



THE NORTHERN IRELAND WOMENS ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE 2018 - 2021

A New Collaboration
between the 11 Local
Councils, Invest NI, and
Women in Business NI to
promote and support
female enterprise in a
consistent way
throughout the region.

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1. Overview of the NI Women's Enterprise Challenge

Collaboration and Origin

The Northern Ireland Women's Enterprise Challenge (NIWEC) is a new collaboration between the 11 Councils, Invest NI and Women in Business NI.

The aim of NIWEC is to promote female enterprise, increase the numbers of women considering starting a business and encourage existing female entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. This collaboration is the result of several months of working together. It recognises that we in Northern Ireland do not have a female specific enterprise strategy, unlike many surrounding regions. Scotland have a Framework and Action plan to improve female entrepreneurship. Wales have funded a charity to support female entrepreneurship. Ireland has tripled its engagement with female entrepreneurs since 2012 through dedicated funding rounds for female-lead business.

This Collaboration is an opportunity to work together, to pilot a range of projects and to impact on female enterprise throughout Northern Ireland.

The 11 Councils have key responsibility for enterprise promotion, business start up and the growth of locally focused small business. This suite of initiatives has been developed in partnership with the Councils and factors in existing provision, so that any new female focused initiatives will add value or enhance participation in existing mainstream programmes, rather than potentially compete with them.

Women in Business NI is a business network that specialises in female specific support through networks, events and programmes. It is social enterprise and a charity, originally founded by a group of female entrepreneurs and with the support of Invest NI, 15 years ago. Women in Business design their support in a way that appeals to females and increases and enhances participation and outputs.

NIWEC is a Collaboration that is the result of a unique situation. An American Entrepreneur originally from Northern Ireland, impressed with the efforts of Women in Business to encourage new entrepreneurs, made a substantial financial commitment to enable them develop other initiatives of support.

Invest NI then approached the Councils to consider whether they, along with Invest NI, could consider a partnership approach to supporting female entrepreneurship, and by contributing financially, could extend the reach and duration of any female specific initiatives.

Evidence of need

A research study was commissioned by the 11 Councils in June 2017, and Dr Eoin Magennis of the University of Ulster presented his findings based on the Total Early Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) and using statistics from the Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor report 2015. There was marginal growth in the TEA of females in NI over the past 10 years from just over 2% to just over 3%, but that the female TEA in Northern Ireland was significantly lower than males. It was measured at 8% for males in NI and just over 3% for females. This gap is greater in some areas. For example Fermanagh and Omagh have a difference of 8% between males and females (10% male TEA and 1.5% female TEA). When we compare Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK, we have a female TEA of just over 3% compared to a UK average of 5.5%. The research recognised that women were under-represented.

This would suggest that women in Northern Ireland are significantly less likely to consider enterprise than men.

Economic inactivity remains high within NI (Labour Force Survey- Jul'17) at 27.8%. 60% of those were women- 195,000 individuals. 20% of those report they want to find work- potentially 39,000 women.

The rate of female Total Entrepreneurship Activity (TEA) in Northern Ireland lags behind the UK average. (2014 rate 4.4% in NI compared to UK 5.7% - Source DETI)

Research by the Women's Business Council shows that the UK economy is missing out on more than 1.2 million enterprises due to the untapped business potential of women. (FSB April 2016).

The Scottish framework highlighted that if women set up businesses at the same rate as men, it would add 7.4 billion to the Scottish economy.

While there have been some female initiatives run on an ad hoc basis throughout the Province, and Women in Business have delivered additional support in recent years through ESF funding (mainly in Belfast), there has been a lack of NI wide consistent approach to supporting female enterprise.

Total value and individual Council input

NIWEC will require an average of £6,060 per annum from each Council by three years. This cost is marginally higher in year 1, reducing in year 2 and year 3. The project costs will be split evenly between Councils. The 11 Councils will collaboratively contribute 1/3 of the total costs.

