

# National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040

Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) Submission - 26 March 2017



## Contents

Overview: National Planning Framework .....	2
1. Technological Universities .....	3
2. Infrastructural Requirements.....	4
3. The STEM agenda.....	5
4. Grow-on Supports for Fledgling Start-Up Companies .....	6
5. Social and Cultural Contributions to Quality of Life .....	7
Additional Information: CIT Overview .....	8
Provision of education to a large and varied cohort of students .....	9
Support for Research, Innovation and Enterprise.....	11
Contribution to the Social, Cultural and Economic Life of the Region .....	12
Munster Technological University (MTU) .....	14
Conclusion .....	15

## Overview: National Planning Framework

The stated aims of the National Planning Framework (NPF) briefing document<sup>1</sup> include a drive towards balanced, sustainable regional development, underpinned by strong urban performance, with a particular focus on increasing public transport usage, improving health and well-being, and coping with rural decline and an ageing population.

In this context the higher education system, if supported and strengthened under the NPF, can make a significant contribution to overall regional development. The Southern Region in particular is well positioned, given the range of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the region, including two traditional universities (University College Cork (UCC), University of Limerick (UL)), and five Institutes of Technology (IoTs) (Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT), Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC), Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT).

This submission points to five ways in which all regions can be greatly strengthened through increased investment in higher education, with particular emphasis on the South West Strategic Planning Area within the Southern Regional Assembly.

1. Implement strong, regionally embedded **Technological Universities**;
2. Address **infrastructural requirements** in higher educational institutions (HEIs) across the region, especially in the institute of technology sector which does not have access to a borrowing mechanism;
3. Address the **STEM education** agenda which includes participation levels in higher education and funding imbalances, which are a disincentive to producing the science, engineering and computer science graduates who fuel growth industries such as pharma, med-tech, agri-tech, Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and building;
4. Address the need for **grow-on supports for fledgling companies** who emerge from the start-up hot houses across the region;
5. Ensure the factors underpinning “quality of life” attributes of the region are recognised and supported, especially through **social and cultural contributions** of HEIs.

These points are then further elaborated from the perspective of a CIT contribution.

This approach is strongly aligned with the Cork submission to the National Planning Framework, “*Cork 2050: Realising the Full Potential*”, with education (people, business development) contributing to two of the five pillars of its economic growth strategy. The place-making strategy also highlights the promotion of cultural assets and creativity, which is another area referenced in the CIT submission. Finally the Cork 2050 submission proposes significant growth in population, growth for HEIs, and enhanced infrastructural developments. It is only through the success of engineering, business, and creative arts graduates of HEIs such as CIT that this vision can be realised.

In conclusion, an enhanced multi-campus Technological University presence, working across the breadth of the Southern Region and in collaboration with the traditional universities and the IoTs, will be a key driver towards growing economic and social performance across the entire region, in both urban and rural contexts, and should receive a strong signal of support as a result of the NPF process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ireland 2040: Our Plan: Issues and Choices, <http://npf.ie>

## 1. Technological Universities

It has been Government policy to support the establishment of Technological Universities since the 2011 publication of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. The creation of a Technological University is about building new, multi-campus, regionally embedded universities which have enhanced capability and capacity. The national strategy and various other reports envisage an increased demand for higher education among a growing population and an enhanced role for HEIs in the social and economic development of the country. There is a clear role for a high-performing technological university sector, which engages deeply with the industry, businesses and communities of the regions, and which drives economic growth through high quality research underpinning its engaged teaching and learning model.

The Southern Region has the opportunity to support the development of two new Technological Universities: the Munster Technological University (MTU), which is a consortium involving CIT and ITT, and which has already completed three of the four stages required, and the Technological University of the South East, involving ITC and WIT, which is at an earlier stage of its evolution toward TU designation.

Technological Universities are expected to deliver and create a substantial, positive economic impact to the region characterised by increased research investment, contribution to increased GDP, increased productivity through enhanced workforce educational attainment, greater numbers of diverse graduates with a flexible approach to how they engage in the workforce, students and graduates willing to pursue entrepreneurial activities and work in non-traditional employment structures, increased access to flexible learning opportunities driving knowledge and skill growth, and enabling a more attractive region in which to live, study, work and do business.

