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NEWSLETTER

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Jobs by EI supported companies

The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Enterprise Ireland announced that total employment in Enterprise Ireland supported companies was 220,613 at the end of 2020.

- However, in a challenging year, with a significant Covid-19 impact, overall net job losses of 872 in client companies
- €124m in Sustaining Enterprise Funding to sustain 418 companies and 17,710 jobs
- 220,613 people now employed by Enterprise Ireland supported companies following challenging year for exporters
- 1,000 customs roles supported to help companies deal with new Customs rules
- Enterprise Ireland sets out strategic priorities for 2021

Job creation closely matched the performance in 2019, with 16,496 new jobs created in Enterprise Ireland backed companies last year. However, job losses increased to 17,368 which resulted in net job losses of 872.

Enterprise Ireland client companies in some sectors saw significant growth in 2020, including Life Sciences (6.8% employment growth), Cleantech (6% employment growth) and Construction (4.7% employment growth), while some saw overall job losses, for example clients in the food sector (-1.5%). It is important to note that there has been significant disruption to all workers throughout the year.

€124m in Covid-19 funding under the Sustaining Enterprise Fund helped sustain 418 companies and 17,710 jobs across the country.

In total, €142m in funding was provided to 1,919 companies under a range of Covid-19 funding initiatives

introduced in response to the pandemic, including €11.8m under the Online Retail Scheme. There was also €8.2m approved under the Enterprise Centres Fund. In addition, 8,650 companies were supported through Enterprise Ireland's Covid-19 information hub, online support and helpline.

Speaking at the launch of the report The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, said:

"We all know the remarkable challenges that Irish businesses faced in 2020. Our priority throughout the pandemic has been to sustain as many jobs as possible and to help businesses adapt their company to a radically different trading environment. Enterprise Ireland played a critical role in delivering on these priorities in 2020. I know many businesses across the country really relied on their local enterprise office for advice, training and financial help during these difficult few months.

“We know that some sectors were more seriously affected than others. Among Enterprise Ireland client companies we can see that there has actually been significant employment growth among their clients in some areas such as Life Sciences, Cleantech and Construction, although I know that those sectors, especially construction, have also seen very serious disruption over the past year too. Workers in most areas have paid a price to protect public health and limit the spread of the virus over the past year. “The good news is that we now have vaccines, which will, over the course of the year allow us to reduce restrictions and get those sectors back on their feet. We will also continue to invest in research and innovation to ensure our economy is prepared for the jobs of the future and to capitalise on new technology and opportunities as they arise.

According to Enterprise Ireland CEO

“2020 was a very challenging year for Irish enterprise due to the dual threats of Covid-19 and Brexit. Our client companies, which employ over 220,000 people, showed resilience and sustained their businesses and jobs throughout the pandemic. “Following the introduction of new liquidity measures from the Government in April and in the July Jobs Stimulus, our priority was to help Irish companies to survive and sustain jobs. This was achieved through a range of initiatives, the most important of which was the Sustaining Enterprise Fund, under which we approved €124m to ensure that viable companies could access the funding they needed to reset

and recover from the impact of Covid-19.”

Enterprise Ireland also continued its focus on assisting Irish businesses to prepare for Brexit in 2020 and approved €7.6m to support 1,000 customs roles to help Irish exporters to the UK to strengthen their capability to comply with new customs rules arising from Brexit.



According to the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment:

“Enterprise Ireland has been to the forefront in helping businesses get prepared for new customs arrangements and changes to their supply chain in light

of the UK’s departure from the European Union. Diversifying export markets will be really important over the coming period and I know Enterprise Ireland will continue to help businesses seek out new markets for their products over the coming months.”

Enterprise Ireland CEO said

“The trade agreement reached on Christmas Eve provides certainty for exporters. Our plan now is to help exporters to the UK in three main areas; helping businesses who haven’t yet put in place people and processes to handle new customs procedures for exporting to the UK to do so; ensuring exporters remain competitive in the UK by engaging with their supply chain and customers; and helping them identify new opportunities for growth both in the UK market, and also in Europe and beyond.”

