



FOUNDATION

Interreg Europe



FOUNDATION will provide a framework and roadmap for regions facing industrial closures, job losses and uncertainty, to develop economic resilience through collaboration.

www.interregeurope.eu/foundation

BUILDING REGIONAL RESILIENCE TO INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURAL CHANGE

ACTION PLAN for Southern & Eastern Region Ireland: To be implemented and monitored from August 2022 – July 2023

Irish Partner

Project Partner: Munster Technological University



Managing Authority

Southern Regional Assembly



Authors:

Dr John Hobbs and Dr Barraí Hennebry

Website

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/foundation/>

Twitter

@FOUNDATION_EU

Introduction - 3 -

Ireland - Southern Region - 4 -

General Foundation Project information - 6 -

Changing Irish Context - Foundation..... - 6 -

Policy Context in Ireland - 7 -

ACTION 1 – Regentrification including retrofit/design and repurposing of facilities to solve the driving need for remote working and promote innovative collaboration - 9 -

Background to Action 1..... - 9 -

The Inspiration for the Irish Action Plan..... - 9 -

Endorsement of the action plan - 16 -

INTRODUCTION

FOUNDATION is an Interreg Europe funded SME Competitiveness project that brings together nine partners in a consortium led by Munster Technological University from 1/08/2019 to 31/07/2023. Presently, across Europe, public bodies are pressed by an increasing need to provide preparatory support to the economic ecosystem in advance of the closure of anchor firms in their region which act as significant employers. The impacts of a closure of course go beyond direct employees and ripple, wave like throughout the regional services sector and economy. Management of such anticipated structural change requires proactive renewal of business approaches and policy supports. Regions are encouraged to introduce pilot projects based on their own strengths and to provide appropriate business supports for the re-alignment of the regional industrial base. This proactive approach by regional stakeholders is critical to building the resilience of these regions and enabling them to adapt to change.

The importance of SMEs and start-ups to the regional economy is widely recognised in terms of the provision of employment, contribution to GDP, driving innovation and supporting regional resilience. It is imperative that the relevant regional stakeholders keep informed, inspired and equipped to provide the appropriate SME and start-up supports, particularly in regions anticipating structural change.

FOUNDATION links its project partners to develop Regional Action Plans. It is imperative that industry players, business support organisations and policy makers understand how their ecosystems work and when faced with shocks (firm closures) to collaboratively develop alternative growth and employment through supportive policies and programmes to boost SME competitiveness. Key project activities included the exchange of experience and learning through interregional events (4 workshops, 4 seminars and 9 study visits).

Foundation Project Partners



IRELAND - SOUTHERN REGION

The [Munster Technological University](#) is the Irish partner representing the Southern region and is lead partner in the FOUNDATION consortium.

Capital: Cork, Limerick and Waterford

Size: 29,590 sq. km²

Population: 1,580,000

National GDP: 163,938.7 (2012)

National GERD (%): 1.58 (2012)

% of Unemployment: 5.4 (March 2019)



The Southern Region is comprised of 9 counties (10 Local Authorities with Cork City Council and Cork County Council in Cork), all 6 counties of Munster (Cork, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford) plus the 3 South-East counties of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford. It covers 29,590 sq. km representing 42.4% of the landmass of the country. The Region's main urban centres are the cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford. With an average population density of 48 persons per sq. km it is predominantly a rural region. The Region is subdivided into sub-regions or Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs), namely the Mid-West, South-East and South-West.

Several Universities, Institutes of Technology and research centres, both private and public, help drive and support the innovation potential of the region. The region is also a significant tourism destination due in part to its renowned natural beauty, wonderful coastline and the presence of important national tourist attractions such as: Cliffs of Moher, Fota Wildlife Park, Blarney Castle, Lakes of Killarney, Bunratty Castle, Carrauntoohil and Gougane Barra to name a few.

1,585,906

Population

almost 10% growth 2006-2016
and over a third of the State's
total population living here.



3 Cities of regional and
international significance

Cork, Limerick & Waterford are projected to be amongst the
fastest growing locations in the State over the next 20 years plus.

over 648k

Labour Force

almost a third of the State's
total at work in the region.



