

How Generative AI is Powering the Next Wave of Innovation in Ireland

Executive Summary

Generative AI (GenAI)—a category of AI that can create new content such as text, images, audio, or software code—is moving from experimentation into operational reality for Irish organisations, reshaping how products are built, how work gets done, and how services are delivered. [\[1\]](#) In Ireland, the signals of mainstreaming are already visible at the population level: the Central Statistics Office reports that **42% of internet users** used generative AI tools within the prior three months in 2025, with usage especially high among younger cohorts (for example, **72% of males aged 16–29**). [\[2\]](#) At the enterprise level, Ireland’s official enterprise ICT survey shows **20.2% of enterprises** used AI in 2025, and notably **9.3%** reported using AI for **natural language generation**—one of the clearest statistical proxies for GenAI deployment inside business processes. [\[3\]](#)

The “next wave of innovation” in Ireland is being powered by GenAI in three interconnected ways. First, GenAI is accelerating **knowledge work** (drafting, summarisation, analysis, software development support, and internal search) and embedding itself into “everyday tools,” which is why enterprise deployments like AIB [\[4\]](#)’s rollout of Microsoft 365 Copilot to the vast majority of staff are strategically important: they represent a move from pilot activity to scaled capability, including forecasting support and faster synthesis of customer insights via a governed AI platform. [\[5\]](#) Second, GenAI is enabling **new products and services** built directly on foundation models (for example AI agents in customer service and workflow automation), exemplified by Irish-founded Intercom [\[6\]](#)’s LLM-driven agent approach and the rapid process changes reported by organisations implementing AI agents in customer support operations. [\[7\]](#) Third, GenAI is catalysing **public-sector and ecosystem innovation**, including structured experimentation with governance and ethics—illustrated by Dublin City Council [\[8\]](#) and Trinity College Dublin [\[9\]](#) launching Ireland’s first local-government Generative AI Lab with the ADAPT Research Ireland Centre [\[10\]](#), explicitly combining prototype development with governance, transparency, and staff upskilling. [\[11\]](#)

The urgency (“Why now?”) is being amplified by a converging policy and regulatory timetable. Ireland published a new National Digital and AI Strategy in February 2026 (“Digital Ireland – Connecting our People, Securing our Future”), setting out **20 objectives and 90 deliverables**, including AI skilling initiatives and public-sector AI supports such as an AI Advisory Unit, AI Fellowship programme, and sectoral actions to

drive AI adoption across enterprise. [12] In parallel, the EU AI Act—an EU regulation that entered into force on **2 August 2024**—is rolling out in phases over 36 months, including AI literacy requirements and major high-risk system obligations that peak in 2026–2027. [13] Ireland’s implementation plan includes establishing a national AI Office by **August 2026** (as a central coordinating authority and single point of contact), and a distributed enforcement model involving sector regulators such as the Data Protection Commission. [14]

Critically, adoption is uneven and measurement differs by lens. Irish enterprise statistics show a fast rise in AI use from 2024 to 2025. [15] Yet senior-leader surveys and journalism highlight that “**widespread adoption**” remains low in some cohorts (for example, PwC’s Irish business leader survey reported **6%** widespread adoption in late 2024), and worker-level daily GenAI use can lag even as organisational experimentation grows (for example, reporting of **10% daily GenAI use** in Ireland in a PwC-linked survey cited by Irish Times). [16] The practical implication for strategy is that Ireland is in an “acceleration phase”: lots of tooling and experimentation, a smaller proportion of enterprises achieving deep operating model change, and a rapidly tightening governance landscape.

A note on sources: previously uploaded internal PDFs referenced earlier in this conversation were not available in the current workspace, so this briefing is built from current public Irish and EU sources and reputable industry publications.

Why Now

Ireland’s GenAI innovation moment in 2025–2026 is driven by a stack of triggers that reinforce each other: mass consumer familiarity, enterprise experimentation moving toward scale, policy pushes for digital productivity, and regulatory deadlines that force governance maturity.

