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GATEWAY UCC LAUNCHES SPRINT ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME

New Accelerator Programme “SPRINT” to support startups and researchers at Gateway UCC

Cork, 25 February 2016: A new accelerator programme, called SPRINT, was launched today (Thursday) at Gateway UCC by Julie Sinnamon, CEO Enterprise Ireland and UCC VP for Research & Innovation Anita Maguire. Designed to support early stage start-ups, entrepreneurs and UCC-based researchers, the SPRINT Accelerator will focus on commercialisation of UCC generated technologies and routes to market.

“Using our extensive experience in the area of commercialising research, early stage companies and spin outs, SPRINT has been developed to increase the number and the success rate of knowledge based start-up companies, utilising intellectual property from UCC,” said Prof. Anita Maguire, VP Innovation and Research at University College Cork.

There are 10 early stage company participants in the first SPRINT accelerator, from diverse areas such as bioinformatics, digital mobile, medtech, eHealth, nutrition and food health as well as ICT. These pre- and early stage startups will be working with seasoned and successful business mentors, as well as being coached in business development, scaling and growth internationally. The SPRINT programme is sponsored by Enterprise Ireland, Bank of Ireland and Cork City LEO.

Speaking at the launch, Julie Sinnamon, CEO of Enterprise Ireland said, “The SPRINT Accelerator programme contributes positively to the target outlined in The Action Plan for Jobs National Entrepreneurship Policy, to double the jobs impact of start-ups in Ireland in the next 5 years. This programme is yet another example of how the Government’s investment in research programmes under Enterprise Ireland and SFI can translate into commercially successful, global focused companies that create jobs and enhance all our lives.”

“The pre and early stage startups, participating on the SPRINT Accelerator, are all in the HPSU (High Potential Start Up) space, are IP based and have the potential to create up to 100 new innovation based jobs in the next 3 years,” said Myriam Cronin, Manager of GATEWAY UCC.

Gateway UCC works with clients from their idea stage of development right through to the eventual commercialisation of the product or service. From having a viable commercial opportunity to getting that product or solution into the global marketplace, Gateway UCC activity supports start-ups and entrepreneurs at every step along the journey.

The state of the art facility and infrastructure at Gateway UCC provides a uniquely supportive ecosystem for start-ups through its programme of business supports. Such supports include mentoring and business coaching, access to financial advice and startup funding, specialist seminars, workshops, introduction to venture-capital opportunities, business angel networks and access to UCC's network of researchers together with excellent support through linkages into academic departments.

Since opening in 2011, GATEWAY UCC Business Incubation & Innovation Centre has supported over 30 start-ups, which between them now employ 180 people and contribute an estimated €13 million in wages and €4 million in tax annually to the local economy.