

**Carlow County Enterprise Board
Action Plan under T2016
Report 2 – Sustaining Progress
1st January 2008 – 31st June 2008**

Enhancing Ireland's Competitive Advantage in a Changing World Economy and Building Sustainable Social and Economic Development

Provide financial support to micro-enterprises.

Assist micro-enterprises in job creation

Carlow County Enterprise Board approved Euro 145,100 under Measure 1 to 11 projects during the period 1st January 2008 – 31st June 2008 . For the period 1st January 2008 – 31st June 2008 . the Board made payments of €24,442.00 in respect of Measure 1 grants.

- **Provide non-financial supports to micro-enterprise.**

The Board offers the following soft supports on an ongoing basis:

- Training & Development
- Management Development
- Student Enterprise Programme
- Women in Business Activities
- Advice & Information Service
- Mentoring & Enterprise Clinics
- Tech-Check Audit Programme

- The following are the results for the period 1st January 2008 – 31st June 2008

Activity	End of Year Target	Current Position	Difference
Mentoring & Enterprise Clinics	50	40	10
One to One Office Visits & Site Visits	150	116	34
Trade / Retail Fairs	10	0	10
Student Enterprise Activity	2000	120	1880
Training	500	219	281
Networking Events	500	243	257

These figures represent local demand for services and supports.

Additional activities to promote entrepreneurship

- Carlow County Enterprise Board is involved in a number of initiatives to promote enterprise in County Carlow. The Board has worked in association with a number of agencies to deliver programmes , most recently a SYOB for Single Parents for St. Catherine's Community Centre & SYOB For Non-Nationals. The Board has developed a positive working relationship via the County Development Board with other agencies.
- The Board is co-ordinating the Spirit of Enterprise Programme for County Carlow involving more than 10 state agencies and government bodies.
- The Board is involved in the "Enterprise Bus" Programme for 2008. The initial visit took place during the period above with the second visit scheduled for September. This joint initiative has been put in place to provide free local community support and advice to people thinking about starting a business and those in the early stages of new business development. The Enterprise Bus will visit County Carlow in June 2008.

Development of a local Enterprise Culture and promotion of Regional Development through co-operation with other local groups/agencies

Co-operate with other local groups/agencies involved in enterprise development

The Business Plan is presented annually to the Board and the following are the current agreed actions:

Objective	Actions required
1. To achieve a net increase in the number of viable jobs in the region through the provision of supports, including financial supports, that will assist the long-term sustainability of business and facilitate the formation of new enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to One consultation • Grants • Business Skills Training • Mentoring
2. To encourage, develop and support an enterprise culture within the county.	Raise Awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a student Enterprise programme. • Encourage client participation in Business competitions and Awards. • Newsletter • Provision of advice & information • Radio promotion • Use of media for PR • Advertising campaign • Special events • Presence at public events • Exhibitions • Partner organisations in enterprise promotion
3. To support the growth and development of new and existing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice & Information • Business skills training • One to One Consultations • On Site visits • Mentoring • Grant Aid
4. To provide co-ordinated information facilities for both new and established businesses in the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of information • Articles in newspapers • Newsletter • Website • Office library with reference material • One to one advice
5. To have business services available which are readily accessible from any location in County Carlow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone & Email support • Website • On site visits • Outreach activities • Enterprise Bus
6. To assist in a pro-active manner, new business start-ups and the growth of existing businesses, by filling gaps in existing enterprise support mechanisms.	Identify the gaps in enterprise support by constant monitoring and needs assessment. Work through the County Development Board with other agencies.
7. To substantially upgrade the level of management expertise in existing and new enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Business skills training, in particular Management Development. • Provision of information. • One to One consultation. • Provision of mentoring. • Facilitation of benchmarking.
8. To preserve and support existing jobs through support for marginal enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Assistance • Partner with relevant organisations
9. To increase the number of women participating in business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop existing Women in Business Initiative.
10. To encourage small and medium enterprises to make more use of Information & Communications Technology in their business, in line with the Government Action Plan for the Information Society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training in the use of IT in business. • Provide mentoring in the use of IT in business. • Work with IT Carlow to encourage and raise awareness. • Provide grant aid for E-Commerce projects. • Delivery of Tech-Check Programme • Partnership with Irish Internet Association
11. To support the development of a Community Enterprise Centre in Carlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Management of the Centre. • Manage the recruitment of suitable Enterprise Start Ups for available units in the Centre. • Representation on the Board of Directors.

Objective	Actions required
12. To encourage and demonstrate to business the importance of applying strategic management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Awareness Campaign. Management Development
13. To encourage graduates from the two third level Colleges in the County to utilise their skills and qualifications within the County.	Establish a presence in the IT Carlow & Carlow College with a view to establishing an awareness to their students through engaging in complementary activities such as the Student Enterprise Awards, participation in public events and exhibitions.
14. To ensure that Value for Money is obtained in the expenditure of public funds by the Board.	Carry out evaluation of all programmes and activities on a formal basis once a year. Prepare an annual budget applying cost / benefit analysis to each budget area
15. To comply with EU and Government regulations governing the expenditure of public funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff are aware of the regulations. Ensure that Board members and evaluation committee members are aware of the regulations. Check all client files to ensure they are compliant.
16. To meet the reporting requirements of the EU and Irish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the B1 forms are completed accurately and on time. Ensure that the Cash Flow statements are completed quarterly, accurately and on time.
17. To meet the legal requirements governing functions as a limited company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that staff and board are aware of their individual responsibilities. Ensure that returns are made to the companies office within the time period
18. To meet the accounting standards required by the C&AG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Quick Books accounting package Adherence to Manual of Accounting Procedures.
19. To deliver a professional high quality service to the target clients of the Enterprise Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply Customer Charter and complaints procedure. Develop a training plan for all staff to update their skills.

