Mid Ulster Regeneration Action Plan

2020 / 2021

Mid Ulster Regeneration Action Plan

2020 /2021

Theme	Projects	Outputs	Methodology	Outcomes	Budget
1. Marketing & Promotion	1.1 Seasonal Marketing Campaigns 1.2 Shop Local Campaigns	1.1 Number of marketing campaigns delivered for the 5 towns. 1.2 Implement a joint shop local campaign in the 5 towns for Small Business Saturday.	1.1, 1.2 Outdoor Advertising Radio Print Materials Social Media	• Contribute to increased footfall across the towns in Mid Ulster. • Contribute to increased visitor numbers in the towns in Mid Ulster. • Contribute to increased traffic to Mid Ulster Council's social media channels.	£30,000

2. Business Support / Attracting Investment	2.1 Provision of Wi-Fi in 5 town centres & Bellaghy	2.1 Maintain free Wi-Fi in the five town centres of Coalisland, Cookstown, Dungannon, Maghera and Magherafelt, and Bellaghy.	2.1 Ongoing contributions to businesses hosting access points.	• To improve and grow the retail offer in the five towns across the Mid Ulster district.	£15,361 ongoing wi-fi costs
	2.2 Provision of Reduced Christmas Car Parking Charges	2.2 Provision of reduced Christmas car parking charges in charged car parks.	2.2 Council approval to reduce parking charges for a 6 week period.	• To promote investment in the five towns across the Mid Ulster District.	£25,000
	2.3 Reducing Dereliction and Vacancy Levels in Dungannon Town Centre – led by Dungannon Regeneration Partnership	2.3 An external town centre development management contactor to be employed by Dungannon Regeneration Partnership for a 3-year period with the aim of reducing dereliction/vacancy levels in the town centre.	2.3 Council allocation of £120,000 to DRP over 3 years (2020 - 2023), subject to match funding from partners. Match funding to be provided by Dungannon Enterprise Centre and Dungannon Traders Association and a funding request pending with DfC to match Council funding of £120,000.	DRP will be responsible for the project outputs and it is anticipated that the project will achieve the following:- • Reduction in Town Centre Vacant Premises by 2% per annum • £500,000 investment by Developers in Town Centre annually •	Yr 1 costs; £40,000 *previously approved by Council*

3. Strategic Events	3.1 Calendar of Events in 5 town centres	3.1 Minimum of 2 Strategic Events delivered in each town annually.	3.1 Officers Delivery, in conjunction with Events Team.	• Increased footfall / visitor numbers across the 5 towns. • Increased profile & engagement with town centre businesses.	£142,000
4. Physical Regeneration / Improving Infrastructure	4.1 Urban Regeneration Projects	4.1.1 Work associated with public realm schemes in Coalisland and Maghera	4.1 Partnership working with Technical & ICT Teams	• Enhanced townscape quality in the five town centres in the Mid Ulster District.	Projects/Funding as per Council's Capital Budget previously agreed
		4.1.2 Potential match funding project with DFC related to urban regeneration project.			£40,000
	4.2 Rural Regeneration Projects	4.2 Work in partnership with RDP to deliver Village Regeneration projects in up to 37 villages across Mid Ulster District Council over 4 years through the Rural Development Programme.	4.2 Officers work in partnership with Technical Services & ICT Team to deliver Projects.	• Improve quality of life for people in the rural areas of the district	RDP Projects & Funding already agreed by Council £5,000 for surveys & fees
	4.3 Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme	4.3 Deliver the Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme for Mid Ulster towns & Villages	4.3 Deliver Grant Scheme based on approved list.	• Enhanced properties for business owners in the towns and villages across the district.	£250,000 (grant aid) & £12,800 (architect fees) previously agreed by Council

Appendix 1   Town Centre Events Programme   2020/2021

Event Name	Event Date(s) 2020	Economic Development Event Budget (excl. Operational/Steward Wage Costs)	Economic Development Budget for Operational/Steward Wage Costs	Other Council Budgets
Cookstown Continental Market	30 & 31 May	£22,000 (£3,000 income)	£8,000	£5,000 (Tourism)
Tafelta Festival, Magherafelt	20 June	£8,000	Paid from another Council budget	
Coalisland Summer Event	26 June	£6,360	£640	£2,000 (ED Marketing)
Walled Garden, Maghera	22 August	£15,000	Paid from another Council budget	
Heels on the Hill, Dungannon	25 September	£6,000	n/a	
Halloween in Dungannon	29 October	£13,500	£1,500	
Halloween in Coalisland	31 October	£9,000	£1,000	
Christmas Lights Switch On Cookstown	27 November		Paid from another Council budget	£10,000 (Tourism)
Christmas Kingdom & Switch On Dungannon	28 & 29 November	£26,000	£3,000	
Magherafelt Christmas Market & Switch On	28 & 29 November	£8,000	Paid from another Council budget	£30,000 (Tourism)
Christmas in Coalisland	4 December	£7,000	ED Staff	
Christmas in Maghera	5 December	£7,000		
Budget Totals		**£127,860**	**£14,140**	**£47,000**
Total Economic Development Events Budget (Event Costs and Wages)		**£142,000**		

Association of Town Centre Management
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TN16 9EU

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Telephone: 44 (0) 300 330 0980
Email: accounts@atcm.org

Invoice

Invoice Number:	22102
Invoice Date:	31/01/2020
Order Number:	
Our Ref:	COOKSTOW

Mid Ulster District Council
FAO Mary Mc Cullagh, Town Strategy
Manager Road
Cookstown
Co Tyrone
BT80 8DT
VAT Reg No:

Quant	Details	Unit Price	Net Amount	VAT Rate	VAT
1.00	2020 Full Band 1 Membership	545.00	545.00	20.00	109.00

Terms: 21 days from invoice date - please ensure invoice number is quoted on payment

BACS Details

Bank:	Lloyds TSB
Account Name:	ATCM
Sort Code:	30-92-32
Account Number:	01440295

Total Net Amount (£)	545.00
Total VAT Amount (£)	109.00
Invoice Total (£)	654.00

This document is also available on the DAERA website at:

https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daera-innovation-strategy-2020-2025

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DAERA Innovation Strategy 2020 - 2025

DAERA - Innovation Strategy - Our Mission

An innovation ecosystem delivering for the environment, society and the rural economy.

Create an Innovative Culture

Provide Effective Leadership

Enable Connectivity

Contents

SECTION 1

1. Preface

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has a vision for a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone. It is a science based, data driven department, which invests around a quarter of its annual budget on science services. These services involve monitoring and surveillance testing and research and development (R&D). Science outputs are used to inform policy development, meet statutory obligations, measure outcomes, provide advice and information, manage risks to society and the environment, support rural affairs and promote innovation. In the context of the UK leaving the EU, the importance of the science evidence DAERA uses and provides is increased.

DAERA is currently implementing a Science Transformation Programme. This programme aims to ensure that the science DAERA secures and uses is innovative, collaborative and transformative and will support a healthy and sustainable economy, environment and rural community, including delivering on Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes.

As part of the Science Transformation Programme the high level DAERA Science Strategy Framework has been established. This will guide how DAERA can optimise its use of science to help deliver Departmental and PfG objectives. This Innovation Strategy (alongside Monitoring and Surveillance and R&D operational strategies), derives from the Science Strategy Framework and is integral to its implementation.

Innovation is 'the successful generation and exploitation of new ideas. It is about transforming creative thinking into new products, new and improved processes and technologies to support new ways of doing business'[1]. In many cases, it relates to the novel use or application of knowledge or information we have, to yield products or outcomes of enhanced economic, social or natural capital value.

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[1] Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025

1

DAERA's strategic drivers provide a context for a significant focus on encouraging and supporting innovation by the Department and in agri-food, environment, marine and fisheries, forestry and rural communities to achieve economic, environmental and social benefits across the breadth of DAERA's remit.

Purpose of this document

This consultation exercise gives you the opportunity to articulate your views on whether you consider the proposed DAERA Innovation Strategy to be relevant and appropriate from your organisation's or your sector's perspective, as a means of driving innovation and delivering better outcomes. This exercise will inform the direction of the Innovation Strategy and the Department encourages you to share your views with us.

SECTION 2

2.   Introduction

2.1   There is a compelling rationale for government to invest in establishing and encouraging an environment conducive to innovation. Evidence shows that businesses that innovate grow nearly twice as quickly in both employment and turnover[2] as non innovators. Innovation drives research and development which in turn leads to economic growth[3].

2.2   Society is facing many challenges and innovations can help transform how we live and work. The scale of human impact on the planet has never been greater and innovative solutions are needed to address the wide range of threats to our future health and well being. It is predicted that 60% more food will be needed worldwide by 2050 to feed the increasing global population[4]. To do this we need to find innovative, resilient and sustainable ways to produce food more efficiently and with a lower environmental footprint.

2.3   Many global challenges, including climate change, land and ecosystem degradation and waste management, are threatening our environment. At a local level, environmental challenges are highlighted in the DAERA Environmental Strategy for Northern Ireland Public Consultation document and include (but are not confined to) the management of waste and development of a circular economy, waste crime, air quality, local environmental quality, biodiversity loss and soil quality. In addition there are challenges that exist in reconciling agricultural activities and environmental consequences, particularly in areas such as greenhouse gas emissions, the effect of run off of nitrogen and phosphorous on water quality and the impact of ammonia emissions on designated sites and priority species.

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[2] NESTA, 'The Vital 6%' (2009)
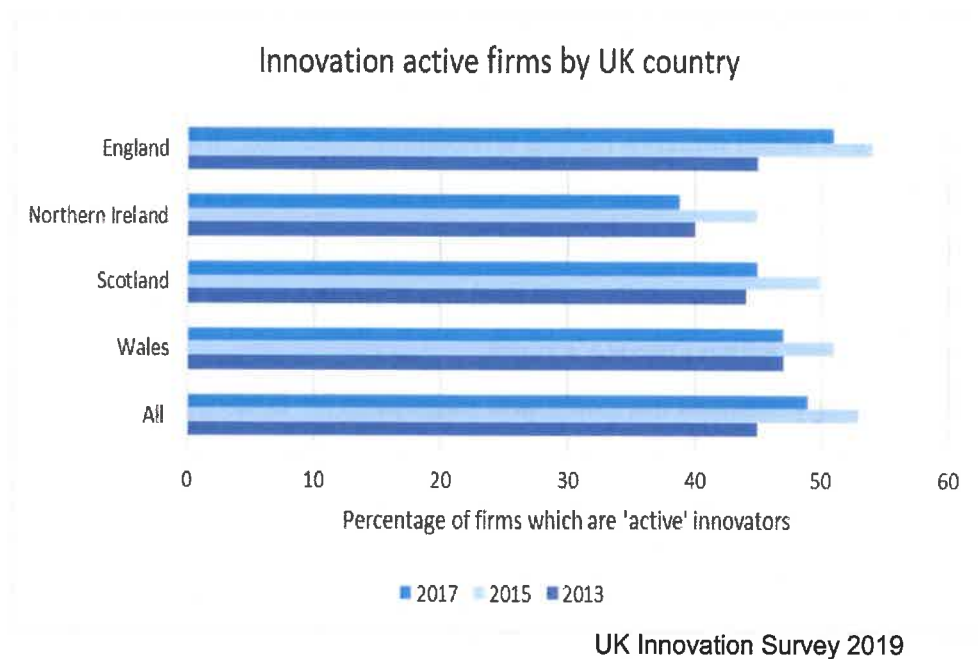[3] Economy 2030 - Draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland (DfE) (2017)
[4] UKRI, Transforming Food Production (2019)

2.4 Northern Ireland has been the lowest or next to lowest in the UK regions innovation rankings for many years (Fig 1[5] and Annex 1) with many barriers to innovation cited[6] including availability and cost of finance, lack of leadership, technological, R&D and creative thinking skills, risk aversion and lack of understanding of innovation. Northern Ireland is currently the least innovation active region of the UK.

