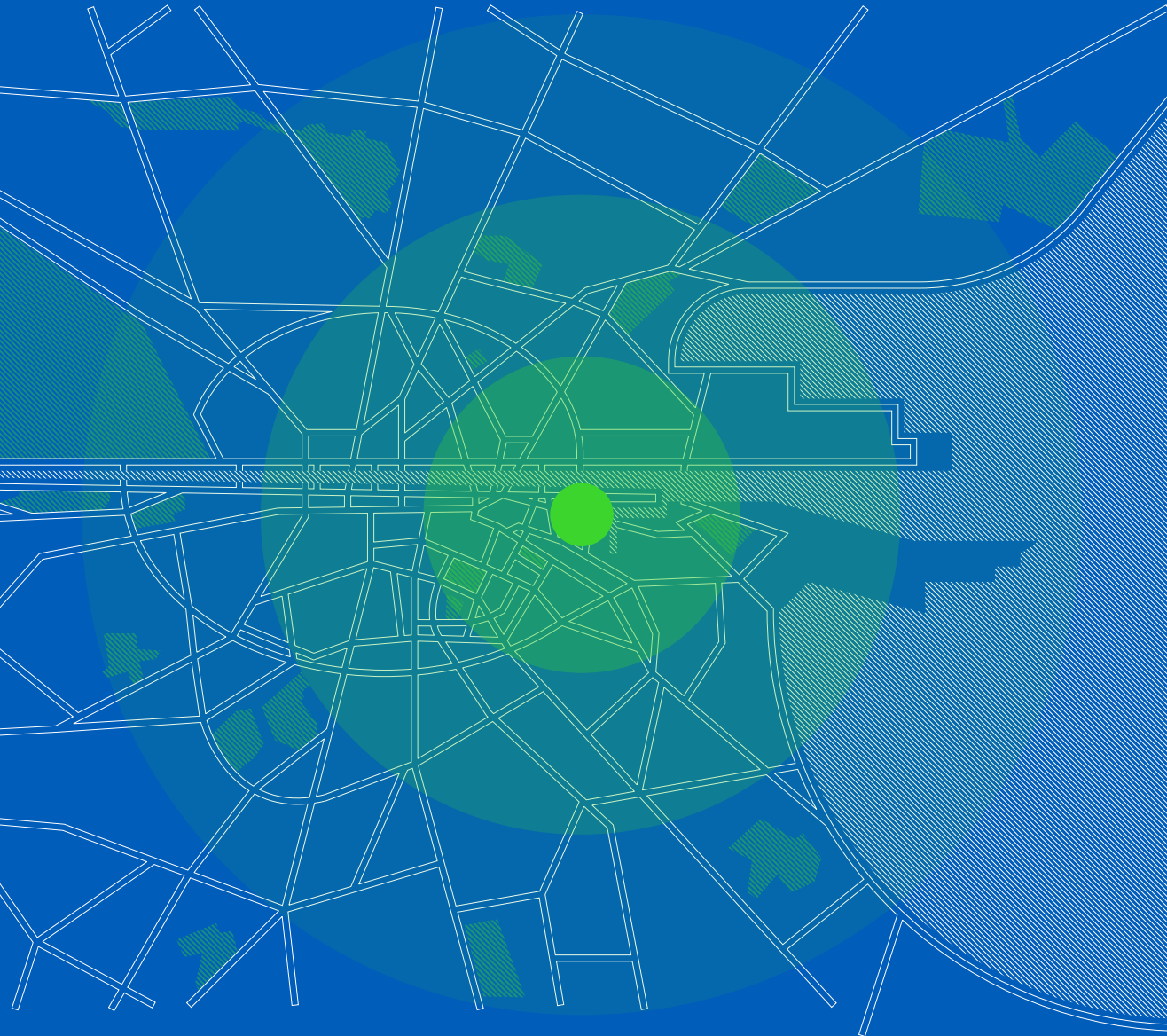


# Grand Canal Innovation District

A Vision for Ireland



## Taoiseach's Foreword



“The Grand Canal campus will be a physical space where encounters and unplanned collaborations happen daily and at the right level.”

