News Release

EMBARGOED until 05:00 GMT on Monday 9 March 2026

Engineering employs 31% of Ireland's workforce according to landmark national analysis

- The first comprehensive engineering economy report of its kind, *Engineering Economy & Place, Ireland* is published jointly by the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Irish Academy of Engineering.
- Engineering sector outpaces national growth with high value, R&D employment.
- Dublin identified as 'Tech Heavyweight' with Cork, Limerick, Meath and Kildare identified as 'Engineering Powerhouses'.
- "*Engineering in Ireland is a highly R&D intensive activity, driving innovation and employment.*" Sean Finlay FIAE, President of the Irish Academy of Engineering.

Ireland's engineering economy employs nearly a third of the country's workforce, according to a new joint report published today by the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Irish Academy of Engineering.

Engineering Economy & Place, Ireland, is the first comprehensive place-based analysis of the engineering economy in the Republic of Ireland. It adapts a methodology used by the Royal Academy of Engineering in the UK and uses datasets including the last available census in 2022. Funded by InterTradeIreland, it is underpinned by analysis from Metro Dynamics.

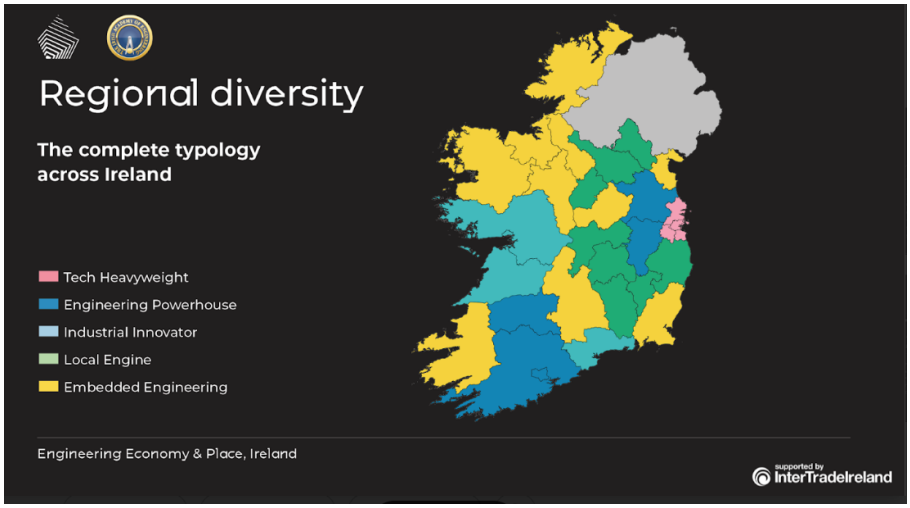
The analysis shows that while engineering employment varies across Ireland, engineering is a large part of the employment base everywhere, accounting for 31% of total employment in 2022. Over 725,000 people work in engineering related industries and occupations. This is broken down into 513,000 in engineering occupations and 212,000 who are non-engineering staff (for example HR, legal and PR), within engineering firms. Engineering expertise permeates all sectors of Ireland's economy, with an estimated 40% of those employed in engineering occupations in Ireland, working in companies outside of the engineering sector

It also demonstrates engineering's significant role in job creation. From 2011 to 2022, engineering employment grew by 44%, compared to a 29% increase in total employment in Ireland, adding more than 200,000 jobs and increasing engineering's share of total employment. These are high value jobs, with an average salary of nearly €60,000, 14% higher

than the national average. Engineering in Ireland is a highly R&D intensive sector, with over one fifth of those employed in the engineering economy in a role focused on research, develop or evaluate activities.

Mapping the engineering economy

The report found that engineering plays a distinct role and exhibits different features in each of the 31 administrative counties across the country. Using a variety of indicators including volume, value, local significance, industrial specialism and R&D intensity, the counties have been grouped into five categories:



Tech Heavyweight: Dublin City, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin

Mean annual earnings: €60,800; 246,000 employees and 14,100 businesses.

The defining characteristics of Tech Heavyweights are high volume (by employment), high-value engineering and strong R&D intensity. Four Dublin authorities fall into this category: Dublin City Centre, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin. This category is the largest in terms of the size of its engineering footprint, accounting for 34% of Ireland's engineering economy employment. It's heavily concentrated in technology industries with a much lower share in manufacturing, and high in roles focused on research, develop and evaluate activities.

Engineering Powerhouse: Kildare, Meath, Cork City, Cork County & Limerick

Mean annual earnings: €52,500; 183,000 employees and 10,400 businesses.

This category covers well established, high performing engineering economies with high value and high local significance. Outside Dublin, they are the largest in volume and have the next highest level of value and R&D intensity**.** They fall into two distinct groups, with Kildare and Meath tied to the tech heavyweights of Dublin, while Cork and Limerick have similar features. They are strong across four broad industrial areas: tech, manufacturing, construction and utilities.

Each county also has its own distinct advantages: Kildare is a major hub of advanced manufacturing and semiconductor innovation and has developed strengths around this, including microelectronics, precision automation and cleanroom construction. Meath has a strong AgriTech sector with an established SME network in agriculture engineering and machinery innovation. Cork has a large and diversified industrial base with strengths in biopharma, MedTech, ICT and advanced manufacturing. Finally, Limerick is close to the Shannon Free Zone with firms active in precision engineering, MedTech, digital technology and aerospace.

Industrial Innovator: Galway City, Galway County, Clare, Waterford

Mean annual earnings: €48,100; 78,000 employees and 4,200 businesses.

