INNOVATION ISLAND SERIES

TECHIRELAND

TECH HUBS & COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

TechIreland is a unique database of Irish tech innovation featuring 3,500+ startups, scaleups, multinationals, investors and hubs across the island of Ireland. This is the first of a series of publications this year - Innovation Island.

The Innovation Island Series aims to celebrate our vibrant tech and startup ecosystem with a focus on key sectors such as CleanTech, Fin-Tech, HealthTech; and tech domains like Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0, SaaS and many others.

We will also focus on the innovation and tech communities across Ireland and Northern Ireland, with in-depth reviews of what is new and exciting in each of our regions.

THE INNOVATION ISLAND SERIES OF PUBLICATIONS WILL BRING YOU THE LATEST INNOVATION STORIES FROM ACROSS IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

In 2020, Irish tech companies raised a record €1.19 billion in investment - a milestone that reflects investor confidence despite the economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic. It also underlines how resilient and diversified the Irish tech community has become. As the economy re-opens after the restrictions, the Irish tech community will emerge stronger and ready to take on the world. From healthcare innovation to digital transformation, our tech champions are bringing jobs and wealth to all parts of Ireland. This series of publications will celebrate our community and showcase their capabilities.
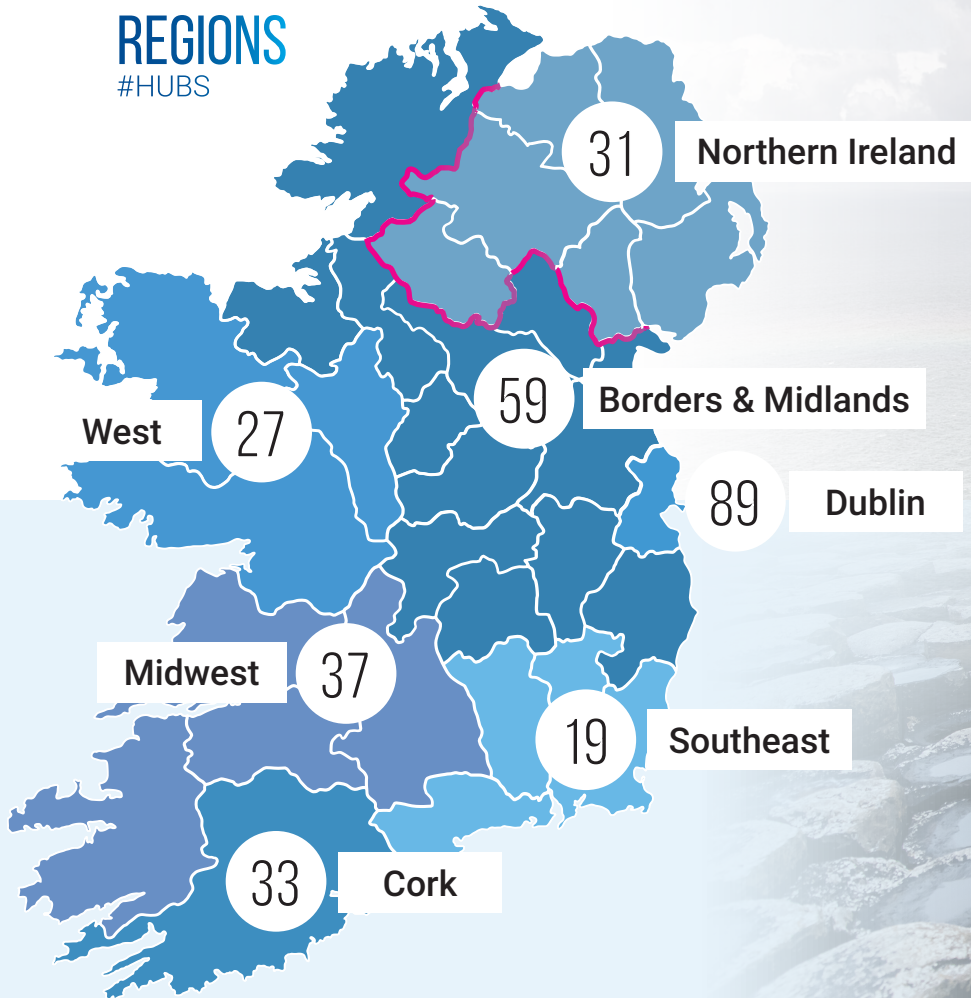
We are grateful to our Community of Supporters, Advisors and 12,000+ strong content subscribers who support us in promoting Irish innovation globally. We hope you enjoy this and the others that are scheduled as part of this series. If you would like to support TechIreland with sponsorships or content for our upcoming reports, please email us.
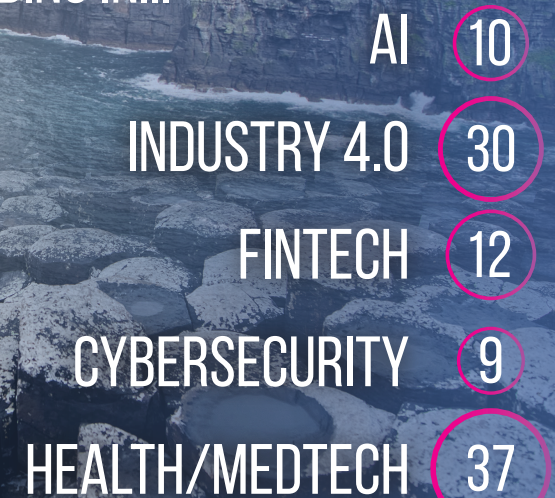
JOHN O'DEA
TechIreland

TECH HUBS ACROSS THE ISLAND

REGIONS
#HUBS

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TECH HUBS ACROSS THE ISLAND

ACCELERATORS/ INCUBATORS

IGNITE NORTHERN IRELAND · NDRc · NovaUCD · DublinBIC · Tangent Trinity's Ideas Workspace · IT Sligo Innovation Centre

DCU RYAN ACADEMY · LAUNCHBOX.ie · Hothouse · Rubicon · NEXUS INNOVATION CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK · BioExel

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COWORKING

the mill · dogpatch LABS · wework · GEC GUINNESS enterprise centre · THE DIGITAL HUB

Regus · HUCKLETREE · THE HATC LAB · BOXWORKS CO.WORK.SPACE · REPUBLIC OF WORK

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RESEARCH CENTERS

Tyndall National Institute Institiúid Náisiúnta · ADAPT Engaging Content Engaging People · DCU INVENT · Lero THE IRISH SOFTWARE RESEARCH CENTRE · CeADAR Ireland's Centre for Applied AI · TSSG

Hi Health Innovation Hub Ireland · Nimbus Research Centre · Shannon ABC applied biotechnology centre · Confirm Smart Manufacturing · IPIC BRINGING PHOTONICS TO LIFE · VistaMilk

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SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

Dublin to Belfast THE FINTECH CORRIDOR Connecting EU & UK Fintech · SaaS NETWORK IRELAND · Guaranteed Irish · CRYSTAL VALLEY PROUDLY CRAFTING TECHNOLOGY · SPORTSTECH IRELAND

rdi hub Research | Development | Innovation · PorterShed #backedbyAIB · arclabs · STARTACUS the self start society · TECH NATION · Workbench Powered by Bank of Ireland

60 VIEW ALL

dogpatch LABS

Dogpatch Labs is a startup hub, located in the heart of Dublin's Digital Docklands. It also powers Ireland's national accelerator programme, the NDRC, in partnership with regional hubs Republic of Work in Cork, RDI Hub in Co. Kerry and Portershed in Galway.

INNOVATION HUBS

Ireland has a great reputation for supporting innovation and nurturing the start-up ecosystem, as evidenced by some outstanding innovation hubs and knowledge clusters which have been established across Ireland in the past 20 years.

There are many examples of successful startups which have emerged from Ireland's innovation hubs and associated third level institutions. These include Inflazome, a TCD spin-out, which was acquired last September by Roche in a fantastic €380 million deal. While not on the same scale a number of UCD spin-outs have also been successfully acquired in recent years including ChangingWorlds for €65+ million by Amdocs and Logentries, which was also supported by the NDRC, by Rapid7 for $68 million.

