



The Association of **EC Business & Innovation Centres** in Ireland

Annual Report 2003

CORKBIC



Chairmans' Statement

As Chairmen of the BICs in Ireland and on behalf of our Boards we are delighted to present our Annual Report for 2003.

Our private sector organisations that form the backbone of Irish industry and commerce represented by Chambers of Commerce, the multinationals and professional service firms have been deeply involved in EC-BICs since 1998. We see these private-public sector partnerships working side by side with the statutory agencies, universities/colleges and government as the way forward to create the new clusters or centres of activity in our regions.

The new millennium brings many challenges both internationally and domestically. The Irish EC-BICs will face these driving the creation and growth of new businesses and embracing new strategies established by government and international best practice. We see the future as linkage, mobilisation of activity, engaging the private sector, trusted partnership with government and agencies, and execution of new ways of delivering client value.

We must pay tribute to our Boards of Directors and past members who have served in many cases for more than a decade on a voluntary and tireless basis. Their guidance and wise counsel has been a cornerstone of the EC-BICs.

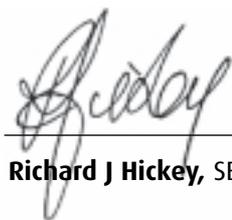
Finally, we must thank our staff led by our Chief Executives who have so effectively delivered venture consulting services to our clients with existing and new methodologies that have stood the test of time.



Gerry Donovan, CORKBIC



Hugh Governey, DUBLIN BIC



Richard J Hickey, SEBIC



Patricia Byrne, LIMERICK BIC



Dr. Chris Coughlan, WESTBIC



Michael O'Connor is CEO of CORKBIC, a venture consultancy specialising in high technology based projects primarily in the IT sector. Previous experience was manufacturing and sales start ups with Raychem Corporation, before co-founding Intepro, an Irish IT start-up in 1983. Responsible for strategy and sales and marketing in the European start up and led the US market entry with several rounds of international venture capital before divesting to a Swiss multinational. He graduated in Engineering from Cambridge and holds an MBA from London Business School.



Desmond Fahey, an engineer by profession and a Master of Business Studies, was appointed Chief Executive of the Dublin Business Innovation Centre in 1990. Former President (1994-1998) of the European Business Network (EBN). 1983-1990 Vice-President of the Irish Government's Industrial Development Authority West Coast organisation. Council member of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce and Director of the Irish Venture Capital Association. Founding Board member of the three seed capital funds managed by Dublin BIC, the Business Innovation Fund (1992), the Dublin Seed Capital Fund Ltd. (1997) and the Irish BICs Seed Capital Fund Ltd. (1998). Founding Board member of the Dublin Enterprise & Technology Centre Limited, t/a Guinness Enterprise Centre.



John Dillon BBS, DMS, FAIA, MBA, Manager, Shannon Development New Enterprise activities which include the InnovationWorks, Limerick and new start-ups in the Shannon Region.



Patrick Munden, is Director of the South East Business & Innovation Centre Ltd. Waterford. He has 14 years experience in business management and consultancy with Small and Medium sized business. He has worked in the UK in the luxury goods sector and has experience in the telecom sector in Ireland. Patrick Graduated from Dublin University (Trinity College) and The College of Marketing & Design in 1989 with a BSc. In Management and Diploma in Advanced Marketing Techniques. He was subsequently awarded an MA from Dublin University. He is currently completing an Executive MBA from the University of Michigan in the United States.



Joe Greaney is the Director of WESTBIC, the Business Innovation Centre for the BMW Region, since. Joe is a Commerce graduate with considerable experience in the small/medium manufacturing sector. Joe's areas of expertise are in entrepreneurship, education/training and policy design at both micro and strategic levels in areas of economic development. Joe has served on several Boards and economic development taskforces and has extensive private sector links having served as President of Galway Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1996/97 and 2000/01).

