



COMPLETE CALIBRATIONS INTRODUCES NEW ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Agile Innovation Fund, supported by Enterprise Ireland & Local Enterprise Office.

Do you wish to develop a new product or improve an existing one?

Enterprise Ireland's Agile Innovation Fund supports the development of new or substantially improved products, services, or processes, where the total project cost is no more than €300,000. It features a streamlined online application form with fast track approval.

The fund is open to Companies who are;

- new to R&D
- operating in short, product life cycles
- undertaking small/short projects

Grant rates range from 25% to 50% and applications can be submitted online anytime. Most importantly, the fund is open to eligible Local Enterprise Office clients, like **Complete Calibrations**.

Learn how Complete Calibrations benefited from the Agile Innovation Fund.

Founded in 2006 by Darren O'Sullivan, Complete Calibrations is a specialised firm dedicated to the calibration and supply of test weights to the pharmaceutical industry and other sectors.

Precision is key to the production of these weights and from the outset this accuracy was determined manually. But this method was time consuming and monotonous, and a more time saving, and cost-effective method was required.

So with the help of an Agile Innovation Fund from Enterprise Ireland, the Cork-based company was able to pivot to using robotics which freed staff up to work on other elements of the business.



Making It Happen:
Darren O'Sullivan of Complete Calibrations

"In the past when we would calibrate the weights, someone would have to put references and test weights on comparators over and over again – this was boring work that no-one really wanted to do," says O'Sullivan. "So I created a robot which would replace the person doing that work.

"In order to do this, I contacted my Local Enterprise Office and applied for funding which would enable me to take on the R&D which was needed to get the robots working 24/7. It was a big project which took me almost two years of research, manufacturing, testing, and redeveloping. Then getting them operational in the laboratory and testing them continuously required more development work in order to get them market ready."

The company boss says that achieving the results required to bring this innovative new product to market was hugely enhanced by the Agile Innovation Fund.

"The fund was really important in helping me to achieve what I set out to do," he says. "Without it I wouldn't have been able to devote the time to it or find the money to buy in the equipment and tools needed in the space of time we turned it around – I definitely would have had to drag the project out a lot longer.

"The funding also acted like a safety net so if things did go wrong, it wouldn't be as disastrous as it might be if I was spending my own funds – knowing that I wouldn't go bankrupt meant I was more willing to take the risks involved with doing my own research and development."

O'Sullivan says the funding also helped the company to 'franchise the lab' across the country and is also planning to expand overseas in the near future.

Exporting or having an intention to is one of the criteria for companies applying for the Agile Innovation Fund, but Pádraig Doolan, Enterprise Ireland Technical Advisor – Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I), says it is open to businesses of any size and is a very straightforward process.

"Essentially, the fund is for companies who want to do R&D, and is designed to have a quick turnaround with a short application form," he says. "It is also easy to fill out and get approval.

"Eligibility is very broad as the company just needs to be EBITDA positive and must be planning to export – not necessarily now, but if the outcome of the project doesn't mean they will be exporting then they would not be supported with the fund. Once a company is Irish-based, with an intention to export and EBITDA-positive – that is good enough for us."

The Agile Innovation Tech. Advisor says applying for the fund couldn't be easier.

"If people are interested, all they need to do is go onto the website and download a one-page proposal," he says. "All info is there on the form, and they are just required to describe their idea and give a high-level info about the company. It probably takes an hour to fill it out.

Then once it comes into us, we commit to giving an answer on eligibility within 3 days, but when it comes into me, I usually deliver a response that day or the following day.

"After being given the go ahead to apply, they need to fill in all the information, most of which is sitting in their business plans already, then do a project plan, where they spell out what their application is for and how they will achieve it. Most people will submit the application within a number of weeks and then, when received by us, it will typically take a number of weeks more to go through the various stages before approval.

But the applicant can start incurring costs as soon as they have made the application – so it doesn't need to be fully approved as the vast majority do get approval."

Doolan says that the majority of proposals are funded either in full or in large part and he would encourage anyone who believes they are eligible to make some enquiries with their local LEO.

"R&D is essential for companies as it is a key part of innovation and without it, they stand to be more vulnerable to outside shocks," he says. "The Agile Innovation Fund is very worth getting involved with as there are many benefits to companies developing a new product or service or even just a new organisational method. So I would encourage them to interact with their local LEO and get the process started."

Darren O'Sullivan agrees.

"The funding played a crucial role in helping me get to where I am today, and I would highly recommend it to others," he says. "It has been really beneficial, and the future is looking bright for us."

Don't delay, apply today.
For more information,
visit: localenterprise.ie/agile