

# Land **and** expand

A place to grow and scale  
your business internationally?  
You'll be in extraordinary  
company in Ireland.

# Time to Scale

Every company needs to expand to new markets eventually and the EU with a population of 449 million and GDP of €15.8 trillion (Eurostat, 2022), is a significant opportunity. For example, public software businesses earn up to 40% of their global revenues from Europe. To serve such a significant group of customers effectively, a direct presence on the continent is essential. So, the question is: where?

**We believe Ireland is that place.**

Ireland is:



**English-speaking,  
highly skilled, and multicultural**



**Young**  
(one-third of our population are under 25)



**Well educated**  
(62.7%- Eurostat, Population by educational attainment level, sex, age and citizenship, April 2024)



**Located in Europe  
and a member of the EU**



**A consistent, open  
and progressive tax regime.**

Analysis by Frontline Ventures found Ireland is one of the top three locations for companies making their first landing into Europe, and 86% of startups choose Ireland or the UK as their preferred first landing location – and with the UK’s departure from the EU following Brexit, Ireland is now the leading English-speaking EU member state.

## Ireland’s advantages

Ireland is the ideal destination in Europe for sales growth, as a location for customer operations, world-class manufacturing, or R&D. We’re ranked 1st in the world for business incentives (IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2023).

Despite global challenges, our economy ranked first in the world for economic performance in 2023 (IMD).

Our business-friendly environment is easy to navigate, with attractive incentives for activities like R&D.

We have a deep, skilled talent pool, ranked first in the world for labour productivity (OECD 2022).

We’ve always been renowned for our open, welcoming culture. Today, Ireland is a multicultural and diverse society, attractive for key hires who are relocating from other countries.

Competitive living costs mean you can live well for less money in Irish cities than in other hubs like San Francisco, New York, or London (Mercer 2023 and Livingcost.org).

Ireland has the 7th highest quality of life globally (UN Human Development Index).

## Be part of something bigger

We’ve been welcoming international businesses to Ireland for more than 75 years, and many have remained here for decades – expanding their operations during that time. By coming to Ireland, you’re joining a community of more than 1,800 companies that have made the journey.

## About this playbook

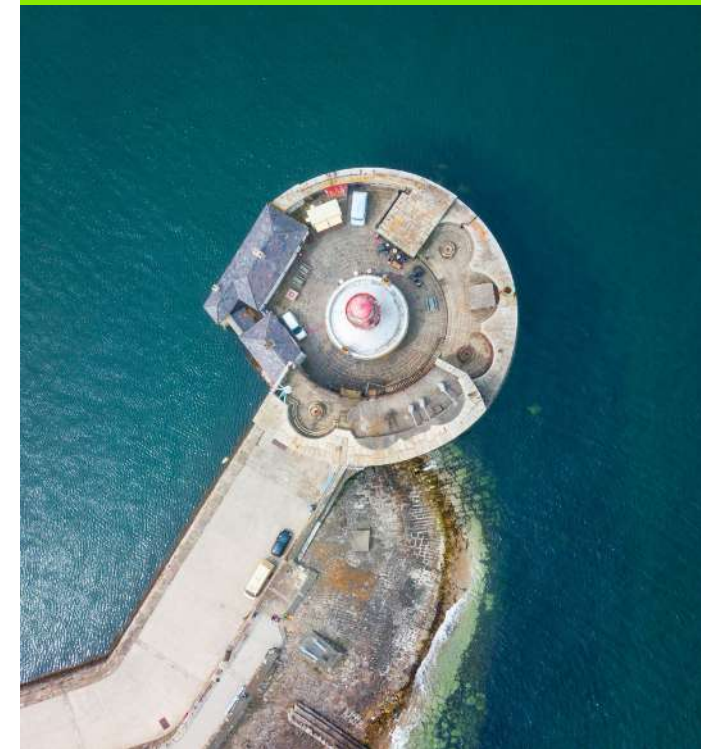
IDA Ireland developed this playbook to help established companies, early-stage start-ups, and entrepreneurs to navigate what, for them, may be uncharted territory. It gives practical advice to speed up the process of setting up.

With over 75 years of experience in partnering with corporations and start-ups, IDA Ireland has a unique perspective on what it takes to land and expand as many have done before; to set up and succeed beyond your home market.

This guide also includes the experiences of some companies that have already taken this step, with first-hand case studies. We’re happy to share this knowledge with you, and we hope you find it useful.

**“For companies targeting Mid-Market and SMB customers, Dublin has a deep talent pool with experience scaling inbound sales teams to cover most of Europe from a single location.”**

Frontline Ventures  
European Expansion Report



# eSentire

**Canadian-headquartered eSentire, a leading global cybersecurity solutions company, is an example of the 'land and expand' principle in action for multinationals that set up in Ireland.**

Having come to Ireland in 2015, the Cork City operation of eSentire has since proved its value and continues to take on more responsibilities. The company initially established a Security Operations Centre (SOC), employing a team of highly-trained cybersecurity analysts.

At the start, the Cork operation dovetailed closely with the Canadian headquarters which had been operating 24 hours a day. Over time, as the Irish team proved its value, it took on more responsibility, reducing the burden on the Canadian team by taking over the overnight shift. The Cork SOC has also been able to operate from 1pm to 9pm, which is simultaneous with Canada's 8am to 4pm shift, providing significant support to the day shift, and in turn eSentire's customers.



**“There’s a global shortage of cybersecurity professionals... We’ve been able to hire very high-quality talent in Cork.”**

Ciaran Luttrell,  
Site Lead and Senior Director, eSentire Cork

“One of the challenges with security operations, being a 24/7 environment, is staffing those unfavourable shifts. It just made natural sense to take advantage of the time zone difference,” says Ciaran Luttrell, Site Lead and Senior Director of the Cork Centre. “They wouldn’t have been able to retire the Canadian night shift without Ireland.”

More recently, the Irish operation added a unit that carries out threat intelligence and tactical threat research on behalf of its clients. It also expanded its support centre team that monitors and manages the IT infrastructure that underpins eSentire’s security services. And as international sales grew, eSentire added go-to-market teams, with customer success and onboarding roles, in Cork and throughout Europe.

“We’ve really expanded beyond just core security operations into other roles that feed into our service delivery, many of them are customer facing, so we’re very much a service delivery Centre of Excellence now,” adds Luttrell. eSentire’s Cork operation employs 52 people in Ireland, which is a significant percentage of the company’s total global workforce and it continues to hire highly skilled cybersecurity personnel.

Being able to attract good talent was key to this achievement and Ireland is well set up to help overcome this challenge. “There’s a global shortage of cybersecurity professionals, it’s well documented that it’s very hard to hire and retain cybersecurity professionals. We’ve been able to hire very high-quality talent, who are doing a great job. There’s a very strong work ethic and culture here,” he says.

