



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

# Our Digital Future

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18 October 2021

# ***Our Rural Future: a new approach to rural development***



**Whole-of-Government** policy for rural Ireland for the **next five years**

Our Rural Future represents an ambitious **new approach** to rural development in Ireland

Focuses on sustainable **economic, social, and environmental development**

Emphasises the **interdependency** of rural and urban areas.

Advocates **an integrated, place-based approach** to rural development

Aims to **maximise the impact, coherence and effectiveness** of investment

# What does the policy focus on?

More than **150 commitments** across Government

Optimising opportunities from **high speed broadband**

Transformational potential of **Remote/Connected Working**

**Supporting Employment and Careers** in rural areas

**Revitalising** rural towns and villages

Enhancing **participation, leadership and resilience** of rural communities



Chapter 3  
**Optimising Digital Connectivity**



Chapter 5  
**Revitalising Rural Towns  
and Villages**

# Key Rural Investments



€2.7 billion in the delivery of **high-speed broadband** to rural areas

€1 billion under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to support ambitious projects to **regenerate towns and settlements** of < 10,000 people

€2 billion **Urban RDF** will support larger rural towns

Up to €100 million to support a **Town Centre First** approach, including addressing vacant properties and encouraging more town centre living

€10M+ investment in building a **national remote working network**

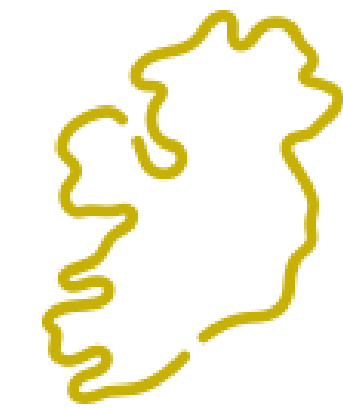
# NBP intervention



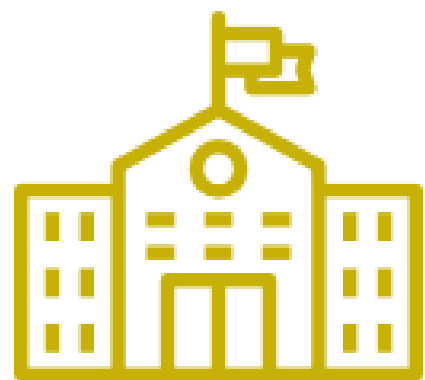
**Across 100,000km  
of road**



**1.1m citizens  
(23% population)**



**458,000 of the  
working population  
live in IA**



**Acceleration  
to connect  
679 schools  
by end 2022**



**Over 290  
Broadband  
Connection Points**



**Over 44,000  
businesses (mostly  
