

County Roscommon

Innovation strategy

2015 – 2020

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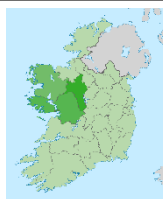
PURPOSE OF THIS ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION STRATEGY

This Strategy is being prepared in the midst of economically difficult times as a result of the recent recessionary environment in Ireland and challenges in the EU and global economies. Recovery is a complex process involving many external factors beyond the direct control of Roscommon County Council and locally-based agencies. However, little if any economic development and growth can happen without the involvement of the Local Authority and the relevant support organisations.

One of the keys to fostering sustainable economic growth is to implement a viable enterprise and innovation strategy in a collaborative manner that can lead to new entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise growth in the county towards wealth creation and sustainable employment for the benefit of the local population.

This enterprise and innovation strategy is developed against the backdrop of the **Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022**, and the Roscommon **County Development Plan 2014 – 2020**, as well as the new requirement within the Local Authority to prepare a Local Economic and Community Plan for the county.

The Regional Planning Guidelines states that **“By 2022 the West Region will be an innovative and highly competitive region with sustainable settlements located in an outstanding environment with excellent opportunities and quality of life for its citizens”.**



Within that context, the Strategic Vision for the county states that **“Roscommon County Council will adopt a positive and sustainable approach to balanced development thereby enhancing the lives of people who live in, work and visit the county, whilst protecting the natural and built environment”.**



Whilst the traditional role of the local authority is not to directly create enterprise and employment, it can greatly facilitate the process for new and existing businesses to do so by ensuring that suitable enterprise and innovation policies, initiatives and support programmes are in place to assist the region to achieve its sustainable growth objectives, encompassed within the overall vision for the county.

Strategic Aims for Co. Roscommon County Development Plan (2014-2020)

Strategic Aim 1: Implement a development strategy for County Roscommon designed to achieve balanced and sustainable development in a strategic plan led manner.

Strategic Aim 2: Improve the quality of life for the people of Roscommon and maintain the county as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Strategic Aim 3: Prioritise the development of Monksland within the context of its association with Athlone and in the context of its location within a Linked Hub (incorporating Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar) and its potential to positively influence the economic wellbeing of South Roscommon.

Strategic Aim 4: Support the development of the county's Key Towns.

Strategic Aim 5: Support continued capital investment over a broad range of infrastructural provisions including roads, water services and sanitary services.

Strategic Aim 6: Promote the role of rural areas thus maximising their economic potential in areas such as agri –food, forestry, renewable energy and tourism.

Strategic Aim 7: Protect, within the context of planning legislation, the county's natural assets such as water resources, scenic areas, archaeological and cultural heritage.

Strategic Aim 8: Promote social inclusion, sustainable communities and sustainable travel.

Therefore, to complement the County Development Plan, and to inform the Local Economic and Community Plan, this Enterprise and Innovation Strategy seeks to contribute to the realisation of the vision and strategic aims by highlighting the role that Roscommon County Council and other key stakeholders can play in making smart use of scarce resources and adopting responsive, flexible and forward-looking policies and implementing actions to ensure the county is one in which innovative enterprise is encouraged and supported to grow for the benefit of the region, in a balanced manner.

Within the reality of limited resources, this strategy also presents a practical workplan of actions that can be implemented in a collaborative manner to improve the business environment in which innovative enterprise can establish and grow, leading to an improved local economy, increased competitiveness and employment growth for the betterment of the county at large, within its local, regional, national and international context.

DEFINITION OF ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION

To put this Strategy into context, it is important to clarify what is meant by Enterprise and Innovation.

Enterprise, as understood by this Strategy, is concerned with creating an environment and support system that will foster the emergence of new entrepreneurs and the start-up and early-stage growth of new firms, as well as supporting existing SMEs, to achieve their business potential in terms of employment and wealth creation.

In particular, it is concerned with the sustainable growth of indigenous micro and small to medium-sized enterprise in important business sectors and the development of new industrial sectors suited to the strengths and opportunities identified in Co. Roscommon. It also aims to foster an environment to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the region and/or to benefit from spillover from FDI in other regions.

Innovation is defined as the identification, application and exploitation of new or improved products/services, processes, markets or marketing opportunities which increases the enterprise's capability to sustain and strengthen its competitive position, thereby generating wealth and employment (Adapted from *Innovation in Small Business*, Michael Tunney). In general, it is concerned with ensuring the generation and provision of 'knowledge' to new and existing enterprise that can be translated into viable business opportunities, thereby making investment in innovation more effective.

Therefore, innovation in the context of this strategy, is not focused solely on new technology and research and development (R&D) but is concerned with imparting knowledge so that business activities can be undertaken better, quicker and in a more cost effective manner. Innovation in this context is also concerned with improving the interaction between the main actors in the innovation system (e.g. universities, research centres, agencies and firms) to enhance knowledge diffusion, and establishing the right incentives for private sector innovation to transform knowledge into economic output and commercial success.

This report presents the possibilities for improving the enterprise and innovation environment in Co. Roscommon through appropriate strategic actions, building on local strengths whilst also acknowledging the resource limitations that exist.

CONTEXT & STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION

Roscommon County Council and local authorities nationally, are emerging as key drivers for stimulating and enabling enterprise and innovation within an overall economic development capacity, as identified in the *Local Government Sectoral Strategy to Support Economic Recovery and Jobs (2012)* and the *Action Programme for Effective Local Government (2012)*. Recent and ongoing alignment processes have resulted in an expanded role for local authorities, beyond their traditional functions and now includes economic development and promotion "as a focal point for local development, in collaboration with other agencies." Recent alignment processes, include the integration of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) within local authorities and the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and the Economic and Enterprise Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) within each local authority area, which are charged with responsibility to develop an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for each region.

The County and City Manager's Association Report on *Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth (2013)* also highlights the increasing economic development role of Local Authorities across a range of measures. The capacity of the Local Authority to pull together all of the different stakeholders, agencies and support organisations is an important function. By further developing this brokerage model with other agencies, along with engagement of the public and private sector, there is significant potential to enhance the economic renewal of the county in a collaborative way.

Contextual Framework

Co. Roscommon operates within global, national and regional frameworks. Increasingly, the trends and issues at international, European and national levels are as important for the economy of Roscommon as local issues. As an example, the global financial downturn and banking crisis, together with the significant slowdown in the construction sector, has had a dramatic detrimental impact on Ireland's economic performance and precipitated a significant rise in unemployment. Coupled with this, whilst improvements have been made, according to the *National*

Competitiveness Council (2014) Ireland's price and cost environment remains amongst the highest in the euro area for a range of key business inputs, thereby impacting on competitiveness.

To set the scene, this chapter identifies the global drivers of change and the characteristics of an innovation-based economy, with a focus on Smart Specialisation, which is identified as the way forward in the development of Regional Innovation Systems across the European Union.

GLOBAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE

It is never easy to predict how enterprise may evolve over time, and within the context of recent economic uncertainty, it is even more challenging. However, there are a number of global drivers that will inform the needs of businesses, have implications for how they will separate in the future and will influence factors of competitiveness, whilst also providing new business opportunities. These include:

Globalisation: The pace and extent of global competition has intensified significantly. Globalisation enables companies to reach new untapped markets whilst also increasing competition. Supply chains are becoming more disaggregated, whilst increasing globalisation means that people can and will choose where they want to live and work. Quality of life factors take on a new dimension in this context.

Advances in Technology: These have a significant impact, not only on the ICT industry itself, but on most businesses regardless of the nature of their activities. Technology advances will continue to be a key enabler for the remote delivery of services and for the transformation of business models to ever increasing on-line activity, providing access to new markets. Additionally, increased convergence of technologies has seen companies from formerly disparate sectors enter into partnerships to provide new/combined solutions to customers.

Increasing Concerns about the Environment: The increased focus on environmental (and energy related) issues presents challenges as well as opportunities for enterprise to innovate with alternative sources of energy, new green business solutions and services. Additionally, consumer pressure will drive companies to reconsider their own production and business processes, carbon footprint, materials and waste.

Food Security: The increasing global demand for food from a growing population, as well as issues regarding safe food and nutrition have placed a greater focus on food

security for the future. Challenges and opportunities include increasing productivity, quality assurance, improving nutritional content and supply chain development.

Shift toward Services: Services contribute a higher proportion of GDP in developed economies driven by consumer demand, increased disposable incomes and a demand for 'personalised' solutions. Additionally, within the business to business (B2B) sector, companies are responding to the disaggregated supply chain model, through out-sourcing of non-core activities where it makes more business sense. Manufacturing firms are 'bundling' services with their products to provide a more tailored and higher value solution to their customers. Competitively priced, high-speed resilient broadband networks and services are now a basic requirement to underpin future economic development.

The Importance of Dynamic Urban Areas: Ireland's economic structure is shifting towards a higher proportion of services exports, balanced with a core of high value-added manufacturing activities. This is more immediately apparent in the larger cities, as international evidence shows that high-value added services are attracted primarily to better developed urban areas. Therefore, to portray a modern image and to compete internationally in the knowledge economy, according to the **National Competitiveness Council 2014**, the prioritisation of cities is critical for sustainable economic growth. In this context, urban areas play a key role in driving the development of their hinterlands, with successful regions generally having a dynamic and vibrant city at their core. This emphasises the importance of gateways and their role as drivers of regional economic development, and the need for strategic planning and development to optimise the inter-relationship between them and their hinterlands.

International Alliances and Strategic Partnering: Increased connectivity and globalisation has resulted in a more international approach to how business is conducted and how support networks are formed. Stronger and faster growth can be achieved by companies and regions if effective international alliances and strategic partnering can be optimised to capitalise on development opportunities.

These drivers present many challenges for existing businesses, which must be addressed in order for them to remain competitive within an evolving global environment. They also provide opportunities for businesses to exploit, or for new enterprises to embrace, thereby creating further wealth and employment. An

innovation-based economy can provide the appropriate environment to encourage such businesses and new entrepreneurs to efficiently and effectively address these challenges and harness new opportunities in a competitive and sustainable manner.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INNOVATION-BASED ECONOMY

A review of a range of studies and reports focused on analysing competitive and innovation-based economies, has identified a number of common characteristics that should be considered in developing an appropriate enterprise and innovation strategy for the county. These include:

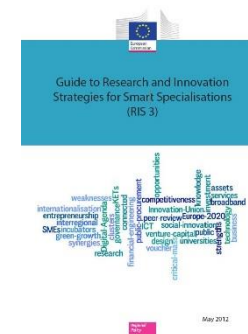
- Infrastructure and key enabling technologies, including incubation, transport and broadband infrastructure and other enhancing technologies
- Availability of appropriate education and skills amongst the workforce, including recruitment and retention of third level graduates
- Effective linkages with research centres, leading to greater investment in research and development activity, collaborations and inter-linkages between Higher Education Institution (HEIs) and firms, between firms and customers etc.
- Applied innovation support, including access to sources of new technological and market knowledge, coupled with programmes to ensure there is sufficient capacity to absorb and exploit new knowledge
- Access to finance, both for private investment in enterprise as well as to provide the basic enabling infrastructure to foster entrepreneurship
- Concentration on important/emerging growth sectors in which a region can capitalise on particular strengths (i.e. smart specialisation)
- Collaborative approaches to developing enterprise and innovation, including clusters and networks
- Access to customers and suppliers, including supply chain development
- Promotion of the region, including the enterprise dynamic and quality of life aspects, based on factors relevant to the attraction of mobile investment and labour/talent
- Leadership and strategic capacity to develop and deliver locally driven initiatives and outcomes.

These points are incorporated in this Strategy document to maximise the potential for developing and promoting enterprise and innovation in the specific context pertaining to Co. Roscommon, taking into account the existing base of infrastructure, skills etc. and what is realistic and attainable with available resources.

THE RATIONALE FOR SMART SPECIALISATION

Building upon the above, the underlying rationale behind the EU's **Strategies for Smart Specialisation (2012)**, is that by concentrating knowledge resources and linking them to a limited number of priority economic activities, countries and regions can remain competitive in the global economy. This type of specialisation allows regions to take advantage of scale, scope and spill-overs in knowledge production and use, which are important drivers of productivity.

Furthermore, strategies that combine innovation with specific strengths of the national/regional economy offer a much greater chance of success. Imitating other regions by trying to create 'miracle growth' in headline industries not only lessens the chances for the imitating region to succeed, but also perpetuates patterns of market dominance with leaders and followers. In short, Smart Specialisation is about generating unique assets and capabilities based on the region's distinctive industry structures, strengths and knowledge bases.



The main steps identified for producing a Smart Specialisation Strategy are defined as follows:

- **Analysis of the regional context and potential for innovation**
- **Setting up of sound and inclusive governance structure**
- **Production of a shared vision about the future of the region**
- **Selection of a limited number of priorities for regional development**
- **Establishment of suitable policy mixes**
- **Identification of key actions to be undertaken**
- **Integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.**

An adaptation of this approach is used to develop this strategy, with the research methodology and consultation process outlined overleaf. It is also developed within the context of acknowledged resource limitations, so that a practical, realistic, attainable and appropriate plan is prepared based on local strengths, opportunities and available infrastructure, skills and capacity to achieve the desired goals.

RESEARCH & CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY




The undertaking of this enterprise and innovation strategy is derived from European Good Practice, including learning from the IN-EUR project, funded by the EU through the Interreg IVC programme, aimed at measuring innovation in local regions. Methodologies and tools developed through this project were adapted and used as part of the information gathering process towards the compilation of the strategy.

Substantial research and consultation processes were undertaken, which are detailed in Appendix I and Appendix II. This included the following activities:

- Organisation of a steering group for the project involving key stakeholders/agencies in the local region to guide the overall process
- Review of key policy documents and reports identified for inclusion in this assignment to inform and identify best practice
- Research work to develop a socio-economic profile, including resources, gaps to inform the SWOT analysis for the county and comparisons with other regions where appropriate
- Extensive consultation with a range of the main stakeholders including:
 - *Consultation with a sample of small enterprises, including distribution of a feedback questionnaire to available enterprise databases*
 - *Meetings with enterprise network/groups to identify needs and priorities*
 - *Consultation with a sample of large business in the county*
 - *Focus group and follow-up with third level/research centres*
 - *Workshop sessions with a selection of enterprises and relevant stakeholders/enterprise agencies*
 - *Interviews with Chambers, Development Groups and Community Enterprise Centres, both in Roscommon and neighbouring regions*
 - *Consultation with a range of stakeholder agencies involved in enterprise support, education and training etc. at local, regional and national levels*
- Site visits/case study analysis of good practice initiatives and successful catalyst projects regionally and nationally
- Case study analysis at EU level to identify best practice as well as potential partnering and funding opportunities based on similar needs and priorities
- Meetings with stakeholders in neighbouring regions to identify potential for collaborative approaches to enterprise and innovation support
- Participation in a range of relevant seminars and events to gather latest information on enterprise and innovation supports and priorities.

All of the relevant information was assimilated, and draft findings presented to steering group members and other relevant organisations/committees. Feedback received was then incorporated into the final report.

An overview of the Innovation Strategy Framework/Development Process

Phase 1	Details
Policy Review & Socio Economic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Of Key Documents • Socio Economic Analysis • Resources, Gaps and Opportunities
	
Phase 2	Details
Consultation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small & Large Enterprises • Enterprise Networks/Groups • Third Level/Research Centres • Chambers/Development Groups • Enterprise agencies • Training & Education • Enterprise Centres • Irish Regional Partners • EU Regional Partners
	
Phase 3	Details
SWOT Analysis & Framework Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT Analysis • Agreed Vision & Goals • Principles/Core Values • Priority Sectors • Key Pillars • Collaborative Possibilities • Case Study Analysis
	
Phase 4	Details
Action Planning & Pilot Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Infrastructure Requirements • Enterprise & Innovative Enablers • Sectoral Action Plans • Agreed Delivery Mechanisms • Pilot Actions for Immediate Implementation

POLICY CONTEXT

The desired core outcome of national Governments is to increase the levels of entrepreneurship and innovation through enterprise and innovation policies that will have direct and indirect impacts. Lundstrom et al (2008, p.24)¹ argue that government entrepreneurship and innovation policies should focus on, “promoting role models, integrating entrepreneurship in the education system, reducing the time and cost of starting a business, increasing the percentage of science and engineering graduates, easing the intellectual property regime and fostering more cooperation between research institutes and entrepreneurs...”.

While different approaches to innovation and entrepreneurship policy implementation may be taken by Governments, there tends to be a commonality of purpose that centres on the following issues:

- Entrepreneurship and innovation policies that directly and indirectly support job creation and economic growth
- Developing more coordinated approaches amongst research organisations, support agencies and the private sector to support entrepreneurship and innovation activities in national economies
- More enhanced collaboration between publicly funded research institutions and the private sector to leverage additional resources and efforts for technology development and research commercialisation
- Focusing on efficient and effective mechanisms for research commercialisation between and within public and private sector actors
- National initiatives that foster broad societal support for entrepreneurship through mentoring programmes, national and international awards
- Prioritisation of public resources around key sectors, themes or grand challenges such as Horizon 2020, Irish research prioritisation themes etc.

For comparative purposes, the approaches taken by advanced innovation-based economies, including the USA and Australia and South Korea, are included in Appendix III, whilst a focus on the EU and Irish entrepreneurship and innovation policy development is provided in this section.

¹ Lundstorm, A., Almerud, M. and Stevenson, L. (2008) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Policies: Analysing measures in European countries, Innovative Policy Research for Economic Growth, Swedish Foundation for Small Business Research.

EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY

The importance of innovation and entrepreneurship at EU level is reflected in policies and strategies aimed at promoting economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurial activity. This is of significant importance in Europe given the current sluggish economic situation in the Eurozone. Over the past 15 years the European Commission has been promoting the concept of Entrepreneurship Policy development. The current European Commission growth and jobs strategy document, **Europe 2020**, sets out a vision of Europe’s economy for the 21st century being driven by smart, sustainable and innovative businesses, advising that “entrepreneurship must be developed by concrete policy initiatives.”

As a result, many policies adopted by national governments have moved from a former industrial policy focus through to science and knowledge-based policies that incorporate innovation, technology and other forms of entrepreneurship. One of the underpinning paradigms that has informed national innovation and entrepreneurship policies is the **triple helix** approach aimed at enhancing the relationships and interaction between universities/public research organisations (PROs), industry and government towards more holistic and **collaborative approaches to innovation**. Research shows collaboration between industry and third level institutions and PROs has positive benefits, including increases in productivity, R&D and commercialisation as well as leveraging of investment and sharing of R&D expenditure. Moreover, easier access between business and universities fosters more university-business R&D collaborations and should be encouraged (Cunningham and Link, 2014).

Important Role of SMEs in the EU

The EU’s **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan** ‘is a blueprint for decisive action to unleash Europe’s entrepreneurial potential, to remove existing obstacles and to revolutionise the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe.’ The plan is focused on the three main areas of education and training, creation of a support environment for entrepreneurship and development of role models, including those listed overleaf.

- Reducing bureaucracy
- Developing a favourable tax environment to foster early stage financing



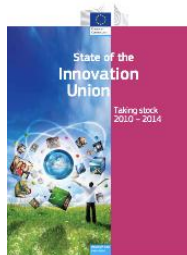
- Entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and mind-set to be embedded in national/regional curricula at all levels
- Raising awareness of government administrations and their staff about entrepreneurial and SME challenges
- Availability of adequate child/dependent care facilities
- Reinforcing loan guarantees and venture capital facilities
- Offering support for new businesses to innovate
- Speeding up and simplification of licensing and other permit procedures
- All young people to have at least one entrepreneurial experience before leaving secondary school
- Targeted training, finance and internationalisation support programmes for high-growth potential SMEs.

The action plan also identifies specific categories that may be targeted to further boost entrepreneurship, including women, seniors, migrants and the unemployed.

EUROPEAN INNOVATION POLICY

With increasing economic pressure on EU countries and concerns about competitiveness, the EU announced its **Innovation Union Strategy** in October 2010. This prioritises the following aspects for Member States:

- Continue investment in education, RD&I and ICT
- Achieve greater collaboration between national systems of innovation
- Reform education systems to meet future demands
- Create a European Research Area for researchers
- Develop more effective innovations from research
- Building on strengths in design and creativity
- Promote more enhanced collaboration with international partners.



For entrepreneurs, the Innovation Union (2010, p.3) seeks to remove barriers including “better access to finance particularly for SMEs, affordable Intellectual Property Rights, smarter and more ambitious regulation and targets, faster setting of interoperable standards and strategic use of our massive procurement budgets.” From a metrics perspective, by 2020, the EU estimates that 3.7 million jobs can be created based on a target of 3 per cent of EU GDP expenditure on R&D.

Innovation Union and Horizon 2020



To support the realisation of the Innovation Union strategy, the current **EU Framework Budget for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020**, will be used to ensure that Europe is at the scientific forefront and that it positively impacts on economy and society. To this end the Horizon 2020 programme is aimed at supporting fundamental and applied research with a much stronger focus on innovation. The Horizon 2020 Programme is based around three pillars as follows:

Excellent Science: This will raise the level of excellence in Europe’s science base and ensure a steady stream of world class research to secure Europe’s long-term competitiveness. It will support best ideas, develop talent, provide access to priority research infrastructure, and make Europe an attractive location for the world’s best researchers.

Industrial Leadership: This will aim at making Europe a more attractive location to invest in research and innovation (including eco-innovation), adopting a business led approach. It will provide major investment in key industrial technologies and maximise the growth potential of companies by providing them with adequate levels of finance to help innovative SME’s to grow into world leading companies.

Societal Challenges: This reflects the policy priorities of Europe 2020 in addressing major concerns of citizens in Europe and elsewhere. It brings together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines, including social sciences and the humanities. It will have a focus on innovation-related activities, such as piloting, demonstration, test-beds, and support public procurement and market uptake.

Source: European Commission (2011) *Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, COM (2011) 808 Final, 30.11.2011, pp. 4-5.*

Horizon 2020 provides significant opportunities for industry to collaborate with academic institutions and other organisations that can benefit SMEs. There are a range of funding instruments particularly suited to industry, outlined in Appendix IV. Furthermore, there are opportunities for enterprise to participate in programmes that connects them with researchers to ‘spin-in’ technologies as part of Eurostars. The Small Business Innovation Research Programme allows entrepreneurs and SMEs to contribute to societal challenges by providing new approaches and innovations. Finally, for access to capital there will be a focus on how to work with member states and intermediaries to ensure entrepreneurs and SMEs have access to appropriate funding. In particular, according to the European Commission (2011, p.10): “The equity facility will focus on early-stage investments, while having the possibility to make expansion and growth-stage investments in conjunction with the equity facility under the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs.”

EU Smart Specialisation

One of the new innovation policy approaches for regions being used to promote efficient and effective use of public investment in research is the concept of smart specialisation. Smart specialisation is a means of integrating and generating synergies between Horizon 2020 and Structural Funds, to build regional innovation capacity and sustainable growth. In essence, smart specialisation posits that regions/geographical areas develop and enhance areas of strength or of potential strength, which requires robust policy, institutional and supporting policy supports.

The four pillars of effective smart specialisation are outlined as:

- **‘(Tough) Choices and Critical mass**: Limited number of priorities on the basis of own strengths and international specialisation, whilst avoiding duplication and fragmentation in the European Research Area
- **Competitive Advantage**: Mobilise talent by matching RTD + I capacities and business needs through an entrepreneurial discovery process
- **Connectivity and Clusters**: Develop world class clusters and provide arenas for related variety/cross-sector links internally in the region and externally, which drive specialised technological diversification
- **Collaborative Leadership**: Efficient innovation systems as a collective endeavour based on public-private partnership (quadruple helix) – experimental platform to give voice to un-usual suspects.

In looking at regional change and instigating a smart specialisation approach, it requires an evaluation of the existing industrial system and may require diversification and modernisation/technology upgrading of an existing industry and/or transition from existing sectors to new ones (Foray 2012, p.13). In principle, smart specialisation is about safeguarding the long-term sustainability in a region by ensuring it has the economic base and supporting structures and programmes in place to ensure long-term survival. For some regions, it may mean transition from existing sectors to new ones, examining how key enabling technologies can be deployed within a region to strengthen or develop sectors and how effective synergies can be made between sectors inside and outside the region to develop competitive advantage for the future.

The vision and ambitions set out in Irish national policy documents for entrepreneurship and innovation are consistent with those outlined by the European Union, which are increasingly expected to play a key role in driving enterprise and economic growth, discussed overleaf.

IRISH ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY

Following strong entrepreneurship activity during the Celtic Tiger era, the levels of entrepreneurship have been impacted by the global downturn in 2008, which is reflected in the latest **Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Reports** (GEMs) for Ireland. In reflecting on a ten year period GEM (2012) noted high educational levels amongst early stage entrepreneurs, improvements in intended internationalisation of start-up businesses, a positive entrepreneurial culture and a recognition of starting a business as a viable career option. However, the latest GEM report (2013) notes a number of challenges, including:

- The prevalence of early stage entrepreneurs in Ireland is at an all-time low
- The perception of opportunities for new business remains low
- There are difficulties reported with access to finance.

In addressing some of these challenges an Entrepreneurship Forum was established, which published its report on **Entrepreneurship in Ireland** in January 2014, highlighting the following six goals for a successful entrepreneurship policy:

- Strengthening the start-up community in Ireland
- Increasing the pipeline of entrepreneurs
- Energising job creation
- Continuing growth of the indigenous export sector
- Capitalising on Ireland’s strengths in growth industries
- Using under-employed resources.

In October 2014, the Government produced its first ever **National Policy Statement for Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014)**. Over the next five years, the ambition is to:

- Increase the number of start-ups by 25%
- Increase the survival rate of new start-ups by 25%
- Improve the capacity of start-ups to scale up, by 25%.

To achieve this, strategic objectives are set out across key elements identified in the Irish entrepreneurship eco-system:

- Culture, human capital and education
- Business environment and supports
- Innovation supports
- Access to finance
- Entrepreneurial networks and mentoring
- Access to markets



Action Plan for Jobs

As well as having an entrepreneurship focus, job creation policies have been set out by the current Government through the **Action Plan for Jobs** which began in 2011/12 in an effort to tackle the high levels of unemployment. In excess of 1,000 actions were identified across a range of areas and sectors. Competitiveness has been a key focus of the Action Plan for Jobs to date and the priority for 2014 is about improving the international competitiveness ranking of Ireland. In particular, the **Action Plan for Jobs 2014** is focused on:



- Disruptive Reforms, including entrepreneurship, FDI, manufacturing, big data, ICT skills, trading online, energy efficiency, developing a national health innovation hub and integrated licensing application services
- Competitiveness
- Pathways to Work
- Access to Finance
- Growing Irish Enterprise
- Developing and Deepening the Impact of FDI
- Capitalising on Sectoral Opportunities.

In its third review of the Irish Action for Jobs, the OECD recommended the following actions need to be taken with respect to tackling unemployment and job creation:

- Doing more to help youth and other disadvantaged groups find jobs
- Strengthening the provision of training, especially for the disadvantaged
- Ensuring scarce resources are devoted to the most effective Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs)
- Developing a more modern apprenticeship system.

The OECD also highlights further improvements that need to be made, including:

- Ensuring companies have access to a skilled workforce and ensuring that there are the relevant skills in the economy
- Access to capital for SMEs, including new equity instruments
- Translating quality research into products and services that can be commercialised

- Active centralised, systematic monitoring of progress.

With respect to entrepreneurship, the focus in the 2014 Action Plan includes:

- The creation of Local Enterprise Offices within Local Authorities
- Creation of a Youth Entrepreneurship Fund
- Review of taxation for entrepreneurs
- Development of a national entrepreneurship strategy.

The following sectors are the main focus of the Action Plan for Jobs 2014:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Agriculture, Food and Marine | • Retail Sector |
| • Green Economy | • International Financial Services |
| • Construction and Property | • eHealth |
| • Tourism | • Smart Aging |
| • Creative Services | • Social Enterprise. |
| • Aviation Services | |

Separately, strategy documents focused on specific sectors (e.g **Construction 2020**, **Tourism Development Strategy, 2010**) identify further actions to grow these segments of the economy.

IRISH INNOVATION POLICY

Following the implementation of the industrial development programmes initiated in Ireland from the 1960s, a new emphasis on innovation emerged in the early 1990s. This resulted in structural changes to maximise economic impact as follows:

- Forfás took charge of overall strategy (including innovation policy)
- IDA Ireland was allocated the task of FDI promotion
- Enterprise Ireland undertook to support indigenous enterprise with growth potential, including export-ready companies.

To complement this new approach, a range of task forces were established to undertake research and foresight exercises, towards developing an innovation-based economy for Ireland. Notable approaches and reports undertaken included:

- **The Technology Foresight Report (1999)** produced by the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation, which led to the establishment of Science Foundation Ireland in 2000, charged with providing research funding for ICT, bio-technology and more recently sustainable energy and related technology.
- The **Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group (2004)**, which identified characteristics and essential conditions underpinning competitive advantage

in Ireland, including cost competitiveness, physical and communications infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship and management capability.

In 2006, the **Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation** was published aimed at coordinating national efforts in commercialisation and technology transfer. It sets out clear key actions to enhance technology commercialisation within the Irish economy. Key actions with respect to IP management and exploitation include:

- Ensure that HEIs encompass IP management and commercialisation as a central part of this mission, equal in importance to teaching and research
- Strengthen institutional competence at the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) level and among researchers
- Establish a competitive fund administered by EI to assist strengthening of the IP management function
- Establish a new function in EI providing centralised support to HEIs thereby maximizing the commercialisation potential of IP.



More recently, in response to the emergence of the Global Recession, the Irish government published a report entitled **Building Ireland's Smart Economy (2008)**, whilst the **Report of the Innovation Task Force (2010)**, outlined the requirements for Ireland to become an *International Innovation Hub* as follows:

- The entrepreneur and enterprise must be at the centre of our efforts.
- Establishing, attracting and growing and transforming enterprises must be the focus of a coherent national effort
- Availability of smart capital is crucial for starting, growing and transforming enterprises
- An education system which fosters independent thinking, creativity and innovation is vital to achieving the Smart Economy
- The State should actively accelerate success by encouraging flagship projects and by prioritising the provision of excellent infrastructure
- We must sharpen the focus of our national research system to target areas of potential strategic and economic advantage for Ireland.

In 2012 the results of a national **Research Prioritisation Exercise** were published – based on research by Forfás, and incorporating input from the research community,

the enterprise sector and research funding departments and agencies. The

Research Prioritisation Areas for Ireland (2012)	
- Future Networks & Communications	- Food for Health
- Data Analytics, Security & Privacy	- Sustainable Food Production and Processing
- Digital Platforms, Content & Applications	- Marine Renewable Energy
- Connected Health & Independent Living	- Smart Grids & Smart Cities
- Medical Devices	- Manufacturing Competitiveness
- Diagnostics	- Processing Technologies and Novel Materials
- Therapeutics - synthesis formulation, processing and drug delivery	- Innovation in Services and Business Processes

prioritisation exercise made a business case for fourteen research areas to be prioritised over the next five years.

