



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

## Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum 15 April 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)

DC Cahalane (Sure Valley Ventures)

David Kilbride (Stripe)

Erik O'Donovan (Ibec)

Kieran McCorry (Microsoft Ireland)

Margot Holland (Johnson & Johnson)

Martina Fitzgerald (Scale Ireland)

Mike Conroy (ITAG and EDIH Network)

Orla O'Keeffe (Failte Ireland)

Victor Timon (Digital Business Ireland)

Stephanie Anderson (META)

#### EDAF Members (Online)

Eoin Costello (Dargan Institute clg, Dun Laoghaire)

### Officials

Jean Carberry (DETE)

Orla Mulready (DETE)

Valerie Rousselin (DETE)

Kathrina Flynn (DETE)

Paul McMorrow (DETE)

Michelle Kearney (DETE)

Barbara Wiseman (DETE)

Adrienne Byrne (DETE)

Elizabeth Harvey (DETE)

Ross Lalor (DETE)

Jill Colquhoun (DETE)

Tara Keane (DETE)

Sami Ei Sayed (DETE)

Catherine Howard (IDA)

Alexa Toomey (EI)

Gerry O'Grady (EI)

Laura Clifford (EI)

Claire Hayes Curtin (D/Taoiseach)

Daire Traynor (NSAI)

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## **Presentations:**

Eoin Morton (Skillnet Ireland)

Karl Pickard (Skillnet Ireland)

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Minister Smyth and members of the EDAF took part in an official photograph, which will be used to launch the *AI - Good for Business* campaign.

The Minister opened the meeting by welcoming members and noting that, due to Dáil commitments, she had been unable to attend the previous EDAF meeting. The Minister emphasised that recent developments had underlined the importance of a strong and effective legal and regulatory framework for digital services and online safety. In this context, she welcomed the Data Protection Commission's investigation into Grok, as well as the support being provided by Coimisiún na Meán to the European Commission's Digital Services Act investigation. She also noted that the Attorney General is currently reviewing options to further strengthen legislation relating to intimate image abuse.

The Minister highlighted a significant milestone since the last meeting with the publication of Ireland's National Digital and AI Strategy, *Digital Ireland – Connecting our People, Securing our Future*. She advised that the Strategy fulfils a key Programme for Government commitment and sets out a clear, whole-of-government roadmap for Ireland's digital and AI adoption and development over the coming years. She reaffirmed the Department's commitment to working closely with EDAF members and other key stakeholders to ensure effective implementation. The Minister also referenced the Joint Oireachtas Committee on AI's first Interim Report, containing 85 recommendations, and noted that she had addressed the Committee's work and recommendations in a statement to Dáil Éireann in February.

By way of further updates, the Minister advised that in January she participated in the first AI Roadshow in Cavan. These Roadshows are designed to support SMEs in understanding and adopting AI and digital technologies and are grounded in the Charter for Digital Inclusion. She encouraged members to support and sign up to the initiative.

The Minister also outlined two significant international engagements in February. She attended France Digitale's AI Day at Station F in Paris, the world's largest start-up campus, which brought together 2,000 innovation leaders and provided an opportunity to engage with both Enterprise Ireland-backed companies and members of France Digitale. She also travelled to New Delhi for the India AI Impact Summit, the first global AI summit hosted in the Global South. The visit demonstrated Ireland's commitment to strengthening relations with India and advancing collaboration on AI and digital transformation, while facilitating engagement with international counterparts, leading AI companies and key global stakeholders.

## **2. Update on the AI and Digital Summit – Michelle Kearney, DETE**

Ireland will host the International AI Summit on 14 October 2026 in Royal Society Dublin, (RDS). The AI Summit will be a flagship event of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The AI Summit will officially launch [European AI Innovation Month](#), delivered in partnership with the European Commission. European AI Innovation Month will run from Dublin (14 October) to Brussels (17 November 2026) and will feature a Europe-wide programme of events focused on accelerating AI innovation and deployment across the European Union.

The theme for the International AI Summit will be “Harnessing AI to Revolutionise Europe’s Competitiveness” and the AI Summit will focus on Applied AI and sectoral value creation, highlighting the shift from research excellence to real-world AI deployment that delivers tangible impact across industries and public services.

The AI Summit will also include an Innovation Spotlight Exhibition, showcasing cutting-edge AI solutions and emerging technologies. Expressions of Interest will open to Industry shortly.

Minister Smyth and officials in the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment are working closely with key stakeholders, including IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, to finalise the Summit agenda themes and speakers. It was advised that a full programme will be announced shortly, including confirmation of speakers to accompany the keynote address by the Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, Henna Virkkunen.

Details on registration will also issue shortly and an Expression of Interest will open in the coming weeks for enterprises interested in participating in the Innovation Spotlight Exhibition. Members were advised that all updates and relevant information will be published on the Department’s website at [International AI Summit 2026 - DETE](#).

### **Comments from EDAF Members**

- EDAF members indicated their willingness to provide assistance as required. It was noted that the team organising the Summit will liaise with members should support be needed.

### **3. Planned Approach to delivery of a “Sectoral Strategy and Enterprise Adoption of AI” - Elizabeth Harvey, DETE**

The presentation outlined the rationale for adopting a sectoral approach to AI adoption, noting that focusing on strategically important sectors can accelerate uptake by addressing shared challenges and skills needs, and by targeting areas where AI can deliver the greatest productivity, competitiveness and export impacts. The proposed Strategy will focus on established enterprises across selected sectors, including micro enterprises, SMEs and large firms, while recognising that start-ups are supported through existing national programmes.

It was also noted that while ICT and software sectors were early adopters of AI, the Strategy will place particular emphasis on how AI is reshaping value creation and competitiveness within these sectors. Elizabeth further outlined the proposed governance arrangements, timelines and research workstreams underpinning the Strategy, with the intention to finalise and publish it during Ireland’s EU Presidency and launch at the International AI Summit in October 2026.

## 4. EDAF Subgroup Updates

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

#### Summary of points

- Sub-group 2 provided an update, noting some overlap with work underway elsewhere, and the importance of early engagement to ensure alignment and avoid duplication. The sub-group offered support and suggested further engagement with relevant stakeholders as needed.
- It was highlighted that many enterprises continue to face challenges in navigating digital and AI supports, particularly at the initial stage. While a wide range of supports exist across the system, improving visibility and ease of access remains a priority, with the National Enterprise Hub identified as a key entry point.
- The sub-group outlined its revised work programme, which focuses on driving digital and AI adoption, improving the clarity, coherence and conversion of supports, and recognising that enterprises are at different stages of digital maturity. Initial work includes mapping the current support landscape, reviewing international good practice, and exploring ways to strengthen coordination and continuity of support. The importance of remaining agile and of developing meaningful measures to assess progress in enterprise AI adoption was also noted.
- The group mentioned that it might need to expand membership.

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

An update was provided by Sub-Group 3 on progress in leveraging Ireland’s European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) network to support enterprise digital and AI adoption.

The update highlighted the group’s priorities for 2026, including improving clarity and coherence across EDIH engagement (“no wrong door” approach), strengthening alignment with Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, and deepening collaboration with the national AI research and innovation community. Significant progress to date was noted across multiple sectors through events, training, advisory services and partnerships.

The group also set out plans to further segment supports by sector and enterprise maturity, strengthen client journey mapping, develop AI adoption playbooks, and maximise the impact of EDIHs through joined-up national and EU-level networks.

A copy of the presentation was sent to all EDAF members before the meeting.

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

Erik O'Donovan (IBEC)

### Summary of points

The subgroup discussed core themes- digital skills, public sector digitalisation, and cybersecurity.

- Digital and AI Skills
  - Emphasis on enterprise-led insights to inform digital and skills priorities for all enterprise.
  - The Chair of WG reported that the ESRI is conducting research for DFHERIS to inform its work on the Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future. This work involved (a) encouraging EDAF members participation *and* individual participation in a half day DFHERIS/ESRI workshop on 12 March and (b) encouraging EDAF members to provide comments *and* providing individual comments to help DFHERIS/ESRI. We look forward to the joint study as it evolves
  - The subgroup drafted an advice on digital skills that was distributed to the Plenary. The objective of the draft advice is to try to help DETE/DFHERIS build on developments/progress in digital skills policy agenda. Elements of the advice included:
    - Progress noted in digital skills and adoption, with a continued focus on market-intelligence-led skills planning. Suggestion to establish a coherent National Skills Observatory that includes insights on the supply and demand for digital and AI skills.
    - Suggested actions progressing on training and funding pathways, including leveraging the National Training Fund and clarifying governance and delivery routes, with targeted supports for digital and AI skills.
    - Group believes digital inclusion objectives can be strengthened through a strengthened digital skills agenda.
  - The WG requested that Plenary members offer comments on the draft by 15 May in an effort to formally finalise and adopt the advice.
- Monitoring of the draft National Cybersecurity Strategy and engagement planned post-launch.
- Public sector digitalisation engagement ongoing with DPER and GovTech.

### **Comments from EDAF members:**

- Members acknowledged difficulties that skill shortages create in digital adoption by businesses. Gap between large firms and cash-constrained SMEs.

### **5. Presentation from Group 1: Driving Digitalisation and AI Adoption**

- *Communication Campaign – Barbara Wiseman (DETE)*

Barbara Wiseman provided an update on the **AI – Good for Business** initiative, which aims to support enterprises in understanding, accessing and adopting AI and digital technologies. The presentation

highlighted the role of the **AI Good for Business platform** as a central information and signposting resource, bringing together AI supports for business, guidance on the EU AI Act, and content aligned with Ireland's National Digital and AI Strategy.

The update focused on improving visibility, clarity and accessibility of AI and digital supports for enterprises, particularly those at an earlier stage of their digital journey. The initiative seeks to simplify how businesses identify relevant supports and understand regulatory requirements, while promoting confidence in responsible AI adoption.

## **6. Update from Skillnet Ireland – Eoin Morton and Karl Pickard**

Eoin Morton and Karl Picard provided an update on **Skillnet Ireland's role in supporting digital and AI workforce development**, outlining the scale, impact and future direction of Skillnet supports for enterprises. The presentation highlighted Skillnet Ireland's enterprise-led model, delivered through 70 sectoral and regional business networks, and its central role in building competitiveness, productivity and innovation through upskilling and reskilling.

The update demonstrated strong and growing demand for digital and AI skills, particularly among SMEs, while also highlighting persistent barriers to AI adoption, including skills gaps and concerns relating to cost and regulation. The presenters outlined Skillnet Ireland's existing programmes, new measures announced under Budget 2026, and the development of a National AI Upskilling Initiative to support enterprises at different stages of AI readiness and adoption.

## **7. AOB**

Further to a question raised regarding a dedicated support under the European Innovation Council (EIC) funding - Enterprise Ireland said they are looking into this matter.

AI & Digital Programmes Unit

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

15 June 2026