

COVID-19: Further Guidance for Legal Workplaces - 19 March 2020



This document summarises information that Enterprise Ireland published in mid-March 2020 to provide Irish business enterprise with information on supports available and best practice guidelines. The full Enterprise Ireland document can be accessed at: <https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/about-us/services/covid-19/>

COVID-19 Related Supports In Place for Business

Specific COVID-19 Supports include:

- A €200m Package for Enterprise Supports including a Rescue and Restructuring Scheme available through Enterprise Ireland for viable but vulnerable firms that need to restructure or transform their businesses. Details are still being finalised.
- A €200m Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) Working Capital scheme for eligible businesses impacted by COVID-19, further information can be found [here](#).
- A Short Time Work Support is available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and is an income support payment for employees who have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week and is intended to help employers during periods of temporary difficulty. Further details at www.gov.ie/stws.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and will be available to all employees and the self-employed who have lost employment due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The payment has a one-page application form and will be paid for a period of 6 weeks at a flat rate payment of €203 per week for jobseekers. More information can be found [here](#).
- "Finance in focus" grant of up to €7,200 available to Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients to support financial planning.

Other Enterprise Ireland/Local Enterprise Office Supports include:

- Strategic Consultancy Grant for SMEs to assist the company development of a strategic response plan.
- Act On Initiative, providing access to two days consultancy engagement at no extra cost to assess Financial Management, Strategic sourcing and transport and logistics advice.
- Key Manager Support to provide partial funding towards the recruiting of a Full or Part time Manager with critical skills for future growth.

- Agile Innovation Fund and Operational Excellence Offer.
- Be Prepared Grant for contingency planning.
- Vouchers for business continuity preparedness, innovation and productivity will be available through Local Enterprise Offices in every local authority area (www.localenterprise.ie).
- The Credit Guarantee Scheme is a government supported product from the banks for small and medium businesses who have difficulty borrowing from their bank. Businesses can apply for loans of up to €1 million at AIB, Bank of Ireland or Ulster Bank.
- Additional financial supports are available locally through the 31 Local Enterprise Offices (www.localenterprise.ie) and Microfinance Ireland (www.microfinanceireland.ie). The maximum loan available from Microfinance Ireland will be increased from €25,000 to €50,000 as an immediate measure.

Visit www.enterprise-ireland.com/businessresponse for details on the above supports.

Enterprise Ireland is available to assist Irish businesses to deal with this significant challenge. For further information on the supports outlined in this guide, contact the Business Response Unit at clientresponse@enterprise-ireland.com or speak to your Development Advisor.

Key Business Responses

Enterprise Ireland is advising companies to be prepared and avail of supports for their business in the following areas which may be impacted by Covid-19.

1. People management
2. Business processes and operations management
3. Supply Chain management
4. Communications - internal and external management

1. People Management

An individual should be appointed to ensure that employees are familiar with the business continuity plans and comply with them during this period. The roles and responsibilities of the person acting as Business Continuity Manager could include some, or all, of the following:

- Actively monitor development of the virus outbreak and liaise with Management to disseminate information as it becomes available
- Monitor all relevant websites including www.hse.ie, www.dfat.ie and www.who.int

- Inform employees on the business continuity plans and safety measures being put in place
- Ensure there is an up-to-date list of all employees contact details and emergency numbers and a way to communicate quickly with staff (sms etc)
- Put in place quarantine procedure for employees traveling or who have traveled to affected areas (14 days) and put in place flexible working arrangements
- Ensure all employees follow travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Ensure that the workplace has adequate supplies of tissue paper/hand towels and disinfectants
- Ensure common areas e.g. pantries, washrooms, meeting rooms, are disinfected regularly
- Put in place a plan in the scenario of key staff being affected
- Avail of relevant HR supports if you are a member of any industry representative bodies

KEY SUPPORTS RELEVANT TO PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Short time work support

Short time work support is available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and is an income support payment for employees who have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week, due to business challenges affecting their employment. It is intended to help employers during periods of temporary difficulty, without resorting to permanent layoffs. Employer and employee application forms and more detail can be found at www.gov.ie/stws

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and will be available to all employees and the self-employed who have lost employment due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The payment has a one-page application form and will be paid for a period of 6 weeks at a flat rate payment of €203 per week for jobseekers. More information can be found [here](#)

Employees can also apply for Short-time Work Support at their local Intreo Centre or Branch Office – local Intreo Centre can be found at www.gov.ie/deasp

Enterprise Ireland Key Manager / Part Time Key Manager Support

The aim of this initiative is to provide partial funding towards the cost of recruiting a Full Time or Part Time Key Manager with skills that are critical to the future growth of the client. The Part Time Key Manager grant has been introduced in order to support companies to attract senior leadership talent by offering more flexible working arrangements. For further details visit [here](#)

2. Business Process and Operations Management

Identify critical business functions (prioritised activities) and essential employees needed to carry out essential operations of the business and take steps including:

- Consider the operations that could be at risk due to COVID-19
- Identify the employees / teams required to implement essential operations

