

EU PILOT PROJECT IS THE CATALYST FOR CROSS-BORDER MENTORING

Companies or individuals involved in the food, drink and life science sectors in Tipperary and Carlow have a unique opportunity to grow their business through a new EU-funded mentoring programme. Targeting SMEs, the pilot is being supported by councils in both counties.

The landmark CATALYST pilot programme supports food and drink producers, food retailers and the food service industry – including logistics and distribution – as well as life science sector businesses, including pharmaceuticals, biomedical, cosmeceuticals and more.

Through the initiative, a carefully-selected core group of successful applicants will receive expert guidance, mentoring and support as they grow. They'll also have hands-on help to develop new and in-demand products, as well as guidance on how best to bring products to market in the most resource-efficient way.

And successful applicants will also be offered an opportunity to network across industry sectors and with SMEs in Wales (i.e. companies employing up to 250 people).

The programme partners, based in both Ireland and Wales, include Carlow County Council and Tipperary County Council as well as the Institute of Technology Carlow's Designcore. The lead partner is University of Wales Trinity Saint David while the fifth and final partner is sustainable waste policy group Wrap Cymru.

CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVE

CATALYST is a new, three-year (2018-2020), cross-border project which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme, 2014-2020. It will deliver tailored supports to meet the needs of the individual participants, according to Kathleen Holohan, Carlow County Council Chief Executive.

"CATALYST has already established a network of leading business mentors in key areas such as Product Development, Communications and Resource Efficiency. The hands-on team is keen to help in key challenge areas such as sustainable development and design thinking; research and development (R&D); supporting the creation of new and sustainable products and processes and more," she added.

The programme is unique in that it combines practical, one-to-one learning with specialised, theme-based network training events, with options for demand-led, short term, cross-border residencies.

It involves business owners, industry experts and academics devising innovative solutions to business challenges, according to Rita Guinan, Tipperary County Council Head of Enterprise.



Pictured (l-r): Dr Silvia Guglielmini, European Projects Officer, Institute of Technology, Carlow; Gabrielle Carroll, European Projects Officer at Carlow County Council Local Enterprise Office and Michael Begley, Business Advisor, Local Enterprise Office, Tipperary. (Pic: Dylan Vaughan)

LEADING BUSINESS MENTORS

"We encourage qualifying businesses to get in touch to see how it can benefit them. The entire programme will be delivered by leading business mentors with vast experience in the areas of communications, product development, resource efficiencies and design thinking," she said.

Institute of Technology Carlow's Designcore expertise will be invaluable, and IT Carlow's President Dr Patricia Mulcahy described CATALYST as a unique programme for SMEs who want to explore business challenges and elaborate innovative, highly marketable solutions.

"CATALYST also offers the opportunity to expand business networks, exchange knowledge, and develop new insights from industry and academia," she said.

For more information contact CATALYST's Gabrielle Carroll on catalyst@carlowcoco.ie