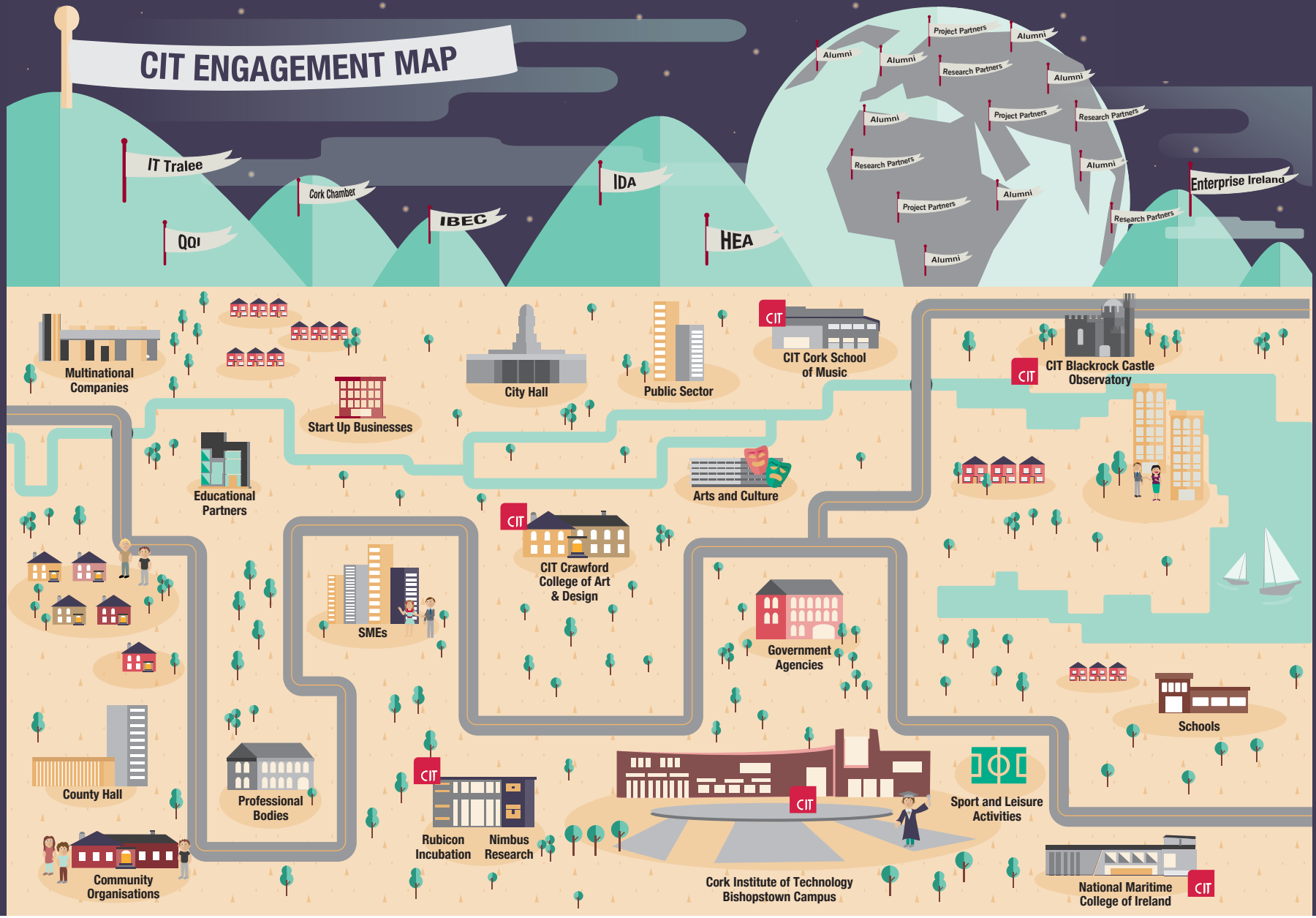

CIT EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2017 to 2021

CIT CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ

#CollaborateWithCIT

External engagement has been fundamental to Cork Institute of Technology since its foundation over one hundred years ago as the Crawford Municipal Technical Institute, and right through its time as Cork Regional Technical College. Working with industry and business and supporting people to upskill through part-time education and continuing professional development have been trademark strengths throughout our Institute's history. Words that were spoken by Mr. T.W. Russell on the occasion of the founding of the Crawford Municipal Technical Institute in January 1912 continue to have resonance today:

"If technical education is to be worked on the right lines the education ought to have some relation to the industries connected with the place where it is given."

Today we are able to say that the excellence in our teaching and learning is underpinned both by informed and engaged research, and by a strong interaction with the outside world. At every stage of our students' educational journey, they have opportunities to gain an external perspective; through staff who interact with industry, guest and adjunct lecturers, the involvement of business and industry in course advisory boards, our assessment systems, and through work placements and externally connected final year and postgraduate projects.

The Cork region today is the leading national provider of STEM graduates, and outside of Dublin the next region nationally in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI). CIT plays an influential role in attracting and sustaining new FDI companies, working with those companies to develop custom course offerings, and delivering a strong supply of skilled graduates. Small to medium enterprises and start-up businesses also find CIT flexible and responsive to their needs. There is also an evolving knowledge transfer activity which seeks to harness research and academic knowledge through commercialisation processes.

