

# Business and Personal Supports in Offaly



Ireland's EM Structural Funds  
Programmes 2007 - 2013  
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EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND



GROWING OFFALY TOGETHER  
Offaly County Development Board



Offaly County  
Enterprise Board

# Chairman's foreword - Mr. Matt Merrick

As Chairman of the Economic Committee of Offaly County Development Board (OCDB), I welcome the publication of this booklet of economic and personal supports available to the people and businesses of Offaly. I would like to thank the agencies for their support and contribution to the information supplied and acknowledge the work of the agencies in providing business and professional support and advice within the county.

I note the work of the staff of Offaly County Enterprise Board in collating the information on behalf of the committee and presenting it in a user-friendly format. I believe the information contained sets out clearly the agencies and supports that are available and will enhance the awareness of the supports.

## Offaly County Development Board – Background

Offaly County Development Board was established in 2000 as part of a wider national initiative aimed at promoting a model of local social partnership.

Offaly County Development Board consists of 30 members representing local government, local development, state agencies and social partners. These members work collectively to prioritise, plan and deliver better services to the people of Offaly. The OCDB has identified “the creation and retention of employment” as one of the three key priorities for the period 2009 – 2012.

One of the employment support priorities was the creation of greater awareness of the agency supports available in Offaly and I believe this publication delivers on this priority.

The booklet has been distributed to all agencies and public offices and I look forward to further initiatives by the Committee in the future.

## Matt Merrick

*Chairman of Offaly County Enterprise Board Ltd*

*Chairman of Economic Committee of Offaly County Development Board*



**GROWING OFFALY TOGETHER**  
Offaly County Development Board

# Contents and Contact Details

## Business Supports

Agency Name	Address	Ph Number	Email	Website	Page
Offaly County Enterprise Board	Enterprise House Cormac Street Tullamore	057 9352971	info@offalyceb.ie	www.offalyceb.ie	1
Offaly Local Development Company	Millennium House Main Street Tullamore	057 9352467	info@offalyldc.ie	www.offalyldc.ie	5
Enterprise Ireland	Auburn Dublin Road Athlone	090 6487100	midlandsbusiness@enterprise-ireland.com	www.enterprise-ireland.com	8
Fáilte Ireland	Dublin Road Mullingar	044 93487614 087 2320820	damien.brennan@failteireland.ie	www.failteireland.ie	11
Offaly County Council	Áras an Chontae Charleville Road Tullamore	057 9346800	webmaster@offalycoco.ie	www.offalycoco.ie	13
FAS	Grand Canal House Columcille Street Tullamore	057 9321921	info@fas.ie	www.fas.ie	14
	Garrycastle Athlone	090 6424241	info@fas.ie	www.fas.ie	
	Edenderry Bus. Park Edenderry	046 9733066	info@fas.ie	www.fas.ie	
	Birr Technology Centre Brendan Street Birr	057 9123940	info@fas.ie	www.fas.ie	
Shannon Development	Construction Training Facility, Mount Lucas	057 9362777	mountlucas@fas.ie	www.fas.ie	
	Birr Technology Centre Brendan Street Birr	057 9124000	btc@shannondevelopment.ie	www.shannondevelopment.ie	21
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Athlone Institute of Technology	Dublin Road Athlone	090 6424400	info@ait.ie	www.ait.ie	24
IDA Ireland	Garrycastle Dublin Road Athlone	090 6471500	idaireland@ida.ie	www.ida.ie	25
Department of Social and Family Affairs	Castle Buildings Tara Street Tullamore	057 9325140 057 9325141		www.welfare.ie	26
Teagasc	Clonminch Tullamore	057 9321405	nora.daly@teagasc.ie	www.teagasc.ie / ruraldev	27

## Personal and Social Supports

MABS	O'Connor Square Tullamore	057 9323211 1890 283438	offaly@mabs.ie	www.mabs.ie	29
Citizens Information Centre	The Bridge Centre Tullamore	057 9352204 1890 777121	tullamore@citinfo.ie	www.citinfo.ie	31
	Emmet Street Birr	057 9121017	birr@citinfo.ie	www.citinfo.ie	
	St Mary's Street Edenderry	046 9732733	edenderry@citinfo.ie	www.citinfo.ie	

Offaly County Enterprise Board Ltd provides financial support, training and information services for new and existing small and medium enterprises in Co. Offaly. The Board provides a full range of business information services, training and financial supports to facilitate new start up enterprises and business expansion. The Board also provides business supports by way of training initiatives, conferences and seminars as well as management development programmes. The supports listed give a broad outline of what is available and further information is available from the Board's headquarters at Cormac Street, Tullamore where professional staff are available to meet with potential clients to discuss and assist with their business's development needs.

## Supports Available

- Financial Supports
- Business Skills Training
- Business Advice and Mentoring
- Business Networking Programmes
- Management Development Programme
- Invest in Offaly Marketing Project
- Schools Programme

## Financial Supports

### Priming Grant

A Priming Grant is a business start-up grant, available to micro enterprises within the first **18 months of start-up**. Priming grants may be available for sole traders, partnerships, community groups or limited companies that fulfil the following criteria:

- Located within the CEB's geographic area;
- A business which on growth may or may not fit the Enterprise Ireland portfolio;
- A business employing up to 10 employees
- A manufacturing or internationally traded services business;
- A domestically traded services business with the potential to trade internationally;
- A domestically traded services business being established by a female returning to the workforce or unemployed persons where the potential for deadweight and displacement does not exist.

### Business Expansion Grant

The Business Expansion grant is designed to assist the business in its growth phase **after** the initial 18 month start-up period. Micro enterprises that have availed of a Priming Grant are ineligible to apply for a Business Expansion Grant until 18 months after the final drawdown date of the Priming Grant, except in exceptional circumstances.

Business Expansion grants may be awarded to sole traders, partnerships, community groups or limited companies that fulfil the following criteria

- Located with the CEB's geographic area;
- A business which on growth may or may not have the capacity to fit the Enterprise Ireland portfolio;
- A business employing up to 10 employees;
- A manufacturing or internationally traded services business;
- A domestically traded service business with the potential to trade internationally.

The maximum Priming Grant or Business Expansion Grant payable must not exceed 50% of the investment or €150,000 whichever is the lesser. Grants over €80,000 and up to €150,000 shall be the exception and shall only apply in the case of projects that clearly demonstrate a potential to graduate to Enterprise Ireland and/or to export internationally. In all other cases, the maximum grant shall be 50% of the investment or €80,000 whichever is the lesser. Subject to the 50% limit, a maximum grant of up to €15,000 per full time job created shall apply in respect of any employment support grant aided.

## Financial Supports (continued)

### Feasibility/Innovation Grant

Feasibility/Innovation Grants are designed to assist the promoter with researching market demand for a product or service and examining its sustainability. It includes assistance with innovation including specific consultancy requirements, hiring or expertise from third level colleges, private specialists, design, patent costs, and prototype development.

The maximum Feasibility/Innovation Grant payable for the BMW Region must not exceed 60% of the investment or €20,000 whichever is the lesser.

### Business Development Grants

Offaly County Enterprise Board may make financial assistance available to eligible clients for technical training, purchase of software and/or marketing assistance. This scheme is confined to qualifying micro enterprises employing 10 or less persons on a full time basis. Eligible expenditure includes the following:

\* **Technical Training:** Direct course costs where a promoter may need to access specialist technical training specific to their sector/business, and assistance is not available through other schemes of the Board or State Agencies.

\* **Purchase of Software:** Direct costs of specific software in relation to the production/operational process. The scheme may consider applications from enterprises seeking to upgrade their production and operational software. This does not include generic software for PCs.

\* **Marketing Assistance:** Design and marketing expertise in relation to branding, packaging and marketing. This grant specifically excludes printing costs.

### Website Development Grants

A website is a means of promoting your business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even when you are not available it can still be working on your behalf! It can raise awareness of your product or service, be cheaper than a colour brochure and can generate sales for your business. Your website can be a simple one page document or a complete catalogue of your products. One of the most important aspects of any website is that it is constantly updated. Under this scheme, eligible clients may receive up to €1,500 or 50% of the cost for design and development of a website.

### Trade Fair Support

Participating in Trade Fairs and Market Visits can provide valuable customer feedback and sales for your business. Trade Fairs can be one of the most cost effective and efficient means of developing and maintaining business or meeting your customers. Eligible clients may receive up to 50% of the costs associated with attending trade fairs, both in Ireland and abroad.

### TechCheck

TechCheck is a programme where small businesses can access independent expert advice on the most effective use of your existing technology as well as practical suggestions for appropriate development of technology use. It is not just about computers – it is about your business and how it can be improved using all kinds of information technology. TechCheck is for every small business no matter what sector it operates in. Whether your business is currently a “technology free zone” or is already using the best and newest technology, there is always a benefit in reviewing where you are now and planning where you want to go next.



### Business Skills Training

To assist small businesses in meeting the challenges of the business world, Offaly County Enterprise Board provides a wide range of training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. The range of programmes offered typically includes a mix of one day workshops, seminars, evening courses and management development programmes. While training content is tailored to the particular knowledge and skills requirement of individual clients, certain common themes are ever popular. Examples of these are Start Your Own Business programmes, Sales & Marketing, Employment Legislation and HR, Health & Safety, Personal Development, Time Management, E-Commerce, Financial Management, People Management and IT skills training.

Contact Geraldine Beirne at [gbeirne@offalyceb.ie](mailto:gbeirne@offalyceb.ie).

### Business Networking Programmes

An important role of the Offaly County Enterprise Board is the provision of networking opportunities for local businesses. Many business networks are organised and promoted by the Boards, such as Women in Business and ONE (Offaly Network of Entrepreneurs). The networks meet on a monthly basis with training and social networking. The programme is free of charge to all businesses, but preregistration is advised.

Contact Geraldine Beirne at [gbeirne@offalyceb.ie](mailto:gbeirne@offalyceb.ie).

