

## ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS

**GOAL: TO PROMOTE ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION**

**TOSAÍOCHTA : LE FIONTRAÍOCHT & SCILEANNA A FHORBAIRT SA RÉIGIÚN**

| Key Activities / Tosaíochta  | Progress Update to CDB at March 2011  |
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| <b>1.</b> Initiate programmes to stimulate innovation and reduce barriers to business creation | <p>Under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) DLDC has delivered an intensive Farm Diversification Training arm Diversification Programme with associated practical business creation projects. This has stimulated the degree of innovation in the existing traditional farming sector.</p> <p>Estates Management (ICT) Proposal awaiting economic appraisal (Interreg IVA) circa €150k Donegal (Donegal County Council).</p> <p>Donegal CEB continues to facilitate the ongoing roll-out of the ProfitNEt peer learning networks with 3 Profitnet groups and 2 Profitnet Plus groups currently running. The Board also delivered in conjunction with the Centre for Innovation Research and Management at Brighton an Innovation Management which finished in the May.</p> <p>The Board also continues to promote the Business Information Service as the first point of contact for business information, advice and direction.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland continues to promote innovation within its client companies through the R &amp; D Fund and associated programmes. The Innovation Voucher Scheme – open to limited Irish companies – promotes innovation through utilisation of expertise from the 3rd level sector incl. Letterkenny IT. 26 vouchers (€130,000) were approved to Donegal companies in 2010 totalling 133 vouchers approved since the Scheme began in mid 2007. This is one of the highest levels of uptake in the country. Enterprise Ireland continues to support eligible entrepreneurs on the CEIM Enterprise Development Programme which is currently in its 7th year with salary support and mentoring assistance.</p> |

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| <p><b>2.</b> To develop Food incubation and project development supports</p>       | <p>Under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) DLDC has delivered an integrated training and practical supports programme for abattoir owners in relation to specialist foods and marketing. Likewise a network of Farmers Markets received significant training and materials supports. Donegal County Enterprise Board is continuing to roll out the Food Cost Programme aimed at making Donegal "a food county". The programme aims to increase the number of food producers/manufacturers in the county, increase the capability and sales of food businesses and create awareness of food both within and outside the county. In 2011 actions planned are a range of food events in Donegal, presence at Donegal Live in Dublin in May, Seafood Development programme in conjunction with BIM, attendance at SHOP, develop local sourcing programme and best practice visit.</p> |
| <p><b>3.</b> To prepare an Integrated Food development Strategy for the county</p> | <p>As previously reported the Donegal CEB launched the Food Coast Initiative in 2010 and this is an initial 3 year pilot programme. The Board has an advisory committee advising the project which is made up of the main enterprise and support agencies involved in food in the county.</p>   |
| <p><b>4.</b> To further promote the North West Gateway Initiative</p>              | <p>Structures currently being agreed on Cross Border basis to progress this. Enterprise Ireland is involved in this initiative in conjunction with DETE.</p>  |