The Atlantic Bridge University Fund, a partnership between UCD, Trinity College Dublin, Enterprise Ireland and institutional investors, invests in entrepreneurs with the ambition to create world-class companies of scale. When we look at the companies which it has invested in so far, we can see the depth and breadth of tech companies that are emerging from Ireland's third level institutions and associated innovation hubs, e.g. ApisProtect from UCC; CroíValve,

ProVerum and Volograms from Trinity, Kastus from TU Dublin, Neurent Medical from NUI Galway and Equal1 Labs, Manna and Output Sports from NovaUCD, as companies to watch for the future.

SUPPORTING IRISH STARTUPS WITH GLOBAL AMBITIONS TO SCALE

Ireland now has an enviable network of third level research centers and innovation hubs, many Looking with their own unique selling points, but all of them focussed on supporting Irish start-ups with global ambitions to scale. to the future, I believe our ecosystem of hubs will need to evolve with smart specialisation and greater connectedness. Hubs will need to distinguish themselves as world-class for specific sectors and/or technologies and they will need to grow in their connectedness with top European, US and Asian hubs to really cater for our brightest and most ambitious Irish entrepreneurs.

CAN SEE THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF TECH COMPANIES THAT ARE EMERGING FROM IRELAND'S THIRD LEVEL INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATED INNOVATION HUBS

TOM FLANAGAN
Director of Enterprise
and Commercialisation
NovaUCD

SIOBHÁN FINN
National Hub
Network Manager
*NACEC: Ireland's
Enterprise Hub Network*

REIMAGING ENTERPRISE SPACE

2020 changed the future of work forever and now, as the world re-opens, Ireland faces a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address economic imbalance across the regions with the emergence of – and rapid increase in – remote working opportunities.

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH REMOTE WORKING

As we move away from endless months spent working through a pandemic – NOT to be confused with remote working! – new opportunities will emerge. The move to remote working will allow people to work from their local communities, reduce commute times, lower transport emissions and, most importantly, improve their quality of life.

Employers will become more innovative and adaptable as their experience of the last year has shown that a hybrid or blended model of working is possible for the vast majority of the workforce across Ireland; employees can be located almost anywhere and talent can now be found almost everywhere.

With the changed future-of-work comes the recently launched and utterly timely Right to Disconnect Code and the rapid transition to a hybrid model of working.

The opportunity /challenge now is to build upon what we have learnt in the last twelve months to create working environments where the employee can thrive, the company can prosper and the community is a better place for all who live and work there.

The Government's commitment to Our Rural Future is of real significance. Described by the government as a 'living document', this policy is the blueprint for the re-imagining of rural Ireland. It is people-centric and heralds the unprecedented opportunities that hybrid-working can deliver to rural Ireland. A key challenge will be the current timescale for delivery of the National Broadband Plan which must be accelerated if the government target of 400+ hubs is to be delivered by 2025. The broadband plan is essential if policies such as Our Rural Future and Making Remote Work are to be successfully delivered upon.

To know more about NACEC's support for Enterprise Hubs - Click here

To view the more than 250 Irish innovation hubs - Click here

Established in 2008 and drawing together a number of pre-existing regional networks, NACEC's primary role is to support and develop the interests of community enterprise on a national basis.

HUCKLETREE

COWORKING AFTER COVID

Covid has had a significant impact across all sectors, and more specifically on enterprise spaces and hubs. TechIreland tracks over 295 innovation hubs, accelerators, incubators, research centers and coworking spaces in Ireland and Northern Ireland. With remote working and work-from-home becoming the new normal, we see that enterprise hubs are remodelling and reinventing their spaces to suit the needs of the current business environment.

The Irish tech work space is changing. We spoke to Aislinn Mahon, General Manager at Huckletree, to get a feel of how enterprise spaces are dealing with such rapidly evolving times. Huckletree is an innovation hub based in the Dublin city center. Founded in 2014 in London, they opened their first Irish hub in 2017 and have 6 such hubs now in London, Manchester and Dublin - a community of 2000 members. They have 55 companies based in the Dublin hub.

295 INNOVATION HUBS, ACCELERATORS, INCUBATORS, RESEARCH CENTERS AND COWORKING SPACES IN IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

A big question we all face is, what kind of a work space environment do we want to get back to later this year? Aislinn says, "Over the past 12 months we have all worked from home, with its pros and cons. The number one benefit of coming to a hub like ours is the space – to have room to walk around and meet people and not have those dreaded back-to-back Zoom-heavy days".