Legislation is awaited to allow the implementation of the Technological University sector to proceed. This is a blockage and barrier to enhanced economic, social and cultural development across the regions, and must be addressed.

The South West region is the most significant region outside Dublin in terms of:

- Population;
- Contribution to GDP;
- National leader for significant economic clusters.

It is essential that the South West region has a Technological University to help provide the economic and social capital necessary for the continued development of the region.

The MTU will bring considerable benefits to the citizens and economy of the region as well as delivering benefits for staff and students of the new University. The MTU will make the South West region more desirable as a destination in which to study, live and do business. It will result in increased economic activity (estimated at €50m per annum), greater inward investment and the creation of additional employment in the region. The MTU will work in partnership with community and social groups to facilitate initiatives aimed at delivering benefits and social capital within the region. The MTU will also deliver leading-edge research and support for enterprise development and growth with a particular focus on indigenous start-up, and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Students will be afforded a broader range of educational opportunities and the range and quality of services and supports available to students will be enriched. MTU graduates will experience enhanced employability both in Ireland and internationally and they will have greater options for further study

and research collaboration. The staff of the MTU will experience greater career opportunities and will have the option within their career to focus or specialise in education, research and engagement. Staff engagement will be facilitated by the MTU, including greater opportunities to work with enterprises and enhanced opportunities for international exchange with HEIs abroad.

The positive contribution of entrepreneurial regional Technological Universities to the social and economic wellbeing of their regions is supported by research and reports from around the world. The creation of the MTU will help to position the South West as the next most significant region outside of Dublin.

## **2. Infrastructural Requirements**

HEIs in Ireland have suffered significant cuts in government funding over the last eight to ten years. IoTs in particular have been unable to access sufficient levels of diversified income or to avail of borrowing mechanisms. The legacy of funding shortfalls is campus infrastructure in need of upgrade and renewal, especially in areas such as engineering and ICT.

Despite the deterioration of core infrastructure, and the loss of academic staff, student numbers have risen in higher education, and are due to rise further over the next ten years due to the growing population and natural demographic. Further gains in student numbers are also expected through growing attractiveness of Ireland as a destination country for overseas higher education. To accommodate the expected growth in student numbers, higher education campuses across the Southern Region, especially the IoTs, will need a major injection of funding to upgrade existing buildings and equipment, and to deliver new facilities.

The Cork region demographic of 18 year-olds shows a significant increase especially from 2024 onwards, rising from just under 6000 (in 2017) to approximately 8,500 at peak in 2027. Higher education institutes will be expected to accommodate increases of between 30% and 40% in terms of first year intake alone. Other drivers of increased numbers include improved retention rates, greater recruitment of international students, growth in lifelong learning, and growth unrelated to the natural demographic, e.g. via increased immigration.

The NPF must send a strong signal of support for improved funding of higher education infrastructure, including upgraded teaching and learning spaces, equipment for laboratories, student accommodation and other facilities, to support a growing student body which will fuel the economy across the wider region. A teaching, learning and research infrastructure that is fit for purpose will be a key building block in the driver towards regional wellbeing.

### 3. The STEM agenda

The Cork region has been identified as the number one region in the country for output of STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates, fuelling strong performance in foreign direct investment (Source: IBEC Economic Indicators 2017). For this performance to be sustained, and increased, the continued provision of STEM graduates is essential.

However, there are a number of factors putting this opportunity at risk. The first is the infrastructural deficit in HEIs, which has been addressed in the previous section. Secondly is the continued poor ability of STEM disciplines to attract female candidates, although a number of initiatives are beginning to deliver changes in attitudes among female second level students. These include the Cork-led IWish initiative, CIT's "Engineering your Future" activities, the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) programme led by UCC, and others. Support needs to be provided to enable engaged stakeholders to continue to promote and advance diversity in STEM education and employment.

There is also the major issue of overall funding levels in higher education. The NPF should support the provision of sufficient funding (capital and recurrent) to enable the appropriate higher education facilities and infrastructure to be constructed and staffed to cater for significant population growth and to meet the growing demand for STEM employment in biopharma, ICT, food, medical technology, and financial services sectors.

