

Waterford County Enterprise Board

Action Plan Towards 2016

Report No. 2

1st June 2007 – 31st December 2007

1. Promotion of Entrepreneurship

1.1 Provide financial support to Micro-enterprises

Waterford County Enterprise Board has approved financial assistance of €359,975 (Capital Assistance €266,975, Employment Assistance €45,000, Feasibility Study Grant €10,000, Preference Shares €38,000) to 22 projects. Payments of €295,172 were made to 24 projects during 2007.

1.2 Provide non-financial supports to Micro-enterprise

The following are details of Training Programmes for year ended 31st December 2007:

Activity	By Year End
Food Innovation Programme	12
Women's Network	18
Start Your Own Business	35
Employment Law	7
Web Marketing	9
Return on Investment Report	1
Book Keeping	9
Sales & Marketing	4
E-commerce Seminar	25
Doing Business in China	8
SHOP	2
Trade Shows	10
Website Development	2
Showcase	2
Networking Event	97
Enterprise Week Clinics	17
Computer Training	15
Energy Conference	48
TOTAL	321

70 businesses have been assigned mentors to provide targeted assistance on a 1 to 1 basis.

Technical assistance has been provided to 21 businesses to help address business issues such as e-commerce websites, design and marketing.

1.3 Assist micro-enterprises in job creation

51 New jobs created by enterprises assisted by the Board in 2007.

1.4 Additional activities to promote entrepreneurship

The Board arranges an annual “Business of the Year” Award and the winner represents the Board in the National Enterprise Awards.

Waterford County Enterprise Board has helped in the development of the micro business skills-net programme and co-operates with it on an ongoing basis.

Waterford County Enterprise Board organised a “Spirit of Enterprise Week” held from 1st to 5th October 2007. A comprehensive range of activities were arranged during the week all designed to promote entrepreneurship.

2. Development of a local Enterprise Culture and promotion of regional development

2.1 Co-operation with other local groups/agencies involved in enterprise development.

The Board is involved with other agencies and community representatives in the development of a Community Enterprise centre for Dungarvan. The Board has agreed to allocate €200,000 to the project and is represented on the Board for the Centre.

The Board co-operates fully with the County Development board in relevant economic activities e.g.

- (i) The Board employs a Business Development Executive funded by Enterprise Ireland, FAS and Waterford Crystal.
- (ii) The Board works with the CDB and other agencies on the Invest in Waterford Initiative – the major strategy for attraction of inward investment to the County.
- (iii) A free office space competition was managed by the Board on behalf of Clancy Construction and Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber.

The CEO is a Member of the Board of Waterford Leader Partnership and this ensures co-operation and co-ordination between the Board and Leader.

3. Implementation of the Small Business Forum Recommendations

3.1 Deliver the ICT Audits Programme “Tech-Check”

The Board held a seminar to launch “Tech-Check” in June 2008 which was attended by 28 entrepreneurs. A local promotional campaign was run together with a National Radio programme. Despite this the Board did not complete any audits in 2007 as no completed applications were received.

A renewed marketing programme will be implemented in early 2008.

4. Promote enterprise within education system

4.1 Deliver an Enterprise Education Programme

Waterford County Enterprise Board continues to provide the Student Enterprise Awards Programme to second level students throughout the County. In the 2006/07 school year 304 students from 7 schools participated in this Programme. The Board provided copies of Exploring Enterprise Resource Pack to all second level schools in the County. 197 students and 11 teachers attend an Enterprise Day in October 2007.

5. Promotion of female entrepreneurship

5.1 Facilitate increased female entrepreneurship

Waterford County Enterprise Board supports a Women in Business Network that has 18 members. The members receive a combination of 1 to 1 support and group training events.

Women are well represented on the Board’s training programmes making up 45% of participants during the reporting period.

The Student Enterprise Awards has an approximate 50/50 split between male and female participants.

6. Co-operation with modernisation, flexibility and change management initiatives

The Board co-operates fully with the CCU.

The Board continually monitors the effectiveness of its communication systems and uses e-mail where possible. A major customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2006 and this indicated very high levels of satisfaction.

7. Maintenance of stable Industrial Relations and a well-managed industrial relations environment to minimise disputes affecting the level of service to the public

A good industrial relations environment is maintained by the Board and there have been no industrial disputes since the Board’s inception in 1994.

8. Co-operation with Team Working and Cross Functional Working Initiatives
Waterford County Enterprise Board is represented by the CEO on the Enterprise Education Committee. This Committee produced a substantial resource for Second Level Schools in 2008. The Board co-operates with all other committees of the CEO Association.

9. Co-operation with introduction and utilisation of New Technology and eGovernment
The Board communicates with its clients by e-mail. Notification of training programmes is distributed by e-mail. The board provides financial assistance to businesses to encourage the introduction of e-commerce facilities to websites.

The Board updates the PMS on a timely and accurate manner.
10. Ongoing delivery of Business Planning process
The Board adopts a business plan each year on receipt of budget allocations from the Department. The Board monitors performance against this plan on an ongoing basis.

11. Ongoing delivery of PDMS: CEB Staff Performance Targets
The Board has prepared performance profiles for staff and these continue to be reviewed on an interim and annual basis.

12. Ongoing delivery of PDMS: Staff Training and Development Plan
The Board provides for staff training and development where required.

13. Compliance with Departmental Guidelines in relation to HR practices
There were no posts filled during the reporting period.

The Board has submitted a negotiated contract with CEO to Department for approval. Template for other staff will follow.

14. Co-operation with the implementation of the Sectoral Plan on Disability
The Board's Offices has access for people with disabilities. The Board will endeavour to provide access to training programmes and other services if required.

15. Ongoing improvement in the delivery of services to the public
The Board continues to meet the current needs contained in its Customer Charter. No complaints were received during the reporting period.

A major customer satisfaction survey was commissioned in 2006. This demonstrated very high levels of customer satisfaction. However the Board continues to seek improvements whenever possible.

16. Compliance with Departmental guidelines in financial reporting practices
The Board complies with the financial reporting requirements of the Department. Financial Control Procedures are subject to annual review by Internal Auditor who has confirmed compliance with best practice. The Board confirms compliance with EU Regulations.

17. Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practice

The Board complies with the Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance. Relevant issues are reviewed at Internal Audit and compliance has been confirmed. The Board prepares its annual report and accounts in a timely manner. The Board has procedures in place to ensure compliance with Ethics Acts and FOI Act.