



Enterprise 2035

Submission from the Event Industry
Association of Ireland

Public Consultation on Ireland's Enterprise Strategy 2035.

October 2026

A submission on the future development
of Ireland's event-industry enterprise ecosystem



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Executive Summary

Enterprise 2035 provides an opportunity to consider not only how Ireland supports established sectors of the economy, but whether the structures through which enterprise is recognised and supported remain appropriate for an economy that is increasingly interconnected, project-based, technology-enabled and reliant on complex networks of SMEs. Ireland's event industry is a clear example.

Events generate economic activity in towns, cities and rural communities; support extensive local supply chains; provide employment and enterprise opportunities; contribute to tourism, culture, sport and Ireland's international profile; and provide the infrastructure through which conferences, exhibitions, festivals, civic occasions, sporting events and major public gatherings take place.

Yet the event industry frequently appears in public policy only through the particular activity being regulated or supported. Depending on the issue, an event may be treated as tourism, culture, sport, entertainment, licensing, public safety, local government, hospitality or the night-time economy. The businesses and professionals responsible for delivering those events can consequently fall between policy structures. Enterprise 2035 provides an opportunity to address that gap.

The [White Paper on Enterprise 2022–2030](#) already recognises the importance of locally traded sectors, including arts, leisure and entertainment, to employment, communities and placemaking. Enterprise 2035 now asks how Ireland can build a more innovative, sustainable, resilient and regionally balanced enterprise economy, addressing productivity, skills, artificial intelligence, innovation and changing global conditions.

There is also a particularly important precedent within the Department itself. [Business Events 2030](#) demonstrates that events can be treated as an enterprise-policy issue. It recognises that business events depend on SMEs and a wider delivery supply chain, including AV companies, transport providers, food and drink businesses and entertainment. It provides for Department-led oversight, agency-led and industry-chaired implementation structures, improved measurement, workforce development, regional and seasonal growth, innovation, sustainability and international development.

That precedent matters because the enterprises responsible for delivering business events do not exist separately from the wider event industry. The same production company, AV supplier, event manager, transport provider, temporary infrastructure business, security provider or specialist contractor may work across conferences, exhibitions, festivals, sporting events, cultural events, public events and corporate activity. The enterprise capability sits within the business, not solely within the policy classification of the event it happens to be delivering.

Enterprise 2035 therefore does not need to establish for the first time that events can be considered an enterprise ecosystem. The Department has already established that principle for one part of the industry. The opportunity now is to consider how the wider event-industry enterprise base should be recognised, measured and developed.

The Department also already uses different policy structures according to the needs of individual sectors. Retail has a standing Retail Forum. Tourism has a national policy, dedicated agencies, oversight and data structures. The semiconductor sector has a national strategy, ecosystem mapping, an industry-led Advisory Council and dedicated skills work. A National Life Sciences Strategy is being developed to provide a coherent approach across another complex enterprise ecosystem.

EIAI is not suggesting that the event industry should simply replicate any one of these models. Rather, these examples demonstrate that enterprise policy already has a range of mechanisms available where a sector requires better mapping, strategic coordination, structured Government-industry engagement, skills planning and clearly assigned implementation responsibility.



There is also evidence that a more coordinated approach is needed. Ireland has a national statutory framework for large outdoor events, while local administrative processes for other events vary. Nationally published event Codes date from 1996 and 1998, despite subsequent changes to legislation and event delivery. Recent Irish research through [Grow the Show](#) has also identified the need for a coherent event-industry competency framework, clearer coordination with local authorities and stronger shared resources.

EIAI believes that by 2035 Ireland should have an event industry that is recognised within national enterprise policy; understood through reliable evidence; supported by coherent structures; able to access productivity, innovation, digitalisation, AI and sustainability supports; underpinned by professional skills and career pathways; operating within clearer and more proportionate administrative systems; contributing fully to regional development; and capable of developing Irish expertise and enterprise internationally.

To achieve this, EIAI recommends that Enterprise 2035 provide for:

1. formal recognition of the event industry within national enterprise policy;
2. mapping of the event-industry enterprise ecosystem and the supports already available to it;
3. development of a National Event Industry Strategy based on that evidence;
4. a permanent mechanism for structured engagement and coordination between industry, Government, enterprise agencies and relevant public bodies;
5. modernisation and greater consistency of event regulation, administration and national guidance;
6. better alignment of existing productivity, innovation, digitalisation, AI and sustainability supports with event SMEs;
7. development of a national event-industry skills and competency framework;
8. recognition of event capability within regional enterprise development;
9. support for the internationalisation of Irish event businesses, technology and professional expertise;
10. inclusion of the event industry within enterprise resilience planning; and
11. development of a sustainable national evidence base through which the industry and future policy interventions can be properly measured.

These proposals do not require the event industry to be separated from tourism, culture, sport or the other areas with which it naturally interacts. Nor do they require the transfer of existing statutory responsibilities from the bodies that currently hold them.

They require something more fundamental: that the businesses, professionals and supply chains responsible for delivering Ireland's events are also recognised and developed as part of Ireland's enterprise economy.

About the Event Industry Association of Ireland

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) is a national representative body for the event industry in Ireland. EIAI's membership base comprises more than 850 members, collectively representing over 56,000 people working across the event industry. Its membership includes individual businesses and professionals as well as member organisations representing particular parts of the industry, including the Irish Exhibition Organisers Association (IEOA), Irish Showmen's Guild, Funfairs & Circuses, Wedding Band Association, and Irish Inflatable Hirers Federation. These organisations retain their own identities and sectoral roles, while EIAI provides representation on wider national policy, enterprise and cross-industry issues.

The event industry itself is a broad and interconnected enterprise ecosystem which does not align neatly with conventional sectoral classifications. It encompasses event management and production, festivals, exhibitions, conferences and business events, entertainment, technical production, staging, temporary infrastructure, security, safety, transport, catering, attractions, performers, venues, communications, and a substantial network of specialist suppliers and independent professionals. Many businesses operate across several of these areas and across multiple types of events.