A key irreversibility trigger is **mainstream user adoption**. Ireland’s household ICT survey introduced new GenAI questions in 2025 and found that **42%** of internet users had used GenAI tools recently; usage levels among younger users reached well beyond that (for example 72% of males aged 16–29). [2] This matters for innovation because it changes employee expectations (“bring-your-own-AI” behaviour), customer expectations (self-service, instant answers), and the feasibility of rolling out AI-assisted workflows across roles without prohibitive training overhead.

A second trigger is the **enterprise adoption curve shifting from “if” to “how”**. The CSO reports that AI use among enterprises rose to **20.2%** in 2025 (from **15.2%** in 2024, and **8.1%** in 2023). [15] Within that 2025 figure, GenAI-adjacent deployment is visible in the share using **natural language generation (9.3%)** and workflow/decision-support uses. [3] Meanwhile, large enterprises are far ahead of small ones (57.7% vs. 17.2%

using AI in 2025). [\[3\]](#) This creates a competitive pressure pattern familiar in Ireland: large firms and multinationals set the productivity frontier; SMEs need funded pathways to catch up.

A third trigger is the **Irish policy agenda explicitly positioning AI as a national competitiveness lever**. In February 2026, the Irish government published “Digital Ireland – Connecting our People, Securing our Future,” committing to objectives and deliverables across public services, enterprise, infrastructure, regulation, and skills, including AI skilling platforms, an AI Advisory Unit, a National AI Fellowship for the public sector, sectoral strategies for enterprise AI adoption, and a “GovTech 2026 Challenge.” [\[12\]](#) This is not generic rhetoric: the strategy ties AI adoption to measurable delivery outcomes (for example, targets towards 2030 for digital public services) and highlights national efforts to build skills and trust. [\[12\]](#)

A fourth trigger is **funding architecture that reduces adoption friction**, especially for SMEs and regional businesses. Enterprise Ireland [\[17\]](#)’s “Access Advice: Digital Discovery” provides up to **80% grant funding** to a maximum of **€5,000**, explicitly including “the first step/next step in Artificial Intelligence.” [\[18\]](#) Enterprise Ireland’s “Digital Process Innovation” supports larger implementation projects via “up to 50% grant funding.” [\[19\]](#) At the same time, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment describes the Digital Transition Fund (part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan) as a vehicle to drive transformative digitalisation, particularly among SMEs, including access to European Digital Innovation Hubs intended to let firms “test before invest.” [\[20\]](#)

A fifth trigger is **labour market pressure and skills repositioning**. IDA Ireland [\[21\]](#)’s Labour Market Pulse, produced with Microsoft [\[22\]](#) and LinkedIn [\[23\]](#), frames GenAI as a productivity catalyst and emphasises workforce segments and sectors most exposed (for example, Technology/Information/Media; Financial Services; Professional Services). [\[24\]](#) The same publication cites a joint Trinity/Microsoft finding that **49% of organisations in Ireland** were already using GenAI in some form. [\[24\]](#) This reinforces a practical truth: in Ireland, AI innovation and workforce innovation are now the same programme.

A final trigger is **regulation moving from abstract to operational**. The EU AI Act entered into force on **2 August 2024** and is phased in over 36 months. [\[25\]](#) In Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment published the General Scheme of the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Bill 2026, proposing an Irish AI Office (“Oifig Intleachta Shaorga na hÉireann”) as the central coordinating authority and single point of contact, backed by a distributed regulator model. [\[26\]](#) National competent authorities include sector regulators such as the Data Protection Commission and others, and the government’s AI Act explainer explicitly states the AI Office will coordinate, provide

technical expertise access, and host a regulatory sandbox to drive innovation. [\[27\]](#) This combination of innovation ambition and governance obligation is one of the clearest “why now” reasons: organisations that build capability early will innovate faster with less regulatory risk.

Data and Statistics

The data below is intentionally “intel-dense”—it is meant to be reused later for blog hooks, executive talking points, or slideware. Where data is older than ~2 years relative to March 2026, it is labelled as legacy.