More traditional STEM disciplines such as construction, civil engineering, and architecture will also deliver graduates to develop the overall infrastructure which will be demanded in the NPF, including areas such as roads and housing.

Finally, there is a further issue with the funding **model** in place for STEM disciplines in higher education. The Higher Education Authority funding model has historically given an additional weighting to science and engineering programmes (STEM disciplines), to give due recognition of the higher costs of delivery of these programmes, especially in the Institute of Technology sector where many of these programmes are delivered. Such costs derive from the need for lab equipment and class delivery in small groups when compared to primarily theory-based disciplines.

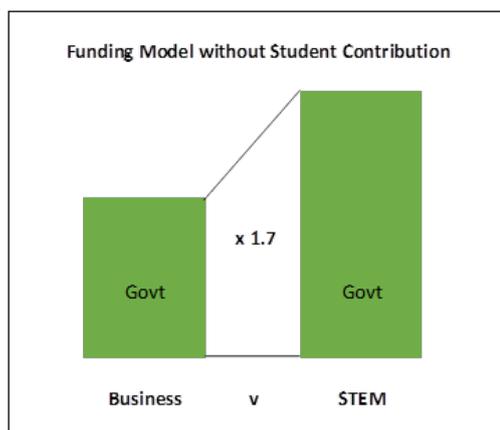
However, for a number of years now the baseline funding allocation has been declining in line with reduced state support for higher education. An increasingly large portion of funding for HEIs is coming from the student contribution, to which the STEM weighting is not applied. The end result is a significantly greater reduction in state funding for programmes in the STEM disciplines, when compared to reductions applied to other disciplines. This is having a detrimental impact on the ability of HEIs to continue to deliver high quality science and engineering programmes. Should these institutions be forced to reduce their focus on STEM disciplines, this would have a negative effect on industry and business in the region, especially since these are areas which are identified as having skills shortages. The funding model needs to be re-balanced to once again enable the appropriate resourcing of high quality STEM programmes.

The following diagram shows the comparison between the funding received for a business student versus an engineering (STEM) student in the Institute of Technology sector. On the left is the historic model with full funding coming from the Government, on the right the erosion of STEM funding has led to a funding shortfall, shown in red.

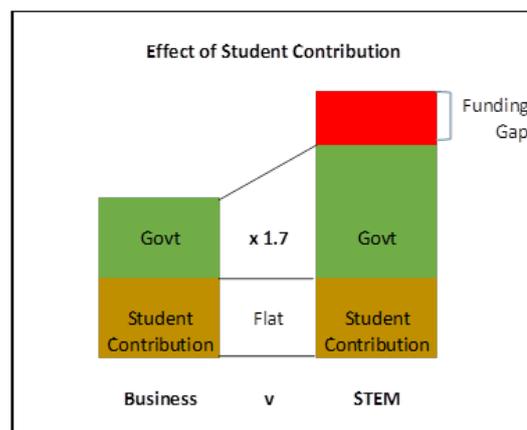
### STEM Disincentive - Funding Model in Institutes of Technology

Simplified Model to illustrate effect of Flat Rate Student Contribution

Sep-16



STEM subject areas cost a multiple of 1.7 times a standard Business Studies subject which is mainly classroom based with larger group sizes. This is reflected in the funding model.



All students pay a flat rate Student Contribution of €3,000 which means that only the Government funding attracts the 1.7 multiplier. The effect is that there is a significant shortfall for STEM students.

Note this model is a simplified one, but the net effect is close to €2,000 of a shortfall per enrolled STEM student (this varies depending on the programme discipline and the programme level).

#### 4. Grow-on Supports for Fledgling Start-Up Companies

Incubation and Enterprise support came to the forefront of economic development in most regions in the late 1990s with the development of Graduate Enterprise Programmes, Enterprise Boards (now LEO), Forbairt (now Enterprise Ireland), Business Technology Centres, Leader and Údarás na Gaeltachta. Since that time, many indigenous companies have developed following support from these agencies and have become major employers. Some of these companies have scaled beyond the need for any additional or ongoing support of agencies such as Enterprise Ireland or the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).

