

# 24 Ireland

This country profile presents recent trends in entrepreneurship and self-employment for women, youth, seniors, immigrants and people with disabilities in Ireland relative to the average for the European Union. It also describes recent policy actions and current issues related to inclusive entrepreneurship.

## Recent trends in inclusive entrepreneurship activities

The entrepreneurship conditions are in line with the European Union (EU) average. The proportion of people working on start-ups and managing new businesses (i.e. TEA rate) was above the EU average between 2018 and 2022 (12% vs. 7%). The shares were higher for women (9% vs. 6% in the EU), youth (18-30 years old) (15% vs. 9%) and seniors (50-64 years old) (9% vs. 4%). If everyone was as active as 30-49 year old men in creating and managing new businesses, there would be an additional 70 000 early-stage entrepreneurs. Of these “missing” entrepreneurs, essentially all would be women and two-thirds would be over 50 years old. Moreover, new entrepreneurs are much more likely to be growth-oriented (19% vs. 14%). The overall self-employment rate declined over the last decade (15% in 2013 to 12% in 2022). Women were less likely to be self-employed than on average in the EU (7% vs. 9%), yet they are as likely to employ others than on average in the EU (27% each).

## Recent policy developments

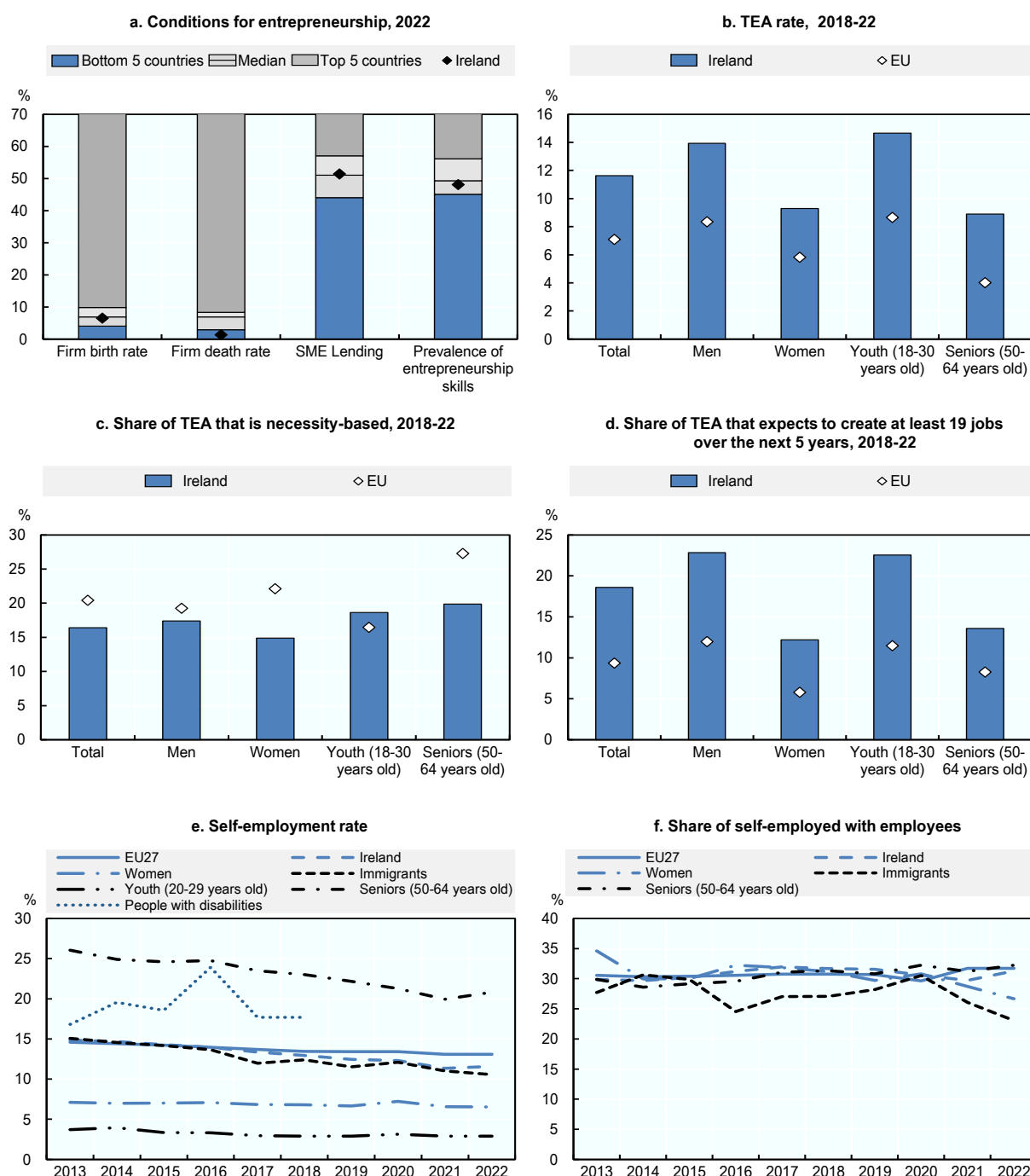
Several new initiatives have been introduced by state enterprise agencies and non-governmental organisations to support some of the inclusive entrepreneurship target communities. For example, Technological University Dublin in partnership with the Open Doors Initiative offers online entrepreneurship courses for people with disabilities and for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Fingal Local Enterprise Office recently launched a new entrepreneurship support programme – Start Your Own Business – which is a dedicated programme for Ukrainian refugees (around 80 participants) and is delivered bilingually. There has also been recent development on the local level through the Local Development Companies: not for-profit multi-sectoral partnerships delivering enterprise grants, training, community and rural development services.

## Hot policy issue

Supporting women entrepreneurs has been a priority over the past decade and there has been a significant commitment by government and its agencies to reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurial activity in Ireland. Many dedicated policies and programmes exist to support women entrepreneurs at the local, regional, and national level. For example, Enterprise Ireland developed a comprehensive six-year “Action Plan for Women in Business” (2020), which aims to increase the number of women engaged in entrepreneurial activity in Ireland. Other dedicated programmes include Going for Growth, ACORNS and Starting Strong.

## Inclusive entrepreneurship indicators

Figure 24.1. Entrepreneurship and self-employment data for Ireland



Note: In Panel a, the data for the EU median for SME lending excludes the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and Romania. The EU median for the entrepreneurship skills indicator excludes: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia and Malta. In Panels b-d, the data for the EU average refers to a population-weighted average and excludes Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia and Malta. Please see Chapter 10 for detailed notes on the figures.

Source: (Eurostat, 2023; GEM, 2023; OECD, 2023). Please see Chapter 10 for full citations.



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