

## Microfinance Ireland

---

# Report on The Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme As of the 31st of December 2025

---



An Roinn Fiontar,  
Turasóireachta agus Fostaíochta  
Department of Enterprise,  
Tourism and Employment



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil   
Local Enterprise Office

### 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 programs 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 €50,000 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 December 2025

As at end 31st December 2025, Microfinance Ireland has been in business for 13 years. In this time, it has delivered the following key results:

- ✓ **13,362 Applications received.**
- ✓ **€105M Value of loans approved**
- ✓ **12,071 Net jobs supported in 6,105 micro-enterprises.**
- ✓ **46% Approval rate**
- ✓ **€93.3M Value of loans drawn**
- ✓ **5,461 Loans drawn.**
- ✓ **Average Loan size of €16.9K**
- ✓ **82% approvals granted to businesses employing 3 people or fewer.**
- ✓ **43% of approvals granted to start-ups (in business for less than 18 months)**
- ✓ **Wide geographic coverage: 22% of loans granted to Dublin,78% to the rest of Ireland**

### Successful applicants by Sector YTD 2025

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES (19%)	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD ACTIVITIES (11%)
OTHER SERVICES (10%)	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION (9%)
MANUFACTURING (9%)	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC & TECH ACTIVITIES (9%)
HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (7%)	CONSTRUCTION (7%)
TRANSPORT AND STORAGE (5%)	EDUCATION (5%)
ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT SERVICES ACTIVITIES (4%)	OTHER (3%)
PUBLISHING, BROADCASTING & CONTENT PRODUCTION (2%)	

### Assessing applications efficiently:

- ✓ **13207 Applications processed to full assessment.**
- ✓ **155 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 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

### Key performance indicators YTD 2025

- ✓ **1,435 Applications received.**
- ✓ **€12.2M Value of loans approved**
- ✓ **1,004 Jobs supported in 511 micro-enterprises.**
- ✓ **37% Approval rate**
- ✓ **€11.2M Value of loans drawn**
- ✓ **467 Loans drawn.**
- ✓ Average Loan size of **€23.9K**
- ✓ **84%** approvals granted to businesses employing **3 people or fewer.**
- ✓ **51%** of approvals granted to start-ups (in business for less than 18 months)
- ✓ **Wide geographic coverage:** 22% of loans granted to Dublin, 78% to the rest of Ireland.

### Key performance indicators Qtr.4 2025

- ✓ **357 Applications received.**
- ✓ **€3.1M Value of loans approved**
- ✓ **263 Jobs supported in 131 micro-enterprises.**
- ✓ **38% Approval rate**
- ✓ **€2.7M Value of loans drawn**
- ✓ **115 Loans drawn.**
- ✓ Average Loan size of **€23.2K**
- ✓ **83%** approvals granted to businesses employing **3 people or fewer.**
- ✓ **56%** 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.

During the 4th quarter of 2025, MFI continued to engage in a range of Marketing and PR activities, as well as new initiatives.

**TV Advertising:**

In November and December 2025, we ran a national TV ad for the first time on Virgin Media and Sky TV. This was on the AdSense platform and targeted to those with a “business interest” profile. The response was very positive, and a larger scale TV campaign, along with Press and Outdoor is planned for Q1 2026.

**Digital Advertising /social media:**

We continue with ongoing promotion through our social media channels, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and LinkedIn to maintain strong brand awareness with paid digital advertising campaigns primarily focused on Google and Meta. In Q4 we did a TikTok collaboration with a well- known influencer and this has brought more followers to our TikTok channel.

**Events/Webinars/Sponsorships:**

We continue our representation at in person events and webinars.

In Q4 we collaborated with the Local Enterprise Offices in webinars and continued to have monthly webinars for anyone interested in Microfinance Ireland. These webinars are well attended with good engagement from participants.

The revitalised resource hub on our website is a central repository for helpful information for business, and we continue to add to this.

**Surveys & Customer Experience**

In Q4 we completed a customer survey to gain some insights on the impact of our online application system launched in September 2024. The application experience rating has increased from 7.7 in 2024 to 8.1 in 2025 which shows the positive impact of our new application portal. We also continue to make customer experience (CX) improvements on this portal after a CX review.