For those who now choose to start a business, the number of Incubators and Accelerators has grown, with providers such as CIT's Rubicon, Indi-Bio, Republic of Work, Teamwork, Blackstone, and Ludgate all expanding in the Cork region alone. In addition, entrepreneurs have gone global in their selection choice, going to the USA, UK, Brazil, and Chile to secure support and seed finance. In the last two years, Entrepreneurs could have a choice of a number of service providers to go to, and indeed analysis carried out in Cork by EI in 2015 showed that no single service provider could claim that the High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) Funding project for the year was supported entirely by them.

Typically, the ratio of companies receiving support from agencies to the overall number of companies is very low.

There is an opportunity to enable HEIs to offer a *Post-Incubation and Scaling* offering, aimed at those who want to do the following:

- Grow employment and turnover;
- Have some innovation employed in either their business process, product or service to protect the future of the operation;
- Secure investment from private and public sources to expand;
- Export and gain new markets;
- Access third and fourth level supports from the Education sector.

Typical needs of such companies are in areas such as financial reporting and control, sales and marketing, human resources and innovation. To deliver such a packaged offering, HEIs, through their Innovation offices and incubators, will need access to seed funding, scaled angel offerings, and international links. This model has been tried and tested in other countries, such as in Warwick University Science Park in the UK and in Laval Mayenne Technipole in France.

## **5. Social and Cultural Contributions to Quality of Life**

HEIs are a huge source of vibrancy within a region, especially those with graduates in creative disciplines such as art, design, music and drama. While many workers are attracted to an area by the promise of a well-paid job with good progression opportunities, other factors also play a role. These factors include access to appropriate housing in a safe and secure neighbourhood, a clean environment with good air and water quality, but also a sense of vibrancy through the availability of cultural resources such as art galleries, performance venues, theatres and festivals as well as opportunities to participate in making art and music.

Art and music education is expensive for the state, as high quality, often high-tech facilities are needed, as well as access to world renowned practitioners. After graduation, it can be daunting to forge a practice when most art activities are subsidised by the state through various schemes. Finding appropriate studio space is becoming more difficult now as the recession dissipates. The NPF should include cultural vibrancy at the heart of its planning for each region, and ensure there are urban and rural strategies included.

Socially, the emphasis on an ageing population will place a great burden of responsibility on our emerging social and health care graduates. Early adoption of healthy lifestyles will require graduates with a focus on physical and mental health and wellbeing to contribute to and drive this agenda.

---

**Additional Information: CIT Overview**

*CIT Bishopstown campus*

CIT and its antecedents have been associated with education in Cork and the broader region since the 1830s. The Institute offers a wide range of flexible full-time and part-time higher education courses (at all levels up to and including PhD) in art & design, business, engineering, humanities, music, maritime studies, science, and information technology.

CIT has campuses in both Cork City and County. The main CIT campus is located in Bishopstown and straddles the city/county boundary with most of the campus in the city but some playing pitches and additional lands located in the county. The CIT Crawford College of Art and Design and the CIT Cork School of Music are both located at campuses in Cork City centre. The National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) is located on the lower harbour in Ringaskiddy, County Cork. CIT also delivers programmes in conjunction with Clonakilty Agricultural College in west Cork.

CIT's student population of 15,000 students enjoys excellent support, social and sporting facilities, including a purpose-built student centre, sports stadium, gymnasium, medical centre and learning support centre.

CIT has a number of vibrant and successful research, innovation, knowledge exchange and enterprise support centres which have had many notable achievements, and have been successful in attracting Irish, EU and international funding. Many CIT graduates and alumni occupy senior management and executive positions across a range of indigenous and multinational enterprises while others are successful entrepreneurs founding enterprises and creating employment at home and abroad. CIT's staff, students and graduates make significant contributions to public bodies, cultural and community organisations, and in the world of sport locally, nationally and internationally.

CIT's mission is to deliver student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond.

The following sections provide a CIT perspective on:

1. Provision of education to a large and varied cohort of students;
2. Support for research, innovation and enterprise;
3. Contribution to the social and cultural life of the region.

