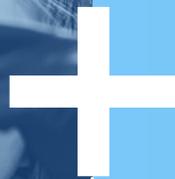


# Enterprise Ireland's Strategic Priorities 2021

TRANSFORM



STRENGTHEN



SCALE



#GlobalAmbition



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# FOREWORD

## AN TÁNAISTE

**In 2020, Irish businesses experienced profound and unforeseen disruption and uncertainty. The focus throughout this period, for Government and for Enterprise Ireland, has been to enable Irish enterprises to weather this storm and emerge stronger and more resilient.**

Irish enterprise has played a major role in the national and international response to the pandemic. Businesses have adapted their products, embraced new sales channels and remote working practices and many have continued to see success. The importance of innovation has come to the fore, as we have seen Irish enterprises providing rapid, research-driven, solutions to the many challenges presented by COVID-19.

In 2021, Irish enterprise will continue to respond to the dual challenges of COVID-19 and the new trading relationship with the UK which is now finally a reality and brings greater clarity and certainty for businesses and citizens alike.

During 2021, the Government and Enterprise Ireland will assist business to adjust to these changes through a range of measures, including the Sustaining Enterprise Fund, a transformation fund for the agri-food sector and the Ready for Customs Scheme. Thankfully, this year sees the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines worldwide while technologies linked to treatment and testing continue to improve. Nevertheless, we are in a rapidly evolving situation which needs to be constantly kept under review.

As we find a pathway through these challenges, our enterprises will continue to need help to build resilience throughout 2021 as they face not only these immediate challenges but also learn how to adapt to strategic long-term drivers of economic and social change, most

notably the vital low-carbon transition and rapidly increasing digitalisation. Government is determined to create the environment for a 2021 recovery. The forthcoming National Economic Plan will set out a roadmap for a resilient, sustainable economy. It will focus on building resilience and innovation across enterprise, ensuring an inclusive and balanced recovery and future proofing our economy and society.



Government is also taking a systemic approach to sustaining and growing the domestic SME sector. That is why in 2020 I established a whole-of-Government taskforce to achieve coordinated agency delivery of a coherent set of supports for SMEs across all sectors of the economy. Through the forthcoming Report of the SME Taskforce, we will pursue medium-term policy targets for the SME sector of higher productivity growth, increased activity in foreign markets and more start up and scale up activity through an ambitious SME Growth Plan. Innovative, globally engaged Irish enterprises are central to Ireland's economic recovery and to creating the future jobs that will ensure longer-term sustainability.

The ambitions and priorities of Enterprise Ireland's Strategic Framework align directly to these national priorities, stabilising the enterprise base in response to Brexit and COVID-19 while also keeping a focus on those longer-term strategic drivers that demand action. It is my belief that Irish exporters, innovators and start-ups will emerge from the crisis period in a robust position. I look forward to working with Enterprise Ireland during 2021 to ensure we can continue to thrive and compete globally into the future.

**Leo Varadkar,**  
Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise,  
Trade and Employment

# INTRODUCTION

## JULIE SINNAMON, CEO, ENTERPRISE IRELAND



### ENTERPRISE IRELAND MISSION:

Enterprise Ireland is focused on enabling Irish enterprise to start, innovate and succeed globally, driving prosperity throughout Ireland.

#### Many Irish enterprises entered 2020 from a position of strength.

In the final year of our 2017-2020 'Build Scale, Expand Reach' strategy, the agency was on track to exceed its targets. In 2019 our clients had recorded the highest level of employment, exports of over €25bn and expenditure in the Irish economy of €29bn.

However, 2020 brought significant turbulence due to COVID-19 and uncertainty surrounding Brexit. To offset these impacts, Enterprise Ireland continued to focus on supporting the competitiveness, innovation and diversification agenda across the enterprise base, resulting in total employment of 220,613.

A wide range of Government supports were delivered by Enterprise Ireland to strengthen enterprise in response to COVID-19, including the Sustaining Enterprise Fund, the COVID-19 Products Scheme, and the COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme.

Significant work was undertaken to prepare Irish enterprise for the new trading arrangements with the UK, with significant supports and funding delivered to clients including the most Brexit impacted businesses.