Strategic Priorities 2021

Enterprise Ireland also announced its new strategic priorities for 2021

which has set out ambitions to sustain and increase employment to 222,000, support a recovery in exports, with a continued focus on market diversification, in particular to the Eurozone, and to increase the level of R&D investment by Irish companies to €1.25bn.

Enterprise Ireland CEO said the new plan is based on three core pillars:

- Strengthening Irish enterprise to respond to Covid-19 and Brexit
- Driving transformational change, through accelerating the pace of innovation, digitalisation and the transition to a low carbon economy;
- Scaling and growing the export and start-up base, across regions, sectors and companies of all sizes.

Enterprise Ireland CEO added

“Last year underlined the importance of efficiency, agility and innovation in business. In 2021 we will support transformational change within our client base and, in particular, help more Irish SMEs to adapt their business models and invest in R&D, increase adoption of digital technologies, and respond to climate change and carbon reduction opportunities for future business growth.

“Another priority area for 2021 is to maximise the number of start-up companies, increase the number of high growth clients achieving scale and expand the number of exporting companies. Having strong, innovative, regionally based exporting companies is vital to balanced economic development and sustaining and creating high value jobs into the future. 2021 will be a critical year for Irish enterprise and we will work closely with Irish businesses to help them accelerate the recovery”.

Remote Work Strategy

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on Friday the 15th of January published Ireland's first National Remote Work Strategy to make remote working a permanent option for life after the pandemic.

The Strategy sets out plans to strengthen the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, to provide the infrastructure to work remotely, and sets out clear guidance on how people can be empowered to work remotely from the office.

Ireland's first National Remote Work Strategy

The Tánaiste said: "The pandemic has exacted a terrible toll on life and livelihoods in Ireland. We all hope and pray for the day when it will be over, not so we can go back to the old normal but rather so we can have a new and better normal incorporating all that we have learned from living our lives and doing business in a very different way.

The requirement to work from home where possible, for reasons of public health, has demonstrated how viable home, remote, and blended working can be. Post-pandemic, I want remote working to be part of a whole new world of work and this new Government strategy sets out how we will enable it.

"Working from home has become the norm for many in 2020. We want remote, blended, and flexible working arrangements, a much

bigger part of life after Covid. We've seen that there can be huge benefits – more flexibility, less commuting, more time for family and friends. It's better for the transport emissions, and for quality of life, but it has to be done right. Employment rights need to be updated, we need to give guidance, and in many cases, we need to provide actual physical working space. It also requires a cultural shift in favour of facilitating it as an option.



This plan shows how we will bring all those parts together. I think it will make a real difference to people's working lives."

Headline actions include:

- Legislate to provide employees the right to request remote working
- Introduce a legally admissible code of practice on the right to disconnect from work – covering phone calls, emails, and switch-off time
- Invest in remote work hubs, ensuring they are in locations

that suit commuters and are close to childcare facilities

- Explore the acceleration of the National Broadband Plan
- Review the treatment of remote working for the purposes of tax and expenditure in the next Budget
- Lead by example by mandating that home and remote working should be the norm for 20% of public sector employees

These actions will be completed over the course of 2021. An Implementation Group will be formed to monitor the progress of the actions with meetings being held every four months.

The Tánaiste said: "Many people will want to continue on to do at least some remote working after the pandemic, and it's really important that we protect the rights and entitlements of those workers so that they can still 'switch off' from work. That is why we have included the right to disconnect piece. We want to put in place the structures which ensure we take advantage of the benefits of remote working and protect against the downsides.

The Strategy was developed under the guidance of a broad Interdepartmental Group consisting of Government Departments and State Agencies. The research for the Strategy draws from the findings of the 2019 Remote Work in Ireland report, the results of the Public Consultation on Remote Work Guidance, and new research carried out on the topic in 2020.

Covid-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme

The Covid-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme is designed to assist businesses, including Primary producers, impacted by Covid-19 to access credit.

Scheme features

- Loans from €10,000 to a maximum of €1,000,000 per borrower, subject to Loan Amount Criteria, see below for further details.
- Terms of between 3 months up to 5.5 years.
- Loan Amounts ≤€250,000 will be unsecured (unless it is a requirement of the product feature e.g. asset finance, invoice discount facilities).
- Amounts >€250,000 may be secured however, a personal guarantee may only

be sought in circumstances where it is required to capture supporting security, or where it is an uncollateralised personal guarantee and is limited to a maximum of 20% of the initial finance agreement amount.

