

SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES

The Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation is now operating a Business Support Call Centre to advise on the Government supports available to businesses and enterprises that are affected by COVID- 19. The Call Centre can be contacted at 00 353 1 631 2002. Businesses can also email infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie.

SUPPORT	ELIGIBILITY	FEATURES
MICROFINANCE IRELAND COVID-19 BUSINESS LOAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro-enterprises (including sole traders, partnerships or limited companies) with less than 10 employees and annual turnover of less than €2m, who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding it difficult to access finance from banks and other commercial lending providers. Experiencing a negative impact on their business from COVID-19 that equates to a minimum of 15% of actual or projected turnover or profit in the business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loans from €5,000 – €50,000. May be used for working capital and required business changes as a result of COVID-19. Loan terms typically up to a maximum of 3 years (capital expenditure up to a maximum of five years). First 6 months – Interest & Repayment free with loan to be repaid over the remaining 30 months of the 36 month loan period. Interest rate of 4.5% if application is made through a Local Enterprise Office and 5.5% if submitted directly to Microfinance Ireland. No fees/no hidden costs/charges. Fixed repayments/no penalty for early repayment. No security required.
CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs experiencing any of the following barriers to lending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate collateral. Novel business market, sector or technology which is perceived by finance providers as higher risk under current credit risk evaluation practices. Need for refinancing caused by the exit of an SME lender from the Irish market. Will be available to COVID-19 impacted firms through the Pillar Banks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government supported product An 80 per cent guarantee to participating banks against losses on qualifying loans to eligible SMEs. Loans from €10,000 up to €1m will be available at terms of up to seven years. Term loans, demand loans and performance bonds are covered. Competitive interest rates. SMEs may be able to avail of between a 3 to 6-month interest-only payment period. Currently AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank are participating. (Refinancing of existing debts will be excluded as the purpose of this Scheme is to facilitate additional lending into the economy).
SUPPORT MECHANISMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SME customers with the banks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplified access to a wide range of credit, cash flow and supply chain supports will be offered to businesses. This also includes deferrals of up to 3-months on loan repayments. A wide variety of tailored supports including extensions of credit lines, risk guarantees, and trade finance.

SUPPORT	ELIGIBILITY	FEATURES
<p>€450 MILLION SBCI COVID-19 WORKING CAPITAL SCHEME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viable micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and Small Mid-Cap enterprises that meet the eligibility criteria. • To qualify for the scheme, businesses must be impacted by COVID-19 resulting in business turnover/profitability being negatively impacted by a minimum of 15%, and they must also satisfy one of the innovation criteria, details of which can be found at sbci.gov.ie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mechanism to fund working capital requirements (measure of short term liquidity of a business to finance the day to day running of the business). • Loans from €25,000 up to €1.5m. • A three month interest only payment period may apply. • Interest rate is limited to a maximum of 4% and is fixed for the period of the loan. • For loans of up to €500,000, no security is required. • Loan period of up to three years' duration.
<p>€200 MILLION COVID-19 FUNDING FOR FUTURE GROWTH LOAN SCHEME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This scheme will be administered by the SBCI. It will provide longer-term loans to COVID-19 impacted businesses. • Viable, micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and Small Mid-Cap enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans from €100,000 to a maximum of €3,000,000. • Loan terms ranging from 8 to 10 years. • No security required for loans of up to €500,000. • A maximum interest rate of 4.5% • Businesses may be able to avail of interest-only repayments at the start of the loan.
<p>€2 BILLION PANDEMIC STABILISATION AND RECOVERY FUND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and medium enterprises employing more than 250 employees or with annual turnover in excess of €50 million. • ISIF may consider investing in enterprises below these levels if they are assessed to be of substantial scale and of significant importance at national or regional level. • Enterprises must be able to demonstrate their business was commercially viable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and that they can return to viability and contribute to the Irish economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This fund will be made available through a sub-portfolio within ISIF. • The fund will mirror the approach of ISIF's existing and proven investment strategy. • As required under ISIF's statutory mandate, the fund will be invested on a commercial basis seeking an appropriate risk-adjusted return and economic impact from investments it makes. • The fund will have the flexibility to invest across the capital structure, investing in a range of instruments from equity to debt and hybrid instruments. This will enable businesses to access the capital they need in the most appropriate form that best suits their individual circumstances. • ISIF's investment approach will be complementary to other Government policy initiatives via agencies such as SBCI and Enterprise Ireland.