Throughout 2020, Enterprise Ireland continued to support client companies in international markets, including through virtual trade and buyer events and promotion of Irish innovation in key export markets and sectors through the Irish Advantage campaign. Under the Government's Global Ireland 2025 initiative, Enterprise Ireland's overseas presence has expanded significantly to 40 locations in recent years representing our global ambitions to grow in international markets, both emerging and established. Additional Enterprise Ireland offices have been opened in a number of European cities - Lyon, Munich, Manchester

and Copenhagen. Further afield, Enterprise Ireland has opened new offices in Seattle, Montreal, Melbourne, and Ho Chi Minh City and new representatives have been appointed in New Zealand and Southern China.

### 2021 STRATEGY

Throughout 2021, our clients will continue to require support to respond to COVID-19 and to adjust to the new EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Additionally, Irish enterprise must respond to climate transition, and adapt to the changes driven by industry 4.0 and digitalisation.

In response, and aligned to the Government's National Economic Plan and forthcoming SME Growth Plan, Enterprise Ireland has developed the following strategic priorities for 2021:

- Strengthen Irish enterprise to respond to market shocks and disruption in response to COVID-19 and Brexit.
- Drive transformational change and the pace of innovation transitioning to new business models, digitalisation and the low carbon economy.
- Scale and Grow the export and start-up base, across regions and sectors and grow companies of all sizes.

Underpinning each priority is our commitment to clients and the research and innovation ecosystem. Continuing to develop our people remains a key focus in 2021 to deliver on our strategic priorities as we adapt to new ways of working.

Our focus during 2021 will be on sustaining Irish jobs and exports and increasing the resilience of the enterprise base.

**Julie Sinnamon,**  
CEO, Enterprise Ireland

## AMBITION 2021

During a period of significant economic uncertainty, drive the recovery of Irish jobs and exports and increase the resilience of the enterprise base, throughout Ireland.



### AMBITION TARGETS 2021



#### JOBS

222,000 total  
direct jobs



#### EXPORTS

Exports of  
€25.6 billion

Eurozone exports  
of €5.8 billion



#### R&D SPEND

€1.25 billion  
spend



#### SPEND IN ECONOMY

€28 billion

# KEY PRIORITIES



**+** **STRENGTHEN**  
Strengthen Irish enterprise in response to COVID-19 and Brexit.



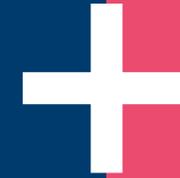
**➤** **TRANSFORM**  
Drive transformational change, accelerating the pace of innovation, digitalisation and transition to a low carbon economy.

**↖** **SCALE**  
Scale and grow the export and start-up base.



# 01

## STRENGTHEN IRISH ENTERPRISE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 AND BREXIT



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

**1. Maximise survival and recovery of Enterprise Ireland clients throughout Ireland.**

- + Maximise company survival through targeted financial and advisory measures, with a particular focus on liquidity, financial planning and business continuity.
- + Drive efficiency and enhance the productivity of client companies through existing and new financial and advisory supports (incl. Lean, Competitiveness and Innovation funding).

**2. Support clients to adapt and succeed in a post-Brexit environment.**

- + Help clients to adapt to the new EU-UK trading relationship, through financial supports, customs training, supply chain supports, regulatory guidance, foreign exchange and financial planning, direct client engagements, advisory clinics/events, targeted communications and cross-Government coordination.
- + Assist clients to identify UK market opportunities to strengthen their competitive positioning in the post-Brexit UK market, including through the Enterprise Ireland Evolve UK programme.

