



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

Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum

15 October 2025

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
John Clancy (Google)
Barry O'Brien (IBM)
Martina Fitzgerald (Scale Ireland)
Mike Conroy (ITAG and EDIH Network)
Kieran McCorry (Microsoft Ireland)
Dualta Ó Broin (Meta)
Kathryn O'Donovan (Google)
Erik O'Donovan (IBEC)
Victor Timon (Digital Business Ireland)
Eoin Costello (Dargan Institute clg, Dun Laoghaire)

EDAF Members (Online)

Terri O'Donovan (J&J)
Orla O'Keeffe (Failte Ireland)
Niamh O'Donnellan (Stripe)

Officials (In-person)

Wendy Gray (DETE)
Valerie Rousselin (DETE)
Kathrina Flynn (DETE)
Michelle Kiernan (DETE)
Michelle Kearney (DETE)
Eimear Friel (DFA)
Catherine Howard (IDA)
Ruairi O' hAilin (EI)
Daire Traynor (NSAI)
Claire Hayes Curtin (D/Taoiseach)
James Farrell (IDA)
Chaira Mizzoni (D/Justice)
Anna Mulligan (D/Justice)
Clare Heenan (D/Justice)
David McGill (D/Justice)

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1. Welcome and Introduction

Minister Smyth welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Minister provided updates since the last EDAF meeting in June. This included her attendance at the G20 Digital Economy Ministerial meeting and AI Task Force Ministerial Meeting at the end of September; the announcement of funding to establish the National AI Office in Budget 2026 and her upcoming attendance at the D9+ Ministerial meeting.

On the simplification of the EU Digital Rulebook, the Minister thanked members for their input in the non-paper and confirmed it had been submitted to the EU Commission. The paper will be made available on the DETE website. Ireland is calling for an ambitious digital simplification package, which supports the EU's strategic positioning as the location of choice for trustworthy digital innovation. Ireland will continue to work closely with the European Institutions in delivering on the wider simplification agenda, particularly in the context of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU next year.

Minister Smyth informed the EDAF members that Ireland's Digital and AI Summit will be taking place during the presidency on 14 October 2026.

2. Follow up on EDAF Ways of Working – Valerie Rousselin, DETE

(a) Collaborative platform set up

DETE is creating a collaborative platform which will be hosted by DETE. Sub-group leads and participants

DETE shared an overview of the thinking agreed on with EDAF members around an updated work programme and more agile ways of working. An overview of the sub-groups was shared, which included the leads and participants who expressed interest:

- *Sub-group 1 – Driving Digitalisation and AI adoption – awareness campaigns and guidelines for adoption* - chair: DETE
- *Sub-group 2 – Driving Digitalisation and adoption - Increasing attractiveness and conversion rates of existing Digital support programmes* –chairs: Enterprise Ireland and Failte Ireland.
- *Sub-group 3 – Leveraging EDIHs*

Segmented approach to technological and AI adoption focussing on specific sectors – chair: EDIH Data2Sustain.

- *Sub-group 4 – Digital inclusions, Digital Skills, Digitalisation of public sector and cybersecurity* – chair : Ibec.
- *Sub-group 5 – Future Trends* – chair: DETE.

EDAF members were asked if there were any other members who wished to join the subgroups.

Terri O'Donovan (Johnson & Johnson), Kieran McCorry (Microsoft) and Martina Fitzgerald (Scale Ireland) joined Group 4. It was agreed that a public sector representative would be required for Group 4.

Martina Fitzgerald (Scale Ireland) also joined Group 5.

(b) Next steps – Wendy Gray, DETE

The subgroups are expected to have met at least once before the next EDAF meeting in December to agree on their scope and their focus and commence the work. The EDAF plenary will review and agree on suggestions and recommendations brought forward by the subgroups.

Any work advanced in a subgroup will be aligned with the EDAF work programme and reviewed by all EDAF members for final signoff in the EDAF plenary meeting.

3. Update of National Digital and AI Strategy – Wendy Gray, DETE

DETE shared the results of the targeted stakeholder engagement. Here is an overview of the submissions:

- **Skills & Talent** – 90% of submissions; a priority for the majority
- **Literacy & Awareness** – at all levels, national campaign
- **Inclusive**, ethical, human rights-based approach
- **Cybersecurity**, safety & link to **public trust**, and digital adoption
- **Digital Infrastructure** (broadband, 5G, data centres, cloud, compute; sustainability)
- **Business & Innovation** ecosystem: Supports for SMEs, start-ups, indigenous innovation; calls for grants, tax incentives
- **Regulation** – clear, proportionate, agile; streamlined, coordinated approach; supports for compliance, ambitious sandbox approach
- **Digital Public Services** – lead by example; inclusive, accessible

- **Governance** – increased coordination, strong KPI-based and transparent implementation and reporting

DETE provided an overview on the drafting of the enterprise pillar of the strategy. It was also noted that the draft is yet to be submitted to Cabinet and any actions are subject to government approval.