These areas are prioritised in national research funding programmes through agencies such as Science Foundation Ireland, which announced recent funding of €245m towards establishing five new world class research centres targeting some of these areas. They are also the focus of **Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy (2014)**.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

A range of conclusions arise from this policy analysis, directly applicable to the development of an enterprise and innovation strategy for Co. Roscommon including:

Multi Agency Collaboration: To grow and develop the innovation potential of the county will require a coordinated multi-agency approach. The expanded economic remit of Local Authorities to develop economic strategies provides an organisational structure that has potential to support a coordinated approach to innovation, and more broadly economic development, within the county, and should be harnessed.

Clusters and Sectoral Development: The Smart Specialisation approach may be used to identify sectors and clusters of firms that have potential to grow and benefit from mutual collaboration. For sectors that have sufficient critical mass, there may be opportunities to explore how these can be strengthened and promoted nationally and internationally. The Medtech cluster in Galway is a good example of how this has been done successfully in the region. A similar approach should be taken for potential/emerging sectors and to explore practical ways for these to collaborate for

mutual benefit. Cross-sectoral approaches may also have potential. Engaging with nearby regions to achieve critical mass and pool resources may also be considered.

Key Enabling Technologies: Similar to other regions in the EU that have gained economic advantage, a baseline analysis should be undertaken to establish the extent of KETs within the existing industrial base as well as establishing the feasibility of investing in KETs to underpin or develop new economic sectors.

Linkages with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Public Research Organisations (PROs): HEIs and PROs are at the forefront of knowledge development and international evidence shows that collaborations with HEIs have a positive impact on firms. Although the county does not have a HEI, an objective should be to grow the number of collaborations between firms and HEIs in the region, nationally and internationally. Collaborations can include research and development, exploitation of technologies and new business models, expertise and know how, graduate placement, and technology licensing. At a strategic level, there may be possibilities to use clusters or groups of companies to engage with HEIs to explore, map and implement different pathways of collaboration that can be mutually beneficial.

Leverage Public Funding: Another objective should be to leverage the array of public funding nationally and internationally that can support the growth of firms, social enterprises and the local economy. At EU level, the Horizon 2020 programme offers significant opportunities for firms to participate in international networks and research programmes. Within this, the SME Instrument provides opportunities for SMEs to secure financial support for feasibility studies, research and development, access to mentors and specialised funding. Other EU inter-regional programmes also offer opportunities for collaboration and exchange. A practical first step is to utilise relevant National Contact Points and other conduits to identify suitable calls/work programmes that may benefit firms in the county and the local/regional economy.

At a national level the Irish Research Council runs an annual call for Employment Based Grants and Enterprise Ireland has an Innovation Voucher Scheme to encourage collaboration with knowledge partners.

Professional Development Programmes for Management and Innovation: Over the last decade a range of approaches, methodologies, frameworks and techniques to support innovation, research and development and innovation management have been developed. These provide management teams with enhanced tools and

knowledge to evaluate how to sustain their business activities over the long term. This support should be targeted at existing businesses through professional development programmes in applied innovation and innovation management

Getting Businesses Online: In line with the **National Digital Strategy (2013)**, a clear objective for the county should be to get as many businesses as possible with growth potential to have an on-line presence and in doing so identify, develop and implement an online trading strategy that will add to their business turnover.

Infrastructure: To support active firms within the county and to attract new companies into the county, there is an ongoing need for threshold levels of infrastructure, such as water, energy, transportation and telecommunications. In particular access to high-speed broadband services is critical to sustaining and growing economic activities.

Business Hubs: Over the last three decades there has been a growth in business parks to meet the demands of firms. This will continue to be a key feature of future business locations. In recent years, new models have emerged that use non-traditional locations such as high street retail settings to house or incubate new enterprises or micro businesses. For example in Umea in Sweden, some high footfall retail premises are used to incubate businesses in the creative economy in the one location. There may be opportunities to identify unoccupied space in suitable locations in the county to develop low-cost business hubs, aimed at particular sectors. Targeted incentives through the local authority (e.g rates subsidies offset against establishment costs) may also encourage take-up of such unoccupied space.

Awareness and Branding: The different stakeholders within the county should collaborate in promoting awareness of industry strengths and emerging sectors. Branding and marketing based on unique attributes of the county should be considered. Such awareness can range from signage coming into the county on main routes, online digital marketing campaigns, infographics etc. A more comprehensive approach is to create a geographic and sector based brand such as Fuchsia Brands in West Cork (see www.fuschiabrands.com), that can benefit firms in different sectors.

International Connectivity: Increasingly, locations are using international twinning and exchange programmes as mechanisms to identify best practice to develop territories and to grow international business between locations. This is supported through regular business, cultural and international exchanges. In the short term, the county should ensure that potential benefits of current twinning/exchange

arrangements are maximized and that new ones are developed that support the established and emerging sectors to enhance their international potential.

These issues and opportunities are taken into account in relation to the strategic focus and action plan identified for the county, taking into consideration the socio-economic analysis and competitiveness profiling presented in the next sections, so that the strategy is tailored to suit local needs, strengths and opportunities.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

KEY POINTS

Geography and Population

- *Relatively central location with significant regional population*
- *Rural county with third-most rural population*
- *Out-migration of younger working age group, leading to large diaspora*
- *Recent population growth, due largely to net migration*
- *People from Co. Roscommon tend to have a longer lifespan.*

Education Skills

- *High levels of third level participation*
- *Very low levels of graduate employment / retention*
- *Skills availability in agri/veterinary, engineering and manufacturing*
- *Skills gaps in ICT, science, technical skills and languages.*

Labour Force and Employment

- *High levels of employment in public services/health sector*
- *Farming/agriculture still relatively important to local economy*
- *One third of workforce travel outside the county to their workplace*
- *Job losses in traditional sectors*

Size and Scale of Enterprise Sector

- *Low levels of entrepreneurship*
- *Enterprise sector dominated by micro-enterprises serving local markets*
- *High dependency on traditional sectors with low-growth*
- *Small proportion of companies competing in export markets*
- *High vacancy rate amongst commercial properties*
- *Emerging pockets of knowledge based industry*
- *Higher levels of knowledge enterprises in neighbouring regions, with potential for spill-over*

Natural and Cultural Resources

- *Natural resources including agri-lands, rivers and lakes*
- *Strong history and cultural heritage*

Enterprise and Innovation Enablers

- *No specialist enterprise/innovation infrastructure in the county*
- *Opportunities for growth in emerging knowledge sectors*
- *Opportunities to support traditional sectors through focused resources to foster growth, including collaborative approaches.*
- *Harness regional access to third level knowledge providers and research centres*
- *Need to foster access to finance.*

GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION PROFILE

Co. Roscommon is a local municipality, an EU Local Administrative Unit (formerly NUTS Level 4 under the classification of territorial units), located in the West Region of Ireland (NUTS level 3), along with the larger counties of Galway and Mayo. Roscommon accounts for 14% of the population of the West Region and 18% of the landmass. To the west lie the counties of Galway and Mayo; Leitrim and Sligo are to the north and counties Longford and Westmeath lie to the south and east, giving rise to a hinterland of approx. 300,000 within a 60km radius.

It is the only inland county in the West region, and is therefore more centrally located, having a lot in common with other inland counties in the Midland region in terms of geography, population trends and economic development.

The overall NUTS 3 region belongs to the NUTS 2 Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region, which contains 47% of the landmass of Ireland, but just 27% of the population and 20% of the GDP. Therefore, historically it has been defined as the lesser developed region of Ireland, more sparsely populated and prioritised for increased EU structural and cohesion funding. However, from 2014 the BMW region is now classified as a more developed region.

Spread over an area of 2,547km², Roscommon is the 9th largest county in Ireland. However, with a total population of 64,065, it has the third lowest population density in the State, revealing the relatively rural nature of the county and its landscape. In the national context, Roscommon has 1.4% of the national population and 3.6% of the landmass,

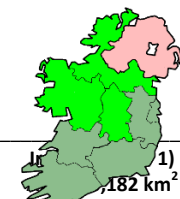
Co Roscommon (NUTS 4)
Area: 2,547 km²
Population: 64,065
Pop. Density: 25p/km²



West Region (NUTS 3)
Area: 14,281 km²
Population: 445,179
Pop. Density: 31p/km²



BMW Region (NUTS 2)
Area: 32,481 km²
Population: 1,242,657
Pop. Density: 38p/km²



BMW Region (NUTS 2)
Area: 32,481 km²
Population: 1,242,657
Pop. Density: 38p/km²



illustrating its predominantly rural nature.

Population Growth

The population of County Roscommon has grown steadily in recent years, having increased by approx 25% in the period 1996-2011, largely as a result of net migration. Despite this growth, the current population of 64,065 (Census 2011), gives a population density of just 25 persons per square km, the third lowest in the State, behind neighbours Leitrim (20 per sq. km) and Mayo (23 per sq. km).

In line with national, and indeed European and global trends, significant population growth was recorded in the main urban areas in the county, growing by 10.6% in the period 2006-2011. The highest growth rates were recorded in the main urban hinterlands of Monksland (Athlone West Rural +53%), Roscommon Town Rural (+19.5%), and Boyle Environs (+22%).

However, the census figures also show that Roscommon remains as the third most rural county in Ireland, (behind neighbouring counties Leitrim and Galway), with 74% of the population still living in rural areas.

Population Migration

Roscommon is amongst those counties which consistently records high levels of out-migration of the native population born in the county. After neighbouring counties, Leitrim and Westmeath, Roscommon has the third highest level of out-migration of its population to other counties, at 35.5%, compared to the State average of 24.8%. In recent times this has been particularly evident amongst the younger adult population (18-39 years), generally in search of education and work opportunities. On the positive side, this gives rise to a large diaspora with Roscommon roots, nationally and worldwide, which, if harnessed correctly, can prove useful for promoting the local region and attracting businesses to locate in the county.

Also of note, almost 11% of the local population are non-Irish nationals. These, along with the migration of other Irish residents into Co. Roscommon, generally account for the recent population increases recorded. Of these non-Irish nationals, 4.4% were UK nationals and a further 2.1% were Polish. There is also a strong Brazilian community and Eastern European population amongst the remaining non-national cohort.

Age Profile

The age profile of people living in Co. Roscommon (2011) is summarised as follows:

Co. Roscommon Age Profile (Source: CSO, Census 2011 data)

Age Category	Number
0-4 years (Pre-school)	4,642
5-12 years (Primary School)	7,222
13-18 years	4,901
19-39 years	17,112
19-64 years	20,792
65+	9,396
TOTAL	64,065

In comparison to the State, the following observations can be made:

- There are less people in the younger working age categories living in Co. Roscommon (18-39 years), largely as a result of out-migration of those seeking suitable work opportunities, including graduates
- There are comparatively more people in the older working age categories (45-64 years)
- There is an increasing number of people in the older age categories (65+) which is set to rise further. Along with counties Mayo and Leitrim, Roscommon (at 22.9%), has one of the highest older age dependency ratios, compared to the State average of 17.4%.

Meanwhile, research by the Institute of Public Health reveals that people living in County Roscommon can expect to live longer than people living in other counties in the country. In County Roscommon, the average life expectancy for males is 76.2 years and for females is 82.2 years. The average life expectancy for the country as a whole is 75.6 years for males and 80.6 years for females. At present the two oldest men in Ireland are from Co. Roscommon, aged 108 and 106 years respectively (Aug 2014). By comparison, the oldest person in the world at present is 111 years.

In another category, premature deaths (i.e. deaths of people below the age of 75 years), Roscommon also comes out on top with the lowest rate of premature deaths in Ireland. The national rate is 324.9 per 100,000 of population whilst for Roscommon the rate is 242.8, 27% lower than the national average. These figures may reflect quality of life aspects associated with predominantly rural living in the county within a relatively clean green environment.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

A good standard of education is a prerequisite for enterprise to become established and flourish, whilst research shows that there is a direct link between levels of innovation and the employment of graduates. In County Roscommon the standard of education across the population is improving, with 57% have attained secondary level education, whilst 25% have completed third level. This compares to a national figure of 31% achieving third level. However, more recently, Roscommon students perform very well, with increasing numbers proceeding to third level, discussed below.

Third Level Participation and Graduate Retention

In recent years Roscommon has produced a consistently high number of students that proceed to third level education, approx 60% of the 17-19 age group annually, which is amongst the highest nationally. Whilst this is a positive trend, there are some significant challenges in retaining this graduate population locally, including:

- There is no third level educational institution in Co Roscommon, so most students must leave the county to access third level courses. This is a contributory factor to the substantial “brain drain” locally. Currently, the majority of third level students from Roscommon attend institutions in the following counties (ranked in order of popularity with Roscommon students)

(1) Athlone	(3) Sligo	(5) Limerick
(2) Galway	(4) Dublin	
- Data from the **HEA First Destinations Report (2012)**, reveals that only 13% of college graduates from Roscommon receive their first jobs in the county. Apart from County Leitrim, this retention rate is the lowest in Ireland, whilst just one third of Roscommon graduates find jobs in the West region. The remainder source work outside the area, or overseas. According to OECD research, such a scenario arises where skills available are underutilised as a result of lack of opportunities, leading to the attrition of human capital and missed opportunities for creating local prosperity
- Similarly, Roscommon has the lowest employment graduate population in the country, at only 20% of the size of its graduate population. Even Leitrim fares better in terms of attracting external graduates to work in the county.

These issues present challenges, which need to be addressed to increase innovation capacity into the local economy, as well as ensuring that the county has a suitable workforce profile to attract and retain new enterprise in the area.

Graduate Profile

Of those living in County Roscommon who indicated their fields of higher education study in the 2011 Census, the majority have studied either Social Sciences, Business and Law, totalling 4,536 - although proportionately this is well below the State average; or Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (4,067 - which is in line with State figures). There is also a strong showing for Health and Welfare (3,259), which correlates with the high levels of employment in the public and health services in the county.

However, on a proportionate basis, Roscommon produces a significantly higher amount of Agri and Veterinary graduates than other counties (2,240), which comprises 5% of our graduates, compared to less than 3% nationally. This may provide opportunities for developing related sectors locally.

A full breakdown of the third level educational profile of Roscommon residents is given in the following table, and compared with the West region and State figures.

Population aged 15 years and over by field of study (Source: CSO, Census 2011 data)

	Roscommon	Roscommon	West	State
Population aged 15 years and over by field of study	Number	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Social sciences, Business, Law	4,536	10%	11%	14%
Engineering, Manuf. & Const.	4,067	9%	10%	9%
Health and Welfare	3,259	7%	7%	7%
Agriculture and Veterinary	2,240	5%	4%	3%
Education and teacher training	1,714	4%	4%	4%
Services	1,832	4%	4%	4%
Science, Maths & Computing	1,485	3%	4%	4%
Humanities	496	1%	2%	2%
Art	472	1%	1%	2%
Other subjects	43	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
None/Not Stated	23,397	54%	51%	51%
Total	43,541			

SKILLS SHORTAGES

According to the OECD publication, *Employment and Skills Strategy in Ireland (2011)*, in general, the West Region of Ireland has a skills equilibrium in terms of supply and demand. A skills surplus is recorded to some degree, which can result in migration of the skilled labour force in search of suitable job opportunities. This is particularly true in County Roscommon as discussed earlier in relation to the out-migration of the graduate population, identified in the HEA First Destinations Report (2012).

However, a number of studies have identified specific skills shortages affecting the region, based on existing and projected future demand. *The Forfás National Skills Bulletin (2013)* focuses on the following skills shortages:

- Science-based positions in bio-pharma, medical devices and food (R&D, product development)
- ICT, software development and gaming, with many jobs in this sector now filled by inward migration
- Precision engineering, including tool design, polymer technology and process engineering
- Marketing/Sales executives, including those with international languages and/or specific industry experience
- Finance professionals including accountants, financial managers with specific industry experience
- Medical practitioners and specialist nurses
- Transport and logistics professionals, with international languages
- Engineers and professionals in the green economy (energy generation, waste management).

The Western Development Commission has also identified a range of these skills gaps in growth sectors in the local economy. For example in 2011, new skills needed for FDI jobs included:

- ICT, science and engineering skills (47%)
- Business, financial and accounting skills (19%)

- Manufacturing, distribution and logistics skills (14%)
- Sales and marketing skills including languages (12%)

These are issues to be addressed to meet current and future demand, to foster the growth of local enterprises.

Skills Training and Conversion Programmes

To address skills gaps, there are a number of initiatives aimed at upskilling, skills conversion and providing work placement opportunities, particularly for jobseekers. Some relevant programmes are described below.

The Springboard Initiative, through the third level institutions, offers free higher education courses at various graduate levels in areas where employment opportunities and skills gaps are identified, primarily targeted at job-seekers with a previous history of employment. Skills conversion courses are also offered in the area of ICT, which is open to suitably qualified applicants regardless of employment status.

The Momentum Programme, provided by Solas, provides free education and training to jobseekers (who are unemployed for 12 months or more) to gain skills, including work placement, and to access work opportunities in identified growing sectors. At present, one (out of 186) Momentum Courses is located in Co. Roscommon, which should be addressed to meet local skills gaps.

Skillnets Programmes aims to provide subsidised training to upskill staff in existing companies in specific areas or in similar sectors facing common challenges/skills gaps. Programmes are also available free of charge to the unemployed. A total of 64 such training networks are in operation in different areas and covering a variety of sectors to meet needs. Of these, ROLE Skillnet is based in Counties Roscommon and Leitrim.

JobBridge is the National Internship Scheme that provides work placements for interns for a 6-9 month period. The aim is to break the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get jobs without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education and training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills.

Self-Employment Skills Training for the Unemployed: The recent *Pobal Research Report on Self-employment Supports provided through the LCDP (2013)*, identifies a successful model of integrated supports for this cohort, including mentoring,

entrepreneurship and other business skills training. A similar initiative may be considered for existing LTU's, involving a targeted approach, with appropriate KPIs.

These, and other skills training programmes delivered through the Education and Training Boards (ETB's) and other providers, can improve the skills base in Co Roscommon, targeted at priority sectors in the local economy. Additionally, a useful training resource for new entrepreneurs and early stage enterprises is available in *Enterprise Ireland's Start-Up Weblink Guide (2014)*.

LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

According to the latest Census, in 2011 there were 30,246 persons aged 15+ years in the labour force, representing a labour force participation rate of 60%. This is a little below the national average of 62%. Of the 20,239 persons aged 15+ years who were outside the labour force, 24% were students, 25.5% were looking after the home/family and 37% were already retired.

Of those in the labour force in 2011, 80% (24,390 persons) were at work, giving an unemployment rate for this area of 19.4% compared with a national average of 19%. The current seasonally adjusted Live Register figures (July 2014) puts the county at a rate of 13% compared to a national rate of 11.5%, indicating the impact of more recent economic recovery, which is more concentrated in the larger urban areas of the country.

Of the 24,390 workers enumerated in Roscommon, 8,534, which is over one third of the workforce, work outside the county. This represents a significant proportion of the working population who leave the county every day to attend their place of work, emphasising its status as a 'commuter' county, serving larger urban areas in the region, including Galway, Sligo, Athlone, Longford, Castlebar and Ballina. The daytime working population (resident and non-resident) in Co. Roscommon was 14,422 (2011).

Employment by Sector

The rural nature of the county, and the significant out-migration in search of work opportunities, reveals that industry is lesser developed, with a greater dependence on agriculture, traditional sectors, retail and public services to support the local economy. A breakdown of employment by sector is provided opposite, and compared to the State, which reveals the following employment structure:

- Roscommon has substantially more people working in the public sectors (including public admin, education and health) than the national average
- Roscommon also has a higher proportion of the workforce in the agriculture sector, which still remains strong relative to national trends
- However Roscommon is weak in important growth areas, including ICT, Professional, Scientific and Technical categories
- Since the 2011 Census, construction is also known to have fallen further.

Employment by Sector, Co. Roscommon Residents (Source: CSO, 2011 Census data)

Employment Sector	No. Employed in Roscommon	Percentage Employed by sector in Roscommon	Percentage Employed by sector Nationally
Wholesale and retail trade	3,618	14.8%	14.7%
Manufacturing Industries	2,863	11.7%	10.5%
Human health and social work	2,687	10.5%	11.0%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,405	9.8%	4.9%
Public administration & Defence	2,322	9.5%	6.3%
Education	2,187	9.0%	9.2%
Construction	1,343	5.5%	4.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,168	4.8%	5.8%
Professional, scientific and technical	863	3.5%	5.1%
Transport & Storage	853	3.5%	4.3%
Administrative & Support service	778	3.2%	3.4%
Financial & Insurance activities & Real	751	3.1%	5.7%
Information & Communications	433	1.8%	3.8%
Arts, Entertainment and recreation	279	1.1%	3.9%
Other	1,756	9.3%	6.7%
Total	24,390	100%	100%

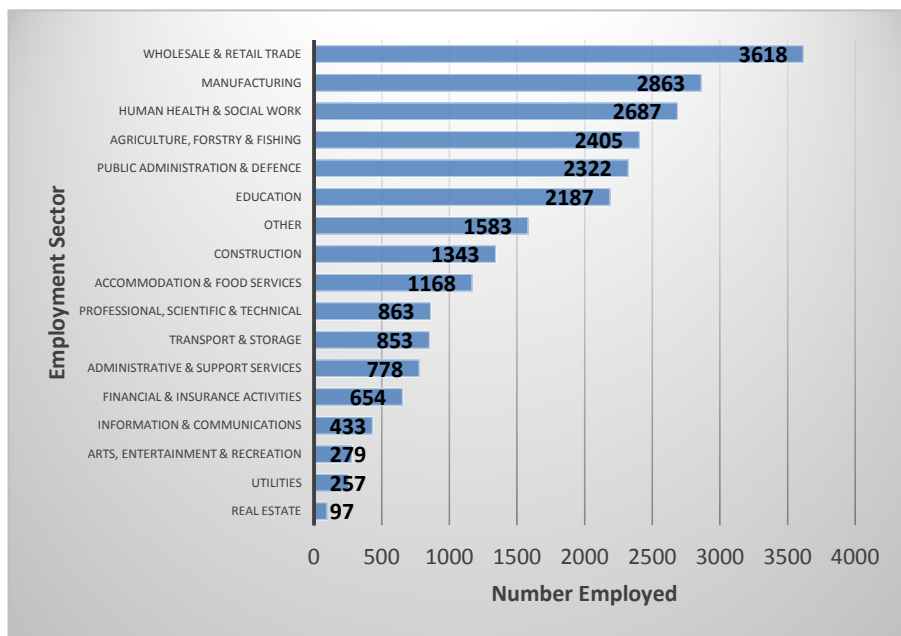
Of those who work daytime in the county (14,422), a summary of employment by sector is illustrated as follows:

Daytime Employment by Sector in Co. Roscommon (Source: CSO, 2011 Census data)

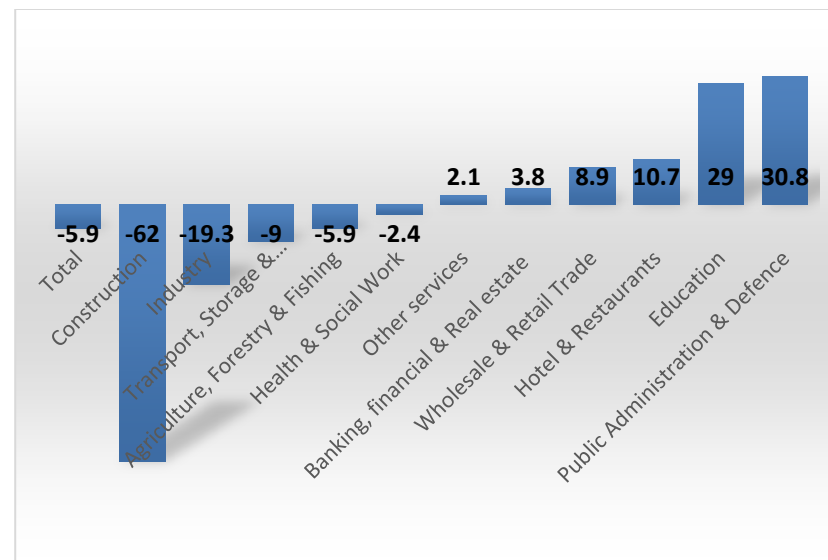
Employment Sector	No. Employed
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,536

Manufacturing	1,880
Building & Construction	371
Commerce & Trade	3,334
Transport & Communications	536
Professional services	3,766
Public administration & Defence	1,267
Other	1,732
Total	14,422

Employment by Sector in Co. Roscommon (Source: CSO, 2011 Census data)



Percentage Change in Employment in Roscommon - 2006-2011 (Census 2011)



Job losses in Co. Roscommon

Since 2007, the financial crisis and resultant recession has impacted on the local economy, with many businesses facing significant challenges, resulting in downsizing and job losses, not least in the construction sector which has been decimated, as revealed in the previous illustration. Other major job losses impacting the county have been as follows:

- 2006 - Glanbia announces closure of food plant in Rooskey with loss of 85 jobs
- 2008 - Closure of Hannon's Poultry factory in Roscommon with loss of 54 jobs
- 2008 - Loss of 80 jobs in restructuring at Dawn Meats in Ballaghaderreen
- 2009 - 80 employees lose their jobs at Elan pharmaceuticals in Monksland
- 2009 - Casey's Auto Group closes with 65 jobs losses across 3 branches
- 2010 - 66 jobs lost MBNA credit card company in nearby Carrick-on-Shannon
- 2010 - Closure of Roscommon Champion newspaper with loss of 9 jobs
- 2011 - Downgrading of Roscommon Hospital with resultant job transfers
- 2011 - A further 100 job losses at MBNA in Carrick-on-Shannon
- 2012 - Flix Cinema/Leisure Centre closes in Roscommon, with 30 job losses
- 2012 - Texas Department Store closes in Roscommon Town with 30 job losses
- 2012 - Target Express Couriers closes in Ballaghaderreen with 12 jobs lost
- 2013 - Alkermes (formerly Elan) announces cuts of 130 jobs at Monksland plant.
- 2014 - Further 160 jobs to be lost at MBNA in nearby Carrick On Shannon

New Job Creation in Co Roscommon

Following the economic downturn, recent job announcements in the county have been small, but notable in terms of growth sectors, as follows:

- Jazz Pharmaceuticals are in the process of building a manufacturing plant in Monksland, projected to create an initial 50 jobs
- Expansion of Vistamed's manufacturing facilities (medical devices) in Carrick-on-Shannon and Rooskey, envisaged to create up to 125 new jobs
- Proposed location of manufacturing facility by bio-pharma company Alexion Pharmaceuticals in Monksland, with an initial 40 jobs.

Other job creation has focused on sectors more traditionally associated with the area, including the decentralisation of part of the Property Registration Authority to Roscommon town, which resulted in the relocation of approx. 85 public sector jobs; along with job creation in new Retail developments. However a number of these retail outlets have since closed/downsized, including those listed above.

SIZE AND SCALE OF THE BUSINESS SECTOR IN ROSCOMMON

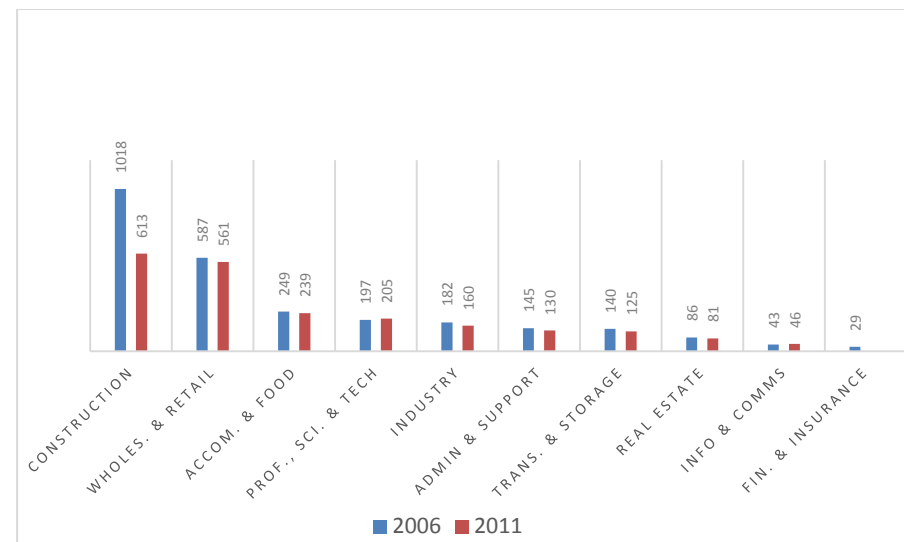
Of those in employment in Roscommon, 5,232 are categorised as self-employed. This represents 20% of those at work, which is higher than the State average of 17%. However, this includes the significant farming sector, classed as self-employed.

According to the latest CSO Business Demography Data (2011), excluding the farming sector, Roscommon had 2,201 active enterprises registered with Revenue. This was a decline of 18.1% from a high of 2,686 enterprises in 2006 and reveals that the county has one of the lowest entrepreneurship rates in the country, and the lowest in the west region, being some 15% behind the national average.

At 93.6%, Co. Roscommon also has the highest share of micro-enterprises in the State, employing 1-9 employees. Therefore, it has a lesser number of larger companies, indicating low levels of FDI in the county, whilst indigenous companies do not tend to grow significantly, with some notable exceptions. Many existing enterprises are family owned entities, which by their nature, often have issues of capacity, succession and other matters that may impact on growth potential.

A breakdown of the number of enterprises across the main business sectors in Co. Roscommon, and changes in recent times, is detailed in the illustration below.

Number of enterprises in each Sector in Co. Roscommon (2006 – 2011)



Source: CSO Business Demography Statistics

In recent times, as highlighted, there has been further downsizing and/or business closures, mostly in traditional manufacturing and the primary food sector. However, growth is evident in modern knowledge based companies, albeit from a low base.

Construction remains the largest industrial sector in County Roscommon despite its decline of 39.8%. Roscommon has the highest share of its enterprises in the construction sector of any county in Ireland (27.9%). This represents a substantial oversupply, although this has fallen further since 2011. Wholesale and Retail is the next highest sector and there is a large gap to the next, Accommodation and Food Service, which is the third largest sector in common with most rural counties.

Roscommon has the smallest share of its enterprises in the knowledge intensive services sectors in the region. Just 15.1% of its enterprises are in the Information and Communications, Professional, Scientific and Technical services sectors. This is less than half the average for the rest of the state (32.4%).

Roscommon experienced a decline in enterprise numbers in almost every sector between 2006 and 2011. After Construction, Industry and Administration & Support had the largest declines. Two sectors recorded increases - Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities and ICT, both knowledge intensive service sectors, which is a positive development, despite the low numbers in these sectors.

Agency Assisted Enterprises in Co. Roscommon

As discussed, the majority of businesses in the county are micro-enterprises (1-9 employees), and therefore the main sources of agency assistance is from the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), formerly the County Enterprise Board (CEB), along with LEADER grant aid for eligible rural and social enterprises.

