

**Collaboration between Skillnet Innovation Exchange and**

**Sport Ireland supports the digital transformation of sport in Ireland**

Skillnet Innovation Exchange and Sport Ireland invite digital companies to join the

marketplace for innovation to provide solutions for sports organisations across Ireland

**Dublin, November 28th -** Today Skillnet Innovation Exchange announced a collaboration with Sport Ireland to support the digital transformation of sport in Ireland. Through its Digital for Sport initiative, Skillnet Innovation Exchange will invite technology solutions providers to pitch to, and collaborate with, sports organisations across Ireland looking to harness the power of digital technology to increase efficiencies and performance.

The collaboration was announced at the inaugural Sport and Innovation Technology Summit held today at the Sport Ireland Campus where Skillnet Innovation Exchange called on digital solutions providers to explore how their solutions can be applied to the world of sports management and performance. The initiative is expected to achieve improved digital adoption across the Irish sports ecosystem, including streamlining administrative processes, optimising data management and communications and improving the understanding of participants performance and experience.

Skillnet Innovation Exchange is Ireland’s innovation marketplace, connecting organisations facing digital transformation challenges with technology companies that can fast-track the solutions. Since its inception two years ago, 30 challenges have been published by Skillnet Innovation Exchange for companies with a digital challenge and 10 deals have been done between companies facing a challenge and companies with the ability to solve them.

Skillnet Innovation Exchange is an initiative of Skillnet Ireland, the business support agency of Ireland that is responsible for advancing the competitiveness of businesses through providing skills programmes. Sport Ireland is the authority responsible for the development of sport in Ireland working with the 60 governing bodies of sport and a network of 29 Local Sports Partnerships.

Thomas Byrne TD, Minister of State for Sport and Physical Education, commented: “*Innovation and collaboration are core values of the Government’s National Sports Policy, so I am delighted to see this new partnership taking place between the Skillnet Innovation Exchange and Sport Ireland, which will support the digital transformation of the Irish sports sector. Technology has an impact on most aspects of our lives and so I want to commend all of the sports organisations, researchers and enterprises who came together today at the Sport Innovation and Technology Summit, to explore what role technology will play in shaping the future of sport in Ireland*.”

Speaking at today's launch, Conor Carmody, Programme Director at Skillnet Innovation Exchange,commented: “*This new collaboration between Sport Ireland and Skillnet Innovation Exchange will offer many SMEs the opportunity to collaborate with sporting organisations across Ireland, bridging the innovation divide and strengthening the Irish sport ecosystem. With today’s announcement we are thrilled to expand our offering and look forward to seeing the challenges and solutions develop in the next few years”.*

Benny Cullen, Director of Research and Innovation at Sport Ireland, said: “*The recently launched Sport Ireland strategy aims to drive innovation through creative collaborations across the sports sector and the promotion of a digital first approach. This new partnership with Skillnet Innovation Exchange will help Irish sport to deliver on these ambitions. This initiative will provide tailored supports to the Irish sport sector and Irish enterprise to help foster new partnerships and develop innovative digital solutions in sport.”*

Mark Jordan, Chief Strategy Officer, Skillnet Ireland, said: “*Digital transformation is one of the most significant challenges facing organisations across all sectors. This collaboration between Skillnet Innovation Exchange and Sport Ireland gives sport bodies the opportunity to access the talent required to enjoy the benefits of digital technology.”*

Skillnet Innovation Exchange has successfully partnered with regional innovation hubs such as The Ludgate Hub, the Galway Technology Centre, GreenTech HQ, The Mill Hub and the RDI Hub. The continuing expansion of the Skillnet Innovation Exchange, which currently has in excess of 600 participants, allows a growing number of SMEs to enjoy the programme’s benefits, including access to an instant sales pipeline, market intelligence and the capability to sell to large companies.

Corporate members get access to collaboration opportunities with Ireland’s most talented SMEs, accelerating their digital transformation. There are currently 34 corporate members of The Innovation Exchange, including Ryanair, Glanbia, ESB, Axa Insurance, Microsoft, IBM and IDA Ireland.

Skillnet Ireland has committed €5 million over four years to fund the Skillnet Innovation Exchange which is designed to address the barriers that exist for scaling companies when selling to large companies and multinationals. The programme will support over 1,000 companies between 2022-2025.

Skillnet Innovation Exchange invites digital solutions providers to join its marketplace for innovation at  [www.theinnovationexchange.ie](http://www.theinnovationexchange.ie/).

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**About** [**Skillnet Innovation Exchange**](http://www.theinnovationexchange.ie/)

Skillnet Innovation Exchange is where businesses facing digital transformation challenges are connected with innovative solutions providers with the talent to help them achieve their ambitions. Large corporations get access to Ireland’s most talented solutions providers, and to collaborate to accelerate digital transformation. Scaling technology companies get an instant sales pipeline as well as access to key decision makers, market intelligence and the capability to sell to large corporates.

**About** [**Skillnet Ireland**](https://www.skillnetireland.ie/)

Skillnet Ireland is the national talent development agency of the Government of Ireland, responsible for advancing the competitiveness, productivity, and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led

talent development. Skillnet Ireland partners with 57 industry bodies, supporting over 24,700 businesses and more than 92,400 trainees annually, through its 70 Skillnet Business Networks across most sectors and all regions in Ireland.

Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

To learn more about Skillnet Ireland visit: [www.skillnetireland.ie](http://www.skillnetireland.ie/)

Skillnet Business Network search tool: <https://www.skillnetireland.ie/our-networks/>

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**About** [**Sport Ireland**](http://www.sportireland.ie)

Sport Ireland is the authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland, including participation in sport, high-performance sport, anti-doping, coaching, and the development of the Sport Ireland Campus.

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