- Loans will be available up to end of June 2021.
- Up to 12 months interest and / or capital moratoria are possible under the Scheme, these remain at the discretion of the participating finance provider.
- The Scheme will permit the refinance and rollover of debt incurred as a result of Covid-19: e.g. Covid-19 related expenses that were initially funded through short term/temporary facilities such as overdrafts.

Who can apply? Viable micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), primary producers and small

mid-cap enterprises that meet the eligibility criteria and have or expect to have a reduction of minimum 15% in their turnover or profitability as a result of Covid-19. SMEs are defined by the Standard EU definition [Commission Regulation 2003/361/EC] as enterprises that:

- have fewer than 250 employees
- have a turnover of €50 million or less (or €43 million or less on their balance sheet)
- are independent and autonomous i.e. not part of a wider group of enterprises
- have less than 25% of their capital held by public bodies
- is established and operating in the Republic of Ireland

A small mid-cap is an enterprise that is not an SME but has fewer than 500 employees.

InterTradelreland Brexit Voucher

Are you a business looking to navigate your way through Brexit and are unsure what to do next? InterTradelreland offers 100% financial support up to £2000/€2250 (inclusive of VAT) towards professional advice in relation to Brexit matters. This support can help your business get advice on specific issues such as movement of labour, goods, services and currency management.

To qualify for financial support your business must:

- Be located on the island of Ireland (North or South)
- Trade across the border (NI/ROI)
- Employ less than 250 employees
- Have an annual turnover of less than €50m (sterling equivalent)
- Have a satisfactory trading history (we reserve the rights to request submission of financial accounts)

Note: There are certain exclusions in line with specific State Aid guidelines, such as primary agriculture – please contact the Brexit Team at InterTradelreland for further information.

The Voucher is provided under the European Commission Regulation on De Minimis Aid as stated in the documentation for the Brexit Start to Plan.

The business must provide InterTradelreland with details of all other De Minimis aid which has been granted to the business within the past three years. **It should be noted that a false declaration by a business resulting in the threshold of €200,000 being exceeded could later give rise to the aid being recovered with interest.**

Essentials Customs Training

Why Clear Customs Training?

Planning for Brexit has highlighted the importance of capacity-building in the customs intermediary sector and boosting 'in-house' customs capacity amongst businesses that are regularly trading with the UK.

Delays at customs due to incorrect or inaccurate declarations can result in disruption to both business and customers. For the customs intermediary sector, and other businesses, taking steps now to train key staff on how to effectively complete a customs declaration helps pre-empt Brexit related customs challenges.

Delivered in partnership with Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) and CILT Skillnet, the Free Clear Customs virtual training programme will upskill your staff

specifically in the area of customs procedures and documentation for continuous or future trade with or through the UK.

Clear Customs is provided to eligible businesses* as part of Getting Ireland Brexit Ready.

Who is this for?

Customs Intermediaries - Will you need to expand your team and train more staff? If so, avail of the Clear Customs training for your staff and new recruits

Currently exporting/importing- Are you currently exporting/importing significant levels of goods to/from the UK? Do you need to increase your 'in-house' capacity to process additional customs declarations? Planning on exporting/importing - Is your business planning for a significant level of trade to/from the

UK? Are you looking to develop an 'in-house' capacity to process customs declarations?

Involved in Logistics - Are you moving goods into or through the UK? Do you need to upskill your team to support clients in completing customs procedures correctly?

Clear Customs offers free, virtual training to customs intermediaries and to businesses who frequently trade with or through the UK.

The aim of this remotely-delivered training programme is to upskill your business personnel specifically in the area of customs procedures and documentation for continuous or future trade with or through the UK.

Apply now:

<https://clearcustoms.ciltskillnet.ie/>

People seeking to retrain or upskill

A new online portal for people seeking to upskill or retrain. The online portal - gov.ie/therightcourse - is a one stop shop for businesses, employees and unemployed persons and outlines the third level options available to them.

This can be a short part-time course, a course for an individual in employment or an option to return to third level.

The one-stop shop outlines the further education and training places and the courses in higher education on offer, and information

for those on a social welfare payment.