The prioritised strategic aims for the enterprise sector will be the following;

1. We will make Ireland the location of choice for ethical AI and Digital Startups and scale-ups and a global hub for applied AI Innovation, building on sectors of strength.
2. We will boost productivity and competitiveness of Irish enterprise by fast tracking adoption of digital and AI tools.
3. Ireland will be a strong voice in Europe advocating for well-designed digital regulation which supports EU competitiveness.

Ireland will position itself as the best location for development of responsible AI. An important resource of AI entrepreneurs will be the new AI Office of Ireland, which will act as the focal point for responsible AI innovation.

In terms of our startups and scaling internationalising agenda, Ireland's strategic approach will be to foster innovation in the development of applied AI solutions, building on sectors of strength for Ireland, which have high growth potential, including in;

- Emerging technologies such as cyber, data, technology services, deeptech, enterprise tech, talent tech,
- fintech, including regtech, Insurtech and payments,
- agritech,
- health, wellness and performance including digital health, food and nutrition,
- smart cities,
- high-tech construction and manufacturing.

Enterprise Ireland will lead the approach for seizing the opportunities in these sectors.

In relation to FDI, IDA Ireland's new five-year strategy identifies digitalisation and AI as one of four strategic growth-drivers for foreign direct investment into Ireland. IDA aims for Ireland to be a leading location for smart, sustainable manufacturing and intelligent, digitalised services.

The Charter for Digital Inclusion will be promoted. The Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment will showcase best practice examples of digital inclusion by

businesses and maximise the opportunity for collaboration and partnerships, at national and local levels. This will help Irish businesses to make new connections, access larger companies' expertise, and build their own digital capability.

Feedback from the EDAF members included:

- ✓ The inclusion of targets for each sector and pillar will be important
- ✓ Access to funding should be a strong focus of the strategy
- ✓ Updates on the incentives and how they deliver on targets will be important
- ✓ Emphasis on Ireland as a voice in Europe is welcome and very important
- ✓ Importance for the strategy to capture the huge opportunity AI brings to society and business (the single thing to deliver this will be adoption of AI)
- ✓ A new way to reach Micro Businesses is required
- ✓ Importance to leverage the National Training Fund for upskilling and reskilling/need to do more on training of employees
- ✓ Alignment between third level and sectors
- ✓ A need to look at tax incentives

The Department of Taoiseach confirmed the aim is that the Strategy will be published by the end of the year.

The Minister suggested that an update from officials on the skills agenda and the NTF would be helpful for the next EDAF meeting.

4. Update on National Cyber Security Strategy – David McGill, DoJ

DoJ provide an update on the National Cyber Security Strategy. It is a very different context now compared to the previous Strategy. The Strategy will focus on three Pillars: Secure, Build and Engage. The next step is public consultation. The Strategy is due to be published by the end of the year.

EDAF Members shared initial views on the update of the Strategy, including asking about the Possibility of the remit of the NCSC being extended

and emphasising the need for supports to SMEs on the Cyber Security front.

5. Update on plans for the AI Office of Ireland – Michelle Kearney, DETE

DETE outlined that work is continuing on the establishment of the AI Office of Ireland, as the central coordination body for the AI Act. The Office will be set up and running by 2 August 2026.

The four key pillars of the AI Office will be:

- 1) Provide governance and oversight of the implementation for the AI Act,

- 2) Act as a Single Point of Contact for the AI Act,
- 3) Host access to technical pool of expertise for the Competent Authorities, and
- 4) Ensure the establishment of a national Regulatory Sandbox

EDAF Members shared their initial views on the plans:

- ✓ Welcomed the budget announcement
- ✓ Noted the need for more staff resources and more funding to progress the plan
- ✓ Policy advice is required much quicker so will there be a panel of expertise set up?
- ✓ The need for an SME focus.

Voiced concerns that the AI Act is not fit for purpose by the deadline of August 2026.
Other comments related to;

- ✓ More clarity is required in relation to the guidance for High Risk.
- ✓ Simplification is required.
- ✓ How can EDAF support this work?
- ✓ The positioning of the Office long term.

Minister Smyth proposed that an update on progress of the plans for the AI Office of Ireland be a standing item on the EDAF agenda for future meetings.

6. AOB

Scale Ireland mentioned that their report on skills needs will be published this Friday 17 October.

Scale Ireland enquired if there will be a strong showcasing of indigenous start ups at next year's Digital and AI Summit. They also asked for support in relation to EIC Funding. DETE will engage with colleagues on this and advised that EI should be also contacted on this.

Eoin Costello informed that he is giving a talk during the UK AI week. He enquired if EDAF will be able to feed into the organisation of the Digital and AI Summit.

The Minister confirmed that the next EDAF meeting will include updates on the National Training Fund, the AI Office, plans for the Digital & AI Summit Oct 2026, as well as on the progress made by the EDAF subgroups.

AI & Digital Regulation Unit

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

30 October 2025