



**Shannon  
Chamber**  
Advancing business together

# Review of the Year 2024





## Foreword

**With 2024 marking the mid-way point in the delivery of the 2023 – 2026 strategic plan, Shannon Chamber directed its energies during the year to ensuring that the key deliverables contained in the plan were either completed or underway.**

Operating at many levels – achieving and implementing on our own and attaining results in collaboration with our many partners, we maintained a sharp focus on ensuring that key strategic issues impacting members and the region were receiving adequate attention by the relevant stakeholders.

Chief among these were:

- The continuation of URDF funding to enable the implementation of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan
- A review of the National Aviation Policy, and the permanent inclusion of Shannon Airport in the Regional Airports Programme
- A commitment to capitalising on the potential that Ireland's west coast offers for the development of a Floating Offshore Wind sector
- A review of General Work Permit salary thresholds

We pride ourselves in being a member-driven, proactive Chamber that, over the past thirty years, has remained relevant and fit for purpose, constantly improving our offering to members in line with their changing needs.

Our forums and networks – the CEO Forum, the HR Forum, the Mid-West Lean Network, and the Mid-West Sustainability Network – continue to deliver value to our members, through giving them a platform for keeping abreast of business trends in their respective sectors.

We thank the board and executive for their commitment to the Chamber in 2024 and look forward to celebrating the Chamber's thirty-year milestone in November 2025.

**Helen Downes**  
Chief Executive

**Eoin Gavin**  
President



## Objective 1: BE THE VOICE AND LOBBYIST FOR BUSINESS IN SHANNON

### Key issues brought to the attention of Government and the region's Oireachtas and elected representatives, and local authorities during 2024:

- a) **Housing:** We sought resolution to the impact that the lack of housing is having on the economy particularly on companies' ability to recruit and retain staff. We sought alleviation of the various obstacles that hinder housing infrastructure development, such as the availability of land for housing and the barriers to building, including the lack of serviced and zoned land.
- b) **Floating Offshore Wind:** We requested the preparation of Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs) to determine the broad area where floating offshore renewable energy projects can be developed off Ireland's west coast. We specifically requested that the expertise available in Clare County Council to develop DMAPs should be utilised to expedite the marine mapping of the Atlantic.
- c) **Funding for Shannon Town Centre Masterplan:** We were vehement in our continual requests to Government for URDF funding to facilitate the delivery of the OneShannonHub, phase one of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan.
- d) **Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme:** We inputted to and held multiple meetings on the Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme with Clare County Council.

- e) **Chambers Ireland Election Manifestos:** We presented the priority areas in Chambers Ireland's Election Manifestos – local, European and general elections – to our elected representatives.
- f) **N19 Shannon Airport Access Road:** We held productive and positive meetings on the proposed designs and timelines to the implementation of this road upgrade.
- g) **General Work Permit Visas:** We lobbied on the detrimental impact the contemplated minimum threshold of €39,000 from 2025 – 2026 would have on our member companies' financial viability.

### Responses to public consultations made on behalf of members

Submissions to Government on issues of regional and national importance undertaken of our own volition and/or in partnership with Chambers Ireland and relevant organisations in our sphere of influence, included:

1. Submission to **Consultation on the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Future Framework Policy Statement.** Submission made in collaboration with the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) Business Forum and AEC Chambers.
2. Submission to **NTA Route 343 Amendment**, including discussions with Irish Rail and Bus Eireann on critical transport requirements, including the development of a rail link to Shannon Airport.
3. Submission to **Draft Revised National Planning Framework.**





## Objective 2: GROW AND DELIVER VALUE TO A DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP



Hosting high-calibre in-person and virtual events on topics of relevance and beneficial to member companies enabled members to learn, collaborate and network. 2024 was a busy year in this regard.

**40 events** were held in 2024 including:

- 3 lunch events with keynote speakers:
  - Darragh O'Brien, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
  - Eddie Wilson, CEO, Ryanair
  - Alice Mansergh, CEO, Tourism Ireland
- We welcomed The Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) to Shannon.
- 3 conferences were hosted:
  - 'History Ireland Hedge School, Dr Brendan O'Regan – Life and Legacy' conference in April 2024, in association with Sixmilebridge Historical Society.
  - S4 Conference: Specialists Sharing Sustainability Strategies (culmination event in the Mid-West Sustainability Week, September 2024).
  - Mid-West Lean Network Conference: Are People Central to Lean? November 2024.
- Annual Golf Classic with full timesheet involving 54 teams playing on the day.
- 25 seminars and business meetings held in association with a wide range of stakeholders including Adare HRM, Grant Thornton, Ireland Canada Business Association, Regional Skills Forum, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, HILT, Clean Ireland Recycling, Southern Region Waste Planning Office, SEAI, Antaris Consulting, EY, Deloitte, Clare County Council, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Uisce Éireann, The Change We Need, WDC, Viatel Technology Group, German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce and ESB.
- 2 workshops and 1 site visit to Seating Matters (Lean Made Simple) in Northern Ireland, hosted by the Chamber's Mid-West Lean Network. The workshops included presentations from Element Six, Zimmer Biomet, Bijur Delimon Ireland and B. Braun Medical Ltd.
- Two new initiatives, which saw active participation by members:
  - Lunchtime networking along the Shannon Estuary Loop Walk
  - Luncheon cycle to mark World Bicycle Day.



## Enhancing the skills of enterprise

2024 was another successful year for Shannon Chamber Skillnet with 98 programmes, involving 2,904 training days, delivered to 582 employees in 96 companies.

