

ATU Innovation Centres' Highlights 2023

ATU Sligo Innovation Centre



The Innovation Centre at ATU Sligo provides high potential entrepreneurs and innovative start-ups with the skills, networks, space and supports necessary to navigate the business start-up process from concept to successful commercialisation.

New Centre Clients

In 2023, the Centre welcomed two new client companies both renting dedicated offices with the intention of further expansion and growth.

The new new companies are Dulann and BVD Consulting. Dulann is an Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) consulting company that assists SMEs with the demands of ever-evolving environmental compliance and

legislation. BVD Consulting works directly with clients in the construction industry to navigate the execution and delivery of large projects. Both businesses complement the Centre's client base in engineering and technology and are positive additions to our community.

Events

In 2023 several events took place including regular social and informal gatherings that presented networking opportunities for Innovation Centre client companies to mingle with ATU academics and research staff.

For Local Enterprise Week in March the Centre teamed up with the Local Enterprise Office, Sligo and hosted renowned guest speaker, Padraic O'Maille. The theme of the energetic and insightful talk centered on business growth and development with an audience made up of academics, students and local business owners.

Later in the year the Sligo Innovation Centre collaborated with Platform94, a Galway-based incubation centre, and hosted a lunch and learn on the Innovation Exchange, an initiative of Skillnet whereby a large industry partner is matched with an SME to address a business challenge.

The Innovation Centre's clients also participated in the ATU Sligo Be Career Curious open day, availing of the opportunity to showcase their company to students and prospective graduates exploring local employment prospects. This reinforced the defining benefit of a company located on a university campus which is access to talent and opportunities for academic engagement.

Student Entrepreneurship

The Innovation Centre's staff continued the tradition of assisting and facilitating several entrepreneurship programmes for second and third level students. These included third level programmes, iDays and StudentInc and the second level NFTE programme run by Foróige.

After a four years absence, 2023 saw the return of the Bright Spark entrepreneurship summer camp. 16 students, all Ukrainian nationals and recent arrivals to Ireland, aged 14-16 years were brought through their paces at the week-long camp. The week was heralded as a success for the participants who brought new energy and diversity and showcased their adaptability and resilience.

New Frontiers North West Programme

Enterprise Ireland's New Frontiers programme is delivered in the north-west through ATU Sligo and Donegal. Participants have access to co-working spaces at Sligo's Innovation Centre or Letterkenny's Co-Lab, one-on-one mentoring, masterclasses and up to €22,500 in financial support to accelerate their startup.

Phase 2 of programme started on 1 September 2023 and will finish at the end of February 2024. The 13 participants come from both counties Sligo and Donegal with businesses ranging from SaaS to consumer goods.

To find out more about ATU Sligo Innovation Hub please click [here](#).



Enterprise Ireland's New Frontiers ATU – Sligo Donegal participants for 2023

ATU Innovation Hub (iHub) Mayo



The iHub is a centre that offers space to startup businesses and runs two entrepreneurship programmes, New Frontiers and the EMPOWER Programme. 2023 proved to be very busy for ATU iHub in Mayo, celebrating its 17th birthday this year.

Empower Cumasú Programme

The year kicked off with the Empower Cumasú programme run jointly between ATU iHub Mayo and Údarás na Gaeltachta. The aim of the programme is to fast-track female-led businesses based in the Gaeltacht areas of Galway and Mayo by offering free training, mentoring, support and peer to peer learning. Thirteen women completed the programme with a further five going on to do an extension programme later in 2023.

New Frontiers Programme

This year New Frontiers celebrated 10 years across the country. Some former New Frontiers clients in Mayo include Sorcha O Grady and Jens Hellberg, Truckscience; David McIntyre, Cubbie; Mark Corrigan, Marine Cable Services; Liam Feeney, Spottrack; Anne Walsh, Allergy Lifestyle; Fergal O Connor, Buy Media and Eoin Heverin, Foodie Savie.

Four new participants joined Phase two of the programme in August 2023. These include Bhibhinn McKenzie, Jamie Clabburn, Martin Parsons and Noel O Malley.

Funding

In funding news, Cytidel a client company of iHub Mayo, recently got approved for €1.35 million in seed funding which was led by Elkstone Ventures with participation from Enterprise Ireland. The Cybersecurity startup has built a risk management platform that offers real-time

vulnerability intelligence to help companies prioritise fixing the most important flaws in their systems.

Paul Walsh with his team in Tarracor Robotics recently received €100,000 from the Pre Seed Start Fund (PSSF) from Enterprise Ireland. They have developed a robot to replace manual tractors in golf driving ranges and golf courses. Paul participated in New Frontiers 2022. His first customer in Florida will be one of many to take advantage of this technology.

Fergal Dunne from Ellaro recently obtained Agile Funding for their new product invoicechecker.ie and Full Health Medical also obtained Agile Funding. Agile funding enables innovative businesses to transform their ideas into impact and shape the future of business, technology and society.

