



EY Entrepreneur  
Of The Year™



**EY**

Building a better  
working world

*The :*  
**Trailblazers**  
*Spring Energiser*



Swipe up

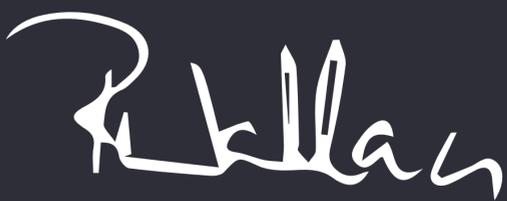


Over the past 27 years, the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ (EOY) programme has been committed to driving, inspiring and celebrating entrepreneurship across the island of Ireland.

We are delighted to be back together for our annual Spring Energiser at the start of what promises to be another incredible year for the EOY Programme. The purpose of this event is to give our Alumni a chance to re-connect with each other. It is always a day of stimulating conversation and valuable insights.

Our aim today is to engage, challenge and inspire you. You will hear from top business leaders, economic analysts and media commentators amongst others.

The stories and insights you will hear today will act as an inspiration and motivation to help drive you and your business forward this year.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'R Wallace', set against a dark grey background.

## Roger Wallace

Head of Assurance, Partner Lead,  
EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™  
Programme

**in Roger Wallace**

# Spring Energiser Agenda

Time	Activity
08:45	Check In
09:30	Welcome
09:40	Ivan Yates
10:40	Loretta O'Sullivan, EY
11:00	Deborah Somorin, EY
11:30	Break
11:45	Pat McCann, Dalata Hotel Group
12:30	Rosaleen Blair and Sam Smith
13:15	Lunch
14:00	Facilitated Breakout Sessions
14:45	Mark Kelly, AI Ireland
15:30	Break
15:50	Mick Dawson
16:10	Conor Galvin, Dairygold
16:40	Dr Kate Kirby, Sports Ireland Institute
17:15	Rob Kearney
18:00	Closing Remarks
18:15	Pre-dinner drinks reception and networking
19:15	Dinner

The image features two glowing jellyfish against a dark blue background with a light blue dot pattern. One jellyfish is in the upper right, and another is in the lower left. The text 'Spring Energiser Speakers' is centered in the middle of the image.

*Spring Energiser  
Speakers*



## Ivan Yates

Broadcaster and Columnist

Ivan Yates is a broadcaster, columnist, businessman and former politician, holding the position of Fine Gael Dáil deputy for more than twenty years. A native of Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, he became the youngest member of the 22nd Dáil at twenty-one. He was appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry in 1994. He founded Celtic Bookmakers, a chain of betting shops, which became one of the largest independent family chains in the country.

As a broadcaster Ivan presented 'The Hard Shoulder' on Newstalk and the 'Tonight Show' on Virgin Media. He set up MediaMasterclass.ie and is now a top Communications Coach. Ivan also provides unique political insights with the new podcast Path to Power, with Matt Cooper - it's top rated in weekly charts.



## **Loretta O'Sullivan**

Chief Economist & Partner EY

As EY Ireland's Chief Economist, Loretta O'Sullivan is focussed on delivering macroeconomic research and analysis to clients. Distilling the latest economic data and preparing economic forecasts, she provides actionable insights to support considered business planning. Loretta has been working in the economics field for almost 20 years in both the public and private sectors, on a wide range of Irish, European and global issues.

She holds a PhD in Economics from Trinity College Dublin, an MA in Policy, Management and Government from the University of York, and a BA (Mod) in Economic and Social Studies from Trinity College Dublin.



## Deborah Somorin

EY

Deborah Somorin is a Qualified Chartered Accountant and Senior Manager in EY's People Consulting team, serving large Irish and Global clients. She is also a published author of two books, an autobiography called 'Believing in Me' and a children's book called 'I Believe in You'. She completed a degree in Accounting and Finance in DCU in 2014. She then went on to complete a Masters in Accounting in DCU in 2015.

In 2018, Deborah founded a not-for-profit called Empower the Family (ETF). ETF an Approved Housing Body, is working with Dublin City Council to deliver Ireland's First Social Student Housing Development. This social enterprise will support Ireland's commitment to accomplishing 10 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Deborah's work in this area earned her a spot on the prestigious 2020 Forbes 30 under 30 list.

In 2022, Deborah launched the Chartered Accountants Ireland Ethnicity Network. She currently sits on the board of directors for Chartered Accountants Support (which supports members and students of Chartered Accountants Ireland) and the Chartered Accountants Ireland Diversity and Inclusion Committee.



**Pat McCann**  
Founder Dalata

Pat McCann boasts over fifty years' experience in the hospitality industry. His career milestones include serving as Chief Executive Designate of Jurys Hotel Group and later founding Dalata Hotel Group in 2007. As Ireland's largest hotel group, Dalata is listed on the Dublin and London Stock Exchange and currently operates 52 hotels with more under construction; amounting in total to over 12,000 bedrooms.

Pat retired from Dalata at the end of 2020, culminating a distinguished career in the hotel business. He now holds numerous Non-Executive Director roles, serving on the board of Ibec and contributing his industry expertise to several firms.

Pat is also Deputy Chair of the National Maternity Hospital, a Senior Independent Director at Glenveagh Properties and holds Non-Executive Director roles at QIPM and Ibec. Additionally, he is Investor and Chair of Alkimii Ltd, UFurnish Ltd, Nutritics, and Elkstone Capital Partners. A seasoned board member, Pat serves as a Non-Executive Director at Greencore Group and EBS, and as Chairman of Whitfield Hospital.



## **Rosaleen Blair**

CBE, Founder & Chair AMS

Entrepreneur and investor Rosaleen Blair founded and led AMS, a global workforce solutions industry leader, for 23 years. Rosaleen served as CEO for 23 years, where she transformed talent acquisition for blue-chip multinationals, achieved significant growth for AMS and led the company through an economic crisis.

Rosaleen is a serial entrepreneur, investing in and advising many companies. Most notably, she is a Deputy Chair of Kainos Group plc and Chair of Everywoman.

She advises several private equity companies and is a coach and mentor to numerous entrepreneurs and growth businesses. Rosaleen has a long-standing involvement with the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year programme and was the returning chair of its global judging panel in 2022.

In addition to this, Rosaleen is involved in several not-for-profit initiatives, notably as Chair of the London Irish Centre. She supports several charities, both financially and with her time and expertise, including serving as Patron of the Women Supporting Women initiative of the Prince's Trust. She is passionate about creating opportunities and helping people make the most of them.



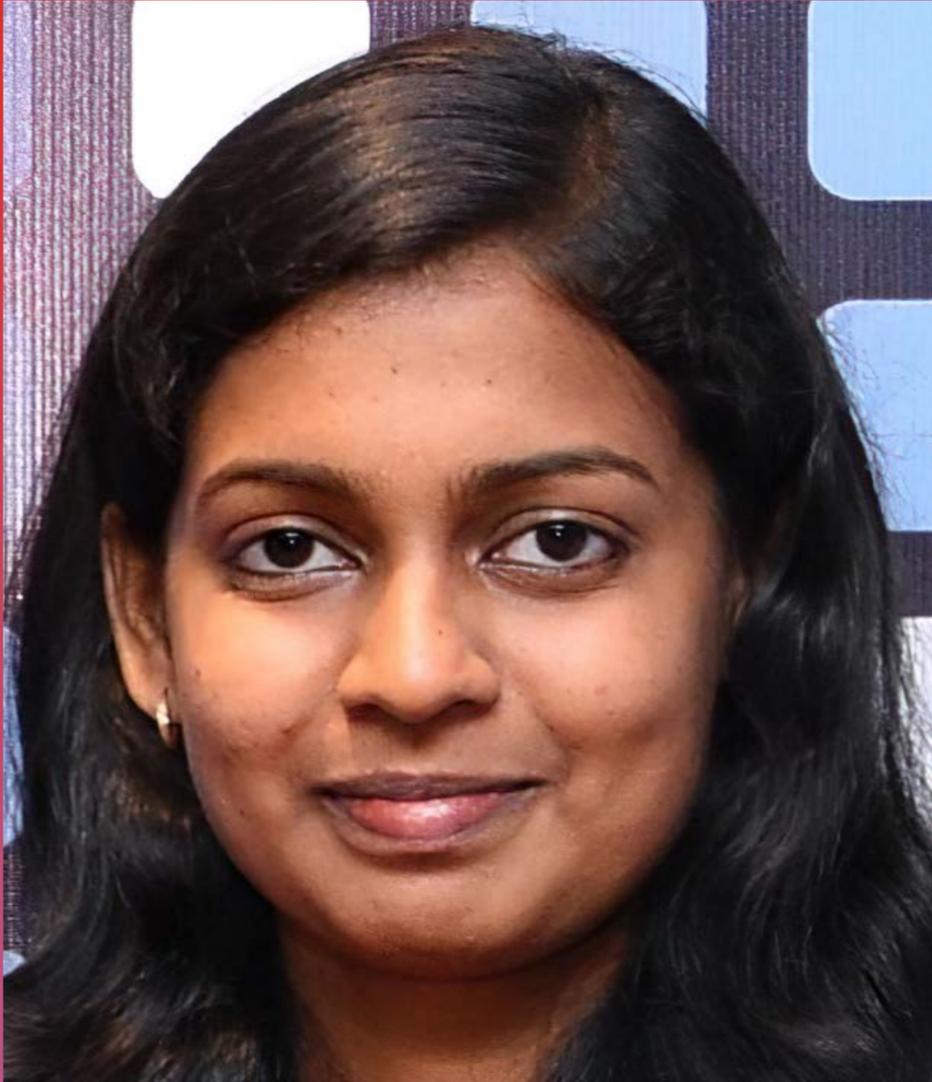
## Sam Smith

Founder and former CEO of financial services group, finnCap (now Cavendish Financial).

Entrepreneur Sam Smith is the founder and former CEO of financial services group, finnCap (now Cavendish Financial). Sam founded finnCap in 1998 as a division within JMFinn & Co and led the MBO of finnCap in 2007, followed by an IPO in 2018. Sam was the first female chief executive of a City stockbroking firm and has worked on over 200 transactions, IPOs and secondary fund raisings.

Sam transitioned from her executive role to become a staunch advocate for Entrepreneurship and Inclusion in the UK, serving on multiple boards like Solid State Plc, Sumer Group Ltd, 55 Redefined Ltd, and Griffin Markets Ltd. Besides her corporate roles, Sam takes on social responsibilities to empower under-represented entrepreneurs and motivate the youth. She actively advises Everywoman, and the University of Bristol, and serves on the Government Taskforce on Women-Led High Growth Enterprises.

To add to her many accomplishments, Sam is an Amazon No. 1 bestselling author of her book 'The Secret Sauce-how to superscale your business and empower talent with empathetic leadership'.



## Aarthi Kumar

EY Ireland Data & Analytics

Aarthi is a technology optimist building augmented intelligence solutions which focus on bringing people and AI together to create sustainable business value. She works with clients on their data transformation journey by helping them navigate the complex world of data as well as building innovative solutions which enable them to have competitive advantage. She advises clients on user-centric AI solutions, AI adoption, and ethical AI.

Prior to joining EY, Aarthi ran her own start-up building AI products for auditors in India.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce & Finance, a diploma in Management Accounting from CIMA, UK and ICAI, India and has an advanced diploma in Business Analytics from IIM-B, India.



## **Mark Kelly**

AI Leader, Advisor, Author and  
TEDx Speaker

As the founder of AI Ireland and a leader in AI staffing, Mark has pioneered AI adoption strategies, impacting businesses internationally. His distinctive approach merges profound industry insights gleaned from analysing over 500 AI applications and conducting interviews with more than 600 AI leaders, with a pragmatic, solution-oriented methodology that propels digital transformation across various sectors.



## **Mick Dawson**

Former CEO Leinster Rugby

Mick Dawson was CEO of Leinster Rugby for 20 years from 2001 - 2022. During that time he oversaw a period of unprecedented success for Leinster both on and off the field.

Prior to his time at Leinster Mick worked in property and in Davy Stockbrokers. He continues to be involved in a range of different organisations.

He is a Director at Contego as well as Director of Stormers Rugby in Cape Town.



## Conor Galvin

Chief Executive of Dairygold

Conor is currently the Chief Executive of Dairygold, one of Ireland's largest farmer-owner dairy processors. He joined Dairygold in 2014 and led the commercial and innovation organisation during the period of milk expansion when the value of dairy ingredients grew by 75% to €750 million. He assumed the role of Chief Executive in 2022.

Conor has recently been announced as the next Chief Executive of Ornu, Ireland's largest dairy exporter and owner of the iconic Kerrygold brand.



## **Dr Kate Kirby**

Head of Performance Psychology  
at the Sport Ireland Institute

Dr. Kate Kirby is a consultant sport psychologist, operating at the highest level of Irish sport for almost 20 years. She has worked at the London, Rio and Tokyo Olympic Games, and is currently involved in preparing Irish athletes for Paris 2024. She has advised multiple Olympic, Paralympic, World and European medallists from a range of individual and team sports.



## **Rob Kearney**

Former Leinster, Ireland & Lions  
Rugby International

Rob Kearney hails from County Louth and is arguably Ireland's most decorated rugby player. His list of achievements for Leinster and Ireland is unmatched and includes being in Ireland's top ten most-capped players of all time (95 caps).

On top of Rob's rugby career, he is an experienced exec and non-exec director across various industries. He is a talented entrepreneur, businessman, author, presenter and speaker.

He works with numerous brands including IADT, Vodafone, Bank of Ireland, Aer Lingus and the Institute of Directors.

Rob can often be seen given his expert analysis on Virgin Media for their rugby coverage. Rob is currently working at one of Ireland's leading investment companies and is also one of the founding members of recruitment agency Mason Alexander.

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Julius Baer is the international reference in private banking and wealth management, providing a fully holistic service for their clients and building long-lasting relationships based on partnership, continuity, and mutual trust.

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# Government Agency Sponsors



As the regional business development agency, Invest Northern Ireland's role is to grow the local economy. It does this by supporting new and existing businesses to innovate, create jobs, and sell outside Northern Ireland, whilst also attracting new investment to the region. Invest NI provides strong government support for businesses as part of the Department for the Economy by delivering the Government's economic development strategies. Invest Northern Ireland has been part of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ since day one and have provided an incredible amount of support throughout the years.

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# Government Agency Sponsors



Enterprise Ireland is the Irish government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises. Through partnerships, Enterprise Ireland helps Irish companies to start, grow, innovate and scale internationally in global markets. Since the very beginning, Enterprise Ireland has been an amazing supporter of the programme and has made a huge contribution over the years.

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The Irish Times is an authoritative and independent commentator and analyst of events nationally and internationally in print, on mobile and online. It is the only Irish news organisation with a network of correspondents around the world, who provide a view of the world through Irish eyes.

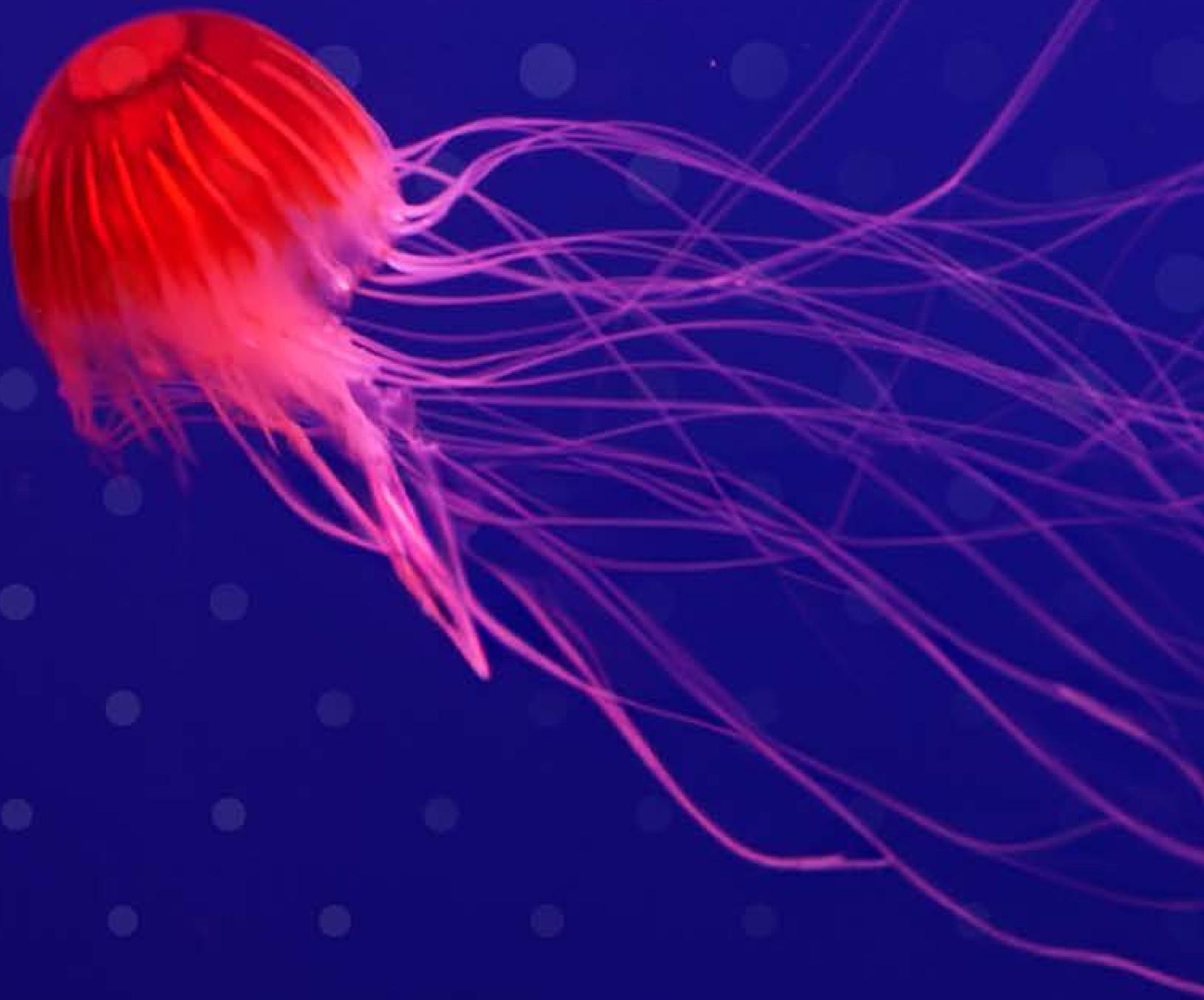
The Irish Times Group is the largest Irish-owned news media publisher on the island.

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# *About*



# About the EOY programme

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ (EOY) programme passionately believes in promoting entrepreneurship across the island of Ireland and empowering entrepreneurs to grow their businesses in Ireland, Northern Ireland and around the world.

The EOY programme not only ensures national and international recognition for successful finalists and alumni, but also provides an invaluable network and business development opportunity within a growing, strong EOY Alumni community of over 600 entrepreneurs.

# EOY Team

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ team are the energy and drive responsible for delivering the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ programme. Contact us on [eoy@ie.ey.com](mailto:eoy@ie.ey.com) if you have any questions, want to find out more or need assistance during the nomination process.



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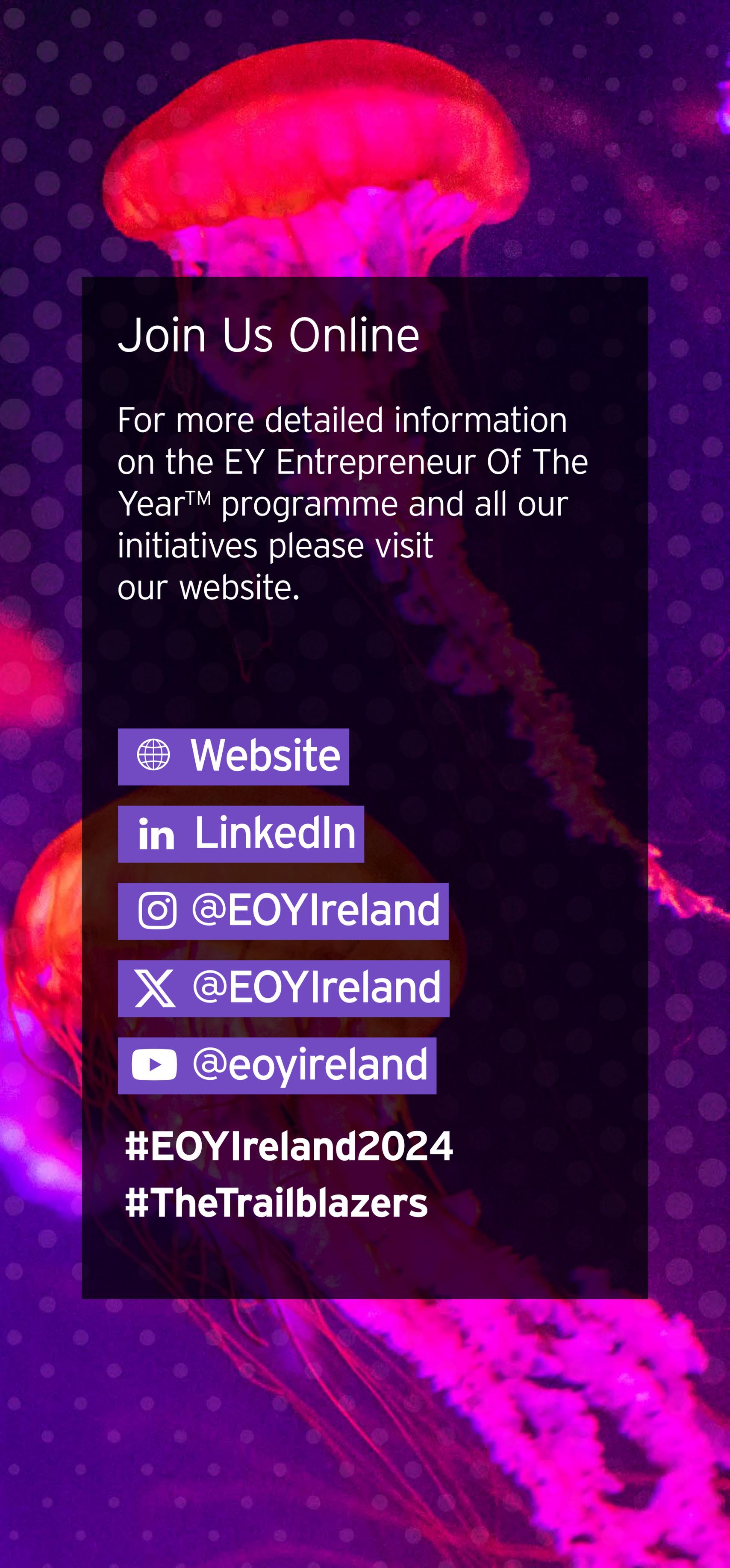
# The Trailblazers

Irish entrepreneurs are increasingly making a name for themselves as trailblazers, redefining business models and creating new opportunities. They've showcased extraordinary innovation, resilience, and a capacity for technological advancement that sets them distinctly apart in the business landscape. Not only are they excelling on the island of Ireland, but they are also branching out and making a significant impact on a global scale.

Irish entrepreneurs possess a remarkable spirit of adventure and resilience. They are akin to explorers venturing into unknown lands, equipped with their innovative ideas and risk-taking spirit. They carve new paths, shaping industries and creating economic opportunities. Irish entrepreneurs today are steadily pushing the perimeters of technology, innovation, and social enterprise. Despite the hurdles and uncertainty, they

continue to venture forth,  
demonstrating determination  
and spirit.

In 2024 EOY Ireland is  
celebrating tenacity, resilience  
and bravery of entrepreneurs,  
who dare to take the road  
less travelled.



## Join Us Online

For more detailed information on the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ programme and all our initiatives please visit our website.

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