



Designing Tech Ecosystems and Building the Digital Workforce

Lessons from Dublin to Thailand's EEC

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50 Years: Two Journeys, One Blueprint

1970's Bangkok and Dublin – “*big changes, same warmth*”



China
Town



Talbot Street
and North
Earl Street

Charoenkrung
Road



Grafton
Street



A Tale of Two Eras: Ireland's 50-Year Transformation

From "brain drain" to a "brain gain"

Then: The 1970s to 1980s

- 🇮🇪 Ireland - economic stagnation and mass emigration ("brain drain").
- Unemployment at over 17%.
- The economy was primarily agricultural
- GDP per capita of just ~\$4,200 USD.

Now: Today's Tech Powerhouse

- 🚀 Ireland transformed into the **"Celtic Tiger,"** a global technology hub.
- National exports have shifted from agriculture to high-value technology services and pharmaceuticals.
- European headquarters for global giants like Google, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft.
- GDP per capita \approx \$107,000 USD— > 25-fold increase.

From **"brain drain"** to a **"brain gain."**



Ireland's Digital Transformation Journey

Global Social Enterprise



• Ireland's Digital Success Formula

- ☒ **Future-Ready Education**
 - every graduate from school and university must have foundational digital skills
- ☒ **Lifelong Workforce Training**
 - Skilling, upskilling and reskilling
- ☒ **Business-Friendly Policies**
 - A digitally skilled workforce attracts FDI
- ☒ **A Proven Methodology (ABC):**
 - Assess
 - Build
 - Certify



ICDL's Role in Ireland's Success



Global Social Enterprise

✓ Local Empowerment and Investment

- Local partners—universities, colleges, and training providers.

✓ Nationwide Scale and Accessibility

- A flexible **national standard** allowed a diverse network of accredited centres to be established across the country.

✓ A "Triple-Win" for the Economy

- The standard created a common language for digital skills.
 - **individuals** (globally recognised, credible proof of skills.)
 - **employers** (reducing hiring risk and training costs)
 - **the nation** (becoming a key factor in attracting Foreign Direct Investment).



Measurable Impact of Digital Literacy

Ireland's Digital Success by the Numbers

Economic Growth & Workforce Transformation

- The ICT sector accounts for **~35% of Ireland's** GVA (2022)
- A **skilled talent pool** became the **#1 asset** in attracting global tech giants like Google, Meta, Apple, and Microsoft to establish their European headquarters.
- It also fueled the growth of a **vibrant domestic startup** scene,
- Approximately **123,000 people are employed** directly in the ICT sector (Q2 2024).
- **~70–73% of Irish adults have at least basic digital skills**, well above the EU average of 56% (2023).

Return on Investment (ROI)

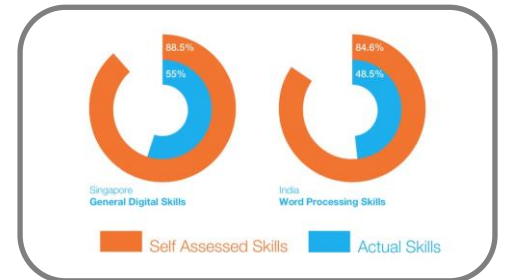
- lower onboarding/training costs



Breaking Digital Skills Misconceptions

The Critical Reality:

- Approximately **90% of jobs** in Europe already require at least basic digital skills.
- To unlock the full potential of any digital strategy, it's crucial to address three common (and dangerous) myths:
 - 📱 **Myth 1: Digital Lifestyle ≠ Digital Workplace**
 - 🧑 **Myth 2: The 'Digital Native' Fallacy and Skills Gap**
 - 🧠 **Myth 3: Perception vs. Reality**



Thailand's Blueprint for a Digital Future

The EEC – Thailand's Silicon Valley

The Foundation: A National Blueprint

- Thailand's 20-year **Digital Thailand Plan**, a national blueprint for becoming an ASEAN digital leader.
- Four clear phases: **foundation → inclusion → transformation → global leadership**.
- Thailand's Strong foundation:
 - a strategic location,
 - a tech-savvy youth population,
 - a world-class manufacturing base.

The Vision: The EECd Innovation Hub

- The Eastern Economic Corridor of Digital (EECd), designed as a major regional hub for 5G, AI, and smart city innovation.
- The goal is to power the 'Thailand 4.0' strategy and create a **280,000-strong high-tech workforce**.

ICDL - A Partnership in Action



☑ Proven Milestones in Thailand

- National Policy Alignment:
 - ICDL Thailand is working in partnership with key government bodies—including: **including MDES, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, DEPA, and TPQI** to embed its global standards for workforce upskilling and PDPA data protection.
- EEC Talent Pipeline: Building a workforce with hubs of excellence like **Kasetsart University Sriracha**.
- ICDL Demonstrated Progress: **Over 120,000+ candidates** have been certified nationwide, showcasing national competitiveness.

The Lesson: The Human Capital Engine

- The lesson from Ireland: **human capital** is the true engine of growth, and Thailand is already acting on this insight.

A Shared Vision for the Future

- From **Literacy to Advanced Skills** in AI, Cybersecurity, and Data Analytics.
- A Certification Backbone for the EEC's key industries (aerospace, automotive, biotech).
- Positioning Thailand as an **ASEAN Digital Hub** and a global exporter of digital skills.
- A Partnership to Accelerate Success:
 - Leveraging the **Ireland-Thailand partnership** to share expertise and realize this vision.

Digital economy is powered by people

People are powered by digital skills

Digital skills are powered by ICDL

Ireland stands ready as a partner in Thailand's digital journey

Chai Yo! (ไชโย)

Sláinte! (slawn-cha)

Thank you