Luttrell also praises the third-level education institutes which have industry-focused courses that produce the skills the company needs. “eSentire has several very, very strong partnerships, and I emphasise the word ‘partnership’. A good example is Munster Technological University: they have what I would describe as the leading programme in cybersecurity in Ireland, hands down,” he says. Not only are graduates a source of talent for eSentire, the company also runs an internship programme with the university to train students in becoming SOC analysts and a bursary programme to support students at the undergraduate level.

Close links between industry and external partners are a feature of the landscape in Cork. IDA Ireland organises itineraries that showcase the venue to companies that are considering where to set up. Luttrell, who was the company’s first recruit in Ireland to manage the SOC, saw this collaborative approach first-hand. These short trips give a flavour of what Ireland has to offer. Meetings are organised with other businesses in the same sector that have already established operations in Ireland, and with educational institutions.

“People know each other, they’re very happy to help out and contribute and share information. And that’s not always the case in other areas that you might go to,” he says.

Having been first on the ground with eSentire back in 2015, Luttrell is well placed to give advice to companies thinking about setting up in Ireland for the first time. He says it’s vital to have a long-term plan in place to retain key staff. As people rise through the ranks, career planning is vital or else a company risks losing valuable staff.

“You can get caught up in the honeymoon period and getting it all running. The first year flies; you need to also think about years two, three, and four, particularly in the cybersecurity sector. Retaining talent is just something you need to be mindful of all the time.”



# Decision Time

Investing in a new country is never easy. Success needs the right foundations for growth and every detail's important. With so many crucial early decisions ahead, our goal is to make them as simple and straightforward as possible.

## Evaluating how to expand

As your company looks outside of your home country, there's a lot of information needed to benchmark potential locations for your business. IDA Ireland's network of offices around the world has relationship managers focused on helping companies with their international plans. Whether you're thinking about expanding in the short, medium or long term, they're a key resource to connect with.



## Key questions



What markets do you want to be in?



When and how will you serve them?



Which locations are you expanding into?



How big is your Irish operation likely to be?



What functions do you plan to carry out here?



How large is your anticipated headcount?



How fast will you need to scale?



How will you identify someone to lead the Irish operation?



What is it like to do business in Ireland?

## Boots on the ground

There's a wide variety of technical, managerial and multilingual talent readily available, which will allow you to scale a team in Ireland. How you do it and your earliest hires will depend on your company's stage of growth.



### Public or pre-IPO

Head of Europe/country manager in charge of local strategy



### Customer acquisition mode

VP of sales



### Engineering-focused

Landing team (e.g. a manager seconded from HQ with experienced technical staff for rapid scaling)

## Liaising with local service providers

As a small, highly globalised economy, Ireland has a well-established path for building European operations. There are many legal, finance and recruitment service providers in Ireland, experienced in meeting multinationals' needs. As part of IDA Ireland's concierge service, we're happy to make introductions to these service providers for you. Like all of our services, this is available free of charge.

## Access to talent

How do you plan to recruit? Ireland doesn't just have a skilled domestic labour force: as an EU member, we benefit from access to a visa-free labour market of close to 220 million people from across the continent (World Bank, 2022). There's more about recruitment in the 'human resources' section.

# Vanta

**Some companies are well established before expanding internationally; others are on an accelerated timetable to capture a fast-growing market. That was true of Vanta, a cybersecurity and compliance startup founded in 2018 in response to rising numbers of high-profile data breaches.**

Paulo Rodriguez, the Dublin-based Head of International at Vanta, believes rapidly scaling companies building their international presence should pitch not only their specific business, but on how the broader ecosystem nurtures talent and gives people valuable opportunities to develop their careers. This environment is exactly what Ireland offers, he says.

“You need to look at it from a very long-term perspective. You have companies like Google or Meta or Salesforce that hire really early in people’s careers, and they grow them. But to progress in a company like that is more complicated than for you to progress in a startup. So having companies like ours coming into the market allows other professionals that may want to fast-track their career to jump into these opportunities, and I think that is really important. I’ve been there: I worked for Google for years, I worked at Dropbox for years. I think it generates a much better ecosystem. Each company makes a certain type of contribution to that ecosystem. And I think it works really well.”

“Some people like the creativity and the challenge of the unknown and of building things, and some people like running things. The type of people that we’re looking for are builders ... We give you exposure to something that is untapped and say ‘go and figure it out’. Having the ecosystem, which exists in Ireland, to cater for multiple different aptitudes that people have, is incredible because people find their own paths.”

Another asset in Ireland’s favour is the availability of talent that specifically helps scaling companies to set up a sales and support hub to serve multiple regions from one place. “We have a talent pool that allows us to serve a large population in a very effective way, both with language and specialisation skills like sales or customer success.”

**“English is the native language so if it’s a US or international company, it makes everything incredibly easy. If you try to engage with the public sector in other countries, it may be a barrier, but in Ireland it’s not.”**

Paulo Rodriguez,  
Head of International, Vanta



Already well established in Ireland from his earlier career, Rodriguez made a strong case to Vanta HQ that Dublin should be the location for its international headquarters, above other possible destinations. “English is the native language so if it’s a US or international company, it makes everything incredibly easy. If you try to engage with the public sector in other countries, it may be a barrier, but in Ireland it’s not.”

Ireland’s culture and its open, progressive society also count in its favour, as he has found it an easy place to integrate and to network. Rodriguez points to the large proportion of the population that was born outside Ireland – one in five people, according to the latest census.

Vanta came to Ireland in 2022, and today it employs close to 30 people with anticipated growth in the coming year.

