

## Microfinance Ireland

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# Report on The Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme As of the 31st of March 2024

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An Roinn Gnó,  
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta  
Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil   
Local Enterprise Office

This financing benefits from a guarantee issued under the 'European Progress Microfinance Facility', the 'Employment and Social Innovation Guarantee Facility' and the Pan European Guarantee Fund in Response to COVID-19 established by the European Union.

## Overview of the Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme

The Microenterprise Loan Fund, administered by Microfinance Ireland was established as part of the Government’s Action Plan for Jobs and forms part of a suite of financial programmes provided through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to assist businesses of different sizes and at different stages of development across all industry sectors.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide loans of €2,000 up to €25,000 to Micro-enterprises, both startups and existing businesses with viable businesses, who cannot obtain funding through traditional sources. (Microenterprises are defined as businesses with less than 10 employees and /or Turnover <€2m

## Fund Performance Summary: 1st October 2012 to 31st March 2024

As at end March 2024, Microfinance Ireland has been in business for over 12 years. In this time, it has delivered the following key results:

- ✓ **11,118 Applications received.**
- ✓ **€85.4M Value of loans approved**
- ✓ **10,703 Net jobs supported in 5,198 micro-enterprises.**
- ✓ **47% Approval rate**
- ✓ **€75.8 Value of loans drawn**
- ✓ **4,617 Loans drawn.**
- ✓ **Average Loan size of €16.4K**
- ✓ **79% approvals granted to businesses employing 3 people or fewer.**
- ✓ **42% of approvals granted to start-ups (in business for less than 18 months)**
- ✓ **Wide geographic coverage: 23% of loans granted to Dublin, 77% to the rest of Ireland**

## Successful applicants by sector YTD 2024

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES <b>(16%)</b>	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD ACTIVITIES <b>(12%)</b>
CONSTRUCTION <b>(10%)</b>	OTHER SERVICES <b>(9%)</b>
HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES <b>(7%)</b>	MANUFACTURING <b>(7%)</b>
EDUCATION <b>(7%)</b>	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECH ACTIVITIES <b>(6%)</b>
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION <b>(6%)</b>	TRANSPORT AND STORAGE <b>(6%)</b>
ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT SERVICES. ACTIVITIES <b>(5%)</b>	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION <b>(5%)</b>
OTHER <b>(4%)</b>	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING <b>(0%)</b>

## Assessing applications efficiently:

- ✓ **11,020 Applications processed to full assessment.**
- ✓ **31 Applications in progress at reporting date**
- ✓ **Endeavour to process complete applications within 10 days.**

## Promotion and performance of the Fund during 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### Key performance indicators YTD 2024

- ✓ **253 Applications received.**
- ✓ **€1.9M Value of loans approved**
- ✓ **336 Jobs supported in 121 micro-enterprises.**
- ✓ **55% Approval rate**
- ✓ **€1.1M Value of loans drawn**
- ✓ **73 Loans drawn.**
- ✓ **Average Loan size of €15.4K**
- ✓ **85% approvals granted to businesses employing 3 people or fewer.**
- ✓ **40% of approvals granted to start-ups (in business for less than 18 months)**
- ✓ **Wide geographic coverage:** 19% of loans granted to Dublin, 81% to the rest of Ireland.

### Key performance indicators Qtr. 1 2024

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- ✓ **Wide geographic coverage:** 19% of loans granted to Dublin, 81% to the rest of Ireland.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, MFI continued to engage in a range of Marketing and PR initiatives.

**Radio Advertising:**

We did not run a radio advertising campaign in the quarter but plan to run one towards the end of Q2 / early Q3.

**Digital Advertising /social media:**

We continue with ongoing promotion through our social media channels, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to maintain strong brand awareness with digital advertising campaigns primarily focussed on Google and Facebook. We are managing our messaging in our social media to reflect the feedback from our Q3 customer survey.

**Events/Webinars/Sponsorships:**

We continue our representation at in person events and webinars. We have held webinars in collaboration with a number of the Local Enterprise Offices and these webinars have been well attended and seem to be well received by the LEO clients. We have recently initiated a monthly webinar series for anyone interested in Microfinance Ireland and have included the calendar of webinars on our website.

We were sponsors of a number of events for start ups during 2023. We believe that sponsoring events and competitions is a good for building awareness and we are currently considering our sponsorships for 2024.

**Performance:**

Q1 2024 was behind budget and the corresponding period in 2023.

Our approval rate year to date is running at c. 55% which is higher than previous years.

Applications from Start Ups accounted for c. 50% of all applications and c. 40% of business funded in the period.

In the year to date, applications from Female business owners accounted for 30% of all applications which compares to c.34% for the year 2023.

## Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme Analysis

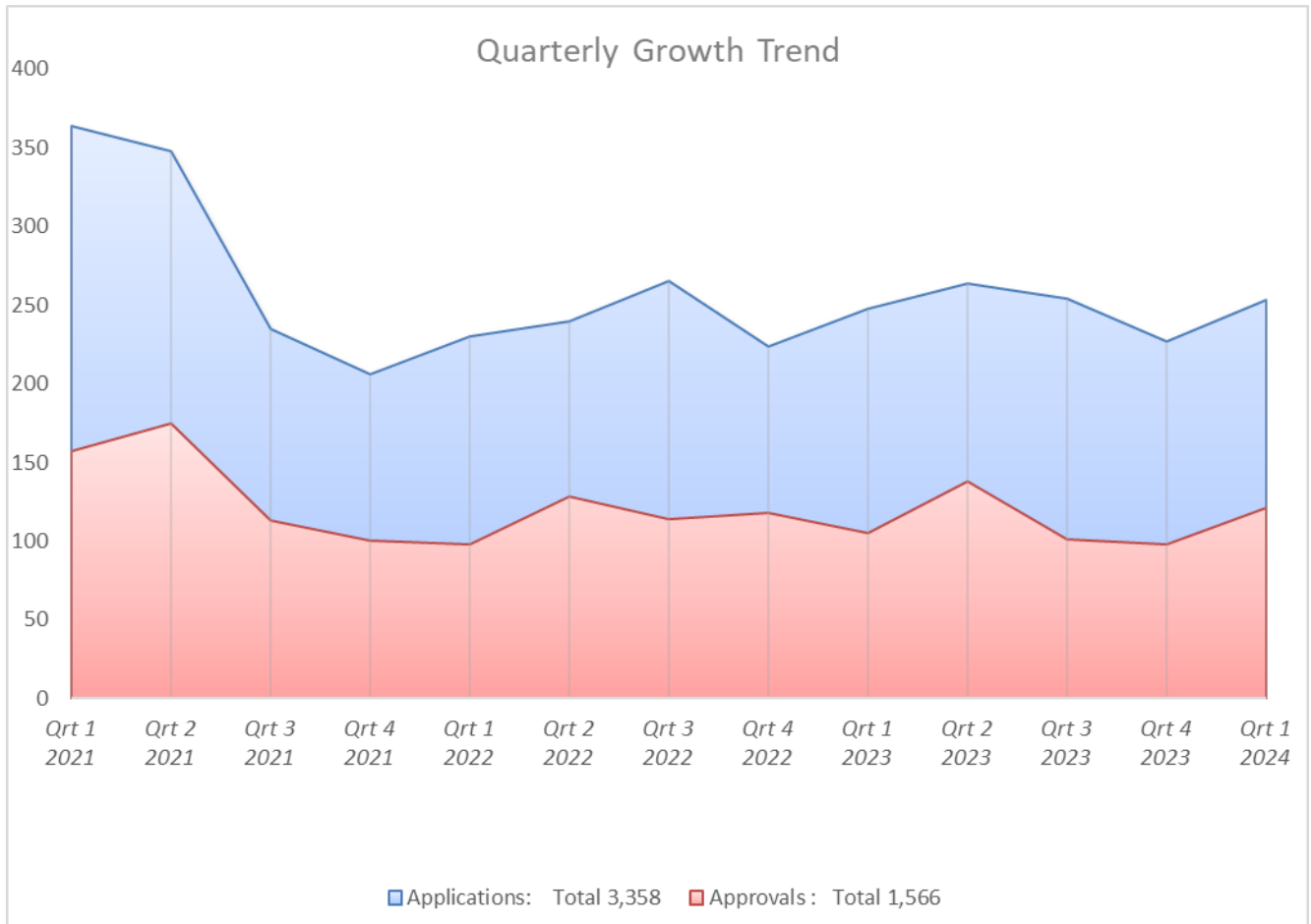
January 2021 – March 2024

	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
Total Applications No.	1,153	959	994	253	253
Total Applications Amt.	€19.837M	€16.873M	€16.841M	€4.529M	€4.529M

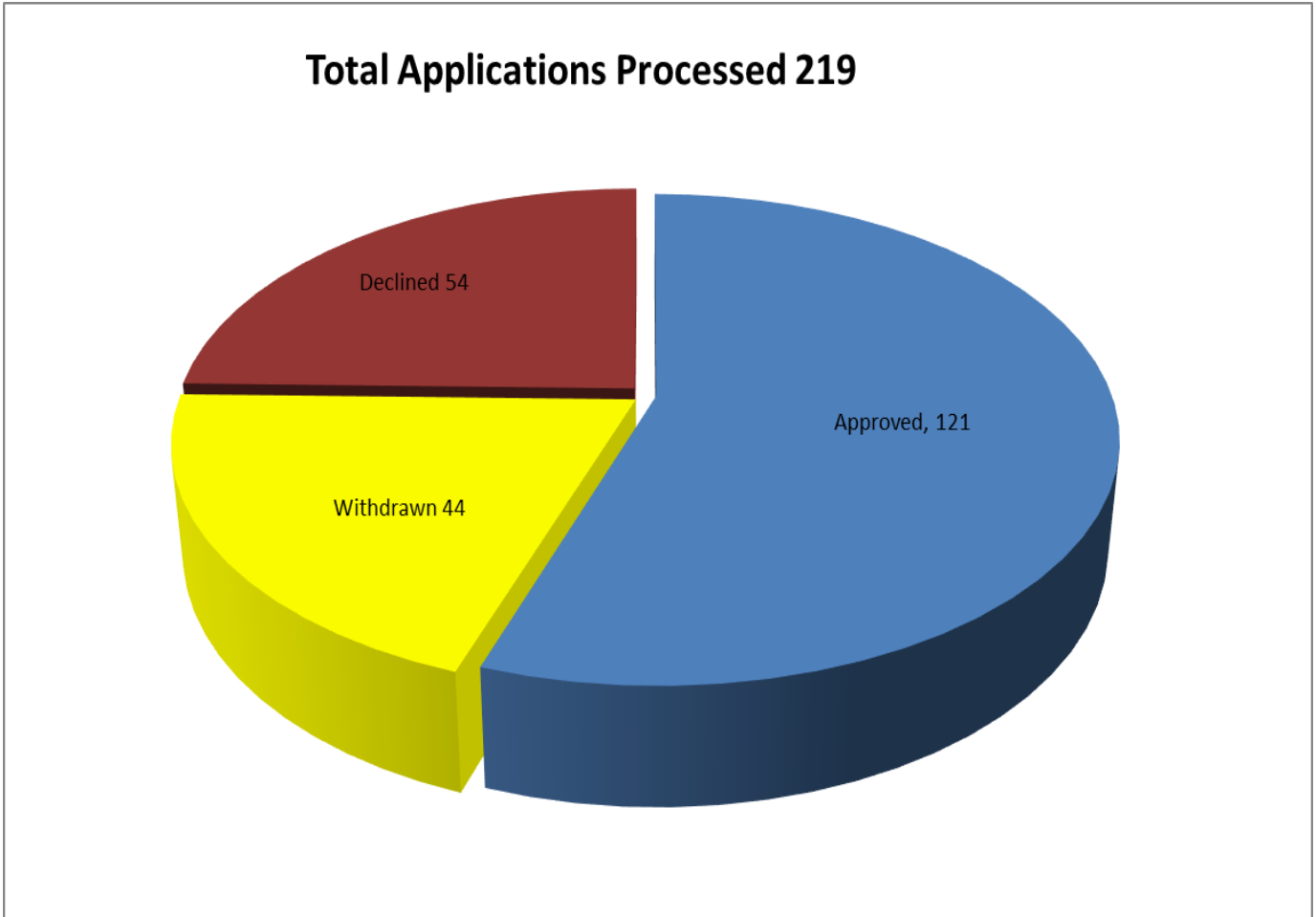
	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
Applications Processed	1,171	961	965	219	219
Approved	545	458	442	121	121
Approval Rate	47%	48%	46%	55%	55%
Approved (€'000)	€8.537M	€6.931M	€6.600M	€1.877M	€1.877M
Loans Drawn	547	401	397	73	73
Loans Drawn (€'000)	€8.783M	€6.004M	€6.009M	€1.126M	€1.126M
Loans Declined	409	335	263	54	54
Loans Declined (€'000)	€7.194M	€6.073M	€4.661M	€1.035M	€1.035M

## Quarterly Growth Trend

Application and approval activity levels by Quarter are displayed in the graph below:



**Applications processed (1st January 2024 - 31st March 2024)**



## Number of Loans by Sector

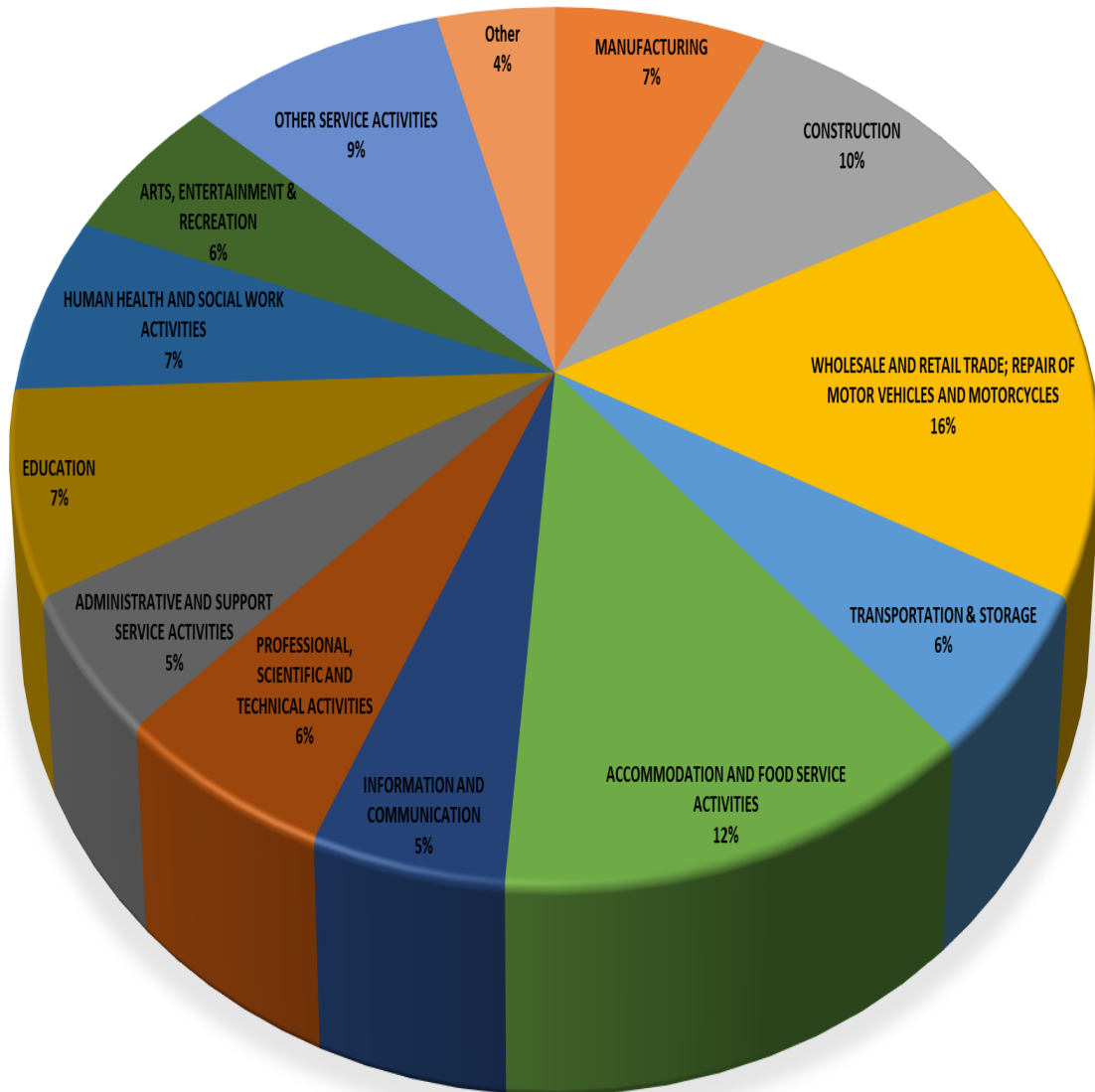
Number of Loans					
	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor	97	96	88	19	19
Accommodation and food service activities	62	41	32	15	15
Construction	46	38	26	12	12
Manufacturing	52	50	49	9	9
Other services	56	42	49	11	11
Professional, scientific & tech activities	42	39	41	7	7
Art, entertainment and recreation	26	22	26	7	7
Administration & support ser. Activities	28	25	25	6	6
Transport/storage	32	19	19	7	7
Information and communication	14	22	17	6	6
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	32	16	12	0	0
Human, health and social work	28	29	34	8	8
Education	22	14	19	9	9
Others	8	5	5	5	5



**Values of Loans by Sector**

<b>Value of Loans</b>					
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>Q1 2024</b>	<b>Total 2024</b>
<b>Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor</b>	1,594	1452	1434	318	318
<b>Accommodation and food service activities</b>	1,134	724	471	251	251
<b>Construction</b>	757	620	445	180	180
<b>Manufacturing</b>	859	759	796	144	144
<b>Other services</b>	649	575	516	156	156
<b>Professional, scientific &amp; tech activities</b>	616	503	515	107	107
<b>Art, entertainment and recreation</b>	332	324	402	124	124
<b>Administration &amp; support ser. Activities</b>	393	251	403	52	52
<b>Transport/storage</b>	535	363	317	153	153
<b>Information and communication</b>	280	367	264	90	90
<b>Agriculture, forestry &amp; fishing</b>	602	283	187	0	0
<b>Human, health and social work</b>	397	482	435	86	86
<b>Education</b>	279	158	340	128	128
<b>Others</b>	110	70	75	88	88

LOANS BY SECTOR YTD



## Approvals by Size of Borrower

From 1st January 2021 to 31st March 2024

Loans were approved to micro-enterprises with the following number of jobs at time of approvals:

No. of Employees	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
1	297	289	327	72	72
2-3	173	118	84	31	31
4-5	43	31	13	11	11
6-9	29	19	18	7	7
10		1	0		0
<b>Total No. of Loans</b>	542	458	442	121	121

## Approvals by Loan Size

From 1st January 2021 to 31st March 2024, loans were granted in the following size range.

Loans by Size					
Euro	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
≤50k					
≤25k	183	122	125	37	37
≤20k	65	79	62	21	21
≤15k	119	100	93	23	23
≤10k	83	71	84	17	17
≤5k	95	86	78	23	23
<b>Average Loan Size</b>	€15.6K	€15.1K	€14.9K	€15.5K	€15.5K

## Purpose for which Microfinance Loans were granted.

The following data is captured at the date of Drawdown's up to 31st December 2023

From 01<sup>st</sup> January 2024 the data captures all Approvals in the Quarter.

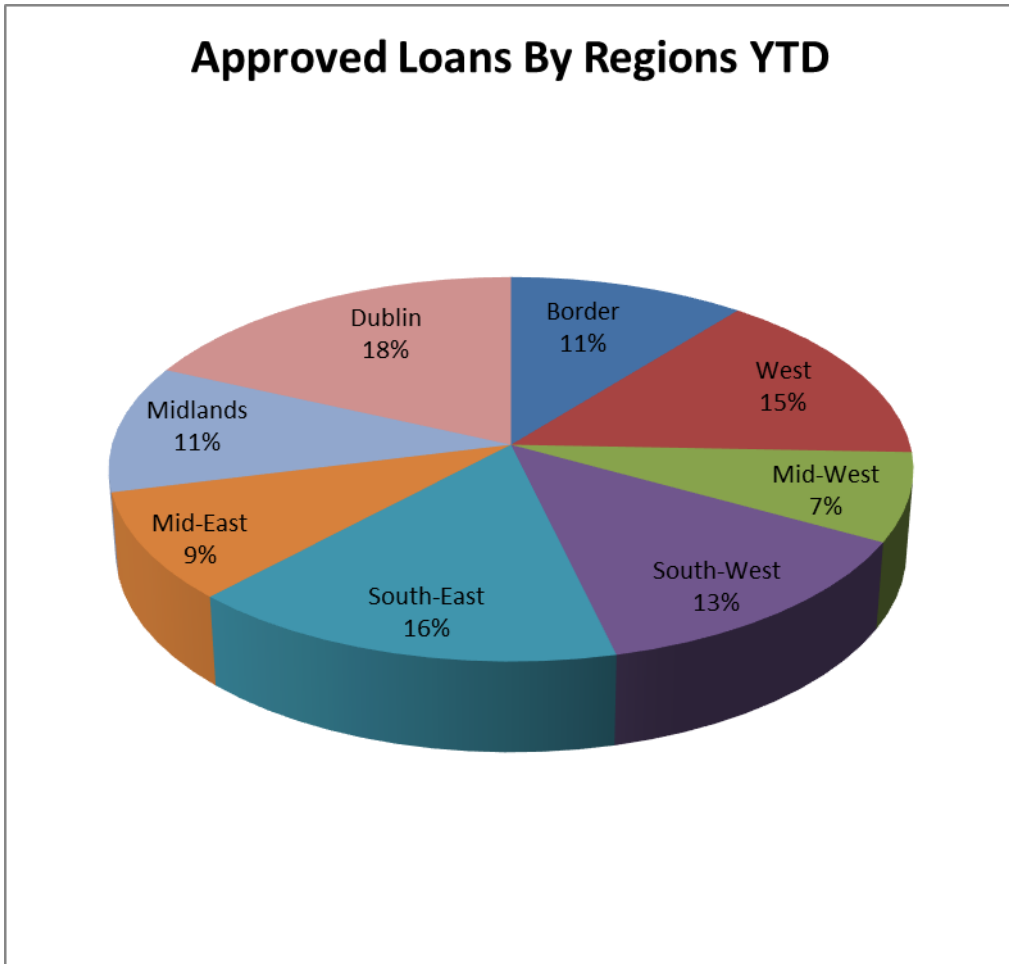
Number of Loans					
Purpose	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
Working Capital	181	136	108	31	31
Tangible and Intangible Assets	207	138	131	45	45
Mixed Financing for tangible, intangible assets and working capital	159	127	158	45	45