### Invest in Offaly

Today, Offaly is a vibrant enterprise led community and the ideal place to establish and grow a business. Operating your business from an Offaly base costs less overall, giving companies a competitive edge. The workforce is well educated, skilled and enthusiastic. Located in the centre of Ireland, Offaly is under 90 minutes drive from Dublin, Galway and other major cities and towns and has close access to the modern motorway network. Furthermore, substantial investment in infrastructure by Offaly Local Authorities has provided all the important support structures for industrial and business activity. For people considering a move to Offaly, there is an excellent business support available through the Invest in Offaly Programme. The Programme can assist by arranging confidential one to one meetings, tailored business itineraries, property and market research, appropriate referrals to other agencies and alerting business executives to a host of other supports in Offaly.

The Invest in Offaly Initiative is a collaborative programme driven by Offaly County Enterprise Board and Atlantic Corridor and supported by Offaly County Council.

Contact: Orla Martin at [omartin@offalyceb.ie](mailto:omartin@offalyceb.ie) or Jimmy Keane and Jackie Gorman at Invest in Offaly.

Further information is available at [www.investinoffaly.ie](http://www.investinoffaly.ie).

### Business Advice and Mentoring

This service seeks to match 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. The Mentor contributes independent, informed observation and advice to aid decision making. Mentor assignments typically include general management, financial restructuring, production planning, marketing and strategic planning. All applications for Mentor assistance are dealt with on an individual basis and are preceded by a training needs analysis.

Contact Orla Martin at [omartin@offalyceb.ie](mailto:omartin@offalyceb.ie).

### Management Development Programme

Innovate – or Stagnate is an intensive programme designed to give participants maximum impact from a limited time period. This new programme creates a dynamic environment where participants learn from practical content, provocative consulting, real Irish successes and failures and most of all from each other. It ultimately focuses on enabling participants to create a business as opposed to a job. In order to achieve this, participants will be shown how to systemise key functions of their business that will free them up from the tyranny of “always doing, doing, doing”. This programme will empower delegates to “work on their business” as opposed to “working in it” and as such create a business of enduring value and a source of continuing income.

Contact Orla Martin at [omartin@offalyceb.ie](mailto:omartin@offalyceb.ie).

## Schools Programme

Offaly County Enterprise Board endeavours to foster an environment where increasing numbers of Irish people will establish and run their own enterprises. In pursuit of this objective the Board has supported teachers in the delivery of a number of action based enterprise programmes designed to give students practical experience of setting up and running their own business.

### Most Enterprising Student

Each primary school in the county is invited to nominate a student for this award which is designed to reward the youngest of the county's entrepreneurs. It can also be used by the school to reward other forms of "enterprising" behaviour e.g. overcoming difficulties, non-academic talents etc. The Board visits each participating school to present the award and talk to the students about what it means to be "enterprising" and have interactive discussions about "entrepreneurship" at a basic level. The participating schools enjoy and benefit immensely from the scheme and it receives widespread publicity from the local media.

### Practical Enterprise Programme

In partnership with the Laois Education Centre, primary schools in the county develop a school website, supported by the Enterprise Board. Offaly County Enterprise Board visit each of the schools involved and provide the pupils with thought provoking exercises in the areas of team building, creative thinking, planning and goal setting. These highly interactive sessions allow pupils to examine their reasons for creating a school website, develop their teamwork skills and think creatively as they develop their website. In addition, teachers attend training sessions on how to create and develop their website. Schools receive free domain name registration and hosting for 3 years and the acquisition of the licence for the website design software.

### Student Enterprise Awards

This programme gives students the opportunity to set up their own business and take it from the idea stage, right through to production, management and report preparation. As well as entering the county final, schools can avail of two other strands of assistance:

- Student Enterprise Awards Mentoring
- Schools Enterprise Day

A new Student Workbook was launched nationally in September 2008 designed to assist students involved in the Student Enterprise Awards. It is a step by step guide for students to help them through the process of setting up a business from the idea generation stage right through to writing the business report. It is based on the Student Enterprise Awards module in the teacher's resource manual "Exploring Enterprise".

A new and improved **National Student Enterprise Awards website** was launched in September 2009. It includes teachers' and students' area, and provides general information on the awards:

[www.studententerprise.ie](http://www.studententerprise.ie).

### For further information contact:

**Enterprise House**  
**Cormac St**  
**Tullamore**

**Tel: 057 9352971**  
**Fax: 057 9352973**  
**info@offalyceb.ie**



# Supporting & developing individuals and communities on Offaly

[www.offalyldc.ie](http://www.offalyldc.ie)

Offaly Local Development Company operates under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) which aims to counter disadvantage and promote equality and social and economic inclusion, and the Rural Development Programme (RDP) which aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification of the rural economy.

## Supports Available

- Information Service/Job Clubs
- Exploring Further Options
- Specific Skills Training Courses
- Enterprise Supports
- Smallholder Development Outreach Services
- Community Development
- Community Based Youth Initiatives
- Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013

## Information Services/Job Clubs

### Information Service - Edenderry

- Job Listings
- FÁS Training Courses/Community Employment
- VEC courses, Back to Education Initiative, PLC's
- Social Welfare Schemes & Supports
- Referral to Support Agencies
- Outreach Jobs Club Services
- Outreach Education/Training Initiatives

### Job Clubs - Tullamore & Birr

- Communications & Personal Skills
- CV Preparation & Design
- Interview Techniques
- Application Letters & Forms
- Advert Analysis
- Identifying Skills, Abilities & Career Guidance
- Job Targeting/Job Search
- Telephone Skills

### Drop In Service

- One to one guidance
- CV Preparation & Interview Preparation

Contact your nearest Offaly LDC office for further information, and register your interest with FÁS.

## Exploring Future Options

### Redundancy - Managing the Changes

#### One Day Introductory Programme

- Adapting to Change
- Building on Your Experience
- How to Develop a Winning Attitude
- Creating Your Own Future

### Career Options Programme

#### 6 Weeks Duration - FETAC Level 3

- Induction
- Preparation For Employment/Self Employment
- Personal Development - Training for a Better Future
- Career Guidance
- Psychometric Testing
- Image Consultancy
- CV's, Interview Preparation, Job Seeking Skills
- Mentoring & Guidance

### New Challenge, New Opportunity

#### One Day Introductory Programme

- Life Planning/Financial Planning
- Starting a Business in the Current Climate
- 4 Fundamental Questions of Business Planning
- Adapting Your Communication Styles
- Time Management and Goal Setting

Contact 057 9322850 for further details.



# Supporting & developing individuals and communities on Offaly

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## Specific Skills Training Courses

### Foundations for Employment

**32 Weeks - FETAC Level 3/4**

- Communications & Personal Effectiveness
- Basic Maths
- Information Technology
- Child Development & Play
- Healthcare
- Reception Skills/Customer Care
- Job Seeking Skills/Work Experience
- Safety Awareness

### Training for Employment

**26 Weeks - FETAC Level 4**

- Information Technology
- Manual Handling/First Aid
- Customer Care/Communication Skills
- Mathematics
- Personal Effectiveness
- Work Experience

### Employment Options - Healthcare Support

**26 Weeks - FETAC Level 5**

- Care of the Older Person
- Care Skills & Care Support
- Personal Effectiveness
- Nutrition
- Health & Safety/CPR
- Work Experience
- Information Technology

**Contact your nearest Offaly LDC office for further information, and register your interest with FÁS.**

## Smallholder Development Outreach Service

### Information & Assistance

- Farm Related Schemes/Supports

### Support & Mentoring

- Maximising On-Farm Income
- Exploring Off-farm Income Opportunities
- Social Networking/Connect Programmes

**Contact Brian Lyons on 086 8336873.**

## Enterprise Supports

### Enterprise Mentoring/Coaching

- Back to work Enterprise Applications
- Business Plans
- Business Coaching and Mentoring
- Enterprise Skills Training

**Contact 057 9322850 for further information.**

### Business Development Programme

**26 weeks - FETAC Level 5**

- Communications
- Personal Effectiveness
- Market Research
- Basic Bookkeeping & Accounts
- Business Finance
- Marketing
- Inputs from Government Agencies
- Business Insurance
- Developing a Business Plan
- Basic IT Skills

**Contact Carmel Ormond 057 9151622 for further information, and register your interest with FÁS.**

## Community Development

Offaly Local Development Company works closely with individuals and communities to enhance their individual and collective capacity to bring about positive change in their own lives, their families, the wider community and its environment. Community volunteers are supported to meet these challenges through community development and volunteerism training initiatives; through facilitation and empowering of issue based groups such as Older People and Women to establish and maintain self help groups & networks; through developmental support for existing and newly established groups; and through participation in Community and Voluntary area fora.

Volunteers are also engaged directly in action research as in the Building Healthy Communities Project, where they are trained in community leadership and supported to implement Action Plans which overcome health inequalities in conjunction with the agencies.

Support for environmental enhancement, community projects, and for local authority residents groups, facilitates the participation of volunteers in the development of projects which enhance quality of life and effect positive change within their communities. Community development groups are also supported to participate in local area planning processes, and to develop and implement integrated Local Area Action Plans in conjunction with relevant agencies.

# Supporting & developing individuals and communities on Offaly

[www.offalyldc.ie](http://www.offalyldc.ie)



## Community Based Youth Initiatives

Identifying, promoting and coordinating initiatives which foster equality in education in conjunction with key agencies is a primary goal of the Community Based Youth Initiatives Measure of Offaly Local Development Company. Actions are centred around youth participation in innovative developmental programmes both in and out of school settings.

Beginning with early years intervention programmes with parents and parenting skills to the fore are initiatives such as Lifestart, a home based educational programme for parents of 0 to 5 year olds. The Better Educational Start programme (BEST) supports children deemed at risk of early school leaving to progress through the education system through coordinated interventions in school, community and family settings. Homework Clubs also support young people at risk of early school leaving, and support is also provided to projects facilitating the return to education of early school leavers and young offenders.

In conjunction with the Offaly Outreach Education Project, Offaly Local Development Company also promotes access to further and third level education among disadvantaged youth in Offaly.

In terms of mainstream youth developmental work outside of school settings, an overriding focus of this work is the integration of disadvantaged youth into mainstream youth activities and the development of services where none are in existence, such as local youth clubs. Projects include ICT Initiatives; a Youth Bank; projects and summer camps focussed on sports, arts and health; film making projects on issues such as drugs and suicide; and activities which encourage youth participation in decision making structures such as Comhairle na nOg.