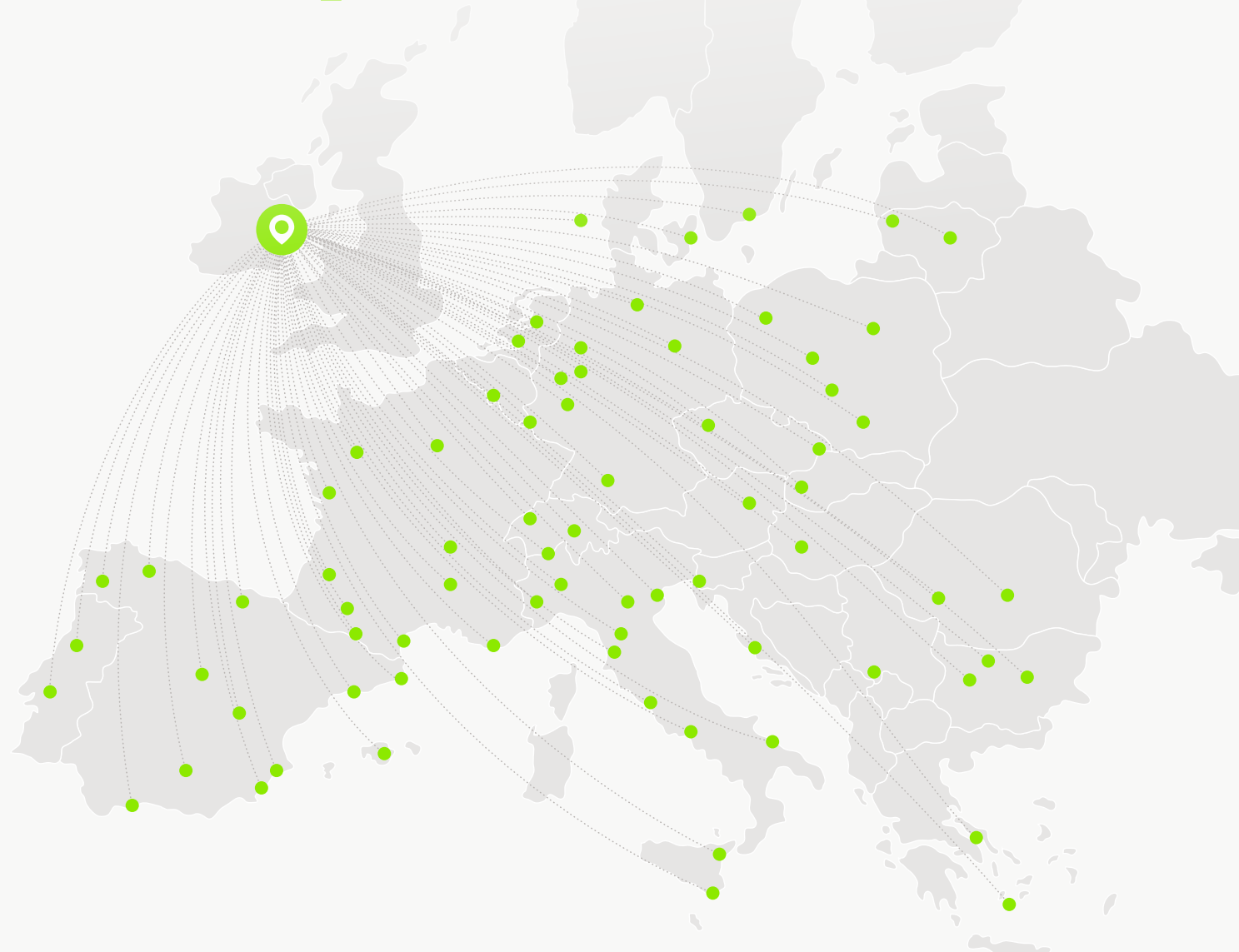
Having already worked in Ireland for years at various technology companies, Rodriguez was also able to avail of his personal network in identifying potential recruits, and as a sounding board for advice. Other companies prefer to send a senior executive from HQ to oversee the early stages.

“What I really like about the model of having a local site lead is that they have connections, so you have people with a strong support network to get stuff done,” Rodriguez says. “For somebody that does not have that network, that’s where the IDA adds incredible value – they will save you so much complexity. You can go to the source, sometimes even bounce ideas off. They’ve been there. And that is really helpful.”

Vanta also appreciated the help of IDA Ireland during the early stages of setting up, when the company had challenges with the US-based payroll company it had been using. “IDA Ireland put us in touch with three vendors and we got the problem solved within two days. If you’re in a pickle, they pull the rabbit out of the hat,” says Rodriguez.

# Ireland in Europe

**Ireland has been a committed European Union member for more than 50 years. In 2023, we exported more than €197 billion worth of goods, with a diversified export base, a wide range of products and market destinations. Ireland's contribution to the EU budget lets us avail of funding for projects ranging from building infrastructure, supporting Irish agriculture, supporting researchers, and protecting the environment.**



Free movement of European Union citizens under EU membership means it's easy for other EU nationals to live and work in Ireland. There are more than 631,700 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland – just over 18% of the country's population – with 495,100 of them in the labour force. Ireland also benefits from the Common Travel Area arrangement with the UK, which gives Irish and UK citizens the right to live, work, travel and study throughout the area. This arrangement remains in place after Brexit.

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Ireland is located on the western edge of continental Europe. With frequent daily flights from Ireland, most major European capitals are easily reachable within two hours. We're ideally placed between the United States and continental Europe. We're five hours ahead of the east coast of the US, eight hours ahead of the west coast, and one hour behind central European time. Ireland is the only location in Europe that has US preclearance at Dublin and Shannon airports. This allows you to clear immigration and customs before flying to the United States.

Many of the world's leading businesses have chosen Ireland as an attractive location for easily accessing the EU Single Market at lower cost. A base in Ireland offers the opportunity to access the European Single Market, offering lower costs and unfettered access to 27 other member states with a total EU population of almost 449 million people thanks to the absence of customs, tariffs and borders and the positive advantages of free movement of people and products as well as increasing regulatory alignment. Of those 27 member states, 20 member states have adopted the euro as their currency, leading to increased transparency and the absence of foreign exchange-related costs for Irish-based firms when selling to other eurozone countries.





**“When recruiting, I work with teams across all of our locations and I think it’s much easier to find high-quality candidates that are a good fit for our culture in Dublin than many of our other locations.”**

Jon Ross,  
VP of Product, Messaging, Zendesk

# Zendesk

**Zendesk has been in Ireland for more than a decade, and during that time, its Dublin base has grown to become a strategic engineering hub for the software-as-a-service company**

It might seem counterintuitive for a software business to locate a significant business unit in a place that already has a concentration of tech companies, but Zendesk doesn’t see it that way. In fact, the presence of so many established multinationals was a big part of the attraction for setting up in Ireland. Although the Danish-American software company already had a foothold in the EMEA market through a sales and support office in London, the concentration of skilled technical talent in Dublin helped to sway the argument for locating a key engineering team there.

“Dublin is such a hub for big tech companies that you might think ‘if we come to Dublin, we’re going to be competing with all of them, we won’t be able to get good staff’. But I think the opposite is true. Because we’ve got such a base of well recognised brands in Dublin, that actually brings qualified people from all over Europe here,” says Jon Ross, Zendesk’s VP of Product, Messaging.

“Speaking for myself, when recruiting, I work with teams across all of our locations and I think it’s much easier to find high-quality candidates that are a good fit for our culture in Dublin than many of our other locations.”

Within two years of setting up in Dublin, Zendesk’s team had grown to more than 50 employees, supporting global development across various products in Zendesk’s suite. The Irish office would ultimately become the company’s EMEA headquarters. Today, the Dublin office has a broad remit, spanning engineering, DevOps, infrastructure, product management and mobile development, along with various non-technical roles such as sales, customer success, finance, and legal.

“It was always going to be a site that would cover everything,” says Neil Weldon, VP of Product Management, who was one of the company’s earliest hires in Ireland.

Being an English-speaking country in Europe also made Ireland attractive to Zendesk, as was its established presence as a magnet for software engineering talent. The latter factor has had an unintended benefit in forging a strong culture in the Irish office. With a mostly young workforce – the average age of its product development group is the mid-to-high 20s – there’s a strong social aspect to life at Zendesk. That’s especially true of people who have come to Ireland from different countries, and who naturally form strong bonds with each other.

Another point in Ireland’s favour is its geographical location. Executives based in Dublin can travel easy and hassle-free on direct flights to the US West Coast, where Zendesk has its headquarters. Ireland’s also well connected by air to Europe and the rest of the world.

Key to the success and continued ramp-up of the Irish operation is having a high degree of autonomy and responsibility, Weldon believes. Some international companies keep key decision making at head office, which can lead to slower progress at satellite offices or regional hubs. He points out that Zendesk deliberately located key product functions together in Ireland. This reduced the time spent waiting for contact from colleagues or managers in other time zones, and enabled faster decision making.

Ireland is not the lowest-cost location for international investors but Weldon says Zendesk’s Irish operation strikes a good balance thanks to high productivity levels, which the company tracks between its global offices. In 2017, Zendesk announced a further 300 roles in Ireland. To accommodate the growth, the following year it announced plans for a larger €10 million purpose-built office on the banks of Dublin’s Grand Canal. Today, close to 10 per cent of Zendesk’s entire global workforce is based from its Irish operation, which employs more than 450 people.

# Legal

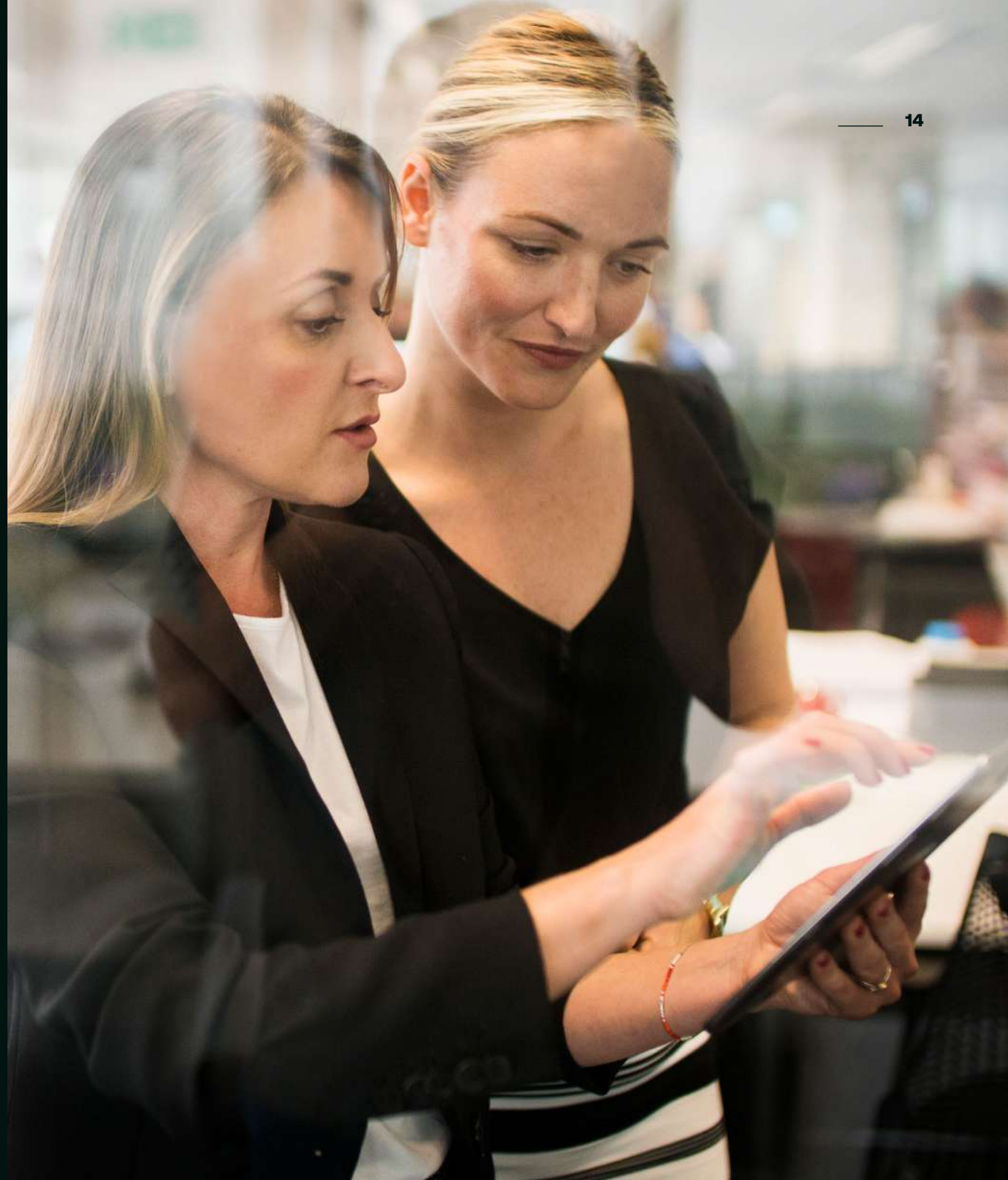
Ireland's strong legal and regulatory landscape makes it an attractive and stable place to do business. Our legal system is based on common law, and as an EU member, we also implement regulations and laws made at European Union level.

## Setting up a company in Ireland

Incorporating a company in Ireland is straightforward, fast, and inexpensive. The Companies Registration Office handles incorporation applications and this is fully online.

There are three main vehicles for setting up a company as a multinational.

- A private company limited by shares (LTD)
- Unlimited liability company
- A public limited company (PLC)



Most multinationals prefer option 1 because of the limited liability for shareholders and the low compliance burden compared to the PLC. Option 2 offers privacy and flexibility for corporate governance and compliance but in theory, this vehicle exposes shareholders to unlimited liability in the event of insolvent liquidation. Option 3 allows shares to be traded on a public market and they can be useful for inversion transactions.

It takes less than 10 business days to set up a company in Ireland from when you submit your CRO application. To do this, you need to have decided on a company name, shareholders, and officers, so the formation agent can draw up the paperwork to sign. If the client doesn't have an EEA resident to act as director, they can take out a S381 insurance bond which will add another week. Typically, it can take about four weeks from a complete application to having a CRO number.

If you're on an urgent deadline, you can speed up the process through buying an 'off the shelf' company or using formation agents as first directors. Getting a corporate and payroll tax number takes a further two weeks, as that application can only start when you have a CRO number. If you need a VAT number, this can take up to eight weeks post-incorporation.

You also need a CRO number to open a corporate bank account in Ireland. At IDA Ireland, we're happy to introduce you to our connections at the major domestic banks to start the process.

## Contract law in Ireland

Contracts in Ireland fall under the common law system, which is similar, though not identical, to the US judicial system. The Irish legal system is transparent and gives due recognition to the importance of contracts. As a member of the European Union, Ireland is bound by EU law; decisions made by the Court of Justice of the European Union are applicable and enforceable in Ireland.