By contributing to this initiative, the Councils will achieve *additional* funding of £2 for every £1 collaboratively invested.

This is a 3 year proposal, with an annual review of activities and outputs.

Partner	Total Funding Contribution over 3 years	Average Funding Contribution each year	Funding Contribution per Council per year
Invest NI	£200,000	£66,666	
11 Councils	£200,000	£66,666	£6,060
Women in Business	£200,000	£66,666	
Total	£600,000	£200,000	

Year 1 individual Council contribution £6162

Year 2 individual Council contribution £6122

Year 3 individual Council contribution £5895

**Full budget breakdown available in spreadsheet format*

2. Programme Summary and Overview

Women in Business has worked with the local Councils and Invest NI to identify the most appropriate support. The partners looked at existing provision and have aimed to ensure that the proposed activities focus on the needs of potential and existing female entrepreneurs, and do not duplicate current provision.

Activity	Target group	Number offered per year	Number of total participants per year NI wide	Number of participants per Council area per annum	Average Direct Cost per person
Imagine It Bootcamps	Pre-start	11	440	40	£41
Explore It (4 months of ongoing support)	Pre-start	6	90	6-10	£729
Sell It (2 day Residential)	Trading/ growth	2	44	4	£272

Local networking event	All women, any stage	11	220	20	£35
Conference and Dragons Den event	Pre-starts, Start ups and trading businesses	1	250	15-30	£80

3. Programme Elements

3.1 Imagine It

Who?

Women who are economically inactive.

Women at the pre-start stage.

These may be women with or without an idea.

Women exploring what to do next/career options.

Women returners

Women in jobs that don't satisfy them or allow them to reach full potential.

Women who have an idea or see an opportunity but don't know how to move forward.

Women who may already have benefited from start up support but have not achieved sales/don't know how to proceed.

Why?

These one day bootcamps have been piloted in Belfast, Lisburn and Newtownabbey in the past 18 months. They have been very successful in terms of numbers attending, and the feedback from evaluations demonstrate that women feel inspired and motivated to take action.

What?

These one day events will take place in a venue within the local Council area, as agreed with the Council. They will include a keynote speaker, local role models, and motivational/personal development workshop and group discussions with local entrepreneurs. It will also provide signposting on local support. Participants will be tracked as to next steps following participation in the Bootcamp.

Cost?

£1630 per Bootcamp.

3.2 Explore It

Who?

Women who are economically inactive.

Women with an idea at the pre-start stage.

Women with a product idea who need help to develop it from an early stage concept to a tested product suitable for trading.

Women who have skills to offer a service but would benefit from confidence to go out on their own.

Women with an interest in a business idea but unsure if there is adequate market demand or whether their idea would be financially viable.

Women who feel they are “under-employed” – not reaching their full potential, but have a skill or idea they could monetize.

Women looking to get back to work, through self-employment, but who have been out of the work environment due to personal commitments or challenges and would benefit from belonging to a group of likeminded women to drive them into action.

Why?

Women in Business has previous experience of running pre-start initiatives that have had a significant impact in driving women forward into action, by building a group that they belong to, by connecting them to role models, by providing ongoing support over a period of time. Women can learn more effectively in a female peer group, therefore achieving greater outcomes.

What?

Each participant is assessed on her idea, personal barriers, skills and needs. (Personal and skills needs assessment)

Each participant is allocated a Buddy who support them through meetings, phone calls and online communication over 3 months. A Buddy is a female entrepreneur with practical experience of all areas of business start who can support their efforts, guide them, and introduce them to other key connections and business support in the area. Total of 8hrs support per person.

Matches will be made based on the unique barriers the participant faces e.g redundancy, health challenges, lack of knowledge of the market or language/communication issues.

Each area will have a group of 15 women who will be encouraged to work together on their business ideas. There will be a closed Facebook group that will be facilitated to encourage peer support and learning and to create a network that will continue beyond the facilitated support.

