



Framework Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Between:

Enterprise Ireland



and

_____ **County/City Council**

County or City
Council Logo Here

In respect of the delivery of services via the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)

May 2013

Note: This document represents a framework service level agreement which will be tailored to suitably account for local circumstances. The framework may be adapted or amended to respond to requirements arising through the implementation process establishing the LEOs before being formally adopted.

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**Framework Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Enterprise Ireland and the
Local Authorities.**

**Re: Local Enterprise Office (LEO)/Micro Enterprise Support Scheme, to be
administered by Enterprise Ireland**

**This Service Level Agreement as agreed by Enterprise Ireland and [X] County /
City Council on [XXth Month] 2013.**

1.0 Background

1.1. Upon enactment of a legal framework to facilitate the dissolution, and transfer of functions to Enterprise Ireland (EI), of the County / City Enterprise Boards (CEBs), EI will carry out relevant functions on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI). In this instance, this Service Level Agreement (SLA) provides the framework for the operation of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), by the County / City Councils on behalf of EI.

1.2. This Framework SLA details or refers to the relevant policies, operational guidelines, metrics and other provisions to which all LEOs are subject. In order to suitably tailor the service level required in each LEO area, an Enterprise Development Plan for each LEO area will be developed annually by the LA/LEO, agreed by EI and appended to the SLA to take account of local circumstances. The Minister for, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will be furnished annually with copies of each SLA and the respective Enterprise Development Plans, by EI. A draft template of the Enterprise Development Plan is referenced at Appendix 1.

1.3. Exchequer funding, currently secured by the Minister for, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will continue to be allocated under a separate sub head on a collective basis to EI, and responsibility for the distribution of these funds to, and between, County / City Councils for the LEOs, is transferred to EI in accordance with the legislation and/or an appropriate scheme. The range of LEOs services and supports is set out in Appendix 2.

1.4. EI has established a Micro and Small Business Division to carry out functions agreed between DJEI and EI. These functions, and those carried out by the LEOs on behalf of EI, will be subject to DJEI policy, to which Appendices 3 and 4 refer.

2.0 Roles of Respective Bodies

2.1. The main objective is to ensure a co-ordinated and cohesive development of micro enterprise for Ireland which contributes to economic growth and job creation, in line with Government policy objectives, and in accordance with the policy tools and instruments established by the Minister for, and Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, also retaining responsibility for budgets.

2.2. The LEOs will serve as a first stop shop to provide support and services to start, grow and develop micro and small business in each local area. As referenced, the range of services and supports which will be offered by the LEOs is set out in Appendix 2. The LEOs will become the first-stop-shop through which all information in relation to State supports for small and micro businesses can be accessed. These offices will deliver quality access to a number of national and local programmes focussed on new business start-ups and micro business in a pro-business environment. The utilisation of the skills and expertise of the local business community will also be retained.

2.3. Enterprise Ireland is a body corporate established by the Industrial Development (Enterprise Ireland) Act 1998. The agency operates in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Development Acts 1986-2009 and under the aegis of the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Enterprise Ireland partners with entrepreneurs, businesses and the research and investment communities to develop Ireland's international trade, innovation, leadership and competitiveness, leading to increased employment and prosperity in Ireland.

2.4. The role of the Micro and Small Business Division of EI is to provide a range of supports to the LEOs which will ultimately enhance the impact of the LEOs on the future development of micro-enterprise and small business (i.e. a Centre of Excellence) and enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. The supports to be provided include strategic, administrative, technical and financial support. The latter will include administering the distribution of such funding to each County / City Council / LEO in accordance with procedures agreed between EI and DJEI, to meet the LEO funding requirements and to enable it to discharge its obligations in the performance of its functions. The Centre of Excellence will develop procedures and best practice for the delivery of supports, including standardised financial support instruments, project proposal documentation and will provide on-going advice. This Centre of Excellence will have a key role to play in maximising the impact of each LEO in the State.

2.5. The County / City Council is a Local Authority (LA) in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001. Each Council has a remit to provide a wide range of services in its functional area. The LEO model will ensure that micro-enterprise and small business service delivery will continue with significant local input, within a national micro-enterprise policy framework. LEOs will be established in LA offices to deliver the services as referenced, and will encompass relevant elements (see Appendix 2) of the Economic Development Units (EDUs) / Business Support Units (BSUs) in LAs. The decision to establish LEOs acknowledges the support that LAs are providing to businesses, and seeks to facilitate the sharing of best practice and active benchmarking of these types of support across the Local Authority system. Benchmarking of LEOs will enable LAs to play an even greater part in making Ireland the best country in which to start a new business.

2.6. The County and City Managers' Association (CCMA) is a representative body for the managers of County and City Councils throughout Ireland, and will have a key role in ensuring successful implementation of the LEOs initiative.

3.0 Service Delivery

The services and supports to be delivered by the LEO are set out in Appendix 2. Section 3.1 refers to the measurement of service delivery and its impact with the LEO client base. Section 3.2 refers to the service delivery support for LEOs.

