

# MIGRATORY PATHWAYS TO IRELAND FOR START-UPS AND INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Emma Quinn

EMN / ESRI

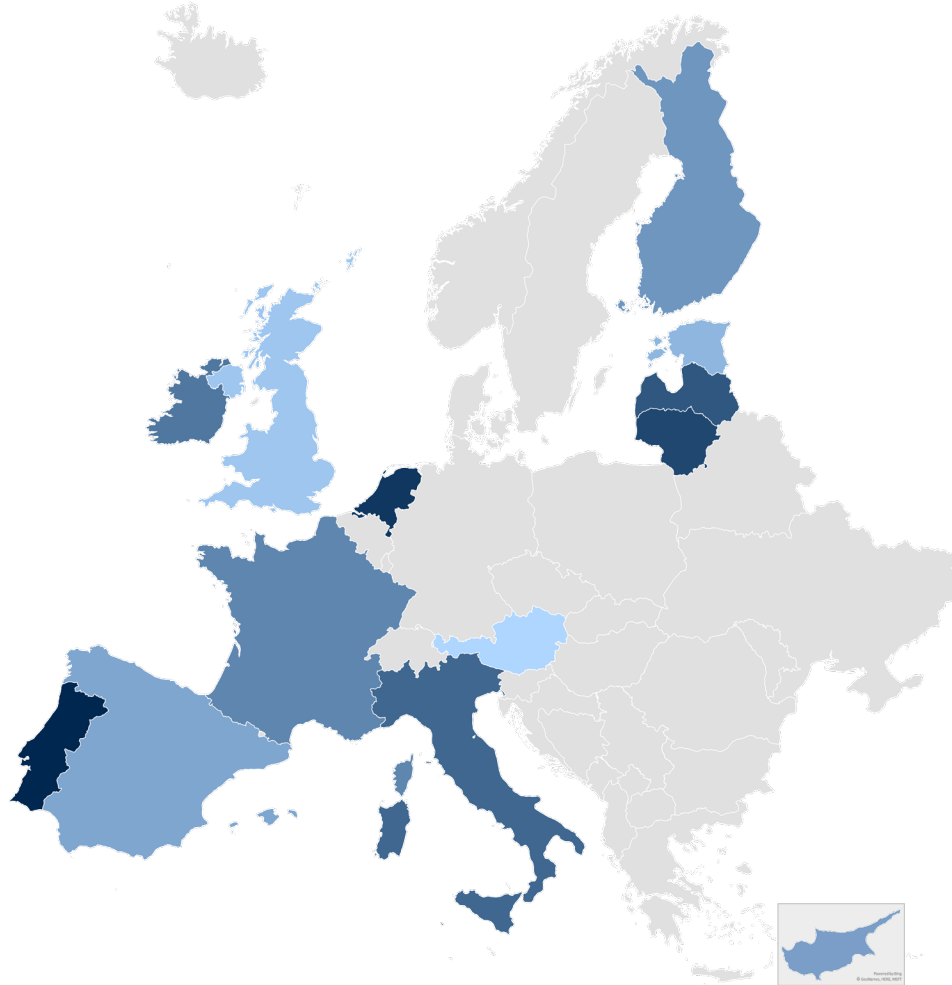
The Atrium, 51 St. Stephen's Green

29<sup>th</sup> January 2020



# Ireland in the EU context

- IE one of 13 EU Member States with a specific start-up immigration scheme: The Start-Up and Entrepreneurs Programme (STEP)
- Objective is to stimulate productive investment in Ireland by attracting 'High Potential Start-Ups' (HPSU)



# Start-Up and Entrepreneurs Programme (STEP)

Targets non-EEA applicants

Applicants are required have €50,000 to invest

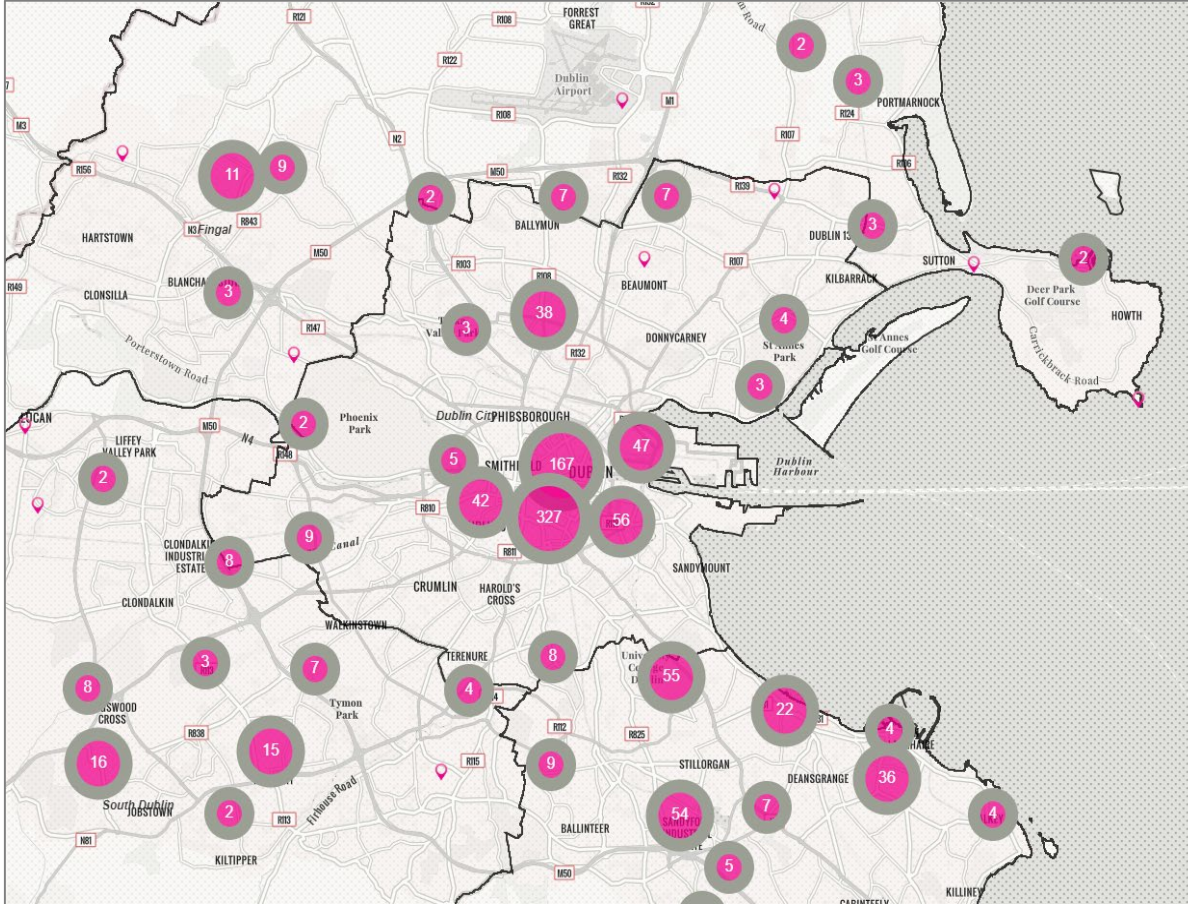
Also a business plan that demonstrates that the venture is a High Potential Start-up (HPSU) i.e.:

- Ventures that introduce a new or innovative product or service to international markets;
- Capable of creating ten jobs in Ireland and realising €1 million in sales within three to four years of starting up;
- Led by an experienced management team;
- Headquartered and controlled in Ireland;
- Less than six years old

# Ireland's business environment

- Government Action Plan for Jobs
- National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland
- Dynamic ecosystem with supports such as Enterprise Ireland, LEOs, incubators and accelerators
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018: 9.7 in every 100 adults either actively engaged in the very early stages of starting a business or have recently started a business in Ireland; EU average 7.6
- Ireland ranks 5<sup>th</sup> highest in Europe (20 countries)

## Start-ups in Dublin



Source:  
techireland.org  
Date: Nov. 2019

## Factors influencing the effort to attract migrant start-ups and entrepreneurs

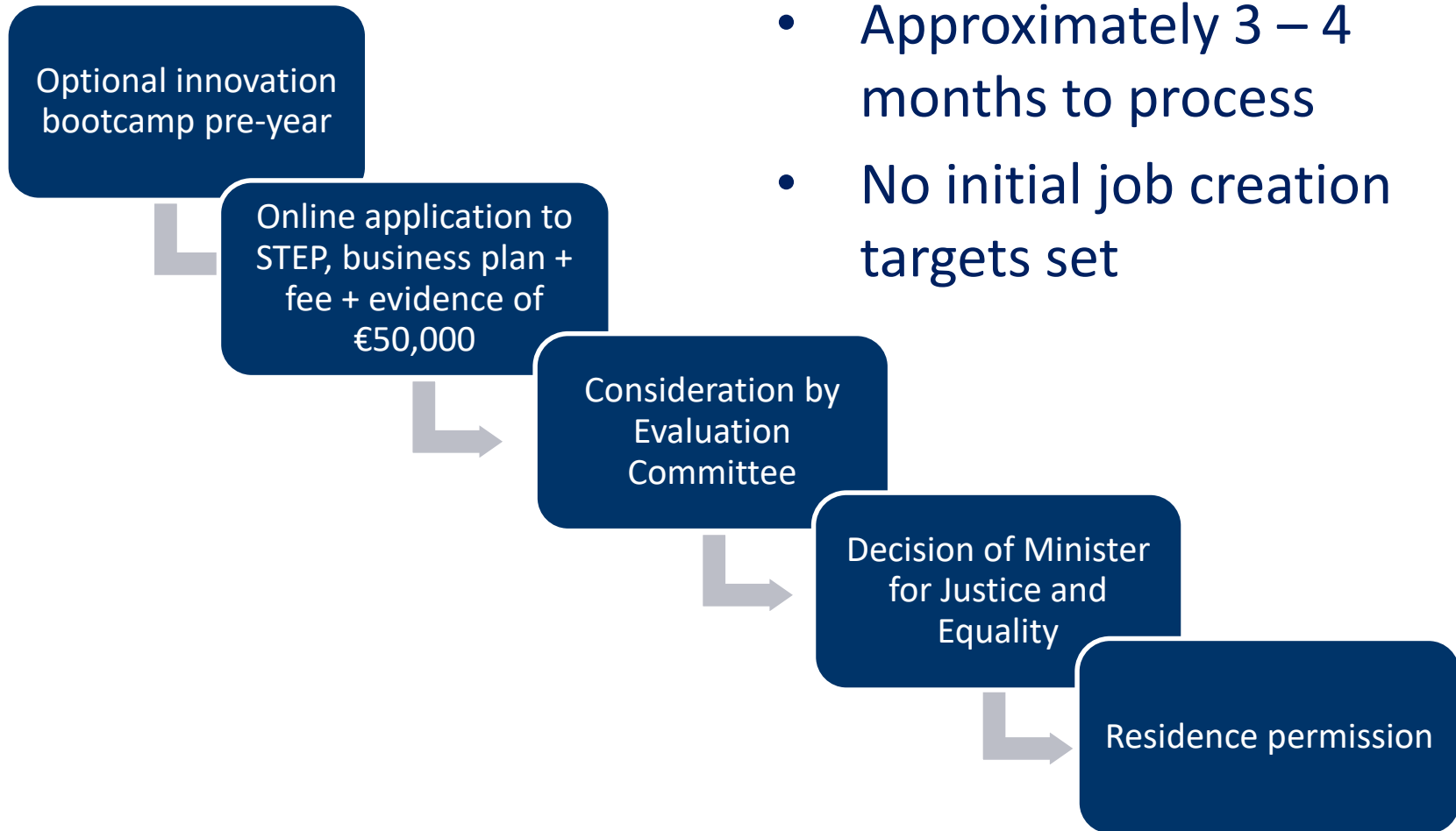
- Proximity to multinationals; English language; proliferation of accelerators and incubators are seen as advantages by Enterprise Ireland
- Insurance; availability of credit / finance for scaling-up; rent and property prices are challenges. Domestic market is relatively small by international standards - faced by native and migrant start-ups and innovative entrepreneurs
- Availability of other employment opportunities via the employment permit route

## What does STEP offer?

- Two year residence on Stamp 4 for applicant(s) and family members (holders may work without an employment permit + residence reckonable for naturalisation)
- Renewal of residence for a further three years and thereafter for five year periods
- Multiple entry visa granted where applicable
- No access to public funds
- More than one start-up founder may apply. Funding requirement drops to €30,000 each for subsequent applicants
- Non-EEA employees must enter via employment permits system

## STEP: Requirements and procedure

- Approximately 3 – 4 months to process
- No initial job creation targets set





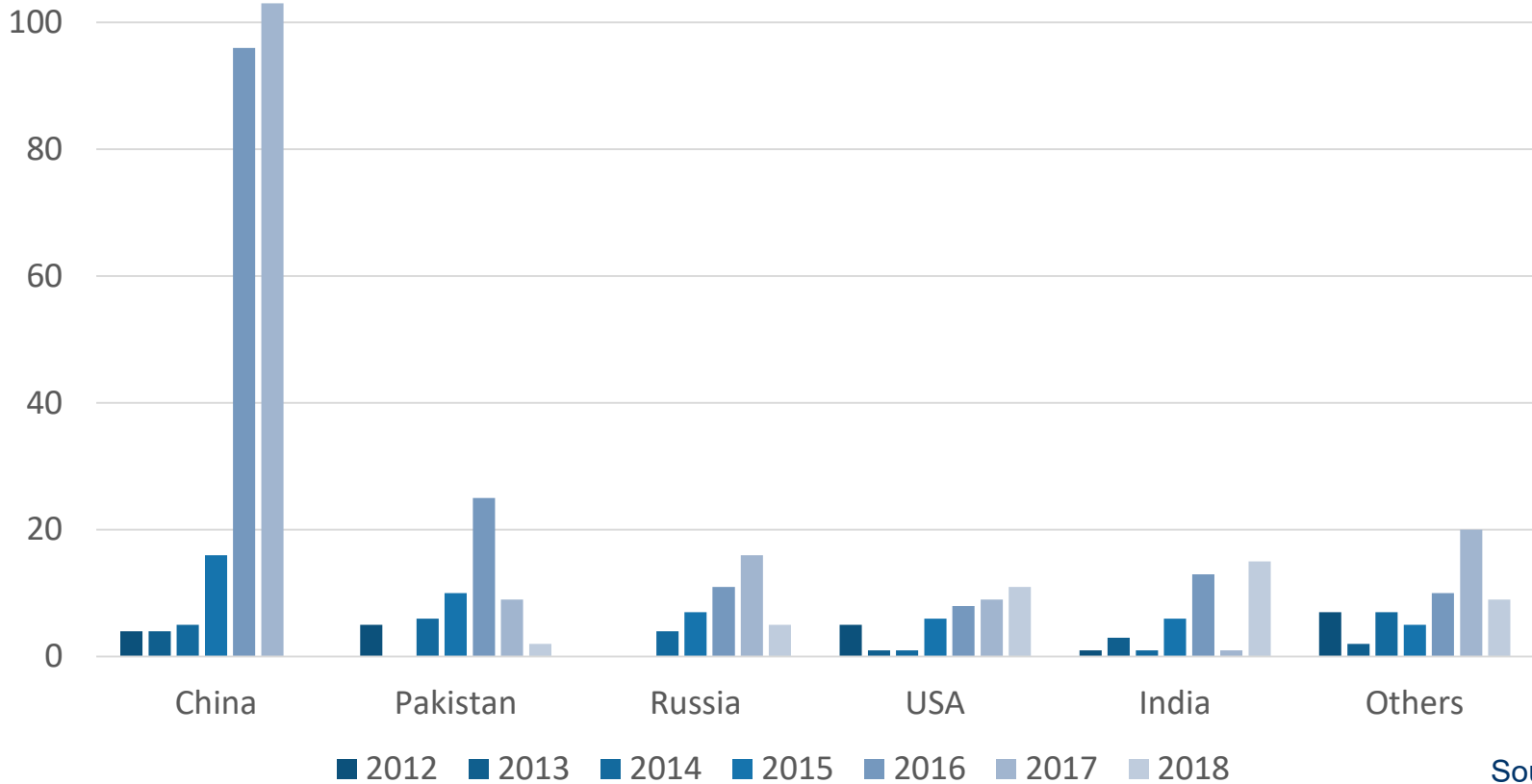
## STEP: Agencies involved



- Membership flexible
- Meets quarterly
- Also involved at renewal stage

# STEP: Applications by nationality of applicant

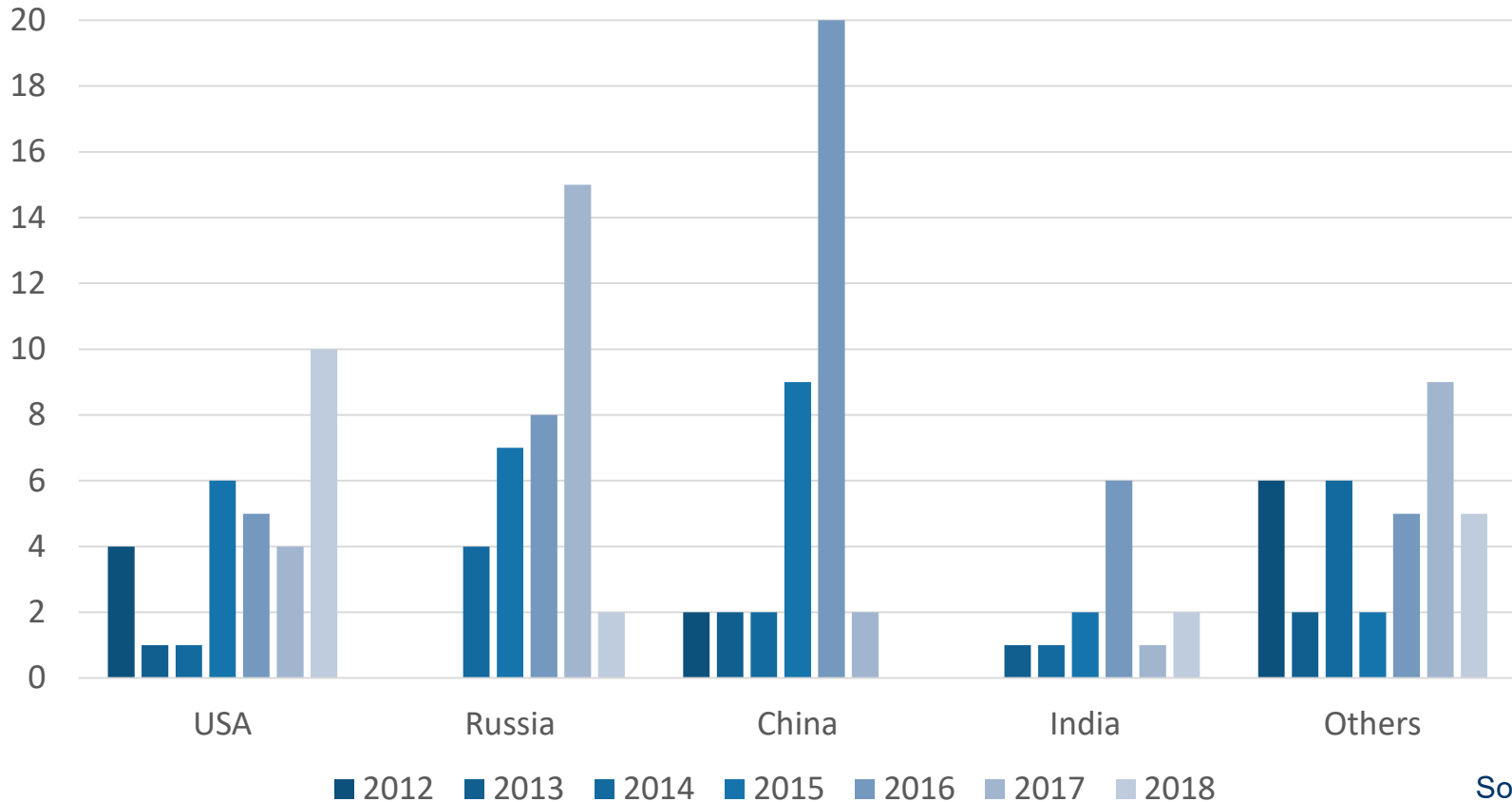
- 469 applications in period 2012-2018



Source: DJE

# STEP: Applications approved by nationality of applicant

- 152 applications approved (32%)



Source: DJE

# STEP: Applications by gender and sector

- 41% of applications in ICT sector

Year	Applications by women
2018	41%
2017	39%
2016	45%
2015	34%
2014	17%
Average	40%

## Conclusions

- Ireland has developed a dynamic ‘ecosystem’ for start-ups
- One of first MS to create a migration pathway for non-EEA start-up founders and entrepreneurs
- Duration of residence and flexibility of permit; flexibility regarding renewal
- Low numbers of applicants and approvals under STEP relative to some MS
- Family members tend not to accompany successful applicants
- Low awareness of STEP among incubators and accelerators in Ireland leading to a review by DJE in 2019
- No data available as to the success or failure rates of migrant start-ups or STEP renewal
- Migration channel is only part of the picture. Migrant entrepreneurs and start-up founders face the same opportunities and challenges as indigenous ventures