Each group will be offered 3 days of workshops on pre-start themes such as idea development, creative thinking, market research, goal setting, barriers to start up, idea viability. Sessions to include role models and visit from local NISBUP delivery agent to give information on Go For It and other local support. All regions to deliver similar content and use materials provided.

The group will meet monthly x 3 months for facilitated discussions and problem solving with role models (women who are successfully trading in their businesses) to give them direction, encourage them, give practical business advice or connect them to useful contacts. It is hoped that participants will be ready to access Go for It business planning support during this phase.

Cost? £10940 per local initiative. 1 in Belfast and 1 delivered per 2 Council areas.

3.4 Sell It

Who? Women who are trading but with access to the right type of support have the potential to grow.

Businesses who are through the start up phase but need to make change to get to the next stage of business.

Women who have potential in their business and through a female motivational environment will get energised and guided to move it forward.

Women who have a business model that may be working but they require further business, strategic or sales/marketing skills to achieve growth.

Businesses serving a local market who want to consider export.

Businesses who need investment to grow their business but don't know what to do next.

Women who need to access mentoring support but do not know what is available/accessible to them.

Why? Women in Business have feedback from members of the network and past participants of start up programmes that there is a need to empower and inform women and to do more to support them with the challenges of growth. Many female business owners want to grow their business, but they learn and achieve differently from men. There is clear evidence that learning is more effective in peer groups. We need to give them the

tools and knowledge to create their own growth strategy and to introduce them to local Council or Invest NI support that may be able to help.

What? These 2 day events will take place twice per year in Northern Ireland in 2 different locations. They will be facilitated by experienced trainers and will cover topics such as Making a Pitch, How to find an Investor, Branding and Selling, Developing a business strategy, and Growth Challenges. They will include testimonies from Leading NI female entrepreneurs who have “walked the walk” and include 121 meetings with Advisers and Businesswomen. There will be information/speakers available on the support that is provided by the local Councils, Invest NI, Colleges and other key business development providers. Participants will be tracked 3-6 months after the residential to assess impact. As there are limited places for each Council area, participation will be by application and assessment.

Cost? £5980 per Residential.

3.4 Female Entrepreneurship Conference and Dragons Den event

Who? Female owned businesses – prestart, start up, trading, growth

Why? Women in Business have a track record of successful conferences and Awards events. There is the opportunity to focus on Entrepreneurial success through an NI wide Female Conference and Dragons Den event. This will take place on International Women’s Day in March, and invite previous NIWEC participants to attend and compete.

What? Delegates will attend a full day event which will bring together entrepreneurial speakers, masterclasses and workshops.

The Dragons Den event will seek to award several female early stage entrepreneurs and trading businesses for their achievements. Several female early stage entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to pitch for investment in their business. The pitches will be presented at an evening event.

Cost? £20000 costs and £20000 in prize fund.

3.5 Local Female Networks

Who? Women at the pre-start, start up, trading and growth stages.

Women who want more information on support available.

Women who are self-employed/one man band and feel isolated and want to meet likeminded women.

Women who want to feel energised and motivated in their business mind-set.

- Why?** Women in Business run at least 3 events per month as part of the Women in Business network. These vary from facilitated networking to keynote speakers and masterclasses on useful business topics. These events however are not delivered NI wide. Many are in Belfast, with some in Coleraine, Newry, L/Derry and Omagh through local delivery partners. The aim is to have a consistent approach throughout Northern Ireland and to initiate female networking in all areas.
- What?** Half day events, normally offered in the morning or early evening. The event will be a combination of a keynote speaker and facilitated networking. In some areas where there are existing local networking initiatives the event may be run in partnership. A local delivery agent such as the Enterprise agency may be interested in hosting or running the event under guidance from the Project Manager.
- Cost?** £710 per networking event.

4 Marketing and Communications

A detailed marketing plan will be developed once the Project Manager is appointed. He/she will work with Women in Business, Invest NI and Local Councils (Steering Group) to agree marketing and PR for the project.