small and micro)**



**55,804 (68%)  
farms**

# Programme Status

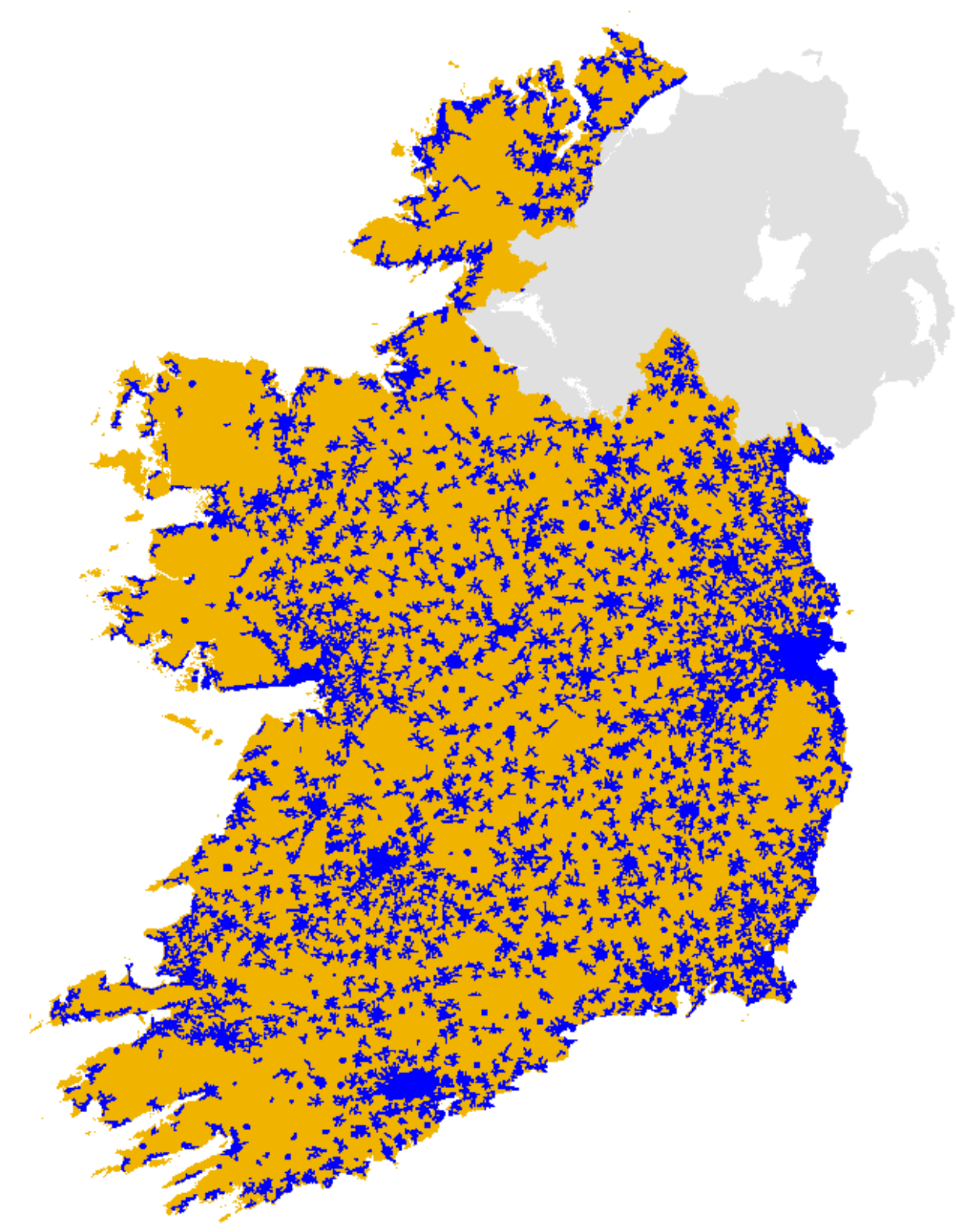


Despite ongoing challenges associated with Covid-19, **significant progress** has been made in the first half of this year.

In May 2021, DECC approved NBI's **Remedial Plan for 2021** to reflect revised targets for the year taking into account delays encountered due to the pandemic and challenges around programme ramp up and network rollout.

The updated contracted target under this plan is almost **60,000 premises passed** by the end of December 2021.

Under the current trajectory, NBI will have rolled out to over **60% of rural premises by end of 2023**, resulting in over 92% of premises across the State being passed by high-speed broadband, majority of these will have access to speeds greater than 500Mbps.



# Broadband Connection Point Initiative



- **~1000 strategic locations** have been chosen across all 26 counties as Broadband Connection Points (BCPs)
- **Primary Schools and Public Locations** are mainly in scope, with Garda Stations and Marts with no broadband options also included.
- **302 locations are live**, with a further 70 locations well progressed.
- Many public locations offer **remote working capabilities** with free high-speed internet access.

## 300 Public BCPs (apx)

**Access is for the general public**

**Local Authorities** have selected candidates to The Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD)

**DRCD & Local Authorities** coordinate with Vodafone to provide connectivity after NBI has installed their equipment

## 670+ Primary Schools BCPs

**Access is limited to pupils and staff only**

**DES** have selected school candidates based on broadband needs

**DES** coordinate with various RSP's to provide connectivity after NBI has installed their equipment

# Making Remote Work– National Remote Work Strategy



*“to ensure to ensure remote work is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace in a way that maximises economic, social and environmental benefits”*

