



Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

STARTUP STORIES: LIR ANALYTICAL

CLEANING UP IN BIO-SECURITY: HOW LEO LONGFORD HELPED LIR ANALYTICAL FILL A GAP IN THE FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY

MICHEAL SAVAGE'S MISSION IN STARTING LIR ANALYTICAL, A FOOD AND BEVERAGE BIO-SECURITY HYGIENE SPECIALIST, WAS TO HELP KEEP THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD CHAIN SAFE AND TO HELP COMBAT THE RISE OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN THE AGRIFOOD INDUSTRY. HE ALSO WANTED TO START AND GROW A BUSINESS IN HIS NATIVE LONGFORD.

"I had always wanted to set up my own business, and in this region," says Micheal.

The analytical chemist worked in the pharmaceutical industry first, which is what gave him the experience and confidence to follow through with his business idea.

He could see that both farmers and food processors were under pressure to produce more food, more sustainably and with greater focus on increasing hygiene standards.

One major problem was holding them back. "Farmers were using the same disinfectant products for 30 years but the bacteria they were facing was changing and the standards expected of them were getting higher," says Savage.

"I could see a gap was emerging in the market. A lot of the focus is on food processors, but not the original food producers. We broke into that market by creating targeted products for it."

He says "we" but admits that at the time he set up Lir Analytical in 2014, aged 25, there was only him and his idea.

"There was just me originally. I went to LEO Longford and told them this is what I plan to do."

He needed some help doing it. "LEO Longford gave me two Innovation Vouchers which I was able to use to work

Making It Happen: Catherine Kane of Local Enterprise Office Longford with Micheal Savage of Lir Analytical

with Athlone IT's Bioscience Research Institute. That helped me develop and validate our bio-security formulations. If I had had to pay private consultants to do the work it would have cost me six times as much," he says.

LEO Longford also provided Lir Analytical with a Business Priming Grant. "Getting the Priming Grant was vital because I had little or no money at the start," says Savage. "It was a classic bootstrap startup. We used the Priming Grant for salaries and equipment. The LEO helped me get the business off the ground and was always very receptive to our needs."

That included helping him find a business premises. Lir Analytical opened its first small laboratory and manufacturing facility in Granard. As the company grew it needed a larger unit and moved into Longford town.

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“I’D SAY TO ANYONE ELSE WHO HAS A BUSINESS IDEA, JUST KNOCK ON YOUR LEO’S DOOR”

Micheal Savage of Lir Analytical

“By late 2016 LEO Longford had helped us grow the business to the point where we became an Enterprise Ireland High Potential Startup. At that time we were just starting to export to the UK and that enabled us to secure a funding round, matched by Enterprise Ireland.”

Today the business employs just under 15 people and is continuing to grow its international markets. The company exports manufactured products across Scandinavia and Central Europe. It has also expanded the sectors it targets, including dairy, food processing and now the pig industry as well.

“We’re creating a new generation of solutions comprising more targeted disinfectants, many of which are bespoke to various geographies. It’s an area farmers have become very interested in.

As well as manufacturing products, we have also grown the consultancy and diagnostic side of our business as well, working with clients who are both farmers and food producers.”

Catherine Kane of LEO Longford was one of many LEO staff who worked with Savage on his entrepreneurial journey. “We advise people to come to us as early as possible in their journey because we have a range of training supports, including Feasibility Study Grants that can help them refine their business idea and develop a viable plan for their business. Once this is developed, the LEO will then identify the range of supports that will be of most benefit,” she says.

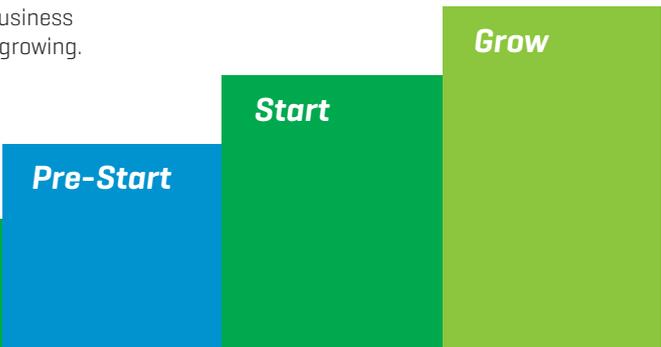
Lir secured a LEO Priming Grant when it started followed by a LEO Business Expansion Grant when it was growing.

“It has now progressed into the Enterprise Ireland portfolio,” says Kane.

Both agree that for anyone with a business idea, their Local Enterprise Office is the first port of call.

“All I had to get me going was an idea, and LEO helped me along the business startup journey,” says Savage. “I’d say to anyone else who has a business idea, just knock on your LEO’s door. Have that conversation and don’t be afraid to ask for support.”

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