Enterprise and household adoption (Ireland-specific):

- **42% of internet users** in Ireland used generative AI within the prior three months in 2025; **47% of males vs 37% of females** reported use. [\[2\]](#)
- Among males aged **16–29**, **72%** used GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT/Copilot) in 2025. [\[2\]](#)
- By principal economic status, **66% of students** used GenAI, versus **46% of employees**. [\[2\]](#)
- AI use among enterprises reached **20.2%** in 2025; large enterprises: **57.7%**, medium: **28.6%**, small: **17.2%**. [\[3\]](#)
- In 2025, enterprise AI use cases included **data mining (10.8%)**, **natural language generation (9.3%)**, and **workflow automation/decision support (6.2%)**. [\[3\]](#)
- In 2025, enterprises most often used AI for **business administrative processes (7.8%)**, and **marketing/sales, ICT services, and R&D/innovation activity (each 5.4%)**. [\[3\]](#)
- In 2024, **15.2%** of enterprises reported AI usage; large enterprises: **51.2%**; medium: **25.1%**; small: **12.0%**. [\[28\]](#)
- In 2024, **natural language generation** was the most common AI technology used by enterprises (**7.4%**). [\[28\]](#)
- In 2023 (legacy), enterprise AI use was **8.1%** (showing the steep adoption climb into 2024–2025). [\[28\]](#)

SME GenAI usage and workforce exposure:

- In a forthcoming OECD SME survey cited by Ireland’s “Skills Insights Note 2025-2,” **33%** of SMEs in Ireland reported usage of generative AI—third-highest in the survey group. [\[29\]](#)
- IDA/Microsoft/LinkedIn Labour Market Pulse analysis indicates **60% of Gen X** in Ireland are in occupations where GenAI can complement/transform work; **56%** for Millennials; **52%** for Gen Z. [\[24\]](#)

- Sector exposure (from the same Labour Market Pulse): **72%** of occupations in Technology/Information/Media, **70%** in Financial Services, and **63%** in Professional Services are positioned for GenAI transformation. [\[24\]](#)
- The Skills Insights Note reports a “doubling in AI-related job posts since 2023,” based on Indeed job posting data referenced in the note. [\[29\]](#)

Executive sentiment, maturity, and governance:

- Deloitte’s Irish findings (Feb 2026) report **84%** say skills gaps are the main barrier to “traditional” AI adoption, and **52%** cite skills gaps as the main barrier to GenAI adoption. [\[30\]](#)
- In the same study, **98%** of Irish leaders said AI improved speed of decision-making and execution, and **84%** reported productivity gains today; **90%** reported moderate-to-extensive job redesign underway. [\[30\]](#)
- Deloitte also reports Irish leaders’ risk priorities: **66%** cite data privacy/security as top AI risks; **64%** cite legal/IP/regulatory compliance; **68%** are highly concerned about using proprietary or sensitive data in AI models. [\[30\]](#)
- PwC’s Irish GenAI Business Leaders Survey (late 2024) found “widespread adoption” remained low at **6%**, consistent with earlier waves; it also states governance and trust are critical, and notes the EU AI Act is welcomed by the majority of respondents. [\[31\]](#)
- Irish mid-market evidence (Grant Thornton, Sep 2025): **58%** of Irish executives cited privacy as the key challenge to AI adoption; **six in ten** worried employees were entering sensitive information into GenAI platforms; and **53%** required staff to follow an AI-usage policy when using GenAI (up from 37% six months earlier). [\[32\]](#)
- IDC/SAS (Nov 2025) reports **28%** of Irish organisations are at the “transformative” AI maturity stage (vs 10% globally) and **44%** at “integrated,” with Ireland also leading an “Impact Index” score. [\[33\]](#)

Macro investment signals (contextual, not Ireland-only but shaping Irish innovation):

- Global GenAI VC investment reached **\$49.2B in H1 2025**, surpassing the full 2024 total (\$44.2B). [\[34\]](#)
- EY notes a funding gap challenge for startups in the **€1M–€10M** range, which can affect Irish scaling pathways. [\[34\]](#)

Regulatory deadlines and penalties (EU, with Ireland implementation implications):