This cross-sector nature is one of the industry's strengths, but it also makes the industry difficult to identify within existing enterprise-policy structures. EIAI welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Enterprise 2035 and to set out how Ireland can build a more coherent, innovative and resilient enterprise environment for the event industry over the coming decade.



1. What should Ireland's enterprise economy look like in 2035?

Ireland's enterprise economy in 2035 should be innovative, productive, internationally connected, sustainable and regionally balanced. It should also be capable of recognising economic activity that cuts across traditional sectoral boundaries. Ireland has been particularly successful in developing an enterprise model that attracts internationally traded investment while supporting indigenous enterprise. That strength should continue. However, resilience over the coming decade will also depend on maintaining strong domestic enterprise ecosystems, particularly SMEs, microenterprises and specialist businesses operating throughout the regions.

The [White Paper on Enterprise 2022–2030](#) recognises the significance of locally traded sectors to employment and placemaking, and identifies improving their productivity as an enterprise-policy objective. Enterprise 2035 should develop that approach further. For the event industry, the 2035 objective should be clear: Ireland should have a recognised, professional, innovative and internationally competitive event industry, supported by an enterprise environment that enables businesses to invest, develop skills, adopt technology, operate sustainably and plan for long-term growth.

Achieving this requires greater recognition of the event industry itself. Events intersect with multiple policy systems. Depending on the event, an organiser or supplier may interact with local government, tourism bodies, cultural agencies, transport authorities, emergency services, health and safety structures, licensing systems and numerous other public bodies. Each has a legitimate function. The difficulty arises where the enterprise consequences of those separate systems are not examined through a single cross-industry lens. By 2035, enterprise policy should provide that lens without displacing the statutory responsibilities of other bodies.

Enterprise 2035 should explicitly recognise the event industry as a cross-sector enterprise ecosystem and ensure that its businesses are considered within national programmes concerning productivity, innovation, digitalisation, sustainability, skills, competitiveness and regional enterprise. Recognition affects whether an industry is visible when policies are designed, data is collected, supports are created and stakeholders are consulted.



2. The event industry within Ireland's enterprise policy architecture

Before deciding what new structures are required for the event industry, it is useful to examine the policy architecture the Department already applies to sectors and subsectors within its remit.

The purpose of this comparison is not to argue that every industry should receive identical supports. It is to demonstrate that the functions EIAI is seeking for the event industry, including recognition, mapping, structured engagement, measurement, skills planning, innovation support and implementation accountability, are already normal features of Irish enterprise policy where Government has identified a need for strategic sectoral development.

2.1 Business Events 2030: the closest departmental precedent

Business Events 2030 is particularly important because it concerns part of the event industry itself and was prepared by the same Department now developing Enterprise 2035. The strategy identifies business events as an economic activity with benefits for tourism, SMEs and local economies. The Department reports that business travel contributes more than €1 billion to the economy annually, contributes €290 million to the Exchequer and supports approximately 22,000 jobs. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))

More significant for the present submission is how the strategy defines the delivery ecosystem. It states that business events need SMEs on the ground to deliver them and identifies the wider supply chain as including AV companies, transport providers, food and drink manufacturers and entertainment businesses. It also notes that the business-events ecosystem includes indigenous SMEs alongside major multinational entities. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))

This is an important acknowledgement. It recognises that an event is not simply a tourism product or a venue booking. It is delivered by an enterprise ecosystem. The strategy then establishes many of the policy functions EIAI believes are required for the wider event industry. These include:

- a Department-led oversight group to oversee implementation;
- agency-led and industry-chaired [subgroups](#) involving the tourism industry and wider stakeholders;
- structured collaboration between business, academia and government agencies;
- use of sectoral clusters to support knowledge-sharing, innovation, competitiveness and productivity;
- development of a more secure and skilled workforce and longer-term career pathways;
- measurement tools to establish the economic, social and environmental value of the sector;
- regional and seasonal growth objectives;
- a Team Ireland approach using agencies and international networks;
- capacity-building supports for organisers; and
- sustainability objectives, measurement tools and practical industry supports. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))



These are not incidental features of the strategy. They amount to a coherent enterprise-development architecture around a defined part of the event ecosystem.

2.2 The wider event-industry gap

EIAI strongly supports the strategic development of business events. The issue is not that *Business Events 2030* should be broadened until it becomes a strategy for every type of event. Business events have specific objectives relating to international visitors, business tourism, conferences, meetings and incentives, and those objectives should remain clear.

The policy gap arises because much of the enterprise capability identified within *Business Events 2030* is not unique to business events. EIAI's experience is that the same production, AV, temporary infrastructure, transport, security, event-management and specialist supplier businesses frequently serve several event markets. The event purpose may change; the underlying enterprise capability often does not.

The event industry ecosystem

The same enterprises, professionals and supply chains support a wide range of event types across Ireland.

The enterprise capability sits within the business, not solely within the policy classification of the event it happens to be delivering.