Multiagency initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing substance misuse and supporting families affected by alcohol and drug misuse, also form part of the work of this measure.

## Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification of the rural economy. It offers supports for projects under the following measures:

- 1. Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities:** to increase farm household income and create employment opportunities by assisting farm households to diversify into non-agricultural activities on farm.
- 2. Support For Business Creation and Development:** to develop the economic infrastructure in rural areas by creating employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship. The programme will provide support for existing micro enterprises and for individuals wishing to set up a new micro enterprise.
- 3. Encouragement of Tourism Activities:** to maximise the sustainable, regionally balanced, tourism potential of all rural areas through provision of necessary infrastructure and development of the countryside as a recreational resource for all.
- 4. Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population:** to increase the attractiveness of rural areas by supporting the improvement of basic services. This will include the improvement of cultural and leisure activities and related small scale infrastructure.
- 5. Village and Countryside Renewal and Development:** to provide appropriate supports to enhance the economic and social attractiveness of villages, small towns and the surrounding countryside.
- 6. Conservation and Upgrading the Rural Heritage:** to support local initiatives to preserve and upgrade the rural heritage.
- 7. Training:** to take the "bottom up" approach to relevant training provision on a geographic and sectoral basis. To equip rural dwellers and communities with the relevant range of skills and training to derive maximum social and economic benefit.

Contact Michelle O'Brien or Caitriona Duggan on 057 9322850

## Rates of Grant Aid

Project Type	Rate
Capital Projects (Private)	50% up to €150,000
Capital Projects (Community)	75% up to €150,000
Analysis & Development (Private)	75% up to €30,000
Analysis & Development (Community)	90% up to €30,000
Training Courses	100% up to €150,000
Training Capital/ICT (Community)	75% up to €150,000
Training Facilities/Equipment	60% up to €150,000

## For further information contact:

**Tullamore** Tel: 057 9322850 or 9352467  
**Edenderry** Tel: 046 9732688  
**Banagher** Tel: 057 9151622

**Job Club Tullamore** Tel: 057 9326528  
**Job Club Birr** Tel: 057 9123940

Enterprise Ireland is the primary Government agency responsible for the development and promotion of Irish Enterprise. Our mission is to accelerate the development of world class Irish companies to achieve strong positions in global markets resulting in increased national and regional prosperity. Our clients are manufacturing and internationally traded service companies.

## Supports Available

- Driving Regional Enterprise
- Starting Up & Scaling Up
- Achieving Export Sales
- Increasing Competitiveness through Business Innovation
- Investing in Research & Innovation

## Introduction

Enterprise Ireland is the primary government agency responsible for the development and promotion of Irish Enterprise. Our mission is to accelerate the development of world class Irish companies to achieve strong positions in global markets resulting in increased national and regional prosperity. Our clients are manufacturing & internationally traded service companies.

Through our extensive network of Irish and international offices, we work with our clients to assist them to compete and to grow.

Our key focus for Irish companies is covered under the following five areas of activity:

- Driving Regional Enterprise
- Starting up & Scaling up
- Achieving Export Sales
- Increasing Competitiveness through Business Innovation
- Investing in Research and Innovation

We also provide assistance for international companies who are searching for world class Irish suppliers and we can help international companies who want to set up food and drink manufacturing operations in Ireland.

## Driving Regional Enterprise

Driving enterprise growth throughout the regions of Ireland is central to Ireland's continued economic growth and one of our key objectives. We work closely with local public & industry bodies, third level institutions and other business networks to encourage and promote start ups, spin off enterprises, and business expansions. We continue to co-invest with the private sector in the development of venture capital funding and four venture capital funds now have specific regional mandates.

We work closely with 3rd level institutions across the state to support the creation of on campus incubation space, centres of research excellence that can support local industry, the acquisition of industry relevant research equipment and increasing industry-3rd level linkages.

Support is also provided to local communities to drive enterprise development in their areas through the provision of grant aid for the creation and development of Community led Enterprise Centres and Business Development Managers for these centres.

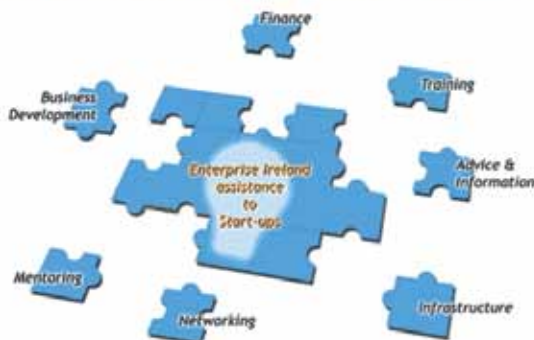
## Starting Up & Scaling Up

### Starting Up

Entrepreneurs with the ambition to develop an innovation based start up enterprise that will employ more than 10 staff, sell over €1m in Ireland & internationally within a 3 year period may avail of a wide range of supports from Enterprise Ireland. Entrepreneurs who think they may have a project of this scale are encouraged to make contact with Enterprise Ireland's Midland Regional Office in Athlone. Entrepreneurs whose plans are not export oriented or are not likely to grow as quickly should in the first instance contact Offaly County Enterprise Board.

The range of start up supports is outlined in the following diagram.

#### Enterprise Ireland can help complete the picture...



### Scaling Up

Enterprise Ireland's Scaling Division provides support to client companies to grow into international companies of scale. The division was established to increase the number of client companies with total sales of €30m+ per annum.

Generally our interaction commences with a strategic review, involving interviews with significant customers, the management team, Board and major investors (as appropriate). The feedback and analysis from this review forms the basis of an agreed strategic agenda between the company and the Scaling Division.

The Scaling team facilitates companies learning from each other and also from international experts tailored to Scaling issues.

## Investing in Research & Innovation

We support both companies and researchers based in third level institutions and Public Research Institutes to engage in research. Our aim is to facilitate collaborative links between enterprise and the research community that lead to the practical & profitable application of research in business, yielding benefits to both groups.

### R&D supports for companies

Enterprise Ireland offers a wide range of supports and funding to client companies that wish to engage in R&D. This includes:

- R&D Funding
  - R&D Stimulation Grant – maximum funding of up to €30,000 is available – access open to clients of Offaly County Enterprise Board.
  - R&D Small Projects – for R&D projects costing less than €150,000 – access open to clients of Offaly County Enterprise Board also
  - R&D Fund – max funding of €450,000 available to Enterprise Ireland clients
- Innovation Vouchers
- Industry Led Research
- Technology Acquisition & Licencing
- Technology Development Advice

### Supports for third level researchers

Enterprise Ireland provides supports to third level researchers along every step of the journey from the bench to the boardroom.

### Supports for Research Performing Organisations

- Applied Research Enhancement Programme
- Campus Incubation Centres & Managers

### Supports for Industry Representative Groups

- Enterprise Innovation Networks

### Supports designed to build collaborative links

- R&D collaboration with researchers and other companies
- International R&D collaboration
- Seventh EU Framework Programme (FP7)

## Increasing Competitiveness through Business Innovation

A company's ability to increase productivity, exports and turnover will determine their future performance. Enterprise Ireland has a suite of business innovation supports to drive growth.

*There are 3 components to our offer.*

### 1 Stimulating Business Innovation

Through the provision of modest levels of financial support to enable enterprises to initiate the process of adopting innovative business practices. These include:

- Supply Chain management
- eBusiness Management Initiative
- Automation
- Benchmarking
- Green Technologies
- Feasibility Studies
- Innovation Vouchers
- Strategy Development
- Management Development & Training

### 2 Growth Fund

The Growth Fund is designed to assist SME clients of Enterprise Ireland to achieve greater competitiveness by improving their export potential. This is achieved by increasing both their gross output and gross productivity, while also providing new employment or maintaining existing employment levels. Support of up to €450,000 is available to client companies under this fund.

### 3 Growth Expertise

To ensure companies get maximum value for the Business Innovation Offer supports, specialist Enterprise Ireland staff work with companies to develop

- good benchmarking systems
- best practice in the relevant sector
- advise on product design
- automation
- eBusiness
- environmental management
- supply chain management

## Achieving Export Sales

Our primary focus is to help our client companies achieve international success. We provide a wealth of professional services and resources. Our state level influence means we can open doors for clients with key decision makers, buyers and influencers in the right organisations and at the right level internationally.

Enterprise Ireland has access to more than 60 countries through its 31 offices around the world and can support companies to increase sales in global markets through:

- Finding potential customers and partners
- Generating sales leads
- Organising face to face meetings with buyers
- Tracking competitors
- Setting up distribution channels
- Developing companies' export marketing strategy
- Helping clients establish a market presence
- Advising on promotional efforts
- Sourcing translation and interpretation services
- Initiating joint venture and technology transfer partnerships

Companies employing less than 10 people and who are clients of Offaly County Enterprise Board can receive export development support through the First Flight Programme run in partnership with Enterprise Ireland.

## For further information contact:

**Margaret Hennessy**  
**Enterprise Ireland**  
**Auburn**  
**Dublin Road**  
**Athlone**  
**Co. Westmeath**

**Tel: 090 648 7100**

**Fax: 090 648 7101**

**[midlandsbusiness@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:midlandsbusiness@enterprise-ireland.com)**



Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, was established to guide and promote tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy. The organisation provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high quality and competitive tourist destination. In this context, our mission is broadly “to increase the contribution of tourism to the economy by facilitating the development of a competitive and profitable tourism industry.” Fáilte Ireland works in strategic partnership with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and more profitable and to help individual enterprises to enhance their performance.

## Supports Available

- Micro Business Support
- You, Your Business and the Internet
- Bizcheck
- WebCheck
- Business Development specifically designed for the Hospitality Industry
- Business Development Manager
- Careers in the Hospitality Industry

### Micro Business Support

Tourism Learning Networks are specifically designed to support self managed businesses most often with less than 5 whole time staff. The emphasis is on action learning and networking and takes place over a year long programme. Subjects such as market research, IT skills, financial planning, HR management are dealt with according to the Networks needs. Each business is challenged to have a Business Plan by the end of the course.