- EU AI Act entered into force **2 Aug 2024**, phased over 36 months; prohibited practices and AI literacy duties are part of staged requirements. [\[13\]](#)

- Penalties can reach **€35M or 7% of global turnover** for certain infringements. [\[35\]](#)
- Ireland's AI Office will be established as central coordinator by **August 2026**, and Ireland's competent authorities include the Data Protection Commission plus sector regulators. [\[27\]](#)

Funding and supports (Ireland-specific):

- Enterprise Ireland Digital Discovery: up to **80%** grant funding, maximum **€5,000**. [\[18\]](#)
- Enterprise Ireland Digital Process Innovation: “up to **50%** grant funding” for implementation programmes. [\[19\]](#)
- Departmental description: the Digital Transition Fund is intended to drive transformative digitalisation particularly among SMEs, including “test before invest” access through European Digital Innovation Hubs. [\[20\]](#)

Thematic Deep Dives

GenAI as a product innovation engine

The most defensible innovation value from GenAI in Ireland is moving from “using tools” to **building differentiated products and services** on top of foundation models. The EU AI Act recognises “general-purpose AI (GPAI) models” (often called foundation models) as uniquely powerful and risk-bearing, requiring specific provisions and obligations, enforced at EU level by the European Commission's AI Office. [\[25\]](#) The innovation pattern for Irish firms is therefore two-sided: create new services quickly, and harden them to regulatory expectations (transparency, risk controls, data governance) early.

In practice, GenAI product innovation is increasingly “agent-shaped”: AI systems that can handle a class of tasks end-to-end (customer support, internal workflow execution, lightweight analysis and drafting). In Irish market commentary, the gap is not curiosity—it is trust and operating model redesign: for example, Irish Times reporting in late 2025 highlighted that only **16%** of Irish companies were developing new “agentic products and services,” compared with higher US levels, suggesting a headroom opportunity for indigenous innovation. [\[36\]](#)

The Irish implication: “next wave” winners will be those who translate GenAI into **repeatable** customer value—domain-specific copilots, secure agents, and compliant automation—rather than one-off point deployments.

GenAI as “decision acceleration” for knowledge work

GenAI's most immediate innovation effect is compressing decision cycles in knowledge-heavy sectors that dominate Ireland's economy (financial services, professional services, software, public administration). The enterprise-level profile is visible: in 2025, 7.8% of enterprises used AI for business administrative processes and 5.4% for R&D/innovation activities. [\[3\]](#) Ireland's own AI labour market publications frame GenAI as a catalyst that frees time for "value-added and creative work." [\[24\]](#)

Deloitte's Irish leadership survey provides a strong "execution and productivity" signal: **98%** of Irish leaders report AI improved speed of decision-making/execution, while **84%** report productivity gains already achieved. [\[30\]](#) This is a useful lens for strategy: GenAI is becoming less about "innovation theatre" and more about **retooling organisations**—job redesign, new workflows, and new measures of performance (time-to-decision, cost-to-serve, throughput per employee).

A practical, high-leverage architecture underpinning knowledge-work innovation is **retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)**—combining LLM generation with retrieval of trusted internal sources to ground outputs. Foundational RAG research describes how retrieval plus generation improves factuality and specificity versus parametric-only generation. [\[37\]](#) For Irish organisations that must manage GDPR and sectoral obligations, this "grounded" approach is a core strategic mitigation against hallucination and disclosure risk.

Marketing, communication, and multilingual advantage

Ireland's GenAI adoption at the population level (42% in recent use among internet users) indicates a steep rise in human familiarity with AI-assisted text and image generation. [\[2\]](#) For businesses, "natural language generation" usage reported by enterprises (9.3% in 2025) underscores rapidly expanding use cases in customer communications, internal documentation, and marketing. [\[3\]](#)

The innovation opportunity in Ireland is not merely "content at scale." It is: (a) consistent brand voice across channels; (b) faster localisation for exports; (c) faster compliance review cycles (particularly for regulated industries); and (d) new modes of customer interaction (conversational journeys replacing static web pages). The caveat, supported by multiple Irish sources, is that privacy concerns and governance are tightening (not loosening). [\[38\]](#)