2.5 The ambitious Mission of this strategy is to develop an innovation ecosystem which delivers for the environment, society and rural economy; measured by Northern Ireland becoming the most successful region in the UK at exploiting opportunities in the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy in the sectors within DAERA's remit.

2.6 This strategy outlines the goals and objectives for DAERA to create an enabling environment for innovation to flourish and to enhance the impact of knowledge generation and science investments to help DAERA deliver Departmental and PfG objectives and meet our commitments under the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

2.7 The draft DAERA Innovation Strategy highlights two key priorities to achieve this:

- The creation of an enabling environment within DAERA to support innovation and the implementation of innovation actions within the Department.
- The establishment of an enabling, external environment to encourage and support the implementation of innovation actions by all businesses operating in the sectors for which DAERA has responsibility; and specifically to prioritise innovations relating to Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and a Transformative Bioeconomy. (Details are provided in Section 4).

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[5] UK Innovation Survey 2017: Northern Ireland Results (June 2019)
[6] Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025

Fig 1 Variations in innovation activity by UK country

Innovation active firms by UK country

Percentage of firms which are 'active' innovators

■ 2017 ■ 2015 ■ 2013

UK Innovation Survey 2019

SECTION 3

3. Strategic Context

The high level strategic context is outlined in the draft DAERA Science Strategy Framework:

https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/daera/daera-science-strategy-framework-V2.PDF

The innovation specific drivers are noted below.

3.1 The Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2016 - 2021 outlines priorities to be delivered in NI for the purpose of *'improving wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth'*. This includes a range of priorities relevant to DAERA, including those focused on achieving a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy (Outcome 1); living and working sustainably - protecting the environment (Outcome 2); enabling the enjoyment of long healthy lives (Outcome 4); becoming an **innovative**, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential (Outcome 5) and creating a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest (Outcome 10).

3.2 The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy - Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity (2012), identified **innovation**, R&D and creativity as one of its five strategic themes. The strategy also recognised agri-food as one of the areas in Northern Ireland with greatest potential for sustainable growth.

3.3 Innovate NI **Innovation** Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025 takes forward the 'Stimulating **innovation**, research & development and creativity' theme identified in the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy 2012. Innovate NI aims to stimulate a step change in innovation across the economy. This strategy also highlights the fact that skills, design and collaboration between sectors locally, nationally and internationally are essential for innovation.

3.4   The draft Economy 2030 - Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland (2017), outlines five 'Pillars for Growth' including 'Accelerating **innovation** and research.' The strategy provides priorities under this pillar and identifies agri-food as one of the six broad sectors of the economy where Northern Ireland has world class capabilities.

3.5   As part of its Brexit preparations, DAERA has developed a draft Future Agricultural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland (2018). This recognises that science and **innovation** are important drivers of long term productivity growth. This draft framework notes that whilst there is significant investment in innovation research in Northern Ireland, much more could be achieved both from existing resources and from additional investment.

3.6   DAERA has also initiated Northern Ireland's first Environment Strategy. DAERA recognises the strategic importance of **innovation** in addressing the wider climate change, environmental and social challenges associated with growing and rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy. We need new technologies, radical approaches and solutions across all areas to achieve ambitious Net Zero UK wide emissions reduction targets and to deliver biodiversity, water and air quality objectives.

3.7   A range of other strategies, which address food, agriculture, environmental resources, biodiversity, marine and fisheries, forestry, water, recreation and the rural sector in the UK, Ireland and further afield identify the importance of innovation to delivering solutions to complex issues across environmental, economic and social interfaces. Details of these are provided in the DAERA Science and Innovation Strategies Evidence Base.

Section 3 Question

Q1 What are your views on the strategic context and drivers identified to underpin a DAERA Innovation Strategy?

SECTION 4

4. What is innovation?

4.1 *'Innovation is the successful generation and exploitation of new ideas. It is about transforming creative thinking into new products, new and improved processes and technologies to support new ways of doing business.'* Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025.

Why should government invest in innovation?

4.2 There is a compelling rationale for government to invest in establishing and encouraging an environment conducive to innovation. Innovation enables firms to stay ahead of their competitors. Innovation is much more than R&D. It includes changes to products and processes, introduction of new business models, organisational changes and the exploitation of new markets.

4.3 There is a need for the public sector to innovate. Increased innovation is required within the public sector to enable it to play an effective role in encouraging innovation in private business and the wider community. Publicly funded R&D and innovation activity elicits a higher business response than private sector spending[7]. Publicly funded academic research results in substantial spillovers to private firms, while private sector R&D is almost wholly captured by the original investors. Government needs to be innovative and it needs to create the conditions for innovation. Support from the public sector for innovation is critical to economic growth[8] and to delivering a healthy society and natural environment.

4.4 There are many challenges and changes facing the world we live in. Innovation is needed to help society find solutions. In agriculture a wave of technological innovations is leading to a revolution in practice that is comparable to the one led by widespread mechanisation[9].

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[7] What Works Policy Review, Why Innovation?

[8] Fostering innovation in the public sector, OECD (2017)

[9] Williams &Wootton-Beard, IBERS, Aberystwyth University (2019)

Innovation is also essential in addressing key environmental challenges, including reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions and understanding and adapting to climate change risks and opportunities.

4.5   It is recognised that national governments can stimulate innovation through providing incentives for R&D and innovation; stimulating knowledge exchange and innovation adoption; supporting facilitation activity to encourage/support innovation; and enabling collaboration. The EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) recommends that governments should have an innovation policy focusing on capacity building, supporting collaboration, mitigating barriers, incentivising innovation actions/investment and dissemination of information as widely and visibly as practical[10].

4.6   Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025[11] recognises that Northern Ireland needs a complete step change in its culture, priority and performance in respect of innovation. The strategy highlights the need for increased innovation within the public sector so it can play an effective role in stimulating innovation.

Barriers to innovation

4.7   Common barriers to innovation in the UK are reported to include affordability, perceived economic risk, regulation, lack of capacity/capability and lack of market intelligence. In Northern Ireland other important barriers have also been identified. The Innovate NI[12] report identifies a culture of risk aversion, lack of openness to collaboration, lack of leadership, technological, R&D and creative thinking skills.

Also the structure of businesses in Northern Ireland is a significant barrier to innovation, with a large number of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), together with a high proportion of sole traders.

[10] Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems towards 2020, SCAR (2013)

[11] Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025

[12] Innovate NI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 - 2025

Micro businesses are estimated to make up over 95% of Northern Ireland businesses. Innovation within SMEs and micro businesses is hampered by issues such as a lack of financial resources, low appetite for risk and insufficient staff training in innovation and creativity.

4.8   Of particular relevance to this draft strategy, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[13] highlights the need for governments to *'not only be innovative; they must also create the right conditions for innovation within and across systems'*. A lack of innovation within the public sector, has emerged as a key barrier to innovation within those sectors which are supported, facilitated and incentivised through government departments. Risk aversion, bureaucratic structures and skills shortages are seen as key issues. Public organisations often struggle to generate enough ideas, partly due to a conservative approach to risk management related to the use of public funding. An innovative and enterprising public sector is vital to help address industry and societal challenges ahead.

4

[13] Fostering Innovation in the Public Sector, OECD (2017)

Why do we need an Innovation Strategy for DAERA?

4.9   A high level SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) assessment was undertaken, considering the innovation position in both DAERA business areas and the sectors for which it has responsibility. These are shown diagrammatically in:

Figure 2 - SWOT analysis of innovation within DAERA;

Figure 3 - SWOT analysis of innovation in the areas within DAERA's remit.

The ingredients needed for innovation are shown in:

Figure 4 - What inward facing action does DAERA need to take to support innovation in the areas within its remit?

Figure 5 - What outward facing action does DAERA need to take for innovation to flourish in the areas within its remit?

Through developing a strategy that can exploit the opportunities and mitigate the threats identified, DAERA will be positioned to optimise its ability to support increasing innovation. This analysis has informed the strategic mission, principles and goals of this draft Innovation Strategy.

4.10   Three clear overarching themes that will drive efficiencies and progress in all DAERA relevant sectors and deliver on the protection of the environment have emerged during the development of this strategy. Economy 2030[14] identified digital technologies as an area where Northern Ireland has world class capabilities. This aligns with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Industrial Strategy 2017[15] , which highlighted *Artificial Intelligence and the Data Economy'* as a Grand Challenge to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future. The importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in underpinning future prosperity was evidenced in the UK Government AI Sector Deal Policy[16] paper.

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[14] Economy 2030 - Northern Ireland Draft Industrial Strategy (DfE) (2017)
[15] BEIS UK Government Industrial Strategy (2017)
[16] UK Government AI Sector Deal Policy Paper (2019)

4.11 The increasing importance of the bioeconomy was reflected in the production of the UK Growing the Bioeconomy Strategy 2030[17]. Furthermore, Horizon Europe's Strategic Plan Consultation[18] has identified '*Reinforced supply of sustainable biomaterials and bio-economy*' as a key policy objective.

4.12 The development of innovation in the utilisation of Big Data, AI and a Transformative Bioeconomy will be prioritised in this strategy.

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[17] Growing the Bioeconomy: A national bioeconomy strategy to 2030 (2018)
[18] Horizon Europe's Strategic Plan Consultation (2019)

Figure 2 SWOT analysis of innovation within DAERA

- Good governance structures.
- Organisation structures which link knowledge generation to knowledge exchange processes.
- Strong links with industry stakeholders.
- Currently delivering schemes to support innovation in agri-food.
- Access to DoF Innovation Lab.

- Conservative risk appetite.
- Organistion culture.
- Lack of dedicated teams, budgets, processes and skills.
- Limited engagement between government, industry and academia.
- Limited innovation provision in education.
- Silo working.
- Limited influence on UK innovation strategies and funding.
- Awareness of barriers.

- Training to encourage staff to engage in innovation.
- Dedication of resources to supporting innovation within DAERA and sectors.
- Establishment and growth of UK/EU networks.
- Developing a culture supportive of innovation.
- Public funding can be used as leverage.
- Open innovation - sharing of data.
- Targeting and prioritisation of effort to optimise innovation impact.

- Change too slow to exploit opportunities.
- EU exit may consume attention and resources.
- Funds not made available to progress innovation measures.
- Lack of leadership to make step change required to DAERA to boost innovation in industry.
- Limited engagement.
- Insufficient influence on national funding priorities.

Figure 3 SWOT analysis of innovation in the areas within DAERA's remit

- Some innovators already operating in industry.
- Currently agri-food industry can avail of DAERA RDP innovation schemes.
- Avaliablity of DAERA and EU R&D funding.
- Support through DfE and Invest NI.

- NI has the lowest level of innovation in the UK.
- Funding environment is opaque and difficult.
- Lack of skills and understanding of innovation.
- Farmers, producers and others in supply chain often work in isolation.
- Fear of failure.
- Lack of access to information.
- Risk averse culture.

- EU exit, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Bioeconomy presenting opportunities to significantly change approaches.
- Create an environment which encourages innovation.
- Many funding streams available for innovation activities.
- Establishment of resources and structures to encourage, guide and support innovation has the potential to lead to innovation uptake.
- Technological advancement relevant to all sectors.
- Establish and promote funding streams available for innovation activities.

- EU exit uncertainties
- Relevant sectors/industry fall behind in technological advancements.
- Barriers to collaborative innovation include mistrust, data sharing issues and IP rights.
- Lack of leadership and support at government level.

Figure 4 What inward facing action does DAERA need to do take support innovation in the areas within its remit?

