

The innovator



Karen Keane

Region

· Wexford (Southeast Ireland)

Sector

- Chocolate Manufacturing
- Chocolate Ingredients,
- Café - 'The Chocolate Bar',
- Retail Space,
- Tours & Experiences



Features of my innovator journey

- > Journey began in 2013, learning traditional hand-tempering from Benoit Lorge.
- 2014: Craft handmade chocolate bars from my kitchen at Last Tree Farm.
- > Dublin's farmers markets allowed us to sell our chocolate, connect with customers, and gain invaluable insights into their preferences
- > Team of 12-14. 3,500 sq. ft. Gorey, Co. Wexford facility.
- > In 2023, we launched a range of high-quality chocolate products for chefs, kitchens, bakeries, and cafes in Ireland, including specialized items like chocolate batons.
- > In 2024, we opened The Chocolate Bar, a café and retail space that shares our story and supports a circular economy by showcasing our chocolate in delicious treats.
- > A High Potential Start-Up Company (Enterprise Ireland) and LEADER funding.

Innovation from 3 perspectives



01

Economic

- Strengthening Local Economies.
- Job Creation and Skill Development.
- Supporting Irish Hospitality and Food Industry.
- Increasing Export Potential.
- Promoting Sustainable Growth in the Chocolate Industry.
- Economic Resilience through Diversification.

02

Environmental

- Sustainable Cocoa Sourcing.
- Reducing Packaging Waste.
- Minimizing Energy Use.
- Local Ingredient Sourcing.
- Waste Upcycling and Circular Economy Practices.

03

Social

- Fair and Sustainable Sourcing.
- Local Collaboration
- Community Engagement.
- Support for Inclusive Spaces.
- Advocacy and Awareness.

Barriers

>High Cost of Sustainable Ingredients: Ethical Sourcing and Local Ingredients Limit.

> Scalability.

>Innovation Stifled by Resource Constraints.

>Small Brands, Big Challenges: Navigating a Premium Market.

>Prioritizing Planet and Profit: A Sustainable Business Dilemma.



"As a female founder leading a rural business, I'm excited to learn from and collaborate with other women facing similar challenges. The Living Lab offers a unique opportunity to drive innovation in rural enterprises, helping us amplify Bean and Goose's positive impact within our community and beyond.."