Operational efficiency and supply chain innovation

While GenAI is often framed as a "knowledge work tool," the broader innovation wave includes operations and logistics when GenAI is integrated into workflows that touch real-world data and decisions. CSO enterprise data shows usage in production

processes and logistics remains smaller than administrative uses, but it is present and growing. [\[3\]](#)

A critical innovation pattern is “AI-native operations” where model outputs directly compress cycle-time: for example, the Irish startup Prodensus (case study below) reports processing **25,000 shipments in 5 minutes** versus an analyst effort of **1–2 weeks**, demonstrating the magnitude of time compression possible when AI is integrated into decision pipelines. [\[39\]](#)

Public sector and govtech innovation

Ireland’s GenAI innovation wave is not exclusively private-sector. The government’s 2026 strategy explicitly calls out public-sector AI enablement (AI Advisory Unit, AI Fellowship programme, and “AI for Care” direction), signalling the state’s intent to systematically adopt AI while maintaining trust and rights protections. [\[12\]](#)

At the applied innovation level, the Dublin City Council / ADAPT / Trinity GenAI Lab is a high signal: it links pilot work (prototypes, workshops, administrative streamlining) with governance and ethical deployment, aiming to create best practice for public services and policy frameworks. [\[11\]](#) This matters for the wider Irish ecosystem because public-sector experimentation can shape procurement norms, standards expectations, and citizen trust—each of which affects private-sector adoption and AI product-market fit.

Case Study Evidence

AIB enterprise GenAI rollout for productivity and customer insight

AIB and Microsoft Ireland announced a broad AI rollout built around Microsoft 365 Copilot deployment to the “vast majority” of employees, embedding AI into everyday tools such as Outlook, Teams, and Office applications. [\[5\]](#) The strategic relevance is not the tool choice—it is the operating model: AIB positions Copilot as a way to optimise forecasting, support planning, and improve cross-team collaboration, while freeing time from repetitive work toward higher-value activity. [\[5\]](#)

AIB also describes an AI Centre of Excellence using Copilot Studio to develop tailored AI solutions, including faster synthesis of customer insights from complex data sources, within a governed and scalable AI platform. [\[5\]](#) This aligns with a broader Irish pattern: regulated industries are recognising GenAI as an execution layer—but only when paired with governance and data controls.

Intercom’s LLM-driven customer service agent as a scalable Irish innovation export

Intercom's Fin product has become a canonical example of AI agent innovation emanating from an Irish-founded company operating globally. Third-party profiles (e.g., podcast summaries and business analysis commentary) describe Fin as built on large language models, with scale indicators such as **7,000+ customers** and **over one million resolutions per week** cited in external summaries. [\[40\]](#) Intercom's own materials position AI customer service as capable of resolving "up to 50%" of support questions quickly, targeting workload reduction and improved response speed. [\[41\]](#)

Importantly for Irish innovation strategy, Intercom's research suggests that implementing Fin or similar agents forces deep operating change: around **95% of participants** reported some level of change in processes after implementation, with tasks like ticket triage, routing, repetitive responses, and translations shifting to AI agents. [\[42\]](#) This highlights a critical "next wave" insight for Ireland: GenAI innovation is not just shipping a model—it is redesigning workflows and accountability across teams.

Jentic as "agent infrastructure" innovation from Dublin

Jentic represents a second-order innovation wave: not only building AI agents, but building the infrastructure that makes enterprise agents usable safely. Jentic reports being selected as the **first ever Irish company** in the AWS Generative AI Accelerator (GAIA), and describes itself as an AI infrastructure company for API-native business agents. [\[43\]](#) The company also reports a **\$4.5M pre-seed round** and outlines product innovations such as secure execution/authentication for API use—directly addressing enterprise concerns around credential handling and "high-stakes digital infrastructure." [\[43\]](#)

This is a core innovation archetype for Ireland: building trust-enabling layers (security, governance, interoperability) that convert frontier models into enterprise-grade products, especially in regulated or data-sensitive contexts.

Dublin City Council GenAI Lab for public services and governance

The Generative AI Lab launched by Dublin City Council, ADAPT, and Trinity Business School is positioned as Ireland's first local-government GenAI lab, focusing on enhancing local government services while emphasising responsible and ethical deployment. [\[11\]](#) The lab's scope includes workshops, prototype development, and public engagement, with explicit goals such as streamlining administrative tasks, improving citizen/customer service responsiveness, and improving organisational data processing and analysis. [\[11\]](#)

A notable feature is the explicit governance framing: the collaboration highlights AI governance, ethics, transparency, and the aim of setting best practice for ethical

adoption—critical in a country that hosts major EU-facing digital operations and must maintain public trust under EU fundamental rights frameworks. [\[44\]](#)

Prodensus as GenAI-enabled logistics optimisation in the Irish startup ecosystem

Microsoft’s customer story on Prodensus frames it as an Irish “AI-native” logistics/freight management innovator built on Azure OpenAI. [\[39\]](#) The key quantified operational innovation outcome is that Prodensus can process **25,000 shipments in 5 minutes**, compared with **1–2 weeks** of analyst effort in traditional workflows. [\[39\]](#)

The same story also provides an ecosystem indicator: Microsoft states “thousands” of Irish startups are part of Founders Hub, and claims the number using Azure OpenAI technology increased **tenfold** in the past year—suggesting rapid platform-level diffusion of generative AI capabilities into the Irish startup ecosystem. [\[39\]](#) (As this is a vendor-authored metric, it should be treated as directional rather than independently audited.)

Frictions, Risks, and Governance

Adoption measurement gaps and “two Irelands” of GenAI

Ireland shows a recurring pattern: widely visible experimentation, but a smaller share of organisations achieving full-scale adoption. PwC’s Irish business leader survey reported **6%** widespread adoption (late 2024). [\[31\]](#) Irish Times reporting also points to low worker-level daily GenAI usage at **10%** in Ireland in a PwC-linked survey (versus 14% globally), with “AI agents” used by **3%** of workers in Ireland. [\[45\]](#)

The strategic risk is not “low adoption.” It is **uncontrolled adoption**: employees and teams adopt tools informally, while governance and data protection lag behind. That risk profile is visible in mid-market data: Grant Thornton reports **six in ten** executives worry about employees entering sensitive information into GenAI platforms, even as more firms adopt GenAI usage policies. [\[32\]](#)

Talent constraints and job redesign as the operational bottleneck

Talent and skills are a central friction point in Ireland’s GenAI diffusion. Deloitte’s Ireland findings identify skills gaps as the main barrier for **traditional AI (84%)** and for **GenAI (52%)**, and show active responses: investing in upskilling/reskilling and targeted hiring. [\[30\]](#) This is consistent with Ireland’s labour market framing: IDA’s Labour Market Pulse emphasises that upskilling and reskilling are vital to harness GenAI opportunities and maintain competitiveness. [\[24\]](#)

The deep implication: the GenAI innovation wave in Ireland will be shaped less by “model access” (which is increasingly commoditised) and more by organisational capabilities—process redesign, data literacy, product thinking, and governance competencies. The organisations that treat talent and workflow redesign as one programme will outpace those treating GenAI as a tool rollout.

Data privacy, trust, and regulatory “cost of innovation”

Irish executive sentiment shows privacy and security are moving to the centre of the GenAI adoption conversation. Grant Thornton reports **58%** of Irish executives cite privacy as the key adoption challenge, up sharply from earlier. [\[32\]](#) Deloitte reports **66%** of Irish respondents view data privacy/security as the AI risk they are most concerned about, and **68%** are highly concerned about using proprietary or sensitive data in AI models. [\[30\]](#)

This aligns with the EU’s broader enterprise picture: Eurostat’s EU analysis shows lack of expertise and legal clarity and privacy concerns as leading reasons enterprises do not adopt AI technologies (EU-wide). [\[46\]](#) For Ireland, which often acts as a European operating base, this “cost of innovation” is not simply compliance—it is also the need to build trustworthy systems that customers and regulators accept.

Data sovereignty and vendor dependence risks

Ireland’s technology footprint includes major foreign vendors and cross-border data flows. Deloitte’s Irish findings report that many respondents have significant foreign ownership/control in their AI tech stack and that concern about dependency on foreign-owned AI tech is widespread. [\[30\]](#) The strategic takeaway is that Irish innovation leadership requires both **adoption** and **architectural choices** that protect critical data, reduce vendor lock-in where it matters, and demonstrate compliance pathways for sensitive workloads.

EU AI Act and Ireland’s enforcement architecture: the compliance deadline becomes the innovation deadline

The EU AI Act entered into force on **2 August 2024** and phases in over 36 months; Ireland’s AI Act explainer provides a clear timeline, including rules on prohibited AI practices and AI literacy obligations, and high-risk system requirements in 2026–2027. [\[13\]](#) Penalties can be severe, reaching **€35M or 7%** of global turnover for certain infringements. [\[35\]](#)

Ireland’s governance model is explicitly distributed: the government decided to build on sector regulators and establish a central coordinating AI Office (by August 2026) to coordinate competent authorities, serve as single point of contact, support access to

expertise, and host a regulatory sandbox to support innovation. [\[47\]](#) The list of competent authorities includes regulators such as the Data Protection Commission and others, reflecting that enforcement and compliance will be multi-regulator in practice. [\[27\]](#)

For GenAI innovation, the practical implication is that governance maturity is now an innovation enabler. Systems that can prove risk controls, transparency, and data discipline will deploy more confidently and scale faster between sectors.

Toolkit for Content and Strategy

Technical glossary

Generative AI (GenAI): A category of AI that can create new content such as text, images, video, or music, gaining broad attention through text-to-image systems and large language models. [\[1\]](#)

Large language model (LLM): A form of AI language model used in natural language processing; language models are trained on vast data to analyse and generate natural language text or speech. [\[48\]](#)

General-purpose AI model (GPAI): Foundational models capable of performing a wide range of tasks; due to their power and systemic risk potential, the EU AI Act includes specific provisions for GPAI models, enforced by the European Commission's AI Office. [\[25\]](#)

Retrieval-augmented generation (RAG): A hybrid approach that combines model generation with retrieval from external knowledge sources to improve factual grounding and specificity; foundational research frames RAG as combining parametric memory with a retriever-accessed corpus. [\[37\]](#)

AI governance: Organisational policies, processes, roles, and controls designed to ensure AI systems are trustworthy and responsibly managed; NIST's AI RMF frames "Govern" as a core function to incorporate trustworthiness considerations across AI lifecycle decisions. [\[49\]](#)

AI management system (AIMS): ISO/IEC 42001 specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving an AI management system within organisations, supporting responsible development and use. [\[50\]](#)

AI literacy: The EU AI Act timeline and Ireland's AI Act explainer include obligations for providers and deployers to ensure staff have a sufficient level of AI literacy (a compliance and risk-control requirement). [\[35\]](#)

Data visualisation specifications

AI adoption in enterprises by size and GenAI proxy (recommended bar chart): Use CSO enterprise data to visualise total AI use in 2025 (20.2%) and the size-class differences (57.7% large vs 17.2% small), plus overlay the “natural language generation” rate (9.3%) as a GenAI-adjacent indicator. Data source: CSO enterprise AI tables/figures. [\[3\]](#)

GenAI usage by population cohort (recommended stacked bar): Visualise GenAI use among internet users overall (42%), plus key cohort splits such as gender and 16–29 male usage (72%), and students vs employees. Data source: CSO household GenAI section. [\[2\]](#)

Workforce exposure and sector readiness (recommended heatmap): Use IDA Labour Market Pulse cohort and sector exposure (Gen X 60%; Technology/Information/Media 72% of roles; Financial Services 70%; Professional Services 63%). Data source: IDA press release summarising labour market analysis. [\[24\]](#)

Risk and barrier profile (recommended grouped bar chart): Combine Irish executive barrier/risk signals across sources: Deloitte skills gaps (84% AI; 52% GenAI); top risk concerns (66% privacy/security; 64% legal/regulatory); Grant Thornton privacy as key challenge (58%). [\[51\]](#)

Regulatory timeline (recommended timeline graphic): Map EU AI Act milestone dates (2 Aug 2024 entry into force; 2 Aug 2025 authority designation/penalties; 2 Aug 2026 high-risk rules and sandbox requirements; 2 Aug 2027 product high-risk rules) and Ireland’s AI Office establishment by August 2026. [\[52\]](#)

Source images and charts discovered during research

Rather than embedding images, these are the best “chart sources” to reuse in blog assets or slideware (each includes figures/tables already laid out):

- CSO “Artificial Intelligence” enterprise release showing enterprise AI use, NLG usage, and purpose-of-AI charts (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). [\[3\]](#)
- CSO Household “Generative AI” release showing GenAI usage by age/sex and economic status (Figure 7.1). [\[2\]](#)
- Ireland’s EU AI Act explainer that lays out the phased timeline, penalties, and competent authority model (useful for compliance graphics). [\[53\]](#)

Content nuggets for future blog and social

These are “copy-ready hooks” grounded in the sources above:

- “In Ireland, **42%** of internet users used generative AI in the past three months.” [\[2\]](#)
- “Among Irish males aged 16–29, GenAI usage reached **72%**.” [\[2\]](#)

- “Enterprise AI use in Ireland rose to **20.2%** in 2025 (up from 15.2% in 2024).” [\[15\]](#)
- “Nearly **1 in 10** enterprises report AI use for **natural language generation (9.3%)**—a practical proxy for GenAI in business workflows.” [\[3\]](#)
- “IDA’s Labour Market Pulse: **60% of Gen X** in Ireland are in roles where GenAI can complement or transform work.” [\[24\]](#)
- “Deloitte Ireland: **98%** said AI improved decision-making and execution speed; **84%** report productivity gains already.” [\[30\]](#)
- “Grant Thornton (Ireland, mid-market): **58%** say privacy is the key challenge to AI adoption.” [\[32\]](#)
- “CSO enterprise survey: **57.7%** of large enterprises used AI in 2025 versus **17.2%** of small enterprises.” [\[3\]](#)
- “EU AI Act penalties can reach **€35M or 7%** of global turnover for certain infringements.” [\[35\]](#)
- “Global GenAI VC in H1 2025 hit **\$49.2B**, surpassing the entire 2024 total.” [\[34\]](#)

Commercial opportunities for AI consultancies in Ireland

The Irish market signals suggest consultancies can win by packaging “innovation + governance + skills” as integrated offers rather than separate services. Irish policy is actively pushing AI adoption and skilling across enterprise and the public sector. [\[12\]](#) Irish organisations simultaneously report talent constraints, governance gaps, and privacy concerns. [\[54\]](#) This combination creates a clear service demand profile.

High-probability consultancy plays include:

GenAI readiness and use-case portfolio design: Aligning business value to CSO-observed adoption patterns (admin processes, marketing, R&D), and identifying where GenAI can realistically move the needle in Irish SMEs and regulated organisations. [\[15\]](#)

Secure GenAI deployment patterns (RAG + governance): Implementing grounded GenAI systems using retrieval-augmented generation to reduce hallucination and improve traceability, paired with governance aligned to AI risk frameworks (e.g., NIST AI RMF) and AI management systems (ISO/IEC 42001). [\[55\]](#)

AI policy, privacy, and “shadow AI” control: Helping companies respond to privacy concerns and data leakage risk with practical policies, technical controls, training, and auditability—mirroring real executive concerns reported in Ireland. [\[56\]](#)

EU AI Act compliance mapping and implementation: Building risk classification approaches, documentation practices, AI literacy programmes, and readiness for Ireland's regulator landscape and AI Office coordination model. [\[52\]](#)

Funding-led adoption programmes for SMEs and regional firms: Packaging consulting engagements around Enterprise Ireland supports (Digital Discovery, Digital Process Innovation) and broader Digital Transition Fund initiatives to reduce cost barriers and accelerate regional diffusion. [\[57\]](#)

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