**Performance:**

Applications in Q4 were steady and in line with application numbers and values seen in the 3 previous quarters. but slightly below the levels seen in the first 2 quarters. The summer months can be quieter so the slight reduction in application numbers is not uncommon. While applications for the full year were c. 35% higher than 2024 that reflects the increase in the maximum loan amount to €50k in September 2024. Our final quarter in 2025 is similar to the final quarter in 2024. We had 357 applications in the quarter which is similar to the 363 applications submitted in Q4 2024.

Our approval rate for the quarter at 38% is running below the long-term average but is continuing to be impacted by an increase in applications where not all the documentation is submitted and need to be withdrawn without being assessed. We are also seeing an increase in applications that our outside our eligibility criteria which are also withdrawn prior to assessment. We have an outreach program to encourage and assist applicants submit documentation and are reviewing other methods of assisting applicants with their applications. Our approval rate for loans that are assessed is in the mid 60% which is in line with long term averages.

Start Up’s accounted for c. 56% of approvals in the quarter.

In the year to date, applications from Female business owners accounted for over 30% of all applications.

Year to date loans to businesses located outside of Dublin accounted for c. 78% of all loans which is in line with historic numbers.

### Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme Analysis

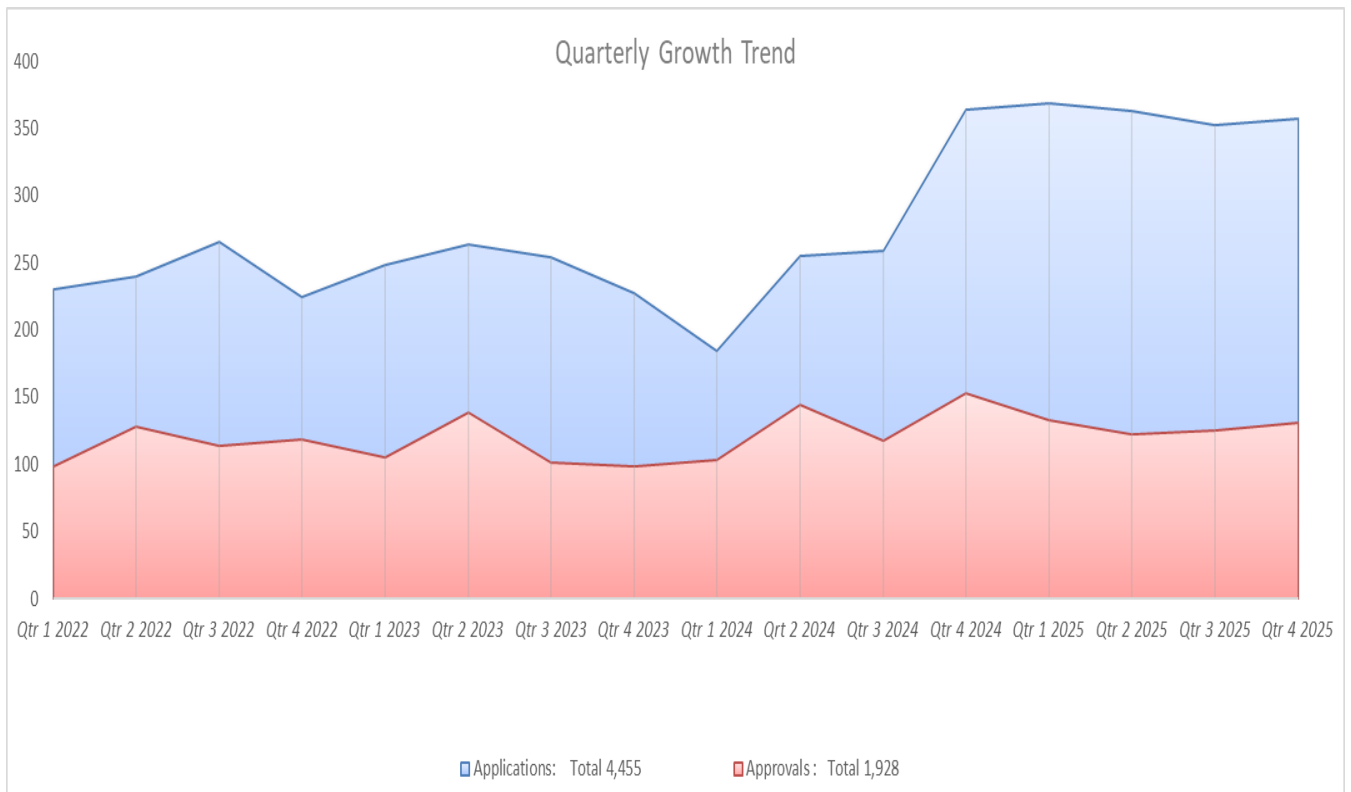
#### January 2022 – 31st December 2025

	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Total Applications No.	959	994	1062	362	364	352	357	1,435
Total Applications Amt.	€16.873M	€16.841M	€21,558M	€9.609M	€9.929M	€9.360M	€9.889M	€38.787M

