prior to incurring any expense;
- Third party costs only will be considered. Own labour is not an eligible expense (labour of spouse or children also considered own labour);
- Claims can be made in either one or two instalments, and only made in respect of actual work completed (i.e. in respect of the components of the project works completed at the time the claim is being made). Expenditure on the various project components can only be claimed once.
- All third party/supplier invoices must contain proper business details (e.g. tax or business registration details or proof that the supplier is a registered business in the territory in which the supplier is located).
- Applications must be accompanied by written/emailed quotes for project works from three suppliers.

What is the voucher application and drawdown process?

Application

- Read the terms & conditions;
- If satisfied you are eligible and wish to apply register to participate in an information event;
- Participate in information session;
- Submit copy of completed and signed application form in hard copy to your local LEO;
- Soft copy of completed application to be supplied by email to your local LEO.

Evaluation

- Evaluation of applications will be conducted by each LEO who will make recommendations for approval;
- An evaluation committee will assess the applications and make recommendations for approval;
- A competitive process will be put in place to assist with selection process. Selection of successful applicant will be based on the following criteria:
- Project Suitability;
- Value Added potential;
- Export potential;
- Job creation potential;
- How will the project aid the business during the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Financial sustainability.
- Record decisions and report to the Local Enterprise Office approvals committee;
- As part of the application process applicants will be required to participate in an information session on how to use and get the best value for money from the voucher.

Voucher administration

- If your application is successful, a letter of offer - detailing the works and amount approved - will be sent to you for you to forward to your preferred supplier.
- The voucher is a letter of offer which is sent to the successful applicant;
- Letter of offer should be signed, accepted and returned within 2 weeks;
- Successful applicants have 9 months to complete the work as per their application.

Drawdown

Payment will be made directly to the successful applicant upon satisfactory receipt of the following:

- Declaration, completed and signed by supplier, briefly detailing the works carried out and indicating they have been completed and fully paid for. This should be submitted by the supplier directly to Local Enterprise Office (LEO).
- Applicant/Client submits:
- Declaration of project completion
- Original paid invoice(s) for the work completed from the supplier(s), with the evidence of supplier details e.g. Company Registration Office (CRO) details, or VAT details or evidence of tax compliance, or proof that the supplier is registered in the territory in which the supplier is located.
- Bank Statement(s) showing proof of payment to the supplier(s)
- Supplier receipts in respect of each component of work carried out.
- Evidence of tax compliance in respect of the applicant/client business
- A copy of applicant/client CRO registration or other proof that the applicant/client business has been trading for at least 6 months.

All work must be completed and paid for prior to claim.

Payments will only be made with relation to approved expenses which form part of this application form.

All successful applicants agree that they will allow reference be made to them in case study materials, which may be used to promote the voucher scheme more widely.

What is post-voucher reporting and how does it apply to me?

By accepting a Trading Online Voucher, successful applicants agree to report on online trading from participation in the scheme, again in 6 months and at annual intervals up to three years thereafter. Reporting will include: jobs (new or reallocated), increased turnover, exports and/or domestic market expansion, reduced costs and expected follow on investment. This may be conducted by Local Enterprise Offices, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment or approved independent evaluators.

Suppliers will be required to report on the impact of their products and services supplied to the applicant business.

- Reporting will include how their product or service enabled trading online, improved business performance, reduced cost, opened markets etc.

What is 'De Minimis' aid?

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme funding is provided under the European Commission Regulation on 'De Minimis' aid. De Minimis aid is limited amounts of State aid – up to €200,000 in any three-year period to any one enterprise. De Minimis aid is regarded as too small to significantly affect trade or competition in the common market. The amounts of grants are regarded as falling outside the category of State aid which is banned by the EC Treaty and, therefore, they can be awarded without reference to the European Commission.

However, a Member State must track De Minimis aid and make sure that combined De Minimis aid payments from all sources to an undertaking and/or business in any three fiscal year period respects the €200,000 ceiling.

