

# Gender based business supports to encourage engagement – *Powerhouse Women in Business Network*

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## Context

In Ireland, recent data highlights the underrepresentation of women in leadership within enterprises:

- As of 2023, women occupy 30% of senior executive roles and 19% of CEO positions across Irish businesses. Female representation is higher in certain sectors, such as service-related fields, with 43.5% of senior executives in "Other Service Activities" and 36.8% in accommodation and food services being women. However, male-dominated sectors like construction see only 13.4% female representation in senior roles.
- Female-led businesses comprise 25% of board members across companies in Ireland, with nearly one-fifth of board chairs being women. Representation has increased incrementally in both Irish- and foreign-owned enterprises since 2021.
- These statistics reflect Ireland's ongoing efforts to close gender gaps, particularly in top corporate roles, but they also underscore the need for enhanced support for women in enterprise leadership and executive development programs.
  - **Further Information:** [Central Statistics Office](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-gbb/genderbalanceinbusinesssurvey2023/keyfindings/)
  - [tps://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-gbb/genderbalanceinbusinesssurvey2023/keyfindings/](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-gbb/genderbalanceinbusinesssurvey2023/keyfindings/).

## Sample Irish Interventions

- 1. Increased Funding and Grants:** Programs such as Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Fund (CSF) and Local Enterprise Office (LEO) grants aim to support female entrepreneurs, especially in early stages, providing direct funding and access to additional resources.
- 2. Female-Targeted Programs:** Initiatives like Enterprise Ireland's "Going for Growth" and "ACORNS" offer mentorship, training, and development for female entrepreneurs in Ireland, helping women-led startups grow and scale.
- 3. Networking and Mentorship:** Ireland emphasizes networking and mentoring opportunities, including pairing female entrepreneurs with seasoned business mentors, often through programs like Women in Business Network (WiB) and LEOs.
- 4. Policy Support for Work-Life Balance:** Female enterprise policies include family-friendly work environments, flexible working conditions, and childcare subsidies, making entrepreneurship more accessible for women with families.
- 5. Focus on STEM and High-Growth Sectors:** To increase diversity in high-growth areas, Ireland encourages female entrepreneurs in STEM through support for innovation, tech startups, and internationalization of female-led businesses.
- 6. Awareness and Research Efforts:** Governmental and independent research on female entrepreneurship helps identify gaps in support, track success metrics, and influence new policies to further close the gender gap in enterprise.

## Local Enterprise Offices

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in Ireland provide support to small businesses and startups, offering various services to foster local enterprise growth. Established in 2014 and overseen by Enterprise Ireland, these offices are located in each of the 31 local authority areas in Ireland, making them accessible throughout the country.

### LEOs support businesses by offering:

- **Financial Assistance:** LEOs provide funding options like feasibility study grants, priming grants for startups, and expansion grants for growing businesses. They also assist businesses in accessing national funding schemes and loans.
- **Training and Development:** They offer training in areas like business planning, digital marketing, financial management, and sector-specific skills. This is aimed at enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.
- **Mentoring and Advice:** Entrepreneurs can access one-on-one mentoring, helping them navigate the business landscape, refine their strategies, and improve operations. LEOs also assist with regulatory advice and compliance.
- **Networking and Market Access:** LEOs facilitate networking events and connections to local and international markets, helping small businesses expand their reach and customer base.
- **Female and Youth Entrepreneurship Programs:** LEOs also support underrepresented groups, offering targeted programs like the "Women in Business" network and initiatives that promote

# **Powerhouse** County Carlow Women in Business Network

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 **Powerhouse**  
County Carlow Women in  
Business Network

 **Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil**  
Local Enterprise Office

## What is Powerhouse ?

The Powerhouse Women in Business Network is a community of women entrepreneurs and professionals who are committed to supporting and empowering each other in their personal and professional lives. The network provides a platform for women to connect, collaborate, and share knowledge and resources.

The Powerhouse Women in Business Network offers various opportunities for its members, including regular networking events, workshops, and mentorship programs. These events and programs aim to help women build their skills, grow their businesses, and advance their careers.

The network also provides a supportive community for women to share their experiences, challenges, and successes. By connecting with like-minded women, members can gain valuable insights and support as they navigate their personal and professional lives.

Overall, the Powerhouse Women in Business Network is a valuable resource for women entrepreneurs and professionals looking to grow their businesses and careers while connecting with a supportive community of peers.

## What does it aim to do ?

### 1. Expand International Presence:

- Increase the number of women-led companies expanding globally.

### 2. Promote Leadership Diversity:

- Boost the presence of women in middle and senior management positions within Irish companies.

