

Upcoming Midlands And West Enterprise Programme In Athlone

THE Midlands Innovation and Research Centre at Athlone Institute of Technology, a hot-bed for new enterprise in the Midlands, is launching a new enterprise programme for entrepreneurs, starting in January 2007. Having incubated and supported 24 start-ups since 2003, the MIRC looks forward to supporting the next generation of innovative start-ups in the Midlands.

The Midlands & West Enterprise Programme is a one-year programme that provides entrepreneurs with the business skills, networks, facilities and supports necessary to navigate the business start-up process. Participants receive a training grant of €6,600 and may also apply to Enterprise Ireland for CORD funding which could provide up to 50% of previous year's salary.

The MIRC is now inviting applications for the MWEP. Participants should have a knowledge-based business idea with growth and export potential. They should be graduates (diploma level or

higher) with a number of years' industry experience and have the enthusiasm and drive necessary to develop and grow a successful business.

According to MIRC Manager, Michael Lonergan, "If you are a prospective entrepreneur with industry experience and an innovative business idea, the MWEP will provide you with the business skills and support necessary to transform your idea into a successful business."

There have been many success stories associated with the MWEP. One example is BioClin Research Laboratories, a provider of contract research services to the pharmaceutical industry, co-founded by Mary Burke, a participant on the MWEP in 2003. BioClin was the overall winner of the Ulster Bank / Irish Independent Business Achievers Award in 2005.

A key objective of the MIRC is to leverage the resources of AIT in support of client companies. The Institute has been particularly active in leading projects under

Enterprise Ireland's Innovation Partnership Programme. For example, AIT's Applied Software Research Centre is currently leading the development of a Thermal Remote and Intelligent Management System for manufacturing processes on behalf of T5 Process Solutions, an early-stage company based in the MIRC.

Joe Temple, CEO, T5 Process Solutions, "As a start up company, the MIRC provides us with state of the art facilities and a comprehensive business support programme while Athlone Institute of Technology provides a ready-made research capability for the development of our technology."

"Whether you are a prospective entrepreneur, an existing company committed to ongoing innovation or an academic interested in commercialising your research, the MIRC is open to you" concluded Mr Lonergan, who can be contacted at 090-6471882 or mlonergan@ait.ie.



The Midlands Innovation and Research Centre at Athlone Institute of Technology