Business owners are also encouraged to explore the range of upskilling options available from Skillnet Ireland including enterprise-led business supports, targeted upskilling opportunities for employees in businesses, free online training programmes and virtual job placements.

Log onto **gov.ie/therightcourse**



Ensuring you are Brexit Ready

The 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are the 'first-stop-shop' for anyone seeking information and supports on starting or growing a small business in Ireland.

As hubs of expert advice, information and practical supports, dedicated Local Enterprise Office teams can help you manage your Brexit response through:

Customs training & financial assistance:

These one-day interactive online workshops, run regionally by Local Enterprise Offices, will provide businesses with a better understanding of the potential impacts, formalities and procedures to be adopted when trading with a country which is outside the Single Market and Custom Unions (a "Third Country"). This will occur when the UK leaves the European Union on December 31st 2020. Open to all businesses, these workshops will cover areas such as what export and import procedures apply, how tariffs work and how to correctly classify goods.

Readiness checkers to help with planning:

Enterprise Ireland's Brexit Readiness Check is an online tool that will assist your business get ready for the 1st January. Companies complete a short online survey, and then receive an individual report highlighting the areas they need to take action on. The report also provides resources available from State agencies that will help you get Brexit ready. The Readiness Checker covers vital issues such as customs, VAT, finance and



currency management, movement of people and strategic sourcing.

One-to-One Brexit mentoring:

The Brexit Mentor Programme is designed to support LEO clients identify key areas of exposure and will assist in developing robust strategies to address issues and maximise potential opportunities. The Programme matches up the knowledge, skills, insights and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with small business owner/managers who need practical and strategic one to one advice and guidance on planning for January 1 2021. The mentor contributes independent, informed observation and advice to aid decision making across areas such as supply chain, currency, market diversification, financial planning etc.

Specialist training and consultancy:

LEO clients are supported to identify and implement practices to boost competitiveness, increase performance and profitability as well as building resilience within their companies. Under this programme, clients can avail of five days of consultancy with a Lean Expert (a

qualified practitioner), who will work with the company to introduce lean principles, undertake a specific cost reduction project and assist the company in benchmarking its performance.

Financial supports:

The TAME grant supports clients to explore and develop new export market opportunities, such as participation in international trade fairs and development of export related marketing materials and websites. With a focus on helping companies to diversify, this scheme is a matched-funding opportunity with up to €2,500 available.

Access to world-wide support networks:

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises that have international growth ambitions. The EEN is active in more than 60 countries around the globe, bringing 3,000 experts together from more than 600 member organisations. Through the Local Enterprise Offices, the EEN can help small businesses get expert advice, source technologies and identify trusted business partners.

Sustaining Enterprise Fund

Enterprise Ireland is helping Irish businesses to rebuild after the impact of Covid-19 – providing the funding they need to stabilise cashflow, adapt their operations and innovate to meet new customer needs.

Our new funding package is available, which includes:

A non-repayable grant of up to 50% of a funding package (up to €200,000) is now available

Funding of between €100,000 and €800,000 available.

No repayments for the first 3 years. Zero administration fee for the first 6 months - 4% thereafter.

This funding is time-limited and open to manufacturing or internationally traded services companies that employ more than 10 people.

Sustaining Enterprise Fund - €800k

Support of between €100,000-€800,000 can be provided to companies who have been impacted by Covid 19. The objectives of the fund are to:

Ensure eligible companies can accelerate their recovery
Provide funding needed to stabilise cash flow, adapt operations and innovate for new customer needs

Eligible companies

Employ 10 or more full-time employees* Are operating in the manufacturing and internationally traded service sectors. Have seen (or expect to see) a 15% or greater reduction in actual or projected turnover or profit, or a significant increase in costs, as a result of Covid-19.

Covid-19



Get the funding your business needs to accelerate its recovery.

New funding package, now including up to €200,000 as a non-repayable grant.

The Sustaining Enterprise Fund will be used to support the implementation of a Sustaining Enterprise Project Plan which should be provided by the company outlining the eventual stabilisation of the business and a return to viability. The Covid-19 Business Financial Planning Grant can help companies to develop the Sustaining Enterprise Project Plan. *For companies with less than 10 people a range of supports are available from MicroFinance Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices - contact the business response unit.