## Privacy and data protection

Since May 25, 2018, the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has come into force. It affords increased protection and privacy to the processing of information that personally identifies EU citizens. As a harmonised European Union regulation, it applies equally in Ireland and all member states. This is an advantage to multinationals doing business across the EU from Ireland because it simplifies the regulatory oversight needed. International companies can choose a supervisory authority from one country and deal exclusively with that agency instead of regulators in each EU Member State. There are additional laws in each EU member state. In Ireland, these laws include the Data Protection Acts and other regulations. These data protection laws mean that your personal data should generally only be stored where there is a lawful basis, such as your consent, or where there is a legal obligation. Ireland's Data Protection Commission acts as the lead European regulator for many US multinational in Ireland.

## Employment law

Irish labour laws are similar to those of other European countries. Employers in Ireland have broad freedom of contract, with minimum statutory requirements around salary levels, annual leave, and working hours. See more on hiring in the following section on Human Resources.

# Diligent

**Governance software provider Diligent benefited from the ready availability of talent, language skills and ties to third-level education when it landed in Ireland in 2020.**

When Diligent announced its European hub in Galway with ambitions to hire 200 people, the timing “raised eyebrows”, admits Ruairi Conroy, VP of sales development. It was late 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic was at its height. But the challenging conditions meant that people from industries like hospitality that were especially hard-hit were available to fill roles at the company’s customer service team.

With a cleverly designed onboarding process, Diligent quickly exceeded its original hiring target by 10%, reaching 220 people. Today, the Galway site has 285 employees and has established itself as one of the company’s three core global hubs. It’s also one of the most multifunctional offices in the Diligent network, with roles ranging from 24/7 customer support and customer success, to sales, human resources, marketing, and finance.

It wasn’t just fortunate timing: when Diligent was scouting 20 potential locations in Europe to set up, Galway quickly emerged as a front runner thanks to the presence of University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University, providing industry focused third-level courses and partnering closely with employers in the region.

Diligent operates in a space that makes it attractive to graduates looking for an employer with strong values. Its software supports organisations to connect insights to drive greater impact and lead with purpose, and its ethos of giving back to the community extends to crowdsourcing ideas for charity partners with its own teams.

Ireland hasn’t just provided talent, but technology too: in 2021, Diligent acquired Accuvio, based in Limerick, whose software has since become Diligent’s core ESG product. Conroy emphasises that the product’s quality mattered most, not location. “We identified Accuvio based on the potential of the product and the company itself.”

**“It’s important to establish your own key personnel right from the beginning, and particularly a site leader who’s the de facto decision maker. That’s the difference between long-term success and short-term success leading to medium- to long-term problems.”**

Ruairi Conroy,  
VP of Sales Development, Diligent



Galway also offered the flexibility to adapt as Diligent's needs grew. It initially took 45 desks at the PorterShed, a co-working space in the city. In parallel, it identified a site at Bonham Quay that was about to start construction. The building meets the One Planet sustainability standard, which was part of the attraction for Diligent.

Conroy had already helped to set up another international tech company, SiteMinder in Galway, which gave him personal knowledge of the business community in Galway, and of the third-level system from lecturing at University of Galway. His experience proved invaluable in helping to shape Diligent's onboarding process, working with the company's New York agency to identify the right people to come into the business.

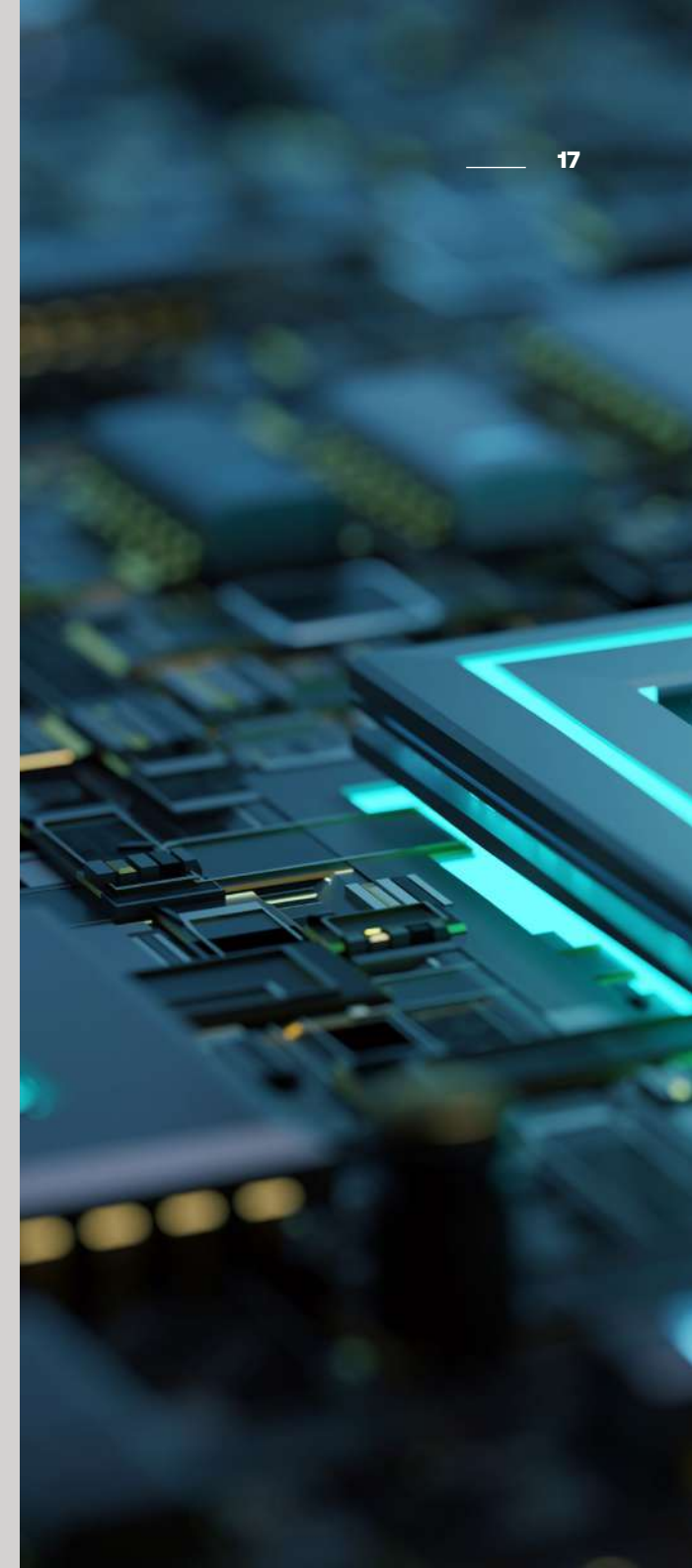
For other businesses thinking about setting up in Ireland, Conroy believes appointing local leadership gives a vital advantage. Having someone on the ground who's familiar with the territory means they can liaise directly with local service providers and also manage expectations for stakeholders at head office.

"Companies can move faster and make less mistakes if they have a local leader who can at times play mediator or ensure that things don't get lost in translation. Being able to educate around culture is such an important part... it's how business is sometimes done," he says.

