

PRESS RELEASE

1st March 2010

EU SUPPORTS INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVE DEVELOPMENT

A new European Union funded project that will increase the competitiveness of small to medium-sized enterprises, through the creation of a tri-regional innovation network, has just been launched.

Spearheaded by the Dundalk Institute of Technology the Innovation for Competitive Enterprise or ICE project has received approximately €2.49 million of support under the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme, with assistance from Scottish Enterprise.

Leading the project Irene McCausland, External Services Manager at the Dundalk Institute of Technology, said:

“The core aim of the ICE project is to encourage the development of an innovation culture that is focussed on creating commercial reward and is supported by an inter-regional network. The project is also particularly relevant in the current economic climate as SME's have tremendous potential to help lay the foundations for economic recovery.”

Representing a truly collaborative approach the project is led by the Dundalk Institute of Technology alongside the University of Ulster, the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian, University. It also has the potential to create up to 90 sustainable jobs within Northern Ireland, Western Scotland and the Border Region of Ireland.

Designed to enhance the innovation capacity of local businesses through an intensive twelve month 'learning by doing' programme the three year project will enable its participants to develop new business models, products and services.

Welcoming the project, Pat Colgan, Chief executive of the Special EU Programmes Body, which manages the INTERREG IVA Programme, said:

“This project epitomises one of the core themes of the INTERREG IVA Programme which focuses on supporting enterprise on a cross-border basis. By encouraging greater co-operation between firms operating within different regions we will be able to enhance their collective ability to compete at a global level. Innovation lies at the heart of this approach and must be supported in order for businesses to grow and prosper in today’s challenging economic landscape.”

ICE is currently co-ordinating a series of nine introductory ‘Innovation Information and Recruitment’ seminars to potential beneficiaries across the eligible area. These will be followed by further information sessions and a specially designed innovation audit to help measure participant’s progress.

For further information on ICE contact the Regional Development Centre at DkIT on Tel: 00353 42 9391038.

- ENDS.

Media Contact:

John McCandless, Communications Manager

Special EU Programmes Body

Tel: 028 9026 6691

E-mail: john.mccandless@seupb.eu

Photo Caption:

Pictured (l-r) celebrating the launch of the ICE project are (front row) Irene McCausland, DKit, External Relations Manager, Professor Richard Harris, University of Glasgow, Professor Renee Reid, University of Glasgow Caledonian, and (back row) Ariane De Vriendt, SEUPB with Professor Rodney McAdam, University of Ulster.

Notes to Editor:

SEUPB

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland.

It is responsible for managing two EU structural funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IVA designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.

The INTERREG IVA 2007-2013 Programme is worth €256 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. It has two distinct priority measures to create co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable cross-border region.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu