



Kerry's ethnic minorities an untapped business pool

BY MARY MURPHY

KERRY'S captains of industry have been told they should make greater use of the talented pool of foreign nationals workers now available for work in the county.

Ethnic minorities in Kerry and across the country have been described this week as "an untapped pool of entrepreneurial ability" which deserve more support.

The Small Firms Association has called on the government to commit mainstream funding from the beginning of 2008 to provide targeted training supports to ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

The SFA has also criticised excessive regulatory barriers which exist to non-nationals starting a business

"Non-nationals now make up over 10 per cent of our population and our workforce and clearly represent an untapped pool of entrepreneurial talent in Ireland," said SFA director Patricia Callan.

"Most of these are in the 24 to 44 years age bracket, which is the age at which most people set up in busi-

ness.

"It is clear that in moving from their native countries, they have already demonstrated their entrepreneurial qualities, a readiness to step out of a familiar environment and into a new culture and system," she said.

"We know from our own history, how entrepreneurial Irish people were when they moved abroad," Ms Callan added.

A pilot programme called Emerge, funded by the EU and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, has been set up to promote ethnic minority entrepreneurship in Ireland and the

"What is now required is a commitment by government to commit to providing mainstream funding from the beginning of 2008, to roll-out the training modules and best practice to potential ethnic minority entrepreneurs in all parts of the country," the SFA official explained.

Ms Callan also called on Kerry's TDs to lobby the government to review the regulations governing non-nationals in setting up a business in Ireland and in

particular the need for business permission which she described as highly restrictive.

Currently, any foreign national wishing to establish a business in Ireland must seek advance permission from the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to do so. Any individual pursuing this option must, among other requirements, transfer capital of €300,000 to the state.

"These ethnic communities have come here to make a better life and many wish to be self-employed and self-sufficient. It behoves all involved in enterprise development and promotion in Ireland to encourage and assist them in achieving this goal," Ms Callan stressed.



Patricia Callan: call.