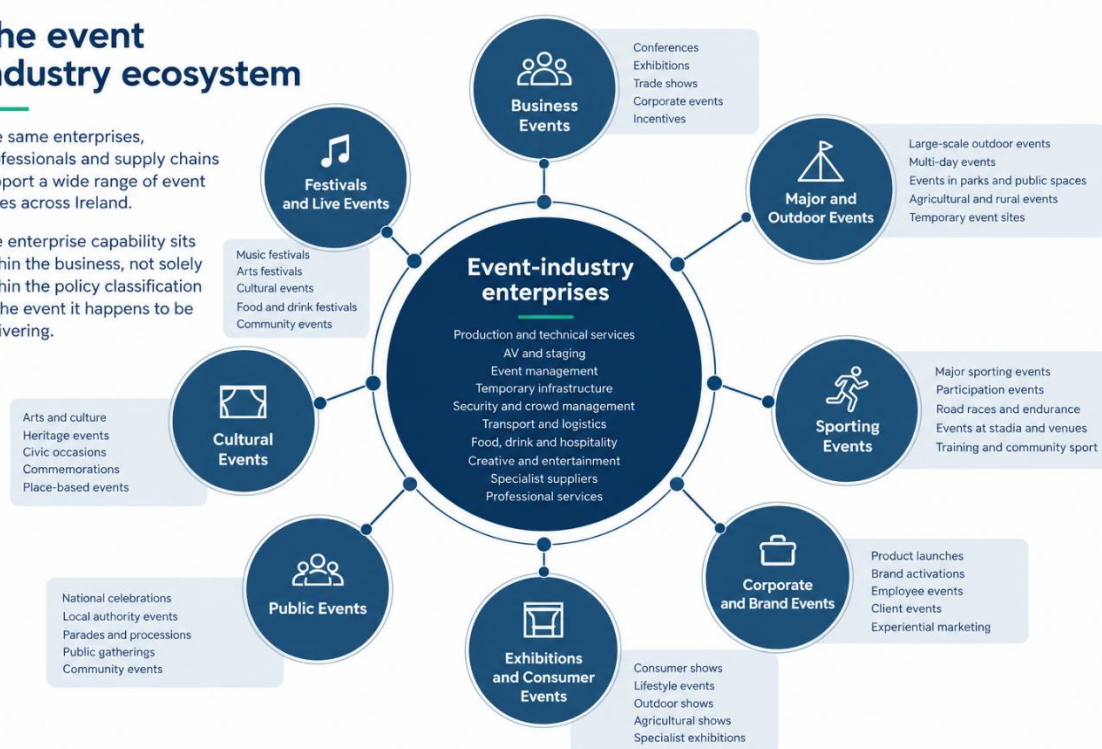


Figure 1. The event industry as a cross-cutting enterprise ecosystem.

Illustrative framework prepared by EIAI.

There is also objective evidence that the wider event environment is distributed across different policy and administrative systems. The national Code of Practice for outdoor musical events is published under the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport and dates from 1996; the Code of Practice for Fire Safety at Indoor Concerts is published under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and dates from 1998. Statutory licensing for outdoor events of 5,000 or more people is administered through local authorities under planning legislation, while *Business Events 2030* sits within the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. (Sources: [S.I. No. 37/2025 – Planning and Development \(Licensing of Outdoor Events\) Regulations 2025](#); [Safety at Outdoor Pop Concerts and Other Outdoor Musical Events \(1996\)](#); [Code of Practice for Fire Safety and Indoor Concerts 1998](#))

That distribution is not, in itself, a policy failure. Different bodies have legitimate statutory and operational responsibilities. The gap is that no published cross-industry enterprise framework has been identified that brings together what those systems mean for the businesses that operate across them. This submission therefore distinguishes between two related functions:

- **enterprise development**, where EIAI is asking Enterprise 2035 to ensure that event businesses are visible within policy on productivity, innovation, skills, regional development, internationalisation and resilience; and
- **event delivery, regulation and safety governance**, where responsibility will necessarily remain distributed across the relevant Departments, local authorities and statutory bodies but requires stronger coordination and maintained national guidance.

This distinction also ensures consistency with EIAI's February 2026 submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Developing Ireland's Live Music Industry. That submission proposed a shared-service model for event-delivery capability and modernised guidance while preserving local-authority decision-making. The present submission addresses the enterprise-policy side of the same cross-cutting system. (Sources: [Oireachtas Joint Committee discussion: Developing Ireland's Live Music Industry, 11 February 2026](#))

The starting point for Enterprise 2035 should therefore be:

The Department has already established through Business Events 2030 that events can be understood and developed as an enterprise ecosystem. Enterprise 2035 should apply that enterprise-policy lens to the wider event industry while preserving the distinct statutory, safety and sectoral responsibilities of existing bodies.

3. What the Department does for other industries

The Department already uses several different models to support strategically important sectors. These provide useful reference points for considering what functions are missing for the event industry.

Sector / area	Existing Departmental approach	Relevance to the event industry
Business Events	Dedicated <i>Business Events 2030</i> strategy; Department-led oversight; agency-led and industry-chaired subgroups; measurement; workforce and career actions; regional and seasonal objectives; cross-sector collaboration; international promotion.	Demonstrates directly that an event ecosystem can be recognised, coordinated, measured and strategically developed.
Retail	Standing Retail Forum, operating since 2014, through which key sector issues are discussed and practical actions can be identified by Government and industry. The Forum includes retailers, representative bodies, Departments, Enterprise Ireland, local-government representation and other public bodies.	Demonstrates a permanent structured-engagement model for a large, diverse and predominantly domestic sector without requiring creation of a separate agency.
Tourism	National Tourism Policy; central roles for Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland; Tourism Policy Oversight Group; stronger data collection; specific policy focus on SMEs, regional prosperity, digital transformation, competitiveness and climate action.	Demonstrates the value of clear ownership, implementation bodies, measurement, regional objectives and oversight.
Semiconductors	National semiconductor strategy; formal mapping of the ecosystem; industry-led Semiconductor Advisory Council; assigned actions across Government and enterprise agencies; dedicated skills study; investment, innovation and commercialisation objectives.	Demonstrates how mapping an ecosystem can precede targeted policy, and how Government can create a standing industry-led mechanism to identify opportunities and policy or funding gaps.
Life Sciences	Development of a National Life Sciences Strategy to create a coherent and ambitious approach across a complex ecosystem, with consultation focused on competitiveness, research and innovation, skills and talent, investment and collaboration.	Demonstrates that sectors spanning multiple activities and institutions can still be addressed through a coherent national strategy.