Women in Business have a number of established marketing channels which they can use for the programme:

- Monthly ezine sent to 8500 members and stakeholders
- Printed newsletter distributed each year in hard copy to 3000 members and stakeholders
- Website which is regularly updated
- Twitter feed with 14.1k followers
- Facebook page with 6693 followers
- Several Facebook closed groups with women who have attended previous start up programmes.

Each activity within the schedule of events will be promoted both centrally by Women in Business and through local contact points – local networks, enterprise agencies, local Colleges, local training providers, local women's centres and through Council Economic Development departments.

Branding/logo for the project will be agreed between the partners and key wording/logos to use on all promotional and printed material.

There will be a project launch and details will be agreed between the project partners, with a PR plan in place.

5 Management and Resources

Capability

Women in Business has been trading for 15 years. They have experience of managing funding from a broad range of public, private and local government sources, including ESF funding (for 7 years) Belfast City Council, Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council, Lisburn Castlereagh City Council, Royal Bank of Scotland's Inspiring Enterprise for Women Fund, Halifax Foundation, and Department for the Economy.

Women in Business is a business network that specialises in female specific support through networking, events and programmes. Over the past 15 years it has run hundreds of events and has grown its membership to over 2500. Events range from small local events (including local networks established in Coleraine, Newry, L/Derry and Omagh) to large conferences with 400+ attendees (Annual Awards event, Annual Chairs Conference, International Women's Conference). While networking was at the core of its original purpose, it has developed over the years to provide a range of programmes in response to member needs.

Women in Business NI is self-sustaining and do not receive any core government support. Strong internal financial governance is key to this success.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for financial management systems within the organisation. The Board meets 5 times a year and the Chief Executive prepares papers which include a full financial report, operational report and HR report.

Women in Business NI have a Finance and Governance Committee with 3 Directors which meets regularly to consider any relevant matters such as budgets, annual accounts, and salary review. They also review all policies and procedures and audits.

The Board of Directors consists of 11 highly skilled individuals including a senior partner in a law firm, a qualified accountant and a PR consultant, who have all had governance training.

Women in Business NI have a recently updated Governance manual in 2006, along with their Employee handbook and all policies. This includes a Financial Procurement policy. They have high standards of policies and procedures throughout the organisation due to the requirements of delivering ESF projects.

WIB are an approved Invest NI External Delivery Agent supplier having underwent a full Dfe audit.

Under the previous ESF programme "Connect" which was a 3 year pre-start programme for women, Women in Business NI managed a budget of £380k.

Prior to that Women in Business managed the ESF programme "Women into Business", again targeting pre-starts, which was a value of £400k.

In the past 2 years, Women in Business have delivered 5 startup programmes (Power of 4) to 75 women, offering a 6 month period of support for each participant. Each programme had a value of £20k, and achieved an overall 70% start up rate. Two Dragons Den events have also been delivered.

Project Manager

Women in Business will recruit a dedicated Project Manager and will provide Administrative and Marketing support.

The Project Manager will have responsibility for liaising with each Council on the schedule of events and activities and ensuring that there is no duplication of delivery. They will seek advice on local engagement and local recruitment for activities and events. They will ensure signposting to local mainstream or Council programmes.

The Project Manager will have responsibility for programme design and implementation including appointing local delivery partners where required. They will create a marketing and communications plan with input from local Councils and Invest NI. They will set up and maintain systems and processes, budget management, monitoring and evaluation and financial management. A monthly report will be available for the NIBSUP meeting and an annual evaluation will be carried out.

The Project Manager will report to Roseann Kelly, Chief Executive of Women in Business who will oversee quality management and delivery.

A Marketing/Admin assistant will support the Project Manager with handling enquiries, signposting, database management, marketing, events logistics and delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

Each Council will be asked to support the Project Manager with the marketing of activities within their area through their normal marketing channels – e.g newsletter, outreach, social media posts.

