

PART THREE

Ireland: country of choice for tech investment



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Ireland is the leader in Europe

When asked to rank European locations for data and technology investment, 57% of respondents rate Ireland as highly suitable, ahead of Germany at 41%, the Netherlands at 39%, France at 30% and the United Kingdom at 30%. This data shows that Ireland is a leader in Europe, and the lead is not narrow.

What drives this result is worth dwelling on. The top factors cited by businesses when choosing a location are proximity to customers (74%), ease of doing business (71%), tax rates and incentives (55%) and access to talent (45%). These are practical, operational factors rather than regulatory considerations. They speak to a country that has built a stable working environment in which international companies can operate without unnecessary friction. The combination of a common law legal system, an English-language working environment, a deep concentration of global technology and other companies and a long-standing incentivised tax framework gives Ireland an unusually strong position from which to attract the next phase of investment.



Ireland as a bridge between US innovation and European standards

According to IDA Ireland, Ireland is positioning itself as a bridge between US innovation and European regulatory standards, leveraging a strong technology ecosystem, a skilled talent pool and a supportive governmental policy environment to attract investment from major technology firms. Our survey data supports that positioning.

AWS's Unlocking Europe 2026 research demonstrates why that bridging role matters. Across Europe, 82% of businesses say access to global technology is important for AI adoption. Ireland's appeal as a venue is, in significant part, that it gives businesses operating in the EU direct and reliable access to the global technology stack on which the next phase of growth depends.

This is a reason why Ireland has become the European base for 16 of the top 20 global technology companies. The next phase of competitive positioning will turn on whether the broader Irish business economy can build the capability and infrastructure to navigate under the regulatory conditions that those companies are now embedding into their global products and business strategies. The opportunity is real, but it depends on the work being done across every part of the economy, not only at the multinational level.

Awareness as the most significant obstacle to wider participation

55% of all businesses report little or no awareness of EU regulation in data and technology. That figure is the most significant obstacle to wider participation in the dynamic this report describes. Awareness is the threshold condition for capability building. Until that figure drops materially, the gap between large businesses and other businesses will continue to widen. Closing the gap is a shared responsibility for regulators, industry bodies, professional advisers and government departments. The Irish regulatory architecture, with its distributed model of competent authorities coordinated by the National AI Office, provides the institutional infrastructure for that transition. The work now is to use it.



Energy reignites the nuclear debate

The conversation about Irish technology infrastructure has moved beyond software and into the physical constraints of compute, power and data centre capacity. The energy demand created by AI training and inference workloads, alongside continuing growth in cloud and content delivery, is now a binding constraint on the rate of technology investment in Ireland. According to EirGrid and SEAI reports, renewables accounted for approximately 40% of Irish electricity generation in 2025 with wind providing the bulk of that share. The policy challenge is how to build the additional zero-carbon capacity needed to power the next phase of investment without compromising the existing decarbonisation trajectory.

Against that backdrop, the Irish public conversation on nuclear has historically been settled but is now reopening. Large technology companies in other jurisdictions, including in the UK and the US, are increasingly looking to nuclear power, including Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), to deliver carbon-free baseload power for AI data centres. SMRs are faster to build and operate at smaller scale than conventional reactors. Our survey data records a measurable shift in Irish business sentiment, with around half of business leaders expressing support for nuclear if it addresses AI and quantum infrastructure or lowers business electricity costs. Businesses are increasingly pragmatic on energy, but social licence in Ireland remains a sensitive question that any policy response will need to address head-on.



49%

In favour of nuclear energy if it reduces electricity costs for businesses



43%

In favour of nuclear energy in future to address infrastructure needs resulting from AI and quantum computing



49%

Nuclear energy is a responsible option to consider in Ireland

The policy ground beneath Irish technology infrastructure is shifting. The figures do not amount to a settled mandate, but the data demonstrate a population that has moved from reflexive opposition to active consideration of options that would have been politically untouchable in the past. That shift will need to be matched by an equivalent maturation in the regulatory and planning frameworks that govern energy infrastructure of every kind, from grid capacity through renewable build-out to dedicated power for major data centre clusters.