

LEO'S SUPPORT IS JUST THE JOB!

Companies supported by their Local Enterprise Office (LEO) will need to be ready for the General Data Protection Regulation, which becomes law in May. And delegates attending the Annual LEO and Local Authority Forum in Athlone also heard about the 3,700 new jobs delivered last year by start-ups and small enterprises across the country.

With a net total of 3,700 new jobs delivered last year by start-ups and small businesses from across the country, this brings to 15,000 the total number of new jobs created by LEO-backed companies since 2014.

The preliminary figures were welcomed by Minister Humphreys and Minister Breen as they opened this year's LEO and Local Authority Forum in Athlone.

The 31 LEOs nationwide, run in partnership by Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities, provide a 'first stop shop' for the supports available to entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses.

Minister Humphreys said: "As the Government rolls out its plans for balanced economic development over the next ten years, I believe the LEOs will have a major role in supporting entrepreneurs to start and stay locally."

According to Minister Breen, in a challenging environment LEO clients have contributed substantially to economic development up and down the country, especially outside of the main urban centres.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

The Chair of the Network of Local Enterprise Offices and Head of Enterprise LEO Wicklow, Sheelagh Daly, said that the jobs figures were "a testament to the determination of local entrepreneurs", adding that they're growing their own businesses with the help of their Local Enterprise Office. "Every day, thousands of small businesses are accessing a range of supports through LEOs, such as training, mentoring, grants and microfinance loans."

Brendan Flood, Divisional Manager, Regions and Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Ireland, noted that during 2017, more than 80 companies progressed from the LEOs into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio, to help them achieve their global ambition. "Enterprise Ireland will continue to work closely with the LEOs and our local authority partners to achieve balanced growth throughout every region," he added.

Speaking on behalf of local authorities, Anna-Marie Delaney, Chief Executive of Offaly and Chair of the CCMA Committee



Pictured (l-r): Sheelagh Daly, Chair of the Network of Local Enterprise Offices and Head of Enterprise LEO Wicklow; Pat Breen TD, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection; Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation; Richard Murphy, Manager of LEO Centre of Excellence Unit with Enterprise Ireland; and Anna-Marie Delaney, Chief Executive of Offaly County Council, and Chair of the Local Government Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Committee.

on Economic Development & Enterprise said: "As these results for 2017 clearly demonstrate, the LEOs are playing a pivotal role in local job creation nationwide, and the work of the LEOs complements and enhances the broader economic development remit of the local authorities."

With the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) scheduled to become law in May, Minister Breen pointed out that there's a range of information available to assist LEO companies in complying with their GDPR obligations.

"As a first step, I would encourage them to visit GDPRandyou.ie which is an excellent source of guidance provided by the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. Don't leave it until the last minute, now is the time to think about data protection measures."

GDPR: *The GDPR will set out in detail the responsibilities and obligations on those who collect, use and store personal data. This will include data protection impact assessments before new types of forms of data processing are undertaken, and the notification of data breaches to the Data Protection Commission and the individuals whose personal data have been disclosed, destroyed or lost. Supervision and enforcement activity will also increase with the conferral of new functions and powers of the Data Protection Commission.*