An Roinn Fiontar,
Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum - Terms of Reference

Overview

The National AI Strategy – AI: Here for Good[1], proposes the establishment an Enterprise Digital Advisory Board to advise and work with Government to drive industry adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies. This body will be known as the Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum (EDAF).

Under Ireland's National Resilience and Recovery Plan the theme of "Accelerating and Expanding Digital Reforms and Transformation" is identified as Priority 2. This reflects the importance of the digital transition for Ireland and Europe in the coming decade. The National Economic Recovery Plan 2021 also identifies digitalisation, including AI, as a key means to create a more prosperous economy with better and more fulfilling jobs.

Purpose

Digital technology continues to herald new ways of doing business and new economic opportunities. This presents challenges but also new possibilities. The pandemic has accelerated the move to online and digital services, remote working and automation. These trends are set to continue, transforming the economy, jobs and our way of life.

The EDAF will provide a focused body for Government to be able to hear the views and perspectives of enterprise and experts to facilitate the adoption of digital technologies among industry, including AI. The EDAF's work will also support and inform the development of the enterprise aspects of an overall National Digital Strategy.

Core Task and Functions

The core task of the EDAF is to advise and work with Government to drive enterprise adoption of digital technologies, including AI. The EDAF will be informed by enterprise, industry, AI experts, the enterprise development agencies, and the Local Enterprise Offices.

A priority of the EDAF will be to support Government in implementing the AI strategy. As part of this work, the EDAF will advise Government on how best to use the "AI development ladder framework" to drive a phased approach to AI adoption - from awareness-raising through opportunities to connect, explore and experiment with AI, to assistance for implementation - which can be rolled out to enterprises, with a focus on SMEs and small businesses across the country.

The EDAF will advise and work with Government on delivery of the following commitments set out in the AI strategy:

1. Assessing the current spectrum of AI resources available to industry from technology centres and relevant agencies to inform actions needed to maximise the potential of the existing infrastructure.

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[1] AI - Here for Good: National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Ireland - DETE (enterprise.gov.ie)

2. Developing an AI programme for enterprise of targeted funding measures, together with diagnostic tools and other advisory supports around AI adoption.

3. Raising awareness among businesses of all sizes – from small SMEs through to MNCs – of the resources available from European Digital Innovation Hubs[2] and Centres of Excellence.

4. Developing a National AI cluster or platform to drive collaboration between MNCs and SMEs.

The EDAF will also play an advisory role with respect to the delivery of the enterprise elements of the forthcoming National Digital Strategy.

An annual work programme for the EDAF will be developed and approved by its members.

Membership

Membership of the EDAF will include officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the State agencies as well as enterprise and AI experts selected through an open expression of interest process.

Additional practitioners may be invited to attend meetings of the EDAF from time to time, where they have a particular expertise or interest in an area under discussion.

Membership of the EDAF shall be on a voluntary basis. Members may have reasonable vouched expenses reimbursed if they incur transport costs relating to their attendance at Forum meetings.

There is only capacity for one representative, from each member organisation, to attend EDAF meetings. If you are unable to attend, an alternate can attend in your place.

Officials:

- Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation (Chair)
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- IDA Ireland
- Enterprise Ireland
- Science Foundation Ireland
- LEO Centre of Excellence

Others:

- AI Ambassador[3]
- Indigenous Enterprise representatives
- MNC representatives
- AI expert(s)
- Ibec
- European Digital Innovation Hub representative

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[2] EDIHs | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)
[3] The AI Ambassador will be selected through a separate open expression of interest process.

Roles and Responsibilities

The EDAF will be chaired by the Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will provide a secretariat to the EDAF.

Frequency of Meetings

The EDAF will meet on a quarterly basis. Additional meetings may be called to consult with the EDAF on matters including the development of the National Digital Strategy.

EU, Digital and Access to Finance Division
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