Therefore, you need to ***provide details of all other grant aid that has been awarded to you or your business within the past three years***. Please note that a false declaration to show a figure under the threshold of €200,000 could later mean that you would have to pay back the grant aid with interest.

Acknowledgements

The trading online voucher scheme is an initiative of the National Digital Strategy (Doing More with Digital National Digital Strategy for Ireland Phase 1 – Digital Engagement), developed and funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment on behalf of Government. It is being administered by the Local Enterprise Offices.

Further Terms

Applications for assistance for expenditure incurred prior to grant approval are ineligible. The Local Enterprise Office reserves the right to refuse any application and the right to terminate this grant scheme at any time without notice.

The approval of applications and the payment of all monies are dependent on the availability of resources under this scheme from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment.

Applicants are advised to check availability of resources with Local Enterprise Office prior to applying. All applicants approved must draw down in full within 9 months of the date of offer.

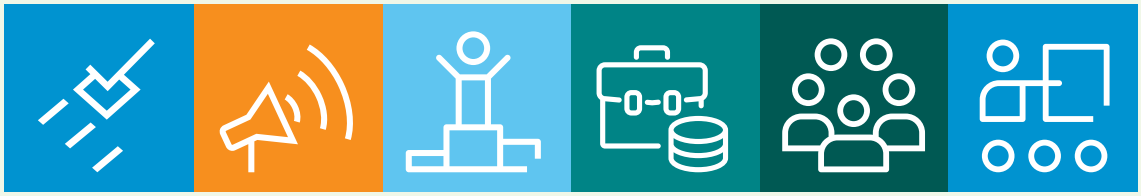
Failure to draw down all or any portion may result in automatic de-committal without notice, i.e. loss of voucher. The Local Enterprise Office may liaise/consult other agencies/local development programmes in relation to this proposal while respecting project confidentiality.

Any false or misleading statement or the withholding of essential information from Local Enterprise Office (as determined by Local Enterprise Office) will result in cancellation of any grant approved under this scheme.

PLEASE NOTE: ***The Local Enterprise Office is not responsible for any disputes between the applicant and 3rd party suppliers. Therefore we recommend that you adhere to best business practice and get three quotes as well as carry out due diligence before selecting a supplier.***

Disclaimer – ***For the avoidance of doubt it is understood and accepted that it is the applicant companies who are selecting and entering into a contract with third parties. The State and its agents (including Local Enterprise Office(s), Enterprise Ireland or any Government Department) does not accept any liability whatsoever in respect of any deficit in or consequences arising from products or services procured by or provided to companies under this scheme. In submitting your application under this scheme you are confirming that you understand and accept this disclaimer.***

Important: ***When completing the form please do not exceed 150 words or the space allowed in the boxes. If you require additional space, please write 'continued...' and use a blank page to complete the remaining text, starting with the name of the section you are completing, e.g. '1. Description of your Business Products/Services' AND attach any additional pages to the form.***



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TRADING ONLINE APPLICATION FORM 2020

Please use the TAB key to move on to the next input box (SHIFT + TAB to move to the previous input box) and use the left mouse button to select Tick Boxes

How did you hear about the Trading Online Voucher?

Have you previously received funding under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme?
(TICK ONE)

Yes **No**

If yes please provide details i.e. name of beneficiary, date of voucher letter and amount claimed:

Name:

Company name:

Company address:

Telephone: Mobile Number:

Email Address:

Website address: Tick if not online

Business type:

CRO Number1:

Year business was established How long has the business been trading?

Describe your current online presence (*none, brochure site, shopify, full ecommerce site etc.*)

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DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS

Description of your Business's Products / Services
Overview of your businesses activities whether related to the project or not

PREVIOUS PROJECT:

If your business has already been a beneficiary of a voucher under the scheme please describe the work you completed with the voucher. *Specify what your deliverables for that project were*

DESCRIBE YOUR TRADING ONLINE PROJECT

Business objective for your Trading Online project
What is it that your business expects this project to do that will help your business? Handle sales, generate new leads, handle customer service, etc... (please be as specific as possible)

DEVELOP A PROJECT PLAN

Unique Selling Point of your Products / Services / Business processes targeted in this project
Look at your online competitors, decide what products/services you will focus on - not all of them need to be traded online. Why did you select what you have?

