



*Creative Industries' Role in  
Rural Development: The  
case of the West of Ireland*

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# What I'll talk about

- ▶ Western Development Commission
- ▶ West of Ireland
- ▶ Creative Industries in Rural Areas
- ▶ WDC Activities in Creative Sector
- ▶ Other examples from West of Ireland

# Western Development Commission

▶ 7-county Western Region of Ireland

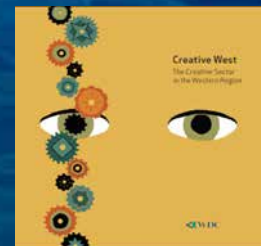
▶ State body under the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government

▶ WDC Act 1998

*'... foster and promote the economic and social development of the Western Region'*

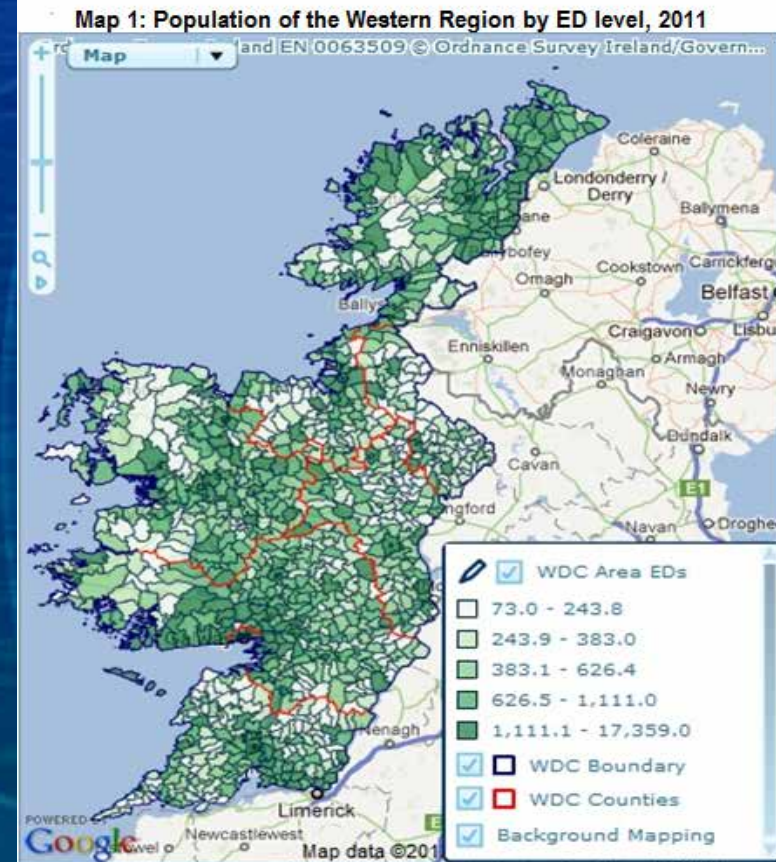
# What we do

1. Inform **policy**-making through data analysis (e.g. employment, infrastructure, rural dev)
2. Support sustainable **development** based on region's resources (e.g. creative, renewable energy)
3. Promote benefits of living, working & doing business in Western Region – **LookWest.ie**
4. Provide risk capital & micro-loans through WDC Investment **Fund** & Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries



# West of Ireland: A rural region

- ▶ 821,000 people
- ▶ 65% live in rural areas (<1,500)
- ▶ 38% is state average
- ▶ 5 most rural counties in Ireland
- ▶ 1 city – Galway
- ▶ High rural unemployment & rising youth emigration

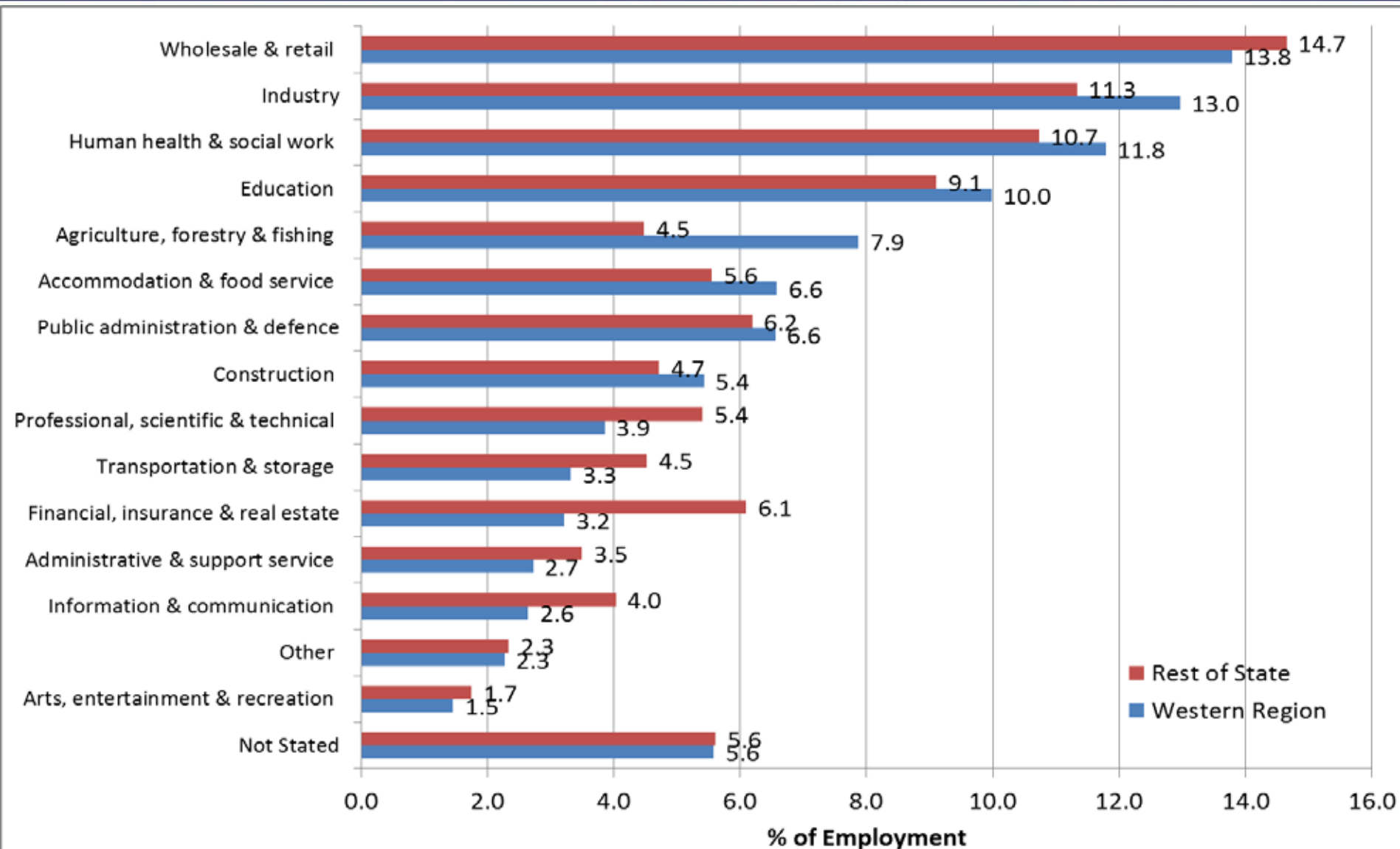


source: CSO, *This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011, Part 1* from All-Island Research Observatory, Western Development Commission Mapping Module [http://www.airo.ie/mapping-module/atlas/Western\\_Development\\_Commission/view](http://www.airo.ie/mapping-module/atlas/Western_Development_Commission/view)

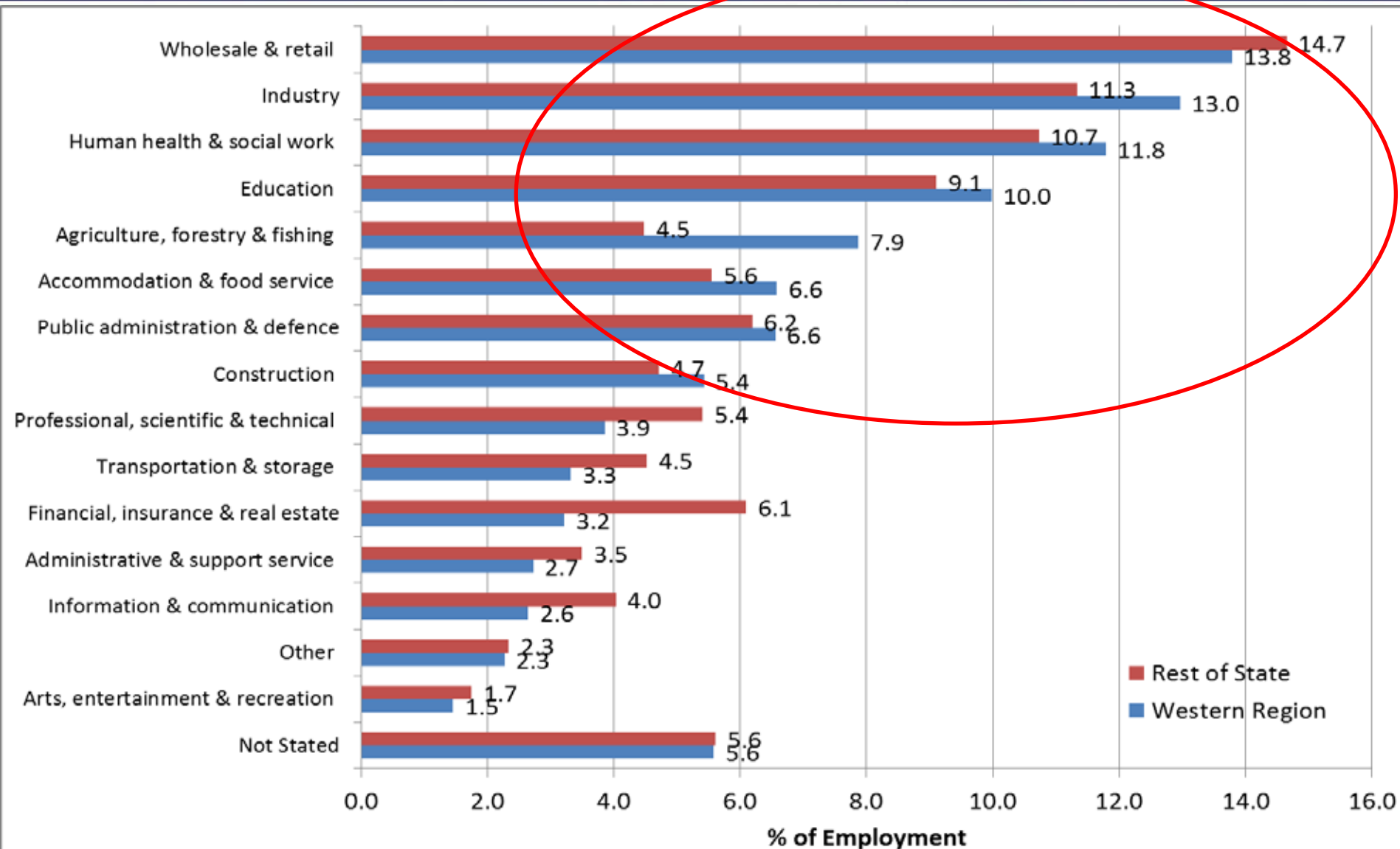
# West of Ireland: A rural economy

- ▶ Top **Employment** sectors
  - ▶ Wholesale & Retail, Industry, Health, Education, Agriculture and Accommodation & Food Service
- ▶ Top **Enterprise** sectors
  - ▶ Construction, Wholesale & Retail and Accommodation & Food Service
- ▶ Rural areas – **more reliant on the sectors that have lost jobs & enterprises in recession** (construction, retail, traditional industry)
- ▶ Urban areas – concentration of growing sectors (ICT, medical devices, knowledge services, high-tech industry)

# Employment by sector: Western Region v Rest of State (2011)

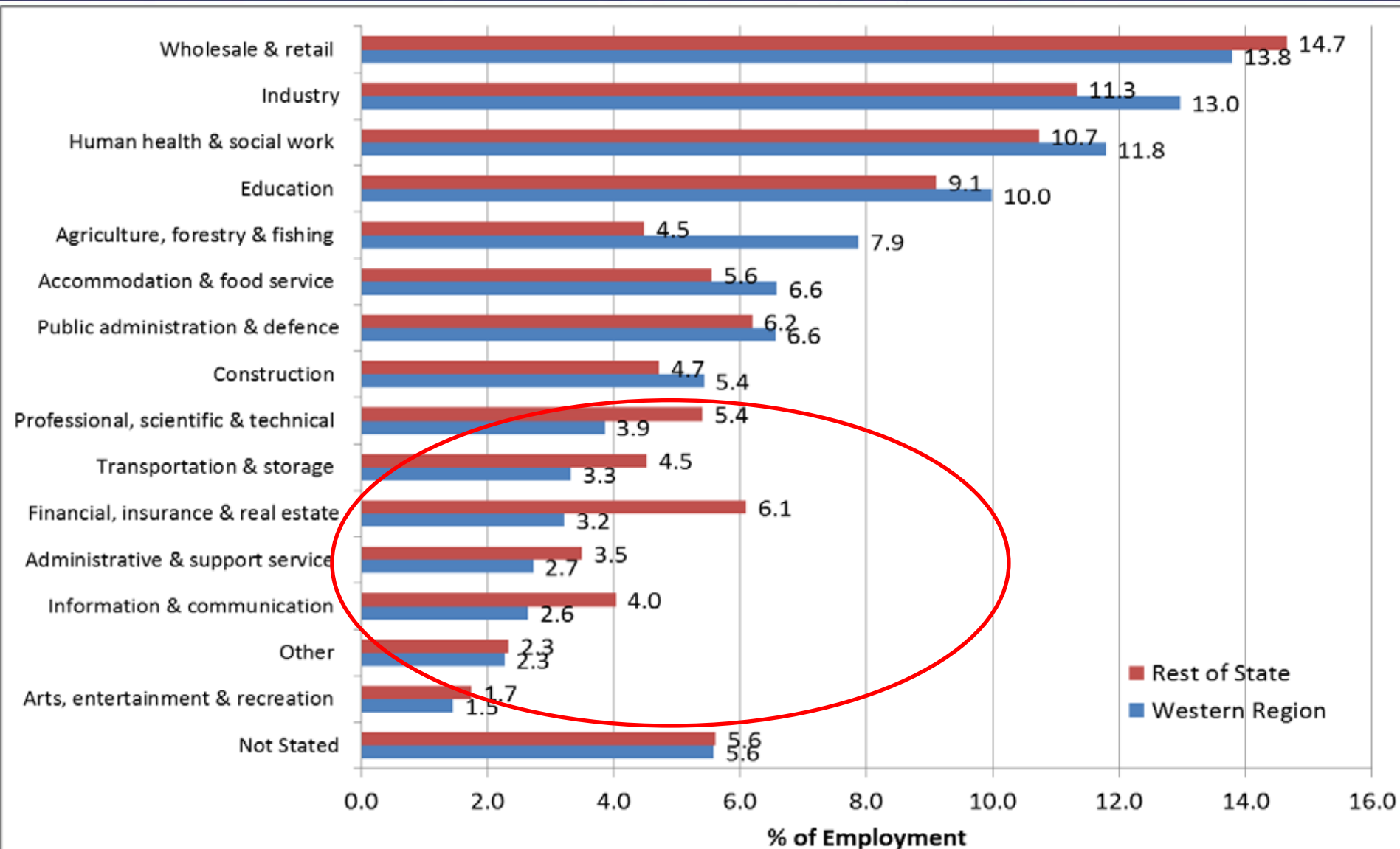


# Employment by sector: Western Region v Rest of State (2011)





# Employment by sector: Western Region v Rest of State (2011)



# Identified rural growth sectors in region

- ▶ Green economy
- ▶ Agri-food
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Knowledge services
- ▶ Caring sector
- ▶ Home-based sole traders & micro across sectors
- ▶ **Creative sector**

# What are the creative industries?

*Occupations and industries centred on creativity, for the production and distribution of original goods and services.*



Advertising  
Architecture  
Art/antique trade  
Crafts  
Design  
Designer fashion  
Digital media  
Publishing  
Internet & software  
Music, visual & performing arts  
Radio & TV  
Video, film & photography

# WDC & the creative industries

- ▶ Research & policy on creative sector largely focuses on urban areas – the 'creative city'
- ▶ But substantial potential for rural regions
- ▶ **WDC Research & Analysis**
  - ▶ *Baseline Research on the Creative Industries Sector in the Western Region of Ireland (2008)*
  - ▶ *Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region (2009)*
  - ▶ *Economic Impact Assessment: The Creative Sector in the Western Region (2011) (with NUI Galway)*



# Molloy & Sons: Heritage Tweed

*Reflections On the Emerald Isle Landscapes That Inspire Authentic Donegal Weave*

“I think that with old crafts which are indigenous to areas like this, it’s **really hard to divorce them from their landscape**,” quote from film-maker

<http://www.nowness.com/day/2011/12/6/1759/molloy-and-sons--heritage-tweed>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=5FFkW9tppJY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=5FFkW9tppJY)

# How important are creative industries in Ireland?

## Economic Impact of Creative Industries in Ireland (2011)

- ▶ €4,644 million Gross Value Added
- ▶ 2.8% of Irish GDP
- ▶ **48,000 direct jobs** + 29,000 indirect/induced jobs

## Western Region (WDC 2008)

- ▶ 4,700 businesses , €270m GVA, **11,000 directly employed**
- ▶ **39% sole traders** + 49% micro-enterprises
- ▶ Low export activity – 2/3 do not export

# How important are creative industries in rural areas?

EU-27

- ▶ 25.5% of cultural employment is in sparsely populated / rural areas
- ▶ 2001-2008 – creative workforce +9.2% in urban areas BUT +12.6% in rural areas (as % of total workforce)

Western Region

- ▶ Most rural county has highest % working in creative sector
- ▶ In general quite **high creative employment in rural counties** BUT second most rural has lowest % in creative
- ▶ Complex factors

# Example from the West of Ireland County Leitrim

Leitrim – most rural county (89.6%) has highest % working in creative sector (4.4%) Why?

1. **Landscape / scenery** + low property prices
2. **In-migration** of small number of artists/craftspeople to Leitrim during 90s > many moved from high costs in Dublin > attracted more creatives > rural loose cluster formed
3. Quality of built environment in main town
4. **Pro-active local authority and Leader group** in this sector

The Dock (art gallery, performance space) <http://www.thedock.ie/>

Leitrim Design House <http://leitrimdesignhouse.ie/>

Leitrim Sculpture Centre <http://www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie/>

Studio North West <http://www.studionorthwest.tv/>



# Some images from County Leitrim



# What issues do rural creative enterprises face?

# Creative Place

- ▶ **Quality of life, natural environment & creative inspiration:** Important attractors to rural areas; Quieter lifestyle; Landscape; Gaeltacht
- ▶ **Connectivity:** Lack of sufficient quality broadband in rural areas; Weaknesses in transport access
- ▶ **Workspace & infrastructure:** Lack of low cost and creative workspace; Many have built own
- ▶ **Planning & development:** Impact of recent developments on sense of place; Attractiveness of built environment

# Creative People

- ▶ **Creative talent:** Pool of creative talent, but can be difficult to access/learn about; Skills gaps in creative technology; Highly mobile talent
- ▶ **Education & training:** Creativity / creative thinking not adequate in schools; Culture of creativity; Insufficient creative business-higher education links (training, R&D); Lack of business skills among creative people / courses, many will need to be self-employed

# Creative Support

- ▶ **Networking & alliances:** Low networking activity in sector & with wider economy; Isolation for rural creatives
- ▶ **Marketing & promotion:** Coherent marketing/branding seen as priority; Showcasing opportunities
- ▶ **Access to funding:** Eligibility criteria for funding; Suitability of funding for creative businesses e.g. risk; Intellectual Property
- ▶ **Public procurement:** Weighting good design/creativity in tender decisions; Scale requirements

# What is key to developing rural creative industries?

- ▶ Creativity is an **asset** & creative talent must be supported
- ▶ Potential exists to participate more in global markets & **increase exports**
- ▶ Preserving the landscape, built environment & natural heritage is necessary to maintain '**creative place**' **strengths**
- ▶ Spillover effects of creative sector can be significant for **innovation & growth in other sectors** e.g. tourism
- ▶ **Regional approach** required to build capacity in the sector with enhanced **partnership** between private & public sector

# WDC Activities

[www.wdc.ie](http://www.wdc.ie)

[LookWest.ie](http://LookWest.ie)



# Creative Edge project

## ▶ Key Objectives:

- ▶ Increase export activity
- ▶ Facilitate networking
- ▶ Improve employment prospects for young creative talent

## ▶ Funding: EU INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) (€1.1m)

## ▶ More Information:

- ▶ [www.creative-edge.eu](http://www.creative-edge.eu)
- ▶ [www.facebook.com/eucreative](http://www.facebook.com/eucreative)
- ▶ [www.twitter.com/eucreative](http://www.twitter.com/eucreative)



Introducing innovation  
in Europe's Northern  
Periphery for a competitive  
and prosperous future.





# Creative Edge partners



- ▶ Whitaker Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway (Lead Partner)
- ▶ Region Vasterbotten / Film I Vasterbotten, Sweden
- ▶ SEED, Craigavon Borough Council, Northern Ireland
- ▶ Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (KTUAS), Finland
- ▶ Western Development Commission, Ireland

# MyCreativeEdge.eu: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge

[www.mycreativeedge.eu](http://www.mycreativeedge.eu)

- ▶ **Export platform** for creative businesses, freelancers & jobseekers to showcase their creative work
  - ▶ Creative Showcase (businesses & freelancers)
  - ▶ Employ a Creative (jobseekers)
- ▶ Individual **rural creative businesses & networks** can greatly increase their international reach
- ▶ Networking opportunities online & at skills workshops
- ▶ Rural & peripheral location used as **unique selling point** for creative products. That services can be **provided online from anywhere** for creative services
- ▶ Launched mid-June – early days!

mycreative  
edge

Home Creative Showcase Employ a Creative About MyCreativeEdge

ADVERTISING & PUBLISHING DESIGN DIGITAL MEDIA TV & RADIO ARTS CRAFTS SOFTWARE & GAMES FILM & VIDEO MUSIC & THEATRE PHOTOGRAPHY

**MyCreativeEdge**  
the creative showcase for Europe's Northern Edge

**MyCreativeEdge – a creative directory with a difference**

Finding that ideal creative partner, service provider or even a unique gift is now easier than ever before. Whether you need to add that extra spark to your current project or hope to find some of Europe's most talented creatives – it's all right here for you.





If it's a creative product, service or even a new employee you need, get the ball rolling and choose your sector from the options below right now.

**Choose a Creative Sector**

Advertising & Publishing Architecture Arts Crafts Design Digital Media Fashion & Jewellery Film & Video Music & Theatre Photography Software & Games TV & Radio

**Filter by Region:** Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Waterford (Ireland) West of Ireland

**Creative Showcase** [View all](#)

 <p><b>Patrick McHugh</b></p> <p>Where: West of Ireland</p> <p>Before: Advertising &amp; Publishing, Design, etc.</p> <p>Tags: Advertising, Advertising Photography, etc.</p>	 <p><b>Liam Duffy - Urbanist and Writer</b></p> <p>Where: West of Ireland</p> <p>Before: Advertising &amp; Publishing, Arts, Design</p> <p>Tags: Urbanist, Art, Blogging, etc.</p>	 <p><b>Pixelcrush</b></p> <p>Where: West of Ireland</p> <p>Before: Advertising &amp; Publishing, Design, etc.</p> <p>Tags: Web Design, Brand, Consumer Brand</p>	 <p><b>Boladh Milk Candles</b></p> <p>Where: West of Ireland</p> <p>Before: Crafts</p> <p>Tags: Craft, Different, Handmade, etc.</p>
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# Creative Edge Talent Voucher Scheme

- ▶ Creative businesses featured on MyCreativeEdge can apply for a talent voucher (max €2,000) to **contract a new/emerging creative talent for a specific assignment**
- ▶ Valuable experience for new talent, possible further collaboration, **retain young talent in region/rural area** & new business opportunities
- ▶ Currently open for applications

# Creative Edge Mentoring Programme

- ▶ Finland & Sweden
- ▶ Match young, emerging creative talent with established mentors to help **set up their own business** & remain in their area
- ▶ 30 people are involved (mentors & mentees)
- ▶ So far 1 company established, 1 mentee has internship with mentor & 1 mentor/mentee partnership applied for funding for project

# Creative Steps

Creative Steps programme for **emerging creative talent** run by Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

- ▶ 15 students/new graduates from 4 regions
- ▶ 4 mixed multi-skilled **international teams**
- ▶ 4 businesses / challenges
  - ▶ R4 Tyres, Spinfy, Creative Summit, Whitaker Institute
- ▶ 4 weeks –
  - ▶ 1 week face to face in Finland
  - ▶ 1 week face to face in Northern Ireland
  - ▶ 2 weeks working online
- ▶ **Online presentation** of ideas to client companies

# Creative Steps (+ a few) in Finland



# WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries

[www.wdc.ie/microfundci](http://www.wdc.ie/microfundci)

- ▶ New *WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries* for creative enterprises in the Western Region of Ireland
  - ▶ **€1m fund over three years**
  - ▶ **Max. €25,000**
  - ▶ Up to 5 years
  - ▶ EU Reference Rate for Ireland for unsecured lending ~ 5.5% fixed for term (no state aid)
- ▶ Launched June 2012 – quarterly calls
- ▶ **9 micro-loans approved to date** – 5 in very rural locations



# Connecting the West: Next Generation Broadband in the Western Region

- ▶ Creative business survey Western Region 2012 – **77% ranked broadband as top on scale of location factors**
- ▶ Rural areas need better speeds & bandwidth
- ▶ **Domestic** users, home based businesses, workers e.g. Amazon, Apple (tele-working)
- ▶ **Small and Medium Sized Enterprises** case studies
  - ▶ Capacity (e.g. video-conferencing)
  - ▶ Price
  - ▶ Service
  - ▶ 1 moved from rural area to larger centre because of poor broadband
- ▶ **Larger users** increasingly only in larger centres with fibre networks

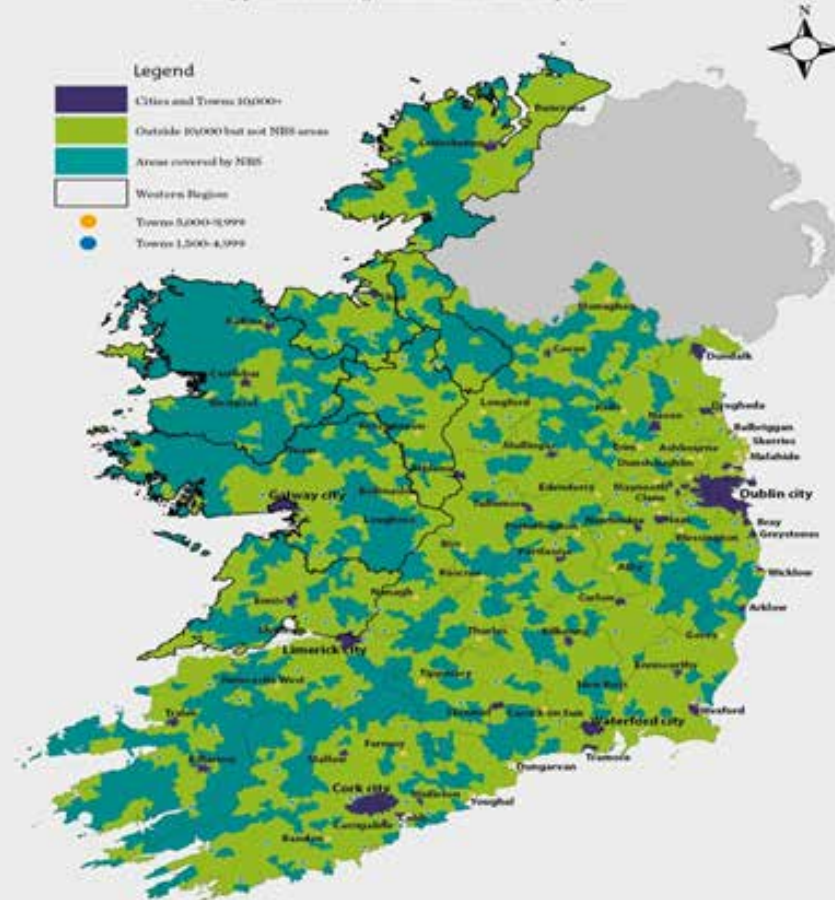


# Irish National Broadband Plan

## ▶ Three speed Ireland?

- ▶ Cities & large towns (10,000+) with 70-100 Mbps+
- ▶ Semi-urban (less than 10,000+) with 40Mbps
- ▶ Rural (areas with current schemes) with 30Mbps

Map 1 Next Generation Broadband in Ireland  
Likely pattern of next generation broadband deployment



# Other creative support projects from West of Ireland

[www.wdc.ie](http://www.wdc.ie)

[LookWest.ie](http://LookWest.ie)



# 4CNW

## Creative State North West

<http://creativestatenorthwest.com/>

- ▶ **4CNW** is a business innovation support programme for the North West of Ireland, run by Sligo local authority & co-financed by DG Enterprise & Industry
  - ▶ Provides talent vouchers to sponsor **collaborations between creatives & broader industry** (Agri-Food, Tourism, Technology & Life Sciences) pairing creative skills with relevant business challenges
  - ▶ E.g. seaweed cosmetic business short promo videos, traditional music at airport, rebranding energy company
  - ▶ Aim is to **increase innovation** & awareness of value of creative services

# Harnessing Creativity: New Energy for the Region's Economy

[www.harnessingcreativity.eu](http://www.harnessingcreativity.eu)

- ▶ INTERREG IVA programme (Leitrim County Enterprise Board, Northern Ireland) to boost '**Creativity Transfer**'
- ▶ **Help creative sector become better at business & business sector become better at creativity**
- ▶ Capacity building / Masterclasses/ Creativity Clusters; Showcase Events; Innovation Product Development
- ▶ Target
  - ▶ 200 creative sector participants & 90-120 wider business participants
  - ▶ Over 80 workshops & classes plus one to one mentoring & support for business promotion

# Thank You

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# Workgroup Questions

- ▶ What **strengths/advantages** do rural areas offer for creative industries?
- ▶ What are the key **issues and challenges** facing rural based creative enterprises?
- ▶ What **actions** are needed to help creative enterprises set up, operate & expand in rural areas?
  - ▶ Policy / Strategy
  - ▶ Practical projects and initiatives (e.g. under Rural Development Programme 2014-2020)