It is recommended that the Councils create a small steering group to liaise with the Project Manager.

The Project Manager will also report to Women in Business Board on progress.

The Project Manager will project manage the 11 Bootcamp events. The Project Manager will oversee all other deliver activity. However, in the delivery of local projects such as Explore It programme and local Networking events, there may be a local delivery agent procured to run the event or initiative.

6 Additionality

There are no region-wide female specific programmes that help women get started in business. Any individual in Northern Ireland, male or female, can access support through the ESF funded Exploring Enterprise Programme delivered in many of the local enterprise agencies. This offers some training sessions and mentor sessions delivered over 1-2 months. There is also the new Northern Ireland Business Start-up Programme funded by the Councils, which assists an individual in the preparation of a business plan and financial projections.

Many local Councils and other local providers (colleges, enterprise agencies, community organisations) may also have start up programmes that target niche sectors or groups, such as graduates, creative industries or tourism.

It is essential that any additional support complements these programmes.

NIWEC will be delivered in a way that incorporates “women friendly support” and adds value to mainstream programmes.

What is “women friendly support”?:

- Any trainers, mentors or “buddies” should in general be self-employed and empathise with the challenges that may face female entrepreneurs. They should have the experience of starting and running their own business and may identify with other issues that women may face: confidence, juggling motherhood, health disorders, redundancy, caring issues.
- The duration of support should not be just the day they attend an event or the 2 weeks they attend a course. Women are more effective if they progress at their own pace and build relationships. Their business growth often has to fit in with family or other commitments. They benefit from building a support network around them including other women going through the same journey.
- Women are inspired and supported by meeting role models – other women who are now making a living from their business – to create vision, give practical advice “how to..”, and build connections.
- Women benefit from a sense of belonging. This may be the relationship with the Coordinator, the mentors, their peers or the role models who give them advice.
- Daytime access to events, workshop or meetings that fit in with school runs.

Imagine It is a one day bootcamp. It will create awareness of these other support programmes and signpost women on to them. It will excite and motivate women to consider enterprise as a possible option for them. Dates will be scheduled in each area to support the recruitment to programmes that are soon to commence within that area.

Explore It is an initiative which targets women who have not started trading. It will help develop their idea and take them to the stage where they may benefit from training from Exploring Enterprise or from a business plan through NIBSUP. There are only 6 initiatives to be run NI wide each year, supporting 90 women. Places will be allocated to those who need more help, or who have specific barriers to overcome. Dates will be scheduled working with local Councils.

Sell It is a 2 day residential targeting those already trading, to encourage growth, ambition, diversification and scalability. The local Councils already have programmes in place which provide training and mentoring to established businesses. This residential will aim to attract more women to consider these programmes – by taking time to evaluate their business – to inspire and encourage them to seek out support.

The **Female Enterprise Conference & Dragons Den event** will be a celebration and promotion of female enterprise. It will create role models and learning, inspire and energise those already in business and those just starting. The Dragons Den will create an opportunity for women to win funding and prizes to assist their business journey. There is no existing NI wide event of this kind.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project Manager will produce monthly reports on activity delivered, outputs achieved and activity in planning to get feedback and input, and to ensure to maximise the impact in each area.

It is recommended that there is a key contact within the Council Consortium to liaise with or a small steering group.

Each activity will have an evaluation to complete at the end to assess impact and get feedback on participants needs. Some activities will have more than one evaluation e.g Explore It.

There will be an annual online survey of participants and an annual evaluation completed to review the range of activities and their impact and this may influence the following year's activities. Any significant change in future activities will be in agreement with the Steering Group.