3.1. Measuring the Impact of the LEOs

3.1.1 An Enterprise Development Plan for each LEO will be developed annually by the LA/LEO, agreed by EI and appended to this SLA to take account of local circumstances. The Minister for, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will be furnished annually with copies of each signed SLA and the respective Enterprise Development Plans, by EI. This should be completed by January of each year and submitted to the Micro and Small Business Division of EI. The plan will address the agreed metrics and include targets which will be established for each LEO.

3.1.2 A key task will be ensuring that there is seamless access for clients to the appropriate services and supports offered by the respective bodies (EI and LEOs). In this regard, protocols will be developed by the Centre of Excellence to ensure that there are proactive progression pathways for client enterprises between the services offered by the LEO and those offered by Enterprise Ireland.

3.1.3 In carrying out its role and delivering the Enterprise Development Plan for the local area, the LEOs will support achievement against the following suggested metrics¹ [*These metrics are broadly agreed, however further refinement may be required in order to agree target levels for each LEO in the context of the Enterprise Development Plan*]:

- a) Sustain and Increase Employment of Client companies: Number of jobs sustained and increased in client companies
- b) Number of Start Ups Supported (Financial/Non-Financial Support)
- c) Financial supports provided - Number of feasibility grants approved, number of priming grants approved, number of expansion grants approved
- d) Number of joint initiatives run with other LEOs

¹ Insofar as is practicable, all metrics will be defined and measured in accordance with the existing Forfás definitions and methodologies, and/or those of Enterprise Ireland as appropriate.

- e) Number of national approved training initiatives run e.g. SYOB, Hi Start, Accelerate, Accelerate Modules (i.e. Leadership, management development, finance, marketing / sales and strategy) Note: Non-core training provision will not be measured or funded e.g. Health and Safety
- f) Economic Impact (as defined by increases in sales, exports, employment and economic expenditure) only related to Forfás accepted client recognition methodology. Annual uniform client data collection to be introduced.
- g) Number of clients transferred to Enterprise Ireland and vice versa with clear protocols established and proactively utilised.
- h) No. of business plans assessed
- i) Number of LEO Clients availing of EI Services as appropriate e.g. Market Research Centre, Overseas Office, and Innovation Vouchers.
- j) No. of Micro-Finance / Loan guarantee applications assessed and recommended to MFI
- k) No. of job approvals / commitments
- l) Cost per job following grant approval (uniform methodology and process to be agreed).
- m) Number of entrepreneurial promotional activities undertaken with the key measure identifying SYOB participants
- n) Number of mentors assigned and successfully evaluated
- o) Number of management development programmes at local level (i.e. leadership, management development, finance, marketing / sales and strategy) Note: Non-core training provision will not be measured or funded e.g. Health and Safety
- p) Further metrics can be developed in relation to other areas of activity including female, student, national enterprise award initiatives, sectors, business networks and youth entrepreneurship.
- q) Annual Satisfaction Survey among service users with services provided through the LEO

3.1.4 Complementary Local Authority metrics

The Local Authority metrics outlined below are complementary supports in addition to the metrics provided for by the LEOs.

- r. Business Information and Advice:
 - i. Number of LA-led business information sessions advising on Public Procurement Procedures (and number of participants)

- ii. Number of business users fora for public sector to engage with local business (and number of participants) – to include advice and information on energy efficiency, waste management, planning & sustainable development
- s. Entrepreneurship Support Services:
 - i. Number of economic promotion events / enterprise initiatives by Local Authority; to include promotional material, online promotion, publications, DVDs, seminars and conferences
- t. Enterprise Support Services:
 - i. Number of businesses availing of Rates Payment Plans (and associated employment)
 - ii. Number of networks or collaborative structures supported which focus on entrepreneurship, economic development, employment generation and support, or addressing job losses (at local, regional, national or international level)
- u. Local Enterprise Development Services: Enterprise Infrastructure
 - i. New investment in enterprise facilities / services for entrepreneurs / information resources
 - ii. Number of incubation / innovation centres, community enterprise centres, business parks maintained (to include joint investment / match funding with EI / IDA / community / business)
 - iii. Number of initiatives to support key infrastructures such as broadband, further education / training, tourism, culture / heritage
 - iv. Amount of zoned land (ha.) for business / employment / commercial / industrial uses
- v. Labour Market Activation:
 - i. Number of placements completed p.a. under all labour activation programmes
- w. Customer Service Enhancement / Integration
 - i. Provision made for LEOs in LA Customer Service Plans
 - ii. Inclusion of LEOs in development of Local Government Portal
 - iii. Development with EI of online access to local enterprise supports
 - iv. LA participation in development of E-Portal for Business Licensing.