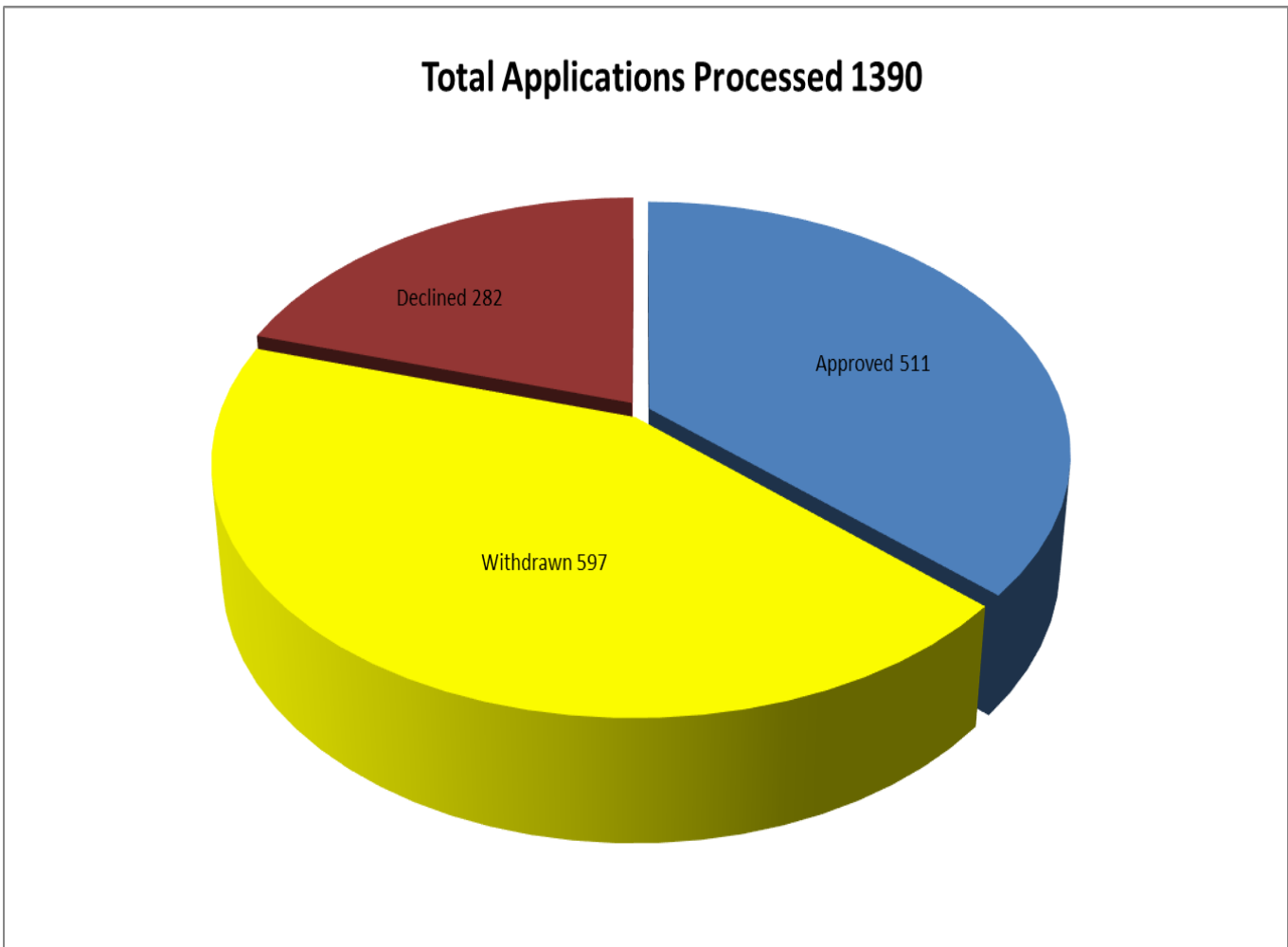
	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Applications Processed	961	965	998	369	335	338	348	1,390
Approved	458	442	517	133	122	125	131	511
Approval Rate	48%	46%	52%	36%	36%	37%	38%	37%
Approved (€'000)	€6.931M	€6.600M	€9.099M	€3,206M	€2.821M	€3.087M	€3.078M	€12.192M
Loans Drawn	401	397	450	121	113	118	115	467
Loans Drawn (€'000)	€6.004M	€6.009M	€7.482M	€2.875M	€2.871M	€2.790M	2.663M	€11.199M
Loans Declined	335	263	217	60	76	76	70	282
Loans Declined (€'000)	€6.073M	€4.661M	€4.388M	€1.791M	€2.228M	€2.087M	€1.948M	€8.054M

