



An Roinn Fiontar,
Turasóireachta agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Tourism and Employment

Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum 1 July 2026

Room 110, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, 23 Kildare Street

Attendees

EDAF Members (In-person)

Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, Niamh Smyth TD

Anne Rooney (Google)

Barry O'Brien (IBM)

Erik O'Donovan (Ibec)

Kieran McCorry (Microsoft Ireland)

Noel Rock (Scale Ireland)

Mike Conroy (ITAG and EDIH Network)

Victor Timon (Digital Business Ireland)

Stephanie Anderson (META)

EDAF Members (Online)

DC Cahalane (Sure Valley Ventures)

Margot Holland (Johnson & Johnson)

Officials

Jean Carberry (DETE)

Orla Mulready (DETE)

Valerie Rousselin (DETE)

Paul McMorrow (DETE)

Adrienne Byrne (DETE)

Bhuvana Sekar (DETE)

Odhran Logue (DETE)

Catherine Howard (IDA)

Gerry O'Grady (EI)

Laura Clifford (EI)

Claire Hayes Curtin (D/Taoiseach)

Daire Traynor (NSAI)

Shay Power (IDA Ireland)

Presentations:

Davena Lyons (Revenue)

Karen Dunne (Revenue)

Elizabeth Harvey (DETE)

Eimear Friel (DFA)

Keith Fitzgerald (DETE)

Marta Alvaro-Taus (ESRI)

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1. Welcome and Introduction

As Minister Smyth was delayed at a previous engagement, Jean Carberry conveyed the Minister's apologies and provided a few updates for the group.

Jean noted that it was a significant day for Ireland as it assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, providing an important opportunity over the next six months to help shape key European priorities, with a strong digital agenda at the centre of the Presidency.

Jean highlighted progress on the EU AI Bill, currently at Second Stage in the Seanad, and noted that Digital Ireland deliverables are being closely monitored by the Department of the Taoiseach. She also referred to the publication of the 2026 Digital Decade Country Report, which highlights Ireland's strong digital performance, and noted preparations for the AI Summit are progressing well.

Members were also updated on recent ministerial engagements, including the AI and Digital Awareness Roadshows, the D9+ Ministerial Meeting in Luxembourg and the Cyprus Presidency Digital Conference in Nicosia. Jean noted that the Minister would attend the Global AI Dialogue and ITU AI Summit in Geneva on 6 July and confirmed that the CEO of the AI Office would be in place by 2 August.

2. Update on Deliverable 19 of the National Digital and AI Strategy - *Elizabeth Harvey, DETE*

The presentation provided an update on the development of the Sectoral Strategy for Enterprise AI Adoption, outlining the rationale for focusing on a targeted group of sectors where AI can have the greatest impact on productivity, competitiveness, innovation and value creation. The Strategy will focus on manufacturing, tourism, construction and ICT services, recognising both the need to accelerate AI adoption in traditional sectors and the importance of supporting ICT firms as they adapt to AI-driven changes in business models, products, services and value chains.

An overview was provided of the research and analytical work underpinning the Strategy, including sectoral profiling, mapping of existing AI supports, development of enterprise personas and use cases, assessment of AI adoption readiness and barriers, and analysis of AI's implications across sectors. Additional work will examine international best practice and explore how AI may reshape enterprise sectors and create new opportunities for Ireland.

The presentation also outlined governance and delivery arrangements, noting that a Steering Group has commenced oversight of the project and that a number of core workstreams are nearing completion. Draft findings from the main research programme are expected during the summer, with a draft strategy and implementation framework to be developed in early autumn. Subject to approvals, the Strategy is expected to be finalised and launched at the International AI Summit in October 2026.

3. e- Invoicing Presentation - Karen Dunne, Davena Lyons, Revenue Commissioners

The presentation provided an update on Revenue's VAT Modernisation programme and the planned implementation of e-Invoicing in Ireland. It highlighted the limitations of the current VAT system, including reliance on periodic VAT returns, the absence of a mandatory e-Invoicing framework, and relatively low levels of e-Invoicing adoption. The work is being developed in the context of the EU's VAT in the Digital Age (ViDA) initiative and wider digitalisation efforts across Member States.

Revenue outlined the preparatory work undertaken to date, including public consultation, stakeholder engagement, analysis of internal VAT processes, participation in EU discussions on ViDA, and involvement in a Peppol pilot. A phased implementation approach was presented, with mandatory domestic B2B e-Invoicing and real-time reporting for large corporates proposed from November 2028, followed by wider coverage of VAT-registered businesses engaged in cross-border EU trade from November 2029, ahead of full ViDA implementation in July 2030. The phased approach is intended to allow businesses and Revenue to build experience and readiness in advance of EU obligations.

The presentation also set out the next stages of the programme, including legislative and change management activities, the development of business and technical specifications, testing arrangements, and continued engagement through the Peppol pilot. It was noted that Ireland is currently among a small number of European countries without mandatory public sector e-Invoicing requirements, while many other Member States have already introduced or announced mandatory e-Invoicing frameworks.

4. EU Tech Business Offer – Eimear Friel, DFA

The presentation provided an overview of the EU Tech Business Offer (EUTBO), a new initiative under the EU's International Digital Strategy designed to strengthen Europe's global digital presence through a combination of public and private investment, technology partnerships and policy cooperation with partner countries. The initiative aims to create mutual benefits for both EU businesses and partner economies by promoting digital development, innovation and market opportunities internationally.

It was noted that the EUTBO adopts a "Tech Team Europe" approach, bringing together EU institutions, development finance mechanisms, export credit agencies and private sector actors to support international digital partnerships. The initiative covers the full technology ecosystem, including artificial intelligence, software solutions, digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity and secure digital connectivity, while also promoting interoperability through the adoption of EU standards and approaches.

The presentation highlighted a number of priority countries and regions where the initiative is being developed, alongside flagship projects under the EU's Global Gateway programme, including digital connectivity infrastructure, innovation hubs, supercomputing capabilities and space partnerships. It was also noted that the EU is continuing to refine the delivery model for the initiative, with ongoing consideration of issues such as financing mechanisms, SME participation and national coordination. Initial discussions have commenced on how Ireland

may engage through a coordinated cross-government approach and contribute to the further development of the initiative.

5. EDAF Subgroup Updates

Group 1: Driving Digitalisation and AI Adoption – Communication Campaign – Barbara Wiseman, DETE

Barbara Wiseman was not available to attend the meeting, however the members welcomed the launch of ‘AI Good for Business Platform’.

Group 2: Driving Digitalisation and AI Adoption Attractiveness of Digital Supports – Alexa Toomey (Enterprise Ireland)

Alexa Toomey was not available to attend the meeting, however the members of the group mentioned that they are continuing to map out the business supports that are currently on offer.

Group 3: Leveraging EDIHs Mike Conroy (ITAG and EDIH Network)

The presentation provided an update on the work of EDAF Sub-Group 3, which is examining how Ireland can maximise the impact of the four European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) to support AI and digital adoption by enterprises. The subgroup’s priorities include improving coordination across the EDIH network, strengthening links with enterprise support agencies, developing sector-focused approaches to technology adoption, and creating clearer pathways for businesses to access digital innovation supports.

An overview was given of progress achieved during the first half of 2026, including the expansion of sectoral partnerships, the delivery of events and training programmes, increased collaboration with enterprise agencies and industry bodies, and deeper engagement with European innovation networks. It was noted that all four Irish EDIHs have secured STEP Seal approval and that over 1,600 companies, including more than 1,300 SMEs, have been supported to date through advisory, training and innovation services.

The presentation highlighted a broad programme of activity across key sectors including manufacturing, tourism, healthcare, construction, ICT, agri-food, the creative industries and sustainability. This work includes the development of AI and digital maturity assessment tools, sector-specific training and use cases, industry events, demonstration projects and collaborative initiatives with organisations such as Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, IBEC and the Construction Industry Federation.

Looking ahead, the subgroup will focus on strengthening client referral pathways across the enterprise support ecosystem, improving regional reach, developing AI adoption playbooks, enhancing collaboration with the wider research and innovation community, and ensuring businesses can access the most appropriate supports through a coordinated “no wrong door” approach.