3.1.5 LA Reports on Best Practice, Service Indicators and Metrics

LAs will provide an annual update of the CCMA's 2012 Report on Best Practice, 'Local Authority Support to Enterprise and Business – Analysis of Economic Templates'. LAs will adopt Local Economic Development Strategies as described in the Local Government Sectoral Strategy to promote employment and support local enterprise entitled 'Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – *Locally*'

3.1.6 It is noted that the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) prepares an annual report against a suite of 46 service indicators in Local Authorities for submission to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, and an Independent Assessment Panel appointed by the Minister quality assures the process. Many of these indicators have specific relevance to the Business Sector, for example:

- Planning Applications Decision Making
- Planning Enforcement
- Pre-planning Consultations
- Commercial Rates
- Environmental Management /Enforcement
- Non Domestic Water Charges.

3.1.7 It is also noted that there is a commitment in the recently published Action Programme for Effective Local Government '*Putting People First*' to undertake a review of the suite of service indicators to make improvements and changes with a view to moving toward setting a more qualitative set of performance indicators and performance standards which will focus on outcomes rather than outputs. The revised indicators and standards will also reflect value for money and the cost effective use of resources by Local Authorities. Furthermore, Local Authorities will prepare Annual Service Plans and set local targets to be achieved in the delivery of services against each of the agreed performance standards.

3.1.8 The LAs have requested that the above metrics be noted as initial metrics to be reviewed / developed over time through the National Monitoring and Review Process (Section 8).

3.2. *Service Delivery Support for LEOs*

3.2.1 EI, via the Centre of Excellence established in the Micro and Small Business Division, will support the LEO network. EI support will assist and enable LEOs to promote the development of an enterprise culture, to support and promote enterprise and to highlight entrepreneurship at Local and National level.

3.2.2 EI will facilitate and support the LEOs in the organisation, delivery, and participation in National programmes, events, conferences and promotions organised and / or delivered by LEOs such as:

- National Enterprise Awards and Entrepreneurship Promotion Activities
- Student Enterprise Education Programme and the National Student Enterprise Awards
- National Women's Enterprise Day
- LEO involvement in Showcase, SHOP etc.
- Other National and Local events to promote entrepreneurship as agreed with the EI Centre of Excellence

3.2.3 Shared approaches in relation to the provision of support across the LEO network as well as cross-network production of marketing / information collateral - EI, in association with the LEOs, to examine the development of streamlined and cost effective shared services as appropriate as well as the development of cross-network materials and publications.

3.2.4 The following sections in this SLA reference a number of operational arrangements supported by EI which will assist in delivery of LEO services, inter alia:

- Staff training and development to support skills enhancement and business development capability among LEO staff supporting clients
- Sectoral knowledge and expertise and participation by EI representatives on all Evaluation and Approvals Committees
- Appropriate access to market research and other internationalisation support (i.e. Potential Exporters Division). In this context, EI will undertake to communicate timely information on appropriate EI supports which may be of relevance to the LEOs.

4.0 Operational Arrangements

4.1. Structure of the LEO

4.1.1 In restructuring the CEBs there is a need to ensure the continuity of service to clients and a need to preserve the valuable range of skills and expertise of CEB staff. Therefore, there will be a ring-fencing of staff, meaning that former CEB staff will remain in the LEO structure for an initial period of three years to allow the new LEOs to embed themselves and to ensure continuity of service to the CEB / LEO client base and the appropriate transfer of skills.

4.1.2 In principle, the structure and staffing of the LEO will reflect the relevant Local Authority banding (as set out by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG)). In principle, the staffing and resources of the LEO will be adequate as to support the delivery of its functions and services as set out in the Service Level Agreement (Appendix 2). Staffing of LEOs will be subject to Government instructions on Public Service policy and numbers at any given time.

4.1.3 The incoming CEO shall be the Head of the LEO and there will be a direct reporting relationship between the Head of the LEO and the County or City Manager. The management relationship for Heads of LEOs appointed subsequent to the establishment of the LEOs will be subject to any future local arrangements the County or City Manager may wish to provide.

4.2. Staffing and Staff Development

4.2.1 A protocol will be developed between EI and the County / City Councils, and incorporated in this SLA, to address the filling of positions in the LEO. This is to ensure that the need for an enterprise culture, accompanied by the specific skills set and competencies needed, is provided for and remains paramount in relation to the staffing of the LEOs.

4.2.2 The protocol will provide for the full participation of Enterprise Ireland in the recruitment and/or selection process for the filling of positions at Head of LEO level. In relation to the filling of other positions in the LEO, Enterprise Ireland, through the Centre of Excellence, will support local management on selection and recruitment, to ensure that the appropriate skills and competencies are available in the LEO.

4.2.3 EI will support the developmental needs of LEO staff via the Micro and Small Business Division (i.e. Centre of Excellence); to ensure that the business development skillsets needed to deliver the appropriate supports to client companies are maintained and enhanced. Enterprise Ireland will provide appropriate enterprise focussed training for all LEO staff. Staff will be made available for such training for an appropriate number of training days per year as will be agreed with the Head of LEO. The LA will similarly provide relevant training to LEO staff, as appropriate.

