



Galway County and City Enterprise Board

Strategic Plan 2012

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Context

Mission: To stimulate and support the creation of economically sustainable employment opportunities for all sectors of the area through the: Promotion of an Enterprise Culture; Provision Of Business Information, Advice, Mentoring, Management Development and Counselling; the Formation of Partnerships and Alliances; Fostering of Economic Development; and the Provision of Direct Financial Support.

We face many difficult challenges in Galway. Unemployment has entrenched itself, emigration has returned and cuts in incomes and public services are impacting on people's lives. Not only are there large numbers of unemployed people looking for work but there are a large amount of businesses struggling to keep overheads and employees paid. With a large geographical spread over 6000 KM² and a population of over 250,000 the GCCEB has a lot of territory and people to spread the word and engage with.

In terms of unemployment, there are now 22,400 people out of work in Galway with 11,500 people out of work in the city. Loughrea has a jobless figure of just over 2,300 with Tuam now just over 3,300 people without jobs. Ballinasloe jobless figure at almost 2,500 and Gort's jobless figure is now just over 1,400. In Clifden there are just over 1,200 people without jobs in the area¹.

There are a number of contexts in which the GCCEB sees opportunities to assist businesses within Galway city and county.

- Existing businesses which are struggling due to the economic downturn
- New business which are identifying a demand in the market place for a product or services and are navigating the turbulent waters of starting up
- Existing family businesses which are looking to diversify or expand their business or change direction
- New start ups by those who are unemployed and are utilising their own skills or using the opportunity to work on a nascent idea that they may have been harbouring while in the workforce
- A renewed focus on assisting existing businesses to look to export markets
- Students who are going through the educational system and are unaware of entrepreneurship and the supports available

We plan to utilise learnings from the 2012 strategy to further develop assistance for potential and existing clients.

¹ Galway Bay FM

1. Raising Awareness and Fostering the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

Objective: To contribute to a dynamic environment that is supportive of entrepreneurs and their new enterprises and the development and growth of existing businesses in the city and county.

Galway County and City Enterprise Board will continue to develop an extremely positive attitude towards the establishment of a culture of entrepreneurship while creating a supportive environment for owner managers of new and established businesses throughout the city and county.

The ultimate measure of success of initiatives taken to foster a pervasive entrepreneurial climate and the provision of a supportive environment for businesses in Galway City and County will manifest in the number of those inspired and supported to plan, start, and grow sustainable new businesses in the county. At present there is no mechanism available to track the progress of these in their entirety and therefore operational targets will be placed against each of the actions outlined below as indicative measures of their success.

Enterprise Weeks (Spring and Autumn)

It is proposed to build on the successful Enterprise Week which took place in October. GCCEB will run two weeks of focussed business advisory sessions and 1 on 1 mentoring for entrepreneurs with business ideas. We also aim to use this week to find out about the issues affecting entrepreneurs and addressing those through soft supports.

Enterprise Clinics/Seminars

The GCCEB plans to hold seminars in the main towns of Galway County, as a means of increasing awareness of and improving access to the support services of the Board throughout the county. These clinics will be organised in conjunction with at Chambers of Commerce and local community groups to maximise their associated reach and awareness. Depending on resources it would be our aim and as appropriate, to give presentations to agencies, organisations, business networks, local communities and voluntary groups throughout the county on the role and remit of the Board and upon the support services available. This is acknowledged as an effective way to promote the services of the Board.

Developing Links with 3rd Level

Strategy / Business Idea Competition for Postgraduate Students

It is proposed to run an annual strategy competition for postgraduate (masters and PHD) business students to help and create an entrepreneurial mindset for the students and establish links with 3rd level institutions in the city. The competition will look for entries from teams to develop a viable business idea and will culminate in a 'Dragons Den' style pitch to a panel of judges and audience. The winning team would win a perpetual Cup and Business Advisory Sessions for the business idea/winning team from the GCCEB.

It is also proposed to run a competition for MBA students based on real life case studies of GCCEB clients. The students would be presented with real life business challenges from these companies and the winner will be selected on the basis of the most realistic and cost effective business case and is then presented to the company as a workable solution. Prize to be decided.

Lunchtime Talks – we aim to run a series of lunchtime talks for business students run across NUI Galway and GMIT. We aim to generate speakers from our list of clients who can impart useful real

life business experience to current students and this will also serve as a promotion opportunity for the speakers for their businesses.

Identify All Educational Establishments Running Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Courses

The GCCEB aims to develop initiatives and seminars which can help equip students with an insight into entrepreneurship and the skills they need to develop to start a business.

Student Enterprise Awards

The GCCEB will also continue to promote the Student Enterprise Awards Scheme throughout Galway City and County. This is a national enterprise education programme for secondary school students aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, through the practical experience of setting up and running a mini-business. The final takes place in Croke Park in Spring each year.

