



# DIGITAL CHANGE MAKERS

Skills for business trainers



## Digital Change Makers

Regional Information, North West of Ireland

*Momentum Marketing Services*



Erasmus+

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## North West, Ireland Regional Information

The North-West possesses a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to develop home-grown, local businesses into successful internationally trading enterprises. In the last number of years, there has been considerable progress made on supporting entrepreneurs, enterprises and SMEs including through the LEOs, Enterprise Ireland, and Údarás na Gaeltachta. These include New Frontiers programmes, training programmes, and financial supports. Enhanced mentoring, networks, and peer learning will benefit in preserving an entrepreneurial spirit in the North-West.

Talent is the key business differentiator and asset for the twenty-first century and the global competition for talent is becoming more apparent. The North-West's ability to continue to grow and attract investment will be dependent on readily available talent and highly skilled workers. The **National Skills Strategy 2025** sets out an ambitious plan to ensure the development of a skills supply that is responsive to the changing and diverse needs of our businesses, people, society and the economy. Considerable work is ongoing to address these needs, through the **North-West Regional Skills Forum**. Sustained access to the right talent and skills is crucial for the region to attract and retain investment. Skills demand has intensified in sectors such as construction, the digital economy, and hospitality. It is crucial that anticipated shortages and/or upskilling requirements are identified well in advance so that a response can be developed and mobilised to ensure that businesses in the North-West can continue to perform and grow.

**Skills and Talent** is one of the key themes under **Future Jobs Ireland**, the Government's new plan to guide the next phase of Ireland's economic development. Funded by the **Department of Education and Skills**, the network of nine **Regional Skills Fora** has been created as part of the **Government's National Skills Strategy 2025**. **The Fora** provides an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. **The Fora** have been established to align with wider Government policy and initiatives on regional economic development. The innovative structure of the Fora sees the work plan within each region being driven by key stakeholders in the region including employers, enterprises and education and training providers. **The Fora** provide a single point of contact in each region to help employers connect with the range of services and supports available across the education and training system.

Through increased collaboration between the **North-West Regional Skills Forum** and members of the **North-West Regional Enterprise Committee**, a more comprehensive picture of skills will be established which will be focused on linking enterprises and education providers. As part of the **Skills for Growth** initiative the **Regional Skills Forum** will assist local enterprises identify their skills' needs through a variety of audit tools to ensure that the region has the effective use of skills to support economic and social prosperity. Once skill needs have been identified, **Regional Skills Fora** will link companies with the education and training providers best suited to responding to identified skills need.

**North-West Regional Implementation Committee** (along with the other eight **Regional Committees** nationally) has engaged in a regionally coordinated manner on important



considerations to do with strengthening productivity, driving job creation, and supporting enterprise resilience in their region through education, training and mentoring. The **North-West Regional Enterprise Plan**, one of nine regional plans, sees the **Regional Action Plan for Jobs (RAPJs)** evolve to a more strategic, focused approach, in line with and complementing these policy developments at the national level. Over the period to 2020 they will take account mentoring to facilitate the emergence of new challenges to enterprise development and competitiveness both domestically and internationally in origin, including Brexit, and a need to achieve more balanced regional development.

## North West Regional Entrepreneurship Training & Mentoring Support Groups

- IDA Ireland
- Enterprise Ireland
- Donegal Local Enterprise Office
- Sligo Local Enterprise Office
- Leitrim Local Enterprise Office
- Western Development Commission
- Letterkenny Chamber
- Carrick-on-Shannon Chamber
- Sligo Chamber
- North-West Regional Skills Forum
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology Sligo
- St. Angela's College Sligo
- Donegal ETB
- Mayo Sligo & Leitrim ETB
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Waterways Ireland
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- InterTradeIreland
- Teagasc
- Fáilte Ireland
- SEUPB
- IBEC

**Local Enterprise Office** is the First Stop Shop for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in Ireland. LEO's provide advice, training, mentoring, skills, services, information and support to you in starting up or growing your business.

**IDA in the North-West** supports 40 companies employing 6,724 people in the region across a range of

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business sectors and activities. IDA partners with local stakeholders across the region in areas of education, infrastructure and Placemaking ensuring the region is an attractive location to work, live and learn.

**Bord Bia** is responsible for the development and training of new markets and the promotion of Irish food, drink and horticulture, reporting to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

**Skillnet Ireland** fosters an enterprise led approach to workforce development that are highly relevant to the needs of industry. There are 65 plus Skillnet Learning Networks. Skillnet Ireland also plays a key role in supporting and enabling Skillnet funded groups to reach their full potential.

**Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)** is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research, operating under the auspices of DBEI. SFI has supported the establishment of 17 National Research Centres, aligned with the research priority areas

**Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)** The purpose of (SEAI) is to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. SEAI provides a range of programmes and services to homes, businesses, schools and communities.

**Waterways Ireland** has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development, promotion and restoration of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes.

**Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Sligo** are key resources in terms of skills development, research and industry-academic linkages. The campus incubation facilities within these Institutes also provide valuable supports to prospective entrepreneurs and small businesses.

**Enterprise Ireland in the North-West** supports 210 Enterprise Ireland client companies, employing 6,341 people. The North-West focus for Enterprise Ireland key initiative is to develop successful startups from the region to better targeted supports and programmes to assist in developing successful startups.

**Údarás na Gaeltachta – North-West** has 6 getic digital and innovation hubs with up to 26 fully fitted office spaces and incubation units developed for start-up or expanding businesse providing access to mentoring, training and high-speed internet with a capacity for gigabit broadband.

**Entrepreneurship Programs** include EI Enterprise Training and Accelerator 'New Frontiers' Programme and EI SME Development Program

**Fáilte Ireland** will continue to offer training programmes which specifically assist businesses in the North-West winning more international business. Fáilte Ireland will also continue to offer programmes to help businesses to develop their experiences and explore the financials of extending the tourism season.