### You, Your Business and the Internet

You, Your Business and the Internet consists of an Introductory and then an Intermediate course designed for the small business owner who is only beginning to conquer the IT world. A simple check list will tell you where to begin and the course is designed to allay any fears and to bring you up to speed on the World Wide Web.

### BizCheck

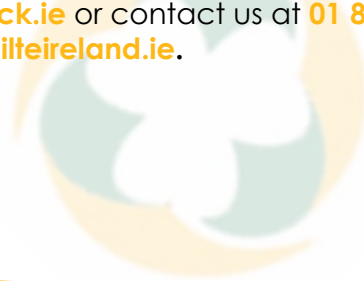
Fáilte Ireland's Business Mentoring & Advisory service provides confidential, practical and expert advice to Irish Tourism enterprises. BizCheck clinics are free one to one sessions with a business mentor who can assist you with a wide variety of business functions. Getting started is as easy as 1, 2, 3...

\* **Register:** All you have to do is complete our online BizCheck Review. This will help you pinpoint where you want help for your business and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

\* **Discuss your needs:** We will then call you to discuss your priorities and help you select the best mentor for you and your business.

\* **Meet your mentor:** After that it's time to put you in touch with your own dedicated mentor.

BizCheck puts you in control. Additional mentoring services are available giving you the opportunity to work with a mentor for longer periods. The fee for further mentoring is heavily subsidised by Fáilte Ireland making the service both affordable and accessible. All details can be found at [www.BizCheck.ie](http://www.BizCheck.ie) or contact us at **01 8847897** or [bizcheck@failteireland.ie](mailto:bizcheck@failteireland.ie).





## WebCheck

WebCheck is a series of supports to improve your existing web site and the features on it. Web Check offers a service which looks at your site, has an initial telephone conversation with you and follows that with a three hour in-house site improvement/adjustment session. Following that you can proceed to Web Check Plus and have professional help in accessing at least two of the Web 2.0 eMarketing features.

Note: both these courses must be applied for on-line at [www.iaa.ie/failte-ireland](http://www.iaa.ie/failte-ireland) and are free of charge

Web Skills is a series of advanced workshops dealing with eMarketing and Web 2.0 issues. A rotating Calendar of events and locations is available from Damien Brennan at the address below.

## Business Development Manager

The Business Development Manager is available to provide direct support to tourism enterprises of every size to assist them identify their business learning and people development needs and help in the design, development and provision of programmes and services to meet their specific needs. This includes:

- Expanding awareness and accessibility to Continuing Professional Development Programmes
- Facilitating tailored bespoke In Company training solutions that fit the operational demands of the business and are designed for micro and SMEs as appropriate
- Promoting and supporting the establishment of Tourism Learning Networks which encourage businesses to work together to develop best practices that develop enterprise capability, service standards and encourage tourism to your local area
- Supporting Enterprise development, sustainability and the establishment of world class service standards, through the Optimus and Performance Plus programmes and tools
- Providing training and enterprise support for regional product development programmes
- Encouraging and supporting skills development and work based learning, to meet the development of people and business

## Business Development for the Hospitality Industry

The role of the Fáilte Ireland Business Development Manager in the East and Midlands region is to liaise with Industry stakeholders to provide support in developing businesses capability and standards to support business goals, service standards, profitability and long term sustainability, in line with the key strategic themes identified for each region. The themes identified for the Ireland East and Midlands region under our current Strategy are:

- Lakelands and Inland Waterways
- Equestrian Ireland
- Beyond Dublin
- Heritage Country

## Careers in the Hospitality Industry

If you, your family or friends are considering a career in tourism be it in hotel management, accommodation management, bar or dining room skills, kitchen or reception Fáilte Ireland have a wide range of options and locations available. See [www.picktourism.ie](http://www.picktourism.ie) for full details.

## For further information contact:

**Damien J Brennan**  
**Business Development Manager**  
**Fáilte Ireland**  
**Dublin Road**  
**Mullingar**  
**Co. Westmeath**

**Tel: 044 93487614**

**Fax: 044 9340413**

**Mobile: 087 2320820**

**[damien.brennan@failteireland.ie](mailto:damien.brennan@failteireland.ie)**





Offaly County Council plays a leading role in delivering programmes and services which contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of Offaly. Offaly County Council facilitates and promotes development through the County Development Plan and through improvements to local infrastructure including roads, water, housing, amenities, environmental and emergency services.

## Supports Available

- Economic Development Unit
- Planning Advice
- Industrial Sites
- Enterprise Grants

## Economic Development Unit

Offaly County Council Economic Development Unit was established to facilitate economic development and enterprise creation in Offaly and to coordinate and promote tourism development within the County.

The Economic Development Officer provides a single point of contact for anyone wishing to contact Offaly County Council for anything to do with Economic Development. The Officer can also facilitate interdepartmental preplanning meetings with potential developers to assist in guiding projects through the planning system.

Offaly County Council works with all of the State and Semi State Agencies and the private sector to create and support employment in County Offaly. It is always available to have discussions with regard to any project which will achieve these aims.

## Enterprise Grants

The West Offaly Enterprise Fund Ltd. and the North Offaly Development Fund Ltd. are two Companies established under the auspices of Offaly County Council. The primary purpose of the Companies is to manage funding put in place by the ESB for the promotion of employment creation in the Ferbane and Edenderry Electoral Areas respectively.

Both Companies invite applications for their Small Enterprise Projects Grants Scheme. Funding is available for the purpose of promoting private enterprise and job creation. The West Offaly Enterprise Fund Ltd. invites applications from projects in the Ferbane Electoral Area and the North Offaly Development Fund invites applications from projects in the Edenderry Electoral Area.

## Planning Advice

The Offaly County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 contains a number of policies and objectives to support economic development in Offaly. There is a positive presumption towards developments of an industrial, commercial, tourism and retail nature which have the capacity to generate employment. Offaly County Council Planning Department is always available to meet with potential developers in relation to projects of any size. Planners are available to meet with people on an individual basis to discuss their project or interdepartmental preplanning meetings can be organised.

A Guide to Making a Planning Application and a Planning Information Pack can be downloaded from [www.offaly.ie](http://www.offaly.ie) under the Planning Section. The Opening Hours for the Planning Office are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Tel: 057 9357414 Email: [planning@offalycoco.ie](mailto:planning@offalycoco.ie).

## Industrial Sites

The Offaly County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 ensures that sufficient lands are zoned throughout the County for industrial development. Offaly County Council operates a number of Industrial Estates and Business Parks in County Offaly. Fully serviced sites are available at very reasonably priced rates in a number of locations. Information on available sites or industrial units can be sourced by contacting the Economic Development Officer in Offaly County Council.

## For further information contact:

**Jackie Finney, Economic Development Officer**  
**Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore**

**Tel: 057 9357456 or 057 9346800 , Fax: 057 9346868**  
**[jfinney@offalycoco.ie](mailto:jfinney@offalycoco.ie) or [webmaster@offalycoco.ie](mailto:webmaster@offalycoco.ie)**

FÁS operates training and employment programmes, provides a recruitment service to jobseekers and employers, an advisory service for industry and supports community based enterprises. The Organisation operates throughout Ireland, divided into eight regions. The following information relates to the Services provided in The Midlands Region (Westmeath, Laois, Kildare, Longford, Offaly). The Operational Units within FÁS Midlands are:

## Supports Available

### • Employment Services

- Services to Jobseekers
- Services to Employers
- An Online Employment Marketplace
- Employment Services Clinics
- Work Placement Programme

### • Community Services

- What does CE provide?
- How do I know if I am eligible for CE?
- How do I get a place on CE
- How will my Social Welfare Payments be affected?
- Jobs Clubs
- Local Training Initiatives
- Community Centres/Youthreach
- Supported Employment

### • Services to Business

- Apprenticeship
- Redundant Apprenticeship Rotation Scheme
- Excellence through people

### • Training Services

- Specific Training
- Bridging/Foundation Training
- Evening Courses
- Sponsored Training
- Contracted Training
- Flexible Training Options
- Full time day courses

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment Services have responsibility for the development and delivery of a general guidance and placement service. Employment Services provide service to both jobseekers and to employers. There are 10 Employment Services Offices in the Region and in addition clinics are held in 7 locations.

### Services to Jobseekers

- Information and advice
- Occupational Guidance, assessment of needs, development of a Career Action Plan
- Referral to training and other Labour Market interventions
- Referral to other services e.g. Job Clubs, Work Experience Programmes, Enterprise Boards, National Learning Network, Local Employment Services, Department of Social and Family Affairs and other non-FÁS Labour Market Activities
- Job Placement
- EURES – Assisting jobseekers wishing to work in other EU member states
- Services and Supports for people with disabilities

### Services to Employers

- Vacancy Advertising
- Vacancy Matching
- Redundancy support for staff
- Employment Supports for a person with a disability

To advertise a vacancy contact 1800 611 116 and give their information on the vacancy. This is a Free Service. There are a number of Supports/Grants available to take on a person with a disability under the Reasonable Accommodation Fund including Workplace Equipment/ Adaptation Grant and Personal Reader Grants. A Wage Subsidy Scheme is also in operation, aimed at increasing the employment of people with disabilities. It offers a financial subsidy to employers to encourage them to employ people with a disability.

## An Online Employment Marketplace

FÁS Jobs Ireland is an online marketplace where Jobseekers and Employers can find information and profiles about prospective jobs and staff in Ireland and across Europe. FÁS Jobs Ireland also provides a database of Training courses to suit all needs.

FÁS Jobs Ireland can be accessed easily and in a number of ways – through the Internet

[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie), on WAP enabled mobile phones, at special touch screen (WATIS) kiosks in FÁS offices or via the FREEPHONE service on 1800 611 116.

## Employment Services Clinics

In addition to the 9 Locations with Employment Services Offices, seven clinics are held in the following locations:

- Portarlington
- Rathdowney
- Mountmellick
- Athy
- Ballymahon
- Granard
- Castlepollard

## Work Placement Programme

Work Placement Programme will provide 2000 six month places to individuals who are unemployed. The programme offers those who are unemployed the opportunity to get six month experience in a work situation.