## Quarterly Growth Trend

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



**Applications processed (1st January 2025 - 31st December 2025)**



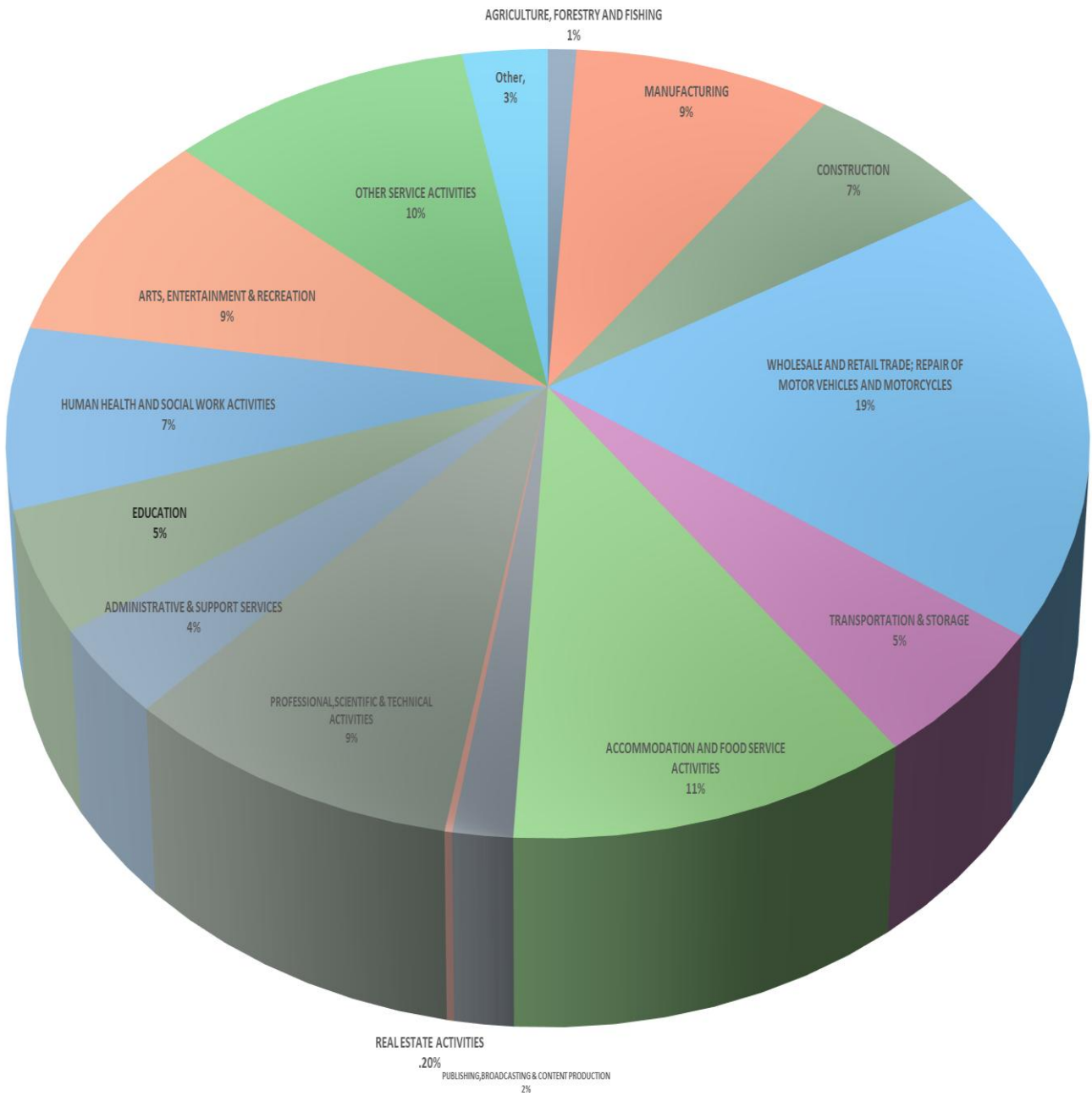
## Number of Loans by Sector

Number of Loans								
	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor	96	88	99	31	24	20	21	96
Accommodation and food service activities	41	32	53	16	10	17	11	54
Construction	38	26	57	10	10	5	8	33
Manufacturing	50	49	38	12	13	10	10	45
Arts, Sports & Recreation	22	26	31	10	12	13	12	47
Real Estate Activities					-	1	-	1
Human Health & Social Work Activities	29	34	35	9	13	9	7	38
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	39	41	46	11	9	9	17	46
Transport/storage	19	19	32	10	5	4	8	27
Administrative & Support Service Activities	25	25	24	3	7	4	4	18
Publishing, Broadcasting, And Content Production	22	17	20	4	2	1	1	8
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	16	12	0	-		1	4	5
Education	14	19	25	4	4	13	4	25
Other Service Activities	42	49	53	12	7	14	20	53
Others	5	5	4	1	6	4	4	15

**Values of Loans by Sector**

Value of Loans								
	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor	1452	1434	1711	766	545	469	430	2,210
Accommodation and food service activities	724	471	1034	445	218	525	359	1,547
Construction	620	445	1069	256	274	94	178	802
Manufacturing	759	796	808	303	287	295	295	1,180
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	324	402	601	228	286	363	349	1,226
Real Estate Activities					-	30	-	30
Human Health & Social Work Activities	482	435	619	271	297	270	152	990
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	503	515	713	253	186	249	325	1,013
Transport/storage	363	317	692	272	134	138	239	783
Administrative & Support Service Activities	251	403	386	73	166	95	68	402