While a strong employment environment fuels economic growth and development, a vibrant cultural landscape makes our region an attractive place to live and work. Through the rich cultural assets of CIT – staff and students from the Cork School of Music and Crawford College of Art & Design, concerts, exhibitions, performances, facilities – our region has an enhanced capacity to attract new people and enrich the lives of those living within it and beyond.

Socially, there is deep engagement with community and not for profit organisations at many levels. In the strategy you will see visual stories describing how our Social Care, Recreation and Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality and Engineering students and staff work with many such organisations for mutual benefit.

To remain at the forefront of excellence in engagement activity we need to become very aware of our partners and actions, and to improve our related processes and systems. We need to be able to celebrate and build on our achievements, and to encourage others inside and outside of our Institution to collaborate with us. The strategy presented here will focus our efforts and help us to do just that.

Dr Brendan J. Murphy
President
CIT
March, 2017

Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) is a leading higher education institution based in Cork City on the south coast of Ireland.

CIT and its antecedents have been associated with education in Cork and the broader region since the 1830s. The Institute offers a wide range of flexible full-time and part-time higher education courses (at all levels up to and including PhD) in art & design, business, engineering, humanities, music, maritime studies, and science & information technology.

The main CIT campus is located in Bishopstown, Cork. The CIT Crawford College of Art and Design and the CIT Cork School of Music are both located at campuses in Cork city centre. The National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) is located on the shores of Cork Harbour in Ringaskiddy.

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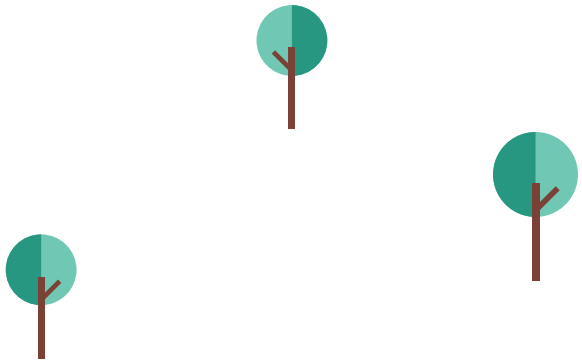

5 Overview - Vision - Mission

5 Strategic Plan

6 External Engagement Strategy (2017 to 2021)

6 Engagement: Collaborate, Respond, Mobilise

7 Vision and Mission - Value and Principles

7 Stakeholders

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OVERVIEW

The CIT Strategic Plan 2012-2016, **Knowledge at Work**, set out the mission, vision, goals and objectives for the Institute to 2016. Each organisational unit of CIT derives its own strategy from the Institute's strategic plan to clearly indicate how the Institute-wide mission and vision will be realised at local or functional level. The External Engagement Strategy harnesses the extensive work that was done in strategic planning over the last five years, and will contribute to the development of new strategy for the Institute into the future.

CIT VISION

CIT will be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the provision of career-focused education which produces effective, ethical professionals capable of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.

CIT MISSION

To provide student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond.

CIT STRATEGIC PLAN

CIT identified eight areas in which to deliver significant achievements through the strategic planning process. These areas were:

1. Developing and Improving the Student Experience
2. Engaging and Empowering Staff
3. Offering High Quality, Relevant and Flexible Programmes
4. Strengthening and Extending Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activities
5. Advancing and Growing the Mission and Role of CIT
6. Serving, Supporting and Partnering with Regional Enterprises, Public Bodies, Educational Institutions and Communities
7. Prioritising Targeted Internationalisation Activities
8. Enhancing and Sharing the Physical Environment of CIT

Under these headings, each unit of CIT has developed strategy in its own area. Some areas are much more focused on one aspect rather than another, e.g. Research.

The External Engagement Strategy (2017 - 2021) takes into account multiple stakeholders and perspectives; from academic, administration, technical and research perspectives, and from central units as well as academic units. A broad collection of about 40 staff participated in the development of the strategy, attending meetings and providing feedback on evolving iterations. External perspectives were also sought.

CIT EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (2017 – 2021)

Engagement: Collaborate, Respond, Mobilise

Engagement is at the heart of CIT – our teaching and learning, and our research, are all connected in some way – or ENGAGED – with a range of external employers, agencies and communities.

- **ENGAGEMENT** is collaborating for mutual benefit with industry, agencies and communities, and for wider societal development.
- **ENGAGEMENT** is responding flexibly, as well as being responsible and proactive.
- **ENGAGEMENT** is mobilising people and units in CIT to work together for integrated solutions.

ENGAGEMENT is ultimately about growing long-term relationships, to provide better services and supports for external partners and wider society, and informed learning and development opportunities for CIT students.

MARKETING RESEARCH STUDENTS ARE WORKING WITH THE YMCA IN BALLINCOLLIG.

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS CARRY OUT PROJECTS WHICH MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

Vision and Mission

CIT's ENGAGEMENT vision and mission are derived from the overall CIT mission and vision and are as follows:

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT VISION

ENGAGEMENT in CIT is collaborative and responsive, and at the heart of all our activities. We ENGAGE with employers, agencies and external communities by mobilising our talents in an integrated way to contribute to social, cultural and economic development. Our ENGAGEMENT philosophy and practices are the drivers for CIT's leadership position in university enterprise engagement nationally and internationally, and are also drivers for regional and national social, cultural and economic development.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT MISSION

- To enable enhanced collaboration between the CIT community and external employers and communities;
- To facilitate students to become informed citizens who are themselves deeply engaged in enabling social, cultural and economic developments;
- To stimulate social, educational, cultural, creative, scientific and technological innovation;
- To strengthen the economy through enabling knowledge transfer, new business growth and entrepreneurship;
- To embrace diversity and promote widening participation in education
- To promote CIT as a central catalyst for regional development

CIT's Mission incorporates three core pillars of teaching and learning, research, and engagement.

CIT's Engagement Mission can be articulated in relation to its other core pillars:

- **Engaged Teaching and Learning:** Provision of a variety of reflective and outward-facing educational and cultural experiences that involve interactive learning with a diverse range of external partners.
- **Engaged Research:** Deepen and link areas of distinctive research that support innovation and engage communities and enterprise in knowledge-building partnerships.

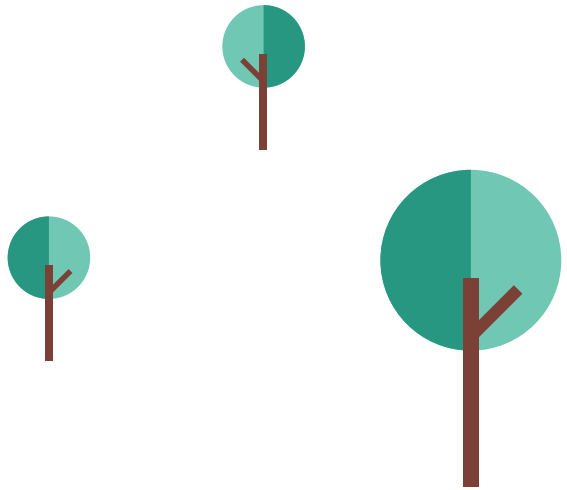
Values and Principles

In engaging with our external communities and sectors, CIT will seek to

- Recognise and acknowledge the importance of engagement activities among all staff and students in CIT;
- Be inclusive and ethical in its relationships and collaborations, with an underpinning philosophy of recognition of and respect for social capital;
- Develop long-term reciprocal relationships to identify mutual needs and benefits, implement agreed strategies, and assess results;
- Strengthen outcomes and learning through evidence-based research;
- Create and facilitate access to opportunities and resources wherever possible;
- Work with regional and national stakeholders to implement national action plans and policies (e.g. Jobs, Education, Entrepreneurship, and Inspiring Partnership-National IP Protocol).

Stakeholders

Throughout this report, illustrated stories are included of CIT's external engagement activities, involving multiple internal and external stakeholders including, Employers, Communities, Education Partners, Clients, and Supporters.



External Engagement Strategy - Key Goals

CIT has considered its current position in the area of EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT and has identified the five main themes below. Within each theme, one or more strategic goals have been identified for achievement.

1 Institute-wide Approach and Policy

- Work with all staff to implement a coherent, consistent Institute-wide approach to external engagement, including the professional management of external relationships, and the communication and sharing of engagement activities.

2 Engagement Support

- Support engagement with enterprise, partner organisations, alumni, and community groups through the effective use of all existing structures in CIT.
- Recognise and acknowledge the engagement activities of students and staff as educators and researchers.

3 Enterprise and Innovation Support

- Facilitate growth in knowledge transfer and enterprise start and development, from initial concept to building companies, including both for-profit and social enterprises.
- Support a culture of entrepreneurship among staff and students, enabling the entrepreneurial student and graduate.
- Support Innovation in the region and nationally through access to CIT expertise and facilities.

4 Impact Measurement

- Develop and implement meaningful benchmarks and indicators to measure engagement activity levels and impact on employment, regional economic development, and social value.
- Articulate the value of engagement among CIT staff and student cohorts.

5 Leadership Role

- Consolidate CIT's position as a national and international leader in external engagement through excellent theory and practice.
- Continue to contribute to policy development nationally and internationally.

CIT ENGAGES WITH A RANGE OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 2016 CIT CORK SCHOOL OF MUSIC HOSTED THE CHORAL SYMPOSIUM AS PART OF THE CORK INTERNATIONAL CHORAL FESTIVAL.

THE CIT JOINT MENTORING PROGRAMME FACILITATES ALUMNI TO MENTOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, HELPING THEM DEVELOP THEIR NETWORK AND TRANSITION INTO EMPLOYMENT.

Objectives, Indicators and Actions

In addition to the thematic areas and strategic goals identified in the previous section, high level performance indicators and metrics are also provided, as well as outline actions. A more detailed operational plan integrates the actions into the Institute's strategic management framework, providing timelines, specific measurable targets, and names of responsible individuals and functional units.

THEME 1. Institute-wide Approach and Policy

GOAL 1: *Work with all staff to implement a coherent, consistent Institute-wide approach to external engagement, including the professional management of external relationships, and the communication and sharing of engagement activities.*

CIT is widely regarded as a leader in the enterprise engagement space, partly due to its leadership on two collaborative higher education SIF projects: Education in Employment and its successor REAP: Roadmap for Employer Academic Partnerships. However, CIT's reputation as an "engaged" institution goes back to the days of its predecessor institution, the Crawford Municipal Technical Institute, which placed strong connections with industry at the heart of its curriculum.