4.3. *Office Location and Functionality*

4.3.1 The LEOs should be an accessible and attractive location conducive for entrepreneurs to interact with LEO staff and discuss their business details and requirements in confidence using appropriate facilities e.g. meeting rooms. It is noted that an intention of the Government decision to establish the LEOs was to locate LEOs in Local Authority offices.

4.3.2 Staffing arrangements / rostering will be such as to cater for all client enquiries received during normal working hours, and to progress the normal business of the LEO.

4.3.3 Available within the office, there should be relevant information for entrepreneurs and businesses such as leaflets, brochures and general signposting to wider supports and services.

4.3.4 The LEO will be accessible (including provision of appropriate parking, disabled access etc.) to the public during the opening hours of the Local Authority office.

4.4. *Governance*

4.4.1 In performance of its functions the LEOs will adhere to relevant policy guidelines and instruction from DJEI/EI. Management of the LEOs will be consistent with appropriate governance guidelines and practices and any other relevant National guidance or circulars. All LEO staff shall be required to comply with the local government staff related codes including the *Code of Conduct for Employees* and the Local Authority Accounting in Ireland Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations (updated 2009).

4.4.2 Arrangements will be put in place to ensure (a) full cooperation, coordination and collaboration between relevant decision-making structures and (b) appropriate demarcation protocols in relation to relevant publicly-funded economic / micro-enterprise supports from local development and community programmes in line with EU requirements and national policy as this is developed.

4.4.3 Administration and accounting processes will be standardised. A standard accounting system and process, which shall be integrated with Local Authority ICT and Accounting Systems, will be rolled out to each LEO. LEO staff pay costs will be processed through the LA payroll system.

4.4.4 A quality assurance process will put in place with EI as an accounting body, which will include the establishment of a unique bank account for LEO activities, and the recording of LEO transactions / activities using a separate cost centre and appropriate activity codes. A quarterly accounting drawdown process with associated reporting is required.

4.4.5 The management of information required for drawdown, approval, refundable aid, and commitments is integral to the effective running of the LEOs and guidelines in this respect will be strictly adhered to, including monthly maintenance of data for the GMIS / client database.

4.4.6 Each LEO will have the responsibility for the collation and maintenance of data to support the B1 claim co-ordinated by EI (see later section on ERDF), or other such claims / processes as required.

4.4.7 Grant inspectorate/Audit – Procedures for compliance with policy and guidelines on support for micro enterprise and small business (and with the Operational Programme etc. where relevant) will be outlined by the Centre of Excellence, allowing for standardisation of the process from enquiry through to inspection. Standardised application forms, grant claim forms and letters of offer to be used in all cases.

4.4.8 Standardised National branding and advertising will be in line with allocated budgetary spend and brand protocols to be agreed under a National brand policy / strategy. The Centre of Excellence will provide guidance on these issues to LEOs as appropriate.

4.4.9 The website and associated pages are to follow National brand policy guidelines but will have built in flexibility (local edit rights etc.) to reflect local issues and needs including response to online queries etc. and general promotion of Entrepreneurship in the designated areas. The National Website designed specifically for micro-enterprise and small business will incorporate online self-assessment tools, signposting to other State services, benchmarking, how-to guides etc. The Centre of Excellence will support the development and maintenance of the national website, etc.

4.4.10 Reporting arrangements for the new LEO system between LEOs and the EI Centre of Excellence will be kept under review as the new arrangements evolve and are bedded in. It is anticipated that monthly and more significant quarterly reports will be provided to the Centre of Excellence. Regard will be made to respective reporting frameworks in the context of minimising administrative workload.

4.4.11 All relevant guidelines in relation to Data Protection, Freedom of Information and the confidential and often commercially sensitive nature of client information in the LEOs will be strictly adhered to. Relevant provisions will be made to ensure full compliance.

4.4.12 Other supports required to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of LEOs, will be agreed on an on-going basis.

5.0 Policy and Support

5.1. Policy with respect to enterprise (including financial) support will be determined by DJEI and will be aligned with micro enterprise and small business policy. EI will support DJEI in developing guidelines on national policy to promote and develop micro-enterprise, small business and entrepreneurship. Appendix 3 details specific policy as regards evaluation and approval of financial support to projects. Such policies will be strictly adhered. Appendix 4 sets out further detail in respect of an overarching policy

5.2. Having consulted with the LEOs, EI will provide guidelines on programmes to support, promote and develop micro-enterprise, small business and entrepreneurship at local level and assist LEOs in the delivery of national programmes taking account of national policy, sectoral strategy and best practice.

5.3. EI will research, identify and disseminate Best Practice in relation to both LEO Programme delivery and complementary Local Authority supports and prepare proposals for the roll-out of “Best Practice” across all LEOs as necessary.

5.4. The Exchequer allocation for micro-enterprise and small business support secured by DJEI is the primary conduit for financial support (i.e. in the form of grant aid etc.) to micro-enterprises and small businesses.