Since its formation in 1993, the local CEB has created/support over 1,000 jobs in the county across 200 enterprises. As an indication of annual levels of grant aid provided, according to the latest **Roscommon LEO Enterprise Plan (2014)**, in 2013, grant aid totalling €236,000 was approved to 16 businesses, of which 3 were new entrepreneurs and 13 were business expansions, supporting 60 jobs. In 2014, five businesses are approved for grant aid, the majority of which are new businesses, whilst the total grant aid approved has remained the same, aimed at creating/supporting 23 jobs.

Other supports provided by the Local Enterprise Office include:

- Business training courses
- Mentoring clinics/assignments
- Funding support for business networks
- Young Enterprise Programme through Secondary Schools
- Website development/On-line trading vouchers
- Branding/marketing supports

An **Evaluation of Enterprise Support for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship (2012)** has emphasised the importance of these support programmes but has recommended a more focused approach to the delivery of CEB/LEO services, including increased efficiencies, greater clarity concerning objectives and targets and increased focus on program evaluations/outcomes. This fits well with the focused nature of this enterprise and innovation strategy.

Enterprise Ireland, with its regional office in Galway, provides support for enterprises with growth and export potential that can employ 10+ people. Whilst activity in Roscommon is more limited based on the nature and scale of enterprise in the county, in total, Enterprise Ireland supports 60 companies, employing a total of 1,454 (full time and part time) people at present. In the six year period from 2008 to date, Enterprise Ireland has approved funding of over €10m to companies in the County.

Enterprise Ireland also assists early stage companies who are looking to develop a business with export potential with a wide range of both funding and other supports to help assist promoters to commercialise their idea. Typically, Enterprise Ireland offers the following range of supports for enterprise with growth potential:

- “Enterprise Start” Development Programmes
- Innovation Vouchers Scheme
- Competitive Feasibility and Competitive Start Funding
- Investment Funding in confirmed HPSU enterprises
- Market Information/Access through its International Office Network

Employment in Exporting Companies

Exporting companies tend to have stronger growth potential, given the limited size of local and national markets for most products and services. In County Roscommon there are 1,788 people employed in exporting companies, representing approx. 7% of employment in the county. This is a relatively low number, and is reflective of the high levels involved in traditional sectors, local trades and public services in the county. The majority of these jobs (approx. 1,000) are in the small number of FDI companies located in the county, discussed in the next section.

Foreign Direct Investment

County Roscommon is promoted by the IDA as part of the Midlands region, with Westmeath, Offaly, Laois and Longford. As such, it ‘competes’ for FDI with larger urban centres with more mature business parks and industrial areas, including the Gateway towns of Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar. In Roscommon, there are a smaller number of FDI companies spread throughout the county, listed below, whilst there have been only a few foreign delegations visiting the county in the past 3 years.

IDA supported Companies located in Co. Roscommon (Source: IDA Ireland)

Company	Sector	Products/Services	Nationality	Location
Advanced Couplings Ltd	Industrial Products/Services	Couplings	United Kingdom	Roscommon Town
Alkermes (former Elan site)	Pharmaceuticals	Finished Pharmaceuticals	United States	Monksland
Athlone Pharmaceuticals Ltd	Pharmaceuticals	Generic Pharmaceuticals	United Kingdom	Ballymurray Co Roscommon
Carson Industries Ltd	Consumer Goods	Plastic Enclosures, Structural Foam Items	United States	Roscommon town
Color Comm. Europe Ltd.	Chemicals	Colour Paint Cards	United States	Castlerea
Harmac Medical	Medical	Medical devices, Blow	United States	Castlerea

Products Ltd.	Technologies	Moulding		Co Roscommon
System Label Ltd	Consumer Goods	Screen printed tech. labels, decals, overlays	Germany	Roscommon town
Vention (formerly Ansamed)	Medical Technologies	Extruded medical tubing and devices	United States	Boyle Co Roscommon
Innocoll Pharmaceuticals	Medical Technologies	Drug delivery	United States	Roscommon Town

Of note, recent announcements that both Jazz Pharmaceuticals and Alexion Pharmaceuticals are to establish manufacturing facilities in Monksland, means that this area will feature a small cluster of renowned multinationals in this growth sector.

Recent Announcements for Co. Roscommon (Source: Primary Research)

Company		Sector	Products/Services	Nationality	Location
Jazz Pharmaceuticals		Pharmaceuticals	Speciality Biopharmaceuticals	United States	Monksland (NEW!)
Alexion Pharmaceuticals		Bio-pharma	Manufacture of Pharmaceuticals	United States	Monksland (NEW!)

This region already has access to a supply of skilled labour in this sector, due to the location of the former Elan plant in Athlone as well as the location of other pharma companies in Athlone and the wider West region..

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

As a largely rural county, Roscommon processes a range of natural and cultural resources that can provide potential opportunities for development, discussed below.

Natural Resources

As a predominantly rural county, Roscommon has a number of natural advantages with potential for development from an enterprise/job creation perspective.

Rural lands: Some 172,000 hectares (1,720 sq km) of the county is comprised of farmed agricultural lands, made up of over 6,000 small farms, primarily used for sheep and cattle farming. There are almost 5,400 farms involved with cattle production, with over 200,000 cattle. Less than 10% of these are involved in dairy production. There are 1,713 farms involved with sheep production (256,000 sheep). There is a lesser presence of poultry and pig production in the county. As a result, the agri-food sector has built up a presence, including primary processing and some value-added producers.

Additionally, there are alternative land uses including tourism and other possibilities to compliment this predominantly agricultural use. Examples include Lough Key Forest and Activity Park, Mote Park, Suck Valley Walking routes and forestry activity.

Rivers, Lakes and other scenic areas: Despite having no coastline, Roscommon has an abundance of water frontage. It has the longest stretch of the river Shannon from amongst the ten counties the river passes through, stretching from Carrick on Shannon to Athlone on its eastern border. The river Suck, is located on the western fringe, famous amongst anglers. Lakes include Lough Ree and Lough Key amongst many others. Notable scenic areas include Lough Key Forest and Activity Park and the Curliue mountains to the north, Sliabh Bán and other areas in the county.

Bogland: Approximately one third of the land in Roscommon is classified as bogland. Whilst the commercial potential may be limited due to environmental constraints, they may provide other amenity and tourism value. There may also be opportunities for niche products based on the high mineral and nutrient content of peat material.

Wind: The south and west regions of Ireland, including Co. Roscommon, are identified as having a wind resource amongst the richest in Europe, providing considerable potential for the generation of wind energy.

Quarrying/Mining: Roscommon has had a long history associated with quarrying and mining. There are a number of sand and stone quarries in the county, which were important employers, particularly during the construction boom. There are also a few specialist quarries, including internationally renowned blue limestone deposits. The Arigna area in the north of the county has a long tradition of mining, dating back to the 17th Century. Initially, high-grade iron-ore was ‘mined’ from the fields and riverbanks, leading to the development of the ironworks industry locally. The discovery of coal in 1788 meant that mining continued to be a major source of employment until 1990, when the last of the mines closed.

Culture & Heritage

Roscommon has a wide variety of cultural and heritage assets and links, which provide potential for capitalisation particularly from a tourism perspective but may also extend to other sectors. These include:

- **Renowned People** from the county, including, Douglas Hyde - Ireland’s first President; Chris O’Dowd, actor, including lead role in current “Moone Boy” series set in Boyle, Co Roscommon; and John Brennan current Director of the CIA! A list of other famous people from the county are included in Appendix VI.
- **Traditional Industries** including mining, captured through Arigna Mining Experience/Museum; and farming/agriculture, with Derryglad folk museum and some visitor farms located in the county, as well as the annual Roscommon Lamb Festival, celebrating the local agricultural heritage.
- **Large Houses** and other buildings associated with the county’s history and heritage including King House, Clonalis House, Strokestown Park House, Castlecoote house, Roscommon Castle and Boyle Abbey.
- **Prehistoric Archaeology**, including Rathcroghan Celtic Royal Site /Cruachan Aí Visitor Centre at Tulsk, identified as the traditional capital of the region of Connachta, strongly associated with Irish mythology and regarded as one of the oldest and largest unexcavated royal sites in Europe.
- **Important Historical Events** in Ireland’s more recent history, including the Great Famine, portrayed through the National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park House and Famine Museum.
- **Festivals and Events:** Annual festivals and weekend events are a regular feature across the county. Larger and more established festivals include Roscommon Lamb Festival, Boyle Arts Festival, Douglas Hyde Conference,

O'Carolan Harp Festival and Percy French Summer School as well as local festivals and events.

ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION ENABLERS

Reports by Forfas (2012) and the National Competitiveness Council (2014), identify the main infrastructure priorities to ensure regional competitiveness, job creation and sustainable business growth, which are considered below, including:

- Suitable Commercial Premises (land and buildings)
- Broadband
- Energy
- Water / Waste Water Services
- Transport Infrastructure
- Key Enabling Technologies
- Knowledge Infrastructure
- Access to Finance

Suitable Commercial Premises

This includes available zoned lands, business parks, commercial buildings, enterprise units, incubators, and specialist enterprise units targeted at specific sectors. Each of these is discussed below.

Business Parks, Commercial land and buildings: All of the main towns have zoned commercial/industrial lands, which varies according to location and priority. The new County Development Plan 2014-2020, includes the zoning of commercial lands, taking into consideration projected future development in the county.

From the Local Authority perspective, Roscommon County Council has a number of zoned land banks and properties that may be available for commercial ventures including:

- Ballyboughan Industrial Park, Roscommon town - sixteen serviced sites
- Greenfield Industrial Sites at Monksland, Elphin, Cortober, Ballaghaderreen, Ballyboughan (Roscommon town), and Castlereagh,

Additionally, the IDA operates Roscommon Business and Technology Park, an 8 hectare (20 acre) park with serviced sites located near Roscommon town. The park has been designed and landscaped to a high standard including a services infrastructure to suit both manufacturing and international services sectors. There is also an advanced office facility located in this business park.

Commercial Addresses & Vacancy Rates: The latest GeoView statistics reveal that Roscommon has 3,516 commercial addresses (June 2014), of which 482 (13.7%) were vacant, although there is no official register of these in the county. This is an increase from 12.2% in June 2013, placing Roscommon as a county with one of the lowest number of commercial addresses, typical of smaller rural counties, but with a relatively high vacancy rate, especially typical of the west/north-west region at present.

In Co. Roscommon, there is a lot of warehouse and retail space, much of it developed in recent years and a lot of which is currently vacant. This is mostly clustered in business/commercial parks in specific locations, notably Ballaghaderreen (warehousing/commercial units), Roscommon town (Retail/Commercial) and Monksland (commercial). There are also a range of other vacant commercial and retail units throughout the county, including vacant properties on the main streets of some towns as a result of the downturn. However, there is no full register of these (and their availability), which would be useful for prospective investors/entrepreneurs.

Enterprise Units / Incubators: Incubation space (low-cost space aimed at new start-ups) is relatively limited throughout the county, with most new start-ups operating from their own, often temporary, premises or renting in the private sector. Existing incubators mainly comprise community enterprise centres (CECs), many of which received EI funding support under the CEC funding programme, including:

- Roscommon Enterprise Centre – 9 units approx. 1,200 sq. ft. each, mainly used for warehousing and light manufacturing
- Boyle Enterprise Centre – small office-based units, training space etc., with a priority on the green business sector
- Castlereagh Enterprise Hub – mostly community space based on demand, but also childcare and some limited office space available
- 'The Shambles' Ballaghaderreen – Currently comprising an admin/training block and an incomplete childcare building other units undeveloped due to financial constraints and existing oversupply of warehousing/ commercial units in the private sector locally
- Arigna Enterprise Centre – Small units in rural community facility, useful for warehousing, light industry
- Enterprise Kiltullagh – Limited rural based units that may be sub-divided.

Additionally, a recent feasibility study, funded by Roscommon LEADER Partnership, has identified potential to establish an incubation facility in the Monksland area where none exists, if a suitable community-based partnership approach can be achieved.

Close to the borders of the county, there are other enterprise centres of note, which may support enterprise in border regions, including:

- Ballinasloe Enterprise & Technology Centre – a large and well-occupied enterprise building located at Creagh, incorporating units of various sizes suitable for clean industry and office-based enterprises
- The Hive, Carrick-on-Shannon, a successful technology enterprise centre connected to fibre network aimed at digital, creative and IT enterprises
- Midlands Innovation & Research Centre at Athlone Institute of Technology – office based units prioritising campus-supported companies.

Specialist Incubators: There are no specialist incubators located in the County. However, of note Pharmaplaz Technology Park is an unfinished business park that was aimed at attracting Medtech companies to locate in the Monksland area, as well as providing support services to pharma companies. This was a private venture, which unfortunately never reached completion and went into receivership, but had potential to support this growth sector, discussed again later.

Broadband

This is becoming ever more important as business models evolve, with increased on-line activity and new businesses emerging in knowledge and technology sectors. According to the latest Census data (2011), 53.4% of households in the county had broadband connectivity, compared with 63.8% nationally. This reflects the rural nature of the county, with broadband access lagging behind urban areas. The County Development Plan 2014-2020 includes policies and objectives in relation to supporting enhanced broadband coverage and connectivity across the region.

Hi-speed Fibre-Optic Broadband infrastructure is available through the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) in Roscommon town and in parts of Monksland which is connected to the Athlone MAN. These networks run nearby many industrial and commercial building in these areas, which have potential for easy connection. However only a limited numbers of commercial buildings/companies are currently linked to this fibre network, with prohibitive connection charges (and usage costs) cited as reasons for the poor uptake, particularly amongst the private sector. This is

an issue which may need to be addressed. Additionally, the comprehensive mapping of these buildings with easy access to fibre connectivity may attract new/existing businesses with a broadband requirement to consider locating in the region.

At present, there is no dedicated technology centre, located in the county that may support the development of new technology/ICT based businesses. This may be an inhibiting factor to growth in this sector, based on the success of similar projects in neighbouring regions (e.g. The Hive, Carrick-on-Shannon and Galway Technology Centre).

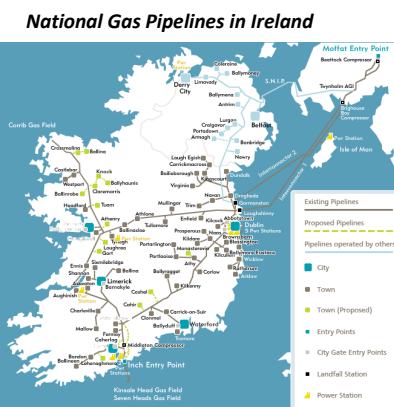
Energy

The Forfás *Overview of the Main Infrastructure Issues for Enterprise (2012)*, concludes that the supply-demand outlook for energy to 2020 is positive, although some upgrades are required, including Grid-link projects in some locations, such as the West of Ireland. The main energy issues refer to:

- Improving cost competitiveness, as energy costs remain an important issue for enterprise development. With energy

costs primarily linked to international fuel prices (due to our dependence on fossil fuels), these have risen sharply in recent years, eroding competitiveness. The availability of natural gas in Ireland has assisted some industries to control energy costs. However, locally, access to gas is limited and only available in the south of the county in the Monksland area. This issue may need to be addressed if necessary to support specific industry sectors that could benefit from them.

- Ensuring security of supply, including reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels, increasing use of renewable energy sources, accessing the Corrib reserves, and electrical inter-connection with the UK and continental Europe.
- Improving environmental sustainability, including improving efficiency and usage as well as focusing on delivery renewable energy capacity (wind, biomass, geothermal) which can also lead to new business opportunities.



The County Development Plan 2014-2020 includes policies and objectives in relation to ensuring the development and upgrading of the energy infrastructure to support growth in economic activity and population as well as facilitating the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations.

Water and Waste Water Services

The provision of adequate and affordable water services is crucial to ensure the sustained growth and development of enterprise. Access to secure and competitively priced water supplies at appropriate quality levels, is core to the delivery of these services and should be prioritised.

The County Development Plan 2014-2020 sets out council policy, in conjunction with Irish Water, to continue the development of a sustainable water supply of suitable quality for domestic, commercial and industrial uses along with adequate wastewater collection, treatment and disposal.

Transport Infrastructure

Domestic Transport: Whilst it still lags behind competitor countries, improvements in the national transport infrastructure as a result of capital spend over the last decade are reflected in data from the IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook which shows significant improvement in Ireland's performance between 2005 (4.5 out of 10) and 2011 (8 out of 10).

County Roscommon itself has benefitted from the completion of the M6 Dublin – Galway motorway, which passes through the south of the county via Athlone/Monksland, as well as improvements to the N4/N5 routes, which traverse the north of the county, linking the region with large urban centres including Sligo, Castlebar and Ballina. Roscommon town is linked to the M6 motorway via the N61 national primary route, ensuring that all parts of the county are within 2 hours of Dublin city and within easy reach of regional urban centres. However, local feedback from the consultation process identified some issues in terms of road networks within the county itself, e.g. considerable journey times from north to south in the county.

The County Development Plan 2014-2020 includes policies and objectives to continue to improve/upgrade and sustainably expand the road network to accommodate current and potential future growth.

International Transport: Good international transport, complete with effective internal connectivity, is a key factor in mitigating the impact of Ireland's peripheral location in the eyes of overseas investors and customers. It also assists in attracting tourists into regional locations. The recent improvement of the national roads network has reduced transit times to Dublin, which is the main hub for both air and sea transport serving the region.

The location of Ireland West/Knock Airport in close proximity to the county also offers potential if it can be tapped sufficiently. This would require greater promotion of the county to travellers into the airport, improved transport links between the county and the airport and improved flight options, including access to onward connections from European hubs. The re-introduction of transatlantic routes may also assist in fostering FDI into the county as well as attracting more US tourists to Roscommon.

Key Enabling Technologies

Key Enabling Technologies that may support emerging/growth sectors in the local economy, include the following possibilities:

Food Incubation Centre: Despite the importance of the food sector locally, there is no dedicated food centre or food incubation units in the county to support the emergence of new food businesses. Recent entrants have been few and have had to develop their own units, including expensive fit-out and purchase of equipment, or consider re-locating to other regions. The high capital costs, means it can be financially challenging to set up locally, without available food incubation units, resulting in food businesses migrating to neighbouring locations where suitable facilities are available.

Fibre-Enabled Technology Centre – As discussed, Fibre Optic Broadband is available through the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs), in Roscommon town and Monksland. However, as yet, there is no dedicated technology centre, located in the county and linked to the fibre network that may support the development of new technology/ICT based businesses. In contrast, as discussed earlier, other counties have managed to implement successful models for IT based technology centres.

Specialist Infrastructure to Support Medical/Pharma Sectors: As mentioned earlier, Pharmaplaz Technology Park is an unfinished business park that was aimed at attracting pharmaceutical companies to locate in the Monksland area, as well as providing support services to pharmaceutical companies. Spread across 4.4 hectares,

the business park proposal incorporated plans for an 8-building complex, totalling 7,400 square metres, which reached various stages of construction, with just one unit fully completed to pharma-industry standard. Given the high set-up costs for new entrants, a completed facility such as this with ready-to-go units and supported by the necessary expertise and networking in that sector, could go a long way to attracting such companies to locate in the county.

Further discussion on the prioritisation of these initiatives is included later in this document.

Knowledge Infrastructure / Innovation Support

This is discussed here, in relation to the key areas of capacity building as well as access to research and innovation support, which are issues identified at a local level.

Capacity Building Innovation Programmes: There is often a need to introduce absorptive capacity into new and existing enterprise in order to maximise the innovation and growth potential that may exist.

An example of such programmes locally was the **Roscommon Innovation House** Initiative, managed by WestBIC - the official EU Business and Innovation Centre in the region, with an office in Co. Roscommon, and funded by Roscommon LEADER Partnership through the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013). This provided the first steps in innovation support for new rural enterprise ideas and existing business with growth ideas and existing business with growth potential.

Other similar capacity building programmes included the **Accelerating Green Business Programme**, managed as an inter-territorial project between Roscommon LEADER Partnership and Meath Partnership and the **Crafted in Roscommon** initiative to support the creative sector in the county, which was delivered using a similar inter-territorial approach.

A range of other innovation programmes of relevance locally are included in the **Start-Up Weblinks Guide for Entrepreneurs and Early Stage Businesses in the West Region (2014)**, published by Enterprise Ireland.

Access to HEI Research and Innovation Support: Whilst there is no third level institution in the county, there are a number of third level facilities within easy reach, providing a wide range of R&D expertise. Advances in on-line communication also means that national and international research centres are also within easier reach.

Creating effective linkages to foster collaborations between these and suitable enterprises will be a critical step in supporting local enterprise with growth potential.

A list of third level/research centre facilities in the region, many of which have received Enterprise Ireland funding to enhance their research capability, include:

- **Athlone Institute of Technology, including**
 - Materials Research Institute
 - Software Research Institute
 - Bioscience Research Institute
 - Midlands Innovation & Research Centre
- **IT Sligo, including**
 - Centre for Environmental Research Innovation & Sustainability
 - Centre for Research in Social Professions
 - Centre of Precision Engineering & Manufacturing
 - Centre for Renewable Energy and sustainable Technologies (CREST)
- **St Angela's College, Sligo, incorporating**
 - Food Technology Centre
- **Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), including**
 - Marine and Freshwater Research Centre
- **NUI, Galway, including**
 - National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Science (NCBES)
 - Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI)
 - Ryan Institute for Marine, Energy & Environment
 - Whitaker Institute for Innovation & Societal Change
 - Lifecourse Institute
 - Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities & Social Studies
 - Technology Transfer Office
- **Teagasc, including**
 - Animal & Grassland Research & Innovation Programmes
 - Crops, Environment & Land Use Programmes
 - Food Research Programmes
 - Rural Economy & Other Development Programmes

Whilst regional availability can assist in accessing timely supports for research and innovation, increased connectivity and globalisation means that the overall aim

should always be to find the best and most appropriate sources of support, even if this is located elsewhere, including internationally.

Some animation work may be required based on recent research which identifies universities in Ireland as being at the bottom of the league in terms of their value to big business (Source: Times Higher Education, 2014). However, given their proximity in the region, the opportunity exists to put resources into developing relationships with these centres to fast-track support to benefit enterprise in the county.

Access to Finance

The new **Government Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship (2014)**, cites access to the various forms of start and growth capital as the major prerequisite to support innovative business with growth potential, particularly if growth prospects and resultant jobs are to be realised. In the initial stages, this finance typically takes the form of promoters funds, coupled with some loan finance and eligible grant aid as part of first round funding, which can include:

- Pre-start-up finance, (e.g. feasibility funds) typically for research and related activities to ensure business ideas/promoters are market-ready
- Start-up / Priming grants, typically applied at an agreed proportion of capital spend and sometimes with a repayable element built in to the funding mix. (e.g. LEO priming grants for micro-enterprise, LEADER grants for rural enterprise, Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Fund etc.)
- Crowd funding, which is becoming increasingly popular through on-line brokering, as a source of initial capital.
- Modest Angel funding for an equity stake of amounts varying from c.10k to 35k

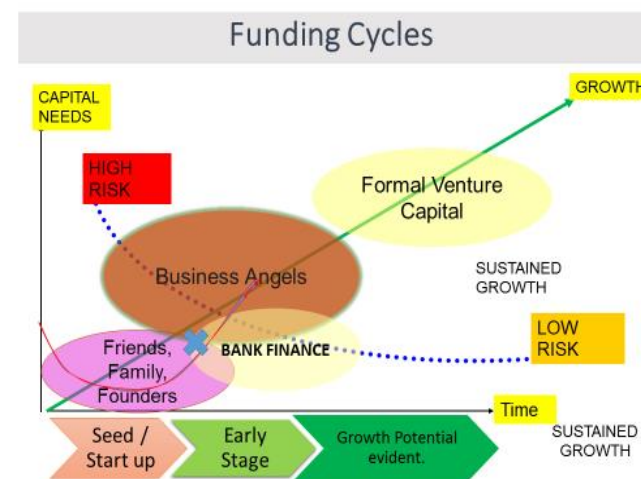
As the business scales up, seed funds, venture capital, second round private equity participation (Angels) and other sources become increasingly important as part of the financial mix, and some of these sources can also bring Knowledge capital, intelligent networks and expertise to leverage the growth potential, improve the absorptive capacity for subsequent rounds of growth funding and push the scaling of the venture. In the case of Co. Roscommon, options include:

- Seed Funds (e.g. Kernel Capital, AIB/Enterprise Equity and WDC Seed funds)

- Venture Capital (Various National and International managed funds, that can also provide knowledge, expertise and market access)
- Private Equity Participation, i.e. Business Angels, which not only provide private equity funding, but also access to thematic and sector based Angel Syndicates through which additional Investment and expertise is available tailored to specific needs. As an example, the Halo Business Angel Partnership have partnered on the setting up of Sector based syndicates in the MedTech, ICT, Food and other sectors.

Whilst first round funding, available through local agencies, is commonly available in Co. Roscommon, the incidences of follow-up finance aimed at scaling up enterprise with growth potential is much more limited. A review of **Seed & Venture Capital Funds** over the past number of years (2007 - 2013) has identified no recent investments in companies registered in Co. Roscommon.

Typical Funding and Investment Sources for High Growth Companies



Facilitating timely and seamless access to these regional, national and international funds can greatly accelerate and enhance the growth potential of enterprises. This requires animation support to access first-round grant aid, as well the follow through supports of professional Project Validation and 'Investor Ready' Business Planning, Business Modelling, Financial Engineering and Stress Testing with financial/tax

planning and Corporate Structuring for follow-up Capital. Intelligent and timely matching of the enterprise needs across the menu of available sources of finance, both Public and Private, helps to ensure an appropriate and optimum funding mix that is company centric and facilitates sustainable growth and job creation. The participation rates of Roscommon based projects and enterprises in this most significant lever of job creation, as identified by Government, is in need of positive discrimination and a concerted effort to bring about a significant growth in these metrics if the much needed jobs are to be delivered.

REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

The global drivers, highlighted earlier, have implications for where and how companies do business. As companies respond to these global drivers of change they make location decisions based on economic and business imperatives. Higher value activities generally depend upon an educated and skilled workforce. Locations are not only considered in terms of relative cost, but in terms of access to skills and talent, access to markets and customers, an innovation capacity and capability and a dynamic environment offering an attractive quality of life – basically a good place to work, live and to do business.

In this context it is important that a location or region provides a competitive environment that stimulates entrepreneurship, enables companies to grow and evolve, and attract and retain investment. The following factors of competitiveness were developed by Forfás to facilitate a competitiveness analysis of Irish regions, incorporating a suite of both quantitative and qualitative indicators:

Enterprise Dynamic	Assessing the enterprise structure, employment and GVA, contribution from agency supported enterprises, sectoral diversity and/or clustering
Skills & Education	An analysis of the skills, educational attainment and education resources
Innovation	Research and development investment and activity, collaborations and inter-linkages between HEIs and firms, between firms and customers
Economic Infrastructure	Transport and broadband infrastructures – recent investments and ongoing infrastructure needs
Quality of Life	Based on factors relevant to the attraction of mobile investment and labour/talent
Leadership and Strategic Capacity	Outlining relevant organisations and indications of locally driven initiatives and outcomes.

Regional Economic Performance

According to the Forfás **Regional Competitiveness Agenda Report for the West Region (2010)**, which includes Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, the region demonstrates a strong entrepreneurial culture with an increase in early stage entrepreneurial activity. However, the highest concentration of new entrepreneurship is located in the main urban centres, particularly Galway city. The region performs well in terms of high value added manufacturing activities, as demonstrated by the significant growth over the past decade in the Medtech sector

in particular, whilst other sectors, including food and chemicals have been relatively consistent. Much of the food production is concentrated in Co. Roscommon.

Within the exporting sectors, the Medtech sector is the most significant employer and has demonstrated the strongest growth since 1998. ICT services and the food sectors are key contributors, although while ICT services have almost doubled in employment numbers, the food sector has declined slightly. There is also evidence of an increasing contribution by internationally traded services activities, although in terms of employment, these services activities account for a relatively small proportion overall. What is also distinctive about the region is that agriculture remains a significant employer at 9%, although at the same time, it has witnessed a contraction over the period.

SECTORAL PRIORITIES

The review of the regional competitiveness of the West region by Forfás identifies key sectors for growth based on existing performance and emerging opportunities. The majority of these are also identified in the **Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014**, and include:

- Knowledge Sectors including:
 - Medical Technologies
 - Software and ICT services
- Tourism
- Renewable Energy / Green Businesses
- Creative Industries and Digital Media
- Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The knowledge sectors listed above are particularly concentrated in Co Galway, especially medical technologies, and to a lesser extent in Mayo. However, there has been some recent growth in medical technologies in Co. Roscommon, identified earlier in this report, including recent job announcements. There is also a presence of medical technologies and ICT businesses in nearby Athlone with potential for spillover.

Based on the socio-economic profile of this predominantly rural county, agri-food, tourism and the creative sector are already more established, whilst the green business sector also offers potential for development.

Profiles for each of these sectors, and strategic priorities pertaining to them, are presented overleaf.

TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED ENTERPRISE

The strategic approach for enterprise development in Ireland, is aimed at driving the smart economy, which focuses on increasing the number of knowledge and technology-based enterprises in the economy. These sectors include ICT and Medical Technologies, in which the West region is developing specific competencies.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Ireland is the second largest exporter of computer and IT services in the world, having successfully attracted eight of the top 10 global ICT companies to establish a significant presence here. The sector accounts for more than €50 billion of exports from Ireland per annum continuing an upward trajectory. Ten of Ireland's top 20 exporters are in the ICT sector. Latest Central CSO figures show that computer services account for 40% of the value of Irish services exports in 2012, creating a new record of €90.2bn.

The sector's traditional players with long-established operations such as Intel, HP, IBM, Microsoft and Apple have now been joined by newer firms at the cutting edge of the Internet and social media revolution, including Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, Amazon, PayPal, eBay and Twitter. Their arrival has firmly positioned Ireland as the internet capital of Europe. Ireland is also the European data centre location of choice for world leaders including IBM, Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, MSN and Adobe and is now poised to become a global cloud centre of excellence. Ireland's worldwide reputation for creativity and communication is also fuelling the interest of games companies, with Big Fish, EA, Havok, DemonWare, PopCap, Zynga, Riot Games and Jolt all having a significant presence here.

Director of ICT Ireland, Paul Sweetman, says the biggest factor behind the strength of the sector here in terms of exporting is the wealth of companies we have. "Multinational companies have chosen Ireland as a location in which to invest in European headquarters and we now have a pedigree in that space. Trailblazers have come in and built critical mass. A strong ecosystem exists made up of a lot of multinational companies as well as indigenous companies which are growing strongly. The sum is greater than its parts, and all companies are focused on exports, hardware and software combined."

Around 75,000 people are employed in 8,000 companies in the ICT sector in Ireland. Demand is currently for computing and electronic engineers, with expansion and replacement demand estimated at 2,500 a year. Meeting this increasing demand is a key requirement for the continued growth, with many of these jobs now being filled by foreign workers coming into Ireland to maintain momentum in this sector.

