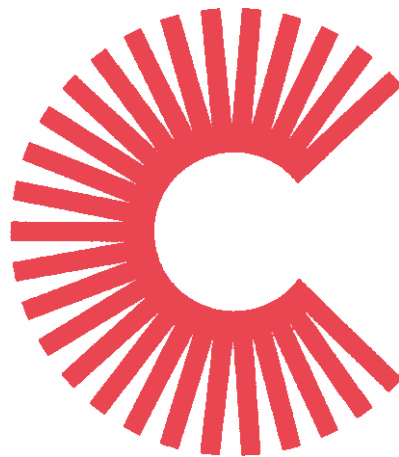


Cork City Council Action Plan 2019 – 2020

Leveraging startups' (scalable, high-potential SMEs less than 5 years old) growth through their engagement with innovation processes at local or regional level and improving their role as regional and industry innovation providers in seven European regions.



We are Cork.

***Startups reinvigorate the business community,
increase competition for innovation, introduce new products,
services and business models, create new markets
and offer innovative solutions to emerging problems.***

*Startup Latin America 2016:
Building an Innovative Future
OECD Publishing 2016 Paris Page (21)*

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Executive Summary

Between 2017 and 2018, each Innovafoster consortium partner was required to conduct a regionalised diagnosis of the innovation policy ecosystem in consultation with local stakeholders. A standardised diagnostic template was agreed between the consortium members early in 2017, though the option for customisation was also agreed between the consortium partners.

Drawing on the agreed diagnostic template, as well as including themes drawn from additional innovation ecosystem diagnostic tools familiar to the Cork stakeholders, a stakeholder workshop was held in Cork in October 2017. The purpose of this workshop was to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for the innovation ecosystem, existing or perceived at a regional level.

The outcomes of this regional workshop, in tandem with the Innovafoster consortium knowledge exchange workshops which took place over 2017 and 2018 has enabled Cork City Council to identify three key themes for the 2019-2020 action plan. They are:

1. Collaboration between the research community and industry partners
2. Pre-commercial procurement of innovative solutions for Cork City Council
3. Promoting connections between innovation-driven companies, professional service providers and the investment community.

It is important to note that these themes were agreed based upon and subsequent actions identified which action which linked to Innovafoster and, in particular, derived from the interregional learning process which took place over 2017-2018. This is the [recommendation](#) that is set out under by Interreg.

Background

The Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme (SEROP) 2014-2020 was prepared in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders. It sets out a strategic development strategy for the region including a coherent set of investment priorities, taking account of specific regional needs. The successful delivery of the programme is based upon the delivery of six priority areas with a total investment of €69,200,000 (50% ERDF and 50% Irish Exchequer Funding) of public funding for the region during a six year period.

Priority 3 of this programme is *to increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in the S&E region by supporting business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises*. This will be achieved by actively supporting innovative and growth oriented micro-enterprise business start-ups and expansions, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors through the provision of business information, advisory services, capability building, mentoring and financial supports. Supports are targeted at value added micro-enterprises in the manufacturing and traded services activities, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors which do not lead to deadweight and or displacement. The non-financial supports are broader and more generally focussed though also meeting the specific needs of these high growth and potential high growth companies.

The *Best Practice* examples identified by the [Southern Regional Assembly](#) under Innovafoster are the [Innovation Vouchers](#) and the [Innovation Partnerships](#), both managed by [Enterprise Ireland](#). The Cork City Council Innovafoster Action Plan will not focus on these instruments as they are well managed in Ireland by Enterprise Ireland and as Cork City Council; we are not in a position to actively influence them.

Cork City Council has a demonstrable track record in building and driving stakeholder collaboration in specific areas including the innovation agenda. The objective of the Cork City Council Action Plan is to set out how the learnings gained from the Innovafoster Knowledge Exchange workshops over the period 2017-2018 will contribute to the achievement of Priority 3 for the Cork region.

Context

Ireland has a keen reputation for delivering successful programmes and projects based upon inter-agency collaboration. At a regional level, this is most often driven by local authorities who lobby key stakeholders, securing buy-in and commitment to build and drive particular agendas for their individual regions.

In 2006, Irish governments first comprehensive strategy for science, technology and innovation was launched to build scientific research excellence in higher education institutions, public research organisations and supporting private enterprise build capacity for research and development. In the years since, Ireland has successfully built up its research capacity and excellence with an increasing base of enterprises engaging in RDI, along with significant steps made in establishing a strong public research environment based on scientific excellence in a number of strategic areas.

Ireland's key policy document [Innovation 2020](#) states that the primary rationale for government investment in innovation is to develop a competitive knowledge-based economy and society and to drive innovation in enterprise, develop talent, and maximise the return on our investment or economic and social progress.

[Innovation 2020](#) reflects a whole-of-government approach to innovation in setting out Ireland's vision to be a [Global Innovation Leader](#) by 2020. This is being delivered through a combination of prioritising public and private investment in research, development and innovation, enhancing the impact of RDI for enterprise and addressing human capital challenges to deliver on the country's RDI goals.

170+ different government mechanisms support the Irish innovation ecosystem through the provision of grant monies, tax incentives, accessible loans, subject matter expertise and specialised equipment delivered by 40+ Irish agencies to indigenous and multinational companies (MNCs).

Cork - the Republic of Ireland's second largest city region

Cork is also Ireland's second largest economic engine, supporting a highly productive economy which contributes 19% of Ireland's national GDP; also generating the highest revenue per person in Ireland (€105,000 per person), ahead of both Dublin (€96,000) and London (€104,000)

Cork is a vibrant city with a population of 125,622; a metropolitan area population in excess of 300,000 and a total population of 542,196. 50% of this population is less than 35 years old (national average). Building on the NPF's recognition of Cork's scale, its population will increase from 542,196 to circa 846,423 with in excess of 60% of overall population living in the metropolitan area in 2050.

While indigenous industry is widely spread across Ireland, each region demonstrates particular industry strengths. The southern region's economic productivity is very much in line with the national average and is home to a particularly strong regional industry base of EMEA business services, industrial products and services, and pharmaceuticals. Over the last 25 years, Cork has consistently attracted many of the world's largest companies and the region is now home to global market leaders in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, ICT, biotechnology, professional services and international financial services. With over 150 global industry names, employing close to 34,000 people, Cork holds a headline position over other Irish regions in terms of its MNC and large corporate base.

[Cork City Council](#) is a public service organisation that operates within a local democratic mandate and is responsible for providing a diverse range of services to the city's citizens. Cork City Council recognise that significant economic progress has been made across the region in the last five years while acknowledging that further measures are necessary to ensure establishing and sustaining new business startup and growth.

For the first time in 50 years, Cork city is due to expand its boundaries in 2019. With an anticipated population growth to in excess of 800,000 Cork is set to become the fastest growing city in Ireland over the next 20 years, enhancing Cork's potential as a city of scale and enabling Cork to be a key regional driver and a complementary alternative to Dublin.

[Project Ireland 2040](#) positions Cork very clearly as a developmental counter-balance to Dublin. This means maximising the potential of a multitude of economic drivers including the innovation ecosystem; the progression of which is seen as a key priority for Cork. This plan aligns with the vision of *Cork 2050 – Realising our potential* which states (Economic Objective 3): 'Support the continued growth of research and development eco-systems, focussing on innovation and high growth sectors'.

Building on the projected growth and development of Cork, the vision for Cork Municipal Area Strategic Plan (MASP) is now to ... sustainably develop the potential and capacity of Metropolitan Cork, which is the State's second city of international scale, as a healthy, people centred, affordable, socially and economically inclusive, innovative and technologically smart international gateway offering a high-quality environment, a vibrant city at its heart, supported by a network of compact metropolitan towns, connected by sustainable transport networks, serviced by a high standard of physical and community infrastructure offering a high quality of life for all.

PART 1

General Information

Project:	Innovafoster Action Plan
Partner Organisation:	Cork City Council
Country:	Ireland
NUTS2 region:	Southern & Eastern
Contact person:	Siobhán Finn
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Phone Number:	+353 86 2872286

City Council is the local authority responsible for the Cork core city and metropolitan area. The [City Development Plan 2015-2021](#) is the main strategic statutory planning policy document, providing the framework for the strategic development of Cork city. Chapter three of this plan sets out the economic strategy for Cork as to 'promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment' [P24]. There are multiple objectives which support this strategy [P25] including supporting entrepreneurship, innovation and economic diversity to facilitate employment generation.

Part 2

Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

European Territorial Cooperation programme

Other regional development policy instrument

✓

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Priority 3: SME Competitiveness
Southern & Eastern Operational Programme
2014-2020

Part 3

Details of the Actions Envisaged

The main objectives of the Innovafoster project are to:

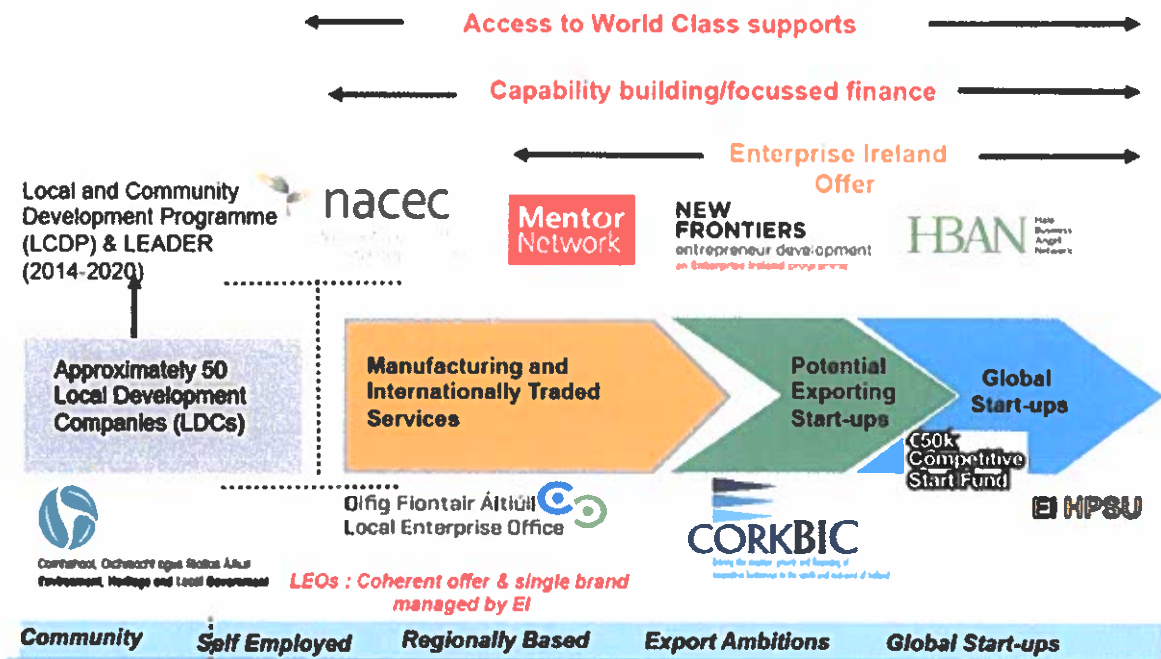
1. Identify and share examples, ideas and solutions among consortium partners
2. Tailor them to regional and local needs based on strengths
3. Implement action plans
4. Improve regional policies
5. Serve as documented cases for analysis to other European regions and cities.

Under phase I of Innovafoster (2017-2018) each consortium partner was required to produce an action plan, specific to their individual region. Under phase II (2019-2020) implementation of the action plan by Cork City Council, as a consortium member of Innovafoster, will be delivered via the Cork Innovates Partnership i.e. a partnership of local stakeholders who actively support entrepreneurship and innovation for startups and SMES in Cork.

Startup Environment

The latest research from [Tech Ireland](#) suggests that tech regions outside the capital are evolving well with Cork producing the most tech companies across all of the regions. These companies operate across a number of sectors including agri-tech/food; consumer/e-commerce; edu-tech; enterprise solutions; entertainment/sports; green/energy; health; industrial technologies; security and social media and advertising.

In Cork, the startup community is widely supported by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland (EI), IDA Ireland (IDA), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). Additionally, the third level institutions – UCC and CIT – along with business support organisations, networks and associations all have a role to play in this community, with the success of the region characterised by the strong inter-agency partnerships and cross-community collaboration; all contributing to world class educational standards, good connectivity, strength in global business sectors, a thriving startup and SME sector and ability to attract talent and overseas investment.



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Working with Enterprise Ireland on High Potential Startups and managing the HBAN Business Angel Network

ACTION 1: COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Background: The Kuyavian and Pomeranian regions of Poland illustrated the active cooperation between science and business community during their knowledge exchange workshop which took place in March 2018. [The Torun Regional Development Agency](#) demonstrated that this type of cooperation i.e. between the research community and industry partners influences the commercialisation of scientific research, giving mutual benefits for academics and scientific workers as well as business partners.

Action: A showcase which will spotlight collaboration between innovation supports and business in the region. The event will provide a forum for researchers and industry to showcase collaboration between parties, spotlighting mutually beneficial collaborations. Cork City Council will work with the key research support providers to identify opportunities and examples of best practice engagement and collaboration which can be showcased.

[Science Foundation Ireland](#) (SFI) is the leading national funder in the area of science and technology, building critical mass in strategic research areas, addressing the needs of enterprise and meeting the targets of the Ireland's [Innovation 2020](#) strategy. SFI specialises in addressing companies' needs through support of researchers in Ireland's higher education institutions; playing a complementary role to that of its sister agencies [IDA Ireland](#) and [Enterprise Ireland](#) in assisting foreign and indigenous industry.

Stakeholders involved: ● Cork City Council ● the Cork Innovates Partnership ● the Southern Regional Assembly ● Science Foundation Ireland ● IDA Ireland ● Enterprise Ireland ● the Higher Education Institutions

A working group will be established with key stakeholder organisations represented and with membership reflecting the organisations identified above and possibly more if appropriate. This 'mix' of stakeholders will enable us to highlight collaborate opportunities between the research community and industry; highlight examples of best practice and share perspectives from both research teams and industry on individual success stories.

Timeframe: Q1-Q3 2019

Costs: estimated at €5,000

Funding sources: Cork City Council Economic Development Fund and the Southern Regional Assembly

ACTION 2: An Open Innovation Approach to Problem-solving for Cork City Council

PILOT ACTION

Background: Following the successful experiences of and the shared learning from Madrid City Council (at the Madrid Stakeholder Workshop in September 2018) on the topic of innovative procurement practices, Cork City Council would like to develop new measures for innovative procurement between local government and specialised startups.

Action: The proposed Pilot Action will promote an open innovation approach to problem-solving by Cork City Council, so as to identify cost effective solutions and technologies which will address a key operational challenge within an internal department of the organisation. Cork City Council will seek smart and innovative solutions to an internal operational challenge within the organisation. Small and emerging companies, innovative startups and high potential innovative SMEs will be offered visibility and an opportunity to engage with Cork City Council, through a hackathon, in order to identify a best-in-class solution which will solve the challenge.

Stakeholders involved: ● Cork City Council ● solution and service providers ● entrepreneurs ● innovators

A committee will be established within Cork City Council. This committee will be made up of representatives from the Division within Cork City Council who are seeking a solution to their operational challenge. A representative from the procurement division within Cork City Council will also be present. Cork City Council intends to draw on the experience of [Madrid City Council](#) and their associates [The Silo Company](#) in establishing guidelines and a best practice approach to innovative procurement.

Timeframe: Q1-Q4 2019

Costs: estimated at €10,300

Funding sources: Interreg Programme Support for Pilot Actions

Action 3: PROMOTING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INNOVATION-DRIVEN COMPANIES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND THE INVESTMENT COMMUNITY

Background: The [VentureFest Network](#) in the UK facilitates 12+ events across the country every year. The focus of these events is to bring together ideas, investment and expertise to accelerate transfer of innovation and technology into business growth. Our proposed action is based upon learnings transferred from Oldham City Council during the knowledge exchange workshop which they hosted in June 2018. Subsequently, Siobhán Finn, Project Manager with the Cork Innovates Partnership visited [VentureFest NorthWest 2018](#) in September.

Action: The Cork event (name tbc) is intended to act as a catalyst for engagement in the region, bringing together key stakeholders to drive innovation and growth in the startups and high-growth SMEs of the region. The event will bring together the region's innovators, entrepreneurs and investors to facilitate business connections, growth opportunities and new ideas. The event will provide a mix of inspirational speakers, interactive workshops, exhibitors and networking opportunities. The event also features the *Innovation Showcase Competition* that enables businesses to promote their latest products, services and innovations to an audience of potential customers, partners and funders. The event will also offer a *Meet the Funder Hub* to provide entrepreneurs and business owners with the opportunity to meet with funders and investors including angel investors, equity specialists, loan funds and grant providers.

Stakeholders involved: ● Cork City Council ● the Cork Innovates Partnership ● ecosystem partners ● professional service providers ● financial loan and investment providers ● innovation and entrepreneurship support agencies

A taskforce will be established with key stakeholder organisations to include a PR agency, an event planner, a representative of Cork City Council, 3 Cork Innovates Partnership representatives and 2 community representatives. This taskforce will be responsible for the planning, management and successful delivery of the event. The taskforce will draw on the extensive experience of the Cork Innovates Partnership that has in the past organised events of significant scale such as the [Startup Nations Summit 2016](#).

Timeframe: Q1-Q3 2020

Costs: Estimated in the region of €100,000

Funding Sources: Combined public and private funding sources through support from the Cork City Council Economic Development Fund, contributions from stakeholders and sponsorship from the private sector.

Anticipated Outcomes

The action plan will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis over 2019-2020 with quarterly reporting by Cork City Council to the Cork Innovates Partnership. Additionally, engagement and collaboration with other members of the Innovafoster consortium will be actively sought for peer guidance and advice on best practice approaches, if required, during this period.

PR and Media Activities

The actions identified under Innovafoster will encourage and promote innovation processes and partnerships to drive growth and job creation for startups and high growth SMES within the region. Under a dedicated communications strategy, Cork City Council will engage with all relevant audiences while adopting a best practice approach to delivering clear and coherent messages in line with the objectives of the Innovafoster action plan.

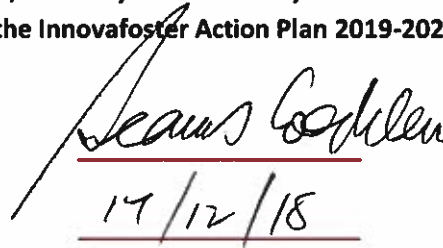
Cork City Council has multiple channels which will allow for extensive news dissemination at local, regional, national, European and international level. Reflective of this will be a multi-targeted communications plan aimed at not just public sector organisations and stage agencies but most importantly engaging with the startup and SME communities.

Cork City Council will implement customised solutions for reaching each target group with specific communication objectives focused on stimulating engagement and highlighting opportunities for participation. Cork City Council will make optimum use of digital media where possible in order to reduce waste and promote resource efficiency. All publicity documentation will include the Innovafoster logo and European Union ERDF logo.

Successful delivery of the Innovafoster action plan will reinforce the value of regional inter-agency relationships for Cork; stimulating additional long-term opportunities for startups and innovative SME; continuing to strengthen the regional innovation eco-system and contributing to Ireland's ambition to be a [Global Innovation Leader](#) by 2020.

The focus for Cork City Council is on maximising existing innovation measures; increasing opportunities to foster and grow public-private collaboration - with an innovation focus - across the city's business and industry sectors; promoting active dialogue with relevant stakeholders and driving active participation in projects which have the potential to be game-changers for the city's innovation ecosystem. To this end, Cork City Council is fully committed to the development, delivery and implementation of the Innovafoster Action Plan 2019-2021.

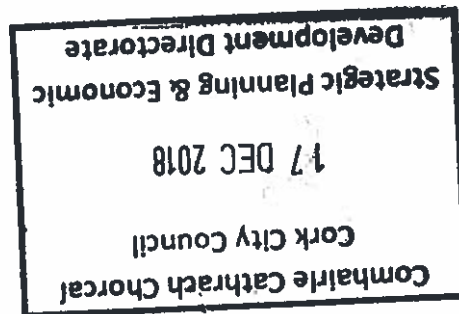
Signature:


Seamus Cordeiro

Date:

17/12/18

Organisation Official Stamp:





For and on behalf of the Cork Innovates Partnership:

- Cork City Council
- Cork Chamber
- Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)
- CorkBIC
- Local Enterprise Office Cork City
- Enterprise Ireland
- University College Cork (UCC)
- Enterprise Europe Network



Pat McGrath
Chairperson