"You only have one chance at a first impression. It's important to establish your own key personnel right from the beginning, and particularly a site leader who's the de facto decision maker when it comes to what happens next. That's the difference between long-term success and short-term success leading to medium- to long-term problems."

He also says IDA Ireland's close support was invaluable. He appreciates that the agency thinks about the long-term approach for companies arriving into Ireland. "In other jurisdictions that we looked at, they literally wanted you to land and sign the deal. Whereas the IDA were very powerful in thinking about the next wave of growth beyond the first 200 people, and what type of skills we might look for then."

IDA Ireland was by Diligent's side at various "sprint moments" as the company moved through jobs announcements, hiring, securing office space and the official launch. "It genuinely does feel like a partnership rather than a one-and-done, and the after-sales experience is excellent too," says Conroy.



# Human Resources

For companies at any stage of growth, access to talent is vital. Ireland offers the best of both worlds: Europe's youngest population (one-third is under 25 years of age and almost half are under 34). We've a highly educated workforce; 62.7% of 25-34-year-olds in Ireland have a third-level qualification, compared to the EU average of 43.1%. We also attract top talent from across the EU and beyond.

## Your first hires

Ireland's long-established links with US multinationals are a rich source of experienced management-level candidates who can lead a local office, giving your company a valuable head start. Ireland's business community tends to be closely networked; connections are plentiful so it's possible that a trusted contact might reach out to their network and link you to a potential candidate. In turn, that person's own network can be a useful source of identifying other potential recruits to build out your company's team.

If you're hiring someone less experienced but more entrepreneurial, they may not have such extensive contacts, and you may need to support them more closely from headquarters in the early days. IDA Ireland can provide free business mentors to these new site leads.

## Growing your team

Whether you're hiring in sales, administration or technical roles, Ireland can provide. Our young workforce is adaptable and highly educated, coming from a system that consistently ranks among the top ten countries worldwide for quality. Ireland's workforce ranks 1st in the world for its flexibility and adaptability, an advantage as global skills needs are changing quickly, (IMD Competitiveness Yearbook 2023).

It's a strong source of technology talent: In Ireland, 30% of students entering higher education for the first time study STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects. This translates to more than 20,000 STEM graduates in Ireland annually. There's also good availability of language skills in-country. An estimated 22% of employees at FDI firms in Ireland are international.

Ireland has the 6th highest international share of the workforce in Europe in 2022, rising year-on-year. Ireland's share of international workers is well above the EU average (28% vs 14%). In 2022, 751,507 people usually resident in Ireland spoke a language other than English or Irish at home, representing an increase of 23% from 612,018 in 2016. The survey data shows that for in 2022, non-Irish citizens accounted for just under half a million (495,100) persons currently classified as 'in the labour force'. This represents approximately 18.5% of the total labour force in Ireland during that period, (Migrants in the labour force in 2022 - The European Migration Network (emn.ie) & Tables - CSO - Central Statistics Office).

## Employment permits

Nationals from countries in the European Economic Area can work in Ireland without needing a work permit first. The Irish Government's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has an online work permit and visa system in place for skilled workers from outside the EU. IDA Ireland clients can waive the Labour Market Needs Test.

For companies that need to recruit talent from outside the EU, IDA Ireland works closely with the relevant Irish authorities on securing employment permits and visas. There's also a streamlined employment permit process under the [Trusted Partner Initiative](#).

## Replicating your company culture

Getting the right cultural fit is important; as a start-up company it is important to have a leader who's familiar with the start-up environment rather than someone more comfortable navigating large corporate structures.

If you plan to start hiring in significant numbers after the initial setup, you might want to build an onboarding programme that includes time spent at your HQ. This can help familiarise new hires with the company culture, build relationships, and create stronger links between both sites.

## Getting your hiring right





When planning for scaling and success over the longer term, we recommend establishing an entity and building out a team through this. It's also more cost-effective to do it this way as your team grows.

## Labour law

Under the [Organisation of Working Time Act](#), employers in Ireland have minimum statutory requirements for salary levels (see below). They also need to comply with [Gender Pay Gap legislation](#). There are statutory annual leave requirements for all workers, but not contractors. The Act protects employees and working hours. Irish law provides employees with protection in dismissals and redundancies.

In Ireland, companies should issue a formal written contract to employees within five days of starting work. This needs to cover 'core items' of the agreement, which usually includes a description of the work, duties, expected hours, salary, and annual leave.

In Ireland:

-  The maximum working week is 48 hours
-  The national minimum wage for people aged 20 or over is €12.70 per hour.
-  Employers pay a 11.05% social insurance contribution (PRSI) on employees' basic salaries
-  Annual leave is calculated based on time the employee has worked, subject to a statutory minimum of four working weeks, or 20 days, plus 10 days of public holidays



Protected leave applies in certain circumstances such as maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, adoptive or carer's leave, but pay during this time is often at the employer's discretion and varies by industry.



From 2024, the law on pensions will change and employers must provide a pension scheme in the Auto Enrolment System.

## Labour costs

Ireland's industrial wage growth has followed the EU average. Hourly labour costs in Ireland are 8th in Europe, below Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, and the Netherlands.

If your company needs to hire candidates with computer science or technology skills, consider working with education providers as a potential source of talent: many multinationals in Ireland form links with universities and third-level educational institutes. At IDA Ireland, we're happy to facilitate discussions with them on request.

# Supermetrics

**Talent and networking have combined to turn Supermetrics' Irish operation from an organic outpost to a strategic sales site to other important markets.**

What makes a European-headquartered company set up a significant strategic outpost elsewhere on the same continent?

Talent.

For Supermetrics, it was an organic process rather than a planned move after it identified Gabrielle Stafford to be its chief marketing officer. Having previously worked for US multinationals in Ireland, she was attracted by the culture at the Finnish marketing data company, but wanted to stay close to her family. Both parties found a solution by setting up a presence in Ireland in 2021 – and it paid unexpected dividends.

“As I started to build out the marketing team, I looked at my network here in Dublin and filled a couple of roles from that. At that point, the business realised how much talent there was in Dublin,” says Stafford.

Talent and networks have been recurring themes for the company ever since. Hiring in Dublin quickly picked up pace across outbound sales and marketing roles serving key markets including the UK, EMEA and Latin America.

The company soon outgrew its base at the startup accelerator Dogpatch Labs. In 2022, Supermetrics announced it would create 100 jobs in Ireland over the next two years. The rapid rise has matched the company's trajectory: it sells into 120 countries, with €60 million of recurring revenues and year-on-year profitable growth. A European success story, it's tipped to reach unicorn status.

Ireland's importance to Supermetrics has grown with over 10% of the total 400-strong employee base working from the country. Not all of them use the Dublin office as a base; however. Supermetrics' culture strongly emphasises working in teams but its flexible working policy accommodates people who prefer to work remotely.