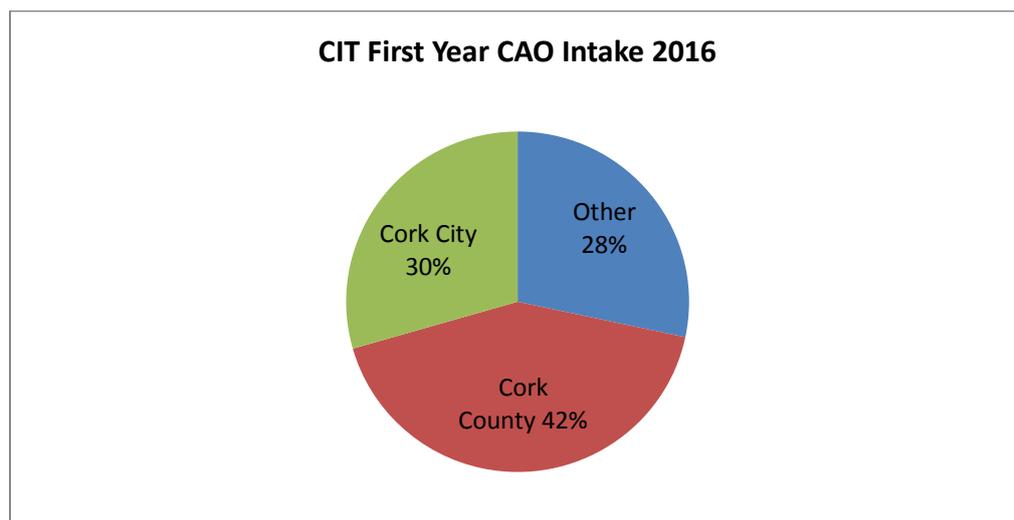
The CIT contribution across these key areas underpins the overall rationale in the previous sections and should form a key element of the Cork2050 developments.

### **Provision of education to a large and varied cohort of students**

CIT has a broad educational mission which has at its core the provision of career-focused education. We aim to provide higher education opportunities to learners with a variety of circumstances and profiles including:

- Traditional school leavers;
- Students who have completed further education courses;
- Those in the workplace wishing to upskill or retrain;
- Those seeking employment;
- Those unable to participate in higher education in the traditional manner.

We are developing different programme structures and modes of delivery to allow greater numbers of learners to access our courses. Our undergraduate student cohort is currently drawn, for the most part, from Cork City and County and we expect this to remain the case into the foreseeable future.



Given the large percentage of CIT's overall population which comes from Cork City and County (over 70%), transport infrastructure is critical.

CIT also has an excellent relationship with the Education and Training Board and the Further Education Colleges, both in the city and now in the county, through the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS). CIT's Access Office provides enormous support to second level schools in disadvantaged areas as well as to students in CIT who come from disadvantaged schools and other areas of social exclusion.

As CIT seeks to enhance its provision to a more diverse and larger cohort of students, it will come to rely more and more on ICT infrastructure beyond its own campuses. We aim to allow students to access a broad range of services including online lectures, ebooks, virtual learning environments and virtual desktop environments. These services will allow students to have a rich educational experience, which closely approximates the on campus experience, while at home during evenings, weekends, etc. CIT's online education offering continues to grow, with the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning established to help develop and support online distance education courses offered by the Institute and also to help develop and implement strategy in that area. CIT's aim is to provide a flexible and effective way for students who, for whatever reason, cannot attend our physical campuses to participate in CIT courses remotely. Training and support are provided for staff in the use of teaching tools and platforms such as the Blackboard Learning Management System and the Adobe Connect Live E-learning system to augment or complement CIT's conventional face-to-face courses. Currently, five postgraduate courses are delivered online, two Diploma courses under Springboard, and six professional development offerings.

While we are planning developments of our own ICT infrastructure to meet the needs of these services, similar development will need to take place in the public broadband infrastructure. Broadband has also been identified as an issue for companies seeking to start up or grow business outside the metropolitan city area. To ensure that CIT can provide education and professional development opportunities to a large and diverse student cohort and to allow CIT to contribute to the strong regional agenda, in support of start-ups especially high-tech or digital companies, it is essential that a uniform high-level of broadband service is available throughout the region.