Create an Innovative Culture

- Enable capability
- Allow risk taking
- Provide time to innovate
- Break down barriers (silos)
- Encourage and reward innovation
- Create capacity
- Provide training

Provide Effective Leadership

- Show commitment
- Encourage innovation
- Provide investment
- Create dedicated teams
- Provide strategic guidance
- Show direction to industry

Enable Connectivity

- Help connect supply chains
- Join up industry and academia
- Join up business areas
- Co-design approaches
- Bring research and practice together
- Create knowledge exchange mechanisms
- Facilitate collaboration between agriculture and environment
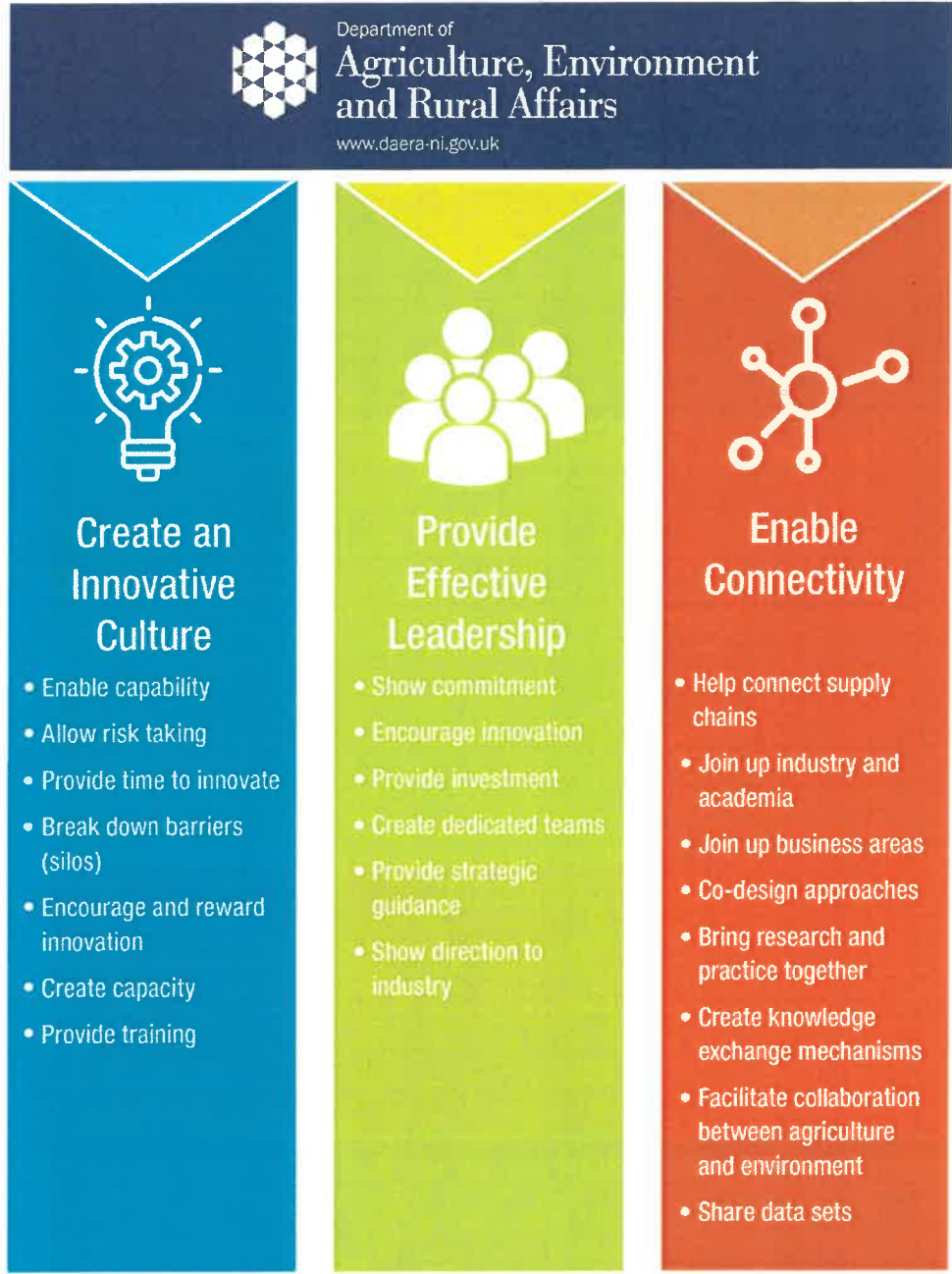- Share data sets

DAERA Innovation Strategy 2020 - 2025

Figure 5 What outward facing actions does DAERA need to take for innovation to flourish in the areas within its remit?

DAERA Stakeholders

Education/training/skills

- Train all DAERA staff in innovation and creativity;
- Investigate innovation scholarships and apprenticeships;
- Employ graduates with innovation skills;
- Collaborate with universities and colleges to provide innovation education;
- Include innovation in all DAERA FE/HE courses;
- Make industry more aware of innovation through education programmes, knowledge transfer and innovation support;
- Prioritise innovation in DAERA Post Graduate Studentship Programme;
- Support Knowledge Transfer Partnerships;
- Encourage Employer Support Programmes.

Collaboration and networking

- Develop effective relationships with networks such as Innovate UK, UK Research Councils, Science and Innovation Network (SIN), European Innovation Partnerships (EIP-AGRI), Knowledge and Innovation Communities, other government bodies and local networks;
- Interact with European networks post Brexit through NI Contact Point (NICP)
- Establish and manage a Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS);
- Provide support for early adopters through BDGs, FIV , EIP and Technical Demonstration Farms;
- Identify and promote funding channels/where necessary;
- Improve success in uptake of innovation funding;
- Help roll out Innovation Accreditation Scheme;
- Increase use of the Employer Support Programme;
- Improve industry interaction with Knowledge Transfer Network.

Communication and promotion

- Establish a DAERA Innovation Unit;
- Implement an Innovation Communication and Promotion Plan;
- Share success stories to encourage others;
- Benchmark innovation quality;
- Showcase innovation excellence and best practices;
- Promote the economic impact of innovation.

Knowledge exploitation

- Create an open innovation culture within DAERA;
- Establish a DAERA Digital Innovation Hub;
- Showcase innovative solutions in Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Transformative Bioeconomy to end users;
- Optimise opportunities to breakdown barriers to innovation;
- Better understand industry R&D and innovation needs;
- Create the knowledge generation through to exploitation feedback loop;
- Breakdown barriers to collaborative projects becoming commercial successes;
- Explore government capital finance for scaling up.

What are Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy?

Big Data

4.13   Big Data relates to capturing relevant data from the huge number of sources available today and translating it into actionable information to improve business processes and help to solve a wide range of problems quickly.

A wide range of Big Data technologies have been developed. In agriculture, for example, devices have been created to measure soil moisture and nutrient density; tractor mounted sensors can measure crop yields; predictive weather stations and image capturing satellites are available; as are drones, that can map out land and monitor crop health, to name a few. The data generated can then be accessed via software programmes on smartphones, computers, and tablets.

Digital technologies are used to collect, store, manage and provide datasets on a wide range of natural heritage, water, land use, climate change and marine topics. The Big Data generated can provide robust evidence for planning and investment decisions, which drive resource efficiency and the protection, enhancement and use of our Natural Capital[19].

Artificial Intelligence

4.14   Artificial Intelligence or 'AI', is an area of computer science that involves machine learning based on statistical analyses, to develop 'intelligent machines'. It can be used to improve the efficiency of daily tasks.

AI has a wide range of applications across agri-food, fisheries, forestry, the environment and the rural economy. In the environment, AI is driving forward our knowledge of the natural environment, including the assessment of natural capital, habitat condition, change detection and ecosystem services.

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[19] Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.

Earth observation technologies and machine learning algorithms are used to deliver regional scale habitats/land cover mapping. Digital science capability lies at the heart of the drive to deliver a step change in our understanding of the environment and the services it provides to formulate innovative solutions to complex issues.

In forestry, AI combined with satellite imagery can be used to monitor forest health and to detect forest threats.

In agriculture, AI helps farmers make better decisions. Evolving technologies using AI in agriculture include:

- Automatic picking/harvesting robotics;
- Facial recognition software which uses machine learning and imaging technologies to identify dairy cows and obtain information about individual animals such as behaviour and feed consumption without the need for wearable devices;
- Airborne surveillance with drones - precision sensors look for stunted crops, signs of pests, disease, weeds and many other variables.

Transformative Bioeconomy

4.15 The world has limited resources. Global challenges like climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, coupled with a growing demand for food, feed and energy mean that we have to seek new ways of producing and consuming. A sustainable and circular bioeconomy offers an opportunity to address these challenges and encapsulates various sectors including agriculture, environment and aquaculture.

Traditionally we have relied on the use of oil and other fossil fuels to produce many of the goods we need. A Transformative Bioeconomy requires us to make lasting changes to the resources we use and adopt creative and innovative techniques to make the products we require from renewable resources and waste streams. This includes producing and selling food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy; using renewable materials that are made from organic, carbon based biological matter, instead of being produced from oil.

4.16   The bioeconomy is already part of everyday life for many people. In Northern Ireland the transformative bioeconomy is reported to have contributed 17.4% of the total regional GVA in 2014[20]. It is estimated that more than 13,000 jobs could be created by 2030 if Northern Ireland moved to a circular economy. Jobs would be at various skills levels within a number of sectors including food and drink, biorefining and the wider bioeconomy[21]. Biological resources and innovative technologies are being used to replace unsustainable products and processes that currently rely on fossil resources. Some bio-based goods may even have novel properties which make them superior to the products we currently depend on.

In order to meet the world's challenges, cutting edge biological and technological knowledge and methods for both intensive yet sustainable production, provision and processing of biomass[22] are needed to bring about the transformative changes necessary to develop the bioeconomy; to contribute to reducing the burden on the environment; and to conserving the earth's finite resources.

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[20] Evidencing the Bioeconomy - An assessment of evidence on the contribution of, and growth opportunities in, the bioeconomy in the United Kingdom, 2016

[21] Job creation in the circular economy - increasing resource efficiency in Northern Ireland, ReNEW Network, 2015