2 UNESCO
Learning Cities



3 WHO
Healthy Cities



3 Smart
Gateway Cities



Productive agricultural region
and rural areas supported by a
significant network of towns
and villages.



All Tier-1 and Tier-2 Ports
of National Significance
outside of Dublin

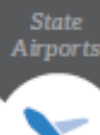
Universities



5
Institutes of
Technology



2
Regional
Airports



2
State
Airports



Clean Renewable Energy Potential

Diverse Industrial
Base with
established
clusters and
specialism's



Good quality farmland with
High Agricultural Yields
- food and beverage



Extensive coastline
with significant
Marine Resource
potential



A region possessing **all three** of the **National Tourism
Corridors**, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and
Ireland's Hidden Heartlands



GENERAL FOUNDATION PROJECT INFORMATION

Project: FOUNDATION
Partner Organisation: Munster Technological University
Country: Ireland
NUTS2 region: Southern and Eastern Region
Contact person: John Hobbs
Email address: john.hobbs@mtu.ie
Phone number: Mobile: 086-8091294 Office: 021-4335149

CHANGING IRISH CONTEXT - FOUNDATION

The Foundation project was developed to actively connect, participate, share and learn about measures and initiatives at regional levels across the breadth of Europe aimed at supporting the resilience of regions and SMEs. Foundation sought to provide a framework and roadmap for regions facing industrial closures, job losses and uncertainty, to develop economic resilience through collaboration. The idea was that if a large firm, with 500+ employees, closed we would build a plan to support the firm and employees in transitioning to new employment with a collaborative approach at a regional level with a key element being learning from partners' real experiences across Europe.

When Covid-19 hit our project consortium immediately re-orientated our project (as we were less than 6 months in to Phase 1 activities) very quickly to support the development of resilience and provision of supports in the face of all sectoral job losses and closures pertaining to Covid. This served to support our regions and the larger community via the sharing of best practices and programmes via webinars and workshops. The outputs of which were shared through a more frequent newsletter and via social media – being driven by our partnership to support each other's Covid-19 response.

The Irish economy faces several challenges and potential challenges including unemployment, unpredictable consumer spending and sustainability of government expenditure due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts. The Irish local stakeholders involved in the FOUNDATION project are seeking to examine ways in which to support the development of resilience for Irish enterprises through provision of innovative spaces where companies can collaborate and work together to grow. The need for this has multiplied during the covid-19 pandemic which has seen many people gravitate away from the cities and back towards 'home' or seeking to re-locate to rural regions for a variety of reasons which pertain to being closer to family, nature, lifestyle and affordability of accommodation.

Focusing on resilience needs and gaps in the innovation ecosystem identified during the FOUNDATION project the next section outlines the policy context in Ireland in terms of supporting start-up and SME competitiveness.

POLICY CONTEXT IN IRELAND

The Action Plan Aims to Impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme
- European Territorial Cooperation Programme
- Other regional development policy instruments

The initial policy instrument identified to be addressed in Ireland for the FOUNDATION project was Priority 3 (P3) of the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 which was focused on SME Competitiveness. Its objective is to increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in the S&E region by supporting start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises. During the life span of the Foundation project the 2014-2020 ROP closed and the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027 has not been published and is still in development in Q3 2022. For these reasons it has been impossible to impact the original 2014-2020 ROP or subsequent ROP. Therefore, the decision was made to move to influence another regional development policy instrument.

Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025’ is the national Government policy for the sustainable development of rural Ireland. Launched in March 2021, it contains more than 150 commitments for delivery across Government over a five-year period and is the most ambitious and transformational policy for rural development in Ireland for decades.

As part of [Project Ireland 2040](#) the government has committed to providing an additional €1 billion over the period 2019 to 2027 through the [Department of Rural and Community Development](#) via the [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#). This will provide investments to renew towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000 people.