**Work Placement 1 and Graduates:** Graduates who have attained before 2009 a full award at Level 7 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications who have been unemployed and on the live register for a period of at least six months and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance from Department of Social and Family Affairs.

There are 1000 placements available under this stream.

**Work Placement 2:** All other persons who have been unemployed and on the live register for a period of at least six months and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance from DFSF. This stream is available to all individuals who do not possess a full award at Level 7 or above on the NFQ. There are 1000 placements available under this stream, a minimum of 250 of which are ring fenced for people who are under 25 years of age.

For the application process and eligibility criteria please contact your local FÁS Employment Services Office.

## Employment Services Contact Details

Location	Address	Telephone	Fax
Athlone	Garrycastle, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	090 6424241	090 6474795
Edenderry	FÁS/Offaly Local Development Co., Edenderry Business Park, Edenderry Co. Offaly	046 9733066	046 9733353
Tullamore	Grand Canal House, Columcille St., Tullamore, Co. Offaly	057 9321921	057 9321682
Birr	Birr Technology Centre, Brendan St., Birr, Co. Offaly	057 9123940	057 9123941

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

Responsible for Community Employment (C.E.), Job Clubs, Local Training Initiatives, Community Training Centres, Specialist Training and Supported Employment for People with Disabilities.

### What does CE provide?

Community Employment provides eligible unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary basis. Community employment programmes service local voluntary organisations environment, caring and community areas.

There are currently 110 CE Projects running in the Midlands Region. They provide an excellent chance to up-skill and build on confidence.

See [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie) for further information or alternatively contact your local FÁS Employment Services office.

### How do I get a place on CE?

For eligibility please contact your local FÁS Employment Services Office where you will be able to discuss your eligibility with an Employment Services Officer.

Once your eligibility has been determined please refer to FÁS Jobsireland where vacancies are advertised or drop into your local FÁS Employment Office and use the WATIS machines. If you are registered for employment you may wish to use the Freephone service 1800 611 116. Please discuss how your Social Welfare Payment may be affected while on Community Employment with an Employment Services Officer, or refer to the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

### Local Training Initiatives (LTIs)

The overall aim of the LTI Programme is to provide flexible training opportunities to raise competency levels of unemployed people. They can facilitate progression towards labour market participation. LTI's provide support to Community/Voluntary organisations to address local service and development needs. There are currently 23 LTI courses in the Midlands. To get on a waiting list for a Jobs Club or Local Training Initiative please contact your Local Employment Office and speak with an Employment Services Officer.

### Community Centres/YOUTHREACH

Community Centres play a major role in the implementation of YOUTHREACH. The Training Centres are aimed at early school leavers aged between 16 and 21 years of age who are most in need of basic vocational training and are managed by representative community committees.

### Jobs Clubs

Job Clubs are an active, practical and participative process in which participants will develop skills, which they will use in actual job finding activities. There are currently 7 Jobs Clubs running in the Midlands Region. Social Welfare payments are not affected by attendance to Jobs Clubs.

### Supported Employment

The Supported Employment Programme is an initiative to assist jobseekers with a disability to find employment. The Supported Employment Programme facilitates the integration of people with disabilities into paid employment in the open labour market. It provides support to assist with this integration process and meet the labour requirements of employers.

There are many other Supports/Grants and specialist training programmes available to people with disabilities and these can be discussed with your local employment services office or viewed on the FÁS Website [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie).

### Community Services Contact Details

<b>Location</b> Tullamore	<b>Address</b> Grand Canal House, Columcille St., Tullamore, Co. Offaly	<b>Telephone</b> 057 9324511	<b>Fax</b> 057 9323144
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## SERVICES TO BUSINESS

FÁS Services to Business (STB) Unit is focused on supporting Businesses with particular emphasis on Small to Medium Sized Enterprises. FÁS STB also administers and manages the Standards Based Apprenticeship programme, which delivers the support and services necessary to assist apprentices gain the knowledge, skills and competence required to become world class craft persons.

### Apprenticeship

Is the means by which people are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland. The "Standards-based" approach ensures that apprentices must achieve set levels during the alternating on and off-the-job training phases. While Employers pay the agreed apprentice industrial wage rate, FÁS assists with training allowances and a contribution towards travel and/or accommodation costs when the participants are attending off-the-job training.

FÁS also offers a bursary to employers to promote the entry of women into apprenticeships. Apprentices must have an employer to register with FÁS and meet minimum requirements. For further information see [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie). To become an Apprentice you must have an Employer to take you on. You must also satisfy the Entry Requirements in the areas of age, education/experience, colour vision (for certain trades) and you must also complete a FÁS Apprenticeship Registration form with a FÁS approved Employer. Vacancies are advertised on FÁS Job Ireland.

### Excellence Through People (ETP)

Excellence Through People (ETP) is Ireland's National Standard for Human Resource Management. It is a business improvement tool designed to further an organisation's performance through its people by promoting employee learning and development in line with the organisation's goals. It will ultimately drive positive change and innovation for organisations.

Excellence Through People is available to all types of organisation regardless of size or sector, whether private, voluntary or the public sector. Further information is available on [www.excellencethroughpeople.ie](http://www.excellencethroughpeople.ie) or through your local STB Office. The Excellence through People Standard can be of great assistance to a company and is a business tool which promotes Best Practice.

### Redundant Apprentice Rotation Scheme

If you are a redundant apprentice you may still be able to finish your apprenticeship. Please contact your local FÁS Services to Business Office and speak with your Advisor who will be able to discuss the options available to you.

FÁS Midlands have successfully placed a number of apprentices on the Redundant Apprentice Rotation Scheme (2009).

FÁS together with the Social partners is providing a temporary Employer Based Redundant Scheme for apprentices who have been made redundant due to the reduction in activity in the Construction Industry.

#### **The Trades covered by the scheme are:**

- Brick & Stone laying
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Electrical
- Plastering
- Plumbing
- Painting & Decorating
- Floor & Wall Tiling
- Cabinet Making and Wood Machining.

The purpose of the employer Based Redundant Apprentice Rotation Scheme is to give the redundant apprentice the opportunity to complete the on-the-job phase of their apprenticeship in order to gain the required knowledge, skill & competence to successfully progress to the next off-the-job phase or to complete their apprenticeship. Contact your Local STB Office to discuss.

### Services to Business Contact Details

Location	Address	Telephone	Fax
Tullamore	Grand Canal House, Columcille St., Tullamore, Co. Offaly	057 9324515	057 9321964

## TRAINING SERVICES

The FÁS Training Services Division provides a wide range of training courses to meet the needs of jobseekers, employers and employees. FÁS delivers a wide range of skills training courses through its network of Training Centres and contracted training providers. Courses and programmes are designed to address skills and labour shortages across the economy as a whole and to increase the prospects of learners gaining or returning to employment. Training Services provides a variety of training options:

- Specific Skills Training
- Bridging/Foundation Training
- Standards based Apprenticeship for designated crafts
- Traineeship for non craft occupations
- Evening Courses
- Sponsored Training
- Contracted Training Provision (including Short Courses)
- Flexible Training Responses
- Life Long Learning – E College
- Blended Learning

### Specific Training

Specific training courses allow job seekers or job changers the opportunity to acquire specific job related skills and formal vocational qualifications to facilitate re-entry to the workforce. The courses lead to FETAC Major Awards at levels 4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications and/or industry recognised certification.

**Types of courses include:** Computer Aided Design, Computer Applications & Office Skills, Construction Operatives, Hairdressing, Machine Tool Operating, Welding, Safepass.

### Evening Courses

A registration evening is held in the Training Centre on a date confirmed by management. The registration date and listing of courses will be advertised in all the local newspapers prior to registration. You may also contact your local FÁS Employment Services Office or visit [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie) for details.

Evening courses are available to fee paying clients who are employed and wish to upskill for personal and professional development and also to unemployed clients through the local FÁS Employment Services Office. Lone parents are also eligible for Evening Courses. Evening courses are free to anyone who is in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, Jobseekers Benefit, Disability Benefit and those claiming for Credits. To avail of this, you must visit your local FÁS Employment Services office.

These courses are designed to give a flexible response to the specific skills needs of job ready individuals who require training interventions with certification to assist them to re-enter the labour market.

### Bridging/Foundation Training

It is aimed at those who need additional help to progress onto further training, education programmes or entry to employment.

Courses include Career Planning and Employment Skills, Basic Computer Skills.

### Evening Courses in FAS Athlone

- Introduction to AutoCAD 2D
- Career Development
- Basic Hairdressing
- Personal Effectiveness
- Computerised Accounts Level 1 (FETAC Certified)
- Computerised Accounts Level 2 (FETAC Certified)
- Digital Imaging Using Photoshop
- Start Your Own Business
- Health & Safety at Work (FETAC Certified)
- Interior Design
- Introduction to Internet & Email
- Introduction to Computers (FETAC Certified)
- Machine Tool Operation
- Basic Arc Welding
- Occupational First Aid (FETAC Certified)
- PC Maintenance & Repair
- Programmable Logic Controllers
- Clerical/Receptionist Skills (FETAC Certified)
- Roofing – Cutting & Calculating
- Small Business Accounts
- Introduction to Web Page Design
- ECDL

A selection of these courses is also available in venues outside of the Training Centre in the Midlands area.

## Sponsored Training

This is a fee paying training programme provided by FÁS to companies for persons in employment. The training can take place either at a FÁS Training Centre or on-the-job if appropriate. The main aim is that those in employment can be upskilled and certified to meet Health & Safety, licence and industry standard requirements. The programme provides employees with the opportunity to formalise their experience by gaining FETAC or other industry recognised certification.

In the past this has included: Scaffolding, Welding and Safepass.

## Contracted Training

FÁS delivers a percentage of its Training Programmes through the mechanism of Contracted Training. Following a tendering process a Contracted Trainer who is on the National Register of Trainers is awarded a Training Programme.

As well as Bridging and Specific Skills Training Courses a number of Traineeships and Shorts Courses are available to clients as part of Contracted Training.

Examples include: Career Planning & Employable Skills, Retail Sales, Warehouse Op & Forklift Driving, Healthcare Assistant Traineeship, Childcare Practitioner Traineeship.