Currently in CIT, engagement activities are in evidence in each Faculty, College, School, and Department, as well as in many central support units. Strategic Planning for each of these areas will reference external engagement activities. The CIT Engagement Strategy aims to recognise and nurture these efforts, encouraging greater engagement across the Institute with enhanced central supports.

The central supports such as the Extended Campus, the Industry Liaison Office, and the Research Office are in place to enable, support and drive increased engagement activity. The Access Service strives to widen participation among under-represented groups, and the Careers Service provides opportunities for students to engage directly with enterprise. The Arts Office along with the student Societies support a wider engagement with the general public through a range of arts activities across all campuses.

CIT takes a proactive approach to external engagement through its involvement in external bodies such as the South West Regional Skills Forum, and contributes to national strategy and policy development in areas such as Recognition of Prior Learning. CIT also interacts with a wide range of accrediting bodies, and relationships with these bodies are vital for CIT's ongoing success.

Areas to be addressed under this goal include the development of an institute policy regarding engagement data recording and usage, the development of coherent communications mechanisms for internal and external audiences, and the drive of external engagement activities in a systemic, integrated manner.

	Performance Indicators	Strategic Actions
1.1	Institute-wide policy established on recording and usage of engagement data.	• Establish working party to drive the development of an overarching CIT policy for recording and use of engagement data.
1.2	Consistent communication to internal and external stakeholders.	• Agree and develop a single presentation on CIT services for external audiences; • Restructure the website for CIT's services for external enterprise stakeholders; • Improve marketing, PR and sharing of all good practices in the broad external engagement space.
1.3	Delivery of engagement activities in a systematic, integrated manner.	• Implement an Institute-wide Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, using the agreed data policy to establish a consistent approach both for data input and for reporting; • Strive to achieve consistent levels of responsiveness across all external interactions; • Identify barriers to good engagement and strive to eliminate them.
1.4	Strategies developed for Entrepreneurship, Arts and alumni activities.	• Develop specific strategies for Entrepreneurship, Arts and alumni activities, drawing on expertise from a range of staff and functional units across CIT.

THEME 2. Engagement Support

GOAL 2-1: *Support engagement with enterprise, partner organisations, alumni, and community groups through the effective use of all existing structures in CIT.*
And
GOAL 2-2: *Recognise and acknowledge the engagement activities of students and staff as educators and researchers.*

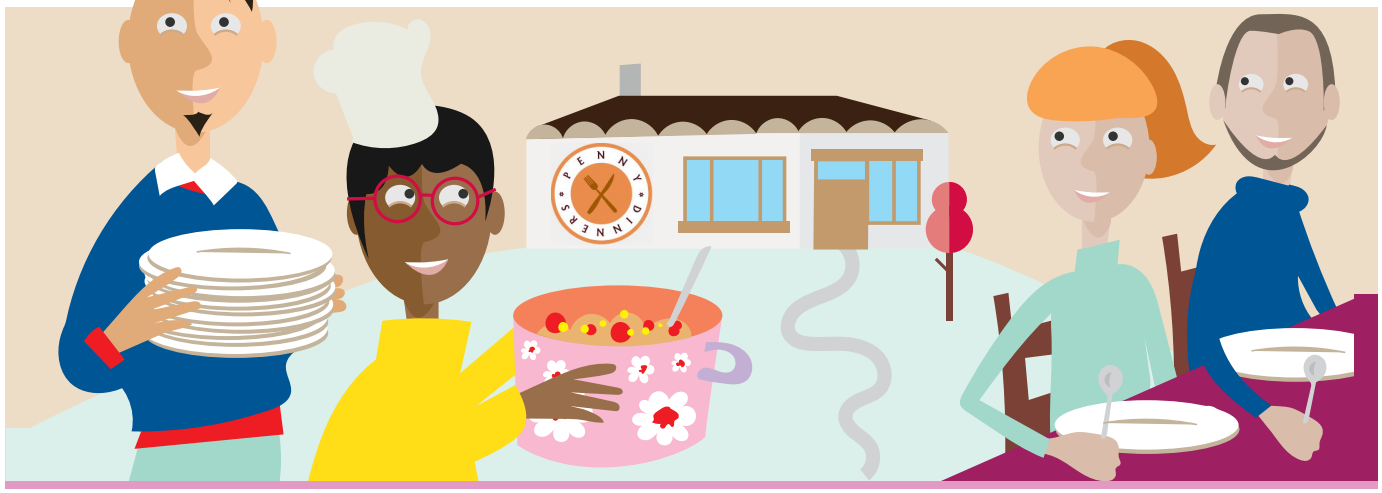
There are many positives and strengths to report under this thematic area. Since 1997, the Industry Liaison Office (ILO) is a central resource unit which has been enabling access to enterprise for staff, students, and researchers - as well as supporting enterprise and entrepreneurs in the Institute and the region. CIT established the Extended Campus in 2011 for the purpose of being a single connecting point between CIT and the external environment, with half-time staff seconded from the two large faculties. CIT has become the national leader in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and practice. CIT is the leading Institute of Technology in terms of its relationship with its alumni, operating an Alumni Office and instigating a number of award-winning initiatives to ensure our current students benefit from our experienced alumni. CIT was the first Institute of Technology to establish an Arts Office with a full-time Arts Officer role. The Arts Office has a wide internal brief but also facilitates an external engagement role through exhibitions, performances and cultural events. Opportunities are provided through the Careers Service for students to engage at a local level with enterprise with regards to their professional development. The Careers Service also engages with enterprise on a national level through its professional association, Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS). The Access Service strives to widen enrolment in CIT from underrepresented groups. To achieve this, there is a significant external engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including Further Education Colleges, schools, Cork City Council, and other representative organisations.