Secondary Schools Enterprise Workshops

To support teachers (especially those involved with transition year students) to participate in the Awards, and to further improve the quality of projects being developed by students, it is intended to make available an 'Idea Generation Workshops' for secondary schools to facilitate the process.

Galway Science and Technology Festival (sponsorship and profile of clients at exhibition)

We propose to continue this sponsorship as this provides the GCCEB with a number of benefits such as creating awareness of the GCCEB to primary school/secondary schools and among the third level sector. It also helps continue our objective to foster the spirit of creativity among the aforementioned but also among other stakeholders who engage with the Festival.

Brochures/leaflets/online information via the website

Information plays a key role in helping entrepreneurs at each stage of business development from start-up through to the growth of their business. The need for good relevant and timely information is central to the success of any business. The information needs of entrepreneurs cover the full spectrum from the basic mechanics involved in establishing a business through to market and financial information.

The GCCEB will strive to enhance its service offering and will continue to provide a business information, advice and referral service to all those in the county thinking of setting up a new business. The Board will send out the message – "Are you thinking of starting a business – then your first port of call is to contact the City and County Enterprise Board."

Information will comprise of the following:

- Basic information and advice over the telephone and from the office, as well as professional advice from experts on the Board's mentor panel;
- 'Business advisory session' provided by GCCEB;
- On-line information and up to date news resource via the Board's website;
- Printed brochures and leaflets; and a signposting and referral service.

Information workshops for filling out/completion of CEB application forms/business plans

We recognise the fact that many entrepreneurs need a little more support than others. Many entrepreneurs are extremely skilled in their own areas of expertise and often struggle with the basics of preparing / writing a business plan and filling out some of our application forms for their business idea. Quite often this is a barrier to entrepreneurs approaching or making progress with GCCEB. To overcome this barrier we propose to hold a number of workshops spread throughout the year to also assist with this process.

The workshop overview:

- Be limited to numbers to individual attention can be given to participants
- Require that those attending to bring an overview of their business and plans for the future
- Part 1
 - Provide an overview of a business plan and what entrepreneurs need to think about to develop their plan
 - Provide an overview of the GCCEB application process and what is required as a minimum from applications – specifically the applications forms for: *Priming/Business Development Grant and Feasibility/Innovation Grant.*
- Part 2
 - The workshop facilitator will then spend time with each of the participants to identify which areas they are struggling with and if necessary assign a mentor on a 1 on 1 basis to help those who need additional assistance.

We are considering running a live webinar for Part 1 of the workshop for those who are based in more remote areas of the county and can therefore access the workshop online and save travel and time costs. A follow up can be done with these individuals online.

As a spin off from these workshops, we aim to develop an online seminar/animation for the website to help entrepreneurs 'walk through' the process where they can do this in their own time.

PR in local media/radio for all events/activities and to champion local Entrepreneurs

GCCEB will aim to develop a relationship with Galway Bay FM to have regular slot talking about Enterprise and positive news stories from GCEEB clients. We will also explore the idea of having regular columns on enterprise and entrepreneurship in the local press with case studies and business topics in an interesting and informative manner for general readership.

GCCEB can facilitate the media in learning about the successes of local entrepreneurs and to celebrate their achievements by continuing to champion the achievements of clients through case studies in the local media. These local success stories can raise awareness of enterprise, as well as encourage and inspire potential entrepreneurs (particularly young people), when they see that success can be achieved by people in their own communities.

2. Supporting Early Stage Entrepreneurial Activity

Objective: To provide appropriate supports to assist entrepreneurs create new enterprises within Galway city and county, particularly those with the potential to grow and develop.

Financial Assistance to eligible Start Ups

Feasibility Grants to assist entrepreneurs assess the viability of project proposals. The GCCEB will be particularly interested in assisting innovative projects that have the potential to grow and/or enhance the local economy.

Employment Grants: to help offset the costs of going self-employed for the first time and/or of employing new staff.

Capital Grants: towards the cost of purchasing plant and equipment necessary for manufacturing, building and other eligible costs associated with a project.

1 to 1 Mentoring / Mentoring Advice Clinics

GCCEB will continue to operate a Mentor Programme. The aim of this service is to provide entrepreneurs with a temporary business advisor to help them identify and overcome obstacles in their development. The Board has access to an extensive panel of experienced business advisors who act as a confidential sounding board by listening, advising and suggesting solutions to problems encountered by entrepreneurs.

Start Your Own Business Training Programme

GCCEB will continue to offer Start Your Own Business training Programmes at regular intervals throughout the year for the pre-start-up and start-up entrepreneur. These training programmes give participants an introduction to all of the main issues encountered when starting up and running a business from researching and planning their idea through to preparing financial projections. We will systematically follow up with those who participate in the programme and assign a mentor to them for a defined period of time following the completion of the programme.