[22] Biomass is plant or animal material used for energy production (electricity or heat), or in various processes as raw material for a range of products (eg textiles, packaging, biofuels). It can be purposely grown energy crops (eg *Miscanthus),* wood or forest residues, waste from food crops (eg wheat straw), horticulture (compost), food processing, livestock (animal slurry) or human waste from sewage plants
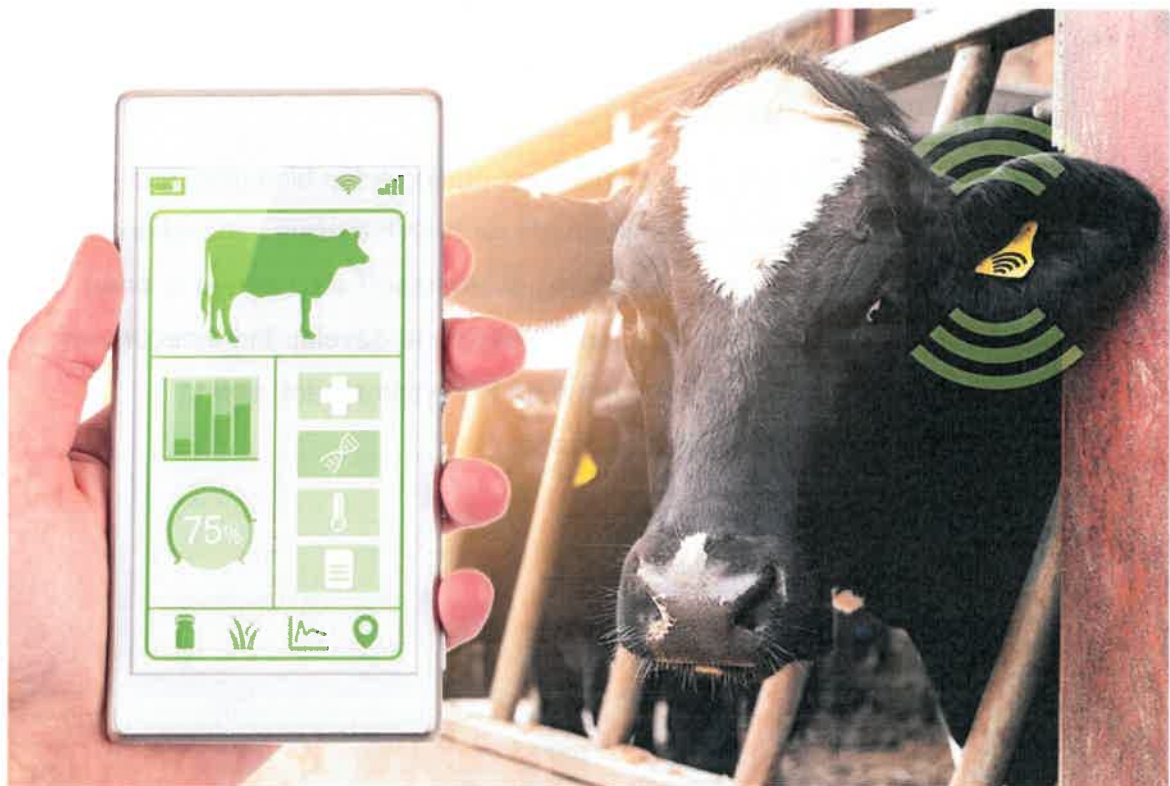
Section 4 Questions

Q2 What are your views on the need for an Innovation Strategy within DAERA?

Q3 What are your views to the barriers to innovation identified?

Q4 What are your views on the innovation themes prioritised ie Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Transformative Bioeconomy?

SECTION 5

5. DAERA Science Strategy

5.1   DAERA is implementing a Science Transformation Programme. This programme aims to ensure that the science secured and used by DAERA will be innovative, collaborative and transformative and will support a healthy and sustainable economy, environment and rural community; help deliver the PfG outcome, help meet UN Sustainable Goals and contribute to a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

5.2   As part of the Science Transformation Programme a DAERA Science Strategy Framework has been developed. This will guide how DAERA can optimise its use of science to help deliver Departmental and PfG objectives. This Innovation Strategy, alongside Monitoring and Surveillance and R&D operational strategies, derives from the Science Strategy Framework.

Innovation Strategy Mission

5.3   **An innovation ecosystem delivering for the environment, society and the rural economy**

- through creating an enabling environment for innovation to flourish and to enhance the impact of knowledge generation and science investments, through collaboration and exploitation, delivering positive, measureable outcomes for the Northern Ireland environment and economy.

Scope

5.4   This strategy will apply to DAERA and the Northern Ireland agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and the decarbonisation, adaptive capacity, conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Section 5 Question

Q5 What are your views on the Innovation Strategy Mission and Scope
    DAERA has proposed?

SECTION 6

6. Principles

6.1 The principles defined in the DAERA Science Strategy Framework apply to this Innovation Strategy. Additional principles specific to innovation are:

What?

6.2 DAERA investment in innovation will support the development of an innovation enabling culture, capability and capacity to improve economic performance whilst improving resource efficiency, enhancing the sustainability of the environment and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Why?

6.3 To stimulate and support innovation that contributes to Northern Ireland being a modern, creative, adaptive and climate resilient society, which prospers through having a strong, competitive, sustainably balanced economy.

How?

6.4 DAERA will seek to optimise the value of its investment in innovation through always:

- Providing effective, skilled leadership which can drive change and create the values and behaviours that promote and reinforce the culture of innovation;
- Engaging with stakeholders, experts and funders to inform a comprehensive and accurate understanding of innovation needs, barriers and opportunities;
- Targeting DAERA investment in innovation to optimise the beneficial impact for Northern Ireland;
- Working across government to facilitate and remove barriers to innovation;

- Building and maintaining DAERA credibility and influence with UK and international funding bodies to optimise the relevance of opportunities to the Northern Ireland agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the decarbonisation, adaptive capacity, conservation and enhancement of the environment;
- Encouraging and supporting a culture, capability and capacity both within DAERA and the business sectors within DAERA's responsibilities, to maximise innovation;
- Applying effective and efficient governance mechanisms for DAERA supported innovation investment;
- Evaluating the impact of DAERA's investment in innovation through measuring industry and environment outcomes.

6.5 The general principles determining funding considerations are:

- There will be a greater need for public funding where the innovation primarily provides for wider societal, environmental or public good rather than economic benefits, or is high risk, and therefore, unlikely to be progressed by commercial organisations;

- There will be a focus on leveraging private funding when the innovation provides benefits to commercial organisations e.g. increased market access, industry growth or profitability;

- All opportunities to use public funding to leverage and complement private investment in innovation (i.e. where this would not otherwise happen) will be explored.

For innovation to flourish in the public sector there will be a need for greater risk appetite. This will involve assessing and managing the level of risk more effectively to balance the potential benefits of innovation and the threats that change required to meet objectives inevitably brings.

These principles for innovation provision have been forefront in the development of the objectives of this strategy which are aimed at addressing issues and grasping opportunities identified in the strategic context and through the research and stakeholder engagement processes conducted.

Section 6 Question

Q6 What are your views on the principles behind what, why and how DAERA will support innovation?

SECTION 7

7. Goals and objectives

7.1 Three goals, together with the objectives to achieve them, have been identified. Activities associated with each of these objectives (subject to the availability of appropriate funding) are outlined in Annex 5.

Goal 1

7.2 DAERA identifies innovation as a Departmental priority. It has the leadership, culture, capability and capacity to sustainably encourage and support innovation in all sectors. It prioritises support for innovation involving the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy.

Objectives

a. To establish appropriate senior and dedicated resource in DAERA **(by summer 2020)**, to provide direction and leadership; to champion and govern the development of an innovation culture that can yield successful, sustainable adoption of innovation in line with this strategy. (See Annex 6)

b. To define and implement a programme of learning for DAERA staff **(by summer 2021)** to ensure DAERA has the capability and capacity to support innovation.

c. To establish and grow an 'open innovation' culture within DAERA through the establishment of an internal Innovation Unit and a Digital Innovation Hub to allow the importing and exporting of knowledge and insights from academia, the private sector, the third sector and the public **(by autumn 2021)**. The network required for an enabling environment for innovation to flourish within DAERA is shown in Annex 3.

d. To establish and grow networks and support mechanisms with other government bodies and funders and together explore key issues which present potential barriers to innovation and identify mitigations to better facilitate innovation **(by summer 2021)**.
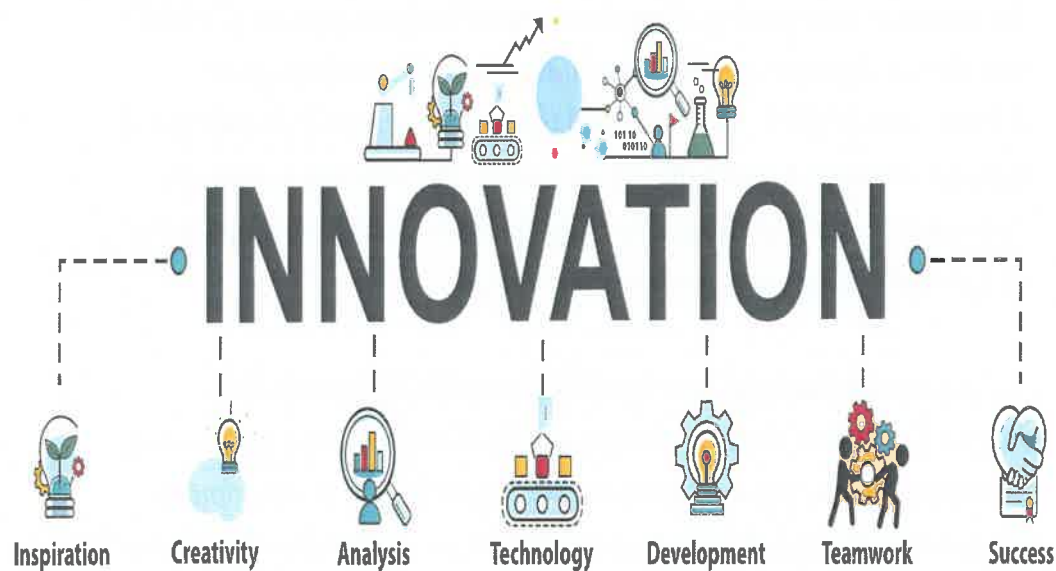
Goal 2

7.3 **Innovation is encouraged, supported, and facilitated by DAERA across all sectors in its remit.**

Objectives

a. To raise awareness and generate interest in the role of innovation, through implementing a Communications and Promotional Plan by **(by autumn 2020).**

b. To establish and grow a Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)[23] network to support collaboration and encourage an innovation culture. The DAERA RISS will facilitate the provision of professional support, through a facilitator, to groups of like-minded individuals who want to test new ideas and find feasible, sustainable solutions to common challenges **(by autumn 2021)**.

c. To encourage capacity and capability building for innovation (aligning with the DAERA Knowledge Framework), through making available, promoting and encouraging participation in appropriate programmes of learning at Further Education and Higher Education level, for both new entrants and Continuing Professional Development **(by autumn 2021)**.

d. To identify barriers to innovation with a view to exploring how these can be mitigated, including through providing support and funding mechanisms **(by summer 2021)**.

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[23] An RISS is led by the Soil Association in Scotland and funded through the Scottish Rural Development Programme. RISS provides professional support to groups of farmers interested in innovation.

Goal 3

7.4   **The ultimate goal is that by 2035, Northern Ireland will be the most successful region in the UK at exploiting opportunities in the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy in the sectors within the DAERA remit. In line with this direction of travel, by 2025, NI will be in the top 50% of UK regions. This will be monitored through liaison with Innovate UK/UKRI.**

Objectives

a.   To establish discrete Task Forces involving relevant departments, experts and industry/sector stakeholder representatives to explore opportunities and develop proposals for exploiting Big Data, AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy **(by autumn 2020).**

b.   To prioritise DAERA R&D project funding to the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy **(by autumn 2021).**

c.   To monitor and report progress for the sectors within the DAERA remit, through regional benchmarking of employment in knowledge intensive sectors[24], R&D expenditure[25] and private sector turnover[26] from innovation.

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[24] Measured by NISP Knowledge Economy Index
[25] Measured by NISRA Survey
[26] Measured by UK Innovation Survey and NISRA Annual Business Inquiry

Section 7 Questions

Q 7 From your perspective, are the goals appropriate?

Q 8 From your perspective, are there any goals missing?

Q 9 From your perspective are there any goals that are more important than others? If 'yes', which are they?

Q10 What are your views on the proposal to establish a Senior Civil Service led resource to champion and govern innovation culture?

Q11 What are your views on the proposal to implement a programme of innovation learning for DAERA staff?

Q12 What are your views on the establishment of an internal DAERA Innovation Unit?

Q13 What are your views on the establishment of a DAERA Digital Innovation Hub?

Q14 What are your views on mechanisms to identify and mitigate barriers to innovation?

Q15 What are your views on the implementation of an Innovation Communications and Promotional Plan?

Q16 What are your views on the establishment of a Rural Innovation Support Service?

Q17 What are your views on DAERA promoting and encouraging participation in innovation related programmes of learning at FE and HE levels?