Sources: Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [DETE Retail Forum](#); [A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#); [DETE consultation on the National Life Sciences Strategy](#))

3.1 What this comparison demonstrates

These models are different because the sectors are different. EIAI does not argue that the event industry requires the same agencies as tourism, the same advisory structure as semiconductors or the same forum model as retail.

The comparison demonstrates something more fundamental: when Government wishes to develop a sector strategically, it has a range of established policy tools available. It can map an ecosystem, create a strategy, establish a forum or advisory council, assign implementation responsibility, develop measurement systems, identify skills requirements, connect enterprises with innovation supports and maintain structured engagement between industry and Government.

EIAI has not identified a published cross-industry strategy, standing forum or mapped enterprise framework for the wider event industry comparable to those arrangements. Existing supports are real and should be recognised: Fáilte Ireland provides guidance, training and resources for festivals and events; the National Enterprise Hub brings together more than 250 Government business supports; and Local Enterprise Offices provide advice, mentoring and digital, green and lean supports. The issue is therefore not that event businesses receive no public support. It is that there is no equivalent mechanism for viewing the wider event-industry enterprise base as one cross-cutting ecosystem and testing whether existing supports, eligibility rules, data and policy structures adequately fit it. (Sources: [Local Enterprise Offices Policy Statement 2024–2030](#) and the [National Enterprise Hub](#); [Fáilte Ireland events and festivals supports](#))

That distinction is important. Enterprise 2035 should not begin by creating a new agency or duplicating existing schemes. It should first recognise and map the ecosystem, test the fit of existing enterprise supports, and identify the functions that are demonstrably missing. At a minimum, those functions should include:

- a reliable understanding of the event-industry enterprise ecosystem;
- clear ownership within enterprise policy for cross-cutting business-development issues;
- structured and continuing engagement between industry and Government;
- coordination with relevant Departments, agencies and local government;
- a route for regulatory and administrative issues to be identified and referred to the appropriate policy owner;
- consideration of the industry within SME, productivity, digitalisation, AI and innovation programmes;
- skills and workforce planning;
- regional-development and internationalisation pathways; and
- measurable implementation and review.



4. A National Event Industry Strategy

Once the event-industry ecosystem has been properly mapped and the policy gap formally assessed, EIAI proposes that Ireland develop a National Event Industry Strategy. The sequencing matters. Mapping should establish the actual enterprise base, current supports, policy dependencies and evidence gaps before a strategy fixes institutional structures or creates new programmes.

A National Event Industry Strategy would not duplicate *Business Events 2030*, tourism policy, cultural policy, sports policy, night-time economy policy or local-government functions. Nor should it transfer statutory safety, planning or licensing responsibilities to the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. Its purpose would be to address the enterprise capability that sits across these areas and the development issues that cannot be seen clearly when each event type is considered only within its own policy silo.

A strategy should establish:

- a national vision for development of the event-industry enterprise ecosystem;
- the respective enterprise-policy, regulatory and delivery responsibilities of relevant bodies;
- enterprise development priorities;
- skills and workforce objectives;
- innovation, technology and productivity priorities;
- sustainability objectives;
- regulatory and administrative improvement priorities to be progressed with the responsible bodies;
- resilience planning;
- regional-development objectives;
- internationalisation opportunities; and
- mechanisms for measuring progress.

The Department already uses this model where it considers coherence necessary. *Business Events 2030* combines economic, social and environmental ambitions with oversight, implementation groups and measurable success factors. Tourism has a national policy and oversight group. The semiconductor sector has a strategy, ecosystem mapping and an industry-led Advisory Council. A National Life Sciences Strategy is being developed precisely to provide a coherent approach across a complex ecosystem. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#); [DETE consultation on the National Life Sciences Strategy](#))

The case EIAI is making is therefore not that the event industry should receive identical treatment to those sectors. It is that Enterprise 2035 should determine, on evidence, the strategic architecture appropriate to an industry whose businesses operate across several policy domains.



5. National coordination and structured industry engagement

Responsibility for event-related issues is distributed across numerous bodies. Some degree of distribution is appropriate and unavoidable. Fire safety, planning, roads, workplace safety, policing, tourism development and cultural policy are not interchangeable functions.

The practical problem is that cross-cutting issues can span those remits without a standing mechanism through which the enterprise consequences are considered. Current public arrangements illustrate that spread: the outdoor musical-events Code of Practice is published under Culture; the indoor concert fire-safety Code is published under Housing; outdoor-event licensing is administered through local authorities under planning legislation; and the Department of Enterprise leads the dedicated *Business Events 2030* strategy. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [S.I. No. 37/2025 – Planning and Development \(Licensing of Outdoor Events\) Regulations 2025](#); [Safety at Outdoor Pop Concerts and Other Outdoor Musical Events \(1996\)](#); [Code of Practice for Fire Safety and Indoor Concerts 1998](#))

Independent Irish research now reinforces the coordination point. *Grow the Show*, prepared by DFHERIS Regional Skills West with Galway City Council in 2026, found demand for clearer communication and earlier engagement between organisers, local authorities and other stakeholders. It also recorded that local-authority staff may be required to assess complex event documentation and coordinate multiple stakeholders, while there is no consistent national training pathway for staff involved in event review, event-safety advisory processes or public-event permissions. Its recommendations include clearer frameworks for different scales of events, regular engagement opportunities and improved coordination. (Sources: [Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland](#))

The Department already operates or supports several coordination models. The Retail Forum provides continuing Government-industry dialogue. *Business Events 2030* uses a Department-led oversight group and agency-led, industry-chaired subgroups. The semiconductor strategy is now supported by an industry-led Advisory Council. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [DETE Retail Forum](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#))

EIAI therefore recommends a permanent coordination and structured-engagement mechanism suited to the event industry's cross-cutting nature. Its enterprise-policy functions should include:

- structured engagement between the Department, event-industry representatives and relevant enterprise agencies;
- a standing route for cross-cutting regulatory or administrative problems to be referred to the responsible Department, local-government structure or statutory body;
- coordination with local government and relevant Departments where enterprise development depends on delivery systems outside DETE's direct remit;
- identification of emerging risks, skills needs and innovation opportunities;
- review of how existing business supports are reaching event SMEs;
- support for national data and ecosystem mapping; and
- transparent reporting on recurring barriers and agreed actions.