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund can fund projects including (but not limited to):

- infrastructure that may be needed to support town centre housing and/or commercial development.
- measures to address building vacancy including building refurbishment, redevelopment and/or demolition.
- the development of community or public facilities infrastructure including improvements to roads, bridges and car parking facilities.
- infrastructure that improves telecommunications connectivity.
- projects that support job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas e.g. development of Digital Hubs, Enterprise Hubs, Creative Hubs, or training facilities. It should be noted that in relation to such projects it will be important that the proposal meets an identified need or deficiency in an area. It should also be noted that exclusive priority will be given to proposals which will locate hubs or other facilities directly within towns and villages and which repurpose or renovate existing sites as part of the proposal.
- enhancement of heritage and/or other community assets including the provision/enhancement of recreational or leisure facilities.

The [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#) is seeking to support projects which will provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure, most notably in terms of revitalising our rural towns and villages, remote working and enterprise development, which will play a part in attracting people back to live in rural areas.

Projects which help address vacancy and dereliction in town and village centres and activate these areas for residency and other uses will be prioritised, as will projects which will assist in the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.

The capital investment provided by the Fund can also assist in achieving the development of key economic growth sectors such as the bio-economy and agri-food; assist other sectors, such as tourism, in meeting new challenges; improve community development and quality of life; and the protection of the environment. The Fund seeks to support coordinated and collaborative projects between Government Departments, State agencies, Local Authorities, other public bodies, communities and, where appropriate, philanthropic funders and/or the private sector, which will have an impact on sustainable economic and social development in rural areas.

The [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#) will only support investments of scale which would not otherwise be delivered without the additionality provided by the Fund, prioritising projects that are outside the scope of funding by existing schemes. In this context, projects are likely to be multi-annual and multi-faceted, involving a number of elements or phases as part of a broad strategic plan.

Funding through the [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#) is awarded via a competitive bid process, based on the extent to which applications deliver on Fund objectives and its criteria.

The Fund will provide up to 80% of the total project value, with at least 20% to be provided in matching contributions by applicants. A minimum of 20% of the matching contributions element must be in cash. Match funding for the [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#) may take the form of a combination of wider Exchequer and/or State sector expenditure, Local Authority investment and/or land, community investment, philanthropic contributions, private sector investment, or other asset contributions.

The minimum request from the Fund for projects is €500,000. There is no upper limit, but all proposals need to demonstrate detailed project costings and clear value for money. The precise level of grant for an individual project will depend on the nature and quality of the proposal. In some cases, the Fund might form the minor part of the total investment, providing a small but important element of funding to add value to a larger project which already has substantial funding commitments in place.

The [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#) policy instrument operated by the [Department of Rural and Community Development](#) will be impacted directly by the actions described in this Action Plan. Specifically, this will occur through the implementation and financing of new projects and influencing the already approved projects including supporting the retrofit/design and repurposing of facilities to solve the driving need for remote working space and promote innovative collaboration within these spaces. This will be achieved as is outlined below in Action 1 through collaboration and consultation with the Department of Rural and Community Development, Cork County Council, relevant Local Enterprise Offices, University College Cork and Munster Technological University.

In addition to the [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#), there is the potential to apply for funding through the [Urban Regeneration and Development Fund](#) and the [Connected Hubs Fund](#). The [Urban Regeneration and Development Fund](#) aims to deliver more compact and sustainable development, as envisaged under Project Ireland 2040. It does this by part-funding regeneration and rejuvenation projects in Ireland's five cities and other large towns. The [Connected Hubs Fund](#) supports and complements the development of the National Hub Network. The [Connected Hubs Fund](#) aims to add additional capacity to the existing remote working infrastructure in Ireland by upgrading existing hubs and Broadband Connection Points (BCPs), while continuing to support COVID-19 mitigation measures.

ACTION 1 – REGENTRIFICATION INCLUDING RETROFIT/DESIGN AND REPURPOSING OF FACILITIES TO SOLVE THE DRIVING NEED FOR REMOTE WORKING AND PROMOTE INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

BACKGROUND TO ACTION 1

MTU have engaged with our local stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities caused by Covid-19 for local enterprises and SMEs, and what kind of support measures could be offered by local public organisations to address the main challenges to contribute towards a more resilient region.