Group 4: Digital Inclusion, Skills, Public Sector Digitalisation & Cybersecurity

Erik O'Donovan (IBEC)

The Group's Skills Report was shared with DFHERIS and also the Department of Education and Youth by DETE, and the resulting feedback and observations from DFHERIS were subsequently communicated to the Group.

The Group will now review this feedback and undertake further work to refine the paper.

The group noted the importance of the SOLAS study published in April on lifelong learning, which highlights the need for greater investment in upskilling and reskilling. The study considers participation over both four-week and twelve-month periods, with the latter providing a broader picture of engagement and indicating that Ireland continues to lag behind comparator countries. The group agreed that its recommendations should support DFHERIS by helping to amplify the message on the need for sustained action in this area.

It was also noted that DFHERIS may showcase a skills-related case study at the AI Summit in October. The group will return to the cyber skills agenda over time as part of its continuing work programme.

6. Presentation from Group 5: Future Trends - *Valérie Rousselin Somerville, DETE*

The presentation provided an update on the work of EDAF Sub-Group 5, which is focused on future technology, regulatory and digital developments. The group's remit includes advising Government on emerging technologies, digital policy initiatives, enterprise adoption of new technologies, access to EU funding opportunities, regulatory developments, and the organisation of digital events, including support for a successor to the Digital Ireland Conference.

An overview was given of the subgroup's work during 2025–2026, including the development of recommendations to support Ireland's EU Presidency priorities. These recommendations emphasise the importance of a simplified and competitive EU digital regulatory framework, strengthening digital and AI skills across the economy, supporting SME and micro-enterprise digital adoption, enhancing Europe's digital capabilities through international collaboration and leadership initiatives, and prioritising investment in digital innovation, research and entrepreneurship.

The presentation also outlined the group's ongoing horizon-scanning and future trends work, which is examining developments likely to influence Ireland's digital competitiveness and policy priorities. Areas of focus include AI and automation, robotics, quantum computing, advanced connectivity, cybersecurity, sustainability technologies, health technologies, digital skills, data governance and funding challenges. This work is intended to inform future policy development, budget and funding considerations, Ireland's Digital Decade objectives, and the wider programme of events surrounding the International AI Summit. A draft report from a recent workshop is currently being prepared, with further analysis and engagement planned over the coming months.

7. Presentation on ERSI Paper – Drivers of AI Adoption and Investment Intentions: Insights from Irish SMEs – *Keith Fitzgerald, DETE & Marta Alvaro-Taus, ERSI*

The presentation outlined findings from new ESRI research on AI adoption among Irish SMEs, based on data from the 2024 Credit Demand Survey. The research examined current levels of AI adoption,

firms' intentions to invest in AI technologies, and the factors influencing both decisions. While current adoption rates among SMEs remain relatively low, the findings indicate a stronger level of interest in future AI investment, suggesting significant potential for further diffusion of AI technologies across the SME sector.

The analysis explored the role of firm characteristics, sectoral differences, knowledge-related barriers, operational constraints and financing needs in shaping AI adoption and investment behaviour. The research found that a lack of knowledge, awareness and understanding of AI is a key factor limiting current adoption, while future investment intentions are influenced by both informational barriers and practical challenges related to implementation, skills, security and business operations.

The presentation concluded that policy interventions should focus on both improving AI literacy and strengthening the wider operating environment for AI adoption. Recommended measures included sector-specific awareness and training initiatives, opportunities for hands-on AI engagement, improved access to finance and skills development, and support for organisational readiness and resilience. It was also noted that further research is planned through the DETE-ESRI Joint Research Programme to track AI adoption trends among Irish SMEs and assess the implications of digital transformation for the Irish labour market.

8. AOB

Minister Niamh Smyth joined the meeting shortly before the AOB session and provided a few closing remarks. She thanked members for their engagement, wished everyone an enjoyable summer break, and advised that invitations to the upcoming AI Summit would be issued shortly.

AI & Digital Programmes Unit

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

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