Published January 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

Built on **3 pillars** bolstered by underpinning conditions – 15 actions

All actions with a deadline within **2021**

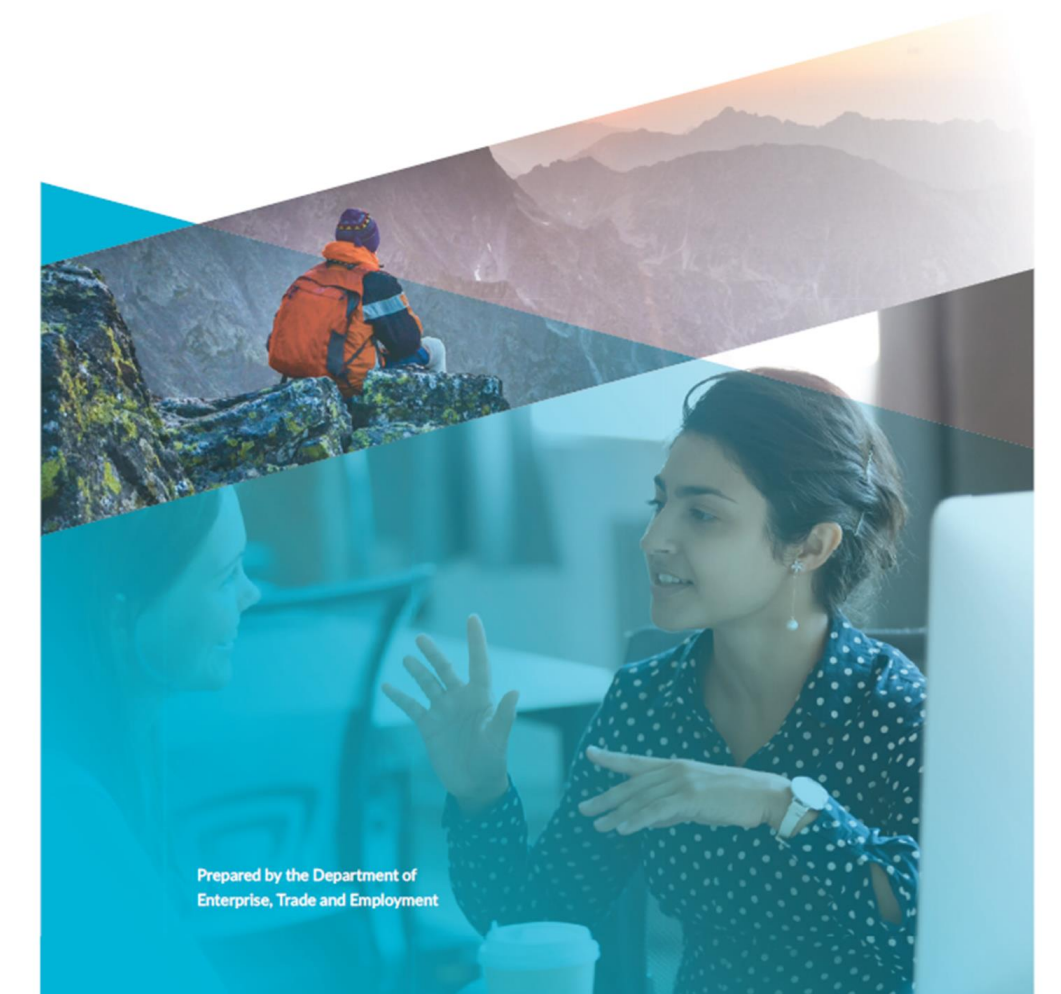
Implementation monitored by Remote Work Strategy IDG



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**Making Remote Work**

National Remote Work Strategy





# The National Hubs Network

Survey launched on the 22nd February

Over **500 Responses** so to the survey

**425 hubs** mapped across the country

Updated Hubs Map is available here:

<https://connectedhubs.ie/nationalhubsmap.html>

**146 Hubs live** on the connectedhubs.ie system

[www.connectedhubs.ie](http://www.connectedhubs.ie)



## Hub Classifications

### Scaling Hub

A step up from a general enterprise hub with strong focus on post start-up clients being supported through scaling and investment stages. High level services for acceleration and export development. Global entrepreneurship events and programmes.

### Enterprise Hub

Local enterprise driver providing space, facilities and services for start-up, HPSU's, remote workers. Hosting events and acting as a connector for entrepreneur networks.

