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Application form "AEBR-Cross Border Award" 2014
Deadline: 31.07.2014

INNOVATION AND RESEARCH – CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

1. General information

1.1 Applicant border / cross-border region:

Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland

1.2 Title of the cross-border measure* [project(s), programme(s) / strategy(ies)]:

North West Regional Science Park (NWRSP)

1.3 Period:

1st October 2011 – 30th June 2015

1.4 Lead Partner:

Contact:

North West Region Cross Border Group

Ms. Carol Margey (0044) 2871370808

1.5 Partners:

Contact:

Northern Ireland Science Park, Belfast, NI

Mr. Norman Apsley - (0044) 2890 737800

Letterkenny Institute of Technology,
Co. Donegal, Ireland

Mr. Paul Hannigan – (00353) 7491 860000

1.6. Financing of the cross-border measure (e.g. INTERREG):

(Remark: It should be explicated how the financing of the strategy(ies) / concept(s) / project idea(s) has been or is realised.)

INTERREG IVa Programme- Cross Border Programme for Territorial Cooperation 2007 – 2013

€14.5 million euro cross border project

Priority 2: Cooperation for a Sustainable Cross Border Region

Theme 1: Public Sector Collaboration

75% of the total cost of the project is funded through the European Regional Development Fund: INTERREG IVa Programme

25% co-financed by the UK and Irish Governments

1.7 Links to other projects, measures and/or programmes (only if applicable):

NISP Halo

NISP Connect

CoLab – Enterprise Ireland

Departmental Funding & Programmes Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland

2. Contents

2.1 Objectives of the cross-border measure:

The North West Regional Science Park (NWRSP) is a unique collaborative cross-border project to develop a third generation science park in the North West cross border region of Ireland & Northern Ireland utilising the triple helix model of academia working in partnership with the private and public sectors to develop an ecosystem for business to inculcate research, innovation and entrepreneurship as regional drivers for development.

The project truly demonstrates to the fullest degree the benefits of investing in **INNOVATION AND RESEARCH** and delivering **CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**.

The Lead Partner of the Project, **North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCBG)**, a cross border partnership of local authorities, was established in 1976. Its mission is to strengthen and develop the regional economy through cross border partnership and collaboration and through this to enhance the socio-economic position of the Region. The NWRCBG has many years of experience in the securing and management of European funding.

Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) are located in Belfast Northern Ireland and are a member of the UK Science Park Association and have been for over 4 years, which in turn is part of the IASP (International Association of Science Parks).

The NISP is recognised as one of the top 5 science parks in the UK and in 2013 it hosted the UKSPA AGM. Science Parks, in offering commercial and research driven centres for knowledge-based industries, are internationally recognised and accepted as a key component in Smart Regional Specialisation.

Since 2000, the Northern Ireland Science Park has developed from an initial concept to physical embodiment, headquartered on 25 acres of Queen's Island in Belfast with a growing array of bespoke science park buildings for high technology industry and, in which, is embedded an innovation ecosystem linking entrepreneurs, business angels, risk capital, and a volunteer workforce of successful business professionals and entrepreneurs. This has been modeled on the work of Mary Walshok and the highly successful CONNECT programmes that she co-founded in USC-SD. Mary is a regular visitor and mentor to the staff in NISP CONNECT.

The Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) Trust has recently been named as the "Most Innovative Project" at the United Kingdom Science Park Association (UKSPA) awards. NISP was also shortlisted for "Most Successful Innovation Environment" and "Most Successful Company on a Science Park" for PathXL at the high profile ceremony which took place at the UKSPA 30th Anniversary Summit Gala Dinner at the ICC, Birmingham on Thursday 24th July 2014.

Through the NISP Halo-Business Angels programme, the project will also benefit from ties with EBAN (European Business Angel Network) and will have close ties with Business Angel Groups Internationally. Also through the NISP CONNECT initiative, close ties with San Diego will be ensured and the 'CONNECT' initiative there.

Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) is a university level higher education institution located in Co Donegal in Southern Ireland. The college has an ambitious and progressive ethos, and has expanded its course curriculum to offer over 100 programmes across the Schools of Business, Engineering, Science and Tourism. LYIT has a wide and varied lifelong learning programme running contemporary education and training programmes across a range of disciplines.

LYIT has always been to the forefront in the development of Innovation Centres in Ireland's Higher Education campuses with their first centre opening over 25 years ago. In 2000, a new Business Development Centre was opened while in 2010 the CoLab innovation space building was opened. This centre, which is full to capacity, now houses 28 start-up companies employing over 100 graduate-level employees. It is also home to the WiSAR Technology Gateway centre, the only such centre north of the Galway/Dublin axis. The NWRSP will extend the space of the facility and embed the first Science Park in the Republic of Ireland in the North West Region.

NWRSP Overview

The North West Regional Science Park will see the further reach of the internationally acclaimed NISP Science Park ecosystem into the North West region. It will be the first cross border Science Park on the Island of Ireland and the first in the South of Ireland. The project will be key to progressing the necessary connectivity between science and business through supplying a model of key intermediaries in the innovation chain in order to fully implement a Smart Regional Specialisation Strategy aligned with the economic realities within the region. The NWRSP will enable regional business across border access global markets and the project will also encourage foreign direct investment to invest in the cross border region as a location for talent.

The NWRSP project will provide, across two locations straddling both sides of the border, 70,000 sq ft of high quality, flexible space creating an environment that supports business start up activity and encourages and facilitates business growth within the knowledge sector. The project initially involves the construction of a 50,000 sq ft science park facility at Fort George in Derry~Londonderry and a 20,000 sq ft extension at LYIT.

The aim of this project is to stimulate the establishment and development of high quality technology and knowledge based businesses in the North West Cross Border Region of Ireland, significantly boosting the commercialization of the research capability of the North West, assisting in the expansion of knowledge based indigenous businesses and attracting higher value added inward investment projects and jobs to the region.

Specific Project Objectives

The objectives of the Project are to:

- Establish a bi- located commercial and research centre in Derry/Londonderry as a satellite park of the internationally acclaimed Northern Ireland Science Park;
- Establish a bi located commercial and research centre in Letterkenny as a spoke of the Derry/Londonderry facility, thus extending the reach of NISP into the whole of the North West Business Technology Zone;
- Assist with the long term development of the North West Business Technology Zone by encouraging the establishment of technology-based businesses (both indigenous and FDI), developing the Knowledge Corridor linking Derry and Letterkenny, and acting as a catalyst for change and enhancing the opportunities for wealth creation;
- Be a major contributor to the promotion of the commercial development of universities and Higher Education research by strengthening the links between the North West business community and the North West's research centres in particular, as well as the North West's linkages to the full complement of research centres throughout the island of Ireland;
- Maximise the investment in Project Kelvin and to provide appropriate business infrastructure and support that will enable new and growing businesses to capitalise on its presence;
- Establish Derry/Londonderry as one of the most digitally enabled cities in the UK by 2013;
- Inform and inspire young people, introducing them to technological and entrepreneurial opportunities, broadening their horizons and enhancing their ambitions;
- Foster clusters and networks that encourage cross-border co-operation between firms and raise competitiveness; and
- Become a self-sustaining enterprise and research and development entity thus providing a key component of an enhanced wealth and job generating capacity in the North West.

2.2 Organisational structure and activities to implement the objectives (e.g. joint secretariat, contract, etc.):

Organisational structure of the North West Regional Science Park

NWRCBG, the Lead Partner, is a cross party, cross border committee of 22 Elected Members/Politicians from 5 different Local Authority Area. The Committee is supported by a Secretariat of 6 staff and a dedicated CEO Advisory Group, the organisation is currently delivering €21 million in EU funded programme.

NISP - See attachment **b**

LYIT - See attachment **c**

To ensure the successful management and delivery of the NWRSP Project, a NWRSP Steering Group was set up, with membership from Northern Ireland Science Park, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and North West Region Cross Border Group.

The Steering Group has been in existence since the planning stage of the project and a very strong partnership ethos is in place. An annual work plan is in place and a quarterly progress report is drawn up to look at activity and expenditure.

2.3 How far has the measure been implemented?

NWRSP Fort George site (FG)

Project completion due early August 2014

11 tenants secured to date, bringing building to over 50% capacity

NWRSP LYIT site

Construction commenced 25th June 2014

Estimated date for completion – May 2014

NWRSP Collaboration activity

Development of a corporate identity

Securing tenants for both sites

Establishing a Programme of NISP CONNECT and Halo events which will lead to creating a North West Innovation Ecosystem and encouraging clusters within the NW

Creating a greater awareness of open access and IP provision of voice, video and tele-presence and greater open access and IP provision availability

Engaging with University research institutions and assist in achieving the commercial objective

Working with Co-Lab's graduates from Enterprise Programmes and assist in business start up

Facilitating workshops to highlight innovations, best practise and encourage collaboration and aimed at encouraging stronger research collaboration

Creating formal operational links with centres of knowledge creation

Enhancing the knowledge of NWRSP within the region

Promoting interaction between the research institutions and the NW businesses

Engaging with other academic and educational partners in commercialization of the Technology Pipeline

Working with other agencies to assist in the creation of new micro-based business starts in the knowledge sector

Further developing Governance details

Moving forwards to implement the research and innovation eco system to align with Europe 2020 strategy

2.4 Special framework conditions (a. geographical, political, etc. / b. only rural area (no regional metropolis))

The North West Cross Border Region is unique in that it has been disproportionately affected by the Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland political situation. The city region of Derry/Londonderry has an unusual geographical location with much of its hinterland divided from it by the existence of a border. This has caused serious impediment to regional development as the region suffered from many years of under investment in infrastructure, differing policy approaches and a lack of engagement with "centre" due to its peripheral location at the outer edge of the Island of Ireland, at the outer edge of Europe. The political situation exacerbated the effects of peripherality and in many cases the development of cross border initiatives and partnerships has taken place at a regional level unsupported by bi jurisdictional Government policy.

The development of the NWRSP with its inherent public, private, academic and philanthropic partnership mix has offered a way, supported by €14.5ml in EU Interreg funds to allow for a truly cross border engagement, to deliver a new approach to technology and knowledge driven regional development. Already this is turning jurisdictional diversity from impediment to advantage in the speeding up of a local regional knowledge economy working seamlessly across border.

3. Contribution of the measure (added value) to the development of the border/cross-border region:

The NW cross border region has high levels of deprivation compared to other regions in the island of Ireland and is characterised by high rates of unemployment, low incomes, an over dependence on the public sector as well as low productivity activities such as agriculture, traditional industries and relatively large scale declining manufacturing activity.

The NWRSP will be an economic driver and provide a focal point for balanced regional development, addressing particular challenges in the North West and extending cross border opportunities. Building on the best-practice that exists at NISP, including International Science Park experience and its national and international linkages, the NWRSP will provide high quality, flexible facilities to growing high tech, and knowledge intensive companies in the region supported by a range of business services and management supports that will nurture and grow businesses in the knowledge based sectors.

This unique partnership will further support the emerging Knowledge Economy in the region by boosting, in a targeted manner, the existing emerging triple helix driver of economic development, consisting of public sector, private sector and third level education partners, currently operating in the NW Cross Border Region. Through the project there will be seamless sharing of workspace, knowledge, mentoring and networks.

Tenants of any one site have associate status at the other two. Thus they can maximise staff availability and access to customers and investment. NWRSP will focus existing cross border initiatives (eg Halo, Fusion, US-Ireland research funds and EU funds). Each element of NWRSP has links with key bodies (government, lobbying and professional) in their own jurisdiction and cross border. NWRSP will inherently improve cross border information sharing leading to better marketing of useful programmes and better Interregional policy.

The project will be key to progressing the necessary connectivity between science and business through supplying a model of key intermediaries in the innovation chain in order to fully implement a Smart Regional Specialisation Strategy adding value to and improving the economic realities within the region. The NWRSP will enable regional business cross border to access global markets and the project will also encouraging foreign direct investment to invest in the cross border region as a location for talent.

4. Added value for the development of cross-border cooperation at European level

The project will lift the value of the region and create a European space which delivers a talent pool and innovation entrepreneurialism location for foreign investment and regional diversification. Within the region it will facilitate and assist companies in the move from existing work, to a future dominated by innovation technology and cutting edge business creation.

The NWRSP will enable SMEs or other smaller entities to benefit from programmes, otherwise impossible to access for example H2020. It will create an exemplar of cross border public and private partnership through which an academic, business and public sector holistic ecosystem can grow.

The project will further Smart Specialisation and associated centre of excellence Science Park developments which will be a best practice model for use by other European regions in linking their sell to European and world markets, also linking regions with the world science park brand and ecosystem model.

The project will also exemplar the benefits of working cross border, pooling resources and sharing knowledge to deliver inclusive regional development and added value through partnership investment in research and innovation and the building of a knowledge economy.

At European level the project will add to the knowledge driven European Economy, developing as an asset to the Union and aligning strongly with Europe 2020 strategy. It will create an integral space in a region characterised by economic stagnation and aid in the effort to move decisively beyond the crisis and create the conditions for a more competitive economy with higher employment. It will act as a cataclyst for knowledge based growth and urban regeneration.

The project will deliver on Europe 2020 priorities through delivering growth that is smart, through more effective investments in education, research and innovation, sustainable through a decisive move towards a smarter low-carbon economy model and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction.

The project truly demonstrates to the fullest degree the benefits of investing in **INNOVATION AND RE-SEARCH** and delivering **CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.**

5. Further annexes

yes no

Which ones?

- a)
- b) NISP Organisational Structure
- c) LYIT Organisational Structure
- d)

Date 31st July 2014

Signature

(if submitted by e-mail please also insert your name and contact details!)

* A cross-border measure is given, when partners from both sides of the border participate as regards contents, organisation, staff and finances.