A key point to note is the extent to which collaboration and co-operation exists between CIT and UCC, also based in the city. There are undergraduate and postgraduate joint awards in Biomedical Science, Architecture, Art & Design Education, and Industrial Physics. This level of cooperation is unique in the country, with no other region in Ireland able to point to such a united effort for the benefit of the region and beyond.

Finally, the CIT 2015 First Destinations Report provided many positive outcomes for CIT and its graduates with 91% of CIT graduates either in paid employment or in further study (62% paid employment and 29% in further study). The fraction reporting as seeking employment reduced from 7% to 6% with the remaining 3% either travelling, volunteering, otherwise unavailable for work or participating in an unpaid internship or work experience. The proportion of graduates going overseas was reduced with 94% of employed graduates working in Ireland and 74% of those working in Cork.

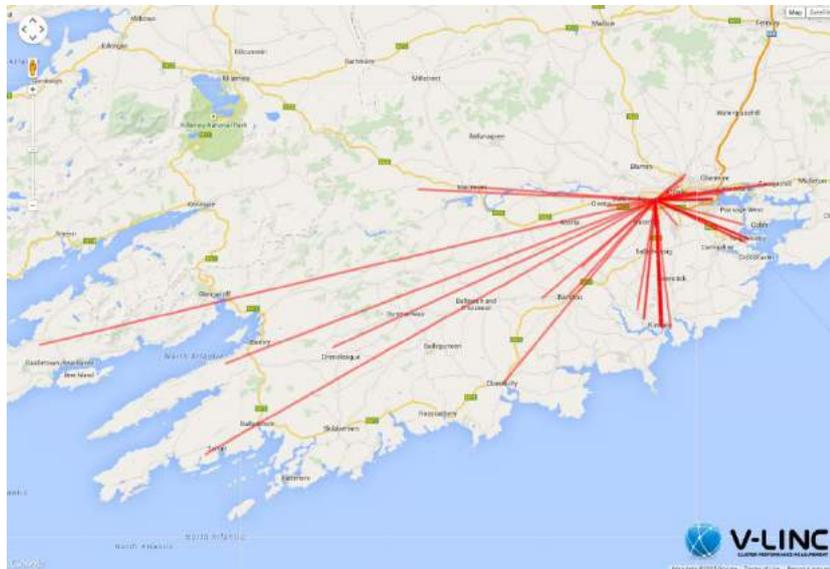
The most prolific sectors of employment identified by graduates were the Bio-pharma, Pharma-chem, and Medical Device and Manufacturing sectors (12.9%) followed by the Computer Programming and Consultancy, Data Processing sector.

CIT, consolidated as part of a Technological University, can continue to grow the provision of a wide range of educational activities across the region, to a large and varied cohort of students.

## Support for Research, Innovation and Enterprise

CIT has many linkages with industry in the region, and sees as one of its core pillars the principle of support for industry and enterprise, through placements, workforce development, innovation supports etc.

The following diagram illustrates the extent of CIT's engagements across a number of sectors in Cork:



*A V-LINC<sup>2</sup> analysis of CIT's linkages with firms in the Agri-food; Biopharma; ICT; Maritime and Tourism sectors in Cork*

The data indicates strong relationships with enterprises across both Cork City and County.