The Research Office has supported the substantial growth of research in CIT and has published the CIT Research and Innovation Strategy: RI2016, pointing to targeted growth in the coming years, much of which will be in collaboration with regional and national industry.

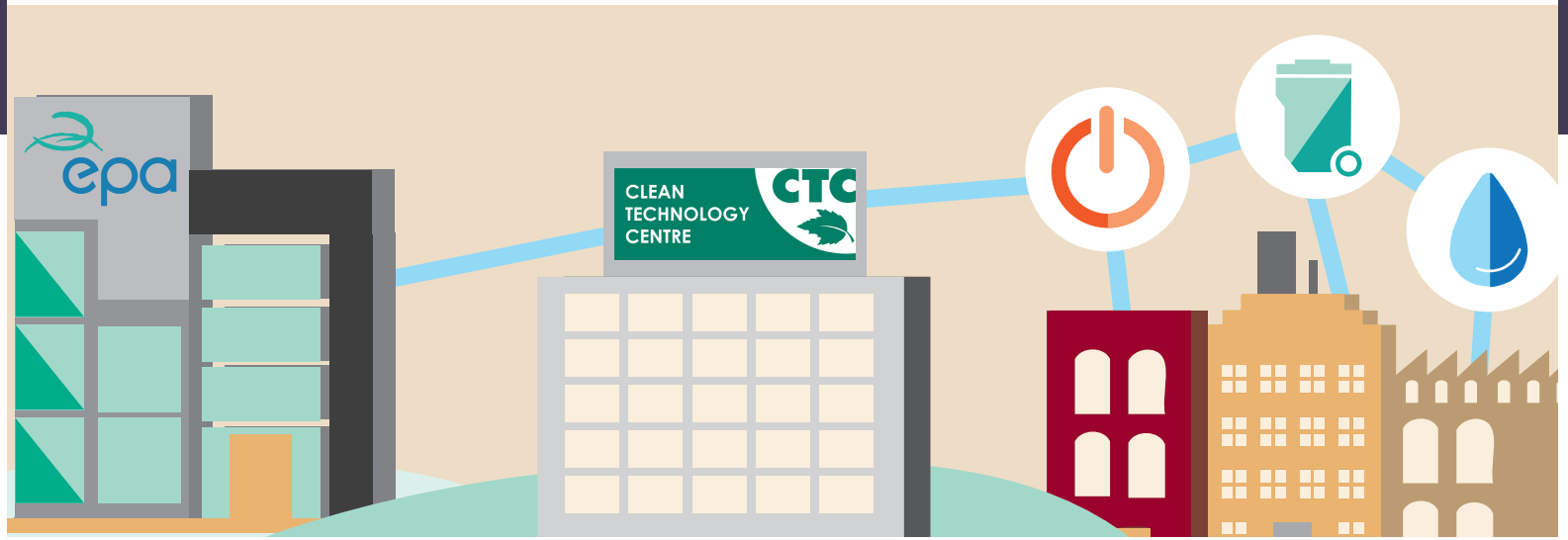
The International Office has been established and is promoting the development of reciprocal relationships with a range of higher education institutions internationally. Promotion of the internationalisation agenda provides benefits for both staff and students.

Greater heights could be achieved in the area of engagement support, however, if staff in the Faculties and Colleges were better supported to harness engagement as a core part of their teaching, learning and research activities. A more seamless relationship between the central units and the Faculties and Colleges could be achieved by enabling champions of engagement across each unit in the Institute. Improved communication of our successes – internally and externally – will be crucial here.

CULINARY STAFF AND STUDENTS IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY DEPARTMENT HELPED WITH PROVISION OF HOT MEALS TO ALL THE CLIENTS OF PENNY DINNERS WHILE THE PREMISES WAS UNDERGOING REFURBISHMENT.



CIT'S CLEAN TECHNOLOGY CENTRE CARRIES OUT RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY FOR ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE EPA, AND HELPS BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES REDUCE WASTE, WATER AND ENERGY COSTS.



