

# network

## enterprise europe

## Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland



*Business Support on Your Doorstep*

### Country Facts:

#### Basic Information

Official Name: Republic of Ireland

Date of Establishment: 29 December 1937

EU Accession: 1 January 1973

Time Zone: GMT

Capital City: Dublin (1.084 m 2009)

Neighbouring Countries:  
Northern Ireland

Area: 68,890 km<sup>2</sup>

Population: 4,670,976 (July 2011)

Territorial Division (26 regions):  
Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow

Ethnic Groups: Irish: 87.4%, Other White: 7.5%, Asian: 1.3%, Black: 1.1%, Mixed: 1.1%, Unspecified: 1.6%

#### Economic Data

Currency: Euro since 1 January 2002

Inflation: -1.6% (2010)

GDP (\$bn): 204.144 (2010)

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): 173.614 (2010)

Real GDP Growth 2011: 2.3%

Real GDP Growth 2010: -0.3%

Structure of GDP: Agriculture 2%, Industry 29%, Services 70%



**Waterford  
CHAMBER**  
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS



European Commission  
Enterprise and Industry

## Economic Data Cont...

Key Industries: Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Computer Hardware and Software, Food products, Beverages and Brewing, and Medical Devices

## Political Data

State Organisation: Republic

Political System:

Parliamentary Democracy

President: Mary McAleese

Prime Minister: Enda Kenny

Membership of International Organisations: EU, UN, UNESCO, OECD, IMF, UNIDO, WHO, WTO, INTERPOL, EMU, CE, IAEA, ICC

## What is an Entrepreneur?

An entrepreneur can mean a number of things. According to the General Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), an entrepreneur would include:

- those who expect to start a business in the next three years (aspiring entrepreneurs);
- those who are actively planning a new venture and are engaged in activities such as organising the start-up team, looking for equipment, saving money for the start-up, or writing a business plan (nascent entrepreneurs);
- those who at least part own and manage a new business that is between 4 and 42 months old and have not paid salaries for longer than this period (new firm entrepreneurs);
- and finally those who have set up businesses that they have continued to own and manage (established entrepreneurs).

## Statistics for Female Entrepreneurs in Ireland

Despite widespread recognition of the important contributions

of female entrepreneurs, Ireland has relatively low numbers of women engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

- In 2010, nearly 800 women per month started their own business versus approximately 1,650 men.
- According to current estimates, women are the largest under-represented group when it comes to enterprise in Ireland: only 15 - 18% of established entrepreneurs in Ireland are women.
- In 2010 the rate among women involved in early state entrepreneurial activity in Ireland was 3.9% compared 9.5% for men. This means that men are nearly two and a half times more likely to be an early stage entrepreneur. The difference in rates between men and women in Ireland (2.4 to 1) is higher than is typical across OECD (2 to 1) and EU-15 (1.8 to 1) countries.
- 5.2 % of women in Ireland are established entrepreneurs compared to 11.8 % of men. This means that men are 2.3 times more likely than women to be established owners of a business.
- Despite these low levels, in general, Ireland's ratios relating to established entrepreneurs are generally on par with the rest of the EU and OECD countries making this problem a much larger challenge that must be met on an international as well as national level.

## Profile of Irish Female Entrepreneurs

- More than half of all female early stage entrepreneurs are planning or starting new businesses in the consumer sector (54%).
- Less than 20% of women entrepreneurs are starting or planning to start a new business in the business services and transforming sectors.
- A much higher proportion of male early stage entrepreneurs (69%)

are focused on export markets than are female early stage entrepreneurs (51%).

- Women entrepreneurs are highly educated. GEM research found that 86% of women early stage entrepreneurs have post secondary education as compared to 74% of male early stage entrepreneurs.

## Importance of Female Entrepreneurship for Ireland

Women make crucial contributions to the economy. In the US women are the majority owners in 50% of privately owned firms. These businesses produce \$1.9 trillion in turnover, employ 12.8 million employees and grow at twice the rate of all US firms. The mobilization of additional women into entrepreneurship would add jobs and growth to the Irish economy and make significant contributions towards economic recovery.

## Challenges to Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland

In female business failure, the three most commonly cited causes are: lack of proper financing, lack of prior experience and lack of training, according to data put forth by National Women's Enterprise Day.

Self-selection is another issue that has prevented women from upskilling. Studies have shown that women are less likely to perceive themselves as entrepreneurs than are men and therefore will steer away from courses designed for 'entrepreneurs.'

Pressures from family life, a lack of high profile role models and a lower perception by women that they have the skills to set up a business are other factors that

[ec.europa.eu/enterprise-europe-network](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise-europe-network)

have discouraged women from starting their own businesses.

New studies and reports highlight effective programmes governments can adopt to help overcome these frequently encountered challenges. Networking initiatives and mentorship programs have been found to be particularly effective. The most recent GEM report underscores the importance of women meeting other female entrepreneur: Women are 5 times more likely to set up their own business as a result of meeting other women entrepreneurs.

## Resources for Irish Women in Business

There are many resources available for women:

### Networks

- **Network Ireland** - An organization committed to providing a professional forum, networking opportunities, and skills development to women in business, the arts and professions. (<http://www.networkwaterford.ie/index.php/about/>)
- **Women in Business Network** - A forum providing local business women with the opportunity to promote their products/services and gain advice from successful and established female entrepreneurs. (<http://www.enterpriseboard.ie/enterprise/web/Display/article/19/>)

### Online Communities

- **Irish Business Women Forum** - an online community and business resource for women in business in Ireland providing information on networking, events, funding, information on marketing, and other general business advice through a forum set-up. (<http://www.irishbusinesswomen.com/forum/index.php>)
- **Irishwomeninbusiness.ie** - a professional body uniting women and enabling them to share resources, information and ideas. (<http://www.irishwomeninbusiness.ie/>)

### Magazines

- **Women Mean Business** - 1st women's business publication for the Irish market. (<http://www.womenmeanbusiness.com>)

### Mentoring Programs

- **Going for Growth** - a mentoring project designed to support women who are serious about growing their businesses. Participants must be the owner manager of a business which has been trading for at least two years. (<http://www.goingforgrowth.com>)
- **Irish Female Ambassadors for Entrepreneurship** - A new project aiming to boost the rate of female entrepreneurship activity in Ireland and to inspire more women to set up their own businesses. ([http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/ambassadors/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/ambassadors/index_en.htm))

### Funding

Various funding options are available to women.

- Banks provide a number of quite competitive start-up packages that vary from institution to institution.
  - Credit unions are another option.
- Another first port of call should be the local city or county enterprise board.

### Reading List

- Candida G. Brush, Nancy C. Carter, Elizabeth Gatewood, Patricia G. Green and Myra M. Hart, *CLEARING THE HURDLES: WOMEN BUILDING HIGH-GROWTH BUSINESSES* (2008).
- THE DIANA PROJECT INTERNATIONAL: RESEARCH ON GROWTH OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS (Candida. G. Brush et al., eds. 2006)
- Nancy M. Carter, et al., *Enhancing Women's Financial Strategies for Entrepreneurial Success*, in *PROMOTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND POLICY* (Nancy M. Carter, et al., eds. 2006)
- Victoria Colligan, Beth Schoenfeldt and Amy Swift, *LADIES WHO LUANCH: EMBRACING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CREATIVITY AS A LIFESTYLE* (2007).
- Jane Hession, *WOMEN IN THE MODERN WORKPLACCE: GENDER BARRIERS TO BUSINESS START-UPS* (2009).
- Sue Stockdale, *THE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS* (2010).

Editor: Michelle McHugh

Date: 13-06-2010

Contact:

[michelle.mchugh@waterfordchamber.ie](mailto:michelle.mchugh@waterfordchamber.ie)

[ec.europa.eu/enterprise-europe-network](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise-europe-network)

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the European Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the information contained herein. The views in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the European Commission.