New Centre Clients

New clients who came to the centre in 2023 include Neuronic who develop wellness devices that send out near-infrared light. Clinical research has shown that near-infrared light positively impacts memory, movement and mood stability. The company develops light therapy equipment, specifically a helmet-like device that has 256 Near-infrared LEDs inside.

Two more new clients include Onawave Medical who are developing technology in the area of women's health, and Ingenium who work in the area of engineering and project water services who are researching the use of AI for the water sector.



Entrepreneurship

ATU iHub Mayo hosted their annual Spirit of Entrepreneurship evening in September with Harry Hughes from Portwest taking centre stage along with Colm O'Brien, Carabola; Tracey Sweeney, Tracey Sweeney Fine Art; Helen Nolan, Spraoi agus Spórt; Matthew Conlon, Cytidel and Noreen Hackett, Advanced Cosmetics.

iHub Mayo works closely with ATU Mayo Campus and this year welcomed a lovely bunch of budding Transition Year (TY) students under the Young Entrepreneur Programme. The TY students got to meet and chat to two other entrepreneurs in the building during their visit.

To find out more about ATU iHub Mayo please click [here](#).

ATU Galway Innovation Hub (iHub)

The iHub at ATU Galway City and Mayo incubators provide high potential entrepreneurs and innovative start-ups with the business skills, networks, space and supports necessary to navigate the business start-up process from concept to successful commercialisation. 2023 was another very successful year for ATU Galway's Innovation Hub.

Funding

Investment funding raised by client companies increased by €28M in 2023 to €291M, the third year in a row where investment funding raised topped €25M. The number of jobs supported reached 1450+ and one acquisition in 2023 brought the total number of acquired iHub companies to eight.

Clients who raised significant funding include Bluedrop Medical, Smart Reactors, Byowave, Cranmed, Symphysis Medical, Endowave, Cytidel, Precision Sports Technology and Tarracor Robotics.

iHub Clients Successes

Funding was secured by several client companies during 2023 with three examples indicated below along with the technology they are developing:

- Smart Reactors who are developing the world's first nanomaterial "nanocellulose" for use in artificial lung devices as a bridge to lung transplantation. €3M EIC Funding.
- Endowave who are developing a novel robotic-enabled microwave ablation catheter with integrated position sensing and ablation imaging technology for metastatic lung cancer with ATU MET Centre as a research partner. €5.4M DTIF 6 Funding.
- Cranmed who will develop and validate a differentiated and reversible liquid embolic treatment for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). €3M DTIF 6 Funding.

New Frontiers Programmes

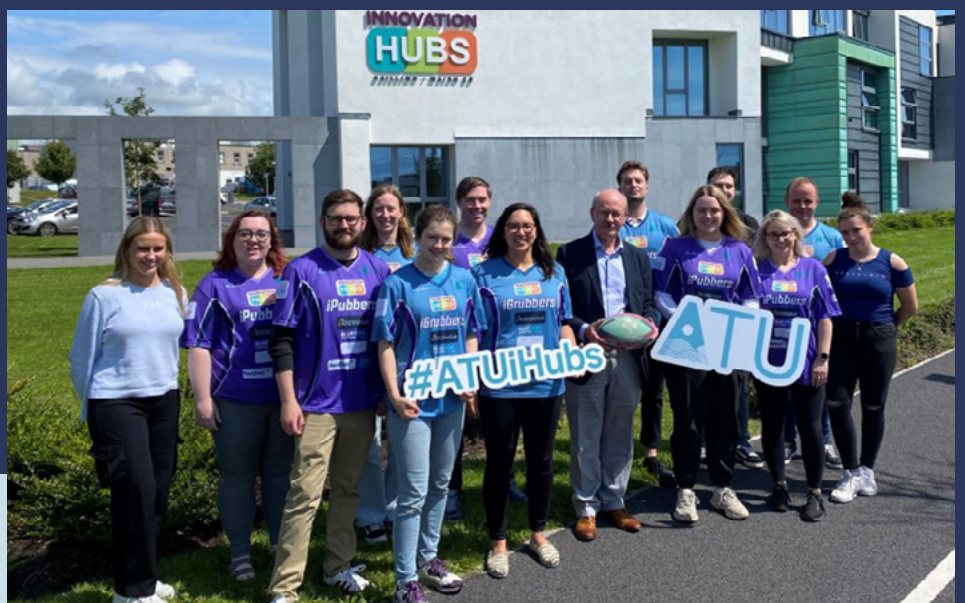
Phase 2 of ATU New Frontiers in Galway-Mayo is currently underway with 15 participants. Applications for the 2024-2025 Phase 1 will open in Spring 2024.

New Frontiers participants from Galway-Mayo, Donegal and Sligo, along with programme managers Tony O'Kelly and Geraldine Beirne came together in November 2023 for a joint workshop, "Activating you Network and the Entrepreneurial Mindset".