Your Target Market through this project
Who are your customers going to be? (i.e. what customers will you target through your online channels?)

Trading online competitors
When you use a search engine to look for the product /services your company offers, what companies/sites are displayed? (list 3 to 5 with a link to their websites)

Scope of work to be carried out
What are the specific deliverables of the project relating back to the business objectives? Describe the work to be undertaken in this project.

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BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Internal resources brought to the project

External resources brought to the project

Existing Assets the project should leverage off
What additional information can you provide to help suppliers assist you? Social media presence you want to leverage? Design material? Photographs? Brand & marketing material?

PROJECTED OUTCOMES

Market expansion potential
What impact will the trading online project have on your business in terms of employment, revenue and ability to export? Based on your target market and competitor analysis, how will this project help you grow your revenue? Export potential? Gain back lost market share to existing online traders? How will the project aid the business during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Financial Information	Current	Projected 12 months	Projected 24 months
Turnover	€	€	€
Staff numbers	Enter Number	Enter Number	Enter Number
Full time			
Part-time			

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INDICATE PROJECT ELEMENTS FOR GRANT SUPPORT

The work you are seeking to have done by external service provider(s) will entail (click all that are applicable)	**Yes**	**Unsure**
IT Consultation		
Project Management		
New eCommerce site development (from scratch)		
Upgrade of existing eCommerce site		
Content Management System – a computer program that allows publishing, editing and modifying content as well as maintenance from a central interface		
Implementing an online payments or interactive booking system		
App development		
Development of a digital marketing strategy		
Subscriptions to low cost online retail platform solutions		
Online advertising* **** purchase of online advertising cannot make up any more than 30% of all other approved Voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase***		
Professional photography for website* **** purchase of professional photography services cannot make up any more than 80% of all other approved Voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase***		
Training specific to the establishment of trading online		
Copy (written or graphic content) for website		
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) services – process of optimizing the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's organic search results		
Analysis of existing site analytics – analysing web data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage		
Other		

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PROJECT COSTS

Trading Online Expenditure

Please note: supplier is not restricted to those based in Irish/EU territory.

Supplier 1	Product / Service	Service provider	Cost (€ Excluding VAT)
			€
Supplier 2			
			€
Supplier 3			
			€

Any additional supplier quotes obtained may be attached.

Trading Online Voucher request amount

- Expected cost based on quotes (ex VAT)	€
Eligible voucher amount requested €2,500.00 Maximum voucher award	€

VOUCHER PAYMENT CONDITIONS

* ***If your application is successful you will receive a letter of offer detailing the amount approved. (Maximum Grant/Voucher exclusive of VAT is €2,500)***
* ***Payment will be made directly to you on completion of the work and subject to the following being provided satisfactorily:***

1. Declaration, completed and signed by supplier(s), submitted by the supplier(s) directly to the LEO
2. Applicant Declaration of completed works
3. Copy of CRO registration for applicant business, and proof of trading for at least 6 months.
4. Up-to-date evidence of Tax Compliance.
5. Original Invoice(s) from the supplier(s) for work undertaken, with evidence of supplier details e.g. CRO or VAT details, or evidence of tax compliance or proof of registration in territory in which it's located.
6. Bank statement(s) showing proof of payment from the client company to supplier(s)
7. Supplier receipts for each component of work carried out

* ***Payments will only be made with relation to approved expenses which form part of this application form***