# 01

## STRENGTHEN IRISH ENTERPRISE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 AND BREXIT



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**3. Sustain existing export sales and accelerate the diversification of Irish exports.**

### ACTIONS

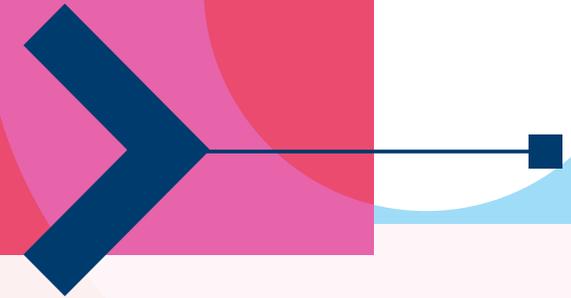
- + Build client sales and marketing capabilities with a focus on virtual/ remote selling and marketing, to international buyers and partners.
- + Intensify supports to Brexit and COVID-19 impacted clients to develop and strengthen links to existing customers and generate new leads and contracts in overseas markets.
- + Continue to provide targeted financial and advisory supports to clients to sustain existing export sales, and accelerate growth and diversification of client base.
- + Promote Irish innovation across key export sectors (including Digital, Medtech, Construction, Manufacturing, Agri) to international buyers through the Irish Advantage campaign, digital trade platform, in-market communications, virtual trade missions, events and partnerships.

**4. Maximise opportunities stemming from COVID-19 and Brexit in existing and new markets, products and services.**

- + Help clients to capitalise on global and domestic opportunities linked to COVID-19 and Brexit through enhanced market research, peer-networking and engagement with multinationals, research and innovation networks in Ireland and overseas and government bodies, such as the HSE.
- + Provide funding to support companies to identify and realise opportunities for new products, services and business models arising from COVID-19.
- + Utilise Enterprise Ireland's network to match clients to domestic and global buyers, including for COVID-19 products and services.

# 02

## DRIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE AND THE PACE OF INNOVATION, TRANSITIONING TO NEW BUSINESS MODELS, DIGITISATION AND THE LOW CARBON ECONOMY



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

**1. Increase digital adoption and transformation within the Enterprise Ireland client base.**

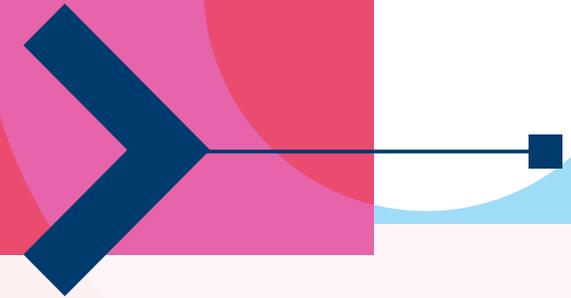
- + Build client awareness and capability in the field of digitalisation with a particular focus on remote working, sales & marketing, capability supports, and communications (“Get the Digital Advantage Campaign”).
- + Develop a multi-year digitalisation response, and input into national policy developments, to improve digital capability and drive digital transformation within the Enterprise Ireland client base.

**2. Increase the levels and pace of research and innovation undertaken by Enterprise Ireland clients, delivering increased return on investment.**

- + Increase client awareness and capability in the field of research and innovation, through the roll out of new innovation scorecards, roadmaps, communications campaign (“Ready to Innovate”) and a streamlined set of supports.
- + Maximise research and innovation collaboration nationally and regionally, including through Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, Technology Centres, Technology Gateways and Regional Technology Clusters.
- + Access and leverage European funding through Horizon Europe.

# 02

## DRIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE AND THE PACE OF INNOVATION, TRANSITIONING TO NEW BUSINESS MODELS, DIGITISATION AND THE LOW CARBON ECONOMY



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**3. Support clients to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint and capitalise on opportunities emerging from the low-carbon transition.**

### ACTIONS

- + Develop Enterprise Ireland's strategic response to the Government's climate action plan and input into national policy.
- + Deliver targeted measures under the Green Enterprise Fund to build client awareness and capability around carbon abatement opportunities, including training, audit, CO<sub>2</sub> measurement and feasibility support.
- + Deliver communications & marketing initiatives for clients addressing carbon reduction & sustainability.
- + Maximise opportunities for clients with low-carbon solutions, through Competitive Start Fund, High Potential Start-Ups, EU Green Deal funding, RD&I programmes and communications and marketing initiatives.
- + Expand company collaboration with technology and research centres for green technology and carbon reduction.