### R&D Hub

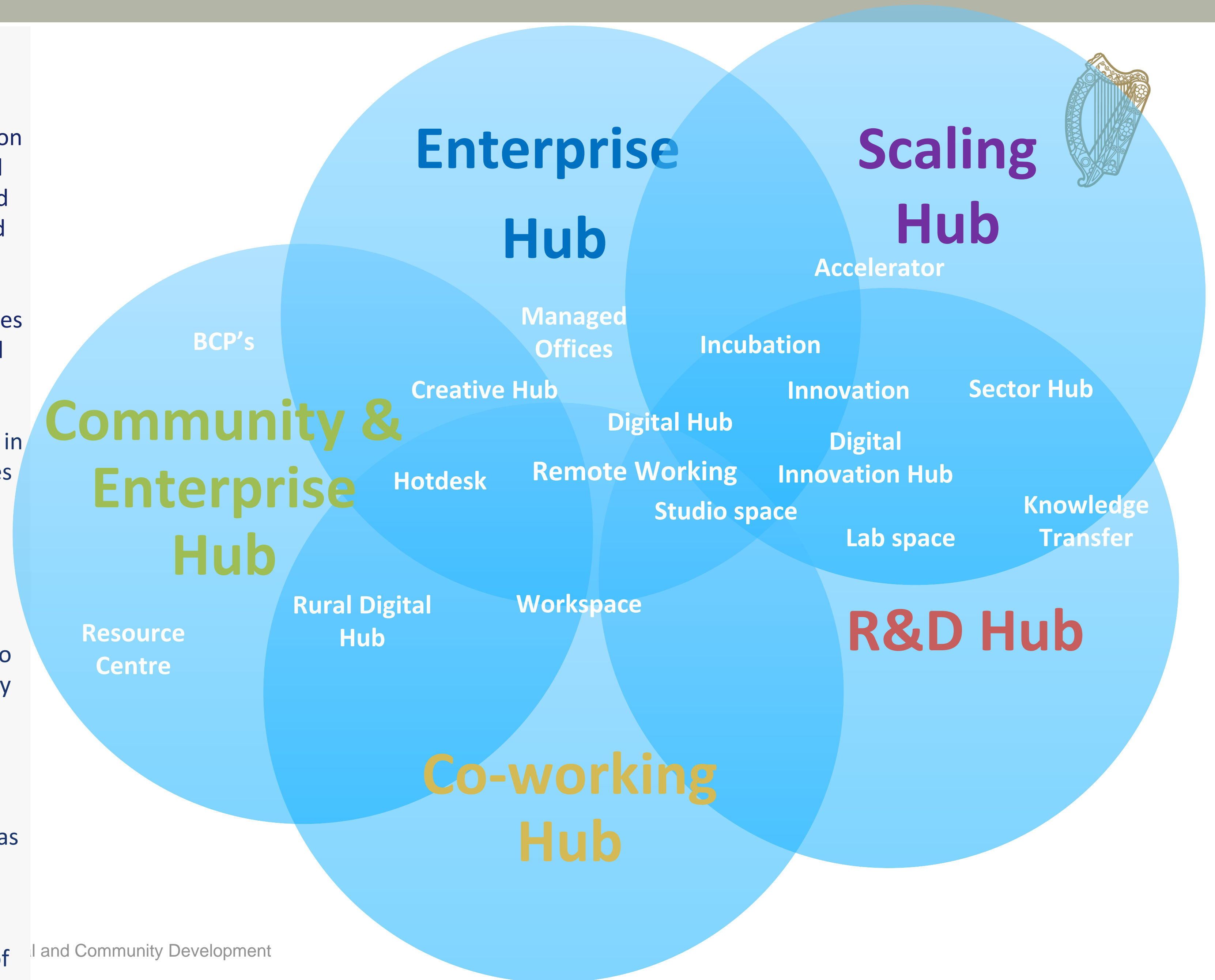
Specialist Hub usually attached to HEI with focus on clients in early stages of R&D of new products and services. Provides office or desk space and access to meeting rooms, laboratories etc. A full time manager and other staff are employed to support business development through incubation and acceleration.

### Co-working Hub

Provides clients with private offices or desks with access to meeting rooms and event space. Offers clients plug & play facilities but not business support. Often co-located with other facilities and shared management.


### Community & Enterprise Hub

A centre whose primary focus is to provide community services and has office space, dedicated and/or hot-desks as well as meeting rooms available to clients. The business facilities will complement the community services and provide an income for the community. These hubs are generally run by volunteers with or without the support of Community Employment staff.




Select Date Range [calendar icon] Enter Location or Search [magnifying glass icon]

- Desks & Offices
- Meeting Rooms
- [MORE FILTERS](#)




**ACE Enterprise Park**  
 Located in Dublin 22  
 1 Meeting Rooms Available

Address: Bawnogue, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Dublin

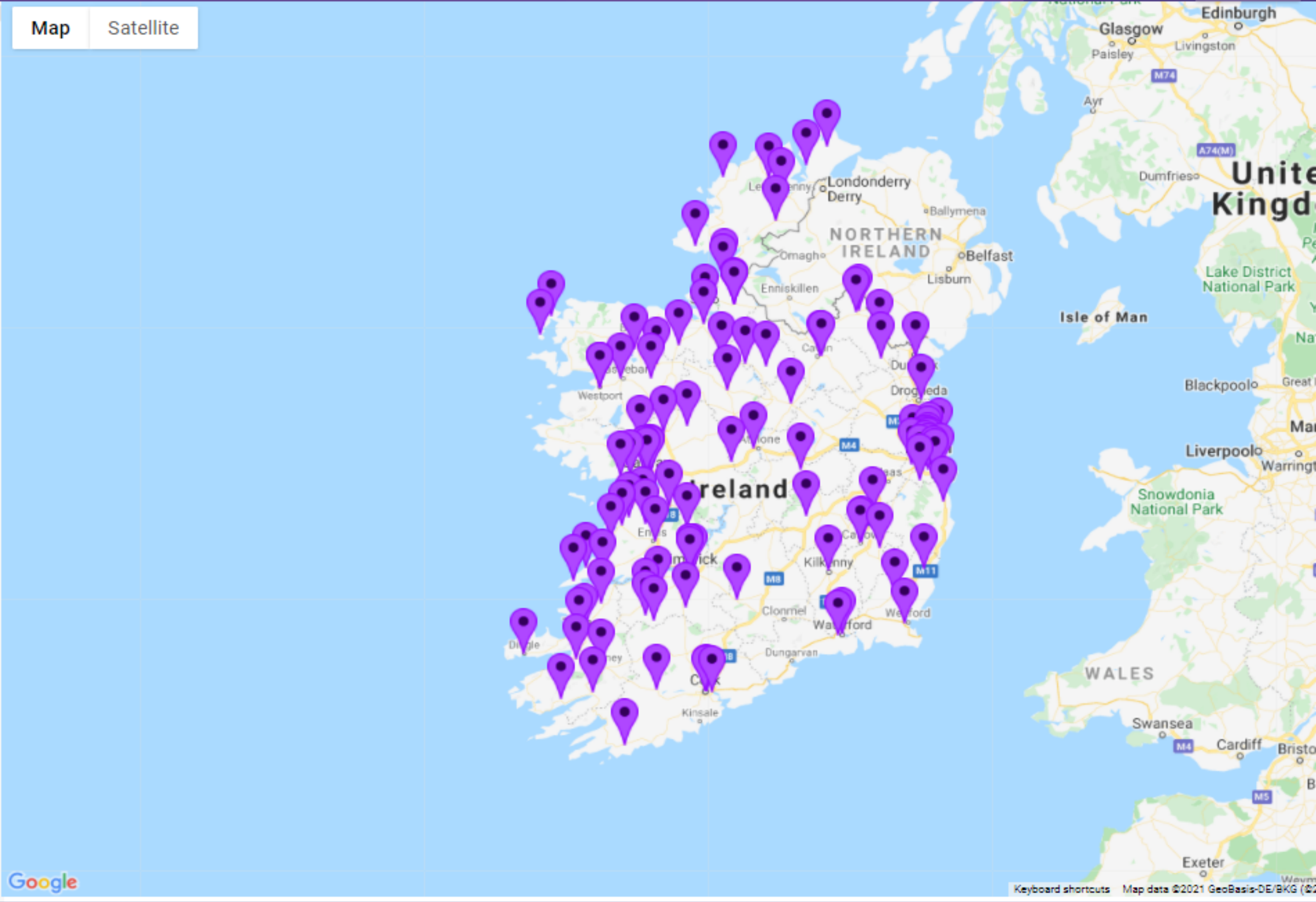


**An Chroi South Sligo Enterprise Centre**  
 Located in Tubbercurry  
 3 Desk Plans Available

Address: Ballina Road, Tubbercurry, Sligo



**Arbutus Innovation Centre**  
 Located in Athlone  
 1 Desk Plans Available  
 1 Meeting Rooms Available



# Connected Hubs Call



To develop and leverage the **capacity** and **quality** of existing remote working facilities and BCPs

**Key support** for building the National Hub Network programme

Not for building of **new hubs** or regeneration of vacant buildings into hubs

118 successful applicants totalling apx **€9M** for **285 Hubs and BCPs**

Measures supported in include everything from **podcast studios** to **new office pods**

# Where Next for **connectedhubs.ie**?



146 hubs **live** and we continue onboarding, another 50 in the pipeline

**Mobile App** for the platform has been submitted to Google and Apple Stores

Hub **community building** sessions will continue to be an important means of engaging with hubs

Data dashboard and Hub Resource library under development

Memo of Understanding – Cisco and NACEC, other **partnerships** being developed

**National** media campaign set for October

Corporate Account Management



# Thank you

Questions? Email me at: [stjohn.oconnor@drccd.gov.ie](mailto:stjohn.oconnor@drccd.gov.ie)