

# The contribution of Social Enterprises in rural Ireland

**Robert Nicholson – Department of Rural and Community Development**

High-Level Rural Policy Forum, Sigüenza (Spain)

27-29 September 2023



# Establish A Clear Policy Framework and Objective

- ▶ Established a new Department of Rural and Community Development
- ▶ National Social Enterprise Policy 2019-2022
- ▶ 'Our Rural Future' 2021 – 2025 – dedicated rural SE actions
- ▶ 2023 OECD Review of Social Enterprise/Entrepreneurship in IE
- ▶ 2023 Social Enterprise Rural Ideas Fora
- ▶ 2023 Mapping Social Enterprises and Impact on Sustainable Rural Development in IE

# 2023–1<sup>st</sup> SE Baseline Data Collection Exercise

- Annual Median Income - Rural € 80,000, Urban € 250,000
- Similar income levels from trading goods/services but rural less Governmental.
- The more rural the area the higher the density of social enterprises
- More prominent in disadvantaged compared to affluent areas
- Rural less diversified - 55% in Childcare/training/environmental
- Rural ≥ Community Infrastructure and Local Development
- Rural 44%/Urban 29% part time workers aged over 50
- IE Census 2022 – Population Growth in all local authority areas nationally
- ‘Our Rural Future’ Policy - Remote working, IT Hubs, Town Centre First Policies encourage retention of younger workers and families in rural areas

# Rural Proofing and Social Enterprise

- ▶ Understand that rural SE's play key role in social inclusion and regionally balanced development – link to wider rural policy
- ▶ Many SE national policies equally important to rural and urban
- ▶ Importance of better sector data/intelligence and development of Social Impact and Wellbeing Indicators for SEs
- ▶ Targetted supports for community based social entrepreneurs
- ▶ Regional procurement initiatives both public and private/corporate level

**Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform**

[https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member\\_en](https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en)



<https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu>