Publishing, Broadcasting, And Content Production	367	264	343	75	17	25	10	127
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	283	187	0	0	0	10	122	132
Education	158	340	399	51	112	208	90	461
Other Service Activities	575	516	654	193	84	202	398	877
Others	70	75	70	20	215	114	63	412

### Loan By Sector YTD



### Approvals by Size of Borrower

From 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2025

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

No. of Employees	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
1	289	327	304	66	58	60	81	265
2-3	118	84	144	48	37	49	28	162
4-5	31	13	42	9	14	12	11	46
6-9	19	18	27	10	13	4	11	38
10	1	0	0					-
<b>Total No. of Loans</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>511</b>

### Approvals by Loan Size

From 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2025, loans were granted in the following size range

Loans by Size								
Euro	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
≤50k			22	18	13	14	16	61
≤45k			1	3	1	1	3	8
≤40k			6	10	9	14	13	46
≤35k			9	6	8	8	8	30
≤30k			9	12	13	8	9	42
≤25k	122	125	130	17	15	18	10	60
≤20k	79	62	72	16	16	24	15	71
≤15k	100	93	103	19	17	13	21	70
≤10k	71	84	89	18	17	16	24	75
≤5k	86	78	76	14	13	9	12	48
<b>Average Loan Size</b>	<b>€15.1K</b>	<b>€14.9K</b>	<b>€17.6K</b>	<b>€24.1K</b>	<b>€23.1K</b>	<b>€24.7K</b>	<b>€23.2K</b>	<b>€23.9K</b>

**Purpose for which Microfinance Loans were granted.**

Number of Loans								
Purpose	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Working Capital	136	108	140	31	43	28	38	140
Tangible and Intangible Assets	138	131	169	51	27	32	33	143
Mixed Financing for tangible, intangible assets and working capital	127	158	208	51	52	65	60	228