Local Issues and Opportunities

Despite the strong performance of this sector nationally, there is limited activity in Co. Roscommon, especially at the scale of larger companies, as the majority of these are attracted to urban centres that provides critical mass, access to services and a skilled workforce. Locally, skills deficits in the ICT sector have been identified.

According to research by Swissnex, once basic infrastructural requirements are met (e.g. broadband and incubation infrastructure), the other factors that tend to influence the location decision of ICT and high-tech businesses include:

- The density of people who have expertise / experience in the same industry (e.g. regions with similar businesses and relevant Third Level Institutions and Technology Centres often serve as magnets to attract such companies). See Galway Technology Centre Case Study overleaf as a good example
- Availability of smart capital (i.e. investors who have experience of the industry)
- The quality of life in the area
- An attractive environment that encourages and supports entrepreneurship

To overcome these issues, and to maximise the opportunities to develop the ICT sector in Co. Roscommon, the strategic focus should be placed on the following:

- Maximise access to fibre broadband and other hi-speed networks
- Develop a Fibre-enabled Technology Centre, modelled on other successful centres, to serve as a magnet that can lead to critical mass in the sector
- Provide local skills training courses using available sources to address gaps
- Foster ICT and software development skills from an early age
- Foster ICT graduate recruitment/retention in the local economy
- Utilise 'ambassadors', from local enterprise and the wide Roscommon diaspora, to encourage ICT enterprise to locate in the county
- Develop links with appropriate third level institutions / research centres to foster and support the sector
- Facilitate access to investment capital to support high-growth ICT enterprise

Measures to deliver on these strategic areas are included in the Sectoral Action Plans, presented later in this report.



Case Study - Galway Technology Centre (GTC)



Galway Technology Centre (GTC) is a 50,000 sq. ft. incubator and innovation site having one of the biggest ICT Clusters in Ireland. The Centre comprises state-of-the-art connectivity and imaginative optimisation and use of accommodation. The cluster site comprises a vertical approach to graduation involving training, a gestation function, incubation and graduation based on global best practice models.

The GTC was originally established in 1994 following the collapse of Digital Corporation's Manufacturing Plant in Mervue, which resulted in substantial unemployment in Galway at the time. The aim of the centre was to develop an incubation space to support the emergence of "cold spin-outs" arising from this closure and to maximise the ICT / technology talent in the area.

Pioneered by Galway Chamber of Commerce and WestBIC, who secured investment and loan finance for the project, the Centre opened initially with 7 companies employing 26 people and continued to grow and service an ever expanding ICT sector. By the year 2000, over 30 companies had moved through the GTC incubating process, generating over 300 jobs in the process. In response to the need for better infrastructure and services, the centre was completely re-developed into a 50,000 sq. ft. modern, state of the art Technology Centre that can house up to 29 SMEs on site.

Actively supported by its founding partners, along with the CEB (LEO) and Enterprise Ireland, the Centre provides flexible, high quality, serviced office space for early stage and developing enterprises. The range of units are designed to

Medical Technologies (MedTech)

Ireland's medical technology (Medtech) sector has evolved into one of the leading clusters for medical devices and diagnostic products globally. Eight of the world's 10 largest medical device companies are located in Ireland, with Europe's premier cluster of Medtech companies based in the Galway region. Examples of global companies with substantial operations include Abbott, Bayer, Becton Dickinson, Boston Scientific, Johnson & Johnson, Guidant, Medtronic and Stryker. According to Enterprise Ireland, 50% of the companies in the sector are indigenous to Ireland.

The sector employs over 25,000 people in 250 companies with exports to the value of €7.9bn. This is the highest number of people working in the industry in any country in Europe, per head of population. At a European level, there are almost 22,500 medical technology companies, employing nearly 500,000 employees, with annual sales of €95bn.

The sector is involved in developing, manufacturing and marketing a diverse range of products and services from disposable plastic and wound care products to precision metal implants including pacemakers to micro-electronic devices, orthopaedic implants, diagnostics, contact lenses and stents. Exports of medical devices and diagnostics products now represent 8.5% of Ireland's total merchandise exports, with strong future growth prospects.

Over half of the medical technologies companies based in Ireland have dedicated R&D facilities. This continued investment has stimulated the emergence of an indigenous cluster of over 100 innovation-led companies along the entire Medtech value chain - from R&D intensive technologies, to proprietary products, contract design and manufacturing, packaging and sterilisation. This has positioned Ireland as a world-class centre of excellence for medical devices.

The Irish government has identified the medical technology sector as one of the key drivers of industrial growth for the future and provides a wide range of supports to encourage and foster this growth. The Irish Government committed to an €8.2 billion investment in science and technology research up until 2013, funding centres of excellence with a strong focus on Medtech research centres to support the sector,

leaving Ireland well placed to capitalise on the growing global market for medical technology products and services.

Local Issues and Opportunities

Similar to ICT, there is lesser activity in this sector than other more established regions that have developed an expertise in this field. However, there is a recognised medical technologies cluster located in Galway city with potential for spill-over. As a result Harmac, (employing almost 300 people), is located in Castlerea serving some of these companies via sub-contracted manufacturing. Alkermes is located in Monksland (on the former Elan site), whilst Vistamed has a manufacturing facility in Rooskey and in nearby Carrick-On-Shannon. Recent announcements include the expansion of Vistamed operations, as well as new proposals by Jazz Pharmaceuticals (projected 50 jobs) and Alexion Pharmaceuticals (40 jobs), both locating in Monksland.

Similar to other technology sectors, there are a number of factors that can accelerate the creation and growth of new enterprises in this sector, including

- Provision of the necessary support infrastructure and services
- Access to sufficient supply of relevant skills
- Development of critical mass in the sector
- Attractive business environment and quality of life issues

The potential to achieve success in this sector would appear to be best located within the Monksland catchment where there is a nucleus of similar companies, with additional Medtech enterprises located in nearby Athlone and in Galway within easy reach on the M6 motorway, leading to clustering and spillover effects.

Strategic initiatives to address the issues above include:

- Develop key enabling infrastructure, including Medtech incubation, (See Case Study opposite), that can serve to attract new Medtech enterprise
- Develop links with appropriate third level institutions / research centres to foster and support the sector
- Identify skills gaps and address them with focused programmes through Momentum, Springboard, Skillnets, ETB's etc
- Utilise 'ambassadors', from amongst local companies and the wider diaspora, to encourage Med-tech enterprise to locate in the area
- Foster appropriate graduate recruitment/retention in the local economy to provide necessary skills base

- Foster access to investment capital to support Medtech enterprises

A Sectoral Action Plan to deal with these issues is included later in this report.

Case Study – Key Enabling Technologies to Attract Knowledge Industry

Plarmaplaz Technology Park Ltd was launched in Monksland in 2005 to help pharma and Medtech companies, achieve their business potential in Ireland.

The park was set up by a former Elan executive, which aimed to house foreign pharmaceutical companies seeking to set up a base in Ireland, whilst also providing support services for fostering indigenous enterprise. It was hoped that it would facilitate employment of up to 300 people.



The property comprises a site area approximately 4.41 hectares (10.9 acres).in an excellent location close to M6 Dublin to Galway motorway.

The proposed development was for a seven wing building arranged in a circular feeding into a central core area, along with a core administrative building. The core building was to extend to approximately 1,641 sq. m. with each wing varying in size from 800 to 855 sq. m. to support enterprise in the pharma and medical sectors.

As a result of the Financial Crisis, the company that was set up to develop and manage the project ran into financial difficulties, and the development has been sold recently to a private property company. However, the initiative is an example of what may be possible, if such a targeted initiative was developed with an appropriate business model, and ideally implemented in a collaborative way across relevant stakeholders, to maximise the potential for success.

TOURISM

Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industry, generating in excess of 4% of GNP and employing approximately 200,000 people. In 2013, an estimated 8 million overseas visitors came to the island of Ireland, delivering revenue of approximately €3.64 billion. Overseas tourism business counts for 59% of all tourism revenue.

Continuing this trend, the overall sentiment for travel into Ireland is very positive. This year, Tourism Ireland, Ireland's tourism marketing body, has placed a major focus on promoting the Wild Atlantic Way along the West Coast and the Causeway Coastal Route in the North, along with an emphasis on cultural festivals (e.g. Limerick City of Culture) and other events throughout the year. Latest figures from the CSO shows that overseas arrivals have increased by 9.4% for the first 8 months of 2014, with growth recorded from all market areas, including Britain (+9%), North America (+13%), Mainland Europe (+7%) and Long Haul markets (+15%).

As an example of its profile globally, Ireland received the "Best Potential Destination" Award 2014, by Ctrip, China's largest online travel agent, whilst the renowned **"Lonely Planet" Best in Travel Guide 2015**, has placed Ireland in the Top 10 destinations to visit in 2015 (listed at No. 5), citing the Wild Atlantic Way as one of the highlights, "with stunning scenery and traditions still intact". Additionally, Tourism Ireland received four Awards at the prestigious CLIO International Advertising Awards Ceremony in New York in October 2014, for its Wild Atlantic Way Media Campaign.

Local Issues and Opportunities

Roscommon is perceived as having significant tourism potential. Centrally located in the West of Ireland, it has a range of natural and built attractions and a variety of festivals and events aimed at attracting visitors to the county. Highlights include Lough Key Forest & Activity Park, Strokestown Park House & Famine Museum, Arigna Mining Experience and Rathcroghan Celtic Royal Site, the oldest and largest royal site in Europe. It also has the longest border with the river Shannon amongst the ten counties the river passes through, providing further tourism potential.

However, Roscommon is often perceived as a county that visitors "pass through" en route to other destinations, especially coastal counties. As an inland county, with some good attractions but more limited in terms of tourism accommodation, the

county has consistently underperformed relative to other counties, including the West region to which it belongs from a tourism promotion perspective.

The latest official tourism figures reveal the following:

- Roscommon received 42,000 visitors in 2012, representing just 0.66% of overseas visitors to Ireland, and 3.6% of visitors to the west region, despite Roscommon having 14% of the population and 18% of the West region land mass.
- This generated revenue of €19m for the county, representing just 0.64% of national tourism revenue and 5.6% of west region revenue.

Current visitors to Roscommon have a VFR profile (visiting friends and relatives), as opposed to dedicated "holidaymakers", reflecting the profile of most visitors to inland counties, in contrast to coastal counties and urban centres, which attract far more holidaymakers. As such, Roscommon remains a small part of the overall tourism market, relative to its size, population and potential.

A Tourism Development Strategy has been in place since 2010, implemented by the Roscommon Tourism Action Group (RTAG) which plays a key role in tourism development in the county, representing the local authority, tourism agencies, the public and private sectors. The Tourism Strategy is being updated to cover the next time period. The development and delivery of a local tourism strategy, supported by the trade is an important development for the tourism sector, which helps to focus on specific issues and actions to be undertaken. Additionally, a Community Tourism Network (CTN) is in place, which aims to develop and promote Roscommon tourism in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders at grassroots level in the community.

Rather than duplicating the work of these groups, this report identifies the potential for tourism development in general, with a focus on the following headline items:

- Branding and marketing, including marketing materials, signage, web presence, collaborative marketing approaches and funding
- Development of new attractions where potential is identified
- Development and Promotion of the outdoor tourism product, including cycling, walking and other activities
- Development of Shannon Corridor Flagship initiative, similar to Wild Atlantic Way, and the Lough Derg Experience (profiled overleaf), including collaborative development and marketing
- Development and promotion of Festivals and Events
- Developing linkages with craft and food sectors, including collaborative development opportunities.

Headline Actions to deliver on these strategic areas are detailed later in this report.

Case Study - Inland Waterways Tourism Development

Lough Derg Collaborative Development Strategy



A major four year plan was recently launched - 'A Roadmap for Experience Development and Destination Marketing, 2014-2017', outlining the future economic development and marketing of the Lough Derg area as a tourism destination.

The overall vision is to develop Lough Derg as a key destination for superb water based activities, combined with a range of high quality walking, cycling, heritage, culture and food experiences that will entice the domestic and international visitors to stay longer. This will be achieved through joint co-operation of all tourism stakeholders in the development and marketing of their area under the "Lakelands – Lough Derg" identity.

The plan aims to create a 'Lough Derg Experience' by maintaining and improving tourism visitor services, recreational facilities and environmental amenities around the lake and Southern part of the River Shannon. It also includes the provision of marina and tourism related developments along the shoreline of Lough Derg as well as the appointment of a designated Tourism Co-ordinator for the area.

The extensive plan was developed by Fáilte Ireland and the Lough Derg Marketing Strategy Group in conjunction with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and local community. It was a beneficiary of EU funding through the Interreg IVC TRAP programme, based on the transfer of good practices across Europe in integrated management development and promotion of aquatic and cultural heritage and landscape management.

Some of the tourism attractions being targeted by the plan include:

- A Waterpark at University of Limerick Activities Centre
- Lough Derg Canoe/Kayak Trail
- Eco-Park in Portumna
- Discovery point and trailhead at the Portroe lookout

Describing the project, Paul Keeley, Director of Enterprise Development, Fáilte Ireland said,

"The collaborative approach adopted in the development and planned roll out of this plan will be key to its success. Previous experience from other parts of Ireland shows that such an approach does deliver results and Fáilte Ireland look forward to working with members of the LDMSG and the Tourism Co-Ordinator to improve existing facilities and amenities

GREEN BUSINESS

There is a major transformation underway in energy markets and energy supply that presents challenges and opportunities, with the global energy sector forecast to grow significantly in the coming years. What is particularly significant about the energy/renewables sector is that it is largely regionally dispersed. This presents opportunities in two ways:

- Production of energy using alternative sources including biomass, wind, solar and wave, based on viable commercialisation
- Management of energy consumption, enabled by new technologies and products such as smart metering etc.

Opportunities exist in R&D, design, manufacture and installation of advanced infrastructure and equipment, development and application of new technologies, project management, engineering services, training, health & safety, maintenance and operational management of equipment and infrastructure.

Other 'green' business opportunities include the application of new technologies in materials recycling/transformation and the potential for 'greening' of existing businesses, to reduce energy costs and to gain competitive advantage, as identified in the report of the **High Level Action Group on Green Enterprise (2011)**.

Local Issues and Opportunities

Of particular relevance to Co. Roscommon in the west region of Ireland is energy production from wind and biomass, recycling and materials recovery/ transformation as well as the application of new technologies, discussed below

Wind Energy: A study by the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) estimates that Ireland could increase wind energy production from current levels of 1,320MW to 7,800MW over the period to 2020, to meet its renewables target. The study envisages that much of this will be produced in the West of Ireland, both offshore and on-shore where the environment is less hostile, with production increasing by up to 27 times. With significant growth potential, the contribution of the West region, including Co. Roscommon, to national wind energy, is anticipated to double, from 12% to 24% (by a total of 881MW) by 2020. One of the key issues is the need to enhance and/or develop the national grid network in the region. Capital investments in the most appropriate locations need to be prioritised. At the same time, given the

natural habitat and environment in the West region, the planning and delivery of such infrastructures will likely be a significant challenge.

Biomass Potential: Research by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Western Development Commission (WDC) highlights the potential for developing the biomass/wood energy sector. The west region has a significant forestry resource (11.5% of the land area). The development of the wood energy sector would result in economic benefits including increased viability of existing forests, reduced oil dependence; supply of indigenous, sustainable fuel and creation of enterprise/employment opportunities in areas experiencing agricultural decline. The analysis points to the viability of wood heating systems, specifically where fuel savings justify the capital investment. Of specific interest is the localised nature of supply and demand required to make such systems economically viable, providing opportunities for local employment, including farm-based biomass production.

Application of New Technologies: As a growing sector, there are many opportunities for the application of new technologies to develop products and services to meet identified needs, including smart-energy and recycling/material recovery initiatives. Possibilities exist to transfer in products/technology from other areas, as well as to design/develop new products in conjunction with research centres in the region, with expertise in these sectors (e.g CREST facility at IT Sligo).

To maximise the opportunities in the green business sector in the county, the strategic focus should be placed on the following:

- Implementation of a wind energy policy that balances commercial interests with ecological concerns
- Support for biomass-fuelled Heat/CHP projects of sufficient scale / critical mass to develop the marketplace for local biomass production
- Supply Chain development so that supply of biomass is linked to demand
- Information/training and capacity building in the sector with a focus on maximising employment creation potential.
- Accelerator programmes to encourage new green enterprise with a focus on development and application of new technologies
- Support for materials recycling, recovery and transformation
- Support for the 'greening' of existing businesses through implementation of cost saving measures, including behavioural and investment projects.

Actions to deal with these strategic issues accompany this report.

CREATIVE (CRAFT) SECTOR

The Creative sector is defined here as those businesses involved in creative application, including traditional and modern craft and design enterprises with tangible consumer products as their main output.

To avoid overlap, it does not include creative expression activities, which is more Arts based including music, visual and performing arts as well as service-based video, film and photography. Nor does it include digital media and related technology based business, which are captured under the ICT profile in this document, given their greater identity with that sector.

Various studies have aimed to identify the size and scale of the craft sector in Ireland. Whilst there are 2,399 craft enterprises registered with the Design & Craft Council of Ireland (DCCOI) there are known to be many more craft enterprises in operation. The main categories registered with DCCOI include textiles (24%), jewellery (16%) and ceramics (16%). The Indecon **Creative Clusters (2013)** Report, estimates there were 5,351 persons employed in craft businesses in 2012, the majority of whom are located in rural areas and much of them in the West of Ireland. In Co. Roscommon, local databases suggest that there are at least 50 active craft enterprises at present.

The sector is dominated by micro-enterprises, often sole-traders, with very low levels of income (70% earn less than €25,000) according to Indecon research, mostly sold directly from the studio or through shops/galleries, although on-line sales are increasing.

Craft enterprises are important in their own right, but also in terms of their impact and contribution to local culture, heritage and tourism, and the cross-over potential that can be achieved.

Indecon has listed a number of actions to secure the potential of craft enterprises:

- Measures to assist existing micro craft businesses to achieve some of the benefits of economies of scale
- Programme to assist the development of a limited number of craft businesses of scale
- Attraction of high potential start-up craft enterprises
- Measures to support new, commercially focused, craft makers.

Leitrim Design House is a good example of a successful initiative that actively supports and promotes craft enterprise in a rural region, with impressive results. (See Case Study overleaf).

Case Study – Flagship Initiative to Support the Craft Sector



Leitrim stands out as one of the counties that has achieved considerable success in supporting the craft sector, particularly through Leitrim Design House, a flagship initiative, established in 2000, as an entrepreneurial response to the needs of local craftspeople, furniture-makers, and artists for development support, including a centrally located facility to exhibit, market and sell their work.

Leitrim Design House is a not-for-profit organisation, essentially an innovative social enterprise in itself, part-funded by Pobal under its Community Service Programme with support from Leitrim Local Enterprise Office, committed to supporting the development and success of designer/makers and artists working in the creative sector.

A board of management was appointed, retail outlet space provided and economies of scale achieved that would not have been possible to achieve as individual producers. The centre occupies a 1200 sq. ft. unit comprising a dedicated showcase/retail outlet and exhibition facility, on the ground floor of the Dock Art Centre, Carrick-on-Shannon. Importantly, rooms are available for training programmes, networking meetings and workshops, which form the core training and development support for the craft sector, to achieve the standards of excellence set out for this growth sector in the local economy. Funding is sought from a variety of sources in order to deliver these programmes, which are designed and delivered based on client needs, including the Design and Craft Council of Ireland (DCCOI), the Local Enterprise Office and EU programme funding.

The Retail Gallery showcases contemporary jewellery, ceramics, glass, textiles, limited edition prints, and original artwork, promoting the excellence of modern Irish craftsmanship. As well as showcasing the work of almost 100 craftspeople from 45 member companies, the Design House also acts as an advice centre for its members. It also provides the opportunity for members of the public to become involved in craft and design through workshops, interactive exhibitions and Meet the Maker events.

Testament to its success, Co. Leitrim now boasts 40 members of the Design and Craft Council of Ireland, by far the highest number per capita amongst the 26 counties. The

Local Issues and Opportunities in the Craft Sector

The craft sector in Roscommon is relatively small, but significant in terms of its contribution to the overall tourism, culture and heritage of the area. However, only 17 craft enterprises from the county are registered with the Design & Craft Council of Ireland (the second lowest after neighbouring Co. Longford) despite there being many more craft producers located in the county. This is in contrast to other counties, e.g. Leitrim, with 40 registered which has a similar profile to Roscommon but just half the population. Other neighbouring counties include Mayo with 92 and Galway with 145 registrations (2012 figures). Of the 2,399 registered with DCCOI, the share of Roscommon registrations is just 0.7%, indicating the huge scope for improvement, particularly given the many supports provided by DCCOI to registered members and registered craft networks. Additionally, 2015 is the Year of Irish Design, promoted by DCCOI, which may provide scope to access additional funding for specific activities.

Strategic initiatives to support and develop the sector include:

- Develop an up-to-date database of craft enterprises in the county for information dissemination purposes
- Support with DCCOI registration for eligible members and networks
- Undertake product and business development training to increase capacity and upskill craft workers so they operate to an agreed high standard
- Develop and promote a common identity once quality standards are reached
- Create linkages with nearby Leitrim Design House to develop critical mass and authenticity for the sector locally
- Deliver a range of other craft support programmes, in conjunction with DCCOI and other organisations where possible
- Provide sector-specific expertise through a dedicated “Innovation House” initiative
- Foster the development of on-line promotion/trading across the craft sector
- Develop suitable craft/display units, ideally with a “craft village” format to anchor and promote the craft sector in the county
- Identify and implement suitable promotional opportunities at regional, national and international levels

- Identify and implement greater links with tourism sector, including trails, display opportunities and other complimentary activities

A Sectoral Action Plan to deliver on these strategic areas is detailed later in this report.

AGRI FOOD SECTOR

Ensuring the availability of and access to sufficient safe and nutritious food now and in the future is a key priority of the European Commission that impacts all EU citizens. At the same time the production and processing of food is a key economic activity providing jobs, skills and training, attracting investment, supporting rural and urban economies and also shaping landscapes.

The economic and strategic importance of the agri-food sector is reflected in the following figures;

- Europe’s food and drink industry is the largest manufacturing industry in the EU, in 2010 it generated an annual turnover of EUR 956 billion, almost half by SME’s, sustaining over four million jobs
- Agricultural exports in 2011 were worth EUR 105 billion, or 7% of the total value of EU exports
- The whole agri-food sector employs 17 million people across the EU.

Given the economic scale of the food sector with strong participation of SMEs and the potential gains from research and innovation, there is a strong focus in Europe 2020 on supporting the food sector. Priority themes include:

- Develop competitive and resource-efficient aquatic and terrestrial food production systems covering
- Eco-intensification of production
- Sustainable management of natural resources
- Technologies for a sustainable food chain
- Safe foods and healthy diets for all; and
- A global food security system, including a recognition of the contribution of the small farming sector within the local food supply chain.

In Ireland, the **Food Harvest 2020 Strategy** highlights the strength of the agri-food sector, with an annual output of €24 billion and employing 150,000 people, with a significant weighting of activity in rural communities. Whilst facing a number of challenges, this strategy identifies the huge opportunity for the Irish agri-food sector to grow and prosper sustainably through the delivery of high quality, safe and

naturally based produce. It sets ambitious targets for growth in primary production (33%), added value products (40%) as well as increasing exports by 42% by 2020, through an overall approach of “acting smart, thinking green and achieving growth.

Local Issues and Opportunities in the Agri-Food Sector

Roscommon already has a cohort of food companies generating significant employment, including notable enterprises in meat and dairy products, along with bakery and confectionary ranges. However, it does not have the same critical mass of added value producers as other more recognised food regions (e.g. Cork, Kerry) whilst the number of newer entrants locating in the county has been limited. This is in contrast to other locations, that have successfully attracted new food/drink producers through the provision of food incubation facilities as identified in Bord Bia’s **Food Incubation Centres Report (2013)**. For example, in recent times, many regional food projects have been referred to Drumshanbo Food Hub in Leitrim to avail of incubation support, and indeed many of the existing food enterprises located there originated from other areas but have moved to avail of suitable food units to meet their needs.

Meanwhile, fledgling food networks are in place in neighbouring regions, including the Midlands, which has a similar profile and encounters similar issues of capacity, critical mass, barriers to entry and distribution in an increasingly monopolistic marketplace.

To pro-actively achieve growth in this sector, development support is required both for existing companies as well as to encourage new start-ups, including:

- Provide food incubation infrastructure (food units, kitchens, training etc.)
- Animation and entrepreneurship programmes, including adding value to food, forestry, agri-technologies and farm diversification opportunities
- Linkages with existing large companies to lever their support
- Collaborative approaches with neighbouring regions to develop, grow and market food enterprises
- Facilitate enhanced linkages with relevant third level/research/technology centres, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Foster graduate recruitment/placement to foster innovation
- Management development training and capacity building programmes for existing companies with growth potential

- Provision of experienced sectoral expertise, taking a virtual “Innovation House” approach, to identify opportunities and facilitate business growth
- Support for substantial and sustainable farmers markets.

- Identification and development of local supply chain/distribution models to suit the needs of food enterprises

Actions to deliver on these strategic areas are detailed later in this report.

Case Study – The Food Hub: Successful Food Incubation in Rural Regions



Drumshanbo Co. Leitrim is home to a world class state of the art food production facility called **The Food Hub**, spread over 32,000 sq. ft. with 14 individual food units.

The premises was originally home to the well-known Lairds jam factory in the 1980's, producing the renowned Bo Peep jams. At one point Lairds was producing over 30 tonnes of jam and marmalade per each eight hour shift and its products were gracing breakfast tables in countries throughout Europe and the Middle East as well as the USA and Canada.

The closure of the premises in 1998 resulted in the loss of 100 jobs in the community. It then lay idle for a number of years, underscoring a lack of employment growth and economic development in the area. The not for profit community group Drumshanbo Community Council took the initiative, seeking to restore the premises as a state of the art specialist food incubation centre, not only unique to the area but as one-of-its kind in the country.

Taking a collaborative approach, financial backing was received from key stakeholders such as International Fund for Ireland, Arigna LEADER, Clár, Enterprise Ireland, Interreg IIIA, Leitrim County Enterprise Board, Green Box, Bord Bia, Musgrave Group, Leitrim County Council and Peace II funding. The final result is an impressive 14 unit world class food production facility, fully compliant with the most stringent environmental health regulations. The units have been designed to address the needs of two distinct markets:

- Low-cost market entry for new food enterprises
- Existing businesses seeking increased production capacity at a competitive rate.

Occupying an area of 32,000 sq. ft., the premises includes 26,000 sq. ft. of food production space and 6,000 sq. ft. of office space. The production space spans 14 units varying in size, from 600 sq. ft. for new start-ups/micro-enterprises, up to 3,100 sq. ft. for larger and more established companies.

Along with the individual food units, finished to a high specification, the Food Hub also offers important support services to assist in developing the food sector. It is home to Ireland's first time share community production kitchen, which acts as an important first step for emerging food enterprises. The facility doubles as a training kitchen for specialist food and hospitality training which has proven to be particularly successful.

Today, the food hub provides employment for 35 people across 5 tenants companies, including cheese production, Surf Seeds (featured on Dragon's Den), ready meals and smoked meats, with a further two high potential start up projects underway, a micro-brewery and a distillery, including visitor facilities, projected to generate a further 26 jobs.

SUPPORTING RURAL ENTERPRISE

Roscommon is predominantly a rural county, with the economy comprised of many rural-based enterprise, as well as farm-based and farm diversification entities, the totality of which makes up a significant proportion of economic activity in the area. Indeed, the County Development Plan identifies the issues of small farm sizes and related viability concerns. Therefore measures to support farm diversification and other opportunities are necessary to maintain the fabric of the rural economy.

The nature of rural enterprise means these can have specific needs, which require support to assist them to develop and grow in a sustainable way. A range of issues emerged from the enterprise survey that was undertaken, including:

- Issues regarding skills deficits
- Lack of resources to plan/grow their businesses
- Poor marketing focus and access to markets
- Limited web presence/on-line trading
- Lack of administrative capacity/support
- Lack of innovation experience/expertise

Supporting growth and Innovation in Rural Enterprise

There are some possibilities to support rural enterprise in a collective way, to overcome the issues identified above. These include:

- Potential for Shared Service Centre to provide administration and marketing support for a cohort of these enterprise (e.g. Dedicated HR resource allocated to provide admin support - secretariat, bookkeeping, etc. as well as assistance with developing and maintaining a marketing/web-presence etc.)
- Maintaining and further developing the successful Roscommon Innovation House Initiative for rural enterprise, which facilitated the identification of growth opportunities and implementation of innovation projects in rural/micro-enterprise and accessing finance to implement these as part of the recent RDP/LEADER programme in the county. (See Case Study overleaf).

- Fostering the emergence and growth of new rural enterprises through animation and training support, linked to the support services proposed above.
- Promoting graduate recruitment/placement opportunities to the more developed enterprises in this cohort, to introduce new ideas and enhance innovation capacity.



Case Study - Supporting Innovation in Rural Enterprise

Originally conceived from EU best practice for supporting the early stages of innovation in new enterprise proposals, Roscommon Innovation House is a client-centred innovation support initiative for rural enterprise in Co. Roscommon; delivered through a partnership between WestBIC, Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Roscommon CEB and other stakeholders.

As part of the move towards a knowledge-based economy and a greater focus on innovation in enterprise, the provision of innovation advice and support is regarded as an important step for improving the innovation capacity and capability of micro-enterprises so that they can achieve their growth potential. Roscommon Innovation House aims to address these issues in a pro-active manner using a partnership approach across participating agencies.

The objective is to provide the best possible innovation advice and support from experienced professionals for new/existing entrepreneurs, in a seamless one-stop-shop format across all relevant agencies, utilising existing resources where possible as well as providing access to new innovation experts where necessary.

A client-centred approach is adopted throughout, to ensure that specific needs are identified and addressed in the most efficient manner possible, with the best professional advice and assistance sourced to support innovation in eligible enterprises.

The overall aim is to foster the development and growth of new and existing enterprises through focused innovation support. The seamless one-stop-shop adopted by Roscommon Innovation House ensures that innovation assistance is provided by experts to eligible enterprises in a timely manner. This also ensures that all enterprises have equal knowledge and access to supports that are available to them and this support is fast-tracked where possible.

In Roscommon, following a successful pilot phase, Roscommon Innovation House was funded by Roscommon LEADER Partnership to support innovation in rural enterprise projects under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Managed by WestBIC, in total, 100 clients/enterprises benefited from over 150 innovation expert sessions. In terms of KPI's, the outputs of the most recent phase funded by Roscommon LEADER Partnership, show that 58 clients received support through 95 Innovation Support sessions, of which 25% successfully submitted LEADER grant applications to further pursue their enterprise/innovation project and a further 12.5% were assisted with other commercialisation routes to develop their proposals. This demonstrates the high successful output that can be achieved, when targeted innovation supports are put in

These issues are included within the Sectoral Action Plans later in this Report.

ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The importance of the social enterprise sector in Ireland and its potential is evident from its inclusion in the Action Plan for Jobs 2014. It is also listed as one of the priority areas for Enterprise Development in the LEADER Measure of *Ireland's Draft Rural Development Programme 2014-2020*.

Similar to many rural counties, Co. Roscommon has a strong Social Enterprise presence, working within the wider social economy, through community enterprises and other initiatives, undertaking essential local activities including care for the elderly, childcare, community initiatives, sports projects, tourism development and other services. Collectively, the sector employs a significant amount of people, both full-time and part-time to suit their needs.

In the context of this report, it is noted that Social Enterprises can play an important role, particularly in filling gaps not taken up by the private sector, both to deliver specific services as well as to play important local co-ordinating roles in developing and supporting various sectors. For example, in Roscommon the tourism sector includes a number of community/social enterprises, including:

- Roscommon Community Tourism Network to promote tourism in the county
- Una Bhan community tourism in Boyle
- Cruachai Ai Visitor Centre (Tulsk Action Group)
- Suck Valley Visitor Centre and Way-marked walks (Suck Valley Co-Op)
- TUS programme to support farmers markets, walking routes etc.

Where social enterprises can play a role in filling such gaps, then support should be provided to animate the process, especially towards developing sustainable business models for these entities. Support with identifying and accessing eligible funding sources should be provided, whilst developing the social innovation potential is also worth considering as part of developing a sustainable social enterprise sector.

Successful supports provided through Roscommon LEADER Partnership for the social enterprise sector as well as the rural enterprise sector, should be built upon to further develop these aspects of the local economy in a viable and sustainable way.

REGIONAL PARTNERING & EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Co. Roscommon is a rural county that is not self-sufficient in terms of enterprise infrastructure, enablers and other resources that can foster and support innovative enterprise. It is also impacted by capacity and resource issues. However, taking a more external view, there are many other sources of support and resources, and learning that can be derived from a range of successful initiatives undertaken in regions with a similar profile, which can provide opportunities for Roscommon to benefit, including the adoption of collaborative approaches. This may be achieved through partnering at regional, national or EU levels, to suit specific needs.

REGIONAL PARTNERING

During the consultation phase, a number of opportunities were explored to best leverage support for local enterprise and business sectors through collaborative approaches with regional partners. These include a range of innovation supports as well as sector-specific initiatives, with examples discussed below.

Leveraging Support from Third Level / Research Centres

Whilst there is no third level facility in the county, there are five third level institutions with associated research centres in the region, all of which include Roscommon within their catchment. Consultations were held with all of these, with positive commitments received to engage in collaborative actions and support for enterprise. For example, a Springboard application to support the food sector was submitted by St. Angela's College, with support from relevant stakeholders in Co. Roscommon, whilst other opportunities, including research support, graduate placement and other possibilities are being explored.

Regional Partners in the Creative / Craft Sector

By their nature, most craft enterprises need specific support in order to grow in a viable and sustainable manner. Consultation with the Design and Craft Council of Ireland has identified a wide range of supports available to individual craft enterprises as well as through collective network initiatives. Additionally, consultations were held with the stakeholders of the successful Leitrim Design House Initiative, which provides a range of supports as well as exhibition space for craft clients. There are opportunities to learn from this initiative in how best to support the craft sector locally as well as to undertake collaborative activities to achieve critical mass and pool resources to benefit the craft sector across the region.

Collaborative Potential in Food Sector

Roscommon boasts a few large food companies (e.g. Kepak, Aurivo etc.), mostly involved with primary processing, as well as an array of smaller added value food producers. However, it is acknowledged that market entry into the food sector is challenging, both in terms of expensive set-up costs as well as accessing markets due to perceived monopolistic structures in the sector. As a result there have been limited new entrants locally in recent years.

Other nearby regions suffer from the same issues. To support the sector in midland counties, a food network initiative is in place. Positive discussions have taken place with midlandsireland.ie regarding the inclusion of Co. Roscommon in this network which can provide benefits in terms of development and marketing support.

Additionally, discussions with large food companies in the county have resulted in their support for developing the food sector, in which they have indicated they may be able to participate. Issues discussed included the need for incubation space, new food entrepreneurship, adding value to output and assessing markets. Further engagement may leverage important resources to support the food sector locally.

Collaborative Opportunities to develop Tourism Sector

The region has substantial tourism potential if it can be harnessed correctly, evident from the phenomenal success of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. However, Roscommon tourism suffers from its inland status, along with other counties, which require a different approach to achieve results in this sector. Consultation with neighbouring counties has identified the same issues as in Co. Roscommon, and the possibilities of working together have been discussed. This collaborative approach provides the best opportunity to maximise the tourism potential by providing resources to develop initiatives of scale to support the tourism sector the region.

In particular, the majestic river Shannon that flows down through the centre of Ireland, along with the abundance of lakes in the region offers similar development potential. As an example, the Lough Derg development initiative at the southern end of the river Shannon demonstrates the opportunities for collaborative development and promotion (see Case Study), in conjunction with local stakeholders and Waterways Ireland.

These potential collaborative partnership approaches are incorporated into the overall development strategy for the county.

EU PARTNERING

Within the EU context, part of the strategy process includes building in elements that boost sustainability and longer term cross-fertilisation of innovative ideas for continued development of support systems and measures to underpin the Innovation agenda for the county into the future. From discussions with the County Council and Partners, the international dimension of this is viewed as important to enable the Partners in the county to build relationships with similar regions in other EU Member States in order to facilitate knowledge transfer to address issues of disadvantage and promote development measures with a wider scope.

For County Roscommon the key benchmarking issues for profiling purposes include;

- The rural, inland nature of the county
- Population distribution indices
- Negative migration/brain drain to urban clusters, and
- Absence of Innovation enablers

Using the 'clearing house' services of the Brussels based executive of the European BIC Network (EBN), some Regions were identified as having similar issues and problems that need innovative solutions. Bi-lateral, exploratory discussions with the EBN Members in those Regions focussed on finding some comparable data and a positive reaction to more permanent relationships. This approach worked particularly well in the case of the City and Province of Burgos, Spain which seems to be experiencing similar problems as Co. Roscommon. A summary profile of the Region is included in Appendix V, which supports the case for such EU partnering to leverage funding support to deal with similar economic problems for mutual benefit.

In parallel, work is underway with EU partners for a new EU Interregional co-operation proposal entitled 'LAND', which aims to support the development of rural areas through fostering and promoting appropriate land use to benefit the region. This proposal, profiled opposite, is ideally suited to the rural nature of Co. Roscommon and the other partner regions, through which shared learning and transfer of experience can be achieved and pilot initiatives undertaken to benefit the local economy.

Leveraging H2020 Funding

As discussed, H2020 offers significant funding opportunities to support innovative SME's. Results from the first calls for projects reveals that Ireland had the highest

success rate, with 20% of applicants successful in receiving funding. By developing the appropriate partnerships with the necessary expertise, the funding possibilities from this and other EU sources may be maximised.

As an example of the focused support that may be accessed through this source, at a regional level, WestBIC is a partner in two current FP7 innovation projects – (the forerunner to H2020), themed as follows:

- Programme to Support the Internationalisation of ICT companies
- Programme to Support the social innovation potential of SME's
- Additionally, WestBIC is facilitating the inclusion of regional entrepreneurs on a further Eu Initiative, supporting innovative software projects in the



CASE STUDY – LEVERAGING FOCUSED EU SUPPORT

'LAND' is an EU Interregional (Interreg) Project Proposal under the North West Europe (NWE) Programme 2014-2020, aimed at generating smart sustainable and inclusive growth in line with EU's 2020 Agenda. In particular the LAND proposal seeks to optimise economic, environmental and societal benefits of land through new inclusive and innovative governance techniques that enable balanced land use to provide a new approach for spatial planning and land use in North West Europe.

The proposal was identified by WestBIC through its EU network of contacts, which has direct applicability to the rural issues pertaining to Co. Roscommon and the opportunities for land development to boost economic activities and growth in a balanced way.

The proposal is a collaboration amongst complementary EU partners located in rural regions with similar issues, including Wales, Netherlands, Ireland, France, Denmark, Belgium and Luxembourg and other research partners that can contribute to the project development.

Whilst the proposal, with an envisaged ERDF budget of up to €5m across partner regions, is just at development stage, already emerging initiatives for Co. Roscommon that may be fostered through this initiative include:

- Development of recreational/amenity parks and Bio-diversity projects
- Substantive land and water based tourism proposals
- Land-based farm diversification opportunities using an 'Ideas factory' approach for rural areas

Agri- food sector.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><i>Relatively central location of the county</i></p> <p><i>Significant population within 60km radius</i></p> <p><i>High levels of third level participation amongst students</i></p> <p><i>Skills availability in agri/veterinary, engineering and manufacturing</i></p> <p><i>Emerging pockets of modern knowledge industry, including some recent announcements</i></p> <p><i>High speed fibre broadband available in Roscommon town and Monksland</i></p> <p><i>Large diaspora due to out-migration, which may be built upon</i></p> <p><i>Strong farming/agri expertise, which is still relatively important to local economy</i></p> <p><i>Longest border with river Shannon with development potential</i></p> <p><i>Good integration amongst local stakeholders with possibilities for collaborative on initiatives</i></p> <p><i>Good choice of competitively priced housing stock compared to other regions</i></p> <p><i>Easy access to main cities of Dublin and Galway via extended motorway network.</i></p> <p><i>Free parking in towns adds to retail potential</i></p> <p><i>Good open spaces, parks, walks and other outdoor activities lends itself to good quality of life</i></p> <p><i>Good land based resources, including agri/rural lands, rivers, lakes and scenic areas</i></p> <p><i>Strong cultural heritage which may provide opportunities.</i></p>	<p><i>Out-migration of younger working age groups</i></p> <p><i>Very low levels of graduate employment and retention</i></p> <p><i>Skills gaps in ICT, science, technical skills and languages</i></p> <p><i>Low levels of entrepreneurship with high dependency on public sector for employment</i></p> <p><i>Enterprise sector dominated by micro-enterprises, serving mostly local/regional markets</i></p> <p><i>High dependency on traditional sectors, with recent job losses in some of these</i></p> <p><i>No specialist enterprise and innovation infrastructure in the county</i></p> <p><i>Lack of significant growth industry with limited new employment opportunities in growth sectors</i></p> <p><i>Not in established tourism region, resulting in underdeveloped tourism potential</i></p> <p><i>One third of workforce travel outside the county to their workplace resulting in lost economic activity locally</i></p> <p><i>High vacancy rate amongst commercial properties</i></p> <p><i>Resource and capacity issues amongst local stakeholders may hinder the enterprise dynamic</i></p> <p><i>Lack of coastline hinders tourism potential</i></p> <p><i>Proximity to Galway city which has better infrastructure may inhibit local growth</i></p> <p><i>High oil prices, and lack of access to Natural Gas pipeline for most of the county may negatively impact on energy prices for related businesses</i></p>	<p><i>Promote central location of county for enterprise and trade and provide the infrastructure and services to attract new enterprise</i></p> <p><i>Invest in specialist infrastructure and resources to foster and facilitate growth in knowledge sectors (e.g ICT, Medtech, Value-added Food, Green business etc)</i></p> <p><i>Support traditional sectors through focused resources to foster growth, including collaborative approaches</i></p> <p><i>Natural resources and strong cultural heritage have potential for development for agri, tourism and recreational/quality-of-life purposes</i></p> <p><i>Address current/future skills gaps through focused educational and training measures using available upskilling programmes</i></p> <p><i>Some existing vacant commercial buildings may have potential to convert to community-based incubation space</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities in agri-food sector based on existing skills/knowledge</i></p> <p><i>Leverage support from nearby third level institutes/research centres to add value to local enterprise, including research, innovation, training and graduate placement</i></p> <p><i>Capitalise on clean, green rural image of the county, in which people officially live longer, to support related sectors, e.g. food, tourism, eco and craft, including collaborative approaches</i></p> <p><i>Partner with other neighbouring counties/regions to leverage resources and achieve economies of scale</i></p> <p><i>Partner with international regions to leverage new funding/development opportunities</i></p> <p><i>Position county as a strategic central hub to capture spillover potential from more industrialised areas such as Galway, Sligo, Castlebar, Athlone</i></p> <p><i>Develop modern web presence for all enterprise with growth potential</i></p> <p><i>Actively promote the county as an attractive place to live, work and locate business</i></p> <p><i>Capitalise on tourism potential including proposal for Shannon Corridor flagship project in collaboration with other counties</i></p> <p><i>Develop local supply chains in food sector and small abattoir facilities that may counteract monopolised routes to market</i></p> <p><i>Develop economic potential in green energy sector, including biomass</i></p> <p><i>Put in place an Innovation fund and a tourism promotion fund</i></p> <p><i>Support enterprise with growth potential to access existing sources of credit and investment finance</i></p> <p><i>Leverage the support from the large Roscommon diaspora, as well as</i></p>	<p><i>Over reliance on traditional sectors with limited growth potential affects economic sustainability</i></p> <p><i>Lack of local identity with technology-based/growth sectors limits potential</i></p> <p><i>Faster growing neighbouring regions resulting in dis-improving local economy in relative terms</i></p> <p><i>National focus on other regions from spatial planning, regional development and tourism perspectives</i></p> <p><i>Brain drain resulting in lack of innovation capacity and sustainability of enterprise with growth potential</i></p> <p><i>Insufficient finance/credit to provide the necessary infrastructure, promote the county and to kick start new ventures.</i></p> <p><i>Sluggishness at international level and global economic issues can impact local economy</i></p> <p><i>Negative publicity at national level (e.g. water quality issues, ghost estates etc.) can adversely affect public perception of county</i></p> <p><i>Weak broadband infrastructure may threaten capacity into the future</i></p> <p><i>Access to adequate and cost effective energy may be a long term concern locally</i></p> <p><i>Current uncertainty regarding new administrative structures may inhibit the enterprise dynamic and slow down progress</i></p> <p><i>Monopolised routes to market, especially in food sector, can threaten market access and prices</i></p> <p><i>Any threat to Ireland West airport will impact on local air connectivity</i></p> <p><i>Proposed transfer of water from the river Shannon to Dublin may have negative impact locally, if not managed correctly,</i></p> <p><i>Global warming and climate change issues may impact on local economy</i></p> <p><i>Other global issues, including natural disasters, war and health scares can impact Ireland's small open economy</i></p> <p><i>Future motorway proposals may divert traffic from the county and out of main towns, which may impact on</i></p>

		large enterprise to promote the county. Actively develop and promote fibre broadband connectivity	the local economy.
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ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION STRATEGY HOUSE

The information gathered from the desk research phase, extensive consultation process and SWOT was analysed in the context of current trends, good practice in fostering innovation and economic potential identified, with a focus on positioning the region to attract and support innovative enterprise with growth potential. Cognisance was also given to key principles and core values identified for the region during the research and consultation process.

The output is presented graphically as an Enterprise and Innovation Strategy House illustrated overleaf, which identifies the strategic issues to be addressed in order to achieve the overall enterprise and innovation vision for the county, set out as:

To be a county where innovative ideas are valued and supported effectively to generate wealth and employment for its people in a balanced and sustainable way

Key Goals: The vision is broken down into a number of key goals, to ensure the overall vision filters down across the community in a balanced way, and includes:

- **Excellence in the Region:** Prioritising business sectors with growth potential to effectively differentiate the region.
- **Innovation and education:** Providing effective education and training that fosters innovation and absorptive capacity at all levels
- **Innovative Communities:** Enabling businesses and communities to apply innovative and collaborative methods to capitalise on opportunities
- **Investing in Innovation:** Linking people, businesses and communities to infrastructure and finance that fosters innovation and growth
- **Pro-active Leadership:** Encouraging and supporting leaders in the public and private sectors with the skills and knowledge to deliver an innovation agenda

Principles/Core Values: The Principles/Core Values underpinning this Enterprise & Innovation Strategy include:

- Enterprise-centric approach; with a focus on needs and gaps identified
- Outward view; including the leveraging of collaborative opportunities
- Responsiveness; to ensure opportunities are identified and capitalised upon in a timely fashion

- Common purpose; amongst all stakeholders for the benefit of the region
- Integrated approach; to maximise resources and economical potential
- Capitalising on local strengths of the region; as identified in the SWOT
- Balanced development; across the region to benefit local communities
- Sustainability; to ensure long-term viability of the local economy

To deliver on the overall vision, the Strategy House identifies the basic foundations that are required to foster and encourage local enterprise and innovation, the sectors to be prioritised and the key pillars to be developed upon which the enterprise and innovation potential can be realised.

Enabling Foundations: The basic foundations to underpin enterprise development include:

- Quality of live/Attractiveness of the area; to attract mobile investment and skills
- Leadership; to drive economic and enterprise development
- Collaboration & Linkages; to maximise use of limited resources
- Enabling Infrastructure & Services; to encourage new enterprise
- Effective Planning & Regulatory Frameworks.

The Priority Sectors for the county, as discussed earlier, are listed as follows:

- Agri-Food
- Tourism
- Creative/Craft
- Green Business
- Technology Enterprise

Key Pillars: From good practice in fostering innovation, with specific reference to supporting priority sectors in Roscommon, Key Pillars are listed as follows:

- Key Enterprise and Innovation Infrastructure
- Education and Training
- Targeted Employment / Graduate retention programmes
- Finance
- Cost Competitiveness
- Research and Innovation Support
- Effective Promotion

Strategic actions to enhance the enabling infrastructure and to develop enterprise and innovation in priority sectors are presented under these pillars.

ROSCOMMON ENTERPRISE

AND INNOVATION

STRATEGY

HOUSE

ROSCOMMON ENTERPRISE

AND INNOVATION

STRATEGY

HOUSE

VISION

*To be a county where innovative ideas
are valued and supported effectively to generate wealth
and employment for its people in a balanced and sustainable way*

GOALS...

Excellence in the Region: Prioritising business sectors with growth potential to effectively differentiate the region.
Innovation and education: Providing effective education and training that fosters innovation and absorptive capacity at all levels
Investing in Innovation: Linking people, businesses and communities to infrastructure and finance that fosters innovation and growth
Innovative Communities: Enabling businesses and communities to apply innovative methods to solve problems and capitalise on opportunities
Pro-active Leadership: Encouraging and supporting leaders in the public and private sectors with the skills and knowledge to deliver an innovation agenda

Principles / Core Values

Enterprise Centric - Outward view - Responsiveness - Common Purpose - Integrated Approaches - Capitalise on Local Strengths - Balanced development - Sustainability

ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE

Adequate Enterprise/
Commercial space
Property register
Suitable Incubation
Space in main towns
Hotdesk facilities
Maximise access to
high speed Broadband
Key Enabling
Technologies
Specialist Incubators
• Food
• ICT/Technology
• Medtech
• Craft units
Tourism infrastructure,
including Shannon
Corridor flagship
project and other
tourist facilities

EDUCATION / TRAINING

Future skills Initiatives
at young/school level:
• ICT
• Entrepreneurship
• Languages etc.
Targeted
Entrepreneurship
Programmes
Intensive Accelerator
Programmes
Capacity Building/Mgt
Development Training
Upskilling / reskilling
through Springboard /
Skillnets, Solas etc
Deliver on sector-
specific Training Needs
Business Skills training
for the unemployed.

TARGETED GRADUATE/ EMPLOYMENT PROGS

Skills register
Graduate recruitment &
retention initiatives:
• Work placement
• Internship
Programmes
• Fusion/Acumen
Springboard programmes
targeted at priority sectors
Targeted Momentum
(Solas) programmes for
the county
Support the role of Social
enterprise where suitable
gaps exist.

ACCESS TO FINANCE

Financial mgt training in
specific sectors
Animation support to
ensure enterprise avail
of available finance /
Grant Aid etc.
Promotion & animation
support to access
existing loan funds
Foster access to Seed &
VC funds
Access to private sector
finance for businesses
with growth potential-
e.g Business Angels
Enterprise/Innovation
Fund for the county
Tourism Marketing
Fund for the county or
shared regionally.

COST COMPETITIVENESS

Energy efficiency
training and investment
projects
Shared service admin
resource in targeted
sectors
Targeted Incentive
Schemes for new
enterprise
Scale economies
through collaboration
with nearby counties
Enhance natural gas
availability in county
Potential for large scale
biomass projects for
cost efficient energy
Develop shared/local
supply chains in suitable
sectors

RESEARCH/ INNOVATION

Develop strategic
linkages with third level
/ research centres
Targeted "Innovation
House" progs to attract
best expertise to
support enterprise
Organise Knowledge
Events/Workshops
Facilitate access to
Innovation Vouchers
and other innovation
funding
Leverage public
funds/support through
EU progs H2020 etc.
Foster networking
activities to encourage
open innovation.

PROMOTION

Develop & promote
common image/identity
Enhancement projects
to add to attractiveness
Promotion of pro-active
enterprise dynamic
Collective promotion,
including cross-sectoral
approaches and
collaboration with
neighbouring regions
Focus on quality
Web-presence for
growth enterprise
Modern web presence
to promote county and
its strengths
Marketing strategy,
including 'Ambassadors'
to promote the region
and attract enterprise

AGRI-FOOD

TOURISM

CREATIVE /
CRAFT

GREEN
BUSINESS

TECHNOLOGY
ENTERPRISE

FOUNDATIONS / BASIC ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION ENABLERS

Quality of Life/Attractiveness – Leadership - Collaboration and Linkages -Enabling Infrastructure & Services - Effective Planning and Regulatory Frameworks

ACTION PLANS

Taking into account the information contained in the preceding sections of this report, Action Plans have been prepared, aimed at prioritising key activities that can foster and accelerate entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth, in order to achieve the overall vision set out for the county.

In line with the Strategy House approach, the actions are set out as follows:

- Foundations/Basic Enabling Actions
 - Quality of Live/Attractiveness
 - Leadership
 - Collaborative and Linkages
 - Enabling Infrastructure & Services
 - Effective Planning & Regulatory Framework
- Followed by detailed Sectoral Action Plans for Prioritised Sectors
 - Agri Food
 - Tourism
 - Creative/Craft Sector
 - Green Business
 - Technology/Knowledge Sectors

For consistency these Sectoral Action Plans are presented under the Key Pillars identified in the Strategy House as follows:

- Key Enterprise & Innovation Infrastructure
- Education & Training
- Targeted Employment / Graduate retention programmes
- Finance
- Cost Competitiveness
- Research & Innovation Support
- Effective Promotion

These plans include a description of the Actions, proposed responsibility for delivery as agreed with the Project Steering Committee, information on what resources are required for delivery where appropriate and envisaged timeframes.

Due to space limitations a guide to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for a selection of measures is included in the Monitoring & Performance Section which follows the individual Action Plans.

MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES

In some cases, similar or related actions are proposed for a number of sectors, e.g.:

- Cross sectoral actions to develop and promote the tourism, craft and food in a complementary way
- Energy efficiency training that impacts a variety of sectors
- On-line trading initiatives

In this regard, a joined-up approach should be taken, including collaborative actions, to avoid duplication and to ensure efficiency in utilising limited resources. In some cases, collaborative actions with neighbouring region is also recommended and highlighted where appropriate, which can lead to scale economies.

During the consultation and strategy development phase, a number of priority actions were identified that could be delivered upon, or started immediately, within available resources. These were successfully undertaken in order to develop momentum and build on the extensive consultation activity that was undertaken. This provides excellent scope for following up with the relevant stakeholders in order to progress various actions and bring them to fruition in a timely manner, without having to re-establish connections and begin the engagement process again.

The Enabling Actions regarding local and regional networking and collaboration activities should also assist in the efficient deployment of resources so that priority actions can be delivered effectively. Regular meetings are recommended in this regard, as identified in the Action Plan, including monitoring of delivery, performance and outputs.

FOUNDATION ENABLERS

Basic Enabling Actions to support Enterprise and Innovation Roscommon

Enabler	Description	Proposed Lead (& other actors)	Further details, Resources Required, Timescale etc
Quality of Life /Attractiveness	Attractiveness: Where possible, contribute to enhancing the attractiveness of the county, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement enhancement/development plans for the main towns; to enhance their visual appeal, deal with derelict/unused buildings, development of landmark buildings, tidy towns etc. Develop and maintain suitable amenities/services towards the enjoyment of arts, health, leisure and recreation in the county. Promote the availability of free parking as an added advantage for local business 	Roscommon County Council In conjunction with relevant business interests, chambers, community groups, Tidy Towns Groups etc. through an appropriate forum)	<p>This will be an ongoing action with continued enhancement required to maintain an attractive environment for work, living and leisure.</p> <p>Resources Required: Animation support to develop plans in first instance. Along with Council funds, there may be scope to obtain funding for specific initiatives through the new LEADER programme and also through EU programmes for specific projects</p> <p>Timescale: Development plans should be prepared in Year 1, Implement from then onwards, with regular performance review.</p>
	Market Town: Revitalise “market towns” in the county, through appropriate regulation, development and promotion of casual trading	Roscommon County Council including C&E, corporate services and planning, in consultation with Chambers and relevant stakeholders	<p>Consultation process will be required with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Resources Required: Human resources / co-ordination, consultation support</p> <p>Timescale: Years 1-2</p>
	Retail Enhancement: Implement a retail enhancement programme with participating retail outlets in main urban areas through the engagement of a retail design expert on a collective/residency basis	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with Chambers / development groups	<p>To be delivered with agreement of relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Resources Required: Design specialist required, may be available through internship or other suitable programme.</p> <p>Timescale: Year 1-2, to coincide with other development plan activity</p>
	Regeneration: Introduce targeted incentive schemes (e.g. rates rebates) to encourage new business in specific locations suffering significant decline	Roscommon County Council	<p>Devise suitable scheme (learning from other successful regions) and identify pilot regions based on set criteria</p> <p>Resources Required: Human Resource to administer scheme</p> <p>Timescale: Pilot initially in Year 1 to identify demand and monitor take-up</p>

Leadership and Promotion of Enterprise Dynamic	<p>Provide effective leadership amongst stakeholder organisations to actively promote entrepreneurship generally, as well for priority sectors/actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Stop Shop: Provision of a responsive “first-stop-shop service” that can provide all of the information required on supports available across the region, including signposting service / contact points etc. for seamless referral to specialist services • Responsiveness amongst stakeholders, including timely support and seamless referral to maximise support • Priority Actions: Pro-active leadership/implementation of priority actions in strategy to complement core activity of stakeholders • Prioritise Growth Sectors: Provision of leadership for prioritised growth sectors (Food, green business, creative, technology etc.) 	Roscommon County Council, plus pro-active participation from all local stakeholders, including LEO executive, LEADER, WestBIC and other local and regional Agencies, Chambers and other development groups)	<p>Collaborative approaches will be required to deliver in this area. See actions under collaboration and linkages below for further details.</p> <p>Resources Required: Human Resources inputs to deliver in a timely and effective manner.</p> <p>Timescale: Over lifetime of strategy.</p>
	<p>Effectively promote the county as an enterprise hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the county as an attractive location for enterprise, including web-based methods and strategic dissemination of hardcopy materials • Awards Scheme: Develop a novel Awards Scheme to promote entrepreneurship as well as promoting the count as a pro-active location for growth enterprise • Invest Roscommon: Develop a Modern ‘Invest Roscommon’ web presence – this should feature information on the central and accessible location of the county, available development lands and premises, highlight the location and quality of services and infrastructure around the county and provide relevant information for potential entrepreneurs, investors etc. • Ambassador Programme: Identify and work with suitable external and internal “ambassadors” who are willing to champion the county from an economic/enterprise perspective. Use a small panel of these to liaise with potential entrepreneurs who are considering locating a business in the region to foster Roscommon as a suitable location. (see further details under Promotion of Technology Sector) • Testimonials: Capture case studies and testimonials from enterprises/business people who have established businesses in the county and promote appropriately, including the ‘Invest Roscommon’ Web Link. • Identity: Over time, identify the potential to develop a suitable identity to promote Roscommon from business/investment perspective. 	Roscommon County Council in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.	<p>Resources Required: Use existing structures/fora to deliver these actions to avoid duplication/drain on scarce resources.</p> <p>Timescale: Past individual actions in place in Years 1-2. Update/review regularly.</p>
	<p>Innovation Fund: Put in place a long-term fund, ring fenced for improving the enterprise and innovation environment in the county.</p>	Roscommon County Council including Economic SPC	<p>Utilise suitable forum (e.g. Economic SPC) to prioritise projects/initiatives to be implemented, taking a balanced approach across the county.</p> <p>Resources Required: Target use of existing funds or identify new sources.</p> <p>Timescale: Establish mechanisms in Year 1, Implement projects.</p>
	<p>Cost competitiveness: Regularly review overhead costs for business in the county (rates, water, energy etc.) to ensure a cost competitive environment for enterprise. These may be undertaken individually or</p>	Roscommon County Council via	<p>Compare with other counties publish/promotion positive findings. Take corrective actions where</p>

	collectively as part of an Annual “Enterprise and Innovation Week” initiative, taking Mayo Ideas Week as a successful example of similar programme.	economic SPC	necessary. Resources Required: Human Resources to monitor performance Timescale: Ongoing
	Knowledge events: Undertake a range of information events/workshops aimed at encouraging innovation and growth in enterprise.	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in collaboration with other agencies	See Sectoral Actions for additional event details Resources Required: co-ordination, plus funding for organisation and promotion of events Timescale: Annual events should be organised potentially as part of “Enterprise & Innovation week”
	Skills Register: Review the LookWest skills register and identify how it may be tailored to develop a skills register for Co. Roscommon to promote skills availability.	Roscommon County Council in conjunction with WDC	Resources Required: Co-ordinator required plus promotion of skills base once completed Timescale: Years 1-2 – promote and update regularly.
	Skills Development: Provide a series of educational upskilling/reskilling programmes for newly unemployed and underemployed people as well as for employees of existing companies to upskill them for the next generation of employment opportunities i.e. ICT, food, value added manufacturing etc. to ensure there is a suitably skilled workforce locally. Engage with training providers including Solas (Momentum), Skillnets, Third Level (Springboard) ETBs etc.		See Sectoral Actions for additional event details Resources Required: Co-ordinate, possible matched funding for training delivery Timescale: From Year 1, based on needs identified.
Collaboration and Linkages	Local Networking: Hold regular (monthly) network meetings amongst local enterprise agencies to ensure seamless collaboration, discuss activities, projects, priorities, cross-referrals, communication, follow-up on new opportunities etc. and identify ways to maximise resources to better support enterprise in an efficient and collaborative manner. Engagement with other Stakeholders: Widen network meetings on a quarterly rotating basis to include managers of enterprise centres, chambers/development organisations, third level representatives and regional stakeholders to ensure effective linkages, collaboration, identification of opportunities and cross referral of projects/supports. Implement appropriate collaborative projects/initiatives to maintain and enhance working relationships	Roscommon County Council, via Economic SPC in conjunction with local agencies (i.e LEO, LEADER, WestBIC etc.)	Engagement with third level sector plus community enterprise centres on quarterly rotating basis Resources Required: N/A Timescale: Immediate/ongoing
	Business Voice/ Representation: Support business representative bodies to develop cohesive representative structure(s) for businesses in Co. Roscommon. Engage with these in setting up suitable economic governance structures at local authority level.	Roscommon County Council including Economic SPC as well as LCDC and other relevant structures	Resources Required: Human Resources as part of current activity Timescale: Immediate, in line with new governance structures in the county.
	External Linkages: Establish and develop effective networks and linkages across the enterprise eco-system, including third level/research centres, innovation centres, accelerator programmes, internship programmes, training resources etc. as well as international linkages to ensure the supports for Roscommon Enterprises are maximised.	Roscommon County Council, with all local/regional agencies.	Resources Required: Personnel for liaison/networking Timescale: Year 1 and ongoing afterwards
Enabling Infrastructure and Services	Availability of Commercial Lands: Ensure availability of suitably zoned lands, sites etc. in appropriate locations to facilitate enterprise to locate in the county. Commercial Lands Registration: Provide an online accessible register of all industrial lands and commercial premises that are available throughout the county, to be updated on a monthly basis.	Roscommon County Council in conjunction with IDA, liaison with auctioneers etc.	Resources Required: Human Resource to co-ordinate/liaise and develop register. Funds to purchase lands etc. as appropriate (Roscommon County Council, IDA) Timescale: Register by end of Year 1. Update regularly.
	Incubation Space: Ensure availability of good quality and affordable incubation space, to foster new entrepreneurship in the county	Roscommon County Council in	Consideration should be given to suitable existing building in suitable locations where new

	<p>New developments, (and specialist centres) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Incubation facilities in Monksland area • Food Development Centre, including customised food incubation and training space • Technology Centre, with incubation space fitted with fibre connectivity in Roscommon town • Craft units as part of craft village project in suitable location(s). • <p>Desk space: Ensure provision of affordable deskpace/hotdesks to foster new entrepreneurship in main towns/urban areas</p>	<p>conjunction with all relevant stakeholder through project teams to be established for each proposal.</p>	<p>developments are required. To avoid duplication, utilise resources of existing community enterprise centres and other similar facilities in relevant locations for hotdesk provision.</p> <p>Resources Required: Project teams, sites/buildings, grant aid (e.g. EI CEC scheme or other possibilities), matched finance, operational funding, centre management resources. Some investment in deskpace infrastructure may be required (Roscommon County Council, LEO)</p> <p>Timescale: Years 1-2.</p>
	<p>Support existing community enterprise centres, including development of appropriate space/facilities, (incubation, hotdesks, broadband access, centre management etc.) to meet local needs.</p>	<p>Roscommon County Council with support of local stakeholder network.</p>	<p>Resources Required: N/A</p> <p>Timescale: Ongoing</p>
	<p>Foster the provision of high-speed broadband on a county wide basis, and facilitate access to high-speed broadband via libraries and community enterprise centres/hotdesks where necessary.</p> <p>Promote availability of fibre broadband in Roscommon town and Monksland.</p>	<p>Roscommon County Council</p>	<p>See Technology Sector Actions for further details</p> <p>Resources Required: Possible investment in infrastructure where necessary to provide local access.</p> <p>Timescale: Years 1-2.</p>
<p>Effective Planning and Regulatory Frameworks</p>	<p>RCC Interface: Undertake internal review of the customer interface with the Rates, Planning sections etc., of Roscommon County Council with a view to establishing a liaison service to support business interactions with these services in a seamless manner.</p> <p>Regulatory Controls: Ensure transparent and consistent approaches to planning and regulatory controls to ensure quality in service delivery.</p> <p>Promotion of Casual Trading: Ensure suitable regulatory practices are in place to promote casual trading in market towns.</p>	<p>Relevant sections of Roscommon County Council</p>	<p>Possibly consider these items in formulation of new Corporate Plan. Consultation may be required for casual trading aspects.</p> <p>Resources Required: Project Team</p> <p>Timescale: Year 1</p>

AGRI FOOD

Note: The Local Enterprise Office has agreed to lead the Priority Actions in this sector, with support from other stakeholders, as appropriate.

Pillar	Description	Proposed Lead (& other actors)	Further details, Resources Required, Timescale etc.
Infrastructure	<p>Food Centre: Develop a flagship food centre, including food kitchens/units and training support, to encourage and locate new food enterprises in the county and attract food projects to the county.</p> <p>Ideally, this should be done in collaboration with existing large food companies in the county, to benefit from/leverage their food sector expertise and networks (and possibly access to buildings/infrastructure), as well as in conjunction with food technology centres in the region (e.g. St Angela's College etc.), to maximise the potential for success.</p>	Roscommon County Council – The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has agreed to take lead role in this area.	<p>Food Centre should be of sufficient scale to ensure it can support a number of food enterprises and lead to sustainable job creation to ensure return on investment. Animation and other support will be required.</p> <p>Other stakeholders, which may form a project committee/team, to explore possibilities, project structure, finance, management etc., include LEADER, Enterprise Ireland, WestBIC, Chambers/development group and relevant private food companies.</p> <p>Resources required: Project teams, sites/buildings, grant aid (e.g. EI CEC scheme or other possibilities), matched finance, operational funding, centre management resources.</p> <p>Timescale: 3-5 years.</p>
	<p>Regional Food Technology Gateway: Link with Athlone Institute of Technology regarding the proposal for a new Food Technology Gateway in the region. Ideally, this may be linked to the above food centre proposal</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	<p>Local Enterprise Office to take lead role in this area, with involvement from other agencies and private food companies to support this proposal.</p> <p>Resources required: Personnel time to co-ordinate / provide inputs.</p> <p>Timescale: TBC based on call for Technology Gateways.</p>
Education/ Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly deliver the Food Academy programme aimed at new food start-ups Support candidates through an intensive animation programme to maximise the potential for success. Develop and deliver suitable agri-food enterprise accelerator programmes to increase capacity and grow food enterprises in the county in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. This may be done with neighbouring regions (e.g. Midland region) to achieve critical mass – see also promotion opportunities with Midlands Region. Collaborate with third level institutions to design/develop suitable Springboard (third level outreach) programmes targeted at employment needs of food sector. Identify any other training needs of food enterprise and deliver through available mechanisms (Skillnet, Solas/Momentum etc.). 	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	<p>Other stakeholders include Skillnets, relevant third level institutions for Springboard programmes, (e.g. St Angela's College), Solas, Education and Training Board, midlandsireland.ie, Enterprise Ireland (accelerator programmes)</p> <p>Resources required: Personnel to liaise/co-ordinate, plus venue(s) for delivery, finance for programme delivery if necessary (from local/regional agencies)</p> <p>Timescale: Annual programmes for Food Academy, animation support, training programmes etc.</p>
	<p>Added Value: Proactively encourage the adding of value to primary agri-produce including food forestry etc., through animation activity, knowledge events, support for farm diversification etc.</p>	LEADER, in conjunction with other stakeholders to maximise opportunities / outputs	<p>LEADER should play a key role in this based on their experience to date in this sector. Animation progs should be suitably targeted with appropriate follow-up supports to maximise outputs/successful projects.</p> <p>Resources Required: Finance to run progs (e.g. LEADER/RDP), plus co-ordination.</p> <p>Timescale: Annual prog should be organised.</p>
	<p>Skills Development: Foster the development of agri-food skills where gaps exist, through</p>	Roscommon LEADER	<p>Good engagement required with relevant training providers</p>

	Momentum (Solas), Springboard (third level outreach), Skillnet and similar programmes.	Partnership, through labour market activities programme	(Solas, Third Level, Skillnets, ETB etc.). Resources Required: Co-ordinator to identify needs and assist with programme roll-out. Timescale:
Employment/ Graduate Retention	Labour Market Activation/Placements: Put in place a resource with a pro-active fostering/co-ordinating role to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and facilitate the placement of internship candidates in suitable agri-food enterprises in the county with growth potential. Promote and facilitate the placement of graduate placement in suitable food enterprises in the county in conjunction with Third Level sector Foster the Cross Border Fusion/Acumen programmes to support the recruitment of suitable graduates into the food enterprise sector 	RLP have agreed to take the lead on this as part of its labour market activation programme, with support from others, including RCC. Other stakeholders will include third level institutions and Intertrade Ireland	This will involve liaison with the third level sector and promoters of labour activation schemes, so that these can be actively promoted in the county, as well as the development of an Employer register with an interest in graduate work placement from third level institutions, graduate programmes and other state sponsored job-activation schemes. Resources required: Project Co-ordinator (part-time), ideally from existing staff. Timescale: Immediate, and ongoing throughout the strategy implementation period.
Finance	Grant Aid: Prioritise agri-food sector for grant support for eligible applications and provide animation support to ensure ease of accessibility	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with other agencies (EI, LEADER etc.)	Resources required: Finance to fund animation support aimed at assisting enterprise to access available finance. Timescale: ongoing throughout strategy timeframe.
	Loan Finance Promote and facilitate access to the Micro-enterprise loan fund for eligible applicants, through animation support, ensuring that Roscommon enterprises achieve a high level of drawdown to meet needs	Roscommon County Council (LEO), with support of other agencies	Support required to ensure Roscommon achieves its share of this national programme. Resources required: Promotion and animation support. Timescale: Ongoing in line with programme rollout.
	Private Finance: Develop more seed and venture funding activity along with private investment/business angel activity in the county to encourage increased investment in businesses with growth potential.	WestBIC, in conjunction with RCC, and Seed fund managers etc.	As Managers of the Business Angel Partnership in the West region WestBIC may be best placed to develop this further in Co. Roscommon. Liaise with all other agencies to promote etc. Resources: Personnel resource to develop / co-ordinate. Timescale: ongoing.
Cost Competitiveness	Shared Kitchens: Identify opportunities for new food companies to make use of existing food kitchen facilities, including community kitchens etc. to encourage new food ideas and reduce start-up costs	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with buildings /community centres with suitable kitchen facilities	To avoid duplication, link with energy efficiency training in other sectors (e.g food). Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate, plus co-operation from community centres and other facilities with suitable kitchens. Possibly some funding required to upgrade some existing kitchens (e.g. LEO, LEADER for community facilities) Timescale: Year 1, depending on funding availability
	Supply Chain: Identify and develop collective /collaborative marketing, sales, distribution activities in conjunction with established players	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Ideally, identify successful models that may be adapted to local situation and implement as appropriate. Resources required: Co-ordinator, plus funding to pilot appropriate models if necessary. Timescale: Research in Year 1, implementation in Year 2-3.
	Energy Efficiency: Deliver energy efficiency training for food enterprises in the county as a cost reduction/competitiveness strategy, based on the high energy usage of many of	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Deliver in conjunction with SEAI, similar to pilot undertaken. Also link with LEADER's Green Energy Programme.

	these enterprises (similar to pilot delivered during strategy development, co-ordinated by WestBIC)		Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate, plus venue(s). Timescale: Implement at regular intervals based on demand.
Research/ Innovation Support	Research Support: Establish and nurture a range of suitable relationships within third level/research sector that can support food enterprises in the county. Develop/implement collaborate actions as appropriate.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with all third level institutions in the region	Requires support from all local agencies that have/can generate suitable contacts with third level institutions / research centres. Resources required: Personnel for co-ordination / liaison. Timescale: Year 1 and ongoing afterwards.
	Innovation Expertise: Develop an "Innovation House" Initiative targeted at agri-food sector, with inputs from suitable enterprise development/food experts that can facilitate the growth of existing food enterprise	Roscommon County Council (LEO), with LEADER and WestBIC based on success of pilot under previous RDP	Linkages will be required with sectoral expertise in food sector, including research centres, food agencies and private sector experts. Resources Required: Co-ordinator plus funding for implementation similar to pilot scheme under LEADER (LEO Measure 2, LEADER). Timescale: TBC in line with other food initiatives.
	International Programmes Identify and prepare submissions for suitable EU exchange/co-operation projects that can support agri-food enterprises to research, exchange and internationalise at EU level.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with WestBIC and others with experience/expertise in securing EU project funding	This will require ongoing resource to monitor calls and identify suitable projects/proposals as they arise. Resources required: Personnel to identify, co-ordinate and follow-up proposals, possible finance to prepare applications (e.g. EI, RCC, others). Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Regional Funding: Support food enterprise to avail of Innovation Vouchers and other innovation funding as appropriate to their needs.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), plus Enterprise Ireland, with support of other agencies for promotion etc.	Animation support for food enterprises may be required. Resources required: Liaison resource, funding for animation activity. Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	R&D Expertise: Foster the Cross Border Fusion/Acumen programmes to support the recruitment of suitable R&D and marketing graduates in the food sector.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with LEADER (see graduate employment above)	Liaise with Intertrade Ireland and local co-ordinators, as well as with existing food enterprises. Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate (proposed LEADER as part of labour market activation activity). Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Knowledge Events Deliver regular knowledge and applied innovation events for the food sector to develop capacity and capitalise on innovation potential to be delivered in conjunction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teagasc Research Centres • An Bord Bia research info • St Angela's Food Development Centre • Third level institutions. 	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with food support stakeholders and local agencies.	This will require the building of effective relationship with all relevant stakeholders in food sector. Resources required: HR for co-ordination, plus event management costs. Timescale: Annual event over lifetime of strategy.
Promotion	Food Network: In partnership with the new Midland Food Network, to achieve scale economies and critical mass, develop a programme of activities for collective approaches to marketing, promotion and other collective development opportunities	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with midlandsireland.ie	A project steering group of relevant stakeholders may be required. Resources required: Co-ordinator, plus implementation costs, funding via local agencies or through relevant EU programmes.

		and other local agencies with food remit	Timescale: Annual programme to be agreed.
	Quality Accreditation: Ensure that Roscommon food enterprises achieve the necessary quality accreditations to best promote their produce.	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with An Bord Bia, Teagasc etc.	Resources required: HR to co-ordinate; possible finance to implement projects if necessary (LEO, LEADER etc.). Timescale: Annual programme.
	Farmers Markets: Further develop farmers markets, as part of a market town approach for the county, through a consistent regulated approach to casual trading to ensure quality standards are promoted and maintained.	Roscommon County Council (LEO). Note: Corporate Services and Planning sections also need to be involved here, plus LEADER, Chambers and farmers market organisations	LEADER should also be involved, based on work to date in supporting the development of farmers markets. Resources required: Internal resources for co-ordination, plus funding for capital/implementation costs (Local Authority, LEADER etc.). Timescale: Develop as part of town teams approach by Roscommon County Council.
	Food Tourism: Develop and promote the food tourism potential in the county including linkages with Roscommon Lamb Festival, other festivals and culinary tourism opportunities, traits etc.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), to engage with CTN / Tourism Action group, Lamb Festival Committee, LEADER and other relevant stakeholders	Community & Enterprise section of RCC will also be involved in this area, aimed at developing a sustainable approach. Resources required: Co-ordinator/Liaison person and other manpower, to manage project. Timescale: Annual event should be organised in conjunction with other festivals.
	Common Identity: Include the food sector in a general promotion of the county with a clean, green image.	Roscommon County Council, including Economic SPC, C&E, tourism stakeholders, Chambers etc.	For efficiency this should be included as part of other marketing and promotion activities, building on overall promotion of the county, led by Roscommon County Council. Resources required: Timescale: ongoing up to 2020.

TOURISM

Note: A new Tourism Development Strategy is underway for the county, building on a previous Strategy (2010-2014) undertaken by Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders the trade (RTAG) and CTN. The Actions below represent guideline proposals that that may be considered as part of that more detailed strategy, and includes reference to Roscommon LEADER Partnership, given the tourism actions identified in the next LEADER programme.

PILLAR	DESCRIPTION	Proposed Lead	Comments
Infrastructure	Visitor Attractions: Support the development of visitor attractions to generate critical mass in the primary tourism locations and ensure collective promotion to maximise awareness and resultant tourism spend. Focus on key aspects of tourism product, including strong identity with history, heritage, outdoor recreation and lakeland/water activities. The Rathcroghan Royal Celtic Site may have significant development potential which should be explored.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, in conjunction with RTAG, CTN and Roscommon County Council	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including viability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
	Tourist Accommodation: Encourage the development of accommodation and support services to complement available visitor attractions. In the interim, collective promotion with neighbouring regions to avail of tourist accommodation (e.g. Carrick on Shannon, Athlone etc.) should be undertaken	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, in conjunction with RTAG, CTN and Roscommon County Council and similar organisations in neighbouring counties	Engage with similar organisations in neighbouring counties to achieve critical mass and economies of scale. Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including viability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
	Shannon Corridor Flagship Initiative: Explore the potential for developing a “Shannon” based tourism framework initiative in conjunction with the relevant counties/stakeholders. Implement as appropriate.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with other neighbouring Local Authorities along River Shannon, Lakelands and Inland Waterways, Failte Ireland plus RTAG, CTN and other relevant stakeholders	This would be a key tourism flagship project and will require collaborative effort across stakeholders, along with significant resources to implement appropriately, similar to Wild Atlantic Way. Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including viability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
	Festivals & Events: Further develop and promote main flagship festivals with growth potential in the county to build capacity and further develop tourism products/services around these. International potential of festivals and events should be developed.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with RTAG, CTN and Roscommon LEADER Partnership	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including viability and sustainability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
	Trails Development: Develop and promote local trails to maximise tourism potential, e.g. craft, food, history, heritage, as well as walking and cycling routes etc. Niche trails should also be developed and	RTAG,	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including

	promoted e.g. Moone Boy trail in Boyle etc.		viability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
Education/ Training	Develop training to ensure everyone is 'tourist ready' including customer service training across private sector, employers organisations across the hospitality sector in the county, to give a consistently high quality visitor experience. Engage with training providers including Solas (Momentum), Skillnets, Third Level (Springboard) ETBs etc.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with RTAG, CTN and training providers	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy, including viability and sustainability aspects. Timescale: Years 1-5
Employment/ Graduate Retention	Labour Market Activation/Placements: Promote and facilitate the placement of job-bridge/internship candidates in suitable tourism enterprises in the county. Promote and facilitate the placement of graduates in suitable tourism enterprises in the county in conjunction with Third Level sector	RLP have agreed to take the lead on this as part of its labour market activation programme, with support from others, including RCC. Other stakeholders will include third level institutions	This will involve liaison with the third level sector and promoters of labour activation schemes, so that these can be actively promoted in the county, as well as the development of an Employer register with an interest in graduate work placement from third level institutions, graduate programmes and other state sponsored job-activation schemes. Resources required: Project Co-ordinator (part-time), ideally from existing staff. Timescale: Immediate, and ongoing throughout the strategy implementation period.
Finance	Marketing Fund: Develop a central fund to promote tourism in the county with contributions from relevant stakeholders	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with RTAG and other stakeholders	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy.
Cost Competitiveness	Deliver energy efficiency programme targeted at the hospitality sector, based on the high energy costs associated with some providers (hotels, etc.)	Roscommon County Council (LEO), link with SEAI etc, similar to recent pilot	To avoid duplication, link with energy efficiency training in other sectors (e.g food). Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate, plus venue(s) Funding for programme delivery (SEAI). Timescale: Implement at regular intervals based on demand.
Research/ Innovation Support	International exchange Identify and pursue possible collaborative/international measures that can facilitate the international aspects of the Roscommon tourism product (e.g. linked trails, festivals, activities etc.), as well as product development aspects.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with WestBIC and others with experience/expertise in securing EU project funding	This will require a collaborative approach locally/regionally, as well as at EU level to identify suitable partners to engage with project activity. Resources required: Personnel to identify, co-ordinate and follow-up proposals, possible finance to prepare applications (e.g. EI, RCC,) Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
Promotion	Common Identity: Promote common identity, building on the "Revive, Refresh, Rewind" approach and incorporating complementary activities in food and tourism sectors.	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with RTAG and CTN	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy.
	Marketing Plan: Develop and implement a marketing plan including targeted promotion to grow tourism numbers	Roscommon County Council, in	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy.

		conjunction with RTAG, CTN, Failte Ireland and relevant stakeholders	Timescale: Marketing Plan – Year 1, Implementation Years 1-5.
	Tourist Information Points: Ensure widespread promotion on the ground via tourist offices/centres, information points, maps, trails signage etc.	Roscommon County Council with LEADER, Failte Ireland, RTAG, CTN and local Chambers/Development Groups	Resources required: Human Resource (possibly through internship or other initiative, plus funding for promotional materials). Timescale: Years1-5.
	Web Marketing: Develop and maintain a modern web presence for tourism in the county, including linkages to complementary activities (e.g. craft, tourism, festivals etc.).	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with RTAG / CTN	Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy. Timescale: Years1-5.
	Festival & Events: Attract large scale regional, national and international events/festivals into the county and use these to further promote the local tourism offering/potential	Roscommon County Council, with RTAG, CTN, relevant stakeholders and Ros. diaspora	Resources Required: Co-ordinator required to facilitate. Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy Timescale: Years1-5.
	Air Connectivity: Work with Knock Airport to maximise the tourism and business potential for Co. Roscommon.	Roscommon County Council (Economic SPC) and RTAG	Resources required: Possibly funding towards marketing/promotion and transportation links Timescale: Ongoing
	Collaborative Marketing: Implement collaborative approaches with other neighbouring regions (e.g. North Roscommon with Leitrim/Sligo) South Roscommon with Athlone/Westmeath to promote tourism regionally, to benefit from economies of scale and to offer a more comprehensive tourism offering. Also consider Lakelands and Shannon Corridor approaches using appropriate promotional materials, signage etc. Product bundling/packaging initiatives should also be considered where appropriate	Roscommon County Council, with RTAG,CTN, local authorities and organisations in nearby regions and Failte Ireland	Also, see also Actions under infrastructure Pillar Resources Required: Action to be further developed as part of Tourism Strategy. Timescale: Years1-5.
	On-line Trading: Support tourism enterprises to establish/maintain a modern web-presence to maximise visitor potential.	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Deliver as part of on-line trading voucher scheme. Animation support may be required to maximise local participation/uptake. Resources Required: co-ordinator to promote and encourage participation. Timescale: Annual targets to be set in line with national programme.
	Ambassador Programme: Foster an ambassador programme in the tourist sector by engaging with external/internal “ambassadors”, of international approved who are interested in promoting the county from a tourism perspective. Also include/engage with large Roscommon diaspora, based on significant out-migration from the county	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with suitable “ambassadors”.	Resources Required: Time inputs at management level to identify and engage with suitable ambassadors Timescale: Year 1 Formalise/Develop Ambassador Programme. Year 2-5: Implement as appropriate.

CREATIVE /CRAFT SECTOR

Note: The Local Enterprise Office has agreed to lead the Priority Actions in this sector, with support from other stakeholders, as appropriate.

PILLAR	DESCRIPTION	Proposed Lead (& other actors)	Further details, Resources Required, Timescale etc.
Infrastructure / Key Enabling Technologies	Craft Village: Develop craft enterprise/display units, towards an overall Craft Village Initiative in suitable location, in line with DCCOI guidelines. Boyle is most suitable location based on existing units, space availability, tourism offering/potential etc. Develop appropriate linkage with Leitrim Design house in nearby Carrick on Shannon	Roscommon County Council (Local Enterprise Office has agreed to take the lead on these actions)	This should build on existing units located at King House, supported by LEADER. Project team should be put in place to deliver, including linkages with Leitrim Design House. Ideally, projects will include training and development as described below. Resources Required: Co-ordinator plus capital funding (LEADER LEO, possibility of EU funding for eligible projects). Timescale: over next 3 years.
	Craft Trail/Display: Where appropriate, support individual craft enterprise to establish visitor/display facilities, as well as training/workshop space if necessary, at their own premises. Signage to be included.	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Ideally link with tourist trail development if possible. Resources Required: Capital funding (LEADER, LEO) plus marketing support (link with tourism). Timescale: Roll out over years 1-2.
	Broadband Accessibility: Ensure access to broadband, via hotdesks/Community Enterprise Centres and/or library services located in all urban areas for access by craft businesses without suitable broadband access to the internet.	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with CEC's and library services	To avoid duplication, utilise existing resources where possible via libraries, community enterprise centres etc. Resources Required: Broadband connectivity, suitable desk space (funding maybe required if no existing facilities are available – LEO, LEADER, RCC). Timescale: Over years 1-2.
Education/Training	Craft Development Programme: Design/deliver a craft development programme either individually or in conjunction with Leitrim Design House to enhance product quality and performance of craft enterprises. Utilise programme to ensure quality standards are developed, learning from Leitrim Design House approach. This may be done collaboratively with Leitrim Design House building on their experience.	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Build on experience of Leitrim Design House in relation to this, to maximise outputs. Resources Required: Funding for delivery of programme, plus follow-up mentoring support if necessary (LEO Measure 2, LEADER). Timescale: Annual, beginning in year 1 with initial cohort, review performance thereafter.
	Capacity Building Workshops: Partner with Co. Leitrim, to develop critical mass and benefit from their strong experience regarding roll-out of DCCOI training supports, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuse programme HPSU programme Craft development workshops Export programmes etc. 	Roscommon County Council (LEO) with Leitrim Design House/Leitrim LEO and DCCOI, plus LEADER	Build on previous LEADER funded initiative for craft enterprises. Resources Required: Co-ordinator plus programme funding (DCCOI, LEO, LEADER). Timescale: Annual programme to be organised.
	Web Presence: Develop and maintain a modern web presence for craft in the county, linked to complementary activities (e.g. tourism, festivals etc.).	Roscommon County Council plus CTN and other	Resources Required: Co-ordinator – link to tourism promotion/web presence. Timescale: Begin in Year 1 – update at least

		stakeholders	annually.
Employment/ Graduate Recruitment/ Retention	<p>Labour Market Activation/Placements: Promote and facilitate the placement of internship candidates (e.g. job-bridge initiative for creative sector via DCCOI) in suitable creative/craft enterprises with capacity and growth potential</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the placement of suitable graduates in suitable creative/craft enterprises with growth potential, in conjunction with Third Level sector.</p>	RLP have agreed to take the lead on this as part of its labour market activation programme, with support from others, including RCC. Other stakeholders will include third level institutions and Intertrade Ireland	<p>This will involve liaison with the third level sector and promoters of labour activation schemes, so that these can be actively promoted in the county, as well as the development of an Employer register with an interest in graduate work placement from third level institutions, graduate programmes and other state sponsored job-activation schemes.</p> <p>Resources required: Project Co-ordinator (part-time), ideally from existing staff.</p> <p>Timescale: Immediate, and ongoing throughout the strategy implementation period.</p>
Finance	<p>Loan Finance: Promote the WDC micro-loan fund for creative industries to relevant enterprises ensuring Roscommon is well represented amongst those supported.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with WDC	<p>Support required to ensure Roscommon achieves its share of this regional programme.</p> <p>Resources required: Promotion and animation support.</p> <p>Timescale: Ongoing in line with prog rollout.</p>
	<p>Grant Aid: Prioritise creative/craft sector for grant support for eligible applications.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO), with support of other agencies	<p>Resources required: Finance to fund animation support aimed at assisting enterprise to access available finance.</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing throughout strategy timeframe.</p>
	<p>Finance Training: Provide workshops/support to craft enterprises in areas of costing/pricing in association with DCCOI</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with DCCOI	<p>Resources required: Co-ordinator, plus programme funding (DCCOI, LEO).</p> <p>Timescale: Year 1, repeat based on demand.</p>
Cost Competitiveness	<p>Administrative Support: Evaluate what efficiencies/savings and growth opportunities may be achieved through collective support actions provided by a central resource e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrative support, • marketing and promotion, • web sales. <p>Implement as appropriate</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	<p>Research work required before implementation on pilot basis. To avoid duplication, link with energy efficiency training in other sectors (e.g food).</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator/administrator (possible through jobbridge or similar programme).</p> <p>Timescale: Year 2, on pilot basis.</p>
Research/ Innovation Support	<p>Innovation Expertise: Develop an “Innovation House” Mentoring Initiative targeted at Creative sector, with inputs from DCCOI specialist mentor panel and other external experts.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO), with LEADER and WestBIC based on success of pilot under previous RDP	<p>Linkages will be required with sectoral expertise in craft sector, including research centres, craft agencies and private sector experts.</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator plus funding for implementation similar to pilot scheme under LEADER (LEO Measure 2, LEADER).</p> <p>Timescale: TBC in line with other craft initiatives.</p>

	<p>International Linkages: Identify and prepare submissions for suitable EU exchange/co-operation projects that can support craft enterprises to research, exchange, internationalise at EU level. Implement as appropriate.</p>	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with WestBIC and others with experience/ expertise in securing EU project funding	<p>This will require ongoing resource to monitor calls and identify suitable projects/proposals as they arise.</p> <p>Resources required: Personnel to identify, co-ordinate and follow-up proposals, possible finance to prepare applications (e.g. EI, RCC, others).</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.</p>
	<p>Knowledge Events: Deliver regular knowledge and applied innovation events for the craft sector to develop capacity and capitalise on innovation potential to be delivered in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft Council of Ireland • Leitrim Design House • Third Level Sector 	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with Craft support stakeholders and local agencies.	<p>This will require the building of effective relationship with all relevant stakeholders in craft sector.</p> <p>Resources required: HR for co-ordination, plus event management costs.</p> <p>Timescale: Annual event over lifetime of strategy.</p>
	<p>Third Level Linkages: Establish and nurture a range of suitable relationships within third level/research sector that can support technology enterprises in the county. Develop/implement collaborative actions as appropriate.</p>	Roscommon County Council, (with support from local agencies and third level /research centres	See Foundation Enablers for related Actions, resources and timescales
Promotion	<p>Database Listings: Maintain an up to date listing of all craft enterprises for communication / dissemination purposes</p> <p>Ensure all relevant craft enterprises (and Craft Network) are registered with DCCOI to enable them to avail of supports available.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with DCCOI and local craft network.	<p>Animation support may be required for individual craft enterprises to facilitation registration.</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator required.</p> <p>Timescale: Complete database in Year 1. Update annually.</p>
	<p>Craft Network: Provide support for development of Craft Network in the county and assist in securing collective funding in that way for suitable projects through DCCOI etc. (e.g. marketing, brochures, trade fairs etc.)</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with craft network	<p>Animation support may be required to assist craft network to identify/agree needs.</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator, plus animation support, matched funding.</p> <p>Timescale: Annual submission to DCCOI.</p>
	<p>National Trade Fairs & Events: Support craft enterprises to capitalise on sales opportunities, including attendance at trade fairs/events locally, regionally and nationally that can generate increased sales and return on investment.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	<p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator, plus funding for participation events (LEO).</p> <p>Timescale: Agreed annual events list</p>
	<p>Display Opportunities: Foster product display opportunities via hotels, tourist outlets, shop-fronts etc., in Co. Roscommon and surrounding region.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO), with support of tourism sector.	<p>Support required from hotels and other stakeholders in tourism sector.</p> <p>Resources Required: co-ordinator, plus funding to develop display units where necessary (LEO, LEADER). Timescale: Year 2 onwards.</p>
	<p>On-line Trading: Support the internationalisation of craft enterprises, through facilitating web development/on-line sales.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	<p>Deliver as part of on-line trading voucher scheme. Animation support may be required to maximise local participation/uptake.</p> <p>Resources Required: co-ordinator to promote and encourage participation.</p> <p>Timescale: Annual targets to be set in line with national programme.</p>

	International Fairs & Events: Support the internationalisation of craft enterprises through participating in suitable international events that can generate increased sales and return on investment.	Roscommon County Council (LEO)	Identify events either individually or as part of wider economic actions. Resources Required: Co-ordinator plus event funding (LEO, possibility of EU funding if appropriate programme is identified). Timescale: Years 2-5
	Common Identity: Include the craft sector in developing overall image of the county as vibrant, clean, green, rural region with strong cultural traditions	Roscommon County Council, (LEO)	For efficiency this should be included as part of other marketing and promotion activities, as part of overall promotion of county led by Roscommon County Council. Resources required: Timescale: ongoing up to 2020.
	Craft Trails: Develop a Craft Trail brochure for those with visitor facilities	Roscommon County Council (LEO) in conjunction with Craft Network and CTN	Ideally link with tourist trail development. Resources Required: Co-ordinator, funding (LEO) Timescale: Year 2-5, once sufficient craft enterprises are prepare

GREEN BUSINESS

Note: Roscommon LEADER Partnership previously delivered an animation programme in this sector, and may be in a position to build on this initiative in the future, supported by other stakeholders

PILLAR	DESCRIPTION	Proposed Lead (& other actors)	Further details, Resources Required, Timescale etc.
Infrastructure	Incubation: Explore and develop the possibility of establishing green business incubator units (manufacturing) in Boyle or other suitable area, prioritising existing suitable buildings with development potential.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, with support from Boyle Chamber, Roscommon County Council, Enterprise Ireland	Also liaise with SEAI, as part of project team to explore possibilities, establish potential and viability. Resources Required: Project team, site/building, grant aid (e.g. EI CEC scheme, LEADER or other possibilities), matched finance, operational funding, centre management resource. Timescale: Year 1-2 establish viability and prepare business plan. Implement in Years 3-5 depending on viability aspects, funding availability.
	Flagship Initiative: Develop/Support Flagship projects in green business sector, aimed at fast-tracking the development of the sector and to enhance the profile of the county in this growth area (e.g. district heating, biomass projects, recycling etc.).	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with local and regional stakeholders (e.g. Western Development Commission), private sector etc.	This can result in positioning the county at the forefront of this sector, creating both direct and indirect employment. For example a major biomass facility can provide a cost advantage in some sectors whilst also creating direct employment and indirect employment in the farming sector for the supply of biomass. Supply chain development will be required. Other possibilities exist in recycling/materials recovery Resources Required: Human resource to project manage activities, animation/consultancy expertise to identify potential/viable projects, feasibility analysis etc. Funding will be required to implement investment projects (LEADER, LEO, EI, WDC, RCC, plus matching finance including VC) EU funding may be available if appropriate programmes can be identified. Timescale: Years 1-2: Undertake project identification, animation, feasibility and viability activities, Years 3-5 Implementation activities
Education/ Training	Accelerator Programmes: Develop and deliver suitable green business starter and accelerator programmes to foster green businesses in the county, including development and application of new technologies, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland and SEAI	This may also involve relevant third level institutions / research centres. Resources Required: Co-ordinator, plus funding to run programmes (LEADER, EI, LEO). Timescale: Annual starter programmes, based on demand. Accelerator programme in Year 2, and thereafter depending on demand following

			evaluation of pilot programmes
Employment/ Graduate Retention	<p>Labour Market Activation/Placements: Promote and facilitate the placement of job-bridge/internship candidates in suitable green business enterprises in the county.</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the placement of graduate placement in suitable green business enterprises in the county in conjunction with Third Level sector.</p>	RLP have agreed to take the lead on these activities as part of its labour market activation programme, with support from others, including RCC. Other stakeholders will include third level institutions	<p>This will involve liaison with the third level sector and promoters of labour activation schemes, so that these can be actively promoted in the county, so that targets can be achieved. It will also require the development of an Employer register with an interest in graduate work placement from third level institutions, graduate programmes and other state sponsored job-activation schemes.</p> <p>Resources required: Project Co-ordinator (part-time), ideally from existing staff</p> <p>Timescale: Immediate, and ongoing throughout the strategy implementation period</p>
Finance	Grant Aid: Prioritise green business sector for grant support for eligible applications and provide animation support to facilitate ease of access.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with other agencies (LEADER, EI, etc.)	<p>Resources required: Finance to provide animation support aimed at assisting enterprise to access available finance</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing throughout strategy timeframe, and in line with funding calls</p>
	Private Investment: Develop more seed and venture funding activity along with private investment/business angel activity in the county to encourage increased investment in businesses with growth potential.	WestBIC, in conjunction with RCC, and Seed fund managers etc.	<p>As Managers of the Business Angel Partnership in the West region WestBIC may be best placed to develop this further in Co. Roscommon. Liaise with all other agencies to promote etc.</p> <p>Resources Required: Personnel resource to develop / co-ordinate</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing for strategy period</p>
Cost Competitiveness	<p>Deliver energy efficiency training for enterprises in the county as a cost reduction/competitiveness strategy</p> <p>Support enterprise to 'green' their business from energy efficiency, environment and product development perspectives.</p>	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, in conjunction with SEAI	<p>Deliver in conjunction with SEAI, similar to pilot undertaken. Also build on learning from LEADER's Acceleration Green Business Programme. To avoid duplication, link with energy efficiency training in other sectors</p> <p>Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate, plus venue(s) for training activity. Animation support for 'greening' activity. Possibly funding for implementing of capital items (LEADER, LEO)</p> <p>Timescale: Implement training at regular intervals based on demand</p>
Research/ Innovation Support	Innovation Expertise: Develop an "Innovation House" Initiative targeted at green business sector, with inputs from SEAI and external experts to foster growth of green businesses	Roscommon LEADER Partnership,	<p>Build on Innovation House activity from previous LEADER programme and managed by WestBIC, to animate and foster innovation in this sector. Liaise with SEAI and relevant third level sector / research centres as well as external experts.</p> <p>Resources Required: Funding for co-ordination plus assignment of experts to individual enterprises</p> <p>Timescale: Ongoing over lifetime of strategy,</p>

			based on targets to be agreed
	International Opportunities: Identify and prepare submissions for suitable EU exchange/co-operation projects that can support green business enterprises to research, exchange and internationalise at EU level.	Roscommon County Council, LEADER, in conjunction with WestBIC and others with experience/expertise in securing EU project funding	This will require a collaborative approach both locally, as well as at EU level to identify suitable partners to engage with project activity. Include third level sector where appropriate. Resources required: Personnel to identify, co-ordinate and follow-up proposals, possible finance to prepare applications (e.g. EI, RCC, others) Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Innovation Funding: Support green business enterprise to avail of Innovation Vouchers and other innovation funding, appropriate to their needs.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), LEADER plus Enterprise Ireland, with support of other agencies for promotion etc.	Animation support for green entrepreneurs/enterprises may be required to access funding Resources required: Liaison resource, funding for animation activity (LEO, LEADER) Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Knowledge Events: Deliver regular knowledge and applied innovation events for the green business sector to develop capacity and capitalise on innovation potential to be delivered in conjunction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEAI • Third Level Sector / Research Centres 	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, in co-operation with local and regional agencies	Deliver in conjunction with local and regional agencies - SEAI, third level sector, WDC etc. Resources required: Co-ordinator / liaison person, plus funding for event management (advertising, speakers, room hire etc.) Timescale: Annual Event targeted at this sector
	R&D Expertise: Foster the Cross Border Fusion/Acumen programmes to support the recruitment of suitable R&D and marketing graduates in the green business sector	Roscommon LEADER Partnership have agreed to take the lead on this as part of labour market activation activity, with support of other agencies (see other Employment/graduate activities)	Liaise with Intertrade Ireland and local co-ordinators, as well as with existing food enterprises Resources required: Personnel to co-ordinate (proposed LEADER staff as part of labour market activation activity) Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls
	Third Level Linkages: Establish and nurture a range of suitable relationships within third level/research sector that can support technology enterprises in the county. Develop/implement collaborative actions as appropriate.	Roscommon County Council, (with support from local agencies and third level /research centres	See Foundation Enablers for related Actions, resources and timescales
Promotion	Common Identity: Promote the clean green image of the county to foster new green enterprise and attract relevant businesses to locate in the area	Roscommon County Council, including Economic SPC, C&E, LEADER, tourism stakeholders, Chambers etc.	Build into overall promotional activities, led by Roscommon County Council, as part of strategic marketing of the county. Timescale: ongoing up to 2020

TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Note: As a fledgling growth area locally, this will require inputs from all stakeholders, to pro-actively animate, promote and encourage new sectoral activity.

PILLAR	DESCRIPTION	Proposed Lead (& other actors)	Further details, Resources Required, Timescale etc.
Infrastructure	<p>Fibre Broadband: Map and promote the availability of fibre broadband along the MAN routes in Co. Roscommon, identifying suitable commercial buildings on these routes as locations for technology-based enterprises</p> <p>Other high speed broadband: Map the availability of other high-speed broadband throughout the county and promote its availability</p> <p>Broadband Hotspots: Provide and promote broadband 'hotspots' throughout the county, including broadband accessibility at hotdesk locations, enterprise centres, libraries etc.</p>	Roscommon County Council (with support from broadband providers, Chambers and development groups, community enterprise centres, library buildings)	<p>To avoid duplication, use existing resources where possible to provide hotspots, via libraries, enterprise centres etc.</p> <p>Resources Required: Human resource to co-ordinate/animate activity. Funding may be necessary to put suitable deskspace in place in suitable locations (LEO, RCC, LEADER)</p> <p>Timescale: Mapping in Year 1, Hotspots Years 1-2, ongoing promotion</p>
	<p>Technology Centre: Explore the potential for developing technology-based incubator/ enterprise centre with fibre connectivity in Roscommon town as main urban area, taking a collaborative approach across relevant stakeholders to bring project to fruition.</p> <p>Ensure linkage with relevant third level/research centres to support development of technology enterprises.</p>	Roscommon County Council, with support from all agencies, LEO, LEADER, WestBIC, Enterprise Ireland, Chamber of Commerce	<p>For cost effectiveness, consideration should be given to existing suitable buildings in attractive locations along MAN route.</p> <p>Resources Required: Project team, suitable building /site, grant aid (e.g. EI CEC scheme, LEADER or other possibilities), matched finance, operational funding, centre management</p> <p>Timescale: Year 1: establish viability and prepare business plan. Implement in Years 2-3 depending on viability aspects, funding availability.</p>
	<p>Advanced Space: Ensure availability of suitable sites / advanced space available for technology-based indigenous and FDI companies wishing to locate in the county.</p> <p>Where possible, provide access to appropriate advance infrastructure to support technology sector (e.g fibre broadband, incubation units, clean room facilities and other enabling technologies).</p>	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with IDA	<p>Resources Required: Access to sites, funding for development.</p> <p>Timescale: Years 1-5, review regularly in line with CDP.</p>
Education/ Training	<p>Accelerator Programme: Develop and deliver suitable technology enterprise starter and accelerator programmes to foster technology entrepreneurship in the county in conjunction with relevant agencies/stakeholders.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland and other local agencies	<p>This should also involve relevant third level institutions / research centres.</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator, plus funding to run programmes (LEO, EI, possibly LEADER).</p> <p>Timescale: Annual starter programmes, based on demand. Accelerator programme in Year 2, and thereafter depending on demand following evaluation of pilot programmes</p>
	<p>Youth Skills: Promote entrepreneurship, ICT and technology skills from a young age by implementing a range of programmes to encourage student to consider technology/ICT-based careers/entrepreneurship in</p>	Roscommon County Council, LEO, LCDC,	<p>Keep abreast of new approaches/initiatives and implement to foster creativity, innovation and</p>

	<p>the future. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coderdojo programmes throughout the county • Intel Ideation Programmes and similar initiatives • Language skills for emerging/large trading partners/ economies (Chinese, Russian etc.) • Entrepreneurship programmes (e.g. Young Enterprise Scheme, Competitions Awards etc.) • Guest Entrepreneurial visits to schools • Participation in suitable Erasmus programmes. 	Education Providers and other relevant stakeholders	<p>entrepreneurship from young age</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordination support, plus funding for project implementation (LEO, LEADER, RCC)</p> <p>Timescale: Annual programme should be developed in conjunction with education providers, and revised each year.</p>
	<p>Skills Development: Foster the development of ICT / technology skills where gaps exist, through Momentum (Solas), Springboard (third level outreach), Skillnet and similar programmes.</p>	Roscommon LEADER Partnership, through labour market activation programme	<p>Good engagement required with training providers (Solas, Third Level, Skillnets, ETB etc.)</p> <p>Resources Required: Co-ordinator to identify needs and assist with programme roll-out.</p> <p>Timescale: Years 1-5, in line with Prog calls</p>
Employment/ Graduate Retention	<p>Labour Market Activation/Placements: Promote and facilitate the placement of internship candidates in suitable technology enterprises in the county.</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the placement of graduate placement in suitable technology enterprises in the county in conjunction with Third Level sector.</p>	RLP have agreed to take the lead on these activities as part of its labour market activation programme, with support from others, including RCC. Other stakeholders will include third level institutions	<p>This will involve liaison with the third level sector and promoters of labour activation schemes, so that these can be actively promoted in the county, so that targets can be achieved.</p> <p>It will also require the development of an Employer register with an interest in graduate work placement, graduate programmes and other state sponsored job-activation schemes.</p> <p>Resources required: Project Co-ordinator (part-time), ideally from existing staff</p> <p>Timescale: Immediate, and ongoing throughout the strategy implementation period</p>
Finance	<p>Grant Aid: Prioritise technology sector for grant support for eligible applications and provide animation support where necessary to facilitate ease of access.</p>	Roscommon County Council (LEO), in conjunction with other agencies (LEADER, EI, etc.)	<p>Resources required: Finance to fund animation support aimed at assisting enterprise to access available finance</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing throughout strategy timeframe, and in line with funding calls</p>
	<p>Private Investment: Develop more seed and venture funding activity along with private investment/business angel activity in the county to encourage increased investment in businesses with growth potential.</p>	WestBIC, in conjunction with RCC, and Seed fund managers etc.	<p>As Managers of the Business Angel Partnership in the West region WestBIC may be best placed to develop this further in Co. Roscommon. Liaise with all other agencies to promote etc.</p> <p>Resources Required: Personnel resource to develop / co-ordinate</p> <p>Timescale: ongoing for strategy period</p>
Cost Competitiveness	<p>Low Cost Incubation: Provide access to enterprise infrastructure at affordable rates to attract technology enterprise to locate/establish in the county – See infrastructure pillar for details</p>	Roscommon County Council, with relevant stakeholders (agencies, Chambers etc)	<p>See Infrastructure pillar for project details to assist in achieve this objective. To avoid duplication, link with energy efficiency training in other sectors (e.g food)</p>
Research/	<p>International Opportunities: Identify suitable EU exchange/co-operation projects (H2020 etc.) that can foster and support technology sector enterprises in the county to undertake collaborative research,</p>	Roscommon County Council, in	<p>This will require a collaborative approach both locally, as well as at EU level to identify suitable</p>

Innovation Support	exchange, internationalisation at EU level.	conjunction with WestBIC and others with experience/ expertise in securing EU project funding	partners to engage with project activity. Include third level sector where appropriate. Resources required: Personnel to identify, co-ordinate and follow-up proposals, possible finance to prepare applications (e.g. EI, RCC, others) Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Innovation Funding: Support Technology enterprise to avail of Innovation Vouchers and other innovation funding as appropriate to their needs.	Roscommon County Council (LEO), plus Enterprise Ireland, with support of other agencies for promotion etc.	Animation support for technology entrepreneurs may be required to access funding Resources required: Liaison resource, funding for animation activity (LEO, LEADER) to access EI funding for innovation vouchers Timescale: ongoing to end of 2020, in line with programme calls.
	Third Level Linkages: Establish and nurture a range of suitable relationships within third level/research sector that can support technology enterprises in the county. Develop/implement collaborative actions as appropriate.	Roscommon County Council, (with support from local agencies and third level /research centres	See Foundation Enablers for related Actions, resources and timescales
Promotion	Ambassador Programmes: Foster an ambassador programme by engaging with external/internal “ambassadors”, including existing large companies, who are willing to promote the county as a suitable location to establish/locate technology companies. Also include/engage with large Roscommon diaspora, based on significant out-migration from the county	Roscommon County Council, in conjunction with large companies located in the county and other ambassadors as appropriate	Initial meetings have already identified enthusiasm for this approach amongst large companies in the county, as well as from diaspora. Also, link with invest Ireland initiative as appropriate. Resources Required: Time inputs at management level to identify and engage with suitable ambassadors Timescale: Year 1 Formalise/Develop Ambassador Prog. Year 2-5: Implement as appropriate.
	Foreign Direct Investment: Collaborate with the IDA to promote the area for technology enterprise to locate in suitable locations in the county	Roscommon County Council	Link with “Ambassadors” initiative above Resources Required: Human resource to co-ordinate/liaise Timescale: Throughout lifetime of the strategy

MONITORING & PERFORMANCE

This strategy has already identified the requirement for good governance, leadership and collaborative engagement across stakeholders and agencies so that the Strategic Action Plan can be implemented and significant results achieved. The successful implementation of the Actions as identified in this Strategy will also require the setting of appropriate targets, coupled with the necessary performance monitoring based on agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

At a fundamental level, one of the important targets is to put in place the basic enterprise and innovation infrastructure required to foster and facilitate entrepreneurship, especially in the prioritised sectors with growth potential in the local economy. To achieve this the establishment of incubation infrastructure, including specialist centres, broadband access and other key enabling technologies are required as well as access to innovation supports to foster growth.

In line with the new National Entrepreneurship Policy (2014) and the latest Action Plan for Jobs 2014, the key outputs should be measurable in terms of the following:

- Number of new start-ups, including increased survival rates
- Number of existing companies scaling up operations
- Numbers of job created
- Increases in turnover, including increases in exports
- Engagement with research centres, R&D and other innovation activities.

Therefore, initiatives should build in direct or indirect targets relating to these criteria so that performance can be monitored, measured, benchmarked and compared to regional and national performance. Specific references should be made to the targets set out in these National Policy documents and comparative KPI's should be established for Co. Roscommon based on the analysis below.

In terms of performance measurement for specific sectors/measures, given its current position, it is critical that the county can achieve at least its minimum share of activity/outputs in proportion to national figures/targets across relevant programmes and sectors. At a national level, for first-time entrepreneurship, targets are set out in the new National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement as follows:

- Increase the number of start-ups by 25%

- Increase the survival rate in the first five years by 25%
- Improve the capacity of start-ups to grow to scale by 25%.

Therefore, Roscommon needs to achieve these targets at a minimum, and ideally exceed these, to enhance its current economic performance.

In terms of specific quantitative targets, based on the county population of 1.4% of national figures and with a substantial landmass (in the top 10 in the State); Roscommon should aim to achieve at least 1.4% of economic activity (and ideally 1.5%-2% to enhance its current position) depending on the sector/nature of programmes. However, given the current economic profile, with one third of the workforce travelling out of the county to their workplace, for some programmes a lower target may be set initially, but increasing over time.

Therefore, as examples, Roscommon's share of national programmes such as internship and work placement programmes, Innovation Vouchers, Seed & Venture Capital funds, on-line trading initiatives, micro-finance, Food Academy Programme, DCCOI supports etc. should be benchmarked against these figures.

Similarly, within the West region, including Counties Galway and Mayo, Roscommon accounts for 14% of the population and 18% of the landmass, and therefore should aim to generate regional economic activity at least within those parameters. For example, regional tourism performance is generally measured for the West Region and Roscommon should aim to capture its appropriate share of this market.

At the Western Development Commission (WDC) level, Roscommon occupies 10% of the landmass with 8% of the population, providing an indicative proportion of economic activity that should be targeted for WDC programmes and initiatives. Examples include the WDC Micro Loan Fund targeted at the creative sector and the more general WDC Investment Fund aimed at business, community initiatives and flagship projects.

At the same time the following horizontal principles should be taken into account:

- Balanced Development, as appropriate across the county
- Equality
- Sustainability, both in terms of long-term viability as well as consideration for the environment

Based on this analysis, a sample KPI Guide for Co. Roscommon, taking into account the proposed measures/Actions for the county, is presented overleaf, which can be used to inform decision making in relation to the implementation of individual Actions.

Sample KPI Guide for Co. Roscommon across a range of Action Areas:

Programme/ Sectors	National Targets/Figures	KPI Guide for Co. Roscommon
<u>New Entrepreneurship</u>	National target of 3,000 new start-ups annually Increase of 25% in survival rate of new start ups Increased scaling up activity by 25%	45 new start-ups (1.5% of national figures) per annum required to maintain/enhance position of county nationally Similar targets to be set in Co. Roscommon Similar target to be set locally
<u>On-line Trading</u>	National Digital Strategy aims to get a further 2,000 businesses trading online by the end of 2015 (2 years)	Roscommon targets should be set at least 1.5% of total, i.e. 30 micro-enterprises
<u>HPSU Activity</u>	In 2013, 7 HPSU enterprises (out of 85 nationally) were located in the West Region. Target for 2015 is 100 HPSU's	Set a target of a minimum of one HPSU in Years 1-2 increasing to 2 in Years 3-5
<u>H2020 – EU Research & Innovation Fund</u>	National target: €1.25bn of H2020 funding over 5 years	Proposed H2020 target for Roscommon: €20m, based on 1.6% of national target
<u>Other EU International exchange progs / twinning initiatives</u>	No national targets set as yet	Ensure Roscommon achieves its share of these programmes, when call are announced
<u>Tourism</u>	National figures show 8 million overseas visitors to Ireland in 2013 with continued growth in 2014 and further growth predicted for the coming years	Roscommon needs to double its overseas visitors from 42,000 (0.66% of national) in 2012 to 84,000 to achieve 1.25% of national share.
<u>Food</u>	Food Academy: National target is to support 350 new start-ups / expansions per annum FOOD WORKS: National target 10 enterprise	Local target should be set at minimum of 3-4 start-ups / expansions per annum (out of 10 prog participants) Aim should be to get at least one Roscommon based food enterprise on the National FoodWorks Prog

		every 2 years
<u>Foreign Direct Investment</u>	National targets of 155 investments (2015)	Secure at least one new investment annually
<u>Enterprise Ireland Exporter Division</u>	National target of 700 companies in 2015	Minimum of 10 Roscommon enterprises to participate
<u>Craft Sector</u>	Currently 2,400 craft enterprises registered with DCCOI and eligible for support WDC loan fund for craft sector	Increase from current level of 17 registries to a minimum of 40 registries (1.7% similar to Co Leitrim) based on rural-bias of craft sector Achieve share for Co. Roscommon, based on size relative to WDC Region
<u>Graduate Placements</u>	Roscommon consistently features in the bottom 3 counties in terms of graduate employment/retention	Increase graduate placements/recruitment to move Roscommon out of the bottom 3 counties in terms of graduate employment in the county.
<u>Internship Programmes</u>	National target of 8,500 placements on JobBridge scheme	Achieve a minimum of 125 placements or more to maintain current position
<u>Incubation Space</u>	N/A	Develop flagship incubation facilities identified in this report
<u>Festivals and Events</u>	Promoting Festivals and events is a key part of the Fáilte Ireland's strategy for tourism growth into the future.	Strategic Plan should be put in place and implemented to grow selected festivals and events internationally (minimum 2), whilst also targeting the hosting of other national/international events in the county each year.
<u>Innovation Voucher Scheme</u>	450 vouchers to be allocated for research projects nationally	Secure a minimum of 7 Innovation Vouchers for Roscommon companies.
<u>Innovation Partnership Programme with Third Levels</u>	National target of 65 Innovation Partnerships in 2015	Secure 6 Innovation Partnership for Roscommon

Appendix I

Details of Secondary Research

Secondary Research Documents

Action Plan for Jobs 2014, Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation

Action Programme for Effective Local Government, (2012) Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government

BMW Annual Report (2013) BMW

Building Ireland's Smart Economy (2008) Department of the Taoiseach,

Co Roscommon Tourism Strategy, (2010-2014) Roscommon County Development Board

Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (2013) Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)

Construction 2020 – A strategy for a Renewal Construction Sector. (2014) Department of the Taoiseach

County Development Plan (2008-2014) Roscommon Co. Co.

Creative Clusters, (2013) Indecon

CSO Business Demography Data (2011) (CSO)

Doing More with Digital - National Digital Strategy (2013) Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Doing More with Digital National Digital Strategy for Ireland(2013) Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources

Employment and Skills Strategy in Ireland, (2011) OECD

Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, (2012) European Commission

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Policies, (2008, p.24) Lundstorm, A., Almerud, M. and Stevenson, L.

Entrepreneurship in Ireland (January 2014) Published by the Entrepreneurship Forum c/o Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

EU Framework Budget for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020, (2013) European Commission

Europe 2020, (2013) European Commission

Evaluation of Enterprise Supports for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship, (2012) Forfas

Fáilte Ireland Lakelands & Inland Waterways Strategy (2010-2015) Fáilte Ireland

Food Harvest 2020 Strategy, (2013) Department of Agriculture, Fishing & Foods

Food Incubation Centres (2013) Bord Bía

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Reports (2012) Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Government Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship (2014), Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation

Guide to Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS 3), (2012) European Union

Innovation Union Strategy, (October 2010) European Commission

Ireland's Draft Rural Development Programme (2014) Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Ireland's Competitive Scorecard 2014, (2014) Forfás -National Competitiveness Council

Local Government Sectoral Strategy to Support Economic Recovery and Jobs, (2012) Environment, Community & Local Government – City & County Mgt Association

National Policy Statement for Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation

National Rural Development Programme, (2007-2013) Department of Environment, Community & Local Government

Overview of the Main Infrastructure Issues for Enterprise, (2012) Forfás

Pobal Research Report,(2013)

Regional Competitiveness Agenda Report for the West Region (2010), Forfás

Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022, (2010) The West Regional Authority

Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) (2014) Forfás

Report of the High Level Action Group on Green Enterprise (2011). Forfás

Report of the Innovation Task Force (2010) Forfás

Reports by Forfas (2012), the National Competitiveness Council' (2014) Forfás

Research Prioritisation Exercise (2012) Forfás

Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020, (2014) Roscommon Co. Co.

Roscommon Integrated Development Company Strategy, (2011-2013) RIDC

Roscommon LEO 2014 Plan (2014) Roscommon Local Enterprise Office

Roscommon Training Needs Analysis 2011, (Roscommon Higher Education)

Seed and Venture Capital Programme (2007-2013) Enterprise Ireland

Start-Up Weblinks, A Guide for Entrepreneurs and Early Stage Businesses in the West Region, (2014) Enterprise Ireland

Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, (2006) Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth, (2013) The County & City Manager's Association

The Forfás National Skills Bulletin, (2013) Forfás

The Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group (2004), Forfás

The Technology Foresight Report (1999) Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation -Forfas Group

Tourism Development Strategy, (2010) Fáilte Ireland

Western Development Commission Annual Report (2012) WDC

What Do Graduates Do The Class of 2012 First Destinations Report (Dec 2013) Higher Education Authority

This above activity was further overlaid with the outputs/feedback from Focus Group workshops where the stakeholders were blended (e.g. SMEs, Local Authority, State Agencies, third level/research centres etc.) to develop further insight and a validation of issues and proposed solutions and measures.

Appendix II

Details of Consultation Process

Overview of Consultation Approach

As agreed in the Terms of Reference, along with extensive consultation of relevant documents, strategies and reports, a detailed and consultation exercise was undertaken across both public and private sector stakeholders relevant to the Project Objectives, to capture the views and opinions among private companies in the productive, services and other sectors, service support organisations, associations, education providers, support professionals and others within the county and outside.

An additional qualitative approach using primary interviews was also undertaken among the relevant support agencies with the potential to impact most on the subject area.

In addition various bodies were invited to make submissions on the topic to a defined template. These submissions were collated and blended into discussion topic areas which will further inform the exercise

Specifically the following consultations activities were undertaken:

- Establishment of a working group to oversee the project, including Roscommon County Council, Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Roscommon County Enterprise Board (now the Local Enterprise Office) and WestBIC and consultation with these on a regular basis
- Review of EU, national and regional policy framework documents and publications (see Appendix I for a comprehensive listing – to follow)
- Socio-economic analysis and review of current local and regional economic performance and comparison with other regions where appropriate
- Analysis of a range of economic catalyst projects and support programmes in the region, and outside, to determine good practice and identify opportunities. These include:
 - Accelerating Green business project in Roscommon
 - Food Hub Initiatives
 - Food Academy, FoodWorks and other food programmes
 - Roscommon Innovative House Initiative
 - Craft Development Initiatives, including Leitrim Design House
 - Metric Ireland – Medical Device Support initiative
 - Technology Centre Projects
 - Effective community enterprise centre/incubator models
- Consultation with Chambers of Commerce and other development groups/organisations that can impact on enterprise and economic development in the county, including
 - Roscommon Chamber of Commerce
 - Boyle Chamber of Commerce
 - Ballaghaderreen & District Area Community Development
 - Enterprise Hub, Castlerea

- Athlone Chamber of Commerce re. proposed enterprise spaces developments in Monksland region
- Consultation with enterprise centres in the county and neighbouring regions including:
 - Roscommon Enterprise Centre
 - Boyle Enterprise Centre
 - Ballaghaderreen Enterprise Centre
 - Enterprise Hub, Castlerea
 - The Hive, Carrick-on-Shannon
 - Ballinasloe Enterprise & Technology Centre, Creagh
 - Proposal for Enterprise Centre at Monksland, Co. Roscommon
- Discussions with a selection of large enterprises in Co. Roscommon to gather their views on running an enterprise in the county, attracting FDI, opportunities and issues arising. These include:
 - Kepak, Athleague
 - Aurivo, Ballaghaderreen
 - Harmac, Castlerea
- Feedback from consultation sessions/focus groups with enterprises and stakeholder groups focusing on positive opportunities for the county
- Consultation and follow-up with representatives from all third level institutes in the surrounding region, using a defined template including:
 - Athlone Institute of Technology
 - Institute of Technology, Sligo
 - St Angela’s College, Sligo
 - Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology
 - NUI, Galway
- Consultation with regional and national level organisations and projects/initiatives with possible relevance to Roscommon including:
 - Teagasc
 - An Bord Bia
 - Design & Craft Council of Ireland
 - SEAI
 - Enterprise Ireland
- Discussions with stakeholder organisations in neighbouring regions to identify potential for collaborative actions including:
 - Midland Regional Authority/MidlandsIreland.ie
 - Leitrim County Council/Leitrim LEO/ Leitrim Design House
- Visits to relevant projects/initiatives with applicability to Roscommon
 - Drumshanbo Food Hub
 - St Angela’s Food Technology Centre, Sligo
 - Galway Technology Centre
 - Polymer Centre, Athlone
 - Leitrim Design House, Carrick on Shannon
- Participation in relevant seminars and events to gather information as part of the strategy preparation:
 - Enterprise Ireland/AIT Food Development Workshop, Athlone
 - H2020 information events
 - Information events about other EU programmes/initiatives
 - Teagasc/An Bord Bia Food Development Workshop
 - Midlands Ireland Food Network Promotional Event
- Hosting of workshops and other events to gather information and kick-start support actions where appropriate e.g.
 - Accelerating Green Business Launch, Boyle
 - Energy training for small business, Roscommon
 - “Crafted in Roscommon” Network
- Investigation of other EU regions and EU funding programmes to identify suitable partners and projects for interregional collaboration and targeted funding opportunities
- Circulation of feedback questionnaires to databases of enterprise (and enterprise agencies/stakeholders) in the county and via workshops/info events to identify current status, needs and opportunities for growth
- Analysis of research information and development of SWOT for the county
- Focus on key sectors with growth potential and follow-up on possibilities and opportunities through further consultation and discussions with relevant stakeholders
- Development of Strategy House Model to identify opportunities/address gaps

- Evaluation of strategic priorities in line with the overall vision, focusing on key sectors, enablers and pillars identified in the Strategy House Model.
- Elaboration of Actions in line with these strategic priorities.
- Preparation of draft actions in consultation with steering group
- Circulation of relevant aspects to stakeholders for feedback and inputs
- Finalisation of Strategy document according to Terms of Reference

Appendix III

Innovation Policy Approaches of Advanced International Economies

United States Policy Trends

Austrialian Policy Trends

South Korea Policy Trends

United States Policy Trends

The US industrial and innovation policy has been focused on ensuring that internationally it maintains its leadership position globally for technology development that underpins multiple industries. Over the last number of decades US innovation and entrepreneurship policy has been underpinned with a legislative frameworks and bills such as the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) of 1981, Small Business Innovation Development Act of 1982, National Cooperative Research Act of 1984. Some empirical analysis of these legislative programmes shows that they have had a measurable impact on the US economy and its position as a global technology leader.

