

# ACORNS

Accelerating the Creation Of  
Rural Nascent Start-ups



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



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

## Who qualifies for ACORNS?

- ✓ **Female entrepreneur living in a rural area as defined by CEDRA.** (All areas of the country outside the administrative city boundaries of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford).
- ✓ **She must have recently set up a new business,** which she owns or part owns, or must be actively planning a new venture and have a clear idea of what she wants to achieve.
- ✓ **There is no restriction on the sector in which the new business is focused.**
- ✓ **She must plan to become an employer within three years.**

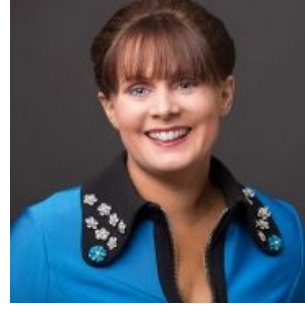
**All are volunteers who have successfully started and grown  
businesses in rural Ireland**



Alison Ritchie  
Polar Ice, Laois



Anne Reilly, Formerly  
PayCheck Plus, Louth



Caroline Reidy,  
The HR Suite, Kerry



Deirdre McGlone, Formerly  
Harvey's Point, Donegal



Eimer Hannon, Hannon  
Travel, Meath



Larissa Feeney,  
Accountant  
Online, Donegal



Mary B. Walsh,  
Ire Wel Pallets,  
Wexford



Triona MacGiolla Rí,  
Aró Digital Strategy,  
Galway

- ✓ Was piloted in 2015/ 2016. Just completed 9<sup>th</sup> cycle
- ✓ More applications each year than places available
- ✓ Based on peer support and philosophy of confidentiality, collaboration, with focus on the achievement of goals and milestones.
- ✓ Over 250 currently receiving support
- ✓ Outcomes are extremely positive – more sales generated, more employed and new exporters
- ✓ Reduction in psychological isolation, increase in confidence and motivation, strong network created

## Outcomes of ACORNS 8 (46 Participants)

- ✓ Participants recorded an increase of €1.7m over the six months to €3.6m
- ✓ There were 5 new exporters over the cycle
- ✓ There were 16 more employed by the participants at the end of the cycle
- ✓ 89% said that their participation brought about practical change within their business and 96% felt nearer to achieving their ambitions. 100% would recommend participating in ACORNS to others and want to stay in contact.

## Recognised at European Level

- ✓ Named runner up in European Promotion Enterprise Awards 2018, Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills
- ✓ Initiative mentioned by name in the Manifesto for an Innovative Europe at SME Assembly in Graz, Austria
- ✓ The Director served as a member of the CAP Consultative Committee having been invited by the Assistant Secretary DAFM
- ✓ In October 2021, the Director spoke about ACORNS at an event organised by the Provincial Government of Gelderland, in the Netherlands

- ✓ Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine has supported ACORNS every step of the way
- ✓ Find out more on website [www.acorns.ie](http://www.acorns.ie), download the brochure and see the [three minute video](#)