	Performance Indicators	Strategic Actions
2.1	Engagement activity seen as a core part – and thus a supported part - of teaching, learning and research in CIT. CIT's staff are reflective practitioners in the engagement space.	• Implement staff development for engagement activities via Extended Campus and the Teaching and Learning Unit collaboration; • Celebrate and share (internally and externally) engagement successes of staff and students.
2.2	Central support units providing seamless and coherent support to internal stakeholders. Growth in customised course development.	• Establish regular and structured interactions between central support services and Faculties/Schools/Departments/Research Centres; • Central support services and Faculties continue to work together to promote and develop customised course offerings for and with external enterprises.
2.3	Central support units providing seamless and coherent support to external stakeholders, including enterprise, schools and communities.	• Coordinate external messaging and continue to implement a consistent and coherent routine for enterprise engagement.
2.4	Increased connectivity between alumni and staff and students. Increased support from alumni for CIT activities.	• Foster mutually beneficial and lifelong relationships with current and future alumni from the time they enter CIT; • Increase Alumni Office reach, visibility and engagement capacity by leveraging relevant technology; • Establish CIT Fundraising/Development function; • Strengthen Alumni Office to enable full delivery of the alumni strategy.

THEME 3. Enterprise and Innovation Support

GOAL 3-1: *Facilitate growth in knowledge transfer and enterprise start and development, from initial concept to building companies, including both for-profit and social enterprises.*
GOAL 3-2: *Support a culture of entrepreneurship among staff and students, enabling the entrepreneurial student and graduate.*
And
Goal 3-3: *Support Innovation in the region and nationally through access to CIT expertise and facilities*

CIT is one of the leading Institutes of Technology in the knowledge and technology transfer (TT) and entrepreneurship spaces. CIT participates in a TT consortium with UCC, Teagasc and IT Tralee to contribute to delivery of national targets in the technology transfer space.

The Rubicon Centre is Ireland's most successful campus incubator, providing a supportive environment for entrepreneurs at all stages of development. It is home to about 55 companies at any given time, with an alumni of over 400 companies. The Rubicon Centre offers state of the art offices and meeting rooms, and staff deliver targeted business supports & mentoring.

In 2012, CIT established the Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence in the School of Business. In establishing this centre, CIT extended its long-standing, strong commitment to supporting the entrepreneurship drive at regional and national level. The Hincks Centre addresses a gap in Ireland's current ability to train and provide support to all stakeholder groups who support and nurture entrepreneurship. The Hincks Centre's overarching aim is to promote and provide entrepreneurship training and education and to foster the entrepreneurial mind set among CIT's partners and stakeholders. The Hincks Centre works closely with the Rubicon Centre which provides it with live case studies and research material.

CIT has embedded entrepreneurship education throughout all of its programmes via the common CIT module delivered in Year 1, and via specialist interdisciplinary delivery in final year. We offer summer opportunities for students to develop their business ideas, and work with agencies such as Enterprise Ireland to deliver major job creation outcomes via programmes such as New Frontiers and Exxcel.

Work to be considered under this thematic area of the strategic plan include the identification and addressing of barriers to effective technology transfer, and endeavouring to make it easier for companies to start up or spin out of CIT. Growing our outputs across all areas will ensure a major contribution not just to societal outcomes but also to strengthening the innovation ecosystem that currently exists and flourishes in CIT.

	Performance Indicators	Strategic Actions
3.1	Research, Technology Transfer (TT) and Innovation targets established and increasing where possible.	• Leverage external funding sources to strengthen central support units where possible; • Allocate additional resource for Research Office, particularly in the H2020 space; • Ensure structures such as research centre advisory boards are working well and informing central decision making; • Identify and eliminate barriers to effective TT activity; • Review relevant CIT policies and procedures as required; • Review TT and Innovation Targets in new Research & Innovation Strategy.
3.2	Entrepreneurship metrics included in mainstream engagement reporting. CIT Entrepreneurship Strategy developed.	• Further develop the relationship between the Rubicon, central support units, Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence, and Faculties and Schools to place entrepreneurship as a core part of CIT activity at all levels.
3.3	Growing numbers of innovation vouchers delivered, with clear and agreed targets for CIT. Enhanced presence for CIT on national databases and the Knowledge Transfer Ireland website.	• Leverage national programmes and resources to promote CIT expertise and facilities; • Identify resources needed to grow innovation activities, and implement the business planning required to deliver those resources.

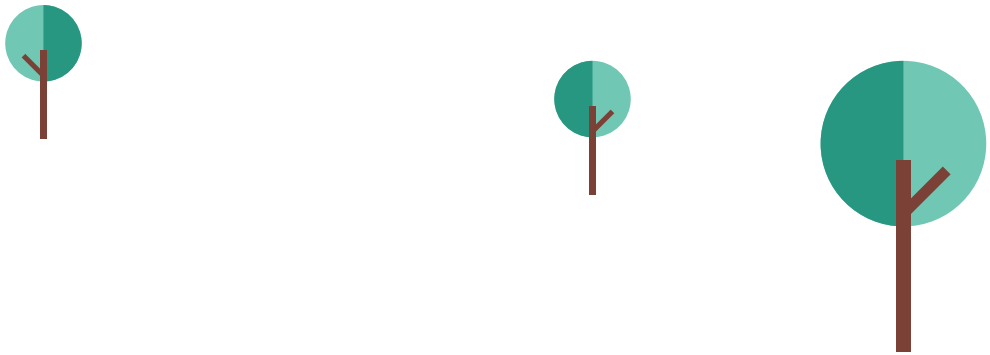
THEME 4. Impact Measurement

GOAL 4-1: *Develop and implement meaningful benchmarks and indicators to measure engagement activity levels and impact on employment, regional economic development, and social value.*
And
GOAL 4-2: *Articulate the value of engagement among CIT staff and student cohorts.*

Measuring successful engagement is not an easy task. It takes both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a complete picture is available for reflection and further improvement. Embedding a data-driven approach into our engagement activities will ensure that measurement is possible, and will also ensure that we can learn from – and disseminate - previous successes.