The current policy focus in the USA is on increasing the levels of commercialisation from federally funded R&D, expand access to capital, reduce any further bureaucracy that prevents entrepreneurship and start-ups, expansion of entrepreneurship education and mentoring programs, and increase collaborations between established firms, entrepreneurs and start-ups. For example is reducing bureaucracy the current administration in the US has committed to permanent elimination of capital gains tax on certain small business stock while the Treasury Development is seeking ways to simplify rules for \$5 billion in tax credits for private investment in lower income communities. For connecting mentor and entrepreneurs, SBA with the Department of Energy and Advanced Research Projects Agency Energy are funding 4 business accelerators and the Department of Veterans Affairs has launched new incubators to support veteran high potential start-ups. To accelerate innovation the Department of Commerce has built on the i6 challenge programme in 2012 with other federal departments has launched other similar challenge type programmes that are designed to accelerate technology commercialisation. In 2013-2014 i⁶ Green was aimed at 'Proof of Concept Centers to accelerate technology-led economic development in pursuit of a vibrant, innovative clean economy.' (See Table X for a comprehensive list of initiatives overleaf).

Table X: Summary of Key Programme Initiatives

Expanding Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs

SBA to Launch Two \$1 Billion Initiatives for Impact Investing and Early-Stage Seed Financing:

- **\$1 Billion Impact Investment Fund:** SBA will commit \$1 billion to those funds that invest growth capital in companies located in underserved communities. This will include investing in economically distressed areas as well as those companies in emerging sectors such as clean energy. SBA will provide up to a 2:1 match to private capital raised by these funds, partnering with private investors to target “impact” investments.
- **\$1 Billion Early-Stage Innovation Fund:** Early-stage companies face difficult challenges accessing capital, particularly those without the necessary assets or cash flow for traditional bank funding. For high-growth companies, the gap is particularly acute in the so called “Valley of Death” for financing rounds between \$1-4 million. Over the past 4 years only 6% of all venture capital has been deployed in that stage, with 70% of the financings going to only three states – California, Massachusetts and New York. The Innovation Fund will target this gap, providing a 1:1 match to private capital raised by early stage seed funds.

Inspiring Entrepreneurs

- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship New Programs Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Innovative Teaching and Learning Efforts
- Blackstone Foundation Expands Scale-up of LaunchPad Entrepreneurship Centers to More Universities
- Marc Ecko Launched “Artists & Instigators Practicum” to Activate Next Generation of Entrepreneurs
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Expanded Programs for Young Entrepreneurs:
- Mott Foundation Announced Virtual Incubation Network for America’s Community Colleges

Connecting Mentors and Entrepreneurs

- TechStars Network
- MassChallenge \$1M Startup Competition and Accelerator to Expand Support for Nation’s Highest-Growth Startups:

- Astia Community Expands Support for Women-Led, High-Growth Startups Across America

Connecting Corporations and Entrepreneurs

- Intel Commits \$200 Million to Investment in U.S. Startups:
- IBM Commits \$150 Million to Accelerate U.S. Entrepreneurs:
- HP Expands Global Program to Support U.S. Entrepreneurs
- Facebook Launches Startup Days to Boost Entrepreneurial Businesses Across the Country:

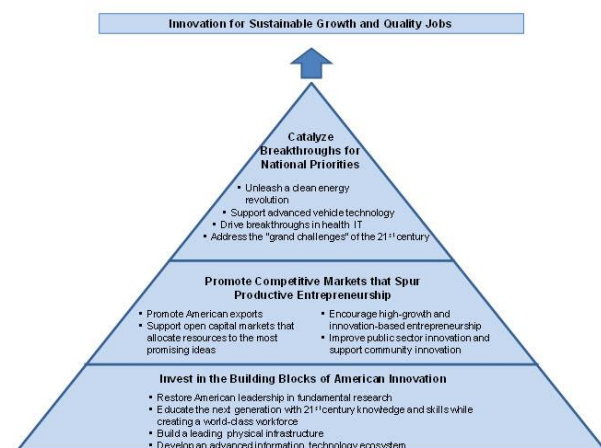
Accelerating Innovation

- Deshpande Foundation Builds New Entrepreneurship Center in New Orleans
- JumpStart America Launched to Accelerate Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystems:
- National Collegiate Inventors & Innovators Alliance (NCIIA) Unveils Venture Launch Pathway
- "Innovation Fund America" Announced by American Association of Community Colleges, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Lorain County Community College

Source: Start-Up America (2013)

In 2013 President Obama administration published an *American Strategy for Innovation* which has three areas of focus: investing in the building blocks of American Innovation, promotion of market based innovation and catalyzing breakthroughs for national priorities (see Figure X). The clear intention and ambition of this strategy is the creation of jobs and growth. To support this strategic intent new initiatives include access to high-speed wireless web access, patent reforms, clean energy technologies, and Start-Up America, which is focused on entrepreneurship. In addition, new legislation has been enacted such as Small Business Jobs Act to act as catalyst in supporting job creation and growth.

Figure X: American Strategy for Innovation



Source: White House (2013) *Strategy for American Innovation*, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/innovation/strategy/executive-summary>

Start-Up America is focused on what the White House (2013) described as ‘with new agency efforts that accelerate the transfer of research breakthroughs from university labs; create two \$1 billion initiatives for impact investing and early-stage seed financing, among other incentives to invest in high-growth startups; improve the regulatory environment for starting and growing new businesses; and increase connections between entrepreneurs and high-quality business mentors.’ In essence this initiative is about bring public and private sector actors together to support and accelerate high growth entrepreneurship in a co-ordinated. This includes entrepreneurs, businesses, universities, federal agencies and other national, regional and local leaders.

Small Business Innovation Research Programme

The Small Business Innovation Research Programme has been one of the most successful programmes in the USA to encourage small firms to engage with federal research programmes that have the potential for commercialisation. The programme is designed to allow for the exploration and feasibility testing of technology and bring it to market and is structured around three phases (see Table X). The new European Union SME funding instruments have been modelled along the SBIR programme. The SBIR programme works with over 11 federal agencies such as Dept of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Education. The key objectives of the SBIR programme are to:

- Stimulate technological innovation

- Meet Federal research and development needs.
- Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by socially and economically disadvantaged persons.
- Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal research and development funding.

The main strengths of the SBIR according to the OECD² is the programme encourages novel research, catalyst for employment and sales, supports a wide variety of firms in different industry settings, certification for investment purposes and it's a flexibility programme that address different stakeholder needs.

Table X: Three Phases of the SBIR Programme

Phase I: The objective of Phase I is to establish the technical merit, feasibility, and commercial potential of the proposed R/R&D efforts and to determine the quality of performance of the small business awardee organization prior to providing further Federal support in Phase II. SBIR Phase I awards normally do not exceed \$150,000 total costs for 6 months.

Phase II: The objective of Phase II is to continue the R/R&D efforts initiated in Phase I. Funding is based on the results achieved in Phase I and the scientific and technical merit and commercial potential of the project proposed in Phase II. Only Phase I awardees are eligible for a Phase II award. SBIR Phase II awards normally do not exceed \$1,000,000 total costs for 2 years.

Phase III: The objective of Phase III, where appropriate, is for the small business to pursue commercialization objectives resulting from the Phase I/II R/R&D activities. The SBIR program does not fund Phase III. Some Federal agencies, Phase III may involve follow-on non-SBIR funded R&D or production contracts for products, processes or services intended for use by the U.S. Government.

Source: SBIR <http://www.sbir.gov>

South Korea Policy Trends

² See OECD <http://www.oecd.org/innovation/policyplatform/48136807.pdf> for further discussion and analysis of SBIR.

South Korea is one of the world's leading innovating countries. The 2008 Science and Technology Plan aimed at achieving a 5 per cent GDP investment in R&D by 2012. Policy and structural changes were implemented in 2011 with the creation of the National Science and Technology Commission and the Intellectual Property Management Council sought to strengthen South Korea's international leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship. The South Korean innovation and industrial model is centred around five elements:

- Improving the investment climate,
- Promoting regional economic growth,
- Establishing an innovative R&D system,
- Upgrading flagship industries
- Fostering new growth engines.

The South Korean government has selected 17 new growth engine industries in green technologies, high-tech convergence and value added services, which are focused on maximising market opportunities aligned with market trends and increased levels of globalisation. For example the upgrading in semi-conductors within South Korea the world's largest chip manufacturers the focus now is on developing new chip technologies. An element of the industrial model being pursued by South Korea is to enhance entrepreneurship through benchmarking "best examples" of other countries to boost the entrepreneurial spirit of

Australian Policy Trends

The Australian economy has been very dependent on exploiting of natural resources but over the last twenty years or so there has been a focus on reducing the economic dependency on mining for example to explore other sectors. Since

the 1930s up until the most recent Government Australia had a dedicated science portfolio in cabinet. This portfolio is now part of the Industry Ministry.

In 2009 the Australian government published their innovation strategy entitled *Powering Ideas An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century*. Kim Carr (2009, piii)³ outlines this policy framework document as follows: "this is a ten-year reform agenda to make Australia more productive and more competitive. Increasing our capacity to create new knowledge and find new ways of doing business is the key to building a modern economy based on advanced skills and technology. It is the key to success in this, the global century." Elements of the strategy include enhancing skills and research capacity, business innovation, public sector innovation, collaboration and governance.

In 2013 a PwC report predicted that online and high-tech start-ups could account for 4% of GDP and 540,000 jobs by 2033, up from 0.1% of GDP and 9,500 jobs today. The Australian Innovation System Report 2013⁴ concluded 'that the rise of Asia presents many opportunities for Australia beyond the resources sectors. Seizing these opportunities will require an economy that is flexible, resilient and embraces market diversification. To achieve this, the comparative advantage of Australia's proximity to Asia needs to be complemented with its competitive advantages in innovation and better knowledge of Asian markets.' The indication of innovation and entrepreneurship activity (see Table x) shows that business expenditure on R&D declining from 2008, along with the portion financed by government, while the numbers of businesses registered for R&D tax credits concessions has increased steadily from 199

³ Carr, K. (2009) *Powering Ideas: An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century*, Executive Summary,

Commonwealth of Australia

⁴ See <http://www.industry.gov.au/science/policy/AustralianInnovationSystemReport/AISR2013/index.html> for full report

Table X: Indicators of Australia's innovation and entrepreneurship activity – Australian Trend Data

Indicators	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
BERD as % of GDP ^[1]	0.82	0.7	1.05	1.17	1.28	1.38	1.30	1.28	-	-
Proportion of BERD financed by government ^[1]	2.4	3.8	4.03	3.86	2.81	2.02	2.02	1.81	-	-
Number of businesses registered for the R&D Tax Concession ^{[2],(a)}	3,734	3,732	6,421	6,967	7,910	8,575	8,756	9,277	10,286	-
Intangible capital stock (\$billion) ^{[3],(b)}	118	157	197	208	220	231	240	250	-	-
Proportion of innovation-active businesses in Australia ^[4]	-	-	42.4	37.1	44.9	39.8	43.8	39.1	46.6	-
Proportion of innovation-active SMEs (0-199 persons) ^[5]	-	-	-	36.7	44.8	39.7	43.7	38.9	46.5	-
Proportion of innovation-active large firms (200 or more persons) ^[4]	-	-	76.5	66.2	70.8	66.7	74.3	65.9	76.0	-
Proportion of businesses introducing goods or services innovation ^[6]	-	-	19.3	18.4	21.9	18.2	19.8	17.3	20.4	-
Proportion of businesses introducing operational/ process innovation ^[6]	-	-	20.8	17	17.6	16.3	16.9	16.4	19.1	-
Proportion of businesses introducing organisational/managerial process innovation ^[6]	-	-	20.7	16.5	19	19.4	20.7	18.9	23	-
Proportion of businesses introducing marketing innovation ^[6]	-	-	14.3	12.9	14.6	17.2	16.7	16.8	19.9	-
Share of high and medium high technology manufacturing as a percentage of GDP ^[7]	-	-	-	2.64	2.60	2.26	2.30	2.18	2.19	-
Firm entry rate (%) ^{[8],(c)}	-	-	16.3	17.1	15.3	14.4	16.7	13.9	13.5	-
Firm death rate (%) ^{[8],(d)}	-	-	15.0	14.6	15.3	15.4	13.1	13.5	13.1	-
Churn rate (%) ^{[8],(e)}	-	-	1.3	2.5	-0.1	-1.0	3.6	0.4	0.4	-
Firm survival rates (annual), (%) ^{[8],(f)}	-	-	85.0	85.4	84.7	84.6	86.9	86.5	86.9	-
Patents granted by IP Australia, for Australian residents ^{[9],(g)}	-	-	-	924	1,086	925	926	1,178	1,262	1,311
Innovation Patents by AU residents ^{[9],(h)}	-	-	926	918	1,034	1,028	1,109	1,127	1,204	1,205
Industrial designs certified by IP Australia, for Australian residents ^{[9],(i)}	-	-	115	151	238	342	274	327	265	318
Triadic patent families per million population ^[1]	13.0	19.7	13.8	12.0	11.5	10.8	10.1	9.8	9.3	-
Patent applications filed by AU residents under PCT per million population ^{[9],(j)}	-	-	-	95.7	96.9	89.6	78.6	78.9	76.8	75
Industrial design registrations (AU resident) per million population ^{[9],(k)}	121	98	136	168	110	113	119	111	111	107
Trade Mark applications from Australian residents ^[9]	19,036	27,175	38,193	40,538	40,001	38,381	38,466	39,633	40,056	41,106
Trademark registrations (AU resident) per million population ^{[9],(k)}	429	504	1,091	1,120	1,221	1,245	1,123	1,077	1,062	10,063
Share of world triadic patent families (%) ^[1]	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.49	-
Share of world patent applications filed under PCT (%) ^[1]	46.2	91.1	101.9	98.4	94.5	84.2	84.0	77.8	73.5	-
Total early-stage entrepreneurship activity (TEA) (%) ^{[10],(l)}	-	14.7	10.5	11.9	-	-	-	7.8	10.5	-

Source: Australian Innovation System Report 2013

Appendix IV

Sample EU Funding Instruments Targeted at SME's

H2020 SME Programme

Societal Challenges - Work Programme

- Health, demographic change and wellbeing
- Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy
- Secure, clean and efficient energy
- Smart, green and integrated transport
- Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials
- Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
- Secure societies – protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens

Excellence Science

European Research Council

- Starting Grants
- Consolidator Grants
- Advanced Grants
- Proof of Concept*
- Synergy Grants

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

- International Training Networks (ITN)*
- Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF)
- Career Integration Grants (CIG)
- Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND)
- Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)*
- International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF)
- International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)
- International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)

Strategic Regional Partnering
THE CASE FOR BURGOS, SPAIN



Appendix V

Summary Profile of Possible Partner Regions – Burgos, Spain.

Burgos is a city located in the north of Spain, in the autonomous community of Castile and León. It has about 374.970 inhabitants. Burgos is a developed and industrial city, with a history and developed economy in trade and tourism.

The City of Burgos has a GDP over the Spanish average. It is an important trade and tourist center with some manufacturing. In the surrounding Rural areas, however it is the primary sector that forms the main source of income and employment for the population. Wheat is grown as the main crop which is a low job creator with no Value add spin-offs as a sector while the City is a very industrial city, with a secondary sector widely developed. The city has the biggest industrial park of north Spain (Villalonquéjar). The tertiary sector employs the bigger percentage in the city and is represented by the public sector (production, delivery and allocation of goods and services), due to the capital status.



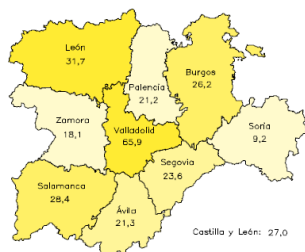
1. DEMOGRAPHY

	BURGOS
POPULATION	374,970
Male	189,124
Female	185,846
Annual Population Growth	-0.18%

Migratory Balance	-2,203
Vegetative Balance	-819
Population of Spanish living abroad	15.357
Crude Birth Rate (nº of births per 1,000 inhabitants)	8.33
Crude Death Rate (nº of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants)	10.51

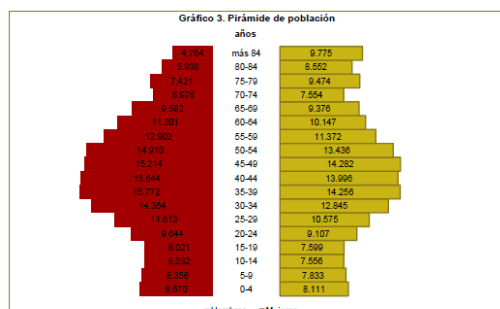
This province has the largest number of municipalities in Spain, i.e. a total of 371. Of these, the number of inhabitants is below 500 in 80% of them. Consequently, the population is concentrated in the capital, Burgos, and in four other municipalities, Aranda de Duero, Miranda de Ebro, Briviesca and Medina de Pomar. This growth in these areas is at the expense of the others who are experience population drain.

Map density of population by province. Year 2012

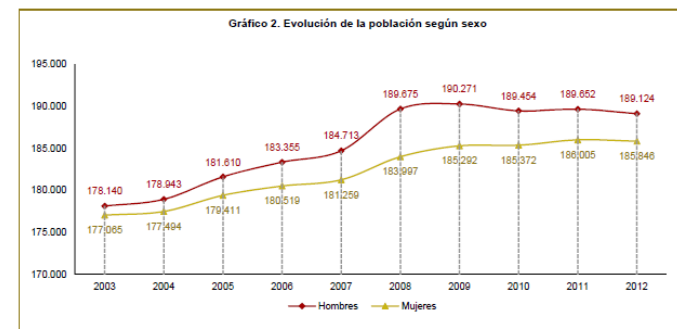


The trend of the population in Burgos (2003- 2012) has increased by 5.56% (total of 19,765 people, 10,984 men and 8,781 women). In this decade, the population in Burgos was favoured by the registration of foreign nationals that increased 217.36%. The pyramid of the population in Burgos is stationary and increasingly more aged. It has a low birth rate and a high percentage of those who have more than 65 years.

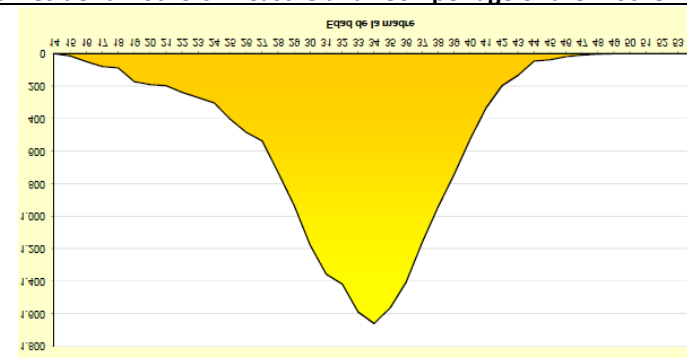
Pyramid of population in the province of Burgos. 1990 - 2008



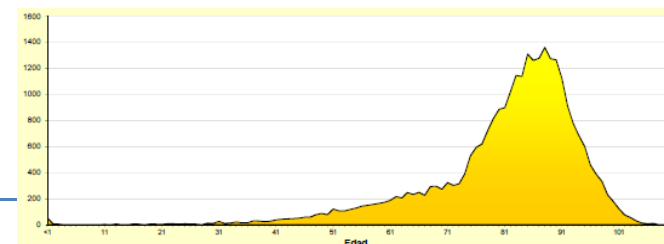
Evolution of the population according to sex



Births of resident mothers in Castile and Leon per age of the mother. Year 2012.



Deaths of residents in Castile and Leon per age. Year 2012.



2. UNEMPLOYMENT REGISTERED ACCORDING TO SEX, AGE AND SECTOR OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (June 2014)

	Total	Sex and age					
		Male			Female		
		<25	25-44	>=45	<25	25-44	>=45
BURGOS	29.052	1.383	5.984	6.370	1.132	7.206	6.977

Sector of Economy Activity				
Agriculture	Industry	Construction	Service	Without previous employment
1.596	4.383	3.772	16.938	2.363

3. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS REGISTERED ACCORDING TO SEX, AGE AND SECTOR OF ECONOMY ACTIVITY (June 2014)

	Total	Type of contract					
		Male			Female		
		p*	T*	C.P*	p*	T*	C.P*
BURGOS	11.578	225	5.926	167	206	4.935	119

Sectors of economy				
Agriculture	Industry	Construction	Service	
587	3.115	637	7.239	

* T= Temporary

* C.P= Convertible into permanent.

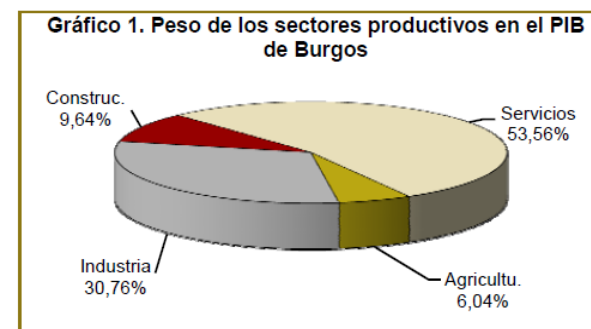
4. STUDENTS MATRICULATED IN UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN CASTILE AND LEON (2010-2011)

	Degree	Doctorate	Master's degree
BURGOS	23.810	4.142	4.487

5. SOCIOECONOMIC INFORMATION

According to the latest data published by the INE and referred to provisional data from 2010, Burgos brings 0.91% of GDP to the National Assembly and 17.31% of the whole of the economy of Castile y León. 53.56% relies on the services sector, construction in 2010 had an underweight in Burgos that had in the State; agriculture represents more than double that in the national.

Chart 1. Weight of the productive sectors in the GDP in Burgos.



Percentage distribution of the composition of GDP

Tabla 1. Distribución porcentual (%) de la composición del PIB			
Sectores	Burgos	Castilla y León	España
Agricultura	6,04	6,41	2,56
Industria	30,76	20,17	16,16
Construcción	9,64	11,12	10,94
Servicios	53,56	62,30	70,34

*GDP= Gross Domestic Product

In table 2 we can see a series of socio-economic indicators for the year 2012 and its variation from year to year. Most of these values are negative; they reinforce the critical negative situation of the Rural part of Burgos within the framework of both the national and regional economy.

The foreign trade of the province, as a whole, shows the good results in 2012 with a significant increase in exports over the previous year. The resultant job creation from this performance in output has minimal impact on the Rural areas, unfortunately. Additionally, the main provincial figures relating to tourism have declined with the number of visitors having decreased by 3.17% and the overnight stays by 6.09%. Along with Agriculture, Tourism offers some job creation prospects for Rural areas but this is now also on the decline.

The annual variation in provincial CPI* rate has been 3.30%

TABLE 2. MAIN INDICATORS				
Indicator	Unit	Period	Value	% variation 2012/2011
Consumption of gasoline, diesel and fuel oil	Tm	Year 2012	508,407	-20.36
Vehicle registration	Units	Year 2012	4,231	-16.20
Travellers in hotel establishment	Person	Year 2012	700,642	-16.20
Overnight stays in hotel establishment	Units	Year 2012	1,076,776	-3.17
Visa application for new construction management	m2	Year 2012	131,793	-26.14
Public tender	Thousand of euro	Year 2012	122,173	17.23
CPI annual variation	Index	December 2012-December 2011	104,993	3.30
Mortgages	Total nº buildings	Year 2012	4,882	-23.24

Government deposits	Thousand of euro	December 2012	11,499,104	-2.83
Credit to public administration	Thousand of euro	December 2012	12,086,879	-14.97
Exports	Thousand of euro	Year 2012	3,150.90	7.86
Imports	Thousand of euro	Year 2012	2,855.16	14.88
Workers affected by regulation of employments record	Number of workers	Year 2012	14,638	149.80
Pensions in force. Social Security	Nº of pensions	December 2012	6,290	0.48

*CPI= Consumer Prices Index

Summary/conclusion.

This brief profile provides some base line data for comparison and continued discussion on the common areas for concern among the partners. In addition to the Burgos Province, an Area of Mid Sweden is also interested in co-operation and collaboration with Roscommon and its partners. Data is being compiled at present for examination as to areas for common concern and opportunities for positive measures to be shared and deployed in a transnational context. The town of Sundsvall is the main urban population Centre with very vast and low density population indices for the surrounding rural areas administered by the Kommun. This, and Burgos should provide a useful set of case studies and scenarios for the Partners in Roscommon to engage in meaningful discussions and joint planning in tackling issues as part of a sustainable Innovation Strategy.

Appendix VI

Culture & Heritage - Brief Profile of Selected Famous People from Co. Roscommon

Douglas Hyde born in Castlerea in 1860, son to a rector who served the town of Castlerea, Douglas Hyde went onto become a leading figure in the nationalist movement in Ireland and went on to become the First President of Ireland.

Fr. Flanagan was born in the townland of Leabeg, County Roscommon. In 1904, he immigrated to the United States where in 1917, he founded a home for homeless boys in Omaha, which became the internationally famous Boystown model.

Fr. John B. Bannon, born in Roosky Co Roscommon in 1829; shortly after his ordination, he was sent to St. Louis, Missouri. During the American Civil War he enlisted as Chaplain and was noted for bravery in attending the wounded and dying.

Fr Michael O'Flanagan (known as the rebel priest) was appointed to the north Sligo Parish of Ahamlish in 1914 where he took on the establishment by leading the local people in cutting turf on a bog that was reserved for the British Army and Royal Irish Constabulary members. He was conferred with the freedom of Sligo in June, 1918.

Jim Coffee, was born in Tully, Co Roscommon in 1890. He moved to America and took boxing. In 1919 he became the European Heavyweight Boxing Champion, winning the title on two occasions, before retiring and returning to Ireland.

John Gately Downey, born on June 24, 1827 in the townland of Castlesampson, Co Roscommon, became an Irish-American politician and the seventh governor of California (1860-1862). He was California's first foreign-born Governor.

Luke O'Connor VC, KCB, was born in 1831 near Elphin, Co. Roscommon and became a British soldier. He was one of the most decorated soldiers and was the first to receive the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest and most prestigious award for gallantry.

Margaret Gillespie, was born in Boyle, Co. Roscommon. She co-founded the Irish Women's Franchise League. She championed women's rights both here and in India where she moved with her husband and became the first woman magistrate in India.

Maureen O'Sullivan was born in 1911 in Boyle, County Roscommon. She was a well-known actress who was best known for her role as Jane in the Tarzan movies.

Percy French, born in 1854 at Cloonyquin, Co Roscommon was at various times a singer, a composer, a poet, an engineer, a humourist, a journalist and a painter. He is particularly famous as an entertainer and author of many well-known Irish songs.

Sir George Arthur French was born in Roscommon and joined the Royal Artillery of the British Army. In 1871, at the request of the Canadian government, he was sent to Canada as

a military inspector and was appointed to organize the North-West Royal Canadian Mounted Police, serving as its Commissioner from 1873-1976.

Surgeon-General Thomas Heazle Parke was an Irish doctor, explorer, soldier and naturalist. He was born in 1857 at Kilmore, Co. Roscommon. In 1881 he joined the British Army and served in Egypt as a renowned military surgeon.

Sir William Robert Wills Wilde MD, FRCSI, (1815-1876) born near Castlerea, in County Roscommon, was the father of Oscar Wilde. He was a prominent eye and ear surgeon, as well as an author of significant works on medicine, archaeology and folklore. He was awarded a knighthood in 1864.

Christopher "Chris" O'Dowd, from Boyle Co. Roscommon was born in October 1979. He is an actor and comedian best known for his role in a number of films and the comedy The IT Crowd. He created and stars in the current television Series Moone Boy, set in his native town of Boyle.

Albert Reynolds (1932-2014), Born in Rooskey; Albert was a successful businessman most associated with building up a chain of music halls in the 1960's. He joined the Fianna Fáil party, and was elected to the Dáil in 1977. He served as Industry & Commerce Minister and Finance Minister before becoming Taoiseach in 1992. He played a big part in the Northern Ireland Peace Process during his time as Taoiseach.

Mary McAleese: Born in Belfast in June 1951, her father was from Croghan Co. Roscommon and her mother from Derry. She served two terms as the eighth President of Ireland (1997-2011), and was the second female to hold the office.

Actor Tony Doyle, born in Ballyfarnan, was a stalwart of the Irish entertainment industry. He played Brian Quigley in Ballykissangel, Father Sheehy in The Riordans and other roles as the epitome of the Irish father figure. He died suddenly in 2000.

Maria Gunning, Countess of Coventry (1733-1760), born to John Gunning and from Castlecoote Co. Roscommon. Although her beginnings were humble she went on to become one of the most celebrated beauties and society hostesses in London.

Brendan Shine, Born in 1947, from Baylough, Athlone, Co. Roscommon, he is a renowned folk and country singer, TV presenter and accordion player, with 45 hit singles and more than 50 albums.

John Owen Brennan, current Director of the CIA, born in 1955 to Roscommon natives, from Kiltreevan near Roscommon town who immigrated to the USA.

Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1736), From Ballyfarnon, Co. Roscommon at a young age. He was a blind harper, composer and singer whose great fame is due to his gift for melodic composition. He is considered by many to be Ireland's national composer. The famous Keadue Festival was started in his honour in 1978.

Roderick O'Connor was born 17 October 1860 in Milltown, Co. Roscommon. He was a famous artist who lived most of his life in France.