Provide details, as appropriate, on CEB participation on the local County Development Board and involvement in its activities

- County Development Board: A Board Director in addition to , the CEO, represent the Board on the County Development Board and a number of different sub-groups of same.

Implementation of the Small Business Forum Recommendations

Deliver the ICT Audits Programme “Teck-Check”

- Carlow County Enterprise Board reached its Tech-Check Target in 2007
- Carlow County Enterprise Board currently has 11 clients participating in Tech-Check Audit. Tech Check promotional events are planned for Autumn 2008.

Promote enterprise within education system

Action: Deliver an Enterprise Education Programme

- County Carlow has 11 second level schools and all schools participate in the Student Enterprise Programmes delivered by Carlow CEB. The Board is currently in the process of designing an “Enterprise Vision” Management Programme for 4th Year Students.
- New Product Development Project: in association with IT Carlow: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Industrial Design delivered by IT Carlow further develops the student's skills and knowledge at Ordinary Degree level. The student develops and enhanced understanding of and ability to continue to, the new product development process. All the elements of product design from initial design research through concept generation, design development, model making, technical specification and visual communication elements are undertaken to a conclusion of professional standard. Business planning is included as an integral component giving a sound commercial context to product design.

Carlow County Enterprise Board sponsors a number of students to do live projects with local enterprises. Such “live projects” provide students with an excellent insight into real life work practices and help to ensure that the course is geared towards current industry needs. A public exhibition of the design took place in the period mentioned above.

Promotion of female entrepreneurship

Action: Facilitate increased female entrepreneurship

- Carlow County Enterprise Board operates a women in business network. The network has 183 members on its Database. The aim of the WIB network is:
 - Create a Business Network whereby women in business have an opportunity to share experiences;
 - Provide an ongoing programme of activities on business related topics and entrepreneurial skills;
 - Create and foster an entrepreneurial culture amongst women in County Carlow

Public Service Pay and Related Issues and Chapter IX on Public Service Modernisation

Co-operation with modernisation, flexibility and change management initiatives

- Carlow County Enterprise Board participates fully with the recently established Central Support Unit within Enterprise Ireland
- Carlow County Enterprise Board delivers its services via e-mail, phone and fax. Where possible the Board is using technology to enhance the services offered to clients. The Board is in the process of upgrading its website and the introduction of electronic payment methods.

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

- No industrial action or cost increase claims have occurred as a result of the implementation of T2016.
- Carlow County Enterprise Board engage all staff in the day to day operational issues of running the Board, staff are encouraged to develop themselves and regular staff meetings occur which provide staff with an opportunity to air issues and also to brief staff on ongoing strategic and operational objectives.

Co-operation with Team Working and Cross Functional Working initiatives

- The following staff are members of the following committees:
 - Michael P. Kelly Enterprise Promotion Committee (Chairman)
 - Kieran Comerford IT Sub Committee

Co-operation with introduction and utilisation of New Technology & eGovernment

- Carlow County Enterprise Board runs a number of e-business programmes.
- Carlow County Enterprise Board is currently in the process of updating its website and this action will be completed by end Qtr 3 2008
- Carlow County Enterprise Board has control systems in place for its PMS System.

Ongoing delivery of the Business Planning process

- A business plan was presented and approved by the Board. The plan is constantly reviewed and statistical information in respect of its progress is reported at each Board Meeting.

Ongoing delivery of PMDS : CEB Staff Performance Targets

Ongoing delivery of PMDS : Staff Training

- Carlow County Enterprise Board had designed a monthly reporting system which constantly monitors staff performance. A number of staff have engaged in training and networking activities during the period in question.

Compliance with Departmental Guidelines in relation to HR practices

- No posts have been filled within the period 1st January 2008 – 31st June 2008
- Employment contracts are or will be signed, in accordance with Departmental Guidelines.
- A HR Manual is available to all staff

Co-operation with the implementation of the Sectoral Plan on Disability

- No needs have been identified with respect to people with disabilities.
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Ongoing improvement in the delivery of services to the Public

- No formal complaints have been handled under the formal complaints procedure.
- Carlow CEB comply with the Code of Business Conduct
- Carlow CEB is in compliance with the Official Languages Act. The Board is currently in the process of compiling its 2007 annual report in English and Irish.

Compliance with Departmental guidelines on financial reporting practices

- Carlow County Enterprise Board comply with financial reporting requirements to the Department. The Board employs the services of a chartered accountant as an internal auditor , who reports periodically to the Board. The Board also has an audit sub committee which is made up of 4 directors , 2 staff members and the internal auditor.
- The Board complies with EU regulations set out in Section 3 of the procedures manual.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practice

- Carlow County Enterprise Board complies with the Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance.
- Carlow County Enterprise Board complies with the FOI Act requirements