— Leo Varadkar TD, Taoiseach

The Grand Canal Innovation District is an initiative whose time has come. Ireland has based its success on being open to the world. That policy has paid off as we see more people in employment than ever before in our history. International companies are attracted by our workforce and our favourable investment climate.

We aim to make Ireland the tech capital of Europe and we have many of the ingredients to succeed. The evidence is all around us as we see so many high-tech companies located here.

But we have to ask how prosperity can be sustained. As the world changes around us, so too must we adapt. As the risks facing a small, open island economy multiply, Ireland has to seek out to future-proof our economy. We must become more innovative as technological developments occur at an exponential pace. Big data, machine learning, the internet of things and robotics are driving change at a dizzying speed.

Future economic success demands that Ireland is able to capitalise on these waves of innovation. We can't just repeat the existing formula, we need to keep adapting.

Ireland must deepen its relationship with the many innovative multinationals that have located here, and develop stronger links between them and the regions in which they reside.

We need to ensure that talent, ideas and capital flow in both directions between multinational companies and start-ups – for the benefit of both.

That is why the proposal for an innovation district centred around the Grand Canal Docks makes so much sense. Companies today look to engage with researchers and entrepreneurs, as well as with other firms, to identify new products or services and discuss how they might be brought to market.

Physical proximity is crucial in encouraging this kind of interaction.

We have the individual elements: numerous high-tech companies, research-driven universities and ambitious start-up companies. But now we need to create the right environment that encourages them to work in a collaborative way to everyone's benefit.

The Grand Canal campus will be a physical space where encounters and unplanned collaborations happen daily and at the right level.

This is not just for the benefit of companies and the bottom-line. We know that young people today value working in a dynamic and welcoming environment. They want the vibrancy of a diverse city area.

This has to be a two-way process. Businesses can't shut themselves off from the public and leading companies recognise that there is a positive link between diversity and innovation.

The innovation district will open itself up to the city and its citizens by providing a public meeting space and creating a role for public performances.

I am sure the Grand Canal Innovation District will provide many chances for the local community to avail themselves of the facilities and opportunities it offers.

Establishing an innovation district is one way for Ireland to position itself globally to take advantage of the next wave of investment and innovation opportunities that arise and it is one we must nurture and develop.

Leo Varadkar TD  
Taoiseach

“If Ireland can create a world-class innovation system to bridge its foreign and domestic firms, while opening the jobs ladder for everyone, it’ll handle the twists and rolls of the next globalisation wave with aplomb”

— OECD Report on Ireland 2016

## Our Vision



**Dr. Diarmuid O'Brien**

Chief Innovation  
& Enterprise Officer,  
Trinity College Dublin



**Dr. Patrick Prendergast**

Provost & President,  
Trinity College Dublin

Trinity is spearheading the development of the Grand Canal Innovation District concept in collaboration with the other Dublin universities and the broader enterprise community. We are outlining our vision and issuing a call to action for industry, higher education, the local community, and government to collaborate on a new and critically important engine for the next phase of Ireland’s economic development.

After 18 months of preparation, today we lay out how a globally competitive innovation district is achievable in Dublin. At a time when the availability of talent and innovation drives business investment and growth Dublin must play its role as a capital city for Ireland and establish the infrastructure necessary to compete internationally.

A new innovation district, with a new university campus at its heart, will be a vital step in enabling Dublin to be ranked as a top 20 global city for innovation. It is achievable if we work together.

We are not presenting a blueprint or a set of specific actions – that comes later. Today’s announcement by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar sets down a marker that Ireland intends to play at the highest levels in the world’s innovation economy. The first step is providing a starting vision to enable an ecosystem-wide conversation on the challenges we face; the opportunities that are open to us and the choices that need to be made to ensure Ireland remains a globally competitive location for business, and becomes an internationally recognised hub for research and innovation.

We encourage all stakeholders to participate, comment and provide feedback and support the development of an innovation district masterplan that is reflective of the entire ecosystem in the Grand Canal Dock area.



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