The changes have impacted the policies and support for enterprise (SMEs in particular) The increase in popularity of remote working and the benefits associated with same have led to huge demands for hot-desking space in rural hubs and co-working spaces as many seek the balance between working from home and the social contact of working remotely with others (even if not in the same organisation).

MTU have been working with Cork County Council to support their work in these areas through Foundation and the new challenges they are facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic through sharing of good practices and insights from partner regions throughout the pandemic. Whilst the County Council has different areas of responsibility geographically and different challenges to solve, there is common ground from a policy perspective in terms of redesign of spaces towards more open plan hubs and collaborative spaces for co-working. Across Ireland, Government Departments and local authorities have taken many old and derelict buildings and are re-purposing them into remote working facilities. Former banks, cinemas, garda stations, convents and train stations are set to become local digital hubs. Expertise and inputs are required to ensure these retrofits become state-of-the-art Remote Working and Digital Hub facilities

A further element which can help drive collaboration in these ‘spaces’ is clustering – something which Foundation partner Business Upper Austria are very experienced in the animation and strategic development of same. In fact the response their regional clusters played during the pandemic has been shared as a good practice during the Foundation project – in terms of how they redefined supply and value chains to get critical equipment produced to support the pandemic response locally. Inspiration can be taken from Austria in this regard in terms of building clustering into the design and re-purposing of new spaces which can drive economic activity.

THE INSPIRATION FOR THE IRISH ACTION PLAN

To support remote working three core elements of Action 1 are regentrification, retrofit/design and clustering of activities to drive innovation.

Regentrification is important for Ireland in rural areas. Former banks, cinemas, garda stations, convents and train stations are set to become local digital hubs. Expertise and inputs are required to ensure these retrofits become state-of-the-art Remote Working and Digital Hub facilities.

Two good practices shared within the Foundation project have provided inspiration in this regard, both are from Austria:

- **Tabakfabrik Linz:** For more than 341 years the building was a production site (textiles, and more recently tobacco goods). The Tabakfabrik Linz has been renovated to become a symbol for recovery by transformation for the creative sector.

Tabakfabrik is home to about 250 organisations varying in size that offer about 1,850 workplaces in various branches. The companies and people operate in different branches – they are artists, start-ups, social societies and programs, advertising and media agencies, business angels, founders, investors, students, social workers, technology and software developers, architects, designers, manufacturers and many more – they use Tabakfabrik as their office, studio, co-working-space, lecture hall, workshop, meeting room and event location.

The Tabakfabrik Linz is a laboratory for its pioneers, in which the contemporary principle of producing in networks and loose communication structures comes alive. The potential of the CCI (cultural and creative industries) is revealed remarkably by the digital sector, which merges genres as film, video, music or animation.

- **Softwarepark Hagenberg:** Softwarepark Hagenberg is a center of excellence for software and IT, which not only closely links research, companies and education on the subject, but also unites them in one place. At present, a total of 11 research institutes, 24 training programs and over 75 commercial enterprises reside at the Softwarepark.

The retrofit/design of the proposed Remote Working and Digital Hub facilities will take inspiration from Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg. Co-learning with Business Upper Austria to drive innovation and ensure SMEs benefit from Remote Working and Digital Hub facilities, we are analysing good practices to develop collaboration between entities using these co-working spaces, to this end will take inspiration from Clusterland and Covid19; and how users of the shared Austrian spaces in Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg drive innovation and collaboration between tenants.

- **Clusterland and Covid19:** regional clusters in Austria played a critical role during the pandemic in terms of how they redefined supply and value chains to get critical equipment produced to support the pandemic response locally.

Business Upper Austria, the business agency of the Upper Austrian government, is an innovation driver and a partner for location development & settlement of companies, cooperation and public funding advisory services. Business Upper Austria host and have developed 8 industry led clusters assisting members by facilitating partnerships, supplying tailor-made services and support them from initial business ideas through to new market development.