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SCHEME TERMS & CONDITIONS

No.	Key Terms of this Scheme	Please tick you have read & agree to comply with the scheme terms
1.	Vouchers will be available to a maximum value of €2,500 or 90% of eligible expenditure, exclusive of VAT, whichever is the lesser.	
2.	Trading Online Voucher Scheme is operated under a 10% co-investment arrangement.	
3.	Businesses are required to participate in an Information session. This requirement is to ensure applicants are supported in developing the project plan which forms part of their application.	
4.	Businesses can apply for Trading Online Voucher Scheme to support expenditure only on the following: • IT consultation; • Development or upgrade of an e-commerce website; • Implementing Online payments or booking systems; • Purchase of Internet related software; • Developing an app (or multiplatform webpages); • Development of a digital marketing strategy; • Implementing a digital marketing strategy i.e. Social media marketing; • Training/skills development specifically to establish and manage an online trading activity; • Subscription fees (excluding transaction costs) to low cost online retailing platform solutions, which would allow successful applicants to quickly establish a retailing presence online; • Purchase of online advertising (this purchase cannot make up any more than 30% of all other approved Voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase); • Professional Photography for website (this purchase cannot make up any more than 80% of all other approved voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase)	
5.	All relevant supporting documents should be included with the application form: • a copy of a quotation from 3 suppliers detailing the works to be done and cost* Emailed quotes are acceptable; • evidence of duration of trading if an unregistered business or sole trader Failure to provide the supporting documents could result in the application being turned down. **** Where 3 quotes for a particular product/service is not possible or overly burdensome in the case of multiple project components, the requirement for 3 quotes per item may be waived and the application may be evaluated on the quotes available. Documentary evidence should be provided showing efforts made to obtain 3 quotes where possible. The applicant should consult with the LEO prior to submitting their application. The LEO must be satisfied that the application represents value for money and that the applicant has engaged with suppliers in developing their trading online proposal.***	
6.	An Evaluation Committee will assess the applications. A competitive process will be put in place to assist with the selection process. I have noted the criteria on which evaluation will be based.	

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No.	Key Terms of this Scheme	Please tick you have read & agree to comply with the scheme terms
7.	Project expenditure can commence from date of voucher approval. Date of voucher approval is confirmed in writing to the company by the Local Enterprise Office. Any expenditure incurred by a company prior to this date is ineligible. There is no physical voucher. The letter of offer is the voucher.	
8.	A letter of offer is sent to the company to provide legal confirmation of the company's participation in the scheme. Companies must return a signed letter of offer by return (within 2 weeks). Failure to do so will result in the voucher approval being cancelled.	
9.	Project Time Limit is 9 months from date of voucher approval.	
10.	Businesses should note claims can be made in either one or two instalments, and only made in respect of actual work completed (i.e. in respect of the components of the project works completed at the time the claim is being made). Expenditure on the various project components can only be claimed once for this grant.	
11.	Applicants should retain all relevant paperwork during the project in order to assist them in processing their claim at the end of the project including: applicant evidence of tax compliance, original Invoices from supplier with required supplier details and proof of payment to supplier and proof that all work being claimed for is completed prior to claim.	
12.	I note the Indemnity Clause on page 5 of the application form.	
13.	Applicants agree that on successful completion of their projects they will allow reference to be made to them in case study materials which will be used to promote the voucher Scheme more widely.	
14.	I note the voucher payment conditions on page 11 of the application form.	
15.	DCCAE, EI or the LEOs shall have the right to perform (or assign agents to perform) spot checks on companies to which vouchers have been issued to verify that the work to which the voucher related was done and/or to assess the impact of that work.	

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GRANT HISTORY - DE MINIMIS DECLARATION – PREVIOUS STATE SUPPORT (IF ANY)

Has the business or any of its promoters previously received any other State supports or EU supports from any other agencies?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If you answered **Yes** above, please give details including the date, amount and purpose of the support:

No.	De Minimis Aid Type of aid approved *[for example, training / innovation / seed capital / feasibility / capital / employment or other grants]*	Agency Agency or Body from which the aid was received	Amount (€)	Date Received
1.			€	
2.			€	
3.			€	
4.			€	
5.			€	
6.			€	
		Total	€	

De Minimis Aid is small amounts of State Aid given to an undertaking and/or business which cannot exceed €200,000 over any three fiscal years regardless of size or location.

De Minimis Aid can come from any State body, agency or department. If a business is part of a group, then the €200,000 limit applies to the group.

Please note that a false declaration to show a figure under the threshold of €200,000 could later mean that you would have to pay back the grant aid with interest.