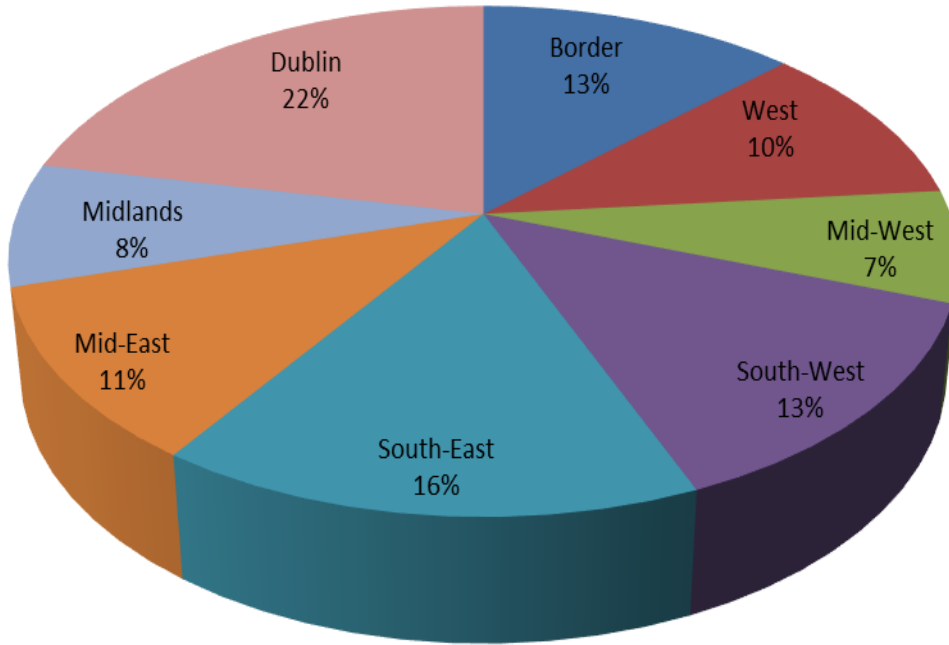
Value of Loans								
Purpose	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Working Capital	1,980	1,578	2,323	677	1,045	699	696	3,117
Tangible and Intangible Assets	2,129	2,126	3,037	1,276	697	829	898	3,700
Mixed Financing for tangible, intangible assets and working capital	1,895	2,305	3,739	1,253	1,079	1,559	1,484	5,375

Geographical Analysis of Approval – from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025

County	Applications Received YTD	Approved Q1	Approved Q2	Approved Q3	Approved Q4	Approved YTD	Approved Amount 2025 €000
Dublin	295	25	28	28	30	111	3,002
Cork	106	19	12	12	11	54	1,101
Galway	70	8	8	11	6	33	791
Meath	65	4	8	8	6	26	583
Donegal	46	8	8	4	7	27	719
Tipperary	45	8	4	8	9	29	625
Kildare	41	4	4	3	5	16	326
Wexford	40	2	6	4	4	16	364
Waterford	36	8	2	3	6	19	469
Wicklow	36	6	1	2	5	14	351
Limerick	36	3	7	5	5	20	384
Louth	32	5	5	3	3	16	443
Kerry	32	2	4	2	6	14	273
Clare	27	5	4	4	3	16	351
Mayo	24	4	4	3	3	14	388
Westmeath	22	4	3	3	5	15	327
Kilkenny	20	2	0	3	4	9	235
Offaly	17	3	1	2	0	6	162
Laois	16	4	4	4	4	16	359
Carlow	16	0	2	0	5	7	184
Monaghan	12	2	1	3	0	6	146
Cavan	10	4	1	1	0	6	166
Sligo	9	0	3	1	3	7	135
Roscommon	9	3	0	4	0	7	113
Leitrim	7	0	2	1	1	4	129
Longford	5	0	0	3		3	66
Non Eligible Outside Jurisdiction	4	0				0	0

**Approval by Business Sector January 2025 to 31st December 2025**

**Approved Loans By Regions YTD**



## Demographical Analysis

Approved Applications	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Total 2025
Start Up	191	181	239	67	49	72	73	261
Existing	267	261	278	66	73	53	58	250
Female	166	168	167	51	50	54	44	199
Male	292	274	350	82	72	71	87	312
No. of Ltd Co.	170	157	208	54	56	63	56	229
No. of Unltd Co.	1							
No. of Sole Traders	273	281	300	73	63	59	74	269
No. of Partnerships	14	4	9	6	3	3	1	13
Youth (Aged 18-25 )	9	9	16	1	2	2	3	8

## Source of Loan Referrals

Channels	2022	2023	2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2024	Total 2025
LEO	220	222	280	82	76	82	79	319
Direct	224	214	229	43	40	36	42	161
Bank	12	3	6	6	6	7	10	29
Údarás	0	0	0					-
Other	2	3	2	2				2

## **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 51 appeals in 2025 and 10 of these cases have been approved on appeal. These figures are included in the YTD approval figures.

## **Complaints**

6 complaints have been received by the business in 2025

## **Business Failures**

During 2025, 47 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.