



The SFA National Small Business Awards 2018 have been officially launched by Awards Patron, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD. The aim of the awards is to celebrate the achievements of small business in Ireland and to recognise the vital contribution of the small business community to the Irish economy.

Small firms (employing less than 50 people) have from 4 September until 20 October to enter free of charge on www.sfa.ie/awards.

Speaking at the launch, **An Taoiseach** said, ““Every day 700,000 people across Ireland go to work in small firms and make an important contribution to their local communities and our economy. The SFA Awards are a great way to showcase the many successes of Irish small businesses, which help support the livelihood of families in every county nationwide. The Government is committed to supporting small firms as a vital part of our local and national economy and we will continue to build a business friendly environment in which they can thrive.”

The Awards are free to enter and the prize package for ALL finalists is valued at €50,000. It includes a strategic management masterclass weekend, participation in a Business Connect event, as well as broad-ranging national and local media coverage. Finalists also receive five complementary tickets to the gala prize giving ceremony which will take place in the RDS in February 2018 when the category winners and overall winner will be announced. The category winners will be presented with a trophy and free membership of the Small Firms Association. The overall winner will also receive a bursary of €5,000 to present to a charity of their choice (funded by the 2013 Overall Winner, Megazyme International Ireland) and a responsible business practices check-up and action plan from Business in the Community Ireland.

SFA Director, Sven Spollen-Behrens commented, “The SFA has a vision of Ireland as the most vibrant small business community in the world – supporting entrepreneurship, valuing small business and rewarding risk takers. The SFA National Small Business Awards are a celebration of the achievements of the 245,000 small firms in Ireland, who collectively employ 700,000 people, half the private sector workforce. The awards aim to promote excellence, achievement and innovation amongst small businesses in all sectors and parts of the country.”



“It is vital to celebrate the major contribution that small firms have made to growth, job creation and regional economic recovery in recent years. At a time of great uncertainty for many businesses, we call on the Government to support small firms to put their best foot forward, both domestically and internationally,” concluded Spollen-Behrens.

Ends

Entries to the awards will be accepted until 5.30pm on Friday, 20 October 2017, and entry forms are available online at www.sfa.ie/awards

The competition is open to all companies in Ireland with up to 50 employees and the categories are:

- Manufacturing — sponsored by Energia
- Food and Drink — sponsored by Bord Bia
- Services — sponsored by Three
- Outstanding Small Business — up to five employees, sponsored by AIB
- Innovator of the Year — sponsored by Enterprise Ireland
- Sustainable Energy – sponsored by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
- Exporter of the Year – sponsored by DHL Express