5.5. All projects will be assessed for compliance with European state aid guidelines and regulations, national legislation, national policy and guidelines which may be issued by DJEI and / or EI.

5.6. On-going Review and Development of Financial Instruments and Competitive Schemes - EI, in conjunction with stakeholders, will as appropriate review the existing range of financial instruments in the context of the current economic environment, and advise DJEI. Revised financial offers for the LEOs to support micro enterprises and small businesses will be agreed by DJEI in conjunction with EI following consultation with the LEOs.

5.7. EI will also provide standardised financial support templates, value for money guidelines, and evaluation methodologies to enable LEOs to ensure a consistent approach to supports to clients throughout the State.

6.0 Budgets – Exchequer Funding, Allocation and Accounting

6.1. Exchequer funding, currently secured by the Minister for, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will continue to be allocated under a separate sub head on a collective basis to EI, and responsibility for the distribution of these funds to, and between, County / City Councils for the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), is transferred to EI in accordance with the legislation and / or an appropriate scheme. Budgets will be allocated on an annual basis which in the interim will be under the existing Measure 1, Measure 2 & administration (pay and non-pay) headings.

6.2. Measure 1 relates to direct financial supports such as feasibility, priming and job expansion grants directly to clients. Measure 2 relates to general development funding covering training, management development and various other interventions and programmes relating to functions such as competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation.

6.3. It is anticipated that a similar national allocation as is currently provided for the support of micro-enterprise, will be the national allocation provided in respect of the new arrangements.

6.4. It has been agreed that initially the Budget Allocation methodology will remain unchanged as regards Measure 1 and Measure 2 allocations. Over time this allocation and the allocation methodology will be reviewed by the DJEI and EI to ensure that opportunities for business development are maximised and that value for money is being secured across the LEOs. Such reviews will in the future be primarily informed by achievement of targets and performance metrics rather than a purely population based assessment. It is envisaged that a competitive element to budgetary allocation will be developed and introduced over time.

6.5. It is possible, as the process of establishing the LEOs moves ahead, that modest savings in respect of operations could be identified (such as reduction in overheads, insurance, rent costs) which may be achieved through the integration of the LEOs into the Local Authorities.

6.6. LAs may provide additional funds for activities / projects supported under Measure 1 or Measure 2 programmes through their normal budgetary processes to LEOs.

Such additional funds are to be distributed in a manner wholly consistent with the policy, guidelines and instruction on distribution set for LEOs, of the DJEI / EI allocations in respect of these financial support offers (i.e. currently Measure 1 and Measure 2). This will mean additional monies will be subject to the same processes including the Evaluations and Approvals process as set out in this SLA.

6.7. Note: This area will be kept under review on an on-going basis as part of the review arrangements outlined in Section 8 of this document. [The agreed capital and current budget allocation methodology will be appended to the final Service Level Agreement text taking due account of the final structures established.]

6.8. *Allocate Annual Budgets to the LEOs*

EI will allocate quarterly funding on foot of the agreed SLA consistent with Budget Allocation methodology. EI, supported by the LEOs will provide quarterly budget returns to DJEI and / or as required. EI will monitor overall drawdown of funds throughout the year and assess LEO's drawdown profiles to year-end, end of year balances, amount of unspent monies to be returned to the Exchequer and any additional monies sought before year-end. Due regard must be given by LEOs at all times to Government guidelines on the level of capital commitments entered into.

6.9. *Audit and Spot-check Arrangements*

EI and the LAs will be subject to existing audit arrangements as set out in Government and Departmental Guidelines, and in accordance with relevant audit procedures. EI will, through the Centre of Excellence, establish a system of audit / spot-checking in relation to financial support provided through the LEOs to assist in satisfying audit / Departmental requirements at a national level. The LEO and LA will assist the Centre of Excellence on all audit / spot-checking demands.

6.10. *Meet Departmental Financial Reporting Requirements*

LAs / LEOs to provide all relevant information to the Micro and Small Business Division for preparation of material on behalf of DJEI for briefing e.g. briefing for DJEI / EI appearances before the Public Accounts Committee, briefing in relation to the estimates process, LEO staff numbers, Management Information Reports and other financial reporting requirements as they arise.

6.11. *EU Structural Funds Requirements*

All bodies will ensure that the Structural Funds draw-down process is implemented in a proper and timely manner.

6.12. EI to implement and manage the ERDF drawdown process by, inter alia:

- issuing appropriate guidance and instruction circulars to LEOs as needed
- issuing timely requests to LEOs for return of completed B1 Forms
- checking all returned B1 Forms for accuracy, eligibility etc. of claimed expenditures and dealing with errors, irregularities, queries arising
- performing regulatory spot-checking of LEOs and final recipients to verify eligibility and reality of claimed expenditures
- liaising with any LEOs concerned to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken in relation to errors / irregularities identified during spot-checks
- collating the data of verified B1s, completing B2 Forms and submitting same to managing authorities
- updating the relevant on-line expenditure tables.

6.13. EI will liaise with, and respond to requirements of, Regional Monitoring Committees. EI will provide progress reports to Monitoring Committees, along with copies of progress reports to key Departments. EI will attend meetings of Monitoring Committees and workshops etc. required by Department of Public Expenditure and Reform / Regional Assemblies etc. and ensure, as necessary, participation by the LEOs in same.

6.14. All bodies will ensure that appropriate processes are in place for the capturing of information required by templates for B1/B2 supporting documentation in context of NDP / Structural Funds 2007-2013 and beyond. All bodies will facilitate auditing activity by third parties and ensure appropriate implementation of recommendations arising.

6.15. The Centre of Excellence will lead in preparation of progress reports for Monitoring Committees on performance indicators for LEO measures and assemble performance indicator data based on inputs available from the LEO Performance Monitoring System. This process will be consistent with the previous arrangements delivered between CEBs and CEBCU for reporting.

7.0 Information Sharing

7.1. LEO Liaison

To facilitate active engagement between LEO staff, with the EI Centre of Excellence, and the City and County Managers Association (CCMA), a system of regular formal liaison meetings between the LEOs, EI and the CCMA, including at least one annual meeting, will be established. This will be in addition to the National Review Group meeting (Section 8). A network of LEOs will operate, with the express purpose of engaging with the Centre of Excellence on matters of micro enterprise, small business and entrepreneurship promotion and development.

7.2. Serving the Political System

EI will provide DJEI and, where appropriate, the CCMA and DECLG with data and material in a co-ordinated and timely fashion in relation to serving the political system e.g. Parliamentary Questions, Ministerial Representations, Adjournment Debates, Topical Issue Matters, Oireachtas Committee Appearances, Ministerial Speeches etc. The LEOs and each LA will support Enterprise Ireland in meeting such requests.

In accordance with normal requirements, the activities of the LEOs will be reported on to the elected representatives of the Councils. To assist LEO reporting, national information collated by the Centre of Excellence can be made available, as appropriate, to the relevant LEO.

7.3. Management/Performance Information Systems

EI will continue to arrange hosting and administration of the LEO Performance Monitoring System, and to provide sufficient support and training to the LEO Staff as required.

7.4. EI to extract LEO data from the Performance Monitoring System on an on-going basis in order to conduct functions of the Centre of Excellence and meet the needs of the Oireachtas etc. EI will compile the Annual LEO Employment Survey and move towards management of the LEO data in line with the Forfás Business Information System.

7.5. LEOs will maintain and update the Performance Management System in line with guidance from the Micro and Small Business Division (Centre of Excellence), to enable EI to support the activity and output of the LEOs, assist with benchmarking and programme evaluation.

LEO staff will ensure completion of scheduled monthly system updates to take account of activity of the LEO (a monthly closing date will be established by EI, in advance of which all data must be entered). Failure to do so will become a topic of review with the Centre of Excellence, and / or National Review group.

8.0 Time Frame and SLA Review

8.1. The Framework SLA will be agreed for a period of three years between EI and the Local Authorities, with an annual Enterprise Development Plan to be agreed each year. For clarity, the provisions of the SLA will continue to take effect beyond this three year period, until such time as a renewed SLA is agreed.

8.2. The framework SLA will be reviewed annually, or at the request of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Outcome of the reviews will influence the adjustment of the current, and development and agreement of future SLAs. A formal review group will be established at national level chaired by DJEI and involving EI, the CCMA, DECLG and a nominated Head of LEO, which will undertake the reviews.

8.3. Additionally, each SLA will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Micro and Small Business Division of Enterprise Ireland.

8.4. Should issues of implementation of the SLA require clarification, these will in the first instance be explored by the relevant Local Authorities and Enterprise Ireland, before escalation to the national level review group.

9.0 Summary of Agreement

This section will detail the specifics of the agreement as it pertains to the LEO in each respective City / County Council.

10.0 Signatories

Service Level Agreement between Enterprise Ireland and the City and County Councils (Local Authorities)

Re: Local Enterprise Office (LEO)/Micro Enterprise Support Scheme, to be administered by Enterprise Ireland

This Service Level Agreement as agreed by Enterprise Ireland and [X] County Council on [XXth Month] 2013.

Signed by:

Name

Name

County/City Manager,
County

Divisional Manager,
Micro and Small Business
Enterprise Ireland

Date:

Date:

Appendix 1: LEO Enterprise Development Plan Template

Each LEO's individual enterprise development plan agreed with Enterprise Ireland for the forthcoming year will be incorporated into the SLA on an annual basis. This will set out key deliverables i.e. initiatives and metrics / targets, for the LEO for the year.

Draft Template included overleaf:

Enterprise Development Plan 201Y – AREA NAME – Plan Template

Table 1: Overarching Goal for 201X (previous year)	i.e. Strategic Targets for the LEO (no. of jobs supported, start-ups supported etc.)
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Provide a short (1 page) review of activity, outputs and key initiatives during 201X (previous year).

This update should align with the four support/service areas outlined in Appendix 2 of the Service Level Agreement.

	Other LEO/3rd parties involved
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Table 2: Strategic Objectives for 201Y (forthcoming year)	
1.1	
1.2	
1.3	
1.4	
1.5	

Provide a short outlook on areas of activity, outputs and key initiatives expected during 201Y (forthcoming year).

This update should align with the four support/service areas outlined in Appendix 2 of the Service Level Agreement.

Table 3: List the key actions to be undertaken		When are these actions expected to be delivered?			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Key Actions					
<i>Key Activities relating to Service/Support Area 1</i>	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	Add as necessary				
Key Actions					
<i>Key Activities relating to Service/Support Area 2</i>	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	Add as necessary				
<i>Key Activities relating to Service/Support Area 3</i>	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	Add as necessary				
<i>Key Activities relating to Service/Support Area 4</i>	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	Add as necessary				
<i>Other Key Actions not captured</i>	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	Add as necessary				

Table 4: Key Metrics

Insert figures against the expected impacts, outputs, and activities associated with achieving the objectives above.

Impacts		201Y
		LEO
	New Jobs (confirmed by survey)	
	New start-ups	
	Other (please specify)	
	Other (please specify)	
Outputs (results)	<i>Expected results from achieving objectives</i>	Draft 201Y
		LEO
	Job Commitments Linked to LEO Approvals	
	Number of Client Investments	
	Number of Participants on accredited training/management development programmes	
	Other (please specify)	
	Other (please specify)	
	Other (please specify)	
Activities	<i>Measurable actions to achieve the outputs/results listed above</i>	Draft 201Y
		LEO
	Number of participants at workshops/information sessions	
	Student entrepreneurship	
	Etc.	
	Etc.	
	Etc.	
	Etc.	
	Other (please specify) e.g. LA relevant metrics	
	Other (please specify)	
	Other (please specify)	

Table 5: Proposed innovative initiatives in conjunction with other LEOs to be implemented in 201Y

List the main innovations/ new actions you will undertake to promote a collaborative approach in delivering your plan.	1.
	2.
	3.
List the main innovations/ new actions you will focus on in 201Y to improve client satisfaction/impact.	1.
	2.
	3.

Table 6: List the proposed events for your LEO for 201Y

Proposed date or quarter in 201Y	Name of event	Type of event e.g. knowledge event, start-up information, etc.	Expected number of participants

Table 7: Risk

List any risks that can adversely affect the achievement of the objectives outlined above.	Actions to mitigate this risk
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

END

Appendix 2: Table of LEO Supports/Services

The key overarching objectives of the new first-stop-shop LEO structure will be firstly a) as a facilitator of access to enterprise services and b) to promote and support enterprise at local level (with particular reference to micro enterprise).

<p>1 Business Information & Advisory Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General business advice and information provision: Business Planning, Financial Advice, Management and Accounting, How-to Guides etc. • Advice and information on rates, planning, licensing etc. including cost reductions e.g. water conservation and waste minimisation • Information and access to other government services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenue [Seed Capital Scheme, Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EIS), Revenue Job Assist] ○ Social Protection/National Employment & Entitlements Service (NEES) [Back to Work Enterprise Allowance] ○ SOLAS [Employer Job Incentive Scheme, Training] ○ Companies Registration Office ○ Credit Review Office ○ Other services for example, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Western Development Commission, Fáilte Ireland etc. • Advice and information for local businesses on accessing public procurement processes • Advice on energy efficiency, sustainable development and alternative renewable energy sources 	<p>2 Enterprise Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support for start-up and business development. • Provide training supports e.g. Start Your Own Business Programmes, Management development support etc. • Access to commercial/enterprise space • Mentoring • Marketing • Access to dedicated business networks • Product and Service development • Development of web-enabled services with a focus on trading online • Maximising the impact of Community Enterprise Centres in local areas • Access to Microfinance Ireland Loan Fund • Progression pathway for high potential start-ups and high growth companies to Enterprise Ireland including access to Business Angels, New Frontiers Programme etc. • Access to promotional space
<p>3 Entrepreneurship Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education – Primary & Second level programmes • Female entrepreneurship • Senior entrepreneurship • Development of clusters • Enterprise Awards • Enterprise promotional activities 	<p>4 Local Enterprise Development Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development & implementation of local enterprise plan • Input into County Development Plan • Development of partnerships with relevant agencies e.g. North/South development • Promotion and marketing of local areas as location for investment in conjunction with the appropriate national body e.g. IDA • Identifying & developing projects & programmes including leveraging resources to implement these programmes and those funded from non-core resources • Development of appropriate enterprise infrastructure at county/city level • Management of local authority enterprise infrastructure or assets e.g. enterprise parks • Acting as an enhanced resource for Government to undertake one-off initiatives • Assisting in development of County/City Economic Strategies as proposed in the Local Government Reform Programme • Direct engagement by Local Authority with businesses in difficulty in order to develop payment plans e.g. commercial rates

Appendix 3: Evaluation and Approvals Process

The Government decision to dissolve the County and City Enterprise Boards and to establish the Local Enterprise Office network noted that the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will retain overall responsibility for national enterprise policy and budgets.