8 Summary of budgets and targets

Activity	Total budget per year £	Cost per unit £	Number delivered per year	Number of total participants per year NI wide	Number of participants per Council area	Total Number of Women signposted to mainstream programmes
Imagine It Bootcamps	17,930	1630	11	440	40	440
Explore It (4 months of ongoing support)	65,640	10,940	6	90	6-10	90
Sell It 2 day Residential	11,960	5980	2	44	2	44
Local networking event	7,810	710	11	220	20	220
Conference and Dragons Den event	40,000		1	250	15-30	250
				600 (Allows for multiple attendance)	Allowing for multiple attendance 55 women per Council area engaged/ supported	600
Council Contribution (Yearly average)					£6060	
Estimated Council cost per participant					£110 per person	

*Full budget breakdown available in spreadsheet format

Maghera Town Centre Forum

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

Maghera Town Centre Forum is a strategic body that will provide advice and guidance to Strategic Bodies and others regarding the growth of Maghera Town Centre.

The Forum's main purpose is to:

- Stimulate and revitalise the Town Centre;
- Act as an 'umbrella' to facilitate the delivery of projects and initiatives by ensuring a strong, positive and coordinating vehicle to deliver the regeneration of the Town Centre;
- Identify and deliver new initiatives that support town regeneration; and
- Lobby and influence other statutory bodies on issues pertinent to the Town Centre e.g. car parking, traffic flow, derelict/run down properties.

Maghera Town Centre Forum does not replace any existing organisation, such as Maghera Development Association / Maghera Traders Association but will operate in parallel to them.

The Town Centre Forum should play a fundamental role working closely with key stakeholders such as Mid Ulster District Council, Maghera Development Association, Maghera Traders Association, Government Departments, Statutory agencies, local businesses and the community.

2.0 Membership

The Membership of the Town Centre Forum will be made up as follows:

Carntogher DEA Members (5)

Maghera Development Association Representative (1)

Maghera Traders Association Representative (1)

Transport NI (1)

Department for Communities (1)

Community Development Representative (1)

Planning Service (1)

Translink (1)

PSNI (1)

Maghera Town Centre Traders (4)

Mid Ulster Disability Forum (1)

Maghera Community Groups Representative (2)

Membership of Maghera Town Centre Forum will be reviewed on an annual basis.

If a member misses two consecutive meetings they lose their place on the Town Centre Forum and a replacement from within the same sector will be nominated to take their place.

2.1 Chair / Vice Chair

The position of Chair and Vice Chair will rotate on an annual basis between an Elected Member and a Trader. In year one the position of Chairperson will be held by an Elected Member and the position of Vice Chair by a Trader.

3.0 Responsibility of Forum Members

The Forum members will be required to work together in partnership to deliver key town centre projects:

To achieve this partnership approach, Forum members need to:

- Understand their role within the Forum;
- Be champions for the Forum;
- Report back to their representative bodies.

4.0 Servicing & Reporting Mechanism

4.1 Agenda & Minutes

The Forum members will receive a meeting agenda, minutes and reports in a timely and efficient manner. The meeting papers will be forwarded to the Forum at least five days prior to the meetings.

4.2 Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis or as required.

4.3 Meeting Location

Meetings will be held in Maghera Leisure Centre, Coleraine Road, Maghera.

Mid Ulster District Council

International Women's Day Events Monday 5th & Wednesday 7th March 2018 Charity Supported – Air Ambulance Northern Ireland

To celebrate International Women's Day in March 2018, the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council hosted two highly successful events which attracted over 170 women to attend.

These events were organised in Dungannon and Magherafelt to help empower and encourage local women by listening to success stories from their peers. All proceeds from tickets and raffle sales totalling £1,634 will be donated by the Council Chair to the Air Ambulance Northern Ireland, to which one of the keynote speakers, Karen Farquhar, is patron.

Outlined below is a short synopsis of what was covered at the two events, along with pictures of the Chair, the guest speakers and sections of the audience who attended.

Event 1: Monday 5th March 2018 – Hill of the O'Neill, Dungannon

The first event took place on Monday 5th March 2018 on the Hill of The O'Neill, Dungannon and featured talks from inspirational speakers Karen Farquhar and Billy Dixon. Karen shared her story on how the Air Ambulance Northern Ireland saved her husband's life following a serious motorcycle accident and Billy will share his secrets on how to build self-confidence to portray a positive image.



Event 2: Wednesday 7th March 2018 – The Bridewell, Magherafelt

The second event took place on Wednesday 7th March 2018 at the Bridewell, Magherafelt, with speakers Dr Janet Gray, MBE and Hannah Shields. Dr Janet Gray, shared her inspirational life story of being a world champion blind water-skier and Hannah inspired the audience as to how she reached the summit of Mount Everest.



As well as having the opportunity to listen to such prestigious inspirational speakers, guests enjoy a non-alcoholic drinks reception, refreshments, a raffle and a free goodie bag. Goodies had been kindly sponsored by Local Women, Rocwell Water, Gordan's Chemist, Mauds Parlour, Medicare and Mid Ulster District Council.

Mid Ulster District Council

World Butchers' Challenge – March 2018

Butchers from across the globe arrived in Northern Ireland on 15th March 2018 to take part in the World Butchers' Challenge. This is the first-time in the competition's history that the event travelled to Ireland, with Belfast playing host to competitors from 13 countries.

The World Butchers' Challenge (WBC) was created as a platform where butchers from across the world can compete and showcase the butchery skills and creative uses of the beef, lamb and pork products from their respective countries.

The main competitions were held at Titanic, Belfast, with an International Study Tour to Mid Ulster, financed by Mid Ulster District Council.

Soiree Event, Titanic, Belfast - Thursday 15th March 2018

Six elected members and an officer from Mid Ulster District Council attended the Soiree evening at Titanic, Belfast, to welcome the competitors. The Chair of Mid Ulster District Council was selected to draw the countries to compete in Heat 1 and Heat 2 at Meat @IFEX.

The Soiree event gave the opportunity for competitors to taste local Irish produce and local craft beers and ciders followed with the opportunity to meet top meat industry stakeholders and sponsors.

International Study Tour to Mid Ulster - Friday 16th March 2018

A full day of activities was organised for 120 butchers from across the globe to visit Mid Ulster. This included a site visit to Linden Foods, visits to award winning butchers MacMahon's, Cookstown and Lowe Brothers, Stewartstown, followed by a tour of the Innovation Centre, CAFRE's Loughry Campus.

At Loughry all competitors and delegates enjoyed lunch showcasing the best local artisan producers, mainly from Mid Ulster. After lunch a 'nose to tail' live butchery demonstration took place and an Irish Charcuterie Session by Artisan Master Dave Land from Butchery Excellence Ireland and 3 Star Great Taste Award Winner Charcutier Jonny Cuddy.

Throughout the world butchers visit to Mid Ulster the food supply chain history from field to fork was showcased in a very memorable way and highlighted the collective knowledge and experience the district has to offer.

The Chair of Mid Ulster District Council spoke at the event and presented gifts to the Leaders of each Butchery Team representing the various countries.

WORLD BUTCHERS CHALLENGE - INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR TO MID ULSTER



Lowe's Butchers, Stewartstown



MacMahon's Butcher, Cookstown

'Nose to Tail' Butchery Demonstration at Loughry Campus, Cookstown



World Butchers Challenge - Gala Dinner, Titanic Belfast - Wednesday 21st March 2018

Six elected members and an officer from Mid Ulster District Council attended Celebratory Gala Dinner in Titanic Belfast. This evening was the platform to announce the World Butchers Challenge Overall Winning Team for 2018. Each team of six had just three hours and fifteen minutes to turn a side of beef, a side of pork and a whole lamb and five chickens into a themed display of value-added cuts.

This year's contest was won by Team Ireland, gaining the title for world's top butchers. This win will add to Northern Ireland / Ireland's reputation for the quality of its meat and craftsmanship, delivering additional promotion on the global stage.