## Flexible Training Options

### *Life Long Learning and E-College – On Line Learning*

These courses are designed to give a flexible response to the specific skills needs of job ready individuals who require training interventions with certification to assist them to re-enter the labour market. Online courses are available free of charge to unemployed clients. Courses are also available, for a fee, to employed persons who wish to update their skills. For more details on online courses please visit [www.ecollege.ie](http://www.ecollege.ie). While these courses are delivered completely online, technical support is available throughout the course.

Fee paying clients can use our online payment system while unemployed clients can apply for a place by completing a postal application form and returning it to the address provided on the application form.

Unemployed clients can also avail of our Blended Learning courses, which provide additional online tutor support and tutor led workshops. (Available in selected areas in the near future) Please refer to website [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie) to check list of available courses and call to local Employment Services Office to register.

## Other Full Time Day Courses

A range of are available in FÁS Training Centre, Athlone. These include:

- Basic Word Processing
- Computerised Accounts & Payroll
- Computer Aided Design
- Machine Tool Operating
- Kerbing & Paving
- Welding MIG Flat Horizontal Plate
- Welding MMA Flat Horizontal Welding of Plate
- Welding TIG Alum & SS Plate
- Hairdressing
- Career Planning & Employable Skills
- Retail Sales
- Industrial Automation
- I.T. Support Specialist
- Legal Secretary
- Office Administrator Traineeship

## Training Services Contact Details

Location	Address	Telephone	Fax
Athlone	Garrycastle, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	090 6474481	090 6474795

## RECENT TRAINING INITIATIVES

### National Construction Training Facility

The National Construction Training Facility at Mount Lucas, Daingean, consists of a 32 acre site comprising a purpose built training facility of 7 classrooms, canteen, and repair workshops. When fully operational it will offer training on a range of equipment including: minidiggers, telehandlers, artic dumpers, site dumpers, tower crane and self erect crane. Courses will also include Safe Pass, Sustainable Energy courses and Assessor training for construction plant.

**Contact details:**

**Tel: 057 9362777**

**Fax: 057 9362783**

**[mountlucas@fas.ie](mailto:mountlucas@fas.ie)**

### Library Project

FÁS, in partnership with the Library Council of Ireland, have devised a programme to make learning available to clients through their local library. A tutor will begin the process, through a series of four workshops, which will allow the learner to familiarise themselves with the computer. The learner will then choose from a list of available courses to continue the learning process. Learners will still have access to the course tutor, while being able to work on their own initiative with minimum supervision. FÁS and the Library Council have selected sixteen libraries to take part in the initial programme. Please contact the FÁS representative on 01 8398150 or 071 9159509 to see if the programme is running in your area.

### Blended Learning

These courses are designed to give a flexible response to the specific skills needs of job ready individuals who require training interventions with certification to assist them to re-enter the labour market. Blended Learning Courses offer a range of online training with enhanced learner supports including telephone, email, E-tutor and instructor led workshops. Some courses may also include: one to one, group mentoring, assignments or project work. 1st attempt at exams are free, any repeats will incur a fee. See right for the list of Blended Courses that are currently available. Drop into any FÁS Office for more details.

### Executive Networking & Support Programme

FÁS is providing a unique development opportunity for recently redundant managers, professionals, specialists and people who have experience in senior supervisory roles. People in the aforementioned categories who are currently in redundancy may also qualify for this programme. The programme is delivered in the FÁS Training Centre Garrycastle, Athlone Co Westmeath. The programme is delivered one day per week over a period of eight weeks. The programme is designed to facilitate a specific group of clients who are well motivated self starters who are ready to enhance their skills and who wish to prepare their personal career seeking campaign.

### Blended Learning Courses

- Microsoft Office 2003
- Photoshop CS3
- CompTIA A+Essentials
- Java Programming S.E. 6
- Cisco Interconnecting Network Devices (ICND) 1
- Microsoft Office 2007
- Dreamweaver CS3
- Bookkeeping and Taxation 2009
- Moving into a Management Role
- CIW eCommerce Designer v5
- CIW Site Design v5
- ECDL
- CompTIA A+ 2006 IT Technician

As the Irish Government's regional development company for Ireland's Shannon Region (Counties Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary, South Offaly and North Kerry), Shannon Development resources, develops and delivers key strategic projects across sectors and places. Through their property portfolio of land and buildings, they provide world class enterprise space and infrastructure for small to large scale businesses. As the regional Tourism Authority, they develop new and existing visitor attractions and engage in strategic marketing initiatives to make the Shannon Region and South Offaly a must-visit location.

## Supports Available

- Locations for Business
- Premium Office Accommodation
- Business Incubation
- Business Networking & Programmes
- Tourism
- Mid-Shannon Corridor Tourism Infrastructure Investment Scheme

## Locations for Business

Ireland's Shannon Region offers entrepreneurs a wide choice of locations for their firms and a flexible range of business accommodation options.

Whether your firm is a new, start up operation, an existing Irish firm planning to expand, or an overseas firm wishing to invest in Ireland, there are location and accommodation options available to suit you within the Shannon Region.

### *Shannon Development offers clients:*

- Ready to occupy business accommodation properties
- Green field sites on which client firms may build their own facilities to their custom designs
- Introductions to 3rd party property developers and property management firms, which offer both ready to occupy and custom designed business accommodation properties

**Contact: Denis Duggan**

## Business Networking & Programmes

Shannon Development in Birr, organise a number of business networking events & programmes throughout the year across a variety of areas such as:

- The Open Coffee Club
- Tourism focused Seminars
- Post Budget Information Seminars
- Festival & Event Launches
- Development Programmes
- Information & Opinion Service

**Contact Denis Duggan or Bernie Leonard**

## Premium Office Accommodation

The Shannon Development Knowledge Network brings business, education and innovation together to create Ireland's most dynamic and exciting world class locations for living and working in the knowledge age. Each location within the Shannon Development Knowledge Network is dedicated to providing the resources and environment in which ideas and knowledge based business are created, developed and succeed. There are currently five locations within the Shannon Development Knowledge Network. Offaly's location is at the **Birr Technology Centre**. The centre offers high quality office space with suites ranging from **Concept Development Spaces/"HotDesks"** to 18m<sup>2</sup> to 40m<sup>2</sup> offices designed as business incubation space. Also available is high quality business expansion space on two upper floors, which may be configured according to each client's individual needs.

- Office Support Services including mail distribution and franking, photocopying, shredding, 24hrs/7days access to building, Tearoom/Canteen Facility;
- Shared Library Services;
- Telecommunication Services including fully managed shared broadband internet access, Firewall protection & 10/10/1000 Ethernet Virtual LANs, DHCP service for each PC;
- Meeting and Conference Facilities including fully networked Conference room, Corporate presentation facilities, TV, Video and DVD equipment, Video Conferencing (IP-2MB or ISDN-512K), Third Party Catering available by request;
- Occupation of InnovationWorks is subject to the Birr Technology Centre eligibility criteria and is governed by a licence agreement which is renewable annually. The maximum period of occupation for the incubation units is three years.

**Contact: Denis Duggan**

## Tourism

Shannon Development works with a range of tourism partners to develop and enhance the visitor facilities of the region and to promote specific products in order to stimulate tourism growth in South Offaly.

The company's work is complementary to that of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland which are responsible for actively marketing and promoting Ireland as a whole to overseas visitors.

Shannon Development's primary role is to initiate and support tourism development as a key element in the achievement of overall economic growth throughout the Shannon region.

The Shannon Development team works proactively, and in partnership with the industry, to secure and stimulate tourism investment in the region in order to ensure it has a strong tourism product base of accommodation, visitor facilities, entertainments, activities and amenities.

**Tourism Marketing:** Shannon Development's Tourism Product Promotion unit works with the region's trade to attract holiday makers to the Shannon Region all year round. This unit supports and coordinates a drive to develop tourism programmes and holiday packages. Shannon Development works closely with, and in support of, tour operators, group producers, incentive houses, travel media and other key influencers.

**Contact: Bernie Leonard**

## Mid-Shannon Corridor Tourism Infrastructure Investment Scheme

As Regional Tourism Authority for the Shannon Region, Shannon Development strongly supports the introduction of Mid-Shannon Corridor Tourism Infrastructure Investment Scheme. The River Shannon is one of Ireland's foremost assets in terms of water based tourism and the Scheme will provide tax relief for balanced and sustainable tourism developments along its banks. The Company is confident therefore that the Scheme will further spread the economic benefits of tourism into the very heart of Ireland. The Scheme allows for tax relief by way of accelerated capital allowances over 7 years for qualifying construction and refurbishment expenditure. The types of qualifying tourism facility and the relevant qualifying locations are available in an information booklet which summarises the main elements of the Scheme. This brochure can be downloaded from our website.

**Contact: Bernie Leonard**

## Business Incubation

An integral element of the Shannon Development Knowledge Network, InnovationWorks are state of the art business incubation facilities, designed to support new, high potential businesses through the start up phase and during the first 3 years of operation. The primary objective of InnovationWorks is to act as a mechanism for stimulating and supporting the creation and growth of such enterprises. There is an InnovationWorks at each location within the Shannon Development Knowledge Network. Offaly's InnovationWorks is located at the Birr Technology Centre in Birr.

All business incubation units are individually cabled with CAT6 infrastructure with raised floor access and individually controlled air conditioning. Each unit is linked with fibre and copper to the main communications room.

InnovationWorks has been designed to support new technology and knowledge based businesses which are dedicated to exploiting the potential of new, fast growing markets. InnovationWorks are designed to be ready to go, so that businesses can be up and running as quickly as possible — ready to exploit the full potential of the global economy.

InnovationWorks are flexible – if you need a minimum of space – say a desk and phone, we have shared Concept Development Spaces or “HotDesks” available. InnovationWorks facilities are housed within ‘smart’ buildings, individually designed around the needs of growing knowledge age businesses. Clients have use of conference and meeting rooms as well as other resident business resources.