Value of Loans					
Purpose	2021	2022	2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
Working Capital	2,890	1,980	1,578	486	486
Tangible and Intangible Assets	3,448	2,129	2,126	731	731
Mixed Financing for tangible, intangible assets and working capital	2,445	1,895	2,305	660	660

**Geographical Analysis of Approval – from 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024**

County	Received YTD	Approved Q1	Approved YTD	Approved Amount 2024 €000
Dublin	59	22	22	358
Cork	25	13	13	160
Galway	16	10	10	166
Wexford	15	6	6	61
Waterford	15	5	5	44
Clare	11	5	5	86
Kildare	10	6	6	68
Tipperary	10	5	5	87
Roscommon	8	1	1	5
Meath	7	3	3	58
Louth	7	4	4	40
Mayo	7	7	7	104
Westmeath	7	6	6	114
Sligo	7	3	3	61
Kerry	6	3	3	58
Donegal	6	4	4	80
Limerick	6	4	4	95
Wicklow	5	2	2	22
Carlow	5	2	2	15
Offaly	5	4	4	65
Laois	4	0	0	0
Longford	4	3	3	66
Cavan	3	1	1	15
Kilkenny	2	1	1	4
Monaghan	2	1	1	25
Leitrim	1	0	0	20

**Approval by Business Sector January 2024 to March 2024**



## Demographical Analysis

Approved Applications	2021	2022	Total 2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
<b>Start Up</b>	214	191	181	48	48
<b>Existing</b>	331	267	261	73	73
<b>Female</b>	168	166	168	36	36
<b>Male</b>	377	292	274	85	85
<b>No. of Ltd Co.</b>	179	170	157	43	43
<b>No. of Unltd Co.</b>		1			
<b>No. of Sole Traders</b>	350	273	281	77	77
<b>No. of Partnerships</b>	16	14	4	1	1
<b>Youth (Aged 18-25 )</b>	33	9	9	2	2

## Source of Loan Referrals

Channels	2021	2022	Total 2023	Q1 2024	Total 2024
<b>LEO</b>	249	220	222	57	57
<b>Direct</b>	285	224	214	64	64
<b>Bank</b>	9	12	3	0	0
<b>Údarás</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>ILDN</b>	1	2	3	0	0

## **Appeals Process**

The purpose of the Microfinance Ireland appeals process is to support an applicant who wishes to have a review of an MFI decision to declining a loan application.

MFI will appoint an Appeal Assessor to carry out an independent review of the original loan decision. The assessor who was involved in the original decision will not be involved in the appeals process. The outcome of this review is communicated in writing to the applicant within 15 business days of receipt of the written appeal. The credit decision of the Appeal Assessor is independent of MFI management and is final. There have been 8 appeals in 2024 and 3 of these cases have been approved on appeal. These figures are included in the YTD approval figures.

## **Complaints**

No complaints were received by the business in Quarter 1 2024.

## **Business Failures**

YTD 2024, 9 businesses of our borrowers have failed. While any business failure is regrettable, it was anticipated from the outset that a not insignificant proportion of projects supported by the Microfinance Ireland might fail. It is a feature of microfinance (given the higher risk profile) that even with strong business supports, failures will occur.

On an ongoing basis, Microfinance Ireland, in conjunction with other agencies, works with every customer at risk to minimise business failure.