TO HAVE ROOM TO WALK AROUND AND MEET PEOPLE AND NOT HAVE THOSE DREADED BACK-TO-BACK ZOOM-HEAVY DAYS

Huckletree is a coworking space in Dublin's city center. They also run the Huckletree Alpha pre accelerator programme with specific focus to support sustainability startups.

AISLINN MAHON
General Manager
Huckletree D2

COWORKING AFTER COVID

"People are looking for the ability to be creative, to collaborate and to brainstorm in person in a safe working environment, have a coffee, go out for lunch, instead of sitting in their bedroom or kitchen or spare room without any boundary between work and home. That's been very difficult." she adds.

Companies are now looking for more flexible workspace options. Aislinn says, "It isn't one size fits all, everyone is unique. Some want to come back to the workspace now, others want more time. It's important for managers to have empathy with people's individual circumstances. I see a lot of teams opting for flexibility, with some working outside Dublin or even outside Ireland, with a hub to drop in and out as they wish.

IT ISN'T ONE SIZE FITS ALL

OPTING FOR FLEXIBILITY

Obviously, there are lots of challenges around that – managing a team that's both on site and remote will take some getting used to, but overall flexibility will be important."

Like most other Irish hubs, Huckletree is also adapting to this new environment. During the past year, they have remained open while taking health and safety very seriously. People have different circumstances. Some don't have space at home or have young kids. So they offer 24 hours 7 days access to their members. They have remodelled a lot of their offering with flexible memberships, single day passes, shared memberships and other new ideas to suit the market.
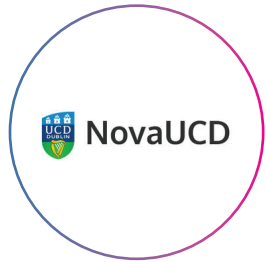
A lot more companies are opting away from longer permanent leases and moving into hubs that can provide them flexible terms of commitment, an innovative and inspiring environment for their team members to meet new people or attend events and be part of the ecosystem. Aislinn says they continue to offer their educational workshops and publish inspiring content.

PEOPLE HAVE FACED A LOT OF PERSONAL CHALLENGES OVER THE PAST YEAR, SO WE NEED TO EASE THEM BACK INTO THE WORKSPACE

Employers are trying to give their team members a lot more than just desks and a computer screen. Aislinn says, "people have faced a lot of personal challenges over the past year, so we need to ease them back into the workspace. At Huckletree, we have a roof garden, wellbeing supports like Yoga and meditation. We're having to do a lot more and we are ready to deliver".

Know more about Huckletree - Click here

STARTUP PROGRAMMES @ NOVAUCD

NOVAUCD HAS SUPPORTED WELL OVER 400 HIGH-TECH STARTUPS AND EARLY-STAGE VENTURES WHICH BETWEEN THEM HAVE ATTRACTED OVER €775 MILLION IN INVESTMENT

University College Dublin has been actively engaged in nurturing tech startups since the 1980s. NovaUCD opened as a dedicated state-of-the-art incubator to house and support startups as far back as 2003. Since then, NovaUCD has supported well over 400 high-tech startups and early-stage ventures which between them have attracted over €775 million in investment and created thousands of hi-tech jobs.

At NovaUCD we run a number of initiatives and programmes to assist our companies to develop and scale. These include our NovaUCD Mentors and Business Partners Network and our annual UCD Venture Launch Accelerator Programme, which is focused on supporting viable tech startups emerging from the University.

The NovaUCD Mentors and Business Partners Network has now grown to over 100 experienced founders and business leaders who help accelerate the growth of our companies by providing advice or taking on an executive role. We are always on the look-out for top talent.

TOM FLANAGAN
Director of Enterprise
and Commercialisation
NovaUCD

OVER 100 EXPERIENCED FOUNDERS AND BUSINESS LEADERS

As part of the UCD Research and Innovation unit, NovaUCD is the hub of innovation related activities at University College Dublin.