SUPPORT	ELIGIBILITY	FEATURES
<p>€2 BILLION COVID-19 CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs. • It will be available to all SME sectors, including primary producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 80% guarantee on lending to SMEs until the end of this year, for terms between 3 months and 6 years. • SMEs will be able to go directly to the banks in the Scheme, and the guarantee can be used for a wide range of lending products between €10,000 and €1 million that have a maximum term of 6 years or less. • Interest rates will be below current market rates. • This is a further development of the existing Credit Guarantee Scheme (see above) which is already available from AIB, BOI and Ulster Bank, and it will be possible for other lenders to get access to this scheme. Lenders will be subject to a portfolio cap of 50%. This reduces the contingent exposure to the Exchequer, meaning that the size of the scheme can be larger. • Implementing this scheme will require legislation, the drafting of which has been approved by Government. In parallel with this, various Government Departments, together with the SBCI will work to put in place arrangements to ensure that this scheme can be implemented as soon as possible after the enactment of the legislation.
<p>RESTART FUND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro and small businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund of €250 million. • The purpose of this fund will be to assist these businesses in reconnecting with the market, their employees and their customers. • Details of the scheme will be finalised in the coming weeks. • It is intended that the fund will operate through a system of rebates/waivers of commercial rates payments from 2019. • It is intended that companies will receive a total amount equivalent to no more than their 2019 rates bill and that there will be a cap per business of €10,000.

SUPPORT	ELIGIBILITY	FEATURES
'WAREHOUSING' OF TAX LIABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs* (given automatically) and larger businesses (on request) that are severely impacted by COVID-19. <p>*(An SME is a business with an annual turnover of less than €3million, which is not dealt with by either Revenue's Large Corporates Division or Medium Enterprises Division).</p>	<p>On 2 May 2020, the Government announced that it will legislate to provide that Revenue will warehouse deferred tax debts associated with the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>The proposed warehousing will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effective parking of unpaid VAT and PAYE (Employer) tax debts, that arose during the COVID-19 crisis, for a period of 12 months after an initial two month grace period from when a business resumes trading (<i>the resumption date will vary from sector to sector and business to business, depending on when Government restrictions are relaxed in line with the roadmap for re-opening society and business as announced on 1 May 2020</i>). No interest will accrue on the tax debts during the 12 month warehousing period. Please note that Businesses must however continue to pay current tax liabilities as they fall due. An interest rate of 3% (normally 10%) will apply on all tax debts outstanding at the end of the 12 month warehousing period. Revenue Tax clearance will not be affected by a business availing of tax debt 'warehousing'. All debt enforcement activity is suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic period. All returns must be filed in accordance with the Revenue guidance that has applied since the start of the current pandemic. <p>The necessary detail of how this will operate and the legislative amendments will be brought forward in due course.</p>
COMMERCIAL RATES WAIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses that have been forced to close due to public health requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three month commercial rates waiver beginning on 27 March. A commitment to local authorities to make up the rates shortfall, so that local authorities can continue to provide full services to the public. It is estimated that this waiver will reduce Local Authority income by €260 million and the Exchequer will meet these costs.

SUPPORT	ELIGIBILITY	FEATURES
ENTERPRISE IRELAND SUPPORTS		
€180 MILLION SUSTAINING ENTERPRISE FUND	<p>Eligible companies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ 10 or more employees. • Are operating in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors. • Have suffered, or expect to suffer, a 15% or more reduction in turnover or profits or an increase in costs as a direct result of COVID-19. • For SMEs: have applied for funding from a financial institution, including the SBCI Working Capital Loan Scheme. • For large companies: have completed a formal application process for funding with an appropriate financial institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repayable advance of up to €800,000. • Used to support the implementation of a Business Sustainment Project Plan which must be provided by the company.
€2 MILLION COVID-19 RETAIL ONLINE SCHEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailers employing over 10 people. • The objective of the scheme is to support companies in the indigenous retail sector with a pre-existing online presence to respond to both the domestic and international consumer demand for a competitive online offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to support a maximum of 80% of project costs. • Grants ranging from €10,000 to €35,000 will be awarded under the competitive scheme.
COVID-19 BUSINESS FINANCIAL PLANNING GRANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all Enterprise Ireland clients. • Also targeted at those manufacturing or internationally traded services companies that employ 10 or more full time employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% funding of up to €5,000 to access an approved financial consultant. • Designed to help companies to develop a Business Sustainment Project plan. • To help the company to understand its immediate financial position, secure the finance it requires to survive and to provide a framework to sustain the business.
OTHER SUPPORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean €2,500 Business Continuity Voucher – available to eligible companies to access up to €2,500 in training or advisory services related to the continuation of their businesses during the current pandemic. • €2,500 Lean Business Improvement Grant – for a training project of up to three days carried out by an approved external advisor/trainer directly with an eligible company to focus on the operations of the company in terms of crisis response, sustaining operations and planning for resilience post-crisis. • Business Process Improvement Grant – used to support short to medium term company projects that are designed to develop management capability and drive company efficiencies and business process improvements. • A Finance in Focus grant of €7,200 is also available to Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients, to enable them to access consultancy support to undertake immediate finance reviews. 	

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE SUPPORTS

- See section on Microfinance support above.
- The **Local Enterprise Office Business Continuity Voucher** is designed for businesses across every sector that employ up to 50 people. The voucher is worth up to €2,500 in third party consultancy costs and can be used by companies and sole traders to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An initiative under the Government’s National Digital Strategy, the expanded **Trading Online Voucher Scheme** helps small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost their sales and reach new markets. There is up to €2,500 available through the Local enterprise Offices, with co-funding of 10% from the business. Information on what funding can be used for and how to qualify for the scheme is available at localenterprise.ie.
- **Financial Supports** - for existing companies and potential start-ups that meet eligibility criteria (such as employing 10 or fewer people with the potential for growth and job creation), Local Enterprise Offices can also offer financial supports to help manage current market challenges, such as Priming Grants, Business Expansion Grants, Feasibility Study Grants and Technical Assistance for Micro-Exporters Grant.
- **LEAN for Micro** - clients can avail of consultancy support with a LEAN Expert (a qualified practitioner), who will work with the company to introduce lean principles, undertake a specific cost savings project and assist the company in benchmarking its performance.
- **Mentoring.**
- **Training and Webinars.**

OTHER INFORMATION

INFORMATION FOR SMES

- The Registrar of Companies has also decided that all annual returns due to be filed by companies between now and 30th June, 2020 will be deemed to have been filed on time if all elements of the annual return are completed and filed by that date. This will enable businesses and their financial advisers to focus on the more pressing and immediate financial challenges. The situation will be kept under review and the date of 30th June may be extended depending on the situation at that time. Companies should check the CRO website www.cro.ie for more details.

INFORMATION FOR SUBCONTRACTORS

- **RCT (Relevant Contract Tax):** the RCT rate review scheduled to take place in March 2020 is currently suspended. Subcontractors and agents are reminded that RCT rate reviews can be self-managed in ROS. Subcontractors can check if their rate should be lower and can then ‘self-review’ to get that lower deduction rate.

DEFERRAL OF PAYMENT OF LPT

- Irish Revenue announced that for property owners who opted to pay their **LPT** for 2020 by annual debit instruction, the payment date has been further extended to 21 July 2020.