**“As I started to build out the marketing team, I looked at my network here in Dublin and filled a couple of roles from that. At that point, the business realised how much talent there was in Dublin.”**

Gabrielle Stafford,  
CMO, Supermetrics

Another key hire in Dublin is Eoin Hallahan, Supermetrics' Director of EMEA and LATAM sales. Also a veteran of tech multinationals having worked exclusively from Dublin, he says companies setting up here can tap into a wealth of talent with similar experience of internationally focused businesses.

"Dublin is ideal for the rich pool of talent, with significant technology literacy; people who have extensive experience either selling similar solutions, or – equally importantly – selling to similar types of customers. That really accelerates our ability to identify and hire the talent, bring them into the business and get them to a point of productivity very, very quickly. You don't get that in other places."

The company has a two-week onboarding process for new hires – double the amount of time that many other companies typically allow. Stafford and Hallahan say this additional time helps employees settle in more effectively. When hiring for roles like senior sales managers and sales executives, Supermetrics has used a combination of an agency in the Netherlands together with local talent agencies to identify potential recruits, along with in-house teams.

In the past, the company identified and relocated people from other countries, but it has pivoted from this approach due to the depth of skills accessible from Ireland. "We've now come to really appreciate that, by planning some of these hires a bit more carefully, you can really spend some time identifying local talent, which doesn't necessarily need to involve expensive relocation costs and extensive visa application processes," says Hallahan.

Ireland attracts people from across Europe, bringing language and technical skills. Adds Stafford: "Dublin has a vast pool of all languages, but a vast pool of people for whom English is our first language. It's very easy to do the messaging and comms from here. In my previous role, I was responsible for marketing from Dublin, with a team of European marketers, because it was cost-effective. We could do it because we're used to American English. So for European businesses, particularly with their sights on the US market, Dublin can be a great hub from which to operate."

For years, the accepted wisdom about Ireland was that it made for a strong beachhead into the European market for companies expanding from the United States; but the same is also true in reverse. High-growth European companies looking to expand in North America will find Ireland hits all the right notes.




# Finance

Ireland has several domestically headquartered banks and local divisions of global financial institutions for setting up corporate business banking facilities. New companies typically need to complete a bank mandate that has been approved by a resolution of the company directors. The company will also need to comply with KYC and AML banking rules, and financial services firms are required by law to ensure they remain compliant. IDA Ireland can arrange introductions to help achieve a faster landing.



## Corporate tax benefits

Ireland's corporate tax rate is lower than in many other European countries, where it can be over 20%. There can be an effective zero tax rate for foreign dividends received. Ireland also has access to an extensive network of double taxation agreements. Our tax regime fully complies with OECD guidelines and EU competition law.

 12.5% applies to multinationals with global revenues of less than €750 million.


 After January 1st 2024, companies with revenues of €750 million+ pay a 15% rate.

## Tax credits, grants and IP holding


Ireland offers generous tax incentives for research and development and an excellent intellectual property regime. A tax credit of up to 30%, which is cash refundable, is available for all qualifying R&D activity. The credit is in addition to the standard tax deductibility of 12.5%. Combined, the two add up to effective relief of 42.5% of qualifying spend. You can combine this with other grant funding from Government. IDA Ireland's team of technologists and tax advisors can guide you on this.


## The Knowledge Development Box

As well as supporting a new investor's upfront spend in R&D through tax credits and grants, the Irish Government's 'Knowledge Development Box' (KDB) initiative can increase after-tax profits on any patents and qualifying IP generated from R&D activity that takes place in Ireland. If you qualify for the KDB, you could get a deduction equal to 50% of qualifying profits, giving an effective rate of 10% on qualifying profits. This is open to all companies engaged in research, development and innovation activities relating to:

 Accounting periods starting on or after 1 January 2016

 10% rate for qualifying profits


 The KDB income must flow to the same entity that undertook the R&D


 OECD Nexus Approach: benefit proportionate to the Irish company's R&D expenditure, relative to overall group R&D

 The Irish company must carry out the substantive R&D activities to qualify.

## Dividend payments

The Dividend withholding tax (DWT) rate in Ireland is 25%. Under domestic tax legislation, dividends can be paid gross (without deduction of DWT) to:

 Companies which are resident in an EU country or a treaty country, but which are not under the control, directly or indirectly, of a person or persons who are resident in Ireland.

 Companies which are not resident in Ireland and which are ultimately controlled by persons who are resident for tax purposes in an EU country or a treaty country.

 To a related 5% EU tax resident company (under the EU Parent/Subsidiary Directive).

Although a dividend may be payable with 0% withholding tax, companies need to disclose and report details of any dividends to the Irish tax authorities.

# Ecosystem

**Ireland provides a thriving hub for a wide range of companies, from household names and global heavyweights to social media giants, disruptors and hungry startups. Our scale makes collaboration easy, and we make it our business to help this networking happen.**

Staying an attractive location for cutting-edge companies means constantly keeping pace with the ever-changing technology environment. Many technology companies with operations in Ireland have centres of excellence in related areas like data analytics, cloud computing and big data. Ireland was the first country in the world to develop an industry-driven postgraduate MSc in Artificial Intelligence.

Leading companies in high growth sectors choose Ireland as a place to invest and grow.