**Contact: Denis Duggan**

## For further information contact:

**Birr Technology Centre,  
Mill Island, Birr, Co. Offaly**

**Phone: 057 9124000  
Fax: 057 9120660  
[btc@ShannonDevelopment.ie](mailto:btc@ShannonDevelopment.ie)**

The MIRC's mission is to accelerate the development of knowledge based start ups through incubation and business support. The MIRC supports innovation and enterprise through entrepreneurial support, incubation spaces, networks and continuing professional development.

## Supports Available

- MIRC Facilities
- Midlands & West Enterprise Programme
- Athlone Institute of Technology Resources

## MIRC Facilities

### Facilities for clients include:

- Incubation units ranging in size from 14m<sup>2</sup> to 43m<sup>2</sup>
- Concept Desk space including high speed broadband
- A boardroom and meeting room
- A cafeteria
- Wireless presentation technology
- Videoconferencing (on campus)
- Security, reception, parking
- A prime commercial and geographic location
- A flexible entry and exit policy

## Athlone Institute of Technology Resources

### Among the AIT resources available to MIRC client companies are:

- Access to the expertise of AIT, facilities and specialised equipment
- Collaborative research projects
- Technology transfer
- Supply of appropriately qualified graduates
- Student work placement/student project work
- Access to the Library and its online databases

The MIRC coordinates the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Vouchers scheme for AIT. Small companies can apply to Enterprise Ireland for an Innovation Voucher worth €5,000 to access the skills and research expertise of AIT.

For more information, visit [www.innovationvouchers.ie](http://www.innovationvouchers.ie) and/or contact the MIRC Manager.



## Midlands & West Enterprise Programme

The Midlands & West Enterprise Programme is a one year programme that provides high potential entrepreneurs and innovative start ups with the business skills, networks, facilities and supports necessary to navigate the business start up process from concept to successful commercialisation. MWEP supports provided include:

- A network of industry experts and peer entrepreneurs
- Regular reviews of business performance/ business counselling
- Assignment of an experienced business mentor
- Incubation facilities in the MIRC and access to the facilities and research resources of AIT
- Eligible participants may apply to Enterprise Ireland for CORD funding which could provide up to 50% of previous year's salary

## For further information contact:

**Athlone Institute of Technology**  
**Dublin Road**  
**Athlone**  
**Co Westmeath**

**Tel: 090-6471882**  
**Fax: 090-6442570**  
**[mlonergan@ait.ie](mailto:mlonergan@ait.ie)**

**Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)** is the only higher education institution in the midlands of Ireland. The college was established in 1970, and has 6,000 full time and part time students enrolled on a broad range of programmes across the four schools of business, engineering, humanities, and science. These programmes are available at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In addition to a strong research tradition, the Institute has developed extensive links with educational, industrial, commercial and service organisations.

## Supports Available

- Examples of Programmes and Services Offered by the Business School
- Entrepreneurship within the Business School at Athlone Institute of Technology

## Examples of Programmes and Services offered by the Business School

- Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise Development (Level 6). (developed under the auspices of Lionra, in collaboration with the other six higher education institutions within the Border, Midland, West (BMW) Region).
- Master of Business (Level 9) with a specialism in Entrepreneurship, which involves delivery of the following modules:
  - The Enterprise Environment
  - New Venture Creation and Growth
  - Innovation and Creativity
- Inclusion of a module on Enterprise Development within the curriculum of other programmes within the Business School e.g. Bachelor of Business (Level 7) and Bachelor of Business in European Business Management (also Level 7).
- The inclusion of a Business Consultancy module as a key element within the Executive MBA programme.

## Department of Adult and Continuing Education at AIT

The Institute's Department of Adult and Continuing Education offers a comprehensive range of part time programmes which, in conjunction with the full time curricula across the Schools of Business, Engineering, Humanities, and Science, allow significant opportunities for personal and professional development.

## Entrepreneurship within the Business School at Athlone Institute of Technology

The focus on entrepreneurship within the Business School significantly strengthens Athlone Institute of Technology as a resource and service provider to industrial, commercial and service organisations across the Midland Region and beyond. Examples of the anticipated benefits for the future include:

- An enhanced awareness amongst students and staff of both the necessity for enterprise development and of the knowledge, skills and attitudes generally displayed by successful entrepreneurs.
- Real integration between AIT and the key agencies involved in the field of enterprise development across the region. Such teamwork is of critical importance in striving to achieve designated targets for job creation.
- The pooling of expertise and the availability of dedicated resources, including academic and support staff from AIT, within the region to facilitate progress via a mentoring process for SMEs across the Midlands Region.

## For further information contact:

Dublin Road  
Athlone  
Co. Westmeath

Tel: 09064 24400  
[info@ait.ie](mailto:info@ait.ie)

IDA Ireland (Investment & Development Agency) is an Irish Government Agency with national responsibility for securing new investment from overseas companies in manufacturing and internationally traded business. IDA's focus is to attract foreign investment that is of high value, requiring high skill levels and a sophisticated business environment.

## Our Focus

We are focused on securing investment from new and existing clients in the areas of High End Manufacturing, Global Services (including Financial Services) and Research, Development and Innovation. Key sectors within these areas for investment are Life Sciences (Pharmaceutical, Biopharmaceutical and Medical Technologies), Information Communications Technology (ICT), Engineering, Professional Services, Digital Media, Consumer Brands and International Services.

Looking to the future, we are actively focusing on emerging areas such as Clean Technology, Convergence and Services Innovation. These areas offer exciting new overseas investment opportunities and are ideally suited to the Irish skill-set, experience and in the case of Clean Technology, geography and climate.

## IDA Ireland

The business which IDA seeks to attract includes internationally mobile projects which can operate competitively and profitably from Ireland. This covers a range of sectors such as ICT (Information, Communication, Technology), Life Sciences (Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Medical Technologies), International Financial Services and Globally Traded Business. A range of services and incentives, including funding and grants, are available to those considering foreign direct investment in Ireland. These are offered by IDA Ireland, Ireland's inward investment promotion agency, to both new and existing clients. While investment from overseas manufacturing and internationally traded services are the broad focus of IDA Ireland, the agency continues to work with investors once in Ireland to encourage and assist in expanding and developing their businesses.

## Assistance Offered

When considering Ireland for foreign direct investment IDA can assist during the process in many ways including the following services:

- Provide information and statistics on key business sectors and locations within Ireland
- Assist in setting up a business in Ireland
- Introduce potential investors to local industry in Ireland, government, service providers and research institutions Offer advice on property solutions for international investors.

## Inward Investment

*IDA attracts overseas and inward investment by:*

- Focusing on business sectors that are closely matched with the emerging needs of the Irish economy and that can operate competitively in global markets from an Irish base.
- IDA compiles up to date statistics and facts for research and development in industry, the economy and foreign direct investment in Ireland.
- Building links between international businesses and third level education, academic and research centres to ensure the necessary skills and research and development capabilities are in place.
- Pursuing Ireland's policy of becoming a knowledge based economy by actively building world leading clusters of knowledge based activities.
- Strongly influencing the competitive needs of Ireland's economy by actively engaging in the development of infrastructure and business support services, telecoms, education, regulatory issues especially in relation to EU policy.

## For further information contact

**Athlone Business & Technology Park**  
**Dublin Road**  
**Athlone**

**Tel: 09064 71500**  
**Fax: 09064 71550**  
**[idaireland@ida.ie](mailto:idaireland@ida.ie)**



Our mission is to promote a caring society through ensuring access to income support and other services, enabling active participation, promoting social inclusion and supporting families.

## Supports Available

- Short Term Enterprise Allowance
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- Training & Technical Assistance Fund
- Back to Education Allowance
- Family Income Supplement

### Short Term Enterprise Allowance

The Short Term Enterprise Allowance Scheme provides immediate support for someone who has lost their job and qualifies for Jobseekers Benefit and wants to start a business. It allows them to retain their benefit for the duration of their entitlement while starting their own business.

Those wishing to take up this Scheme must have a business idea and submit a short business plan and be approved by the Department's Job Facilitator.

Once Jobseekers Benefit payment has been approved, contact your local DSFA Jobs Facilitator via your local Social Welfare Office.

### Training & Technical Assistance Fund

The Training & Technical Assistance Fund provides support to Back to Work Enterprise Allowance recipients and other Social Welfare customers, particularly those engaging in self employment projects, to enhance their chances of success to become independent of the social welfare system.

This is a discretionary scheme. Further information is available from your local Jobs Facilitator who can be contacted via your local Social Welfare Office.

### Family Income Supplement

A weekly payment for families including one-parent families at work on low pay. Not subject to income tax.

Further information and application forms are available from your local Social Welfare Office.

### Back to Work Enterprise Allowance

The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme provides support for persons more than 12 months on the Live Register who have an underlying entitlement to Jobseekers Allowance. Participants on this scheme can retain 100% of their Jobseekers Allowance for 12 months and 75% for a further 12 months.

Application forms are available from your local Social and Family Affairs Office. Further information is also available from your local Jobs Facilitator who can be contacted via your local Social Welfare Office.

### Back to Education Allowance

The Back to Education Allowance allows persons in receipt of certain Social Welfare payments to take up educational opportunities whilst retaining their benefits. Examples are Second Level or Third Level or Part time courses.

Application forms are available from your local Social and Family Affairs Office. Further information is also available from your local Jobs Facilitator who can be contacted via your local Social Welfare Office.

### For further information contact:

**Social Welfare Office**  
**Castle Buildings**  
**Tara Street**  
**Tullamore**  
**Co. Offaly**

**Tel: 057 9325140 or 057 9325141**  
**Fax: 057 9322650**



Many rural dwellers have established or are looking to establish new enterprises to improve their income, provide employment for family and utilise available resources. Teagasc Rural Development Unit provides advice, training and support to farm families, rural businesses and rural communities.

## Supports Available

- Farming Options Programme
- Alternative Enterprises
- Opportunities for increasing farm income
  - On farm business development
  - Rural tourism
  - Commercial and free range poultry
  - Artisan food
- Training and Advisory Services

## Farming Options Programme

The Options Programme is specifically designed to assist farm families in looking at all options for growing farm profit and other possibilities for the future. Teagasc advisers are trained to discuss all aspects of the farm business, succession, inheritance and lifestyle issues to ensure the long term viability of the household. Following discussions, a Way Forward Action Plan is agreed which sets out the pathways to be followed. The plan sets out how the land asset can be used to the maximum plus other options such as diversifying into another on-farm enterprises, small business development or off-farm opportunities.