CEOs' Statement

Welcome to the 2003 activity report for the Association of EC Business & Innovation Centres (BICs) in Ireland. This report outlines the activity and achievements of the BICs in Ireland and illustrates the depth of services offered to high potential enterprises many of whom we include as case studies in this report.

2003 was another year of considerable achievements. We entered the second half of the Productive Sector Operational Programme and during that year the five BICs in Ireland met with over 1,400 project promoters and provided intensive support to 354 entrepreneurs leading to 45 business start-ups. This is consistent with recent years and demonstrates the demand for our specialist services.

Our unique Private/Public partnership has allowed us to leverage the support of business professionals from some of Ireland's leading businesses. This support has been instrumental in the development of our world-class incubation and enterprise facilities and has facilitated the growth of many of our innovative start-ups especially on the International stage.

This report also highlights the important work that the BICs provide in developing and promoting an enterprise and entrepreneurial culture in Ireland. We work closely with our partners in Enterprise Ireland, The City & County Enterprise Boards and Third Level Colleges in developing the entrepreneurial capacity that is so important to the future growth of indigenous business in Ireland.

We look forward to working with our partners throughout the Regions in creating and nurturing the next generation of profitable high growth companies.

Boards of Directors

NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
CORKBIC		
Gerry Donovan John Cashell Michael Delaney Brian McCoy Ger O'Mahoney Michael O'Sullivan Brian Quinlan	Chairman, CORKBIC <i>Past President</i> <i>Head of Development</i> <i>Managing Director</i> <i>Managing Partner</i> <i>Vice President (Strategy)</i> <i>Regional Director</i>	Cork Chamber of Commerce Cork Chamber of Commerce Cork Institute of Technology M/A Com Eurotec Deloitte University College Cork Enterprise Ireland
DUBLIN BIC		
High Governey Prof. Frank Roche Domhnall McCullough Anthony M. Prendergast Dr. Owen McBreen Chris Park John O'Dea	Chairman, Dublin BIC <i>Chairman</i> <i>Director</i> <i>Chairman</i> <i>Head of Technical Division</i> <i>Director</i> <i>Area Director</i>	Group CEO, Coyle Hamilton Colin McIver Associates James Crean Plc. Dublin Enterprise & Technology Centre Ltd Enterprise Ireland Park & Associates Enterprise Ireland Dublin/Mid East Region
SEBIC		
Richard J. Hickey T.A. Richards Bill O'Gorman Sean Kelly Gerard Enright Colin O'Brien Mark Minihan John Lyons Michael McGuire Sean Mythen Kathryn Kiely Frank O'Regan Matt Glowatz	Chairman, SEBIC <i>Director</i> <i>Lecturer-Entrepreneurship</i> <i>Regional Industrial Organiser</i> <i>CEO</i> <i>General Manager</i> <i>Managing Director</i> <i>Chairman</i> <i>Regional Manager</i> <i>CEO</i> <i>Mngr, Ind & Innovation Services</i> <i>VP Supply Chain Operations</i> <i>Managing Director</i>	SERCHAM PPI Group Waterford Institute of Technology ATGWU Waterford County Enterprise Board DIAGEO (Waterford) Steele & Co Hitol Ltd Enterprise Ireland Wexford County Enterprise Board Waterford Institute of Technology BAUSCH & LOMB WEB-IT
WESTBIC		
Dr. Chris Coughlan Tony Barrett Seamus Bree Mairtin O'Conghaile Prof. Jim Ward Joe Watson Larry Elwood	Chairman, WESTBIC <i>Director</i> <i>Regional Director</i> <i>Director</i> <i>Director</i> <i>Member</i> <i>Member</i>	Hewlett Packard FÁS Enterprise Ireland Údarás na Gaeltachta NUI, Galway NUI, Galway Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology

LIMERICK BIC

Board of Directors

InnovationWorks Limerick falls within the remit of Ms. Patricia Byrne, Director – Knowledge Enterprise, Shannon Development. It does not have a separate Board of Directors, and therefore reports indirectly to the main Shannon Development Board – which has a high private sector composition,

2003 Outputs Combined Table

THE IRISH BICs – STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS 2003¹

Number of EU-recognised BICs	5
NDP funding	€2.5m
Private contributions ²	€2.0m
Enquiries received	1,421
Projects advised	354
Business plans developed	125
BIC-assisted start-ups	45
BIC-assisted expansions	45
Incubation space managed	30,000m ²
Capital expenditure on incubation space managed	€40m
Seed funding under management	€6.5m

¹ Excludes NORIBIC in Derry

² Figure based on 2002

Business Enterprise
Innovation

Building High Growth Startups

EC-BICs are specialist/multidisciplinary “venture consulting” organisations. They provide a holistic approach with a private sector bias to pre-startup and startup businesses to convert ideas into reality. They act selectively, effectively becoming a partner, and accompany and handhold the entrepreneur through all the stages of the development of his/her business.

BIC clients tend to be high risk, high potential companies and projects with a requirement for hands-on advice over a period of five weeks to five years.

CORKBIC: Selatra



Selatra publishes JAVA games for mobile handsets to the Global Market.

Since 2002 it has successfully partnered with the finest JAVA game developers in the world. Selatra aggregates these games and coupled with own (over the air) JAVA download platform, takes them to market and offers a simple solution to Mobile Operators and Mobile Content Retailers.

Selatra's success is based on its ability to offer flexible business solutions to its partners through its experienced and dedicated team, coupled with the excellent timing for entering a growing market.

Selatra had 2 main objectives in 2003, both of which have been achieved and surpassed

- 1) Increase its international presence, Selatra's games can now be found in 29 countries across 5 continents.
- 2) In the latter half of 2003 to increase foothold in the Network Operator space, with 13 Network Operators now commercially live, and the same number again in advanced negotiations, we have far surpassed our expectations.

Selatra's goals for 2004 include launching an in-house game development facility, and releasing our own original and branded games. Selatra delivers 'Gaming on the Go' to mobile subscribers worldwide, through our retail partners. We collaborate with CORKBIC in raising awareness and growing the profile of Selatra within the investor community in Ireland.

DUBLIN BIC: Straatum

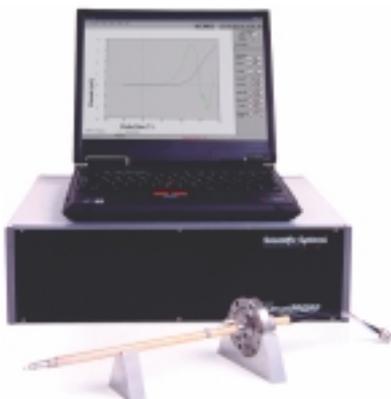
Scientific Systems Ltd (now known as Straatum) is a leading international designer and manufacturer of sensors and software applications for advanced process control in the semiconductor and thin-film industries.

The company, founded in 1998 by Dr. Mike Hopkins and Ciaran O'Moráin, with assistance from Dublin BIC has pioneered the plasma process metrology concept. Its strategic intent is to exploit its role as the catalyst for change from product metrology to plasma process metrology to accomplish advanced process control (APC) within the semiconductor and other relevant manufacturing environments.

Scientific Systems' product portfolio includes patented plasma sensors, control tools and specialised applications including fault detection and classification and plasma characterisation.

The company raised €10.2 million in its latest round of funding. Scientific Systems has its headquarters, manufacturing centre and R&D function in Dublin, Ireland, and has sales and marketing offices in San Jose, US and in Tokyo, Japan. Scientific Systems now employs over 50 people. www.straatum.com

The Dublin BIC managed Dublin Seed Capital Fund invested €127,000 into Scientific Systems in 1998 and Dublin BIC has advised and assisted the company in securing further rounds of funding. "The early seed capital investment provided the founders of Scientific Systems with the confidence to launch the company," said Hopkins, "and Dublin BIC was instrumental in Scientific Systems' success."