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| <p>5. To promote innovation and research and development in enterprise</p> | <p>The mainstream delivery of the RDP programme by DLDC has provided research and project development grants to several small rural businesses throughout the county. This includes both private and community based project promoters. The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (BTWEA) has also promoted business development amongst persons going into supported business directly from the Live Register.</p> <p>As indicated at 1. Donegal County Enterprise Board has actively promoted innovation through dedicated programmes and networks during 2010 and again in 2011. During 2010 the County Enterprise Board has approved mentoring to a further 70 businesses most of whom were looking at new products, processes or market opportunities.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland has a dedicated R &amp; D Fund and promotes this to client companies on a regular basis. As noted in section 1, the innovation voucher scheme is critical to supporting companies traditionally not involved in R &amp; D to begin to utilise local and regional expertise in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level sector.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland has funded and supports 2 Applied Research Projects in LYIT currently: CamBIO (€750,000) in Marine Biotechnology and WiSAR (€1.25m) for the development of wireless sensor project. Both these projects have been approved to enhance R &amp; D in the region and to ally academic knowledge with regional industry. Enterprise Ireland has supported 2 projects under the Innovation Partnership Programme in 2010 (€24,000) whereby a client company can avail of the expertise within LyIT to assist in significant product or process development. In addition, Enterprise Ireland ran an IDEAGEN event in April for the Wind energy sector in collaboration with Killybegs Chamber of Commerce with over 60 attendees. In November 2010, an Ideagen event focussing on the Wireless sensor sector took place in Letterkenny IT in collaboration with the EI funded WiSAR ARE project. There were 21 participants from both industry and the research environment.</p> <p>The 10th Annual Conference was held at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, 21st - 22nd October 2010. The IT&amp;T annual conference has become a major event in the Irish research calendar since its inauguration back in September 2001. The conference is unique in Ireland as it combines academic papers with presentations from industry, funding agencies and international business experts. It provides a forum for researchers to present their work, discover sources of funding and form partnerships with industry</p> |
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| <p>6. To promote cross border enterprise &amp; skills development</p>  | <p>The Cross Border Entrepreneurs for the Environment Training programme &amp; practical Projects were delivered by DLDC under the RDP Programme which saw a strong cross-border uptake of training and grants in the alternative energy sector.</p> <p>Management and Workforce enhancement proposal awaiting economic appraisal (Interreg IVA) (Donegal County Council).</p> <p>The Donegal CEB is been actively involved in managing the delivery of the Tradelinks 2 programme and once again is the lead agency in the North West region which stretches from Donegal to north Antrim.</p> <p>CEB and EI are partners in the Innovation Factory project recently approved INTERREGIVA funding.</p> <p>The Enterprise Ireland Propel Programme has a cross border networking dimension and participants from both Propel Programmes (NI and ROI) have opportunities to network and collaborate. Enterprise exhibited at an event in June 2010 "Bridging the Border" a Cross Border Technology &amp; Business Partnering Workshop at City Hall, Derry. The event was held in collaboration with EEN-NI (Invest Northern Ireland) and InterTrade Ireland.</p>  |
| <p>7. To undertake active promotion and positioning of the county as a viable location for inward investment</p> | <p>Under the RDP Programme DLDC has delivered a variety of projects improving the basic services provisions for communities as well as making significant provision for a variety of village enhancement projects. The Rural Social Scheme and the Walks Scheme developments have contributed positively towards enhancing Donegal as an attractive destination to live and establish businesses.</p> <p>Donegal Ezine platform established.</p> <p>Diaspora Phase II proposal awaiting economic appraisal (Interreg IVA) (Donegal County Council) Council Business Support Unit established.</p> <p>While the focus of Donegal County Enterprise Board is on promoting local entrepreneurship and supporting micro enterprise the Board will work with the other mainline agencies in particular IDA, Enterprise Ireland, FAS and Donegal County Council when requested so as to ensure that no potential opportunity for new business to the county is lost.</p> <p>Donegal County Council have also advertised enterprise sites available at locations in Buncrana, Ballyshannon, Donegal Town and are working closely with the Donegal Craft Village tenants on marketing the centre.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland sends a quarterly e-zine to North West region contacts to promote the region incl Donegal.</p> |

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| <p><b>8.</b> To further promote and support entrepreneurship in the county</p> | <p>Under the RDP Programme DLDC has provided training to increase the entrepreneurial skills of small rural businesses. The Start Your Own Business and Micro-enterprise training initiatives delivered by DLDC through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme have provided critical supports to more than 1700 small businesses started up in the DLCD catchment. The demand for this programme is increasing.</p> <p>The European Commission Rural Development/Leader Programme 2007-2013 is being delivered in County Donegal by the 3 Partnership Companies; Donegal Local Development Company(DLDC) MFG &amp; Inishowen Rural Development Co. The Total funding to be provided in the programme is €425.4 million (55% from the European Union and 45% from the Irish Exchequer). This is almost treble the amount available in the last programme (2000-2006). DLDC was awarded initial funding of €12,831.901. This will support the continued development of rural communities. The activities that are eligible for funding are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversification into non-agricultural activities</li> <li>2. Support for Business Creation and Development</li> <li>3. Encouragement of Tourism Activities</li> <li>4. Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population</li> <li>5. Village Renewal and Development</li> <li>6. Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage</li> <li>7. Training and Information.</li> </ol> <p>As the first point of contact for anyone wishing to start a business in Donegal the Donegal CEB received over 600 enquiries in 2010 and had over 1,100 participants on training and management development programmes of the Board. The Board also engages with all of the secondary schools in the county to promote entrepreneurship within the schools and the final of the Schools Enterprise Competition was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.</p> <p>The Donegal County Enterprise Board ran Enterprising Donegal Business Week 2011 from March 7 to 11 and the final of Enterprising Donegal Business Awards will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Over 850 people attended the range of events during the week.</p> <p>In 2010 the board had over 25 secondary schools involved in the schools enterprise competition and the schools enterprise days. The Board also visits schools to support teachers and pupils in their enterprise activities.</p> |
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Enterprise Ireland in conjunction with DCEB and LyIT hosted a business information evening in Oct 2009 with 98 attendees. This assisted the agencies to promote the various supports that are offered to start-up businesses as well as showing the Co Lab facilities in LyIT available. Enterprise Ireland followed this by running an Enterprise Start Workshop in Letterkenny in Nov 2009 with 6 attendees and again in November 2010 with 6 attendees and EI continues to work with these projects. One to one mentoring support is also offered, if appropriate, to start-up projects. The Propel Programme is a further support for entrepreneurs where training, funding, incubation and mentoring are available to projects at an early stage of development. Propel 2 Phase 1 began in May 2010 with 20 participants and Phase 2 began in August 2010 with 11 projects.

The Patents Office, in cooperation with The Enterprise Europe Network, Enterprise Ireland and the County Enterprise Boards held a one-day seminar in Donegal Town on Thursday, September 23, 2010 aimed at the 'small business' community, entrepreneurs and inventors, on the theme of 'Building a Business on Your Ideas'. This was attended by approximately 50 people. Enterprise Ireland presented the EI supports available to new start-up companies and existing business to a group of potential entrepreneurs in Pettigo, Co Donegal. 20 people in attendance.

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| <p>9. Develop and undertake up skilling programmes in local enterprises</p> | <p>Skills levels amongst farmers have been enhanced through the DLDC delivery of the Future Farms programme which saw the evaluation of farming strategies by participants. The skills levels of the growing Surfing / outdoor pursuits sector was enhanced through a training development programme delivered in conjunction with groups in France and the south west of England. A similar programme was delivered for the sea angling sector in conjunction with groups in west Florida. A skills upgrading intervention was delivered for communities involved in festivals &amp; events provision which contribute to the tourism sector in a significant and localised manner.</p> <p>There continues to be a significant demand for the BTWEA scheme delivered by DLDC as evidenced by the 2010 access and progression rates; 320 individuals registered with and received advice, guidance and support; 170 individuals started up in business through the scheme</p> <p>The CEB delivered a range of management development and training programmes during 2010. These included an Innovation Programme, a business growth &amp; sustainability programme, a Certificate in Online Marketing, a SYOB food development programme, 5 Start Your Own Business programmes, 2 small business accounts programmes, 2 computerised accounts programmes and a series of workshops. In 2011 one SYOB and 1 Small Business Accounts programme have been delivered.</p> <p>With additional funding secured in 2010 the Donegal CEB is currently rolling out dedicated management development and train-the-mentor programmes to female entrepreneurs in the county.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland ran an Enterprise Start Programme in Letterkenny on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov with 6 participants planning to start export focussed businesses.</p> |
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| <p><b>10.</b> Develop and undertake re-skilling programmes</p>                               | <p>The Pilot Labour Activation Programme delivered by DLDC specifically targeted recently made redundant construction workers for skills retraining and re-integration into the labour market with considerable success.</p> <p>The Higher Level Education Fund for the Newly Unemployed (in conjunction with LYIT) was established under Goal 2 of the Local &amp; Community Development Programme. The objective of the Fund was to provide support for disadvantaged persons to access educational opportunities which would enhance both their employment opportunities as well as contribute to the attainment of the National Skills Strategy target of significantly increasing participation rates at 3rd Level Institutions from 55% to 72% by 2020.</p> <p>Under the Pilot Access to Education Initiative delivered by DLDC (in conjunction with LYIT) in 2010, all 35 participants (highly disadvantaged and from areas of deprivation) who were supported passed their Semester One examinations. The Project aims to address an identified need to support the newly unemployed to return to and stay within 3rd Level Education</p> |
| <p><b>11.</b> Develop and undertake innovation and skills in Business Programme</p>          | <p>See 1., 5. and 9. above.</p>   |
| <p><b>12.</b> To develop and implement actions to assist the retail sector in the county</p> | <p>NPP Rural Retail Programme commenced September 2009. Pilot project in 2 (Ballybofey/Stranorlar and Falcarragh) areas.</p> <p>Donegal County Enterprise Board continues to provide mentoring to retailers in the county and has a number of retailers involved in the ProfitNet groups.</p>   |



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| <p><b>13.</b> Undertake programmes of enterprise awareness/entrepreneurship in primary/post-primary schools, adult &amp; further education services in the county</p> | <p>A Primary Schools project in Ardara project involving a “seed to plate” food business pilot was delivered by DLDC under the RDP Programme</p> <p>Regional Employment Service (RES): This initiative was delivered in 2010 from the ICTU Resource Centre, Pearse Road, Letterkenny. It provided a personalised, confidential, frontline advice &amp; guidance service for people that were long-term or short-term unemployed. The project was considered to be additional and complimentary to a range of services provided by agencies such as FAS, Donegal Sports Partnership, etc. The RES provided pre-employment, work readiness and employment search advice &amp; guidance to support unemployed people in preparing for entry to the labour market, finding labour market opportunities and entering the labour market. The RES established a relationship with local employers in matching job-seekers with available job vacancies and worked in partnership with statutory agencies to maximise opportunities for inter-agency referrals and progression. There continues to be a demand for the services of the RES – driven by exceptional increases in unemployment in the area during the last 3 years – as evidenced by the 2010 access rates to the RES and progression rates of clients i.e. 327 people accessed the RES service during an 8-month period, with 43 people securing full-time employment, 22 people securing part-time employment and 23 people securing labour market schemes.</p> <p>Donegal County Enterprise Board has continued to actively engage with secondary and national schools in 2010 and will continue to maintain this level of activity in 2011. These activities include the schools enterprise competition (300), the student enterprise focus days(600) and the Biz Sim competition(170). Due to staff reductions the level of activity in this area has been reduced. The Board also visits schools to support teachers and pupils in their enterprise activities.</p> <p>The Enterprise Ireland student enterprise awards are run annually to support and assist 3<sup>rd</sup> level students to develop business ideas.</p> |
| <p><b>14.</b> To research and to develop a viable internship programme to develop skills and experience and to assist in the development of resources</p>             | <p>Placements Surfing</p>   |

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| <p><b>15.</b> To undertake research into the role of libraries as a resource for enterprise development</p> | <p>Previously the CEB assisted the county library through the purchase of business books in the past but the return from this action was deemed poor with no recorded referrals from the library. A fully resourced library service with a full business reference and research library would be of assistance to enterprise development if promoted but would also duplicate the current resource in LYIT which could be opened up for such a use. Clients of Enterprise Ireland can avail of business information for export markets either through the Letterkenny, Sligo or Dublin information desks.</p> |
| <p><b>16.</b> To nurture and sustain traditional skills</p>   | <p>Several traditional skills updating courses have been delivered by DLDC through both the RDP Programme as well as the Smallholders Initiative Programme. Examples include the Dry Stonewalling courses in Rosstownlagh and Ballyshannon as well as a willow copse development project in Ardara.</p> <p>This is an area in which FAS had been active.</p>  |
| <p><b>17.</b> To maximise opportunities presented by Project Kelvin</p>                                     | <p>Donegal County Council will coordinate a joint response to maximise the opportunities presented by this infrastructure.</p>  |