CIT has piloted a CRM approach to engagement. A professional approach to any activity requires some level of insight and knowledge of actions taken – this is only possible if we record and measure – and share – what we are doing. This strategy seeks to develop an institute-wide policy on data gathering, storage and usage, particularly in the context of our engagement activities. Implementation of an agreed policy will enable units within CIT to take charge of their own engagement agendas, measure and reflect on their own engagement activities, and learn from the successes of other units.

	Performance Indicators	Strategic Actions
4.1	Engagement metrics included in strategic planning and programmatic review for all areas of the Institute.	• Identify, agree and communicate a commonly-understood set of engagement metrics; • Embed engagement metrics in Institute dashboard and reporting templates.
4.2	Baselines established for internal and external engagement activities.	• Map and measure engagement baselines for each academic, research and support unit in CIT, including the highlighting of existing cross-functional activities.
4.3	CRM system in use Institute-wide.	• Implement agreed policy (developed under Goal 1), with appropriate timelines established.
4.4	Measures in place to link engagement activities with regional economic development and increased social value.	• Continued active participation in external fora such as the South West Regional Skills Forum.



THEME 5. Leadership Role

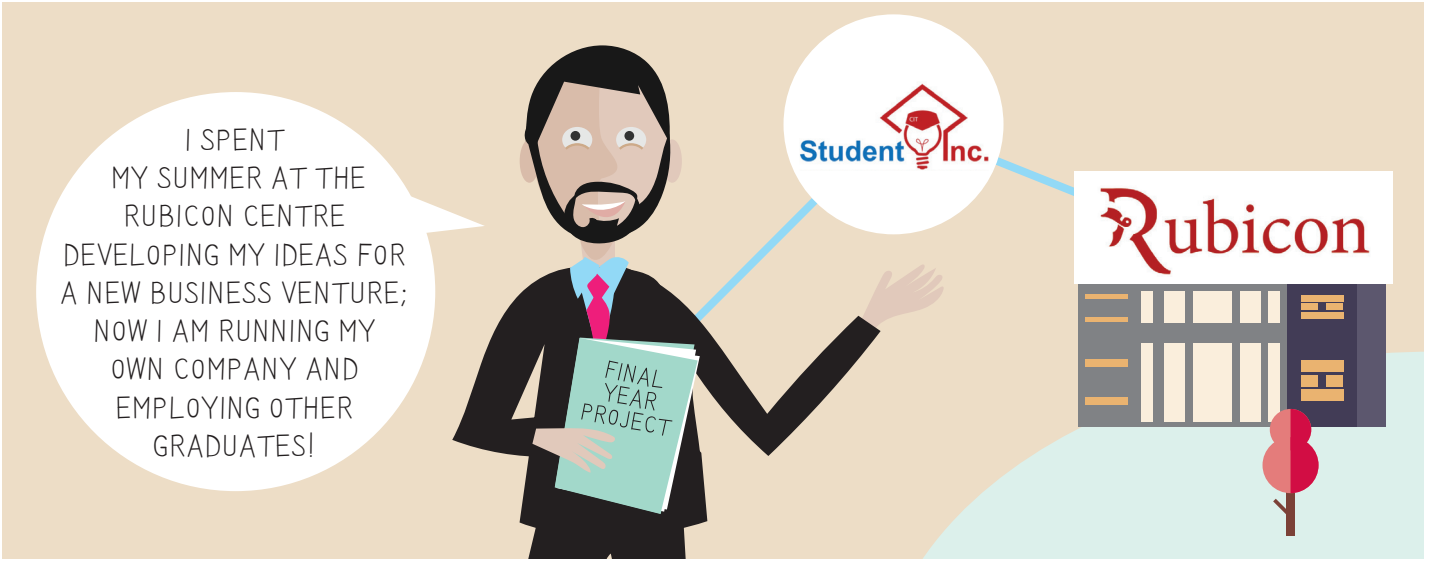
GOAL 5-1: *Consolidate CIT's position as a national and international leader in engagement through excellent theory and practice.*
And
GOAL 5-2: *Continue to contribute to policy development nationally and internationally.*