These programmes provided a wide variety of learning and development opportunities in areas such as management and leadership development, lean, project management, digital skills, communication, as well as industry-specific professional development.

## Key highlights in 2024

- The creation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) Technology programme in collaboration with the Technological University of The Shannon (TUS) and a range of industry partners. This course was the first of its kind in the country at Level 7. Participants were awarded a 10 ECTS credit Special Purpose Award Certificate.
- Successfully applied to Skillnet Ireland for a funding stream, ESF+. This enabled member companies to avail of a higher subsidy on certain certificated programmes such as the Level 8 Diploma in High Performance Leadership, certified by Technological University of Dublin.
- Participation in an EU-wide project, Project Eagle, in conjunction with the University of Limerick, Limerick Chamber Skillnet and Skillnet Ireland. This project aims to enhance the digital skills of managers and staff in SMEs. Programmes delivered in 2024 included:
  - An 'Introduction to Data Analytics/Visualisation & Machine Learning'; and
  - 'Digitalisation of Process'
- Enabling Shannon Chamber member companies to avail of a range of fully funded supports through ENTIRE – one of 4 European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) in Ireland – funded by Enterprise Ireland and the European Union, Next Generation EU fund with Skillnet Ireland the industry partner in this initiative. ENTIRE focuses on supporting SMEs and public authorities in life sciences/healthtech, agriculture, energy and transport sectors on their digital journeys.





## Objective 3: CHAMPION THE DELIVERY OF THE SHANNON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



We were disappointed to note that URDF funding, earmarked as the funding source for the delivery of phase one of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan – the OneShannonHub – was almost exhausted. As no provision for renewing this Fund was made in Budget 2025, we renewed our lobby for the continuation of URDF funding to enable the implementation of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. This would demonstrate a commitment to enhancing Shannon's infrastructure, recognising the contribution it makes to the national economy.

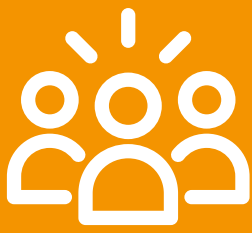




## Objective 4: PROMOTE THE UNIQUE PROPOSITION OF BRAND SHANNON TO GROW THE REGION'S ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY



We maintained our focus on energetically publicising and promoting the expansiveness of Shannon's offering; the benefits accruing to using Shannon Airport; the transformative work being undertaken within the corridors of industry; the availability of talent and educational offerings; the collaborations available to potential investors in Shannon and the region; and the wondrous Wild Atlantic Way.



## Objective 5: POSITION SHANNON CHAMBER AS A THOUGHT LEADER ON ISSUES THAT IMPACT SHANNON AND THE REGION



We consolidated our role as a thought leader by actively addressing regional challenges, promoting sustainability, and enhancing business development through strategic initiatives and collaborations. Our proactive approach in 2024—through policy advocacy, sustainability initiatives, award recognitions, and comprehensive training programmes—reinforced our position as a thought leader committed to fostering regional development and business excellence.

### **Advocacy and Policy Influence**

We maintained a strong lobbying presence in 2024, focusing on critical infrastructural and policy issues affecting the region.

### **Sustainability Leadership**

Building on the success of the inaugural Sustainability Week in 2023, we hosted the second annual Mid-West Sustainability Week in 2024. The event featured ten themed days and a one-day conference, showcasing the strides companies in the Shannon region are making towards net-zero goals.

### **Recognition and Awards**

The Chamber's commitment to excellence was recognised when it was shortlisted in three categories at the 2024 Chamber Awards, sponsored by Zurich. The nominations included Sustainability and Biodiversity, Event of the Year, and Local Authority Engagement, underscoring the Chamber's effective initiatives and collaborations.

### **Business Development and Training**

Through our Skillnet programme, we facilitated the upskilling of the region's workforce in areas such as management and leadership development, lean practices, digital skills, and industry-specific professional development.





## Objective 6: COLLABORATE ON PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY



Through organising our second annual Mid-West Sustainability Week in September we showcased and promoted sustainable practices among businesses in the region.

### Key Highlights of Sustainability Week 2024

#### 1. Themed Events Focused on Sustainability

The week featured a series of in-person and online events, each dedicated to a specific sustainability theme: Waste, Water, Energy, and Biodiversity. These sessions provided valuable insights and practical solutions for businesses striving to reduce their environmental impact and achieve net-zero targets.



#### 2. Hydrogen Power Unit Demonstration

A notable addition to our 2024 programme was the placement of ESB's new Hydrogen Power Unit at the Shannon Free Zone.

#### 3. Collaborative Engagement with Industry Leaders

The event brought together a diverse group of companies and organisations, including ESB, Eli Lilly, Ei Electronics, AIB, and the Shannon Airport Group, among others. These stakeholders shared their experiences and strategies in implementing sustainable practices, fostering a collaborative environment for knowledge exchange.

#### 4. Recognition and Awards

The Chamber's efforts in promoting sustainability were acknowledged through being shortlisted in the Sustainability and Biodiversity category at the 2024 Chamber Awards. This recognition underscores the impact and significance of the Sustainability Week initiative.

Through these initiatives, Shannon Chamber has reinforced its commitment to fostering sustainable business practices and supporting the transition to a greener economy in the Mid-West region.



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## Contact Us

T: +353 (61) 475854  
E: [admin@shannonchamber.ie](mailto:admin@shannonchamber.ie)  
[www.shannonchamber.ie](http://www.shannonchamber.ie)



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