LIMERICK BIC: Tango Telecom



Dr. Colm Ward, Managing Director, Tango Telecom with Ann Slattery, Development Advisor, Shannon Development

Tango Telecom – Carving out a niche in the telecoms market.

Working for a multinational often spurs entrepreneurship. New ideas and market opportunities present themselves. Once the spark is ignited, the decision is all down to timing. This was how Colm Ward set up Tango Telecom in 1999; he worked for a Finnish telecommunications company and saw an opportunity in the fast growing telecommunications sector. He assembled an experienced team of four, with over sixty years telecoms experience and they developed a Converged Charging Node (CCN) for mobile network operators. This enables the rapid deployment of advanced mobile data and content based services in existing networks.

Tango Telecom set up in InnovationWorks Limerick with support from Shannon Development. It subsequently attracted investment from a venture capital company. InnovationWorks enabled Tango to project a positive image in its niche market while also easing the transition into entrepreneurship.

Tango employs over 20 people. Despite the downturn in the telecoms market, the company has grown its revenue year-on-year, and now has a strong customer base and partnerships with key global players.

SEBIC: Broadway Bagels



“If You Want a Great Bagel – You Gotta go to Broadway!”

Established in 2002, 'Broadway Bagels' is Ireland's first dedicated bagel factory, located in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. The bagels are made to an authentic New York style as learned by the company's founders Des and Rose Sheehan during their time spent living in the Big Apple. The couple always dreamed of settling back in Ireland to make authentic American bagels using the finest Irish ingredients.

The business started out on a relatively small scale, but has recently moved to a purpose-built 2,400 sq. ft. factory unit outside of Dungarvan. The company customers are in the Irish catering and retail sectors.

A range of bagel types are produced and the company's success can be seen as building upon the recent growth in the popularity of bagels as a delicious and healthy snack food amongst Irish consumers.

SEBIC has worked with Broadway Bagels in developing its national marketing and financial strategies and has acted as a critical sounding board for the ideas of Des and Rose as they strive to develop their business.

WESTBIC: Turbard Iarthar Chonamara Teo

Turbard Iarthar Chonamara Teo (TIC Teo), was established in June 1997, in Ross, Letir Mor, Co. Galway, by Joe McElwee and Jimmy Reaney. In 1999, in association with WESTBIC the company was successful in securing seed capital funding through the Irish BICs Seed Capital Fund.

The company produce both turbot and halibut and is currently the only landbased fishfarm in Ireland. The farm is considered one of the most hi-tech land units in Irish aquaculture at present with many automatic and monitoring facilities.

The company has 8 employees, with production rising steadily supplying domestic, European and American markets. TIC Teo is the only farm using disinfected incoming water as supply, is the only farm to create pure growing conditions and is the first farm to successfully rear halibut.

The farm contains a variety of different sized tanks giving a total growing area in excess of 2000m². The most beneficial growing conditions are created for all stocks with the generation of the company's own oxygen system and an ultra violet chamber unit to disinfect all incoming water. Consequently, the company have never used medicines, nor do they use GMO feed, thereby creating near organic conditions.





BICs Developing International “Route to Market” Programmes with International Partners

Building revenue with customers and channels is a key requirement for the new-age startup. The BICs work closely with clients to develop channel and customer acquisition targets and use the extensive EBN network of 150+ European BICs where possible.

EBN is a Brussels-based team of 10 people co-ordinating the activities of the members and providing services to them, including implementation of international projects/contracts with the EC. The European Business and Innovation Centres (BICs) are regionally and locally based organisations specialising in identification, selection and support of new businesses. They concentrate on supporting new innovative businesses which have high potential and which can contribute to economic development and regeneration in their areas.