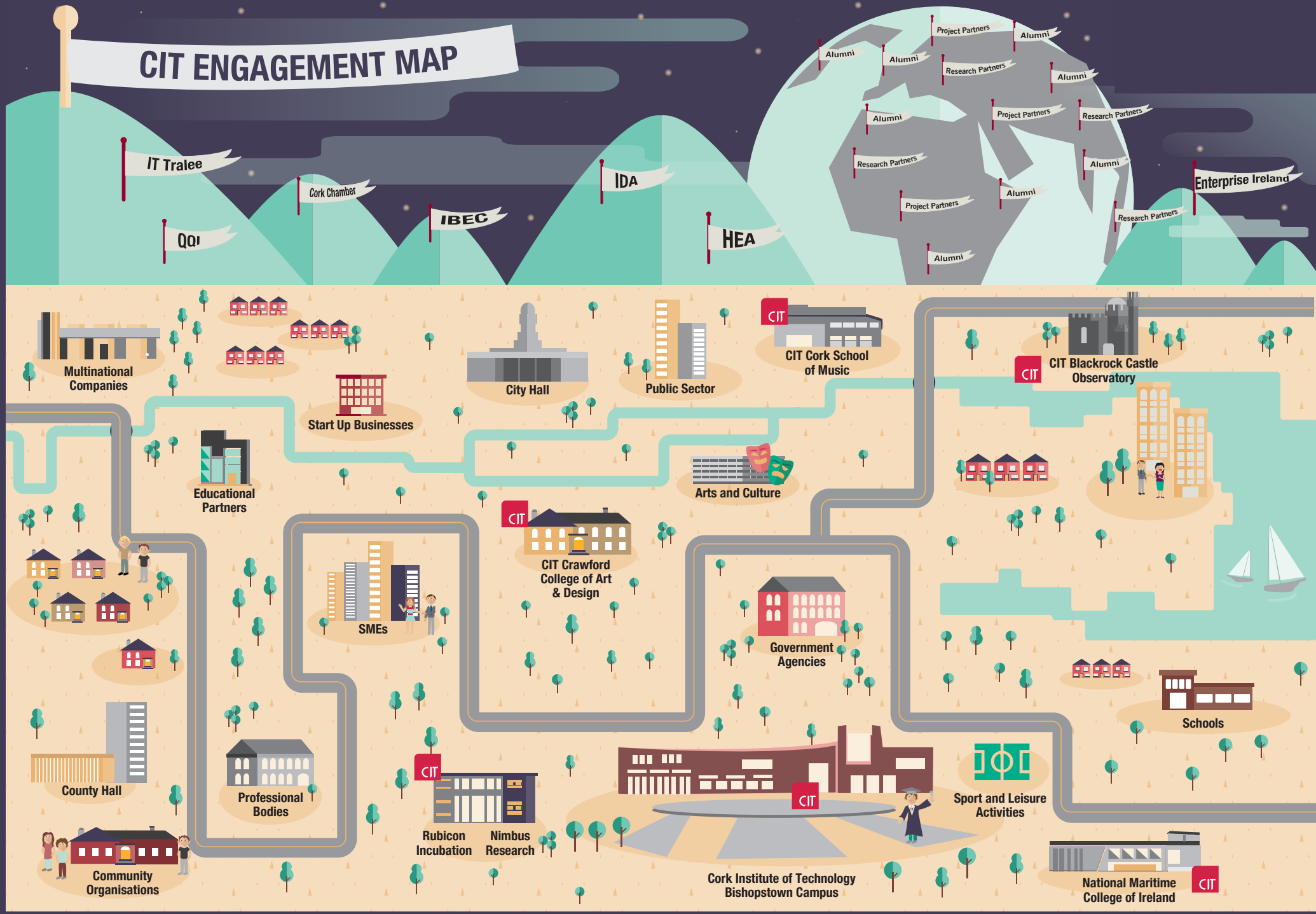
Thematic area 1 referenced the need for more coherent and cohesive policies internally within CIT, as a means of improving current performance. However, externally, CIT is already a nationally-recognised leader through a range of activities, contributing to national and international policy formation in areas such as RPL, skills development, entrepreneurship and engagement with enterprise. We have established multiple good practices in relation to all aspects of external engagement in CIT. We are recognised by key external stakeholders, such as Enterprise Ireland and the IDA, as being responsive, engaged and proactive. We understand the importance of data gathering and usage.

We now need to consolidate our leadership position, both through continued theory development and promotion of excellent practice across the Institute.

	Performance Indicators	Strategic Actions
5.1	Designated research group with increased participation and relevant outputs.	• Convene open sessions to encourage increased research activity in the area of university enterprise engagement.
5.2	CIT used as a national best practice engagement exemplar by state agencies such as the HEA, QQI, IDA and EI, as well as recognition by employer organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and IBEC.	• Ensure continued representation on all relevant local and national bodies, with improved mechanisms for widely sharing gathered information back in CIT; • Continue to bid for relevant competitive funding, including research funding, to ensure CIT maintains its current position as a national leader in university enterprise engagement.

CIT STUDENTS GET AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESS IDEAS AT THE RUBICON CENTRE THROUGH THE STUDENT INC. SUMMER PROGRAMME.




CIT ENGAGEMENT MAP
IT Tralee
Cork Chamber
IBEC
QQI
IDA
HEA
Project Partners
Alumni
Research Partners
Enterprise Ireland
Multinational Companies
City Hall
Public Sector
CIT Cork School of Music
CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory
Start Up Businesses
Educational Partners
Arts and Culture
CIT Crawford College of Art & Design
SMEs
Government Agencies
Schools
County Hall
Professional Bodies
Rubicon Incubation
Nimbus Research
Sport and Leisure Activities
Community Organisations
Cork Institute of Technology Bishopstown Campus
National Maritime College of Ireland
CIT