



Exports by Irish companies hit all-time high

By Brian Hayes Curtin

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Record exports are helping Ireland's economic recovery. The Government hopes the levels will continue to increase this year

Exports by Irish companies increased last year to record levels of €18.6 billion, new figures revealed last week. That represents an increase of 10 per cent on the 2013 figures.

Last week, the National Export Hub's first regional showcase took place in Cork and highlighted some of the challenges facing exporters, including skills shortages, costs and a potential British exit from the EU

The showcase was organised by the National Export Hub and aims to increase the number of Irish businesses exporting for the first time, assist Irish businesses to enter new export markets and support Irish exporters to grow their exports in existing markets.

Enterprise Ireland's figures showed growth was recorded in exports to all international markets and across all sectors.

CEO of Enterprise Ireland, Julie Sinnamon said: "These results are reflected in the record jobs performance by Enterprise Ireland clients in 2014 where the agency's clients recorded the highest net job gains in the history of the agency and further validate Enterprise Ireland's investment in indigenous industry".

The Government also published the 13th Action Plan for Jobs Progress Report last Thursday. The Progress Report showed that 101 of the 113 measures scheduled for delivery during Q1 2015 have been delivered. Among the measures delivered include:

- Action Plan for Jobs Regional secured €250m in additional funding for regional jobs support and set out a framework for eight regional jobs plans.
- Started lending under the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland – €400m in lending for SMEs made available through agreements signed with AIB and Bank of Ireland.
- Made improvements to Microfinance Ireland, in order to make it easier for SMEs to access lending under this scheme.



- Launched a new IDA Ireland five year strategy, aimed at creating 35,000 net new jobs.
- Launched a new strategy for the financial services sector, aimed at creating 10,000 net new jobs.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD said: "In the coming months, we will deliver one year early on our target of adding 100,000 jobs. By next year, our plan will see more Irish people returning to work in this country than leaving. By 2018, we will have replaced every job lost by the previous Government with more, sustainable jobs and by 2019 there will be more people working in this country than ever before."

Tánaiste Joan Burton TD said: "As part of the Action Plan, I expect that the first referrals under JobPath, a new employment initiative by my Department, will begin in July with a very ambitious target - to help 115,000 long-term unemployed jobseekers return to work.

"Two organisations - Turas Nua and Seetec - will provide additional employment services to augment, not replace the Department's own employment services. Between them, the two organisations will provide 1,000 additional staff in roughly 100 outlets across the country to assist the long-term unemployed in finding suitable employment and training options."

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD said: "These exports directly supported 8,500 extra jobs created in these companies last year. This does not happen automatically, but if we implement the right policies we can improve on this in future years as part of our drive towards sustainable full employment by 2018."

<http://www.corkindependent.com/20150507/business/exports-by-irish-companies-hit-all-time-high-S104511.html>