Declaration

I wish to apply for the Trading Online Voucher Scheme under the De Minimis Regulation (EC) 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 of behalf of [name business]. I confirm that the above information is true and correct.

Signed for Business:

Date:

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TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER SCHEME APPLICATION - SIGNATURE FORM

PLEASE NOTE: *The Local Enterprise Office is not responsible for any disputes between the applicant and 3rd party suppliers. Therefore we recommend that you adhere to best business practice and get three quotes as well as carry out due diligence before selecting a supplier. Disclaimer – For the avoidance of doubt it is understood and accepted that it is the applicant companies who are selecting and entering into a contract with third parties. The State and its agents (including Local Enterprise Office(s), Enterprise Ireland or any Government Department) does not accept any liability whatsoever in respect of any deficit in or consequences arising from products or services procured by or provided to companies under this scheme. In submitting your application under this scheme you are confirming that you understand and accept this disclaimer.*

PLEASE NOTE: *Applications for assistance for expenditure incurred prior to grant approval are ineligible. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) reserves the right to refuse any application and the right to terminate this grant scheme at any time without notice. The approval of applications and the payment of all monies are dependent on the availability of resources under this scheme from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment. Applicants are advised to check availability of resources with their LEO prior to applying. All applicants approved must draw down in full within 9 months of the date of offer. Failure to draw down all or any portion may result in automatic de-committal without notice, i.e. loss of voucher. The LEO may liaise/ consult other agencies/local development programmes in relation to this proposal while respecting project confidentiality. Any false or misleading statement or the withholding of essential information from the LEO (as determined by the LEO) will result in cancellation of any grant approved under this scheme.*

PLEASE NOTE: *The Local Enterprise Office is committed to its transparency obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Our data protection notice for personal data that is supplied to us by our clients is available at* ***www.localenterprise.ie/legal*** *This notice tells you about your privacy rights and sets out how we, as a Controller, collect, use, process and disclose your personal data relating to your interactions with us. We request that you read the notice carefully and that you ensure that it is made available to any data subjects (e.g. your employees) whose personal data you provide to us.*

By ticking " I agree", you confirm that: (a) you have complied with your own data protection obligations in respect of the personal data that you supply to us and that you are entitled to disclose such personal data to us; and (b) you will ensure that a copy of our data protection notice is sent to data subjects (e.g. your employees) whose personal data you provide to us.

[I agree] ☐ *(Please tick)*

DECLARATION: *I/We hereby declare that the above information and details are accurate and true to the best of my/our knowledge and belief and I/we make this application for grant assistance on the basis of the information and details given. I/We have not sought and will not seek grant aid from any state agency or other sources in respect of this expenditure. I/We have read and fully accept the terms and conditions attaching to the 'Trading Online Voucher' from the Local Enterprise Office.*

Signed by	**Business Name**	**Date**

YOUR LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO US (YOUR LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE - ABOVE), WHEN COMPLETED.

You will receive a confirmation email that we have received your application within 5 working days, if you do not receive the confirmation email please contact your Local Enterprise Office.

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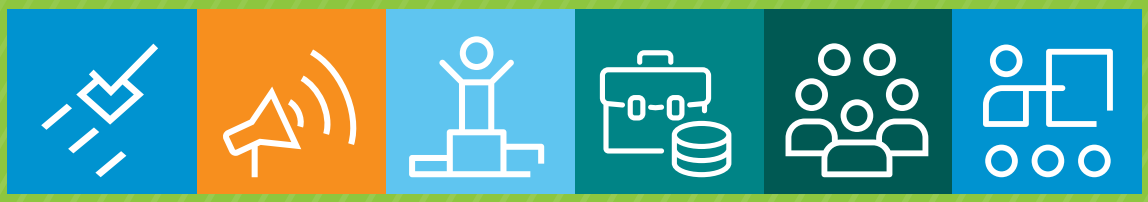

Talk to your Local Enterprise Office advisor
about the Trading Online Voucher Scheme.

localenterprise.ie

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland