



## OMAGH LED CROSS-BORDER INNOVATION ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE ANNOUNCE £3.2 MILLION

A new enterprise initiative, valued at £3.23 million, has been announced. The Innovation Enterprise Initiative has received £2.27 million in part-finance from the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVA Cross-Border Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

This cross-border programme will further advance the economic links between Omagh, Leitrim, the wider cross-border ICBAN region and beyond. It will be led by Omagh District Council, in partnership with Omagh Enterprise Company, Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Enterprise Body and has been developed by the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd through their Multi Annual Plan.

The £3.23m Initiative involves the construction of an Innovation Growth Centre at Omagh Enterprise Company and a Technology Enterprise Centre at Leitrim County Enterprise Board. The new state of the art buildings in Omagh and Leitrim will provide facilities for 35 early/new and expanding businesses and it is expected that up to 250 jobs will be created between the two centres by the end of the three year programme.

In addition to the construction work, two Innovation Officers will be recruited through the programme to support the innovative and technical development of new companies entering the "Innovation Growth Centre" in Omagh and the "Technology Enterprise Centre" in Leitrim.

Cllr Robert Turner, ICBAN Chairperson explains: “The initiative builds upon previous successes through cross-border collaboration, notably under the Innovate programme funded by the earlier EU INTERREG IIIA programme for Ireland/Northern Ireland. The project was originally submitted to INTERREG IVA programmes as part of a regional Multi-Annual Plan developed by ICBAN in 2007. The funding award demonstrates the value of cross-border development, when two areas with common challenges can come together and develop a collaborative response, and then take this forward into a successful submission. The actual implementation process will enhance linkages further between Omagh and Leitrim, and ICBAN looks forward to working with both Councils and their project partners in realizing the project.”

Omagh District Council Chairman Cllr Declan McAleer, welcomed this major announcement at this time of economic fluctuation, saying “the initiative will create much needed construction work in Omagh and Leitrim in the short term and in the medium term will provide new state of the art buildings to support new, expanding and high tech businesses in the ICBAN region.”

Echoing these remarks, the Leitrim County Council Cathaoirleach, Cllr Frank Dolan welcomed announcement of this initiative as recognition of the continued partnership with Omagh and the wider ICBAN region. He indicated that the programme would support the growth and expansion of exciting new businesses, that would in turn create new employment opportunities and would act as a stimulus to future economic growth in the cross border region.

These remarks have been endorsed by the Chairman of the Omagh Enterprise Company, Professor Fabian Monds, on whose site the Innovation Growth Centre will be built. Professor Monds welcomed the development and highlighted the fact that it would help to create new businesses and jobs for the area. He also highlighted the importance of the company’s mission to promote enterprise and

support start-up growth and innovative businesses in the current challenging environment and that he looked forward to working with Leitrim in bringing the project to fruition.

Concluding, the Chairman of Leitrim Enterprise Board, Ms Jackie Maguire, added that the project funding is very welcome at this time and looks forward to working with Omagh and Leitrim County Enterprise Fund in the development of the new Technology centre catering for growth in the 'Smart Economy'.

Welcoming the initiative Tracey Scullion, Programme Manager with the SEUPB said:

“This new initiative, which has received extensive support from the EU’s INTERREG IVA Programme, will make a significant impact on the local economy, on a cross-border basis. It reflects some of the key objectives of the programme which aims to diversify and enhance the region’s economy by encouraging greater levels of innovation, competitiveness and sustained business development.”

Further information about the Innovation Enterprise Initiative is available from Kieran McCrory, Economic Development Manager, Omagh District Council  
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## **Press Notes**

- The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd was established in 1995 as a network of councillors from the central Ireland/Northern Ireland border area with one common aim: to respond to the unique economic and social needs of the central border region.
- The ICBAN Multi Annual Plan (2008 – 2013) which is part-financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVA Cross-Border Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, is the funding plan for the cross-border region and will contribute to the economic growth of the 10 local authorities, which make up its membership.
- 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 IV 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](http://www.seupb.eu)