

APPENDIX 1 - MEGA Letter of request to Council for Funding Support



Mr Paul McCreedy
Economic Development Section
Mid Ulster District Council
15 Circular Road
Dungannon
County Tyrone
BT71 6DT

12th March 2021
By Email

Dear Paul,

Re: Post-COVID strategic review of MEGA

At our recent MEGA steering group meeting on Monday 1st March and with one year remaining under the current funding programme for MEGA, we discussed the importance of undertaking a strategic review to evidence what has been achieved by MEGA to date and to develop a strategic action plan for our next phase of industry skills development.

No doubt Council will be acutely aware of the profound impact Covid has had on the economy and the next few years will prove challenging for many businesses in our sector as we collectively build towards recovery. In this context we think it is timely to undertake this review to map out MEGA's role in supporting its members in the years ahead.

To progress the strategy we have identified a need to appoint professional advisory services to assist us with this exercise in order to:

- Review and document MEGA progress and achievements to date;
- Evidence the positive impact the MEGA initiative has had on the Mid Ulster manufacturing and engineering sector generally, and also specifically through the COVID pandemic;
- Engage all 36 (and growing!) MEGA member companies to secure their input and buy-in to a new strategic action plan for MEGA;
- Engage with key external stakeholders (including Mid Ulster District Council, Invest NI, South West College, Department for the Economy, Department for Education and others) to understand broader stakeholder strategies and how MEGA may be able to align to these;
- Develop strategic aims and objectives for the MEGA initiative over the next 3 years;

- Explore how MEGA might work towards an operating model that enables the initiative to be more self-sustaining;
- Prepare a strategic action plan for MEGA that charts our way ahead, and which will form the basis of a future funding application to support the initiative beyond February 2022; and
- Effectively communicate the new strategy to members through digital and printed means, and to use the materials as a tool to support the recruitment of new members.

We have estimated a budget of £20,000 will be required for this strategic review and its launch. We are hoping to secure £15,000 of funding support through a Phase One application to Invest NI's Collaborative Growth Programme, and we are writing to enquire as to whether Mid Ulster District Council would be able to provide £5,000 of funding support to co-fund this exercise with Invest NI?

Our plan would be to commence the strategic review in mid-April, and we expect it will take 12 to 14 weeks to complete at which stage we will then apply for a further round of Phase Two funding.

Paul, whether or not you are able to support us in this funding request, on behalf of the MEGA steering committee I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mid Ulster District Council and yourself for the strong support we have received to date – not only in funding, but also in Council's ongoing positive championing of our work, which is a great encouragement to our group and very much appreciated.

The MEGA Project officially started on 1st August 2019 and to reflect the facilitator contract of 30 months it will end on 1st February 2022.

I hope I have provided you with all the information you require to consider our request for financial support of £5,000. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Maria Curran
Programme Director
MEGA

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