Midlands West Enterprise Programme

We will continue to support a number of start up enterprises on the MWEP programme.

Incubation Centres

We will compile a list of incubation spaces for start ups in the city and county and make this available on our website/brochure.

Acquisition of IT/Internet skills for start ups who are setting up a business which is based in ecommerce

For successful applicants with the GCCEB who will utilise the internet as a core part of their business operations, they will be required to attend workshops to help them build a better business on line. These workshops will be run at various intervals throughout the year.

Facilitating Opportunity Identification and Peer to Peer Supports in Key Sectors*

Networks present an ideal mechanism to help entrepreneurs with peer to peer learning; sharing of experiences; discuss issues of common concern; redress the isolation that many may experience and provide a forum for advice and ongoing support. GCCEB will facilitate and encourage the establishment of a network of entrepreneurs who have recently started a business (or who plan to start a business) within the city and county.

The targeted sectors:

- Technology /I.T.
- Food Processing
- Crafts

*See NETWORKS document for more detail on this (attached)

Referrals from Banks/credit unions etc

It is our intention to foster links with local financial institutions here in Galway city to ensure that the GCCEB is continuously on their radar and refer businesses which they deem as being suitable for supports from the GCCEB. It is also in the interest of our clients that we have basic information (such as flyers) about various supports from banks available for clients.

Fund for Seed Funding/Mentoring from Maureen O'Connell Fund (MOFC)

As part of it's strategic plan the MOCF has a remit to support local enterprises in Galway city and county through the provision of funds to local organisations within Galway city and county. The GCCEB is proposing to apply to the MOCF under this particular heading to secure EUR 30,000 which will be matched with EUR 30,000 from the GCCEB. This total sum of EUR 60,000 will be used to provide start up supports of EUR 5,000 maximum for a total of 12 start up businesses which would not ordinarily qualify for support under the normal GCCEB terms and conditions. There will be a formal application process and competition for this funding and the evaluation committee will continue to be involved.

It is expected that a jointly funded mentoring programme will be offered in conjunction with financial aid for these start ups.

Not only will this initiative provide support for start up enterprises which will greatly benefit from the funding and mentoring but will also provide an opportunity for the GCCEB to engage with the community creating awareness and fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship throughout Galway city and county. This initiative will also generate a lot of positive news stories.

3. Entrepreneurial and Capability Development and Enhancing Competitiveness

Objective: to focus on the needs of existing enterprises, to enhance their competitiveness, innovation and management capability and, where an aspiration for growth exists, to work in partnership with the company to support its growth and development.

Financial Assistance to Existing clients

Employment Grants to help offset the costs of employing new staff.

Capital Grants: towards the cost of purchasing plant and equipment necessary for manufacturing, building and other eligible costs associated with a project.

Enterprise and Capability Training Development Programme

Accelerate

Owning and managing a small business can be a lonely experience. In the course of any one day, the entrepreneur might have to make decisions as an accountant, a marketing person, a sales person, a HR manager, a buyer and many more functions. However, entrepreneurs very often need to acquire the necessary skills to perform these management functions for the effective operation of their business. Developing management capability is also a prerequisite to innovation and growth, as well as ensuring the long-term survival of small business.

Accelerate provides owner managers with a practical set of tools to grow their business in today's difficult trading environment. There are six modules focusing on different business and leadership topics which will include: Leadership and Management; Planning and Operations; Marketing and Sales and Finance. Each module includes a group workshop, a peer network session and 1-1 mentoring sessions.

Places on the programme are limited to 12 participants and all applicants will be assessed individually: To qualify, businesses must be in business for at least 3 years and be willing to participate in a "financial health check" of their business. Business goals specific to their needs will be agreed as part of the outcomes expected from the programme.

Foster relationships with existing clients to support development efforts

We aim to meet with a minimum number of existing clients to assess their needs and to enquire if the GCCEB can further support their development efforts. Businesses that are entering a growth phase may require short intensive management development training combined with one to one on-going mentoring/coaching. Suitable supports of this nature will be provided by the GCCEB as appropriate. The challenge for a growing business is often to make the transition from being operationally focused to being able to manage the business as it grows. Strategic mentoring support is designed to facilitate this type of capacity building in businesses at this stage of development and will continue to be provided.

Strategic Mentoring for next phase of growth

The panel of mentors will also continue to be made available to assist owner-managers of existing businesses. The Board will also organise Mentor Advice Clinics at regular intervals throughout the year. The focus in these mentor clinics will be on relevant specific issues for owner-managers of existing businesses such as accessing finance, becoming an employer, marketing and promotion, among other topics.