Teagasc Rural Development Unit has published a series of concise fact sheets on a range of potential additional sources of income aimed at rural dwellers. The fact sheets are intended as a starting point for the farmer who may be interested in diversifying. Each fact sheet gives a general introduction to the topic, outlines the market, important requirements, typical costs and typical returns. Factsheets will be updated and new factsheets will be developed on an ongoing basis. View factsheets on [www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev](http://www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev).

## Alternative Enterprises

### Organic farming

Grant assistance for the development of an organic farm is available under the Organic Scheme. Grant assistance towards the purchase of equipment is also available. Teagasc provides support through its Organic Advisory Programme to improve the skills of producers and ensure the long term viability of the sector

### Equine husbandry

Close on 6,000 farmers keep brood mares. Improving the skills of producers and adding value to the product is critical to developing a profitable horse enterprise. Teagasc provides support in the form of one to one advice and various events and courses.

### Deer and goat farming

There are approximately 250 deer farmers and about 300 dairy goat farmers in the country. Demand for farmed venison and dairy goat products are at an all time high. The Deer Demonstration Unit at Teagasc Kildalton Agricultural College serves as a resource to the wider deer industry in generating ongoing practical information.

Dairy goat farming is now well established in Ireland. Products can be found in many shops and demand continues to increase. With relatively low capital investment, a goat enterprise may complement an existing enterprise, especially on farms where facilities for sheep already exist.

## Opportunities for increasing income

### On-farm business development

The establishment of a small business requires key skills in business planning and development. Throughout the year, various seminars and courses are ran that focus specifically on developing the business, whether it be marketing, cash flow, distribution or business planning. Teagasc also encourages those starting a rural business to enter the Innovation Awards for Rural Business. All participants get feedback on developing their business further, and the winners gain free publicity, mentoring and financial support.

### Commercial and free range poultry

Over 1,000 people make their livelihood from poultry production in intensive, free range or organic systems. Of these, approximately 300 are free range egg producers. Opportunities are very much market driven and many free range producers are grouped together and supply local markets. There are several enterprises including eggs, chickens, turkeys and geese. Teagasc provides support in the form of one to one advice and training courses to promote poultry production as an income generating option for farmers and to incorporate quality assurance standards at development and operational stages.

### Training and Advisory Services

Teagasc provides training and advisory services to promote and sustain a broad range of alternative enterprise development in rural areas. A team of specialist advisers provide start up training for those establishing new enterprises. A continued training and advisory service is available for those who are up and running.

### Rural tourism

Upwards of 30 million tourists visit Ireland annually. Many come to participate in activity based holidays. For example, about one million come to participate in walking holiday activities while about 300,000 foreign visitors come to Ireland to experience equine related activities. This presents opportunities to land owners. Teagasc provides training in the possibilities available in rural tourism including expected profit margins. Grant aid for specific rural tourism projects is available through local Leader companies.

### Artisan food

The production of specialty food in Ireland is worth over €500 million from a base of 320 producers with an estimated combined employment level of 3,000 people. The production of artisan food offers an on-farm business opportunity to many farmers.

Teagasc has an Artisan Food Training Programme, designed to meet the needs of enterprise orientated people who are interested in setting up a small food business. Such businesses may be grant-aided by local Leader companies.

### For further information contact:

**Clonminch  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly**

**Tel: 057 9321405  
Fax: 057 9321659  
[nora.daly@teagasc.ie](mailto:nora.daly@teagasc.ie)**



MABS is an independent, free and confidential service for people with debt and money management problems. We provide a money management and budgeting service, to families who are in debt or risk getting into debt.

## Supports Available

- Advice
- Practical Help
- Why People come to MABS
- The Role of Credit Unions
- Using the Money Advice and Budgeting Service

### Advice

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is made up of a network of local services around the country that addresses the problems of money lending and over indebtedness.

MABS is an independent, free and confidential service for people with debt and money management problems. We provide a money management and budgeting service, to families who are in debt or risk getting into debt. We help them cope with their immediate debt problems, and help them develop the knowledge and skills they need so that they may become financially independent in the long term. We also provide advice on how to deal effectively with debt situations when they arise. We can identify and facilitate access to sources of credit that can best meet the needs of the families.

### Why People come to MABS

#### **People often seek our help because:**

- There are extra bills to pay because something has happened, e.g. an illness in the family, separation, bereavement or an accident;
- There is no money left over to pay everyday bills;
- The money coming into the household is less than it used to be and loan repayments have fallen behind;
- A prolonged period of being on low income means getting further and further behind with bills;
- More loans were taken out than are able to be repaid;
- They go from welfare to work and find they haven't as much money as they thought they would have and need help with a new budget.

### Practical Help

There are 62 MABS offices in Ireland with professional Money Advisors. We can help in the following ways:

- Enable you to regain control of your finances
- Educate you in essential practical budgeting skills and money management so that you can meet day to day expenses and repay debt;
- Open up alternative credit options by working with Credit Unions and setting up special accounts on a case by case basis where useful;
- Provide assistance in making a suitable budget;
- Contact and negotiate with creditors on your behalf with offers of payment if you are not able to do it yourself;
- Provide ongoing support once you have successfully overcome your financial difficulties
- Examine your income to make sure you are not missing out on any of your entitlements;
- Help you decide on the best way to make the payments.

### The Role of Credit Unions

The participation of local Credit Unions is valuable to the success of MABS. Many local MABS projects have established a "special account" system with the cooperation of local Credit Unions. This is one of the options open to our clients. In this system, the client makes a weekly payment to the local Credit Union and the payments are made to the various creditors, in accordance with the agreed budget. Payment to the Credit Union also includes a small savings element. Over a period of time, the client clears their debts and savings are being built up, therefore creating access to a new source of credit and eliminating the need to resort to money lending.

## Using the Money Advice and Budgeting Service

### 1. Make contact

Make contact by phone, email, letter, or by calling in person. If you don't feel able to make the call yourself, ask someone to help you, e.g. a family member, a friend or a contact with any community group or organisation. No one can make an appointment for you without your agreement.

### 2. Make an appointment

When you make the appointment with us, it is important that you tell us about anything very urgent, e.g. if a creditor has taken legal action or your ESB is to be disconnected. If you feel frightened by your situation, you should say this too. Some offices have a waiting list for appointments and may take people on a priority basis.

### 3. What to bring

When you go to your first appointment bring:

- Any letters from creditors or their solicitors
- Bank statements, credit union account book
- Books from any account you might have with door to door salesmen or moneylenders
- Papers or statements of rent, ESB, telephone or cable accounts
- Details of your income, e.g. payslip or social welfare payment book or receipts
- Car finance or mortgage agreements

All information is taken in confidence, the Money Advisor will be non-judgemental on the number of debts you have, how much you owe or how you got into debt. The focus is on how to help you.

### 4. How the service works with you

Your first appointment could take an hour or more, depending on your needs. The Money Advisor will:

- Examine your income and make sure you are getting all your entitlements and that you are liable for the debts;
- Help you work out a budget
- Help you prepare a financial statement that will be used when negotiating with creditors;
- Help you prioritise your debts and help you decide on a payment plan;
- Provide support while you deal with your debts;
- If you wish, we can negotiate with creditors and make contact with and refer you to other services.

### 5. How long the process takes

The number of appointments you have with us and the length of time you remain with the service will depend on your needs. There is no set time in which you are expected to make progress and deal with the difficulties yourself. The service will provide you with the information and support you need to make decisions but no one will tell you what to do. Any decisions and choices about your debts and payments must be made by you.

### 6. Making payments to your creditors

We work with credit unions to provide a payment system for people who have budgeting problems. The Money Advisor will help you examine your budget and work out how much you need to pay every week to keep up to date with your bills. The Credit Union will open an account for you. You then pay the agreed amount, which will cover all your bills, into the account on your payday. At the end of each month, we will send an invoice to the credit union and your creditors will be paid by credit union cheque.

### For further information contact

Offaly MABS at 8 O'Connor Square, Tullamore  
at 057 9323211 or e-mail: [offaly@mabs.ie](mailto:offaly@mabs.ie)

The Citizens Information Centre provides individuals with information, advice and if needed advocacy on all their rights and entitlements. Your local service can help with employment rights, taxation, health services, housing, disability, consumer and educational/training enquiries.

The service is free, confidential and independent.

## Supports Available

- Information on your Social Welfare Entitlements
- Information on Revenue
- Information on Employment Responsibilities
- Information on Health and Safety Responsibilities

## Information on your Social Welfare entitlements

- Claiming Social Welfare Payments
- Paying PRSI and State Pension Entitlements
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- Referral to Support Agencies
- Help with paying your rent and mortgage
- [www.losingyourjob.ie](http://www.losingyourjob.ie)

## Information on your Employer Responsibilities

- Employment rights and duties
- Contracts of employment
- Pay and employment
- Hours of work
- Leave and holidays
- Industrial relations and trade unions
- Monitoring and surveillance at work

## Revenue

- Personal Tax Credits System
- Claiming Expenses such as medical expenses
- Basic information on Self Assessment
- Registering as Self Employed
- Registering as an Employer
- Registering for Corporation Tax
- Information on VAT and when to Register for VAT
- Paying PRSI and PAYE for your employees

## Health and Safety at work

Information on Employers' responsibilities to employees regarding health and safety measures in the workplace including bullying and harassment.

## For further information contact:

**Bridge Centre, Tullamore**  
Tel: 057 9352204  
Tel: 1890 777121  
Fax: 057 9326742  
[tullamore@citinfo.ie](mailto:tullamore@citinfo.ie)

**St Mary's Street, Edenderry**  
Tel: 046 9732733  
Fax: 046 9732022  
[edenderry@citinfo.ie](mailto:edenderry@citinfo.ie)

**Emmet Street, Birr**  
Tel: 057 9121017  
Fax: 057 9125810  
[birr@citinfo.ie](mailto:birr@citinfo.ie)