STARTUP PROGRAMMES @ NOVAUCD

In recent months we have also expanded our national and international collaborative activities in support of high-tech companies with global ambitions.
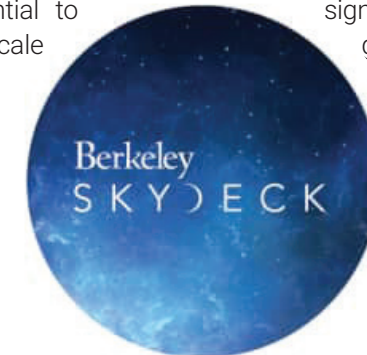

Using custom-developed aerospace-grade drones, Manna.aero will deliver directly to consumer's homes, flying at an altitude of 80 metres and a speed of over 80kph - delivering within a 2km radius in less than 3 minutes.

- NovaUCD has joined the **European Space Agency Space Solutions Ireland** consortium with the Tyndall Institute, Athlone Institute of Technology's Midlands Innovation and Research Centre, Maynooth Works at Maynooth University and MaREI, the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and the Blue Economy. Together we are supporting entrepreneurs and startups with innovative technology in sectors as diverse as agri-tech, data analytics, architecture and planning, and med-tech, in addition to the space sector.

- NovaUCD has also recently been selected as a **global strategic partner by Berkeley SkyDeck**, UC Berkeley's start-up accelerator programme. We are SkyDeck's only Irish global strategic partner and are now looking forward to nominating a start-up, with deep intellectual property and international ambitions, to proceed to the interview stage for SkyDeck's Autumn 2021 Programme, with the potential to significantly accelerate its ability to scale globally.

STARTUP PROGRAMMES @ NOVAUCD

- Through AgTechUCD, our AgTech Innovation Centre, we are also partnering with SVG Ventures | THRIVE, on the **THRIVE Europe Challenge** programme which is seeking the continent's most innovative Agri-Food Tech startups that are solving the critical challenges facing the global agriculture industry.

- Last year, we also ran a **5G/IoT accelerator sponsored by Vodafone and Ericsson and an EU-funded Advanced Manufacturing Accelerator** programme, along with partners in Italy and France. This year we have plans for an AgTech Accelerator programme later this year and we are continuing to look for partnerships at home and abroad to expand our offerings.

In addition, we have a successful track record with Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95 billion. NovaUCD and the other Irish Third Level centres of excellence are well positioned to leverage this funding to develop and scale world-class startups to create a brighter future for Europe.

To know more about NovaUCD: Click here

NovaUCD nurtures and supports high-tech and knowledge-intensive spin-in and spin-out companies through purpose-built and state-of-the-art facilities and a comprehensive support programme.

BUILDING AN IRISH **SAAS** COMMUNITY

Communities are an integral part of the overall tech ecosystem. We have several good examples of tech communities and clusters across the island. The Dublin-Belfast FinTech Corridor, Crystal Valley Tech in the sunny Southeast and the world-class MedTech Cluster in Galway are examples of thriving tech communities. Another community that has successfully built a network of scaleups, startups and multinationals is SaaS Network Ireland. How does SaaS Network Ireland operate and what can other tech communities learn from their model?

SaaS Network Ireland is a network of SaaS companies that are looking to scale faster. The aim is to help build a sense of community in the Irish SaaS sector, by sharing knowledge and insights to help build stronger, more internationally competitive companies. By encouraging founders and senior staff to learn from later stage SaaS companies and share hard-won lessons, companies can help each other grow and avoid common pitfalls.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN THE IRISH SAAS SECTOR

Philipp Macher, the coordinator of SaaS Network Ireland says, "We build a sense of community through practical discussions, member events and mentoring. It is non-committal, and some may think paradoxically low tech, but getting people to talk to each other is a valuable exercise. The network is not a place to pitch products or services, not a place to pitch for investors or partners and not a social meetup. It is designed to be time-efficient, low-committal and entirely free-of-charge. The ask is only that the members make themselves available for 1-2 hours a month for sharing knowledge and advice. We invite new founders and senior staff to learn from later stage SaaS companies who have been through the same challenges they are facing. By sharing hard-won lessons, we help each other grow and avoid common pitfalls".

