**NEW REPORT FOCUSES ON TRAINING NEEDS OF RURAL MICRO-ENTERPRISES**

Irish Rural Link

29th June 2017

This Report was compiled by Maynooth University (NUIM) as part of an Erasmus+ project called MICRO, coordinated by Irish Rural Link (IRL). MICRO brings together experienced partners from six countries (Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia and Spain), with extensive experience in EU-funded projects.

“Rural Micro and Craft Enterprise Entrepreneurs: Sustaining Rural Europe” is the MICRO Project Composite Report that consolidates the findings of primary and secondary research that participating partners carried out to assess the training needs and preferences of micro-enterprises located in rural areas. The report is available at http://www.microsmetraining.eu/pdf/MICRO\_European\_Comparative\_Report.pdf

The MICRO project (Enhancing Competitiveness of micro-enterprises in Rural Areas) will develop training tailored to the needs of micro-enterprises in rural areas. The training will then be made available for free access in five languages on the dedicated Open Educational Resource: http://www.microsmetraining.eu/

This project composite report draws on a range of European literature, which confirms the status of micro-enterprises all over Europe as the backbone of employment and sustainable development outside of the public sector and as key actors that ensure economic growth, innovation, job creation and social integration in the EU.

The report verifies IRL’s first-hand experience that the rural dimension of micro-entrepreneurs is seldom taken into account when designing training programmes. In particular the report highlights geographical remoteness as an isolating and cost factor that limits uptake of training opportunities often coupled with inadequate broadband connectivity which magnifies the problem.

The research also identifies training topics that are priorities for rural micro-entrepreneurs. These include the area of ICT Literacy where IRL is already very active through its “Getting Citizens Online” and “IT Skills for Farmers” courses. The report findings underpin the preparation of rural micro-entrepreneur focused open access training that will be piloted by the MICRO project partners during 2017-18.

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For further information, please contact (anytime):

Seamus Boland (Chief Executive) 0862491153 or Louise Lennon (Policy and Communications Officer) 0861069244

About Irish Rural Link:

Irish Rural Link represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of over 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level.

About Michael Kenny and NUIM

Michael Kenny, Lecturer, Department of Adult & Community Education, Maynooth University (Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad) [**Click here**](http://www.nuim.ie/adult-and-community-education). Established in 1975, Maynooth university Department of Adult & Community Education is an academic department that specialises in adult learning in Ireland and is at the forefront of teaching, research and development. Michael Kenny is a board member of Irish Rural Link and is a specialist in learning for rural development.