Q18 What are your views on the identification of barriers to innovation and exploring how these can be mitigated through support and funding mechanisms?

Q19 What are your views on the establishment of Task Forces to identify opportunities in Big Data, AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy?

Q20 What are your views on the prioritisation of DAERA funding to Big Data, AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy projects?

SECTION 8

8. Benefits

8.1 The benefits of implementation of an Innovation Strategy by DAERA are described in Table 1. Methods of obtaining evidence of progress for each of the benefits are included. Baselines will be established at an early stage of strategy implementation. Delivery of the key objectives detailed within the Innovation Strategy will also provide evidence of progress.

A DAERA Innovation Report will be produced at the mid and end points of this strategy implementation and will include:

- An evaluation of progress against goals and objectives to ensure we are on track for delivery and that necessary adjustments can be made in a timely manner;
- An assessment of innovation performance within agri-food, environment, marine and fisheries, forestry and rural communities;
- Recommendations for future actions and policy direction.

A retrospective evaluation will also be carried out on this strategy at the end of its term (2025) to inform the development of its successor.

TABLE 1 Benefits of implementation of an Innovation Strategy by DAERA

Benefit	Description	Evidence of progress
Increased innovation in agri-food, environment, fisheries, forestry and rural communities.	Benefits in external impact such as; Improved adoption and exploitation of innovative technologies particularly in Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy; Targeted and effective policy on innovation to help tackle challenges, issues and opportunities in industry, resulting in increased adoption of innovation; New and improved education and support systems to provide the skills needed for innovation in rural businesses and to enhance rural entrepreneurship, which supports increased adoption of innovation.	Case studies to highlight innovative adoption of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy. UK Innovation Survey: Northern Ireland Results. Numbers participating in DAERA Innovation schemes e.g. FIV, EIP and ITEDS. Inclusion of elements or modules relating to innovation within all DAERA courses and programmes. DAERA Innovation Unit monitoring figures.
Improved value for money.	Benefits in use of public money, such as: Increased impact from investment in innovation and R&D by industry and increased draw-down of external, competitive funding as a result of improved collaboration and co-funding, supporting increased adoption of innovation. Investigation into Intellectual Property barriers and possible mitigation.	NISRA R&D Survey. UKRI Gateway to Research. DfE innovation and R&D figures Enhanced existing IP protocol developed.

Improved collaboration and strategic alliances. - -	Benefits in use of networks such as: Improved working across government to facilitate an innovation enabling environment including mitigating barriers to innovation; Increased credibility and influence with UK and international funding bodies to optimise the funding opportunities for NI agri-food, environment, fisheries, forestry and rural communities.	Official recording of all DAERA networking within other jurisdictions in relation to innovation Increased draw down of external funding as measured by: UK innovation Survey: Northern Ireland Results NISRA R&D Survey UKRI Gateway to Research
Improved staff expertise.	Benefits to staff such as: Increased investment in training and competence development to improve staff expertise in innovation and creativity, leading to increased productivity, improved policies and practices and a better working environment; Embedding of more innovative ways of working leading to increased adoption of innovation both within and external to DAERA.	DAERA staff training figures. DAERA Staff Pulse Surveys. Industry surveys through Business Development Groups.
Improved innovation and creativity within DAERA. -	Benefits to internal management of DAERA such as: Improved culture, capability and capacity within DAERA, including better strategic alignment to key objectives relating to innovation, improved leadership and management processes, targeted investment in innovation, and prioritisation of innovative R&D.	DAERA Innovation Champion in post DAERA Innovation Unit established and operational Innovation prioritised within all DAERA R&D Priority Research Areas

Improved staff confidence in thinking and working innovatively, expertise, supporting increased adoption of innovation, both within and external to DAERA.	DAERA Staff Pulse Surveys.

Section 8 Question

Q21 What are your views on the benefits of implementation and evidence of progress described?

SECTION 9

9. Rural needs considerations

9.1   DAERA has a statutory duty to screen decisions to consider the likely impacts of proposed decisions on rural areas.

9.2   A Rural Needs Assessment has been completed.

9.3   While potential impacts of the strategy on rural areas have been identified, the Rural Needs Assessment template is a living document and therefore any additional views you may have on how the strategy could impact rural areas are welcome.

Section 9 Question

Q22   Are there any considerations on rural needs you wish to raise at this point? Do you have evidence that would be useful to DAERA? If so, please describe the evidence and provide a copy.

SECTION 10

10. Equality considerations

10.1 Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern IrelandI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act. DAERA commits to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

10.2 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions. In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

10.3 DAERA uses the tools of screening and Equality Impact Assessment to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

10.4 An Equality and Human Rights screening has been completed for this strategy and the data required to monitor the impact of the strategy when implemented, on equality, good relations and disability duties have been identified. Further Equality and Human Rights screening will be undertaken before more detailed elements of the Innovation Strategy are put in place.

Section 10 Question

Q23   Are there any considerations on equality that you wish to raise at this point? Do you have any evidence that could be useful to DAERA? If so, please describe the evidence and provide a copy.

SECTION 11

11. Abbreviations

AF	Agri-food
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AFBI	Agri-food and Biosciences Institute
BDG	Business Development Group
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
Defra	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for the Economy
DOE	Department of Environment
DoF	Department of Finance
EC	European Commission
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
EU	European Union
FIV	Farm Innovation Visits
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GVA	Gross Value Added
IP	Intellectual Property
ISCF	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund
IT	Information Technology
ISMS	Information Security Management System
KAS	Knowledge Advisory Service
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
NI	Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFMDFM	Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers
PfG	Programme for Government

QUB	Queens University Belfast
R&D	Research and Development
RISS	Rural Innovation Support Service
RPD	Rural Development Programme
SBRI	Small Business Research Initiative
SCAR	Scientific Committee for Agricultural Research
SIN	Science and Innovation Network
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TRPSI	Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation
UK	United Kingdom
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
UN	United Nations
UU	University of Ulster

SECTION 12

12. Capturing stakeholder views - next steps

DAERA welcomes responses and comments from stakeholders on the questions outlined in this document to help develop proposals for a DAERA Innovation Strategy.

How to respond

A full list of questions in this document can be found at Section 13.

When responding please provide the following information:

Your name;

Contact details (preferably e-mail); and

Organisation you represent (if applicable).

Responses should be sent to:

By e-mail to: STPMO@daera-ni.gov.uk

By post to: Science, Evidence and Innovation Policy Division

               Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

               Room 643

               Dundonald House

               Upper Newtownards Road

               Ballymiscaw

               Belfast

               BT4 3SB

               Telephone: (028) 9037 8389

The closing date for responses is **5th March 2020**

Please ensure your response is submitted by that date.

Publication of responses

At the end of the engagement, the Department intends to publish a summary of responses following the closing date for receipt of views. Your response, and all other responses to this publication, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

Section 8(e) of the Data Protection Act 2018 permits processing of personal data when necessary for an activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement. Information provided by respondents to this stakeholder engagement exercise will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a stakeholder engagement exercise. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a stakeholder engagement exercise. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this stakeholder engagement exercise, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response.

This means that information provided by you in response to the stakeholder engagement is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not

otherwise be provided; The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and

• Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office. (https://ico.org.uk/)
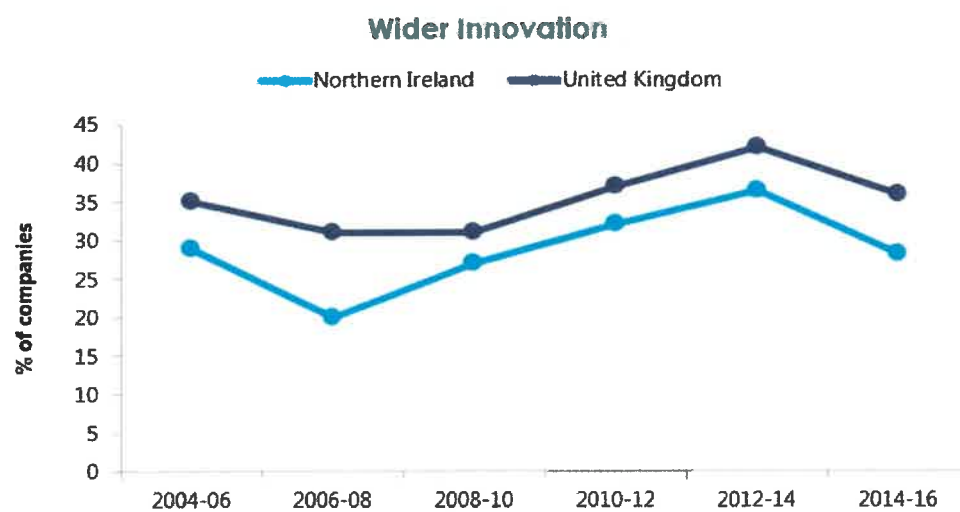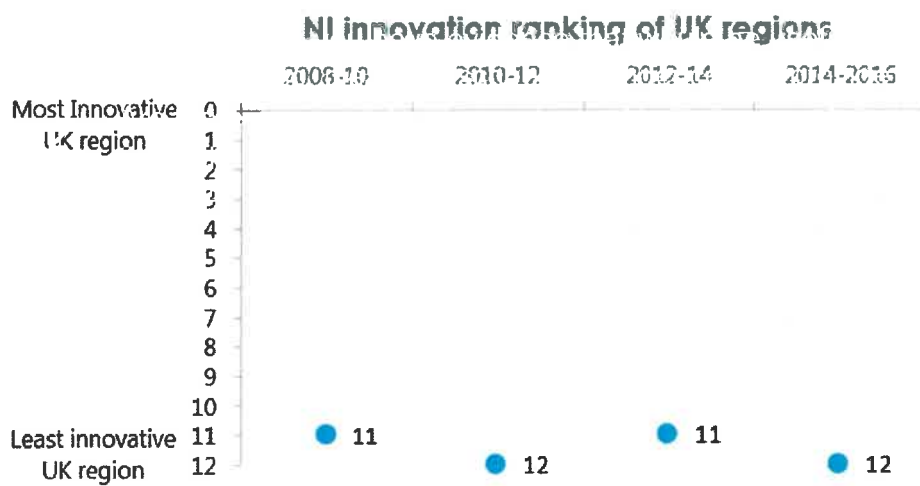
SECTION 13

13. Questions

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What are your views on the	ation identified?
	What are your views on the innovation themes prioritised i.e. Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Transformative Bioeconomy?
strate gic	What are your views on the Innovation Mission and Scope DAERA has proposed?
	What are your views on the principles behind what, why and how DAERA will support innovation?
onte	From your perspective, are the goals appropriate?
denti ed?	From your perspective, are there any goals missing?
What re	From your perspective are there any goals that are more important than others? If 'yes', which are they?
	What are your views on the proposal to establish a Senior Civil

NI innovation ranking of UK regions

		2008-10	2010-12	2012-14	2014-2016
Most Innovative UK region	0				
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
Least innovative	11	● 11		● 11	
UK region	12		● 12		● 12

Wider Innovation

Northern Ireland · United Kingdom

% of companies

45 40 35 30 25 20 15 10 5 0

2004-06 2006-08 2008-10 2010-12 2012-14 2014-16
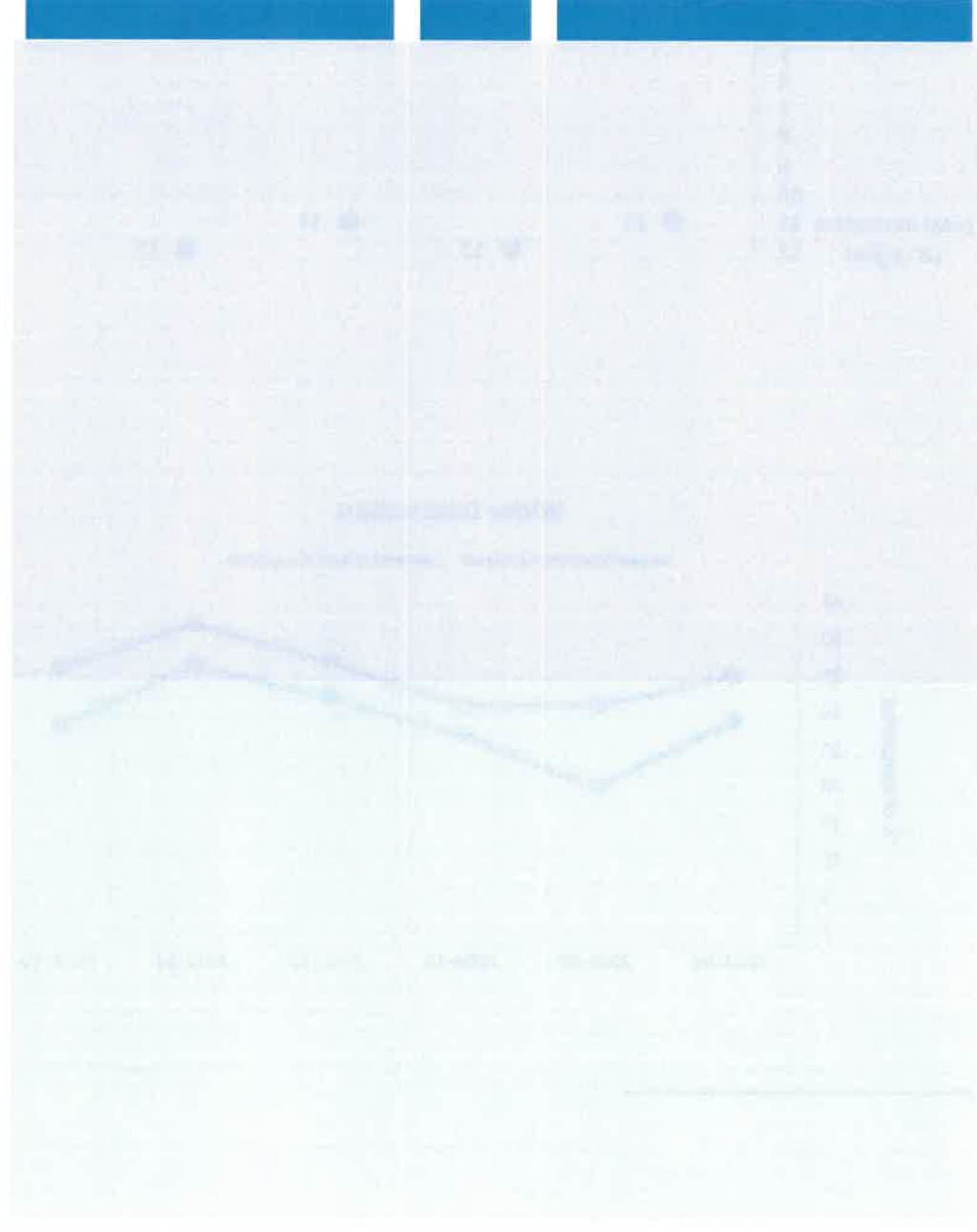
SECTION 14 - Annexes

Annex 1 Northern Ireland Innovation Rankings

Department for the Economy, UK Regional Innovation Ranking (2008 – 2016)[27]

Wider Innovation in the UK and Northern Ireland (2004 - 2016)[28]

Annex 2 Goals and objectives of the Innovation Strategy and associated activities

Affordability will be subject to the availability of resource and capital funding as well as EU replacement funding in future budget exercises

Goal 1

DAERA identifies innovation as a Departmental priority. It has the leadership, culture, capability and capacity to sustainably encourage and support innovation in all sectors. It prioritises support for innovation involving the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy.

Objectives		Activities
1. To establish an appropriate senior and dedicated resource in DAERA to provide direction and leadership; to champion and govern the development of an innovation culture both in the Department and in the NI agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the conservation and enhancement of the environment that can yield successful, sustainable adoption of innovation in line with this strategy.	Summer 2020	Establish a dedicated division, to lead, champion and support the implementation of the Innovation Strategy. Establish an Innovation Advisory Board, to provide expert (internal and external) advice on innovation trends and new technologies relevant to all aspects of the DAERA remit. Establish an Innovation Champion role in DAERA to support the development of an enabling culture and provide a visible emphasis of leaders' commitment to innovation within DAERA.
2. To define and implement a programme of learning for DAERA staff to ensure DAERA has the capability and capacity to support innovation.	Summer 2021	Training on creativity and innovation provided to all DAERA staff. In-depth competence development learning programmes specific to innovation roles/business areas. Innovation competences and behaviours identified as key competences for all DAERA staff roles (and proposed for inclusion in the NICS Competence Framework).

			The Knowledge Advisory Service (KAS) consolidates innovation messages and opportunities through its interactions with industry and raises awareness of available programmes of education, knowledge transfer and industry support.
3.	To establish and grow an 'open innovation' culture within DAERA through the establishment of an internal Innovation Unit and a Digital Innovation Hub to allow the importing and exporting of knowledge and insights from academia, the private sector, the third sector and the public.	Autumn 2021	Establish an 'open innovation' culture within DAERA. This is where there is an appetite to look for and consider innovation related knowledge, insights and ideas from across DAERA, NICS, academia, private and third sectors and an enthusiasm to translate ideas with potential into innovations.

Establish a DAERA Innovation Division (see objective 1 above) specific to DAERA's needs to assist DAERA business areas in looking at innovative alternatives or solutions to problems, issues, opportunities etc by connecting, collaborating, listening, failing fast, learning, disrupting, inventing and enabling.

As a delivery mechanism of the DAERA Digital Transformation Strategy, establish a physical Digital Innovation Hub, which will act as an "intelligent customer" for innovation. It will identify potentially relevant data sources (including where necessary, commissioning work to create data); commission Big Data analyses to yield sector relevant intelligence; translate complex data into accessible, digestible information that can be utilised by DAERA sector end users.

Identify and support a network of centres, for innovation competence development and |

			where innovative Big Data, AI and Transformative Bioeconomy solutions can be showcased and demonstrated to DAERA sector end users.
4.	To establish and grow networks and support mechanisms with other government bodies and funders and together explore key issues which present potential barriers to innovation and identify mitigations to better facilitate innovation.	Summer 2021	Build DAERA relationships with existing networks such as Innovate UK, UK Research Councils, Science and Innovation Network (SIN), European Innovation Partnerships (EIP-AGRI), Knowledge and Innovation Communities, other government bodies and local networks with the aim of: - Exploring key innovation issues; - Addressing barriers to innovation; - Developing collaborative networks and improving training opportunities; - Improving uptake of underutilised funding streams locally eg SBRI, ISCF and Strength in Places Continue DAERA's interaction with European networks post-Brexit through Northern Ireland Contact Point (NICP) to allow access to international and global knowledge and innovations on a timely basis Through the Innovation Advisory Board (see objective 1) and via horizon scanning, determine and communicate with potential global collaboration partners to explore opportunities for innovative projects

Goal 2

Innovation is encouraged, supported, and facilitated by DAERA across all sectors in its remit.

Objectives		Activities
1. To raise awareness and generate interest in the role of innovation in the NI agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the conservation and enhancement of the environment, through implementing a Communications and Promotional Plan	Autumn 2020	An Innovation Communications and Promotional Plan will be developed and implemented. Innovation practices both internal and external will be showcased. This will include annual conferences, social media activity, organised site visits, collaborative exhibitions, regular publications, educational engagement etc.
2. To establish and grow a Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) network to support collaboration and encourage an innovation culture in the NI agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the conservation and enhancement of the environment.	Autumn 2021	Establishment and management of a RISS, which will be implemented externally, to support innovation to address the needs of land managers by forming groups of people together to look at the challenges they face, or opportunities they identify and to think and work through potential solutions. Support the formation of groups through identification of funding channels and the facilitation of a pool of innovation facilitators/ brokers. Support the more innovative/early adopters/technically efficient farmers identified through the Business Development Groups (BDG), Farm Innovation Visits (FIV) and the Innovation, Technology, Exhibition Demonstration Scheme (ITEDS).
3. To encourage capacity and capability building	Autumn	Influence all relevant DAERA and DE FE/HE course

for innovation in the NI agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the conservation and enhancement of the environment, through making available, promoting and encouraging participation in appropriate programmes of learning (at FE and HE level, for both new entrants and Continuing Professional Development).	2021	providers, with the aim of ensuring relevant learning programmes have elements or modules relating to innovation incorporated in them with industry linkages/placements. Investigate provision of Masters level innovation centric programmes, relating to sectors within DAERA's remit. Investigate opportunities for collaboration between DAERA and UU, QUB, AFBI and Competence Centres to provide courses necessary to allow skills shortages in innovation and creativity within the relevant sectors to be addressed. Explore opportunities for apprenticeship schemes, internships and scholarships in innovation and creativity. Review the Evidence and Innovation Post Graduate Awards programmes to ensure that innovative projects are targeted and prioritised.
4. To identify barriers to innovation with a view to exploring how these can be mitigated through providing support and funding mechanisms.	Summer 2021	Collaborate with DfE and delivery partners to roll out the Innovation Accreditation Scheme in DAERA relevant sectors and participate in, or introduce, innovation audits within specific sectors of interest Increase utilisation of the Employer Support Programme by the agri-food sector, with an emphasis on innovation and creativity skills Develop, or enhance existing Intellectual Property (IP) protocols to provide a framework for the commercialisation of

industry/academia/government collaborative projects.