Identify businesses which are not current clients for the CEB and appear to have potential to gain support from the CEB

A minimum number of these businesses will be identified each year and followed up to see if GCCEB support would contribute to their development efforts.

Specialist Seminars for existing clients

These seminars will be delivered by experts in their fields and will be held on an occasional basis and all businesses within the Galway region would be invited to attend.

Management development for arts/crafts sector

Specialist seminars for the crafts sector will be delivered by experts in their fields and will be held on an occasional basis and all craft businesses within the Galway region would be invited to attend. Specific issues for owner-managers of existing craft businesses such as accessing finance, becoming an employer, marketing and promotion will be covered. See NETWORKS document for more detail on this (attached)

Showcase Ireland - 22nd-25th January 2012

Prepare clients for events/exhibitions.

Women in Business

It is a key priority for the GCCEB to support women in business and support those who are intending to start a business or those who are already in business. The GCCEB will continue to support organisations such as BPW and Network Galway.

We aim to run a showcase which profiles Galway women in business to celebrate International Womens Day which took place this year on March 8th. The aim of this would be demonstrate the success of these women in business and to provide access for those who may wish to meet with these woman. It also provides a platform for young women to hear about positive business stories, foster a sense of enterprise and encourage women of all ages to start up their own business. There is potential to work with NUI Galway on this initiative.

Fair to showcase clients products

This will be a pilot fair to give clients the opportunity to have direct access to customers in the Galway region. The fair may run over a weekend in a venue in Galway city and be open invitation to the public to attend and shop local. An ideal time for this may be close to Christmas so the public can also attend the fair for shopping ideas and presents for Christmas. This initiative would be determined by resources.

4. Growth – Achieving Growth and Expansion and Export Potential

Objective: the focus will be on capability building among existing owner managers, on enhancing productivity and innovation, and on the development of export potential. In particular, the GCCEB will direct its resources to those enterprises with a clear aspiration for growth. To support the achievement of this objective, the full range of appropriate supports will be available to qualifying businesses.

Workshop to help clients who wish to prepare to enter export markets

To further encourage small businesses in the county to develop new markets, small businesses will be identified and supported to develop exports each year, some of which will be exporters for the first time. We plan to hold a workshop for existing clients who plan on exporting or have already made the first steps into the export market to assist them and provide further supports if necessary.

Information session/nomination for Enterprise Ireland First Flight Programme

We aim to arrange an information session for small businesses that plan to export with a representative from Enterprise Ireland who will provide an overview of the First Flight programme and following on from this the GCCEB will work with businesses which are eligible to apply for this programme.

Assist clients to utilise web technologies

GCCEB will assist clients to exploit ebusiness opportunities as a means of winning customers in overseas markets. GCCEB will run workshops targeted at businesses which have potential to use ecommerce to sell their products or services on a global basis.

Participation on Trade Missions

We will have a calendar of trade missions organised by Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Exporters Association recommend trips which we feel would be of benefit to clients. GCCEB can subsidise trips for clients and this be decided on a case by case basis.

Transfer of client companies to Enterprise Ireland

Start-ups deemed to 'fit' the criteria of a High Potential Start Up (HPSU), will be signposted to Enterprise Ireland for support. GCCEB will meet with Enterprise Ireland executives in the region on at least an annual basis to proactively identify clients with the potential for transfer actively seek to identify existing businesses with growth and/or export potential and will work in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and other agencies as appropriate to assist these businesses to grow and develop.

5. Partnerships

This theme crosses all levels of the business life cycle hence we have given this a separate heading.

We aim to work with other agencies and organisations in a spirit of partnership for the good of enterprise and entrepreneurs in the city and county. GCCEB has Board has developed excellent working relations with all of the state and local development bodies operating in Galway city and county. We will focus on developing even stronger strategic partnerships with a range of organisations and agencies in order to maximise the effective delivery of its strategy. These include in particular Enterprise Ireland, FAS(SOLAS), Galway Local Authorities, NUI Galway, and GMIT, Technology groups, food processing groups, the Crafts Council of Ireland, Galway Chamber and other Galway based Chambers, Business Innovation Centres, multinationals. LEADER, WESTBIC and local secondary schools. We will also endeavor to work with Intertradelreland and their initiatives as a means of assisting our clients to enter markets in Northern Ireland.

WIN – West of Ireland Networking is a unique company operating to help the unemployed – we also aim to work closely with WIN as there are many synergies between the GCCEB and WIN and the GCEEB aims to foster a spirit of enterprise among workers being made redundant or who are unemployed. WIN can serve as a recruitment bed for potential start ups and also a vehicle for disseminating information about the work of the GCCEB. WIN is also planning a Team Entrepreneurship programme of which GCCEB may be able to refer entrepreneurs or start ups to participate in.