



Food Incubators Transforming
Regions Workshop/Discussion Group
Notes

Irish Multiplier Event – 11/11/16
Athlone Institute of Technology

Access to Finance Workshop-Feedback

Facilitators: Claire Carty & Paul Clabby, RLP

Speakers:

Local Enterprise Office Roscommon	Louise Ward	Phone: 090 6626263 Email: localenterprise@roscommoncoco.ie Web: www.localenterprise@roscommoncoco.ie
Clann Credo	Tracey Hannon	Phone: 094 9060679 Email: tracey@clanncredo.ie Web: www.clanncredo.ie
AIB	Michael Hegarty	Email: michael.o.hegarty@aib.ie
Roscommon LEADER Partnership	Claire Carty	Phone: 090 6630252 Web: www.rosleaderpartnership.ie
Bank of Ireland	Mena Doherty	Email: mena_m.doherty@boi.com
Community Finance Ireland	Rose Hally	Email: rosehally@communityfinance.ie Web: www.communityfinance.ie
Crowdfunding as a source	Michael Ward	
Enterprise Ireland	Burga Fullan (Galway Rep only)	Website: www.enterprise-ireland.com

Local Enterprise Office Roscommon: Louise Ward

- Louise Ward highlighted the two measures/pillars operating within local enterprise offices. The first being direct funding and the second being training/mentoring.
- She explained that many companies do not seek advice before setting up and urged anybody who has an idea to contact their local LEO who will advise on the correct procedures to go through.
- She explained that many potential startups do not seek advice and plough ahead without understanding essential policies such as “90 days’ credit” etc.
- She highlighted the fact that food incubators are unexploited in the region and that there is a gap for them.
- Explained how LEO has teamed up with Roscommon LEADER Partnership to establish a food hub in Castlerea.

Clann Credo: Tracey Hannon

- Tracey gave a brief overview of what Clann Credo can offer. Clann Credo helps to build stronger communities by providing Community Loan Finance for community growth. They offer a range of loan products to community, voluntary and charitable groups as well as social enterprises and community businesses.
- Tracey said that they help organisations achieve their social, economic and financial potential on terms and conditions that may not be available to them commercially.
- She added some enlightening statistics such as 85 million given out on loans to date.
- They have regional bases in Dublin and the West
- **Why Clann Credo?**-Expert knowledge of the Community and Voluntary sector, Regionally based specialist staff with local knowledge and dedicated person assigned to assist through the process from start to finish.

- **How is Clann Credo Different?** - They only lend to projects that have a social impact, no personal guarantees required, no penalties for early repayment and they lend where the banks may not.

- She also discussed the fact that they require match-funding in order for applications to be successful.

AIB: Michael Hegarty (Business Advisor)

- Discussed how AIB have restructured their business model with benefits such as extended hours to facilitate customers
- Discussed their newly reformed start-up package including additional benefits such as 2 years no fees
- They added how they have joined up with other businesses to offer discount packages such as My business toolkit and Sage accounts at a fraction of the price for potential customers.
- Michael also discussed Micro Finance Ireland as an alternative option upon refusal from AIB.

Roscommon LEADER Partnership

- Roscommon LEADER Partnership (RLP, also known as RIDC – Roscommon Integrated Development Company Ltd.) is an organisation that brings together key development projects including rural enterprise, development and social inclusion that work for the betterment of the people of Co. Roscommon
- Claire Carty gave a run down on what Roscommon LEADER Partnership had to offer including a lot of information on how they are currently teaming up with Roscommon County Council and LEO to establish a food hub in Castlerea.
- She talked about the new LEADER Programme and the pillars/themes that are involved.

- She also gave information on marketing and collaborative networking.

Bank of Ireland-Mena Doherty

- Mena gave a brief overview of what Bank of Ireland had to offer with respect to financing and discussed the new products attributable to the food sector potential entrepreneurs.
- She discussed the benefits of their newly adapted start-up package specifically tailored to meet the needs of today's customers.
- She discussed their new partnerships with solicitors and Accountants to offer potential customers with services at a reduced rate.
- Can send business advisors to your door for convenience.
- Mena said that everyone should seek advice before going their own way.

Community Finance Ireland-Rose Hally

- Rose Hally gave a very informative pitch on the background of Community Finance Ireland. Community Finance (Ireland), formerly UCIT, is a Charity which provides loans exclusively to other third sector organisations such as community groups, charities, sports clubs and social enterprises in the Republic of Ireland. Since 2001, as part of the wider UCIT Group, we've committed in excess of €70 million to over 360 organisations across the island of Ireland.
- She described how they are an all island social lender and how they originated in Northern Ireland.
- Profits reinvested into communities.
- She explained how they are very flexible and there are no fees
- She talked about some of their projects with regards to food to date.

Crowd-Funding-Mike Ward

- He presented the opportunity that crowdfunding presents for Entrepreneurs and Small & Medium Enterprise as an alternative source of start-up/investment finance, and he introduced the CRUCIAL CROWDFUNDING project which is creating a free access learning platform to help people to successfully crowdfund.
- He described that they are very involved in the food and creative sectors, and have done work with each sector recently. He described the equity crowd funding for shares as an option to the crowd on the day.
- He described the benefits of high profile finance including the large cohorts of backers readily available
- He said some of the disadvantages included the hard work required in becoming a successful applicant.

- He told everyone to log on to crowdfunding.com as an additional source of information.

Enterprise Ireland- Burga Fullan (Galway Representative)

- Burga gave a very informative presentation on what enterprise Ireland had to offer with regards to their community enterprise initiative scheme which was their most recent scheme to date.
- She said they are currently updating the scheme and relaunching a new similar initiative in the new year.
- She talked about the advantages of sustainability funding within their umbrella of programmes.
- She said how they are very competitive and are very approachable and for further information to look on their website enterpriseireland.com
- She also added how she was the Galway Rep and for people to contact their own local representative for further information.

Education Workshop Feedback

Facilitators: Ken Farragher, GRETB, Christopher Scally, RLP

- GRETB offers level 1 QQI up to 4 year apprenticeships
- 5,000 trainees per year pass through the doors of GRETB
- GRETB have 800 staff members
- Courses offered range from construction to IT

3 trainings provided:

- 1) Local Training Initiative (LTI)
 - ✓ 11 months' duration
 - ✓ Level 4-5 QQI catered for
 - ✓ GRETB fund running costs
- 2) Part time Programme
- 3) Career Traineeship
 - ✓ Develop skills of local people
 - ✓ Ran for a half year to a year

Lorna: 4-year BA in Culinary Arts offered in AIT ⇒ spin-out into hubs ⇒ final year of management are looking for training

Francis: Tourist and food (food tourism)

- ✓ Small intimate indigenous buildings

Ken: Food entrepreneur ⇒ Drumshanbo is an intimate location

Francis: Ireland is standing out as an important asset to develop food hubs

Catherine Fox: Taste of Cavan dictating where people go on holidays

- ✓ “666 Event”

Catherine Cooney: Regional Skills Forum can develop these events

- ✓ Paul Keating (Education & Skills) is the contact for developing food hubs
- ✓ 12 small businesses selected to upskill in digital marketing
 - Training held in larger businesses

Michael Hoey (St. Angelas, Sligo): Provide technical services

- ✓ Legislation requirements
- ✓ Use by/best before legislation discussed
- ✓ Courses are commercially driven because of the size of the businesses students want to work for
- ✓ Companies must be set-up as a limited company to apply for enterprise voucher

Benny: It needs to be thought through

- ✓ LTI is a fantastic opportunity

Mary Tynan: €8,000 to go on SuperValu academy

LEOs responsible for appointing mentors to start-ups

LEOs training for people on DSP and employees

Farmer’s markets – can be a heritage and cultural entity and not needing compliance

Distribution Workshop - Feedback

Facilitators: James Donlon, WestBic & Martina Earley, RLP

Speakers:

<i>Irish Food Coop</i>	<i>Sarah Gough Chairperson (Also owner of Milleven Fine Foods)</i>	<i>Email: info@irishfoodcoop.com Phone: 056 7800577</i>
<i>Larder 360</i>	<i>Brendan Allen</i>	<i>Tel: 091-792899 Email: info@larder360.com</i>

Sarah Gough - Irish Food Coop

Sarah discussed her experience in being involved in the setting up of the Irish Food Coop. Some key points:

Sarah has been chairperson of the Irish Food Co-Op since it started in 2014. The Irish Food Co-op is a not for profit cooperative of Irish artisan producers who have joined forces to maximise their sales and distribution.

- They are a producer owned Food Co-operative that links food producers from South East region of Ireland to multiple customers nationwide.
- They facilitate the delivery via courier and invoicing from multiple producer sources with the frequency, volume and quality that is considered best practice by the customer and increase the rate of sale on behalf of all participating producers.
- Kilkenny Leader Partnership strategy, the genesis of the idea began with a Kilkenny Food Strategy and the challenge of 'Growing a local food economy.'

Brendan Allen – Larder 360

Brendan discussed his experience in being involved in the setting up of the Larder 360 and talked through how the concept works in terms of reducing delivery costs from over 30euros a drop to just 7 euro. Some key points:

- The expense of having a distribution centre (heavy with refrigeration) and finding a reliable, economical and affordable delivery/courier service are two things that drove the creation of Larder 360.
- Deliver direct to service and also to consumer on a specific route, have a warehouse in Oranmore, this is their distribution base
- Planning a Dublin Delivery route and hope to work with Dublin suppliers to bring their products back to the west of the return trip
- So far 13 suppliers on board – find out more on <http://larder360.com/localsuppliers/>

Q&A

Shane Bonner from Newmarket Kitchen was impressed by both initiatives and identified distribution as one of the biggest challenges that his tenants faced.