These are places with a high share of local economic activity in engineering, more R&D intensive activity than average and the highest share of manufacturing employment. Significant for this group is the role of engineering as a driver of innovation, boosting value and productivity in smaller local economies.

Galway is home to a major MedTech cluster, while in Clare the sector is tied to aviation and aerospace via the Shannon Free Zone , with strengths in precision manufacturing, automation and sensor technologies. Waterford is a leader in plastics engineering and toolmaking, which serve the wider national supply chain.

Local Engine: Carlow, Longford, Cavan, Monaghan, Offaly, Laois, Kilkenny and Wicklow.

Mean annual earnings: €44,700; 79,000 employees and 3,800 businesses.

These Border and Midlands regions of the country are characterised by the high local significance of engineering, accounting for at least 29% of overall employment. Growth rates are

strong but from a smaller base. They have a higher rate of employment in manufacturing, without a large tech sector, and lower rates of R&D intensity, which may mean less high-value manufacturing on average compared to other categories.

Embedded Engineering: Sligo, Kerry, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Westmeath, Louth, Wexford, Tipperary and Donegal.

Mean annual earnings: €44,300; 139,000 employees and 9,600 businesses.

The North-West and Midlands are more rural, less densely populated areas with lower wages and have the smallest engineering footprint. Engineering makes up a lower share of the local economy than the other categories but is still an important sector.

EEP Ireland Dashboard

In addition to this report, Metro Dynamics has created a dashboard of all the data which will be searchable by type of engineering activity and location. This should provide policymakers with a starting point to understand the distribution of engineering across Ireland and inform decisions that drive long-term growth and sustainability.

Sean Finlay FIAE, President of the Irish Academy of Engineering, said*: "There has long been a consensus in Ireland that engineering is integral to its economy. Developing and deploying the Engineering Economy and Place approach has allowed us to not only demonstrate that engineering plays a far greater role in Ireland's economy than captured by more traditional analyses; but also takes a much more granular view of the role of engineering in the place-specific contexts of the 31 administrative counties.*

"Engineering expertise is spread across all sectors of Ireland's economy, far beyond traditionally defined engineering industries. The data shows that engineering in Ireland is a highly R&D intensive activity, driving innovation and value creation with significant growth in employment, particularly in R&D intensive activities and employment in tech-related fields.

"The findings in the report and dashboard will help places, policymakers and engineering businesses to develop employment and their economy and leverage engineering's true potential.

"This report benefits from the insights of the best engineering minds in Ireland, North and South. Alongside the six Fellows of the Irish and UK academies who led the steering group, I would like to thank former IAE Presidents Tom Leahy and Jim Browne for their invaluable advice and input."

Sir John Lazar CBE FREng, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said: *"We created the Engineering, Economy and Place framework because traditional analyses struggled to account for the complexity of engineering and its contribution to our modern economy. It combines indicators that look at the engineering economy, engineering enterprise and place economics, to create a typology to describe the local and national role of engineering.*

"I am pleased that we have been able to work with the Irish Academy of Engineering to apply this robust and comprehensive data-led framework to describe Ireland's engineering economy and I hope the analysis will prove to be as useful as it has for us in the UK."

Margaret Hearty, CEO of InterTradeIreland, said: "*InterTradeIreland welcomes the findings from the Engineering Economy and Place report, which provides a clear, data-driven picture of*

how engineering and engineering-intensive activities are distributed across the island and its sectors, and how significant these activities are to local economies.

"The report demonstrates the scale and diversity of the engineering economy in Ireland, with almost a third of jobs relating to the engineering sector.

"Through our Synergy programme, we are proud to have supported the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Irish Academy of Engineering to collaborate and deliver this first-of-a-kind report and full map of the engineering economy at country and all island level, which will strengthen the evidence base for investment and policy targeting."

Jack Chambers TD, Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, said: *"The Engineering Economy and Place - Ireland report launched today by the Academies will help decision makers better understand our nation's engineering strengths and how best to support the sector to meet our shared goals.*

"My department recently published Ireland's Accelerating Infrastructure Report and Action Plan. This clearly demonstrates that timely and efficient infrastructure development is essential to meeting the needs of our growing population, supporting economic competitiveness, and delivering the essential public services our people and communities need.

"Engineering, in the many forms it takes, from tangible assets like roads and rail, to software and digitalisation, is central to addressing these challenges in the months, years and decades ahead."

Notes for Editors

1. The **Royal Academy of Engineering** creates and leads a community of outstanding experts and innovators to engineer better lives. As a charity and a Fellowship, we deliver public benefit from excellence in engineering and technology and convene leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics across engineering and technology. As a National Academy, we provide leadership for engineering and technology, and independent, expert advice to policymakers in the UK and beyond. Our work is enabled by funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, corporate and university partners, charitable trusts and foundations, and individual donors. www.raeng.org.uk
2. The aim of the **Irish Academy of Engineering** is to advance the wellbeing of the country by marshalling the expertise and insights of eminent engineers to provide independent, evidence-based advice to policymakers on matters involving engineering and technology. www.iae.ie
3. **InterTradeIreland:** InterTradeIreland connects businesses to opportunities across the island. It has directly assisted more than 61,000 business, while thousands of more SMEs have benefitted from its specialist advice. It has generated more than €1.95bn / £1.7 billion in business development value.

Established under Strand 2 of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, InterTradeIreland's approach is value through collaboration. Across the island there are many shared policy priorities and economic opportunities that can best be addressed by maximising collaboration.

Funded by both the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and the Department for the Economy, it is uniquely positioned to accelerate economic growth across the island. https://intertradeireland.com/