### 3. Foster Entrepreneurship:

- Encourage more women to become entrepreneurs.

### 4. Support High-Growth Startups:

- Facilitate the growth of women-led startups with high growth potential.

## What activities does it provide ?

Networking  
Events

Mentoring

Profile &  
Awards

National  
Events

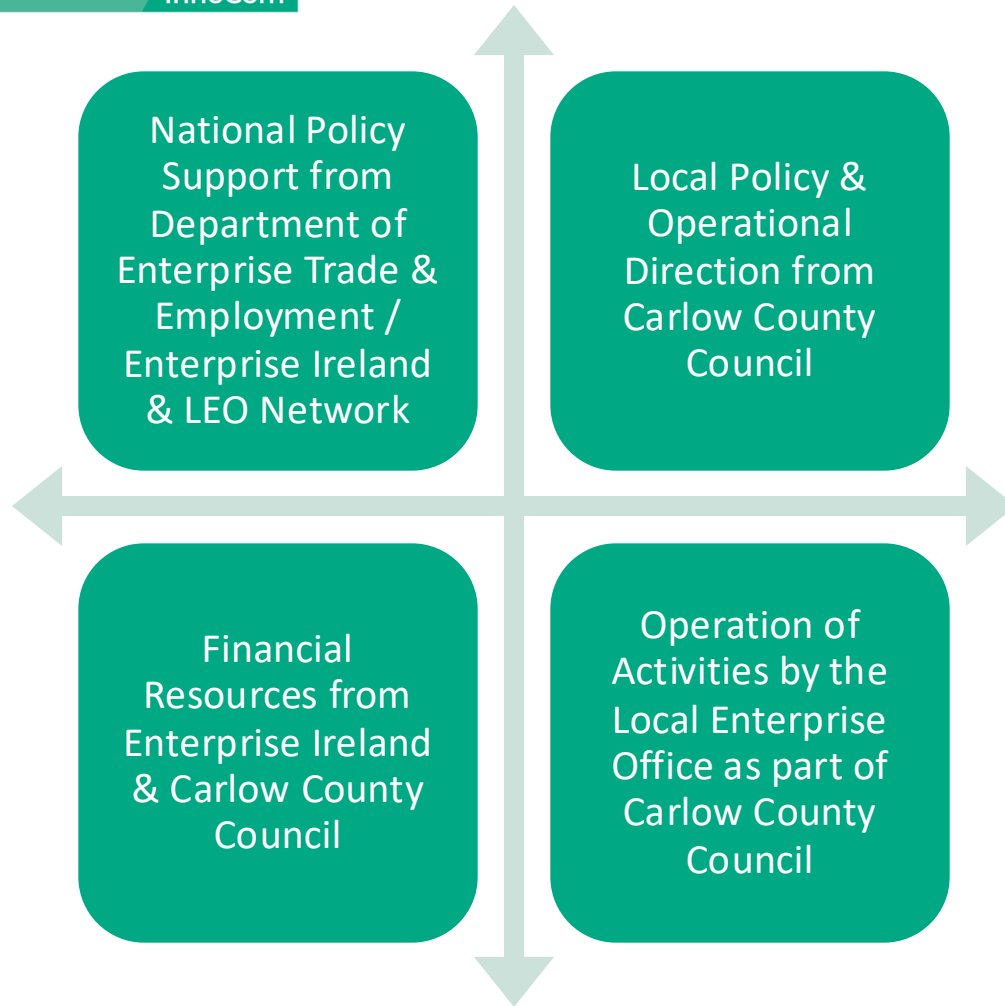
EEN Events

Linking with  
Partner  
Agencies



## How does it operate ?

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### Activities 2024:

- Women in Business Lean for Business Programme
  - 4 X In-County Networking Events
- 1 X Cross County Summer Networking Event
- International Women's Day Network Event
  - National Women's Enterprise Day
    - Awards Programme
    - National PR Activities

## National Women's Enterprise Day

Ireland's largest female enterprise event promotes, encourages and inspires female entrepreneurship across Ireland. It is designed and led by women and is an annual high point in promoting entrepreneurship to women in Ireland. The Local Enterprise Office along with Enterprise Ireland provide a wide range of help, incentives, training, and development programmes to female entrepreneurs.

While help is available all year round, National Women's Enterprise Day allows us to turn the spotlight on female entrepreneurship. It attracts widespread media attention. It opens the prospect of entrepreneurship to women who may not have considered it before. It highlights what support is available. It provides valuable networking opportunities and connections with industry experts. And it celebrates the achievements of women in enterprise.

## Further Information



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