Business Upper Austria's Clustering Programme seeks to:

- Secure, strengthen and enhance the business and employment location of Upper Austria
- Position Upper Austria internationally
- Create and develop infrastructure to encourage investments, innovation and technologies
- Promote the settlement of companies as well as expansion of existing companies
- Promote innovation and technology

From the good practices adopted developed in Business Upper Austria it is clear that the mission of cluster organisations is to expand the membership base, provide high quality innovation services to cluster members, promote partnerships at national and international levels and develop research agendas. Clusters can also support regional policy makers with updated data on technology trends and cluster evolution. Helping cluster members to access regional public funding for collaborative research and innovation (R&I) projects.

The necessary actions, stakeholders, timeframe, costs, and funding for achieving the aims of Action 1 are specified in the following table.

ACTION 1 – Regentrification including retrofit/design and repurposing of facilities to solve the driving need for remote working and promote innovative collaboration	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Understanding the increased demand and need for remote working and articulate same in a report. ii) Understand the redesign need for such co-working / remote working spaces post covid-19. iii) Utilise clustering as an economic development tool to drive innovation/collaboration in remote working and digital hub facilities. iv) Development of an online booking system for individuals to book a workstation, meeting room or other facilities as part of publicly funded remote working and digital hub facilities.
Description	<p>i) ‘Making Remote Work’ Ireland’s National Remote Work Strategy (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2021), objective is to ensure that remote working is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace in a way that maximises economic, social and environmental benefits.</p> <p>It is important to assess with stakeholders how remote work could also have a negative impact on national employment levels. With remote work becoming increasingly popular, there could be challenges in attracting and retaining talent in Ireland. Whilst increased remote work could help to revitalise villages and towns across Ireland, it could result in challenges for cities as increasingly workers may choose to work from other locations.</p> <p>It is important to understand the increased demand and need for remote working in Ireland from the following perspectives: employees, employers and regional requirements. A desk-based study and local stakeholder meeting workshop will be used to quantify and outline this increased demand via a structured report.</p> <p>ii) Regentrification and retrofitting of existing vacant buildings will be key to the increase of remote working opportunities across Ireland. The Rural Regeneration Development Fund, Urban Regeneration Development Fund and Connected Hubs Fund all seek to support projects which will provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure, most notably in terms of revitalising towns, remote working and enterprise development, which will play a part in attracting people. Significant investment in remote work hubs and infrastructure in underserved areas are required to underpin Ireland’s development of the national hubs network.</p> <p>Through the Foundation projects interregional study visits there was an opportunity to understand and see first-hand how the redesign of such remote working has occurred in Austria where Good Practices shared during project activities such as Tabakfabrik Linz, Softwarepark Hagenberg and the clustering programmes managed by Business Upper Austria have showcased different approaches to same. This has helped the MTU and our local stakeholders to understand the redesign need for such co-working / remote working spaces post covid-19 in Ireland.</p>

MTU is available to participate with Cork County Council in supporting applicants when applying for capital support via the [Rural Regeneration and Development Fund](#), [Urban Regeneration Development Fund](#) and [Connected Hubs Fund](#). Based on the learnings gained from an interregional study visit to [Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg facilitated by Business Upper Austria, MTU will](#) be in a position to provide evidence, examples and support for the repurposed buildings seeking to become Digital, Enterprise or Creative Hubs through engaging with the applicants and Cork County Council before formal submission of applications to the applicable Development Funds.

Applicants will in the first instance bring their ideas to Cork County Council and at the point MTU will be available to engage with both the applicants and the council during formal and informal meetings to showcase drawings, designs and images of Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg. Sharing this knowledge and stories about these re-designs of facilities, will inform the creative redesign and repurposing of buildings in Ireland to ensure that opportunities for collaboration are considered from the first instance and taken into account in planning applications. If required MTU can facilitate conversations with the management organisations of Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg to answer specific design queries.

- iii) The need for increasing innovation and collaboration, as well as integrating more flexible and autonomous ways of working, has also caused changes in the where people work. In recent years there has been an explosion in the creation of spaces where individuals, motivated by the development of their creative projects, interact face-to-face and collaborate with peers. The origin of the spaces might respond to different logics, but it is often related to an actor's need to gather with other locally distributed peers with a common interest. These collaborative spaces take many different forms such as fablabs, coworking spaces, makerspaces etc.