Commission a review to evaluate 'scaling up of innovations' in various jurisdictions.
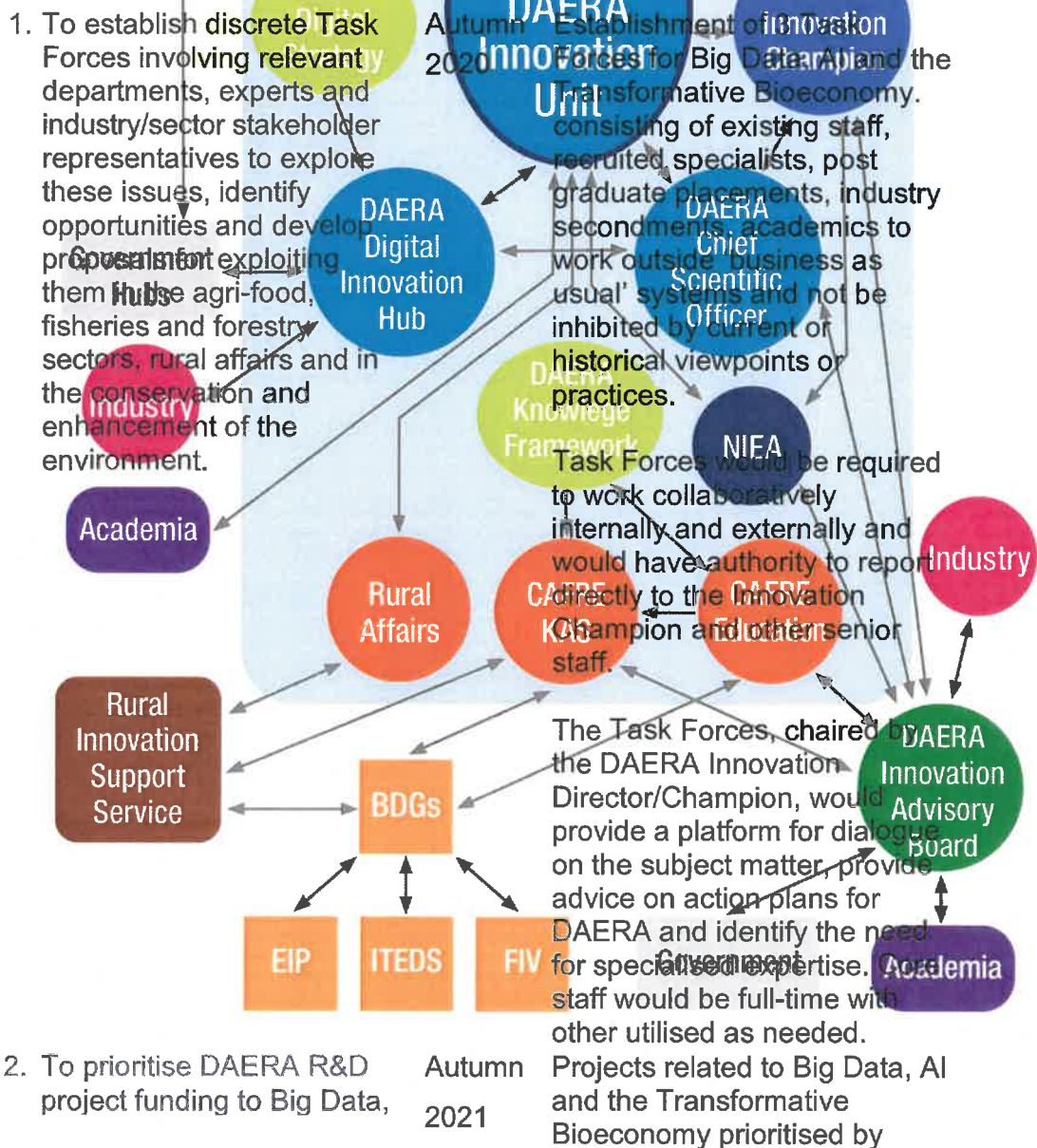
Investigate capital funding opportunities for innovation adopter.

Build on the experience with current, relevant, DAERA industry support programmes (Technology Demonstration Farms, EIP) to assist the implementation of this strategy.

Goal 3

The ultimate goal is that by 2025, NI will be the most successful region in the UK at exploiting opportunities in the utilisation of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformative Bioeconomy in the sectors within the DAERA remit. In line with this direction of travel, by 2025, NI will be in the top 50% of UK regions. This will be monitored through liaison with Innovate UK/UKRI.

1. To establish **discrete Task Forces** involving relevant departments, experts and industry/sector stakeholder representatives to explore these issues, identify opportunities and develop proposals for exploiting them in the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors, rural affairs and in the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

   Autumn 2020

   Establishment of Task Forces for Big Data, AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy. consisting of existing staff, recruited specialists, post graduate placements, industry secondments, academics to work outside 'business as usual' systems and not be inhibited by current or historical viewpoints or practices.

   Task Forces would be required to work collaboratively internally and externally and would have authority to report directly to the Innovation Champion and other senior staff.

   The Task Forces, chaired by the DAERA Innovation Director/Champion, would provide a platform for dialogue on the subject matter, provide advice on action plans for DAERA and identify the need for specialised expertise. Core staff would be full-time with other utilised as needed.

2. To prioritise DAERA R&D project funding to Big Data,

   Autumn 2021

   Projects related to Big Data, AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy prioritised by

Diagram labels:

- Innovation Champion — DoF, DfE, DfI, DfC, DfH, DoJ, TEO
- DoF Innovation Lab
- DAERA Innovation Unit
- DAERA Innovation Training for Staff
- Activities — DAERA Innovation Unit — Autumn 2020
- 3 Task Forces
- DAERA Innovation
- DAERA Chief Scientific Officer
- DAERA Data Facility
- DAERA Digital Innovation Hub
- DAERA Government Innovation Hubs
- DAERA Knowlege Framework
- NIEA
- Industry
- Academia
- Rural Affairs
- CAFRE
- CAFRE Education
- Rural Innovation Support Service
- BDGs
- EIP
- ITEDS
- FIV
- DAERA Innovation Advisory Board
- Government
- Academia

AI and the Transformative Bioeconomy.		DAERA in the commissioning of R&D and expenditure.
3. Monitor and report progress for the sectors within the DAERA remit, through regional benchmarking of employment in knowledge intensive sectors, R&D expenditure and private sector turnover from innovation.	Mid and End Term Reports	A number of indicators have been identified in Section 8 Benefits that will be used to track the impact that the Innovation Strategy is having and its success in meeting the Vision.

Department of
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Annex 3 Innovation - Creating an enabling environment

Appendix 4

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT RESPONSE

TO

DAERA INNOVATION STRATEGY 2020-2025

Deadline for response 5th March 2020

Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the DAERA Innovation Strategy 2020-2025. Council also welcomes the focus placed within this Strategy on fostering innovation within the rural economy.

Mid Ulster has over 9000 VAT registered businesses and the largest concentration of small businesses outside of the Belfast Metropolitan area. Over 80% of our micro and SME businesses are located in dispersed rural communities which demonstrates the importance of these businesses within the rural economy in terms of employment and maintaining vibrant local communities.

The MUDC area has an unprecedented entrepreneurial spirit. It is recognised globally as a centre of excellence in the design and manufacture of materials handling equipment and home to many cutting edge businesses who export locally produced innovative solutions to customers worldwide. A willingness to engage in innovation by all business sectors combined with a skilled and a well-educated workforce will help to grow these businesses and further strengthen the region. The challenge is creating an environment within which a willingness to innovate can flourish.

To consolidate [1]Mid Ulster's position as the Advanced Manufacturing Capital of Northern Ireland, it is essential that financial supports from DAERA and other relevant Departments, are made available to areas such as Mid Ulster that have the ability to make substantial legacy contributions towards the creation of large scale innovation projects, aligned to the key strengths of the region and where need is proven to exist.

Key strategic innovation investment in Mid Ulster is required to develop our ambitious plans for an Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Innovation Centre in Dungannon, similar to a Catalyst Centre in GB, and an Agri-Food Robotics Centre in Cookstown, focused on the education of HE students and technology transfer of robotic automation and enabling technologies to the NI agri-food industry. Both pioneering projects will undoubtedly create a step-change in industry performance and act as 'leading lights' at the 'cutting edge' of innovation. In Mid Ulster, there is a higher productivity per head when compared to the NI average and indeed figures released last year from HMRC reveal that Mid Ulster is already an innovation hot-spot having the highest percentage of enterprises investing in R&D in the UK. We wish to develop upon this further through the two innovation centres highlighted above, both of which require multi-departmental funding and without which, Mid Ulster and Northern Ireland Plc will fail to maximise its full 'innovation potential' and be unable to close the productivity gap with GB.

QUESTIONS FROM DAERA INNOVATION STRATEGY

Q1: What are your views on the strategic context and drivers identified to underpin a DAERA Innovation Strategy?

Council is broadly satisfied with the strategic context identified. Consideration also needs to be given to the work ongoing by DAERA on developing a new Rural Framework for Northern Ireland which identifies innovation and entrepreneurship as one of five emerging goals for a future rural policy to address.

There should also be an agreed

Q2: What are your views on the need for an Innovation Strategy with DAERA?

DAERA has a wide remit of responsibilities which impact on rural society and the rural economy therefore it is right that innovation is at the heart of the Departments work. Council would encourage DAERA to continue in its role as an advocate for rural areas by ensuring initiatives for innovation promoted by other government departments are fairly targeted at rural areas also. There also needs to be cross working and integration between individual government departments including local

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[1] *Mid-Ulster manufacturing market accounts for 26% of total employment compared to the NI average of 11%, and the area manufactures at least 40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment.*

authorities, the FE sector and other stakeholder on innovation policy to maximise benefits.

Council recognises the need to foster a culture of innovation within the rural economy of Mid Ulster but that there are wider challenges in doing so as outlined within the strategy consultation document. Access to financial resources and staff training are rightly included amongst the challenges identified therefore Council welcomes the approach set out within the Strategy of tackling barriers to innovation by providing support and funding mechanisms for this purpose. This Council believes there is a need to pump prime innovation through the availability of financial assistance at individual business level and for more strategic level initiatives such as innovation centres to capitalise on local sectoral strengths such as the engineering sector here within Mid Ulster.

Council would point to how LEADER funding within the current Rural Development Programme has enabled rural businesses to implement innovative projects which led to new product development or the introduction of new and improved processes and technologies within their businesses. In addition Council in partnership with South West College InnoTec Centre delivered an Engineering Innovation Programme in 2017 which supported 18 engineering businesses to develop innovation actions plans for their business. Both of these initiatives provide examples of how innovation can be encouraged though increasing knowledge and providing financial assistance to implement innovation solutions. Council would encourage this approach to continue through a new DAERA Innovation Strategy.

Q3: What are your views on the barriers to innovation identified?

Council would concur with the overarching barriers to innovation identified within the Strategy but would argue that a deeper understanding of why SME's in Northern Ireland choose not to innovate is important for ensuring future support mechanisms target the root causes. This is particularly important for rural based micro / SME businesses.

This Council would highlight that the absence of adequate broadband and digital infrastructure is an overarching barrier to the introduction of innovation within our rural businesses and as such will adversely impact on the achievability of goals and objectives set out in this Strategy unless addressed.

Q4: What are your views on the innovation themes prioritised ie Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Transformative Bio economy?

These themes are relevant in the wider context and Council would welcome the use of new technologies and approaches across all sectors which aid competitiveness and improve profitability. In particular the use of technologies which allow businesses to increase productivity when the supply of skilled labour is limited is an area there new innovative practices could provide solutions. This Council would however reiterate that Mid Ulster is characterised by micro and small businesses

where capacity to innovate needs to be supported in the first instance before making to jump to transformative technologies such as AI.

Q5: What are your views on the Innovation Strategy Mission and Scope DAERA has proposed?

This Council would concur with the Innovation Strategy Mission Statement and considers the desire with the statement of creating an "enabling environment" as being a key focus. In particular this Council wants to see continued opportunities for innovation within our agri-food and wider rural business sectors, especially within micro and SME sized businesses given their concentration within the district. The scope of the Strategy is fitting but again this Council would urge DAERA to pay due consideration to the enablement of innovation within the rural business sector.

Council would suggest that an agreed and accepted definition of what innovation means is important especially when trying to raise awareness of innovation within the business sector. Innovation can be achieved by technical and non-technical means therefore misconceptions that innovation is only about new product development or the use highly advanced technologies need to be addressed.

Q6: What are your views on the principles behind what, why and how DAERA will support innovation?

This Council would agree with the principles outlined. As a rural Council, MUDC believes that the availability of funding to encourage rural businesses to engage in innovation is essential and will help lever private sector investment. In this Council area there is a willingness within our rural business sector to invest in innovation. Within the current LEADER programme, funding of £2.8m has helped to lever total investment of £7.2m within the rural business economy. Many of the businesses who received funding did so to introduce new technologies and processes within their business practices which conform with the definition of innovation as described within the Strategy consultation document. This would not have happened without the availability of funding support.

This Council is aware that encouraging innovation within the rural business sector is included as a goal within the emerging DAERA Rural Policy Framework. This should be used as an opportunity to mainstream funding for innovation into rural areas. Councils recent involvement with DAERA in the delivery of a pilot business development scheme under the TRPSI programme is an example of how local government could assist DAERA in achieving this goal.

