



**AGE FRIENDLY  
ECONOMY. EU**  
FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMES

# VET-Business Partnership Strategic Plan Summary N. IRELAND



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## Our Strategic Regional Approach

The VET Business partnership in N. Ireland is led by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC). Stakeholders in the partnerships include Enterprise Development Agencies, Government and local Government organisations, business networks and higher education institutions. The implementation of the AFE project in our area will benefit from the guidance, input and support of these key enterprise, community and economic development stakeholders. They were selected for their commitment to:

- (i) Growing the capacity of individuals and businesses in terms of entrepreneurship, innovation and digital skills OR
- (ii) Representing the interests and needs of older people especially in terms of more appropriate products and services

The VET Business Partnership Strategic plan follows the methodology set out in the Work Based Learning Guide and includes:

- **Context and justification**

While the UK as a whole is an 'innovation leader' and ranks 5<sup>th</sup> overall on the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) ahead of Germany and Belgium, Northern Ireland is the lowest scoring of all UK regions on the Regional Innovation Index for the UK. Northern Ireland lags far behind the rest of the UK in terms of this key driver for economic growth.

Lisburn and Castlereagh's population is projected to grow by 9% by 2025 and 13% by 2030 (from 2015). Much of the growth will be concentrated in the 65+ age group. Thus by 2030; 35,507 of the 158618 residents will be over 65 compared with 23,639 in 2015.

- **Specific learning objectives for SMEs with regard to new products and services for Seniors in the region**

It was agreed that the training elements of the project both IO2 and IO3 should focus on training businesses on the needs and opportunities associated with this market.

This could include:

- Overview of the current trends in the silver Economy
- Innovation and Ideas Generation
- Planning and Commercialisation support
- Digital Marketing Training tailored to the specific needs and tastes of older people.
- Sources of funding
- Examples and case studies from SMEs experienced in this market could help animate the training and allow for the transfer of skills/knowledge.

- **Action planning**

In Northern Ireland the stakeholders have agreed to implement the following actions:-

- Awareness building
- Development of two case studies
- Get Online training Programme
- Age Friendly Economy Bootcamps LCCC 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- Multiplier Event



- **Available Resources**

Opportunities for funding actions arising from age friendly economy innovation projects in our region are numerous and include, Enterprise centres, Invest NI, ENI Loan Funds, Co-innovate and various other enterprise support programmes.

- **Communication and Dissemination**

Dissemination will include graphic design for text-based publications, development of E-zines, social media promotions, live video streaming and promotional events. LCCC and Ageing Lab will work with NCC to implement the Dissemination Strategy using these outputs and all partners will share with their respective Partnerships and encourage all to disseminate through their respective communication channels. In N. Ireland, we will focus on those areas of activity with greatest potential economic opportunity for LCCC, with a particular focus on supporting enterprise to better meet the needs of the older population while gaining a competitive advantage in this lucrative market.