Clustering and collaboration can be utilised as an economic development tool to connect users of the regional hubs and co-working spaces. It is important to ensure that co-working or regional hubs are designed in such a way that they encourage collaboration and connection between others using the same spaces to contribute to both innovation and social inclusion. Inspiration can be taken from the clustering programmes managed by Business Upper Austria and how Tabakfabrik Linz and Softwarepark Hagenberg are laid out to support opportunities for collaboration and co-learning.

Specifically, here in terms of a step by step approach, MTU will analyse the type and scope of events and initiatives run by 1) Cluster Organisations hosted by Business Upper Austria in Linz; 2) implemented by the management organisation of Tabakfabrik Linz and 3) the engagement events organized in the Softwarepark Hagenberg to identify which mechanisms are best aligned to build trust between organisations and drive innovation/collaboration.

	<p>Items as simple as not having too many coffee stations can be shared with the applicants to the to the <u>Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, as a way of getting individual tenants into open spaces where they have the opportunity to build trust and subsequently share knowledge with users of the same space.</u></p> <p>iv) As more regional hubs and co-working spaces develop, a one-stop-shop for hubs throughout Ireland is required. To simplify and standardise the process of sourcing and booking spaces, desks, offices, and events in hubs for a day, a week, a month, a year etc. If a remote worker or start-up are looking for a place to work and a community to support them, full-time or even for a few days each week. A centralised booking system is required.</p> <p>Development of an online booking system for individuals to book a workstation, meeting room or other facilities as part of publicly funded remote working and digital hub facilities.</p>
<p>Stakeholders Involved</p>	<p>i) Munster Technological University will take the lead on pulling the information for the Report to understand the increased demand for remote working in Ireland and will compile same with inputs from Cork County Council and University College Cork.</p> <p>ii) Munster Technological University will be available to support Cork County Council, and Cork County Local Enterprise Offices to provide evidence and support for the design/redesign of repurposed buildings towards Digital, Enterprise or Creative Hubs, as part of applications for capital support via the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.</p> <p>iii) Munster Technological University and University College Cork will research cluster policy and practice in Business Upper Austria’s constituent clusters to list a number of events and initiatives which can be utilised as a mechanism to drive innovation/collaboration in remote working and digital hub facilities and increase collaborations. Engagement events implemented by the management organisation of Tabakfabrik Linz and organized in the Softwarepark Hagenberg will also be considered. The findings will be presented to Cork County Council, Cork County Local Enterprise Offices and Sport Ireland to support their work in this field, and these organisations who co-fund these spaces will work with local management of the hubs to implement same.</p> <p>iv) Munster Technological University to liaise with Cork County Council, The National Hub Network, and Local Enterprise Offices to contribute to the development of an online booking system for individuals to book a workstation, meeting room or other facilities as part of publicly funded remote working and digital hub facilities at a Local and National Level.</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>i) Work undertaken and delivered between August to October 2022.</p> <p>ii) Work undertaken and support delivered for applicants in terms of sharing knowledge and stories about the re-designs of such facilities in Austria at face to face meetings to inform and support the creative redesign and repurposing of buildings in Ireland to ensure that opportunities for collaboration are considered and taken into account in planning applications. This will take place between September 2022 to June 2023.</p>

	iii)	Work undertaken and delivered between September 2022 to December 2022.
	iv)	December 2022 to May 2023.
Costs	i)	A desk-based study and local stakeholder meeting workshop cost of staff inputs (4 x Days), plus catering for stakeholder group meeting = €2,500, to develop this report.
	ii)	MTU will be available to participate with Cork County Council to provide evidence and support for the design/redesign of repurposed buildings towards Digital, Enterprise or Creative Hubs, as part of applications for capital support via the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Staff Costs = €3,000 (6 x Days). Be in a position to support funding requests in excess of €500,000 to redesign, develop and animate Digital, Enterprise or Creative Hubs, as part of applications for capital support via the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund .
	iii)	MTU to write and present proposals utilising clustering principles as an economic development tool to drive innovation/collaboration in remote working and digital hub facilities and increase collaborations. Staff Costs = €4,000 (8 x Days).
	iv)	MTU to input and contribute to the development of an online booking system for individuals to book a workstation, meeting room or other facilities as part of publicly funded remote working and digital hub facilities at a Local and National Level. Staff Costs = €2,000 (4 x Days).
Funding Sources	i)	A combination of MTU Staff time in collaboration with local and national stakeholders to develop the desk-based study of the increased demand for remote working spaces in Ireland.
	ii)	A combination of MTU Staff time in collaboration with local and national stakeholders and input interregional learnings plus support local applicants through face to face meetings to develop their submissions to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund , Urban Regeneration Development Fund and Connected Hubs Fund .
	iii)	A combination of MTU Staff time in collaboration with local and national stakeholders and provide interregional learning from initiatives aimed at driving innovation/collaboration in remote working and digital hub facilities to increase collaborations.
	iv)	MTU Staff time to collaborate with local and National stakeholders and provide inputs into development of an online booking system for Digital, Enterprise or Creative Hubs.

During the development of the Action Plan, progress has been made regarding Action 1. Munster Technological University have additionally organised to take a group of relevant staff and stakeholders to Linz for inter-regional learning from the 9th to the 11th of May to learn more about Softwarepark Hagenberg; Tabakfabrik Linz and the Clustering Policy in Linz, Austria, and integrate these face to face learnings into the implementation of the action plan.

Those who will be attending this study visit and in turn contribute to the Action 1, elements i, ii, iii and iv are:

- Dr John Hobbs, Senior Lecturer & Foundation Co-ordinator @ MTU
- Yvonne O’Byrne, Cluster Manager STEM South West hosted @ MTU
- Eleanor Doyle, Professor of Economics, University College Cork
- Paul Sutton, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development, at Cork County Council
- Cormac MacDonnell, Innovation & EU Funding Manager at Sport Ireland

The additional learning from the face to face visit of the Austrian Good Practices will be weaved into the implementation of the Irish Action Plan, specifically to address, actions 1.2) to understand the redesign need for such co-working / remote working spaces post covid-19 and 1.3) utilising clustering as an economic development tool to drive innovation/collaboration in remote working and digital hub facilities.

The visiting delegation will take advantage of the agenda prepared in collaboration with Business Upper Austria to showcase the Irish Action Plan and understand how elements of the design of Softwarepark Hagenberg and Tabakfabrik Linz integrate collaborative spaces to develop opportunities which spark innovation. Furthermore, the delegation will seek to understand the intricacies of the Clustering Policy in Linz to utilise some of the initiatives from Linz to drive innovation/collaboration and develop SME resilience. A group debrief will occur on the 25th of May 2022 to share individual insights and input into Actions 1.2 & 1.3. Information can also be gleaned from the increased professional capacity surveys related to stakeholder’s participation in interregional cooperation.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN

Munster Technological University hereby agree to support and promote the implementation (and where appropriate implement) the actions detailed above.

The undersigned confirm that they have the required authority of their organisations to do so and that the required authorisation process in the organisation has been duly carried out.

Name and Job Title: Dr John Hobbs, Senior Lecturer, Munster Technological University

Signature:



Date:

16/05/2022

Stamp of the Organisation:



FOUNDATION
Interreg Europe



FOUNDATION will provide a framework and roadmap for regions facing industrial closures, job losses and uncertainty, to develop economic resilience through collaboration.

www.interregeurope.eu/foundation

BUILDING REGIONAL RESILIENCE TO INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURAL CHANGE

ACTION PLAN for Southern & Eastern Region Ireland: To be implemented and monitored from August 2022 – July 2023

Irish Partner

Project Partner: Munster Technological University



Managing Authority

Southern Regional Assembly



Authors:

Dr John Hobbs and Dr Barraí Hennebry

Website

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/foundation/>

Twitter

@FOUNDATION_EU