# 03

## SCALE AND GROW THE EXPORT AND START-UP BASE, ACROSS REGIONS AND SECTORS AND COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**1. Maximise the number of new start-ups from ambitious and diverse entrepreneurs in all regions.**

### ACTIONS

- + Encourage and inspire a new wave of entrepreneurs and start-ups through targeted programmes and communications campaigns.
- + Strengthen engagement with start-ups and entrepreneurs, through New Frontiers, Competitive Start Funds, targeted feasibility calls, and regional accelerators.
- + Provide funding to seed and early-stage companies through direct investment and Seed & Venture Capital Funds, and assist them to identify and secure other sources of funding (e.g. EU, international investors).
- + Advocate for an improved start-up ecosystem, including better access to finance, talent attraction and retention, and technology infrastructure.
- + Continue to deliver disruptive spinout companies from the higher education research system and experienced management teams.

**2. Increase the number of high growth clients achieving scale.**

- + Drive the capability and ambition of high growth clients through targeted scaling supports and engagement through the Global Ambition communications and events programme.
- + Develop key sectors and enable clients to grow and win in overseas markets, including through the Enter the Eurozone programme.
- + Enhance the range of client scaling supports and their delivery through structured client engagements and leadership development initiatives.

# 03

## SCALE AND GROW THE EXPORT AND START-UP BASE, ACROSS REGIONS AND SECTORS AND COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES



### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### ACTIONS

#### 3. Increase the number of new exporters.

- + Engage with a wider cohort of potential new exporters through delivery of tailored capability supports and a targeted 'Ready to Export' communications campaign.
- + Increase the number of companies transitioning from Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) to Enterprise Ireland.

#### 4. Strengthen regional enterprise development and enterprise infrastructure.

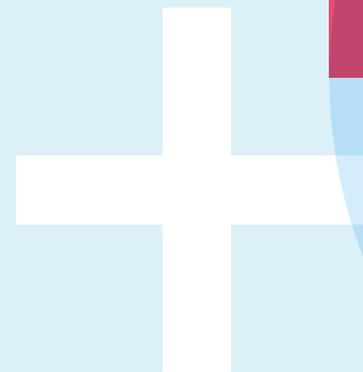
- + Capitalise on new ways of working through delivery of a remote working action plan and engagement with external stakeholders.
- + Implement and deliver regional enterprise schemes (including Regional Enterprise Development Fund I-III, Border Enterprise Development Fund, Community Enterprise Scheme).
- + Enhance the skills and competitiveness of clients across all regions, working with industry and stakeholders. e.g. through the Regional Skills Fora.
- + Support Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) to build a vibrant and resilient micro-enterprise sector in the regions, maximising sustainable jobs.

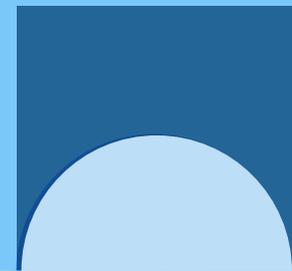
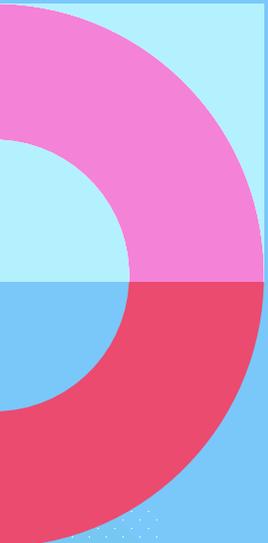
## SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION IN RESPONSE TO EVOLVING NEEDS

**A key priority for Enterprise Ireland in 2021 is to continue to develop our people and organisation to respond to the rapidly changing external environment, driven by external shocks and structural changes, Brexit, COVID-19, digitalisation and climate change.**

Enterprise Ireland is strengthening and evolving our client service delivery, with increased digitalisation and new teams being established in priority areas for enterprise, such as climate change and the digital transformation of Irish enterprise.

To position our global team to deliver with maximum impact, Enterprise Ireland will continue to focus on the development of our people, and ensuring a positive and inclusive workplace.





**Enterprise Ireland** is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. We work in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, grow, innovate and win export sales in global markets. In this way, we support sustainable economic growth, regional development and secure employment.

For more information on events and client supports which enable the delivery of Enterprise Ireland's Strategic Priorities 2021 visit [www.enterprise-ireland.com](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com)

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