The BICs involve a combined private sector, government and EU inspired approach to business development. The European Commission initiated the Business Innovation Centres in Europe in 1984. Its initiative was motivated by earlier US approaches to enterprise development. The overall goal of the BICs is to ensure that all potential local indigenous entrepreneurs and SMEs with innovative projects are identified, and that they then receive the full package of services and resources necessary to bring their new activities through from concept to establishment. Over 80% of BICs provide incubation facilities to their client companies.

LIMERICK BIC: VentureRoute

Developing new routes to market for InnovationWorks Limerick clients.

Since 2002, InnovationWorks Limerick executives have been contributing to the development of the EU-supported VentureRoute programme in conjunction with six innovation support organisations in Austria, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

VentureRoute will comprise a range of relevant on-line tools which will be used by a virtual cluster of growing enterprises across Europe, primarily in the e-content/digital areas.

VentureRoute has been developed to provide a virtual and physical venture support service, linking start-ups and SMEs to investors, banks and market makers in the expanding European marketplace.

Shannon Development’s Geoff McMullen says: “When the elements of the project are in place, InnovationWorks’ clients will be able to interact virtually with client companies in the six participating European BICs. They will be part of an active digital community involving more than 400 SMEs and up to 150 support organisations. The benefit for Irish technology start-ups will be easier transition from local to global markets.”



SEBIC: Sharpbyte – US Research Project

The South East BIC entered its second year of a unique partnership with the University of Michigan Business School. As part of a Global MBA project at the University, MBA students visited Ireland in March and worked with SEBIC client Sharpbyte Ltd to develop a US market entry strategy for the company.

Sharpbyte is a Waterford-based data compression and transmission software company. In 2003 the company launched its products onto the European market. Its main customers are companies that need to move large image files between different destinations. Its current customer base includes some of the world’s leading advertising, print and newspaper groups.

During 2003 SEBIC worked with the company to develop its business plan and put together the Michigan project to ascertain the potential for the company’s products in the US.

According to Mick Mahony from Sharpbyte “in 2003 we were fully committed to entering the US market as soon as possible. Were it not for the incisiveness of the report produced by the Michigan team we would surely have made some costly mistakes. The report was a real breath of fresh air to management and will expedite our route to market in the US in 2004”

Sharpbyte – Waterford – www.sharpbyte.com



Developing “Best Practice” in Incubation Logistics and Venture Consulting

EC BICs have been active in running incubators and incubation programmes for fifteen years. They have perfected the economics and service level agreements to build strong networks around these centres of activity and energy (CAEs). Many of these projects are PPPs between the public and private sector and within the “know how” resides best practice.

CORKBIC: National Software Centre (NSC)

The NSC Campus is a landmark development in the context of Ireland and the EU.

The NSC is a partnership between the public and private sector. CORKBIC acted as the catalyst to bring the public and private sector together and promote the idea and put together the deal between the investors. The fundamental thrust is to create a global footprint for startup ventures through using innovative networking technologies and linking to major corporates to build strategic alliances and routes to market. CORKBIC moved its operation there to manage the Innovation Centre and provide the value added services.

The primary objective of the Innovation Centre is to assist in the creation of new knowledge-intensive companies based on promising technology and capable, innovative people. It provides these companies with access to a range of business expertise and business development programs to accelerate the route to market and therefore reduce the risk. The secondary objective of the Innovation Centre is to develop a critical mass of software developing companies around clusters in a location with a significant Software Industry.

Michael O'Connor, CEO at CORKBIC says “We can offer start-up companies the ability to develop products and applications through international alliances using VPNs (virtual private networks) hosted within the facility. This allows the entrepreneur to work over the Internet on secure private networks. Inter firm collaboration coupled with the interdisciplinary skills and talent pool of CORKBIC facilitates these new ventures to harness opportunities at considerably lower risk and cost. In these new more uncertain times scalability and fast, secure communications are key”.

DUBLIN BIC: Dublin Enterprise & Technology Centre t/a Guinness Enterprise Centre

The idea for developing a very substantial and significant Enterprise Centre emerged from discussions between Dublin Business Innovation Centre and Guinness Ireland from 1994 onwards, relating to the desirability of stimulating enterprise development and business innovation within the inner city.

In response, Guinness offered Dublin BIC a site and warehouse at Taylor's Lane, within its James' Street complex, as the location for an enterprise centre. It also offered a cash contribution towards the Centre's development.

In order to ensure the success of the businesses at the Centre and with a view to assisting enterprise, wealth and employment objectives, Dublin BIC undertook the task of raising the balance of finance required to enable the project to be realised. Over the following two years, Dublin BIC, through its Chief Executive and Board, sought to raise the balance of the capital cost. Eventually, by mid-1997, cash support from the following organisations was committed: Guinness Ireland, Dublin City Council, Dublin City Enterprise Board, Guinness Workers Employment Fund (GWEF), and Dublin Business Innovation Centre.

In May 1997, a Steering Committee comprising representatives of Guinness, Dublin BIC, Dublin Corporation, Forbairt and Dublin CEB was formed to progress the Centre's development. The Steering Committee agreed that Dublin BIC would manage the project and requested that the BIC arrange for the formation of a company limited by guarantee to enable the development of the Centre. A management company known as the Dublin Enterprise & Technology Centre Limited was formed on 25th June 1997 and appointed Dublin BIC as manager of the Centre on their behalf. The Centre opened for business in June 2000, and currently has over 65 client companies in residence, employing over 350 people.



BICs – Igniting Entrepreneurship

EC-BICs develop formal and informal networks to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship. Many of these are industry groups, Chambers of Commerce or centres of learning. EC-BICs work regionally as knowledge carriers facilitating regionally staffed offices to provide the knowledge and enthusiasm to build dynamic start-up teams.

WESTBIC: Regional Initiative: Support to the Third Level Sector

In the BMW Region WESTBIC have set out a clear strategy of support in the third level sector to generate high value innovative enterprises and spin offs.

This has taken the form of supporting the development and management of enterprise platform programmes on the campuses which now encompass GMIT, NUIG, LYIT and Sligo IT. In addition, WESTBIC provides under and post-graduate enterprise modules with practical case studies, dissertation work and enterprise management theory to a number of classes including Final Year Commerce students, Post-Graduates at AIT, Masters in Rural Development students at NUIG etc. Across all of the third level colleges in the BMW Region, WESTBIC now sponsors an Innovation Award to raise the level of awareness across several faculties, not only Commerce and Business, of the importance of enterprise and the potential for Science and Engineering graduates to gravitate towards entrepreneurship and the development of project ideas.

This partnership between the BMW third level colleges, who collectively function under the umbrella group, LIONRA, is now a major dimension of the resource allocation of the WESTBIC Board. WESTBIC is perfectly poised to augment the industrial liaison function on each of the campuses bringing practical know-how, experience, a multi-functional team and a network of talent pools and other experts to bear. WESTBIC acts as the common gel across all campus activity ensuring transfer of know-how, opportunities, training and methodologies and providing access to seed and venture capital, State supports and vital links to the Private Sector.



WESTBIC Innovation Award Presentation, NUIG, October 2003

LIMERICK BIC: InnovationWorks – Bringing Business to Life

InnovationWorks Limerick has over 30 resident clients. A further 20 clients are at various stages of development at InnovationWorks centres in Tralee, Thurles, Birr and Ennis.

InnovationWorks Limerick has developed an entrepreneurship initiation programme – VenturesStart 1, to help individuals decide if entrepreneurship is a career option for them.

VentureStart 2 then provides development support by taking participants through the phase of identifying a business team and developing a business plan.

Over 200 people attended VentureStart programmes in the past two years while ninety technology-driven start-up projects were supported through the provision of business accommodation, feasibility grants, investment packages, mentoring support and access to business finance.