Description of funding

Funding will be provided for a five-year period, using the following instruments: repayable advances, grant aid, equity or loan note. Funding provided will comprise a combination of repayable and non-repayable support.

Points of Note:

Repayable Advances are due for repayment in years 4 and 5 i.e. no repayment for the first 3 years. The Equity instrument used will primarily be Cumulative Redeemable Preference Shares (CRPs). Cumulative Convertible Redeemable Preference Shares (CCRP) and ordinary equity may be used where Enterprise Ireland seeks to match the terms of other investors. All Funding will be made available



against a submitted Sustaining Enterprise Project Plan subject to completing a satisfactory due diligence process.

Who cannot apply?

The scheme is not open to companies who: Are active in the primary agricultural, fishery or aquaculture sectors. Operate in the coal and steel sector. Were covered by specific rules for Financial Services.

How to apply

Application forms are available from the Business Response Team within Enterprise Ireland, contact details for which are below:
Email address: businessresponse@enterprise-ireland.com
Telephone number: 01 727 2088
All completed applications should be returned to the following inbox: GA-BSF@enterprise-ireland.com

For further information:

Enterprise Ireland has a comprehensive suite of support available for companies at all stages of development, under Sustaining Enterprise Fund and Innovative Start-Up funding, as well as other funding offers.

Get in touch with your Development Adviser or the Covid 19 Business Response Unit at businessresponse@enterprise-ireland.com

Export Compass Webinar Series

The Export Compass Series: Are you looking to grow your business through export?

The five-part webinar series, which takes place between 28 January and 25 March, 2021 aims to help pre-exporting businesses on their export journey.

Enterprise Ireland is hosting a series of webinar workshops aimed at helping Irish businesses to grow through export. The Export Compass Webinar Series takes place between 28 January and 25 March, 2021.

Attendance is complimentary for all micro and SME companies that are taking their first steps on their export journey.



The series will feature five webinars, each of which will guide businesses in developing their export strategy and plans. This includes helping companies to understand overseas business cultures, and how to build digital capabilities for selling and developing customer, distributor and/or partner relationships.

The webinars will feature interviews with companies that have already successfully exported. Attendees will

also hear from market experts from Enterprise Ireland's overseas offices. Topics covered during each of the five webinars are as follows:

- 28th January: What is the basis of your export plan? Where in the world might you export to?
- 11th February: Who is your ideal customer? Culture and doing business in other countries.
- 25th February: How to prepare for export. Sales and marketing to win export customers in a digital world.
- 11th March: How to finance your export plan. Finance management through funding and pricing.
- 25th March: Bringing it all together, followed by a Q&A session.

All Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Office clients are welcome to attend the webinars, but registration is also open to any company across sectors, particularly those new to navigating the process of becoming an exporter.

Commenting on the launch of the webinar series, Minister of State with responsibility for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation, said:

"Maximising our ability to promote and export Irish goods and services successfully is key to future-proofing the Irish economy for stable and sustainable growth in the future. I welcome Enterprise Ireland's Export Compass Webinar Series, which particularly targets companies that are developing their export journey.

"SMEs are the backbone of the Irish economy. For both myself, as Minister for Trade Promotion, and the wider Government, this sector is a priority as we work to support business growth and job creation in every region across Ireland. I hope that participating companies will find the webinars of significant value. During these challenging times, I would also urge SMEs in particular to ensure that they are availing of other forums like this and the supports that are available through agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices."

The Manager of Regions and Entrepreneurship at Enterprise Ireland, said:

"The Export Compass Webinar Series is open to all start-ups and pre-exporting companies across industries. The series will cover in detail a range of topics essential for developing an export strategy, including business planning, sales and marketing, operations, finance, innovation and people. At Enterprise Ireland, our focus is on helping businesses to scale and expand their reach into global markets. A robust export strategy is key to achieving this, so it's particularly important for growing companies to ensure that they have the right plan and processes in place from the start. For businesses with ambition to break into new markets, these are the building blocks that will allow them to compete and grow with confidence into the future."

Businesses can find more information and register for the Export Compass Webinar Series here:

<https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/export-assistance/>