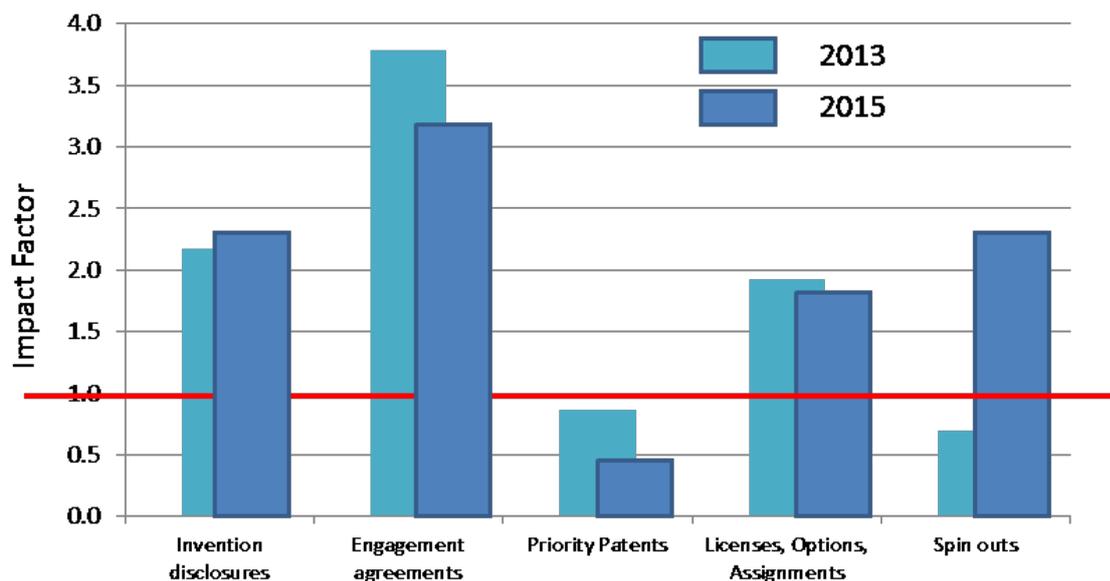
Cork City and County have both partnered with CIT in many research and EU projects through its key research centres and Enterprise Ireland-supported technology gateways (NIMBUS, CAPPA, BIOEXPLORE), e.g. Smart Cities, Water Testbed (Macroom and Lee Road), urban and rural community Testbed (Mallow).

CIT is now the strongest performer of all the IoTs in terms of research: recent data released on Ireland's drawdown of Horizon2020 funding shows that at the midpoint stage CIT's is the second highest performer in the state in terms of success rate and is the clear leader in the technological higher education sector in terms of funding competitively won.

CIT's research and innovation impact, or return on the State's investment, is also significant (*Source (university data): Knowledge Transfer Ireland, Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2013/15*):

---

<sup>2</sup> V-LINC is a methodology and associated software application that organisations can use to visualise, analyse and optimise how they do business with their suppliers, customers and other stakeholders, internal and external. Developed in the School of Business, CIT



The red line indicates the expected IP outputs if CIT's research income was equal to the average for an average Irish university.

The collaboration mentioned in the last section with UCC also extends to research and innovation: CIT has researchers and principal investigators in the UCC-based SFI centres at Tyndall (through CAPPA@Tyndall), MaREI, and APC as well as in the CONNECT centre based at Trinity College Dublin. CIT is a member of the BRIDGE Technology Transfer consortium led by UCC which also includes Teagasc and IT Tralee. Other partnerships also exist such as IMERC (Irish Maritime and Energy Research Cluster) which involves CIT, UCC, and the Irish Naval Service.

The Rubicon Centre at CIT is one of Ireland's strongest-performing on-campus incubators, with over 50 companies based in the centre at any one time employing approximately 200 people. The Rubicon, supported by Enterprise Ireland, the Local Enterprise Offices and SECAD, offers a number of start-up programmes such as New Frontiers and the Exxcel programme for female entrepreneurs. The Rubicon is benchmarked within the top 5% of European incubators.

### Contribution to the Social, Cultural and Economic Life of the Region

CIT currently enjoys an excellent working relationship with both Cork City and County Councils through:

- Working Groups (e.g. County Age Alliance, CASP)
- Support for twinning relationships (primarily with Shanghai and Cologne)
- Major contribution to art and music through provision of venues at CIT Cork School of Music, CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, and CIT Wandesford Quay Gallery
- Many collaborative exhibitions, performances, projects and events. There is greater impact perhaps on the city region given the location of these venues and activities which are predominantly city based. However there have been county-wide collaborations also, including the Camden Fort, the Sirius at Cobh, and through the County Libraries.