InnovationWorks partners third level Colleges in the region in initiatives such as AlumniStart, a programme aimed at overseas graduates contemplating starting a business in the Shannon Region.

InnovationWorks also works with private sector partners Ernst & Young, developing and delivering their Excellerator Programme to early-stage companies in the region, and with private sector VC funds to encourage more risk capital investment into its start-up portfolio.



SEBIC: Hatching the Future!



The development of start-up enterprises in the South East was given a boost with the launch of Phase 2 of the Incubation Centre by the South East Business and Innovation Centre Ltd. (SEBIC).

Located at SEBIC's offices at the Industrial Park on the Cork Road in Waterford, the Incubation Centre provides space for entrepreneurs in their development or "concept" stage. The centre consists of six individual units equipped with the latest high spec IT and e-commerce facilities. Units are rented on a monthly basis and are available in single or multiple format.

According to Mr. Patrick Munden, Director of SEBIC, "several clients in the Incubation Centre have quickly developed to the extent that they have now graduated from the Centre to their own facilities throughout the region and are enjoying significant success". Incubation Centres have been shown to be a key success factor in helping entrepreneurs get through that very difficult first six months where the difference between success and failure can be a very thin line.

DUBLIN BIC: Dublin BIC Small Business Support Programme



The Dublin BIC Small Business Support Programme has been running on an ongoing basis since 1999. The objective of the programme is to bring information on topical issues to start-up businesses that have commenced trading.

Held in the Guinness Enterprise Centre, the seminars typically accommodate 25 to 30 people and are well attended. The seminars are presented by industry professionals who have first hand experience of the topic in question and can relate as to how it effects start up companies.

Some examples of topics that were looked at during the 2003 programme include:

- Companies & Director Responsibilities (under the Companies Acts 1963 - 2001) Impact on Small Business
- "International Trade - Export/Import" - Finance in International Trade and eBusiness
- "Trade Credit Protection and the Virtual Marketplace"
- Enterprise Ireland - Financial Support Programmes
- Revenue Commissioners - Seed Capital Scheme & BES Scheme

CORKBIC: Bringing Together the IT Professionals



Leading Irish entrepreneur, Mr. Denis O'Brien, Chairman Digicel Limited and formerly founder of Esat delivered the keynote address at the it@cork 5th Annual Conference on the 24th of November in Maryborough House, Cork.

Opened by Minister Micheal Martin the conference, entitled "Delivering the Future – Local Solutions to Global Problems", addressed the challenging and current themes of Creating and Delivering Value from IT and Mobile and Wireless Computing.

The main conference sessions for this year were "Creating and Capturing Value" – looking at Ireland as a player in the global market in the first session. The second session concentrated on New Ways of Delivering Value to the Business. The final session focused on the use and application of Mobility and Wireless Computing. The primary focus of the morning sessions were the increasingly difficult task of convincing the Board of the value of its IT investments, with valuable insights from Gartner and a case study from the Kerry Group. The afternoon was given over to the busy, sometimes confusing but extremely valuable area of mobile and wireless computing – an area which can certainly deliver added value to most businesses. This session provided an insight into best practice in the application of mobile and wireless computing as well as taking a look at future developments.

With over 100 IT member companies at present, a dedicated Steering group and a number of Working groups, it@cork was delighted with the exciting line up of speakers and an attendance of over 160 professionals from across the country.

CORKBIC

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The European Business and Innovation Centres (BICs) are regionally and locally based organisations involved in identification, selection and specialist support for new and existing enterprises. BICs typically operate as public-private partnerships, combining both Government funding and private cash or kind contributions. In Ireland, Exchequer support is provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the NDP Productive Sector Operational Programme 2000 – 2006, and it is managed through Enterprise Ireland. BICs concentrate on supporting new innovative businesses, which have high growth potential and which can contribute to economic development in their areas.