This does not require a large new agency. A forum, advisory council, shared secretariat or other structure could fulfil the function. Enterprise 2035 should define the required outcomes first and select the lightest structure capable of delivering them.

6. Regulation, permitting and the business environment

Enterprise competitiveness is influenced not only by taxation, labour costs or access to finance, but also by the administrative environment within which businesses operate. Events necessarily involve regulation, permissions and multi-agency coordination. EIAI does not advocate weakening appropriate safeguards. The objective should be clearer, more proportionate and more predictable administration.

There is a national statutory framework for large outdoor events. Under the Planning and Development Regulations, an outdoor event with an audience of 5,000 or more is prescribed for licensing purposes. The regulations provide for local-authority licensing and pre-application consultation, and the 2025 amendments extended the permitted pre-application consultation window to 36 months. (Sources: [S.I. No. 37/2025 – Planning and Development \(Licensing of Outdoor Events\) Regulations 2025](#))

Below that statutory threshold, and for the use of council-owned land or public space, published local processes vary. The examples are not identical legal schemes and local circumstances legitimately differ, but they illustrate the administrative landscape an organiser can encounter:

- Dublin City Council categorises public-domain events by scale and risk. It publishes a four-week process for small events and eight- or ten-week lead times for events of 1,000 to 4,999 people depending on risk classification. (Sources: [Dublin City Council event-planning guidance](#))
- South Dublin County Council publishes notice periods for events in parks and open spaces ranging from four weeks for very small events to 16 weeks for 1,000 to 4,999 attendees, 20 weeks for 5,000 to 19,999, and 52 weeks for 20,000 or more. (Sources: [South Dublin County Council – Hosting an Event in a Park](#))
- Fingal County Council requires permits for organised gatherings on council land, with six weeks' notice for events under 250 people and 12 weeks for larger events, together with separate arrangements where road closures are required. (Sources: [Fingal County Council – Apply to Hold an Event on Fingal Land](#))
- Cork City Council operates a separate public-space licensing process under the Roads Act; its current public guidance states that six weeks' notice of the proposed activity or event must be given. (Sources: [Cork City Council – Use of General Public Spaces](#))

These differences do not prove that any individual council process is unreasonable. They do demonstrate why organisers working across jurisdictions need early visibility of local requirements and why nationally reusable principles, templates and terminology could reduce repeat administrative work without removing local discretion.

The age and distribution of national guidance provide a second concrete issue. The State's published outdoor musical-events Code dates from 1996 and the indoor concert fire-safety Code from 1998. (Sources: [Safety at Outdoor Pop Concerts and Other Outdoor Musical Events \(1996\)](#); [Code of Practice for Fire Safety and Indoor Concerts 1998](#)) In contrast, the statutory outdoor-event licensing framework was amended as recently as 2025. (Sources: [S.I. No. 37/2025 – Planning and Development \(Licensing of Outdoor Events\) Regulations 2025](#)) EIAI's February 2026 Oireachtas submission set out a detailed case for a maintained, version-controlled national guidance baseline, clearer separation between legal requirements and guidance, proportionate risk-based processes, standardised templates and digital-ready document handling. (Sources: [Oireachtas Joint Committee discussion: Developing Ireland's Live Music Industry, 11 February 2026](#))

Enterprise 2035 should therefore support a cross-government regulatory-improvement workstream, led by the bodies with the relevant legal responsibilities, examining:

National consistency	Develop common terminology, model templates and baseline information requirements where national consistency is appropriate.
Proportionality	Use risk, complexity, site characteristics and potential public impact alongside attendance when designing guidance and administrative processes.
Digitalisation	Increase the use of interoperable digital submission, document distribution and status information.
Transparency	Make permissions, lead times, roles and decision points easy to identify at the beginning of planning.
Guidance ownership	Assign clear owners and review cycles to national event Codes and core guidance.
Learning	Establish a mechanism through which recurring operational issues and effective practice can inform national updates.

The objective is better regulation and administration, not a transfer of local statutory powers or a weakening of public-safety requirements.

7. Innovation, technology and commercialisation

Innovation in the event industry includes both the development of new products and the practical adoption of technologies that improve productivity, safety, accessibility, sustainability and customer experience. Relevant areas include ticketing, event-management systems, mapping, accreditation, access control, communications, temporary infrastructure, transport planning, energy monitoring, crowd-management tools and data analysis.

Ireland already has significant enterprise-support infrastructure. The National Enterprise Hub brings together information on more than 250 Government supports. The Local Enterprise Office policy framework provides advice, training and mentoring and makes digital, green and lean supports available broadly, while direct financial grant aid remains focused principally on manufacturing and internationally traded services. The Department's 2026-2030 capital plan allocates €1.33 billion to enterprise innovation and commercialisation and €1.12 billion to helping indigenous enterprises start, grow and scale. (Sources: [Local Enterprise Offices Policy Statement 2024-2030](#) and the [National Enterprise Hub; DETE Sectoral Capital Plan 2026-2030](#))

This means the policy question should not be framed as though no innovation supports exist. The more useful question is whether event-industry SMEs can identify, qualify for and practically use the supports that exist, and whether gaps remain for locally traded, project-based service businesses.

Enterprise 2035 should therefore commission, as part of the proposed ecosystem mapping, an event-industry support-fit review covering:

- awareness and take-up of existing LEO, Enterprise Ireland, National Enterprise Hub and other supports;
- eligibility barriers affecting locally traded event-service businesses;
- suitability of existing digital, green, lean and innovation programmes for project-based SMEs;
- access to test-before-invest facilities and research partnerships;
- pathways for event technology or specialist services with commercialisation potential; and
- opportunities for clustering between event enterprises, technology companies, higher-education institutions and public bodies.

This approach is consistent with *Business Events 2030*, which explicitly links sectoral clusters to knowledge-sharing, innovation, competitiveness and productivity. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))

Events can also provide controlled real-world environments for testing technologies in areas such as mobility, accessibility, temporary energy, digital accreditation, site mapping and audience-flow management. Any such pilots should be subject to normal safety, privacy, procurement and data-protection requirements.

8. Artificial intelligence

The Department is already moving from general AI policy towards sector-specific adoption measures. Its 2026 targeted consultation on enterprise AI adoption focused initially on manufacturing, tourism, construction and ICT services, seeking evidence on adoption levels, barriers, skills and the supports required. The Department also publishes a staged support pathway for SMEs, including LEO digital-readiness supports and vouchers, European Digital Innovation Hubs and more advanced Enterprise Ireland supports. (Sources: [DETE targeted sectoral consultation on enterprise adoption of AI](#))

That is a useful model for the event industry. EIAI is not proposing a separate AI scheme simply because a business works in events. Rather, Enterprise 2035 should ensure that the sectoral approach does not overlook event SMEs that sit outside the sectors selected for early AI work.

Potential uses include administrative automation, scheduling, procurement, document management, translation, accessibility, customer service, logistics, scenario analysis and operational planning. Some applications are low-risk productivity tools; others may touch operational or safety-critical decisions and therefore require stronger human oversight, data governance and competence.

EIAI recommends that the event-industry support-fit review assess:

- current AI adoption and barriers among event SMEs;
- whether existing digital supports are known and accessible to those businesses;
- sector-specific training needs;
- appropriate test-before-invest opportunities; and
- governance guidance for the use of AI in operational and safety-adjacent contexts.

The aim should be inclusion in the Department's existing AI-adoption architecture where possible, with event-specific measures developed only where evidence shows a gap.

9. Skills, careers and professional capability

The skills case is now supported by recent Irish research rather than industry assertion alone. *Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland* was prepared by DFHERIS Regional Skills West in partnership with Galway City Council and published in 2026. Its evidence base included a regional survey, a stakeholder workshop with more than 40 participants and review of existing training. The report's acknowledgements identify EIAI among the industry stakeholders who participated in the research. The report identifies a need for a coherent events-industry skills and competency framework covering safety, risk, compliance, technical production, statutory engagement, volunteer coordination, business sustainability, digital documentation and leadership. It also identifies demand for short, flexible, sector-specific programmes and clearer career pathways. (Sources: [Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland](#))

The report is regional and should not be treated as a national census. However, its recommendations are directly relevant to the national policy question. It also records limited provision tailored specifically to the operational realities of festival and event management and notes the absence of a consistent national training pathway for local-authority staff involved in event review, event-safety advisory processes or public-event permissions. (Sources: [Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland](#))

This evidence aligns with the Department's own approach in *Business Events 2030*, which includes long-term, sustainable careers and a secure, skilled workforce among its objectives, and with *Silicon Island*, where sectoral development is accompanied by a dedicated skills study. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#))

Enterprise 2035 should therefore support a national event-industry skills and competency workstream, developed with DFHERIS, Regional Skills, Skillnet Ireland, further and higher education, local government and industry. It should:

- test the regional *Grow the Show* findings nationally;
- define competency needs by role, responsibility and event complexity rather than relying on job titles alone;
- map existing courses, micro-credentials and industry training;
- identify gaps in technical, operational, regulatory, management and digital capability;
- develop flexible CPD and progression pathways suitable for project-based and freelance work;
- consider training and shared learning for public officials who review event documentation; and
- improve connections between education providers and real event-delivery environments.

EIAI's previously proposed National Events Centre of Excellence could be considered as one possible delivery mechanism for shared guidance, professional development, applied research and practitioner-public-sector learning. Enterprise 2035 does not need to prescribe that institutional model now; it should first establish the functions that require a permanent home.

The intention is not to impose a single qualification route on a diverse industry. It is to make competence, progression and professional development more visible and accessible.



10. Sustainability and the transition to lower-carbon events

Decarbonisation is one of the structural changes shaping the enterprise environment to 2035. For events, the transition involves practical questions concerning temporary power, transport, infrastructure, materials, procurement, waste, food and beverage provision, audience travel and supply chains.

There are already useful supports and precedents. Fáilte Ireland provides sustainability guidance for festivals and events. *Business Events 2030* provides for carbon baselining, a carbon calculator, a green toolkit and incentives for sustainable event delivery. At Department level, the 2026-2030 Sectoral Capital Plan allocates €300 million to enterprise decarbonisation. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [DETE Sectoral Capital Plan 2026–2030](#); [Fáilte Ireland events and festivals supports](#))

Again, the case should not be that a new stand-alone scheme is automatically required. The first requirement is to establish whether the wider event-industry enterprise base can effectively access existing enterprise and tourism supports and where event-specific infrastructure or guidance is genuinely needed.

Enterprise 2035 should support:

- practical measurement tools suitable for different event scales;
- clear routes into existing decarbonisation and energy-efficiency supports;
- demonstration projects for temporary power, circular materials, transport and waste systems;
- procurement approaches that reward measurable improvement without excluding smaller suppliers through disproportionate reporting burdens; and
- knowledge-sharing between business events, festivals, public events and other event types where solutions are transferable.

Major public and publicly funded events can provide useful demonstration environments, but measures should be evaluated for cost, operational feasibility and actual emissions impact rather than adopted as symbolic requirements.