## Pharmaceuticals

9 of the top 10 global companies



## Semiconductors and electronics

8 of the top 10 US companies



## Medtech

14 of the top 15



## Software

8 of the top 10 US names



## Financial services

22 of the top 25



## Industrial automation

9 of the top 10

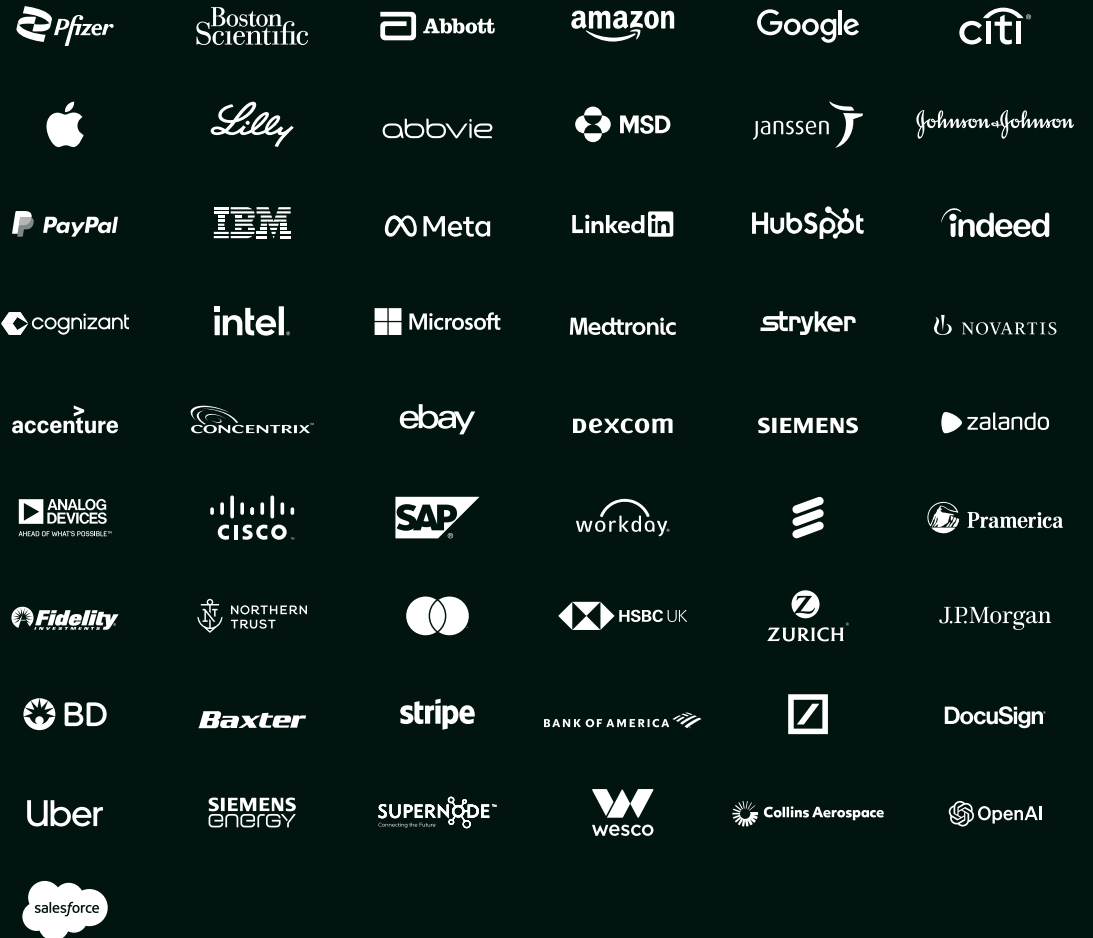


When multinationals come to Ireland, they put down deep roots and commit to the long term.

**50%** of IDA Ireland clients have been here for 10+ years

**33%** clients have been in Ireland for over 20 years

### Companies with European operations in Ireland



# With You Every Step of the Way

Making the decision to invest in a country is never easy. IDA Ireland offers full support for your company at no cost.



## Here to help

Think of us like a concierge service for your business. We'll take you where you need to go: to business parks, office space, peer companies, business clusters, recruiters, banks, or regulators.

Want to locate near similar companies or have specific skill-set requirements? We'll match your needs with the right people and location. We've got the expertise and assistance you need.

While you're researching potential locations for going global, we can help you with:



Hosted site visits to potential locations where you can set up



Tailored networking sessions: your chance to listen, learn, question and find solutions



Information gathering to guide your decision

Our entire organisation is ready to help you discover how easy it is to do business in Ireland, providing everything from concrete facts and figures to the more intangible assets of priceless connections, hard-earned expertise, and memorable experiences. Concerned about visas, schools, electricity, phones or executive accommodation? Whether you're starting with 15 or 200 people, it's our job to help you hit the ground running and settle in well.

## Hosted site visits

Visiting Ireland as part of your evaluation is a crucial step in validating your plans. We encourage you to make this trip as soon as you can, to move your plan to the next stage.

Decision makers are often already visiting Europe to meet customers, attend conferences or even on their vacation and tag on some extra days in Ireland to hear first-hand how peers have built and scaled their international teams in Ireland.

## Making connections

Our clients appreciate the support they get from IDA Ireland; some of them have shared their experiences in this playbook. We can help you bring those learnings to life by arranging meetings with companies like them.

Through these conversations, you'll gain valuable insights about investing and operating in Ireland, giving you a real feel for the experience from the people best placed to tell it like it is. By the end of the visit, your team will have a strong grasp of the opportunity waiting for you in Ireland.

## How we work

By working with IDA Ireland, you'll be allocated two client relationship managers – one in Ireland and one close to your home base – who'll support you in making effective connections and with services to make your investment in Ireland a success.

We support these managers on our global team with subject matter experts in fields like life sciences, technology, engineering and financial technology and real estate. You'll find us responsive to your needs, proactive, professional, and willing to go the extra mile. We ensure your investment journey goes smoothly and we keep working to make your Irish operation a success long into the future.

## Next steps

All of the services in this section are available to our clients pro bono, so if you're considering investing abroad, talk to us about what Ireland can do for your business.

# Support after Landing

## Research and innovation supports

Our grant funding programme includes a wide range of supports including tax incentives and collaborative funding to help your research, development and innovation (RD&I) activity in Ireland. We also provide direct help with exploring longer-term RD&I options.



25% tax credit on eligible RD&I activity



Credit claimable on revenue and capital expenditure on qualifying RD&I

IDA Ireland is keen to support its client companies to deliver sustainable growth in Ireland. Our Innovate Programme for client companies is designed to encourage clients' growth through proactive management of their innovation activities



**Innovate Start** – Innovation Advisor working with the leadership team to help start and progress an innovation pathway.



**Innovate Plus** – Innovation Advisor working with leadership team to develop a formalised approach to successful innovation.

## Transformation and training supports

In a rapidly changing world, your business may need to adapt to stay competitive. Together with our partners, we've got a range of programmes to help identify ways to transform your operations through digitalisation, lean practices or upskilling your teams.

We also support training and upskilling for businesses that help to increase productivity, create new products, evolve the business functions at your site, or enhance your leadership team's strategic skills.



**LeanStart** introduces principles and processes to help you map your Lean journey



**LeanPlus** targets process improvement or digitalisation that delivers measurable gains



**Mentor Programme**, delivered with Enterprise Ireland, including peer site visits

## Sustainability

Ireland is committed to achieving the 2030 Carbon Emissions Targets, with one of the world's most ambitious decarbonisation targets. Our latest national Climate Action Plan targets a 35% reduction in emissions for the enterprise sector by 2030, focused on improving energy efficiency and replacing fossil fuels with renewables in production processes, buildings, and transport.

As an IDA client, you can access financial supports to mitigate climate impact and move to more sustainable production, cost-effectively and competitively.

The Green Plus programme supports up to 50% of the cost in developing a site-specific climate action plan, either with your own team or with an external consultant.

The Green Capital Grant supports multi-year capital investments identified in your climate action plan, such as:



Decarbonisation  
(solar panels, heat pumps, HVAC, etc.)



Adapting your site  
(flood resilience, EV chargers)



Water use  
(wastewater treatment)



Pollution prevention control



Circular economy  
(recycling, sustainable packaging)



Biodiversity  
(green roofs/rewilding)

# Where to Find Us

## Europe

- 1 Ireland
- 2 France
- 3 Germany
- 4 United Kingdom

## North America

- 5 Atlanta
- 6 Boston
- 7 Chicago
- 8 New York
- 9 Seattle
- 10 Northern California
- 11 Southern California
- 12 Austin
- 13 Toronto

## Asia Pacific

- 14 Australia
- 15 China Beijing
- 16 China Shanghai
- 17 China Shenzhen
- 18 India
- 19 Japan
- 20 Singapore
- 21 Korea

