

16 December 2020



Minister McGrath launches competitive challenge-based grant call to deliver Build Digital Project for the Construction Sector in 2021

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath TD, has today launched a competitive challenge-based grant call to deliver the Build Digital Project for the Construction Sector in 2021.

Increasing innovation in the Irish Construction Sector is more necessary than ever over the coming years in order to deliver on the ambitions set out in the Government's Project Ireland 2040 investment strategy.

To support the industry in grasping this opportunity, a Construction Sector Innovation and Digital Adoption team has been established by government and industry. This is to deliver on the seven priority actions detailed in the Building Innovation Report which was itself informed by research carried out by KPMG and Future Analytic Consulting and peer reviewed by Technological University Dublin. This work drew upon a wide-ranging survey and consultation, international benchmarking process and an economic analysis of causes of productivity trends in the Construction Sector in Ireland.

The Build Digital Project is one of the leading actions of this strategy. To this end, and as part of its role in driving the delivery of Project Ireland 2040, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is launching a competitive challenge-based grant call to deliver the Build Digital Project.

Minister McGrath said: -

“Build Digital aims to ensure that world class digital practices are adopted throughout the industry and supply chain in order to achieve a more sustainable and innovative sector from top to bottom.

It will provide guidance and leadership on the necessary digital tools, standards, approaches and training required by all across the sector, and in particular small and medium sized firms who may have yet to realise the full benefits of digital approaches. Increasing innovation in the Irish Construction Sector is more necessary than ever over the coming years in order to deliver on the ambitions set out in the Government's Project Ireland 2040 investment strategy".

Applications are being sought from multi-partner consortia, for example collaborations between higher education institutions (HEIs), companies and/or other Research Performing Organisations (RPOs).

Expressions of Interest must be submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform by 15th January 2021 and full applications by 15th February 2021.

One successful application will be selected in March 2021 based on the prescribed criteria. The successful bidder will be eligible to draw down public grant funding of up to €500,000 per annum for a total of five years, subject to meeting the requirements of the grant agreement. The project will present significant opportunities for industry participation and cooperation, as well as the need for the public funding to be supplemented by industry funding.

CIF said:-

"CIF welcome today's launch of this call for consortia to lead the Build Digital Project and recognise it as a critical step in the advancement of our industry towards a digital transformation. Successfully delivered the project can be an enabler for regionally balanced delivery of Project Ireland 2040 and should promote the advancement of our SME's. With the establishment of the project, the industry can look forward to a coordinated approach to the implementation of standards, development of nationally aligned training programmes and in time facilitate a mandate supporting the digital procurement of public and private sector projects. "

Earlier today, Enterprise Ireland, in collaboration with the IDA, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the CIF, hosted a high-level webinar entitled, "Next Generation Construction of Capital Assets in Ireland - Innovation for International Investors" aimed at highlighting the opportunity created by the Build Digital Grant Call Out. The webinar was attended by over 200 participants across the construction sector, relevant government department agencies and other bodies.

Chair of the CSG Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-group PJ Rudden said:-

"Build Digital is one of 7 priority actions to raise construction productivity levels. Also included is a new Construction Technology Centre by Enterprise Ireland, a move to high quality offsite and modular methods of construction, addressing the built environment skills shortages and digitising the planning permission application system to speed up preconstruction planning approvals. These 7 new integrated actions will combine to better deliver Project Ireland 2040 and the National Development Plan. It means building to much higher technical standards, delivering on time and within approved budgets. Our future construction will be green as well as digital. That's means meeting our sustainability and climate action targets".

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

Construction Sector Innovation and Adoption Subgroup

The Construction Sector Group Innovation and Adoption Subgroup was set up by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to implement the seven priority actions as identified in the KPMG/Future Analytics Report that was peer reviewed by Technological University (TU) Dublin on 'Economic Analysis of Productivity in the Irish Construction Sector' dated June 2020. The project officially commenced in September 2020.

The seven priority actions are as follows:

1. Expand the Construction Research Forum (Construction Industry Federation)
2. Identification of Research and Innovation Funding Sources (Association for Consulting Engineers Ireland **and Engineers Ireland**)
3. Develop Modern Methods of Construction (Construction Industry Federation)
4. Construction Technology Centre (Enterprise Ireland)
5. Establish a Digital Network under the Construction Skillnet (Construction Industry Federation)
6. Digitize the Planning Application Process (Local Government Management Association)
7. Establish Build Digital Project (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

The integrated delivery of all seven of these actions will contribute to a more competitive, dynamic and sustainable construction sector to deliver the new social, economic and climate infrastructure required by Ireland in the future.

Build Digital

The Build Digital Project will aim to ensure that world class digital practices, which already exist in certain elements on the construction sector, are adopted throughout the industry and supply chain in order to achieve a more sustainable and innovative sector from top to bottom. The project will achieve this goal by providing guidance and leadership on the necessary digital tools, standards,

How to Apply

A guide for applicants can be found on www.gov.ie, along with the Expression of Interest (EOI) form and full application form.

The call for EOI form will close automatically at 15:00 Irish Time on 15th January 2021 and EOI forms not received in the csginnovation@per.gov.ie inbox by this deadline will be ineligible. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Following on from this, the call for full proposal forms will close automatically at 15:00 Irish Time on 15th February 2020 and full proposal forms not received in the csginnovation@per.gov.ie inbox by this deadline will be ineligible. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged. Paper applications will not be accepted.

The EOI and full proposal form must be submitted by the lead partner before the call close.

Questions regarding the application process can be submitted to csginnovation@per.gov.ie with the subject line 'Build Digital FAQ'. The deadline for receiving queries will be 15:00 Irish Time on 30 DECEMBER 2020. Any answers to queries will be posted on the DPER website by 7th JANUARY 2021.

Contact

Name, title, number