



Collaboration is key to commercialising new ideas, according to Minister Sean Sherlock speaking at the launch of InterTradelreland's Innova Programme which offers up to €5 million to help companies benefit from all-island collaborative approaches to R&D. InterTradelreland is seeking applicants for the 2011/2012 Innova programme which will support 18 collaborative projects with a funding package of up to €300,000 each.

The programme aims to stimulate, promote and support R&D cooperation between companies North and South to accelerate new product, process or service development. Companies are currently invited to apply for Innova funding and, in particular, projects in the areas of life and health sciences including polymers and plastics, agri-food, advanced engineering, advanced materials, telecoms, environment and ICT are being sought.



Speaking at the launch of the programme, Minister of State for Research and Innovation, Sean Sherlock TD said; "I have been greatly impressed by the level of innovation in action across Irish SMEs and the creation of product and service ideas which are being transformed from a concept to a reality."

Minister Sherlock added: "All-island collaboration is enabling the development of companies that are scalable internationally with the ability to compete globally. This new generation of companies are embracing innovation with real results in terms of jobs and growth. Those taking part on InterTradelreland's Innova programme for example, have benefited from nearly €40 million worth of business development value despite the fact that over half of these projects are still in development phase. This government is committed to supporting innovation across the island and providing the necessary tools to companies to deliver their aspirations."

Margaret Hearty, Director of Programmes and Business Services at InterTradelreland added; "We want to ensure that any enterprise with a creative idea which has strong commercial potential can access whatever resources it needs across the island – be it market, financial or technical. Our Innova programme for example, helps SMEs to undertake 'game-changing' forms of innovation that would normally be confined to larger organisations with significant resources and expertise - and enables them to become successful. Investment in innovation with a focus on high-value enterprise and export orientated business is yielding significant results."

In addition to the financial support available, Innova companies benefit from pooling their expertise and resources with another company in Northern Ireland to bring their innovations to market faster than if they were working alone. One such company is life sciences firm, Biosensia Ltd. which was partnered with a leading electronics company in Northern Ireland to develop a point-of-care diagnostic instrument platform.

Their product, which aims to take testing out of the laboratory and into hospital wards and bedsides, is a fluorescence reader which is capable of reading test results obtained from Biosensia's patented point of care platform – RapiPlex. The portable design allows the reader to be used in locations such as a clinic or doctor's office, laboratory, hospital bedside or A&E department to test for a variety of clinical conditions. It can also be used by emergency services at accident scenes or by police officers to test for drugs of abuse. RapiPlex is currently undergoing commercial trials in the USA.

For further information on InterTradeIreland's Innova programme and to apply visit <http://www.intertradeireland.com/innova/>

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