PHILIPP MAUCHER
Coordinator
SaaS Network Ireland

GTS supplies mobility software for the automotive industry including ride-sharing for autonomous vehicles. Their clients range from leading car share companies to major OEMs

BUILDING AN IRISH SAAS COMMUNITY

So what does it take for a tech community like this to work successfully and be self-sustaining? Philip says, "To make any community successful, it requires a common purpose. For us, this purpose is to grow Irish SaaS. And in order to achieve this, we ensure members are active and engaged. We're fortunate to have a great number of members who support the greater good of Irish SaaS and are open to sharing their expertise with others".

SaaS Network Ireland is currently setting up a small Community Forum to encourage engagement among their members. They also support popular conferences like SaaStock and Future of SaaS. They work closely with TechIreland in promoting Irish SaaS through insight reports, publications and data on the community.

They are currently planning their annual summer event. So, if you are a SaaS business and interested in getting involved, or if you are thinking about forming a tech community and would like to know more about how SaaS Network Ireland set about it, contact Philipp at info@saasnetwork.ie.

To know more about SaaS Network Ireland - Click here
To view all SaaS Network members - Click here

Using Blockchain technology, AID:Tech revolutionises how governments, corporates and NGOs deliver digital entitlements across the world. Their Decentralised Digital Identity enables users to accumulate data, relating to their health, aid, donations, welfare payments or remittances.

NORTHERN IRELAND TECH HUBS

IAN BROWNE
Chief Operating Officer,
Ignite NI

Northern Ireland has recently emerged onto the mainstream European tech scene after a doubling in pre-seed funding deals over the past year. TechNation, the UK's Digital champion, places Northern Ireland amongst the top UK regions with high growth potential in 2021. This is a significant change from the past when startup companies lagged behind their counterparts on both the number and size of investment deals.

The emergence of the North is underpinned by multiple ecosystem hubs which are working collectively to drive the next generation of entrepreneurs. According to a recent TechCrunch article, the team at Ignite NI

COMMUNITY OF 150 FOUNDERS

are a hugely important influence through their accelerator and pre-accelerator programmes. The accelerator programmes, which now have a community of 150 founders, operate out of the Ormeau Baths, a co-working space situated in the centre of Belfast. Founded by experienced entrepreneurs, Ormeau Baths is also home to Digital Catapult and a host of startup companies. This confluence of talent and capital makes it the entrepreneurial heartbeat of Belfast.

Ignite NI's Accelerator and Propel Pre-Accelerator support early-stage startups across the island and beyond.

NORTHERN IRELAND TECH HUBS

However, innovation hubs cannot succeed alone and require collaboration across the entrepreneurial ecosystem. There are many organisations who are actively working to support founders across Northern Ireland including Techstart Ventures, who are driving the local investment scene and Queens University and Ulster University who continue to spin out both highly skilled graduates and companies. Catalyst, previously the Northern Ireland Science Park, offers a range of support for startups and has made the North West a focus with their workspaces and programming. Hubs are more than physical and it is great to see new digital networks emerge such as Awaken Hub which was created by experienced entrepreneurs to champion female founders across the island of Ireland.

HUBS ARE MORE THAN PHYSICAL AND IT IS GREAT TO SEE NEW DIGITAL NETWORKS EMERGE

Invest Northern Ireland, the regional economic development agency, deserves a lot of credit for recognising the importance of high growth ventures to the future of the economy. They have invested significantly in the vision by providing a wide ranging source of funding and upskilling which is enabling entrepreneurs to take a chance on their ideas.

NORTHERN IRELAND IS BECOMING AN INNOVATION HUB IN ITSELF

There is a growing excitement about what is possible and Northern Ireland is becoming an innovation hub in itself. The next five years look better than the previous.

Know more about Ignite NI - Click here

View all Northern Irish Hubs - Click here

Ignite NI selects startups that can demonstrate traction and significant potential for future growth.

More than 1,000 start-ups from 35 countries applied for this year's accelerator.

CONTACT US

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DELL

the mill

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Draper Esprit

sfi — Science Foundation Ireland

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HUCKLETREE

Ciste Infheistíochta Straitéisí d'Éirinn Ireland Strategic Investment Fund — Coimisineach Bainistíochta an Chisteán Náisiúnta National Treasury Management Agency

Department for International Trade

dogpatch LABS

IRISH TECH GOES CARBON NEUTRAL 2020 — GoCarbonNeutral.ie

ChannelSight

COMTRADE

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