11. Regional enterprise and placemaking

Events are inherently place-based. Their supply chains draw on venues, accommodation, transport, food and beverage businesses, retailers, technical suppliers, security, attractions and local services. The Department already treats regionality as an enterprise-policy objective: *Business Events 2030* includes specific regional and seasonal growth measures, while the National Tourism Policy links tourism SMEs with regional prosperity. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement](#))

Recent Irish research adds a useful event-specific perspective. *Grow the Show* identifies festivals and events as contributors to tourism, employment, placemaking and local enterprise in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and recommends a regional festivals and events strategy addressing sector growth, skills, infrastructure, collaboration and investment. (Sources: [Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland](#))

Enterprise 2035 should therefore treat event capability as one component of regional enterprise capacity. This does not mean every region requires the same event infrastructure. It means Regional Enterprise Plans and local economic strategies should be capable of considering:

- venue and event-space capacity;
- supplier and technical capability;
- skills and workforce availability;
- transport and accommodation;
- temporary infrastructure and utilities;
- public-space readiness;
- local administrative capability and predictable permissions;
- seasonality and opportunities to support year-round activity; and
- potential clusters linking events with tourism, culture, sport, food, technology and other regional strengths.

A useful early action would be to pilot event-industry ecosystem mapping in one or more regions, building on the evidence and stakeholder network already created through *Grow the Show*, before determining whether a national methodology can be standardised.



12. Trade, internationalisation and investment

Ireland competes internationally to host conferences, exhibitions, sporting events, cultural events, corporate activity and other significant gatherings. *Business Events 2030* already uses a Team Ireland model involving agencies, ambassadors and overseas networks and explicitly describes business events as an export sector that can support investment, trade promotion and knowledge transfer. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))

There is a separate potential opportunity on the supply side. Some Irish event businesses, professional services and event technologies may be capable of selling expertise internationally, including production, event management, specialist consultancy, software and technical solutions.

The current evidence base does not establish the scale of that export opportunity across the wider event industry. EIAI therefore recommends that Enterprise 2035 avoid assuming that every event business is export-oriented. Instead, the proposed ecosystem mapping should identify:

- event businesses already exporting services or technology;
- categories with realistic international market potential;
- barriers to participation in Enterprise Ireland or trade-promotion supports;
- procurement and partnership opportunities linked to international events; and
- where Irish event-delivery expertise could complement existing Team Ireland activity.

Enterprise Ireland is already the State agency responsible for supporting the development of Irish enterprises in world markets. The objective should be to ensure that export-ready event businesses are visible within existing internationalisation structures before considering any bespoke scheme. (Sources: [Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2025–2029](#))



13. Resilience

Events are particularly exposed to interruption because activity is time-specific and often depends on interconnected suppliers, venues, workers, transport, ticketing, temporary infrastructure and public services.

Recent Irish research documents some of the consequences of disruption. *Grow the Show* describes the COVID-19 pandemic as having an outsized effect on the Irish festival sector and records concerns around loss of skilled contractors, volunteer depletion, staffing pressure, increased workloads and the need for stronger organisational capacity. Because that research is regional and draws partly on earlier sector studies, it should not be treated as a current national measure of workforce loss. It does, however, support the case for treating resilience as an ecosystem issue rather than only a firm-level issue. (Sources: [Grow the Show: Skills Needs of the Festivals & Events Sector in the West of Ireland](#))

Business Events 2030 similarly includes a secure and resilient workforce among its economic objectives. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#))

Enterprise 2035 should therefore include the event industry in wider enterprise-resilience planning and use the proposed mapping exercise to identify dependencies that become critical during disruption. Areas for assessment should include:

- supply-chain concentration and substitutability;
- critical technical skills and specialist labour;
- dependencies on ticketing, payment and digital platforms;
- availability of temporary infrastructure;
- insurance and financial resilience;
- severe weather and climate adaptation;
- business-continuity capability among SMEs; and
- established channels for rapid two-way communication between Government and industry.

The strongest immediate recommendation is not a new resilience fund. It is to create the data and standing engagement structure that would allow Government and industry to understand the consequences of a future shock quickly and respond through the appropriate existing or emergency mechanisms.

14. Data, mapping and evidence

The event industry's data problem is partly structural. Economic activity is distributed across statistical classifications rather than captured by a single event-industry category. The CSO's NACE classification, for example, places organisation of conventions and trade shows in class 82.30, support activities to performing arts within the arts and entertainment classifications, and event catering within food-service classifications. Security, transport, equipment hire, software and other event supply-chain activities sit elsewhere again. (Sources: [CSO NACE Rev. 2.1 classification](#)) This does not mean the CSO is classifying businesses incorrectly. NACE is designed around principal economic activity, not around every supply chain a business serves. It does mean that a conventional single-code approach is unlikely to capture the event-industry ecosystem EIAI is describing.

The Department has already encountered a similar policy need elsewhere. *Silicon Island* is accompanied by a mapping of Ireland's semiconductor ecosystem and supporting sectors, explicitly to improve understanding of the sector's footprint and inform targeted policy. *Business Events 2030* likewise calls for new measurement tools and a value baseline for its own subsector. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#))

A comparable event-industry mapping exercise should therefore combine statistical data with administrative, survey and industry evidence. It should not be limited to counting events or to one NACE code. The work should seek to establish, insofar as reliable measurement permits:

- enterprise numbers and principal business activities;
- employment, self-employment and freelance work;
- geographic distribution;
- economic contribution and turnover where measurable;
- supply-chain relationships;
- skills and occupational profiles;
- export activity;
- event volumes and categories;
- seasonality;
- investment and capital requirements;
- innovation, digital and AI adoption;
- exposure to key dependencies and resilience risks; and
- regulatory and administrative interactions.

A first-stage map should also catalogue existing public supports and policy ownership. This would allow Enterprise 2035 to distinguish between three different problems: areas where supports exist but awareness is low; areas where support exists but eligibility or design does not fit the industry; and genuine policy gaps. This should be treated as infrastructure for better policymaking, not as a once-off headline estimate. It would also allow future EIAI or Government claims about the size of the event industry to rest on a transparent methodology rather than combining figures from different subsectors.

Where evidence is currently regional or subsectoral, Enterprise 2035 should not silently extrapolate it nationally. The absence of a robust national evidence base is itself one of the issues this recommendation is intended to address.



15. Governance and implementation

A recurring difficulty with cross-sector policy is that recommendations can fall between organisations because no individual body has responsibility for implementation. The sector comparisons outlined earlier show the importance of pairing strategy with governance.

Business Events 2030 provides for Departmental oversight and implementation subgroups. The semiconductor strategy assigns responsibilities across the Department, enterprise agencies and other institutions and is supported by an industry-led Advisory Council. The National Tourism Policy provides for a Tourism Policy Oversight Group and aligned implementation by the tourism agencies. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#))

For that reason, any commitments relating to the event industry within Enterprise 2035 should identify:

- who is responsible;
- what action will be undertaken;
- the intended timeframe;
- how industry will participate;
- how progress will be measured; and
- how implementation will be reviewed and reported.

This is as important as the individual policy measures themselves. EIAI would welcome the opportunity to participate in further engagement with the Department as Enterprise 2035 is developed.

Recommendations to Enterprise 2035

1. **Recognise the event industry** as a cross-sector enterprise ecosystem within national enterprise policy, while distinguishing enterprise development from statutory safety, planning and licensing responsibilities.
2. **Undertake a formal mapping of the event-industry enterprise ecosystem**, including businesses, employment, professions, supply chains, infrastructure, regional distribution, existing public supports, statistical classifications and cross-sector dependencies.
3. **Develop a National Event Industry Strategy following the mapping exercise**, establishing a long-term enterprise-development framework while complementing existing strategies for business events, tourism, culture, sport and the night-time economy.
4. **Establish a permanent national coordination and structured industry-engagement mechanism** linking DETE, enterprise agencies and event-industry representatives, with a formal route for cross-cutting matters to be referred to the relevant Departments, local-government structures and statutory bodies.
5. **Support a cross-government programme to modernise event regulation, administration and guidance**, focusing on clarity, proportionality, reusable national templates and terminology, digitalisation, transparent local processes and formal review cycles for national Codes and guidance.
6. **Carry out an event-industry support-fit review** to determine how effectively existing SME, innovation, digitalisation, green and commercialisation supports reach project-based and locally traded event enterprises and to identify evidence-based gaps.
7. **Include the event industry within sectoral AI-adoption work**, using existing SME digital and test-before-invest supports where possible and developing event-specific measures only where evidence shows a need.
8. **Develop a national event-industry skills and competency framework**, building on *Grow the Show* and testing its regional findings nationally; include flexible professional development, technical and operational pathways, and shared learning for public-sector staff involved in event review.
9. **Support the transition towards more sustainable event delivery** through practical measurement, access to existing enterprise decarbonisation supports, demonstration projects and transferable tools rather than duplicative reporting requirements.
10. **Recognise event capability within regional enterprise policy**, including supplier capacity, skills, venues, infrastructure, public-space readiness and local administrative capability; consider regional mapping pilots.
11. **Map the internationalisation potential of Irish event businesses, technology and professional expertise** and ensure export-ready firms are visible within existing Enterprise Ireland and Team Ireland structures.
12. **Include the event industry within national enterprise-resilience planning**, focusing first on ecosystem dependencies, skills, business continuity and standing communication channels rather than assuming a new funding mechanism is required.
13. **Develop and maintain a national evidence base for the event industry**, using a transparent multi-source methodology capable of informing policy and measuring progress over time.

Conclusion

Enterprise 2035 provides an opportunity to consider what Ireland's enterprise economy should become rather than simply extending today's structures for another decade. For the event industry, the objective should not be the creation of an isolated policy silo. It should be the opposite.

The Department's own work already points towards the solution. *Business Events 2030* recognises that events are delivered through an ecosystem of SMEs and specialist suppliers and builds around that ecosystem an architecture of oversight, collaboration, workforce development, measurement, regional growth, sustainability and international promotion. Retail demonstrates the value of a permanent forum for Government-industry engagement. Tourism demonstrates the value of policy ownership, implementation agencies, oversight and data. The semiconductor strategy demonstrates the value of mapping an ecosystem, assigning responsibility and maintaining an industry-led advisory structure. The development of a National Life Sciences Strategy demonstrates that a complex, cross-cutting sector can still be approached coherently. (Sources: [Business Events 2030](#); [DETE Retail Forum](#); [A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement](#); [Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy](#) and the [Semiconductor Advisory Council](#); [DETE consultation on the National Life Sciences Strategy](#))

The event industry does not require those models to be copied wholesale. It does require the same fundamental policy question to be asked: what structures are necessary for this enterprise ecosystem to develop successfully over the next decade?

By 2035, the businesses and professionals responsible for delivering events should be properly connected to Ireland's enterprise system. Their productivity should matter. Their capacity to innovate should matter. Their skills requirements should be understood. Their ability to invest should be supported. Regulation should be proportionate and navigable. Their contribution to regional economies should be recognised. Emerging Irish expertise and technology should have routes into international markets. And policymakers should have sufficiently reliable evidence to understand the industry they are making decisions about.

Ireland already recognises sustainability, innovation and productivity as foundations of successful enterprise policy. Enterprise 2035 provides an opportunity to ensure that those ambitions extend to the diverse indigenous enterprises that make Ireland's events possible.

The Event Industry Association of Ireland would welcome continued engagement with the Department in developing this work.

