



Annual Conference 2017

**‘Micro Enterprise: A Key to Rural Employment -  
Outlining pathways to Europe’**

Conference will be opened by

**Denis Naughten, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment**

**Speakers on the Day Include;**

**Patricia Callan**, Small Firms Association

**Dr. Michael Brougham**, Enterprise Ireland

**Michael Kenny**, NUIM

**Harald Felzen**, Sparkassen, SBFIC

**Christine Charlton**, Westmeath Enterprise Board

**Ann Marie Walsh**, The Tipperary Kitchen

**Friday 5th May**

**The Sheraton Hotel**

Athlone

**Co. Westmeath**

\*\*\*\*\*

The conference; “Micro Enterprise: A Key to Rural Employment – Outlining Pathways to Europe” will allow participants to reflect on the many issues facing rural microenterprises and the effect of Brexit on export opportunities.

The conference will look at how micro enterprise and rural entrepreneurs are responding to these issues and explore supports available in order to create a pathway to the EU Single Market.

Irish Rural Link will be promoting a new programme - MICRO, to promote growth and employment in rural areas by leveraging under utilised EU opportunities and promoting participation to EU single market by Microenterprises. The idea behind MICRO is to develop and deploy Open Educational Resources (open and widely available training content and modules) targeted at micro and craft type enterprises in rural areas to foster their chances of growth and access to the EU single market and EU opportunities to ultimately enhance their competitiveness.

IRL’s target group include microenterprises and micro entrepreneurs in rural areas, who wish to explore / develop strategies for their entry to the single EU market.

So whether there is a need to influence policy makers to remember rural enterprises or simply to get advice, Irish Rural Link will be delighted to welcome all comers to the event

**Conference starts at 9.00am – 2.30pm Including IRL AGM & Lunch**

**Tel. 090 6482744: Email: [maria@irishrurallink.ie](mailto:maria@irishrurallink.ie)**

## Schedule for Irish Rural Link Annual Conference

Event will be Chaired by Seamus Boland, CEO of IRL

<b>Date</b>	Friday, 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
<b>Time</b>	9.00am – 2.30pm
<b>Location</b>	Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
<b>AGENDA</b>	
9.00am-9.30am	Registration Teas/Coffees
9.30am – 9.40am	Welcome by Chair and Introduction to Minister Denis Naughten
9.40am – 10.00am	Opening of Conference by Minister Denis Naughten – Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment
10.00 - 10.15am	Patricia Callan – Small Firms Association – “Next Generation Business - A Vision for Small Firms in Ireland”. This will look at stats on small business in Ireland, economic overview, the vision SFA have for small firms, and what Government/Business/Communities need to do to achieve that. Also some practical tips on preparing for Brexit.
10.15am-10.30am	Michael Broughman – Enterprise Ireland – Services we provide to enterprises and start up’s with an export dimension
10.30am-10.45am	Michael Kenny – MICRO Project
Tea/Coffee Break	
11.00am – 11.15am	Harald Felzen– Sparkassen SBFIC (Germany) – Local Banking & the case for Irish SME’s - How SMS’s and local communities Benefit, How this would <i>Fit</i> in Ireland
11.15am – 11.30	Christine Charlton – Westmeath LEO – Services and Supports available
11.30am – 11.45am	Ann Marie Walsh – The Tipperary Kitchen – Example of Micro Enterprise, personal experience of setting up business – supports available, accessed
11.45am-1.00pm	Plenary Session and Q&A
1pm	IRL AGM, followed by Lunch
Conference Ends at 2.30pm	

**\*\*\*Places must be booked by Tel: 090 6482744 or email [maria@irishrurallink.ie](mailto:maria@irishrurallink.ie)**

There will be a number of exhibit stands on the day featuring Micro enterprises from around the country. If you are a micro enterprise and would like to avail of a stand (limited) please call Maria 090 6482744. For more information: [www.irishrurallink.ie](http://www.irishrurallink.ie)