There is also a need for further benchmarking of innovation activity at local level as well as regional level to identify the sectors and sizes of businesses who hold greatest potential to benefit from support or indeed to identify those most in need of support for innovation. For example the UK Innovation Survey focuses on innovation activity within businesses with 10 or more employees and doesn't therefore capture evidence from the micro business sector. A clear understanding of how to measure

innovation is also important and innovation indicators need to the clearly defined for this purpose which link to PfG targets.

Q7: From your perspective are the goals appropriate?

This Council acknowledges the overarching reach of the goals identified but is primarily concerned about how these goals will trickle down to benefit the businesses and communities of this district. Council acknowledges that the achievability of the goals will be subject to funding but would urge DAERA to give due consideration, within its remit for rural affairs, to the particular needs the rural business economy when prioritising the delivery of its innovation goals.

Q9: From your perspective are there any goals that are more important than others. If yes which are they?

This Council considers Goal 2 *"Innovation is encouraged, supported and facilitated by DAERA across all sectors in its remit"* as essential for the rural economy of the district. Council would urge DAERA to give due consideration, within its remit for rural affairs, to the particular needs of the rural business economy when prioritising the delivery of this particular goal.

Q14: What are your views on mechanisms to identify and mitigate barriers to innovation?

This Council considers that the activities outlined within Annex 2 for identifying barriers to innovation must include sufficient engagement with rural micro and SME sectors. DAERA should avail of local knowledge within this Council and indeed other rural Councils across NI to facilitate this engagement. This work would help form the evidence base needed to build a support structure for encouraging innovation as well as a business case needed to secure funding for delivery.

Q18: What are your views on the identification of barriers to innovation and exploring how these can be mitigated through support and funding mechanisms?

Linked to Q14 above. In terms of support mechanism this Council would urge DAERA to engage with all existing providers of innovation support with a view to simplifying the "support ecosystem" for the business sector. This Council takes the view that there should be a wrap round support structure beginning with building innovation capacity and capability within businesses to identify innovation, through to making available funding to allow businesses to invest in innovation solutions. Clear communication on where and how to access support which reaches all businesses wishing to engage in innovation is needed.

Conclusion

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that enabling innovation within a skilled and well educated workforce will further strengthen the region. This Council therefore welcomes the DAERA Innovation Strategy 2020-2025 but would however urge the Department, within its remit for rural affairs, to take full consideration of the potential for innovation from within the agri-food and wider business sectors and to support these businesses accordingly.

Appendix 5

COOKSTOWN TEDx EVENT – SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

03/02/2020

Dear Fiona/ Shirley,

My name is Claire O'Hanlon and I'll be organizing an independent TEDx event in Cookstown on 18th June 2020.

TED is an annual event that brings together the world's leading thinkers and doers to share ideas that matter in any discipline — technology, entertainment, design, science, humanities, business, development. The talks at the conference, called TED Talks, are then made available to watch for free on TED.com.

In the spirit of "ideas worth spreading," TED has created TEDx, a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED videos and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connections that matter to our community. Our TEDx event is operated under a license from TED.

TED and TEDx speakers tackle humanity's toughest questions, attempting to answer them with innovation, enterprise and enduring optimism. TEDxCookstown brings that innovation, enterprise and optimism to the heart of Mid Ulster for the first time, inspiring people to change their lives, futures and, ultimately, the world.

The theme for TEDxCookstown is 'What If…?' With talks on art, science, entrepreneurship, emotional intelligence, mental health, education, inclusion and innovation, our amazing speakers will be asking the audience - a remarkable group of open-minded, curious, intelligent and hungry to learn individuals from varying backgrounds to consider new ideas, new ways of being and new solutions to problems.

TEDx events are organised on a voluntary basis but there are considerable production costs and TEDxCookstown can't happen without the support of valued sponsors and partners and that is why we are reaching out to a select group of companies and organisations that are committed to the power of ideas to support our TEDx event. We would be so grateful if Mid Ulster District Council would consider signing up to one of our sponsor packages which are outlined along with the benefits in the annex below.

For more information, please take a look at:
www.ted.com
www.ted.com/tedx

We look forward to discussing further.

Sincerely,
Claire O'Hanlon, MBE

info@tedxcookstown.com

'What If…?'

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TEDx events are organised on a voluntary basis but there are considerable production costs and TEDxCookstown can't happen without the support of valued sponsors and partners and we are asking if you would kindly consider signing up to one of our sponsor packages which are outlined along with the benefits below:

	Gold £2,000	Silver £1,000	Benefit
Logo Placement on: • Programme • On stage slides • TEDxCookstown Video	Y	Y	On average TEDx video are viewed over 10k times (looking at TEDxStormont/ Omagh & QUB) leading to huge exposure to an engaged audience. This provides a significant benefit in terms of the online reach of your brand.
Website	Y	Y	Inclusion on the dedicated partner page of the website will associate your identity with a global brand thus increasing your credibility
Special Acknowledgement by the host	Y	Y	Due to the nature of TEDx events the audience is highly engaged meaning that people actually hear your brand name
Press photos and press releases	Y	N	TEDxCookstown is new to Mid Ulster and will attract significant press interest

			so your brand will benefit from placement in local press
Stand at TEDxCookstown	Y	N	Direct access to 100 people with a genuine interest in learning something new so a perfect opportunity to launch a new product, market test a new idea and tell people about you. Stands will be located near food and beverage areas so you will benefit from networking opportunities.
No. of complimentary tickets	4	2	Complimentary tickets for your staff / family / friends to listen to the ideas worth spreading
TEDxCookstown Masterclass	Y	N	Public speaking masterclass delivered to your staff by one of our partners.

We also welcome in-kind contributions. Supporting us in this way provides your business or organisation with fantastic promotional opportunities and we can offer the same benefits as above based on the value of your contribution.

For more information please contact:

 Claire O'Hanlon

claire@lucocomms.co.uk / info@tedxcookstown

Find us online:

Facebook.com/tedxcookstown

Twitter - @tedxcookstown

Mid-Ulster Mail
MID-ULSTER
BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

Celebrating 10 Years

2020 PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

Prepared by - Julie Forde, Events & Exhibitions Executive, JPIMedia Events
Contact: julie.forde@jpimedia.co.uk Telephone 028 3839 5504
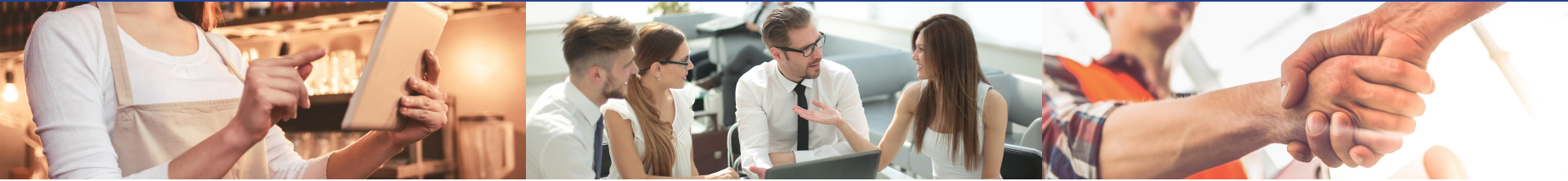
Celebrating excellence in business

Now in their 10th year, the Mid Ulster Mail is proud to launch the 2020 Mid Ulster Business Excellence Awards

These prestigious awards recognise the talent and enterprise that exists across the full range of business and commerce that are vital to the economic success and profile of the area

The awards ceremony and gala dinner, which will be attended by over 200 guests from across the industries in the area, will take place late Nov 2020

The Categories

14 award categories recognise a cross section of businesses who excel in their sector

- Best Retailer
- Excellence in Health & Wellbeing
- Readers' Favourite Eating Establishment
- Best Customer Service
- SME Business of the Year
- Excellence in People Development
- Best Community Impact

- Excellence in Tourism
- Best Manufacturer
- Best Digital Initiative & Use of Social Media
- Best Start-Up Business Award
- Excellence in Innovation
- Business Person of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

The Media Partner & Promotion

The Mid Ulster Mail in print & online is dedicated to delivering the best of local news, sport, features and photography from the region

The Mail reaches over 60.000 monthly unique users and over 26,000 social media followers

The Mid Ulster news team has been reporting on events in the area for decades and is a trusted source of news for the community

Extensive media support throughout the 5 month campaign will include a minimum of:
- 8 full page adverts
- 8 Page Post Awards Supplement
- Online & social media campaign
- Minimum of 4 editorial stories from launch to event

The Timelines

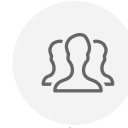| Campaign Launch Nominations Open	Media Campaign	Nominations Close	Reader Voted for Categories Nominees Published	Judging Panel	Full Page Advert Announcing Finalists	Awards ceremony	Supplement Announcing Winners

| Early August | Early August - Nov | Oct | Oct/ Nov | Nov | Nov | Nov | Dec |

Headline Sponsorship

Pre Event

- Opportunity to say a few words at the Launch
- Company logo in prime position across extensive in paper editorial and advertising campaign for 5 months
- Photograph & Quote of 200 words to appear in the launch article in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Position on the judging panel
- 50 word company profile and logo on event website

Awards Ceremony

- 10 complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony
- Extensive branding around the reception and main event room area including stage graphics
- Full page advert in the event programme
- Welcome within the event programme
- Opportunity to make a welcome speech at the awards
- Co-present each award
- Presentation of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award

Post Event

- Extensive Media coverage, logo branding and photography in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Logo branding to appear in the 8 page Awards supplement in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Front page branding & photography of your organisation within supplement
- ½ page advert in the post event winners supplement

PACKAGE COST   £7,000 + VAT

Bespoke packages to suit all budgets available on request

Associate Sponsorship

Pre Event

- Company logo in prime position across extensive in-paper editorial and advertising campaign for 5 months
- Photograph appear in the launch article within the Mid-Ulster Mail
- 50 word company profile and logo on event website
- Opportunity to co-judge your given categories

Awards Ceremony

- 5 complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony (inc 1 VIP ticket for the top table)
- Branding around the reception and main event room area including stage graphics & event programme
- Opportunity to make a welcome speech at the awards
- Presentation of your selected categories awards on stage

Post Event

- Extensive Media coverage, logo branding and photography
- Logo branding across an 8 page Awards supplement
- Photography of your organisation within supplement
- 1/4 page advert in the post event winners supplement

PACKAGE COST   £3,500 + VAT

Bespoke packages to suit all budgets available on request

Category Sponsorship

Pre Event

- Logo branding included in all pre-event in paper editorial and advertising campaign from point of launch for 5 months
- Photograph to appear in the launch article in Mid Ulster Mail
- 50 word company profile and logo on event website
- Opportunity to co-judge your category

Awards Ceremony

- 2 complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony
- Branding around the reception and main event room area including stage graphics & event programme
- Presentation of your selected category award on stage

Post Event

- Extensive Media coverage, logo branding and photography in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Logo branding to appear in the 8 page Awards supplement in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Photograph of your organisation with the winner in the supplement
- ¼ page advert in the post event winners supplement

PACKAGE COST   £1,750 + VAT

Bespoke packages to suit all budgets available on request

Venue Partner

Pre Event

- Company logo positioned in paper editorial and advertising campaign for 5 months
- Photograph to appear in the launch article within the Mid-Ulster Mail
- 50 word company profile and logo on event website
- Opportunity to co-judge your given category

Awards Ceremony

- 2 complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony
- Logo included in graphics and branding around the reception and in main event room area including stage graphics and event programme
- Presentation of your selected category award on stage

Post Event

- Extensive Media coverage, logo branding and photography in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Logo to appear in the 8 page Awards supplement in the Mid-Ulster Mail
- Photography of your organisation with the winner in the supplement
- ¼ page advert in the post event winners supplement

PACKAGE COST   £1,500 + VAT

Bespoke packages to suit all budgets available on request