



# SEEDING

Social Economy Enterprises addressing Digitalisation,  
INDustrial relations and the European Pillar of Social Rights



This project has received financial  
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**#SEEDINGprojec**

## Transnational workshop | 14 April 2021

Digitalisation

Industrial relations

Social enterprise

Tanya

**METHOD**

Ireland has the 6<sup>th</sup> most advanced digital economy in Europe (DESI index 2020)

### But generally, a two-tiered digital economy

- Large multinationals with high digitalisation levels – large in size, small in number
- SMEs slower to embrace digitalisation
  - barriers: knowledge, technical and finance.
  - employ 43% of workers

### Impact on jobs (2018)

- 46,000 job losses by 2023
- 1 in 3 jobs at high risk of impact by digitalisation (not loss)
- Sectors: agriculture, retail, transport, hospitality manufacturing



### **Covid - adds to the uncertainty**

- Eurofound (2020) survey: 'equal opportunities and access to labour market' – selected more than any other issue for EU's social and economic development (46% of Irish people surveyed)
- Covid - Rise in remote working; but also rise in 'platform work'
  - Impact on cities, workforce management (remote working)
  - Impact on status of workers (platform workers)

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (IR) – CONTEXT

- IR system described as voluntarist – no statutory union recognition
- Collective bargaining (employers & trade union) takes at local level
- National social partnership agreements between 1997-2009
- Trade union density in decline since 1990s (25%)
  - Partially due to most MNCs not recognising trade unions
  - Highest coverage in the public sector (66%)
  - Decline coincided with increase in employment rights legislation
- However, current employment legislation does not cover for some digital economy (platform workers)
- They would not come within the scope of collective bargaining (self-employed)
- Collective bargaining will not cover many in private sector (or non-employees)
- For other workers, lack of union presence could impact on access to lifelong learning
- Current industrial relations and employment legislation provisions not suited to meeting this gap

- Digitalisation will impact on existing workers (& low skilled)
- A new type of worker ('platform') – not by employment legislation
- But also entry into the labour market (education attainment key)
- Lifelong learning is key (participation associated with higher ed. attainment)
- Social enterprise context
  - Role in responding to labour market disadvantage
  - Role in adapting to digitalisation demands and opportunities
  - The sector is comparatively less developed in Ireland
  - Momentum - first social enterprise policy (2019)
  - Other collective responses - worker co-operative sector still small (est. 19) - co-op sector predominately agriculture coops and credit unions
  - Models of practice emerging