- Social wellbeing and cohesion through the availability of student placements and graduates from degree programmes such as Community Development, Social Care, Early Years Education, Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Art Therapy.
- The NMCI is Ireland's national centre for maritime education. It involves a formal partnership with the Irish Naval Service (based in Haulbowline, Co Cork). The College has a strong international reputation and is increasingly attracting global business clients with knock-on benefits for both the city and county.
- CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory with its dual science outreach and heritage perspectives, and large influence on primary school children in the region;
- Economic Development Fund
- Cork Science and Innovation Park (CSIP)

CIT's cultural assets are worth listing: they include CIT Cork School of Music which also has Drama and Theatre Studies, CIT Crawford College of Art and Design, the award-winning Architecture Factory, 3 galleries (Wandesford Gallery, the James Barry Gallery, and the School of Music Gallery), 3 Theatres (the Rory Gallagher Theatre, the Stack Theatre and the Curtis Auditorium), an extensive Visual Art Collection containing not just the Hennessy Collection but also the work of young artists emerging from the Institute, and a full catalogue of its Visual Arts Collection recently digitised by the Arts Office. The catalogue is available to search in the Special Collections section of the Library website. CIT's Arts Office with an Arts Officer develops, enhances and promotes the profile and range of arts on the various sites of the campus.

CIT works not just with local authorities but also with many other public and private organisations such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Cork Chamber of Commerce, the American Chamber of Commerce, IBEC, the Port of Cork, Bus Éireann, the Cork Business Association, the COPE Foundation and more.



CIT Cork School of Music



CIT Crawford College of Art &amp; Design



National Maritime College of Ireland

## Munster Technological University (MTU)

The aim of the MTU is to **promote the use of knowledge to realise positive effects for society.**

The MTU will be a different type of university characterised by:

- Entrepreneurial organisational culture;
- Innovative and flexible provision of education, research and other services;
- Responsiveness and regional impact.

The MTU will have:

- 17,000 students;
- Over 1,600 staff;
- Two main locations and six sites across Cork and Kerry.

The MTU will deliver significant benefits for students, graduates and staff:

- Students will be afforded a broader range of educational opportunities;
- The range and quality of services and supports available to students will be enriched;
- Graduates will have greater options nationally and internationally for further study and research collaboration;
- MTU graduates will experience enhanced employability both in Ireland and internationally;
- The staff of the MTU will experience better and more career opportunities;
- Staff will have the opportunity within their career to focus or specialise across the three pillars of education, research, and engagement. In particular research and innovation opportunities will be enhanced;
- Staff mobility will be facilitated by the MTU including greater opportunities to work with enterprises and enhanced opportunities for international exchange with HEIs abroad.

The MTU will:

- Contribute an additional €50m per annum to the regional economy;
- Deliver 13.21% more economic activity than two individual IoTs.

In addition the MTU will make the South West region more desirable as a destination to study, live and do business in, through:

- Provision of required skills and competencies to a variety of learners (e.g. school leavers, mature students and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) learners) via varied and flexible modes of delivery;
- Engaging in leading-edge research and innovation in cooperation with enterprise and social partners in the region;
- Supporting enterprise development and growth with a particular focus on indigenous start-up and SMEs;
- Operating with an over-arching culture of responsiveness which is focused on recognising the requirements of stakeholders and delivering on those requirements;
- Partnering with community and social groups to facilitate initiatives aimed at delivering benefits and social capital within the region.

In order to achieve its mission goals and deliver the considerable benefits, it is vital that the MTU is not merely located in the region but instead is distributed across the region. Through the merger of IT Tralee and CIT we can create a truly regional university which will be highly responsive to stakeholder needs due to its proximity to those stakeholders. The multi-campus structure of the MTU will bring additional opportunities and benefits over a single-site institution. These include:

- Providing enhanced educational opportunities to greater numbers of learners at or near where they live and/or work;
- Proximity to enterprise and other stakeholders which facilitates cooperation and leads to greater synergies and outcomes;
- Being situated in community they serve results in first-hand experience (and therefore a greater understanding) of the needs of stakeholders.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, CIT currently plays a huge role in driving economic, social and cultural growth across Cork City and County, and further across the greater South West region. Through the deep integration of its three key pillars of *research and innovation*, *enterprise engagement*, and *teaching and learning*, it demonstrates excellence on a daily basis. CIT's plans to join with its partner IT Tralee to become the Munster Technological University are intended to deliver even greater opportunities for growth for the wider region.