Events

ATU iHub Galway hosted 18 events in 2023 with workshops and seminars in areas such as Digital Disruption, European Institute of Innovation, International Women's Day, Career & Learning Pathways, Investment Funding, Student Entrepreneurship, Intertrade Ireland Seedcorn Competition, STEM Passport Project, Legals & M&A, Medical Device Regulation, Research Expertise with Enterprise Ireland's funded Gateways and a Client Demo Day.

ATU iHub iPubbers and iGrubbers who participated in Galway Corinthians Tag Rugby Tournament.



Winner of Galway Chamber Sustainability Award

ATU Galway iHub was a winner at the 2023 Galway Chamber Business Awards, securing the coveted Sustainability Initiative Award, generously sponsored by Shannon Airport in collaboration with the Shannon Airport Group.

This prestigious win signifies ATU's unwavering commitment to sustainable development, solidifying its position as a leader in fostering innovation and driving positive environmental and social change. The award recognizes the outstanding success of various sustainability measures implemented within the iHub.

As part of ATU's development plan, the iHub has integrated a range of sustainability initiatives. This includes the adoption of energy-efficient LED lighting, the installation of solar panels that generated over four thousand kilowatt hours of renewable energy in 2022, and the incorporation of two electric vehicle charging stations. The recently completed extension, designated a 'Nearly Zero Energy Building,' and the addition of nest boxes for endangered Swifts exemplify ATU iHub's holistic approach to sustainability.

To find out more about ATU Galway iHub please click [here](#).



ATU iHub Galway at the Galway Chamber Business Awards, left to right: Tony O'Kelly, Mary Considine, Dr Orla Flynn, Evanna Ryan, George McCourt, Michelle Lee, David Lee and Turlough Rafferty.

CoLab at ATU Donegal Letterkenny



CoLab is an Innovation Centre based on ATU's Donegal Letterkenny campus. It provides flexible office space and outstanding facilities for high-potential start-ups.

It is the largest campus-based Incubator in the Technical University sector. With over 45,000 square feet of workspace, companies and start-ups can choose from a variety of move-in ready office space, hot desks or lab space.

The Centre currently has forty-seven companies based there, employing 270 people and over 30% actively recruiting in 2024. Eleven

of the companies are either HPSU companies or IDA Client companies.

The companies operate in sectors such as Software, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Ecommerce, Fire Technology, Edtech and Apps Developers.

The Centre is also home to the Research Office and postgraduate research students. WISAR LAB, an Internet of Things strategic research centre is also based there.

Entrepreneurial Training

CoLab is home to the New Frontiers Programme where Phase 2 participants have desk space and where the participants attend the best practice workshops.

The LeadTech – Impact Through Leadership Programme currently has 10 participants attending monthly in person workshops in Vision and Strategy, Communications, Team building, and Time Management with Barry O’Sullivan.

Update on Companies based in CoLab

FinTrU is a technologically enabled Regulatory Solutions company, specialising in the areas of KYC, Compliance, Legal, Risk & Control and Operations. They announced in 2023 that they were establishing a European Delivery Centre in Letterkenny with the creation of 300 jobs.

CoLab was able to offer FinTrU quality office accommodation, highspeed broadband and through ATU the graduate pipeline they required. They are currently employing 65 graduates and intend to move out in the Summer of 2024 to a refurbished office in the IDA business park with the intention of growing their work force to 300 people.

Druva is an Indian based company that provides a secure SaaS-based platform for data backup, disaster recovery and cyber resilience. Employing 35 people they arrived in the centre in 2018 when they acquired a start-up company whose founder had gone through New Frontiers at ATU and then went on to receive Competitive Start funding and finally HPSU funding.

They unveiled a new AI product in October 2023. Called Dru, it is the industry's first AI copilot for backup that revolutionises how companies engage with their data protection solutions.

ITUS Secure Technologies Ireland, a past participant in the New Frontiers Programme and Regional Winners of the InterTrade Ireland Seedcorn competition have announced that they are working with the National Cyber Security Centre in the UK on a start-up programme.

WISAR LAB are an Internet of Things strategic research centre at ATU Donegal and are based in CoLab. They occupy over 2250 square feet of lab and office space.

Other Organisations at CoLab

CoLab is also home to two Skillnet Business Networks, Retail Ireland Skillnet and Tech Northwest Skillnet. Between them they have a combined training budget of over €2,000,000 per year.

ERNACT is a European Digital Transformation Service agency managed by Donegal County Council and Derry and Strabane District Council. They currently manage 12 European Projects with a Regional Investment value of €20 million Euros. ATU are partners in several of these projects.

The Garda Continuous Professional Development Department has an Office in the Centre and provide CPD training for all Garda Staff in the Donegal Division.

For more information on CoLab please click [here](#).

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