Evaluation and Approvals Committee

An Evaluation and Approvals Committee will be established in each LEO area. This Committee will consist of:

- A Chair (either the City or County Manager or another senior local authority official not from the LEO, delegated by the City or County Manager);
- A representative of Enterprise Ireland (Regional Manager or his/her nominee) and;
- Five individuals with specific areas of business expertise (i.e. record of entrepreneurship, accountancy experience, knowledge of markets / sectors / technology, and banking / financial expertise).

A public call for expressions of interest from individuals, to serve (pro bono) on the Evaluation and Approvals Committee, will be made by the Local Authority / City or County Manager. A panel will be formed from which first-filling and subsequent vacancies will be filled.

Appointment of the business sector representatives will be made by the City or County Manager, in consultation with the Head of the LEO, in each LEO area. Particular account will be taken of the individual's relevant experience and expertise.

Appointments will be made for a maximum of three years to provide for a renewal of expertise on the Committee. Changes in Committee membership will be on a phased basis to ensure that a critical mass of experienced people is maintained. Of the five business sector individuals, membership will be such that one member retires from the Committee every 12 months.

Guidelines will be provided in due course by the Centre of Excellence in respect of operational Committee matters such as Data Protection and Confidentiality, Commercial Sensitivity and Quorums etc.

Projects seeking direct financial support

EI will provide standardised templates and value for money guidelines which will be used for all projects seeking financial support to ensure that uniform information is provided to the evaluation and approvals committee, and that projects supported are within agreed policy guidelines.

All projects being considered for financial support will be evaluated by the Evaluation and Approvals Committee and all projects under €40,000 may be approved by this Committee in line with enterprise policy.

All projects over €40,000 will be evaluated and if endorsed by the Evaluations and Approvals Committee, recommended to the Enterprise Ireland Jobs Expansion Fund Committee (or similar committee) for final approval. Projects seeking approval in excess of a cumulative €80,000 over a 3 year period will also be approved by Enterprise Ireland in the same manner. This threshold level will be subject to a review after July 2014.

The LEOs will be asked to nominate a Chair of an Evaluation and Approvals Committee to sit on the Enterprise Ireland Jobs Expansion Fund Committee, and this position will be rotated every 6 to 12 months in consultation with the CCMA. This will ensure knowledge sharing and consistency of approach for the Chairs of local Evaluations and Approvals Committees and Enterprise Ireland.

Appendix 4: National Enterprise Policy

Development of the National Micro-Enterprise Policy

The existing national micro-enterprise policy must continue to learn, improve and evolve with experience. The new structures will assist this process. In establishing the new small and micro-enterprise support infrastructure, the existing policies will be reviewed, with a view to ensuring that legitimate gaps in supports to this sector are identified and eliminated. A key element of this new structure will be the consistent application of policy across all LEOs from the evaluation of applications for funding support to the spending of budgets allocated. The developed policy will ensure that all viable small and micro enterprises will have access to appropriate support from the State. The policy will be restated by DJEI providing guidance for the operation of the LEOs. This policy will seek to address any potential issues of duplication in service provision to the enterprise sector to ensure value for money and clarity for the client.

This Appendix will be updated on conclusion of the development and enhancement of relevant policies by DJEI.

Appendix 5: Enterprise Ireland – Functions of Centre of Excellence

The Centre of Excellence will have a key role in enhancing the LEO's services and supports, and will have among its functions the following:

- Lead role within EI for the development and review of the SLAs with each County / City Council
- Review and Benchmarking of the services and supports available from each LEO to promote best practice across the network
- Development of standardised financial and non-financial support instruments (including application, evaluation and approval documentation, information modules re. micro-finance fund etc.)
- Work in conjunction with LEOs to design and deliver appropriate national training and management development programmes at local level
- National Website designed specifically for micro-enterprise incorporating online self-assessment tools, signposting to other State services, benchmarking, how-to guides etc. This is under development and may be operated as a connected site to that of Enterprise Ireland, but will have appropriate localisation and local access and edit rights.
- LEO Staff will receive training organised by the Centre of Excellence
- Carry out audit and spot checks of expenditure including Evaluation and Approvals Committee approvals
- Carry out Data Analysis, Survey Co-ordination, Programme Evaluation
- Development and management of Metrics
- Development of LEO operational Benchmarking/Best in Class
- Development of a common approach to mentoring and mentor management
- Research of International Best Practice in micro-enterprise support
- Measurement monitoring of customer/entrepreneur experience/satisfaction
- Lead role in linking Potential Exporters Division and LEO clients
- Management of the client transfer mechanism
- Development of national sectoral policies for micro enterprise
- Development and roll out of various competitive funds
- Support LEO networking events as appropriate
- Such other supports as are necessary to maximise the effectiveness of LEOs.