- Set up a register of essential functions and designate an 'alternate employee' who could implement essential operations if required and train the 'alternate employee' to undertake the operations by shadowing the employee who is responsible for the areas
- Examine the extent to which others will be dependent on you due to COVID-19
- Provide ICT infrastructure to facilitate remote working
- Consider the possible impact of employee absences
- Consider the financial management implications due to COVID-19
- Review all business travel and ensure travel policy is adhered to. Put in place remote meeting technology to conduct meetings online, where possible
- Establish authorities and procedures for implementation of business continuity plan

KEY SUPPORTS RELEVANT TO BUSINESS PROCESS AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

€200m Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) Working Capital scheme

For eligible businesses impacted by COVID-19, further information can be found [here](#)

Finance in Focus Support

The Finance in Focus grant offers Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients funding of up to €7,200 to cover third party consultant's fees. These consultants will work with the clients to develop a detailed financial and business plan that identifies funding needs and potential sources of funding.

Strategic Consultancy Grant

The grant supports the hiring of a strategic consultant for SME's typically over a longer period to assist the company in the development and/or the implementation of strategic initiatives. It is designed to facilitate business growth as the consultants can act as coach, mentor, facilitator, analyst for the company.

Be Prepared Grant for Contingency Planning

The Be Prepared Grant is designed for Enterprise Ireland clients who would benefit from further research and external expertise in examining their exposure to Covid-19 and exploring ways of addressing this. The grant offers up to €5,000 or 50% of the total cost in financial support.

3. Supplier and Customer Management

Ensure that measures are taken to ensure continuity of supply chain and customers including, proactively tracking additional costs resulting from business continuity activities related to the virus, preparing for budget impacts and margin pressures.

Companies who do not have a well-defined plan in place are at an elevated risk of delayed response and recovery and supply chains that operate just in time (JIT) or hold limited inventory are likely to be disproportionately impacted.

- Build up inventory where possible to mitigate any shortages
- Keep an active management focus on inventory levels
- Prioritise high-revenue or high-profit margin products whilst mapping the geographical spread of the virus to locations of critical suppliers
- Identify key customers and ensure that plans are put in place to continue to meet customer needs and delivery mechanisms
- Consider the possibility of changes to your product, your service, or your interaction with customers, and plan for any changes you consider appropriate
- Identify key suppliers on whom you depend for essential operations and engage with them to discuss their own business continuity plans and investigate alternative suppliers
- Assess how the supply chain and wider organisation can balance health, safety, and legal duties to ensure that workers are protected
- Identify production gaps and assess if alternative suppliers have capability and capacity in the interim. Review timelines and costs associated with temporarily switching suppliers if required
- Raise a separate cost centre for additional expenditure associated with the impacts of Covid-19.

KEY SUPPORT RELEVANT TO SUPPLIER AND CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

Act On Initiative

An Act On initiative to support impacted exporting businesses will be available to Enterprise Ireland supported companies. The initiative provides access to two days company consultancy engagement at no extra cost to help companies strengthen their capabilities in three key business areas; financial management, strategic sourcing and transport and logistics.

4. Communications - Internal and External Management

It is important to develop a communications plan for all stakeholders including employees, suppliers, customers and external stakeholders. This will include:

- Documenting the key elements, policies and procedures so that all employees have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and safety measures to avoid Covid-19 and the procedures that will be put in place should an outbreak occur in the business
- Setting up a communications channel from employees to the business continuity manager to report any risks or concerns
- Prepare a stakeholder list to include suppliers and customers with messages for each

- Ensure there is awareness among all stakeholders of the business's preparatory plans and ensure that they are kept informed of new developments
- Update customers on service levels and alternative delivery locations if required
- Review attendance by colleagues at all large-scale events on a regular basis and cancel attendance where there is a Covid-19 risk
- Provide clear communication on interim working arrangements including remote working, video conferencing and travel.

KEY SUPPORTS RELEVANT TO COMMUNICATIONS

Information, advice and webinars

Enterprise Ireland will engage directly with businesses to provide information and practical support. Over the coming weeks, Enterprise Ireland will be developing an online portal of relevant advice, articles and webinars which will be accessible [here](#).

Development Advisor

Speak to your Development Advisor who can direct you to the relevant supports specific for your organisation and/or your industry.

Covid-19 Business Risk Assessment in 4 steps:

1. Risk Audit

Assess your current areas of exposure such as key import / export markets, supply chains or operations that may be affected.

2. Scenario Testing

Run through potential scenarios and simulations in the event of a business continuity interruption such as a supplier being unable to deliver materials for manufacture of product which could impact delivery deadlines for your customer.

3. Clear Plan with Roles & Responsibilities

Appoint key business leads to areas of responsibility around the Covid-19 outbreak so should a contingency plan need to be implemented with immediate effect, all personnel are aware of the role they will play in executing the plan.

4 Iterate and Update

The Covid-19 global situation is changing on a daily and hourly basis. To keep up to date with the evolving situation, it is vital to ensure your business continuity response is agile and responsive to any developments domestically or globally.

Essential Links

[Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation](#)

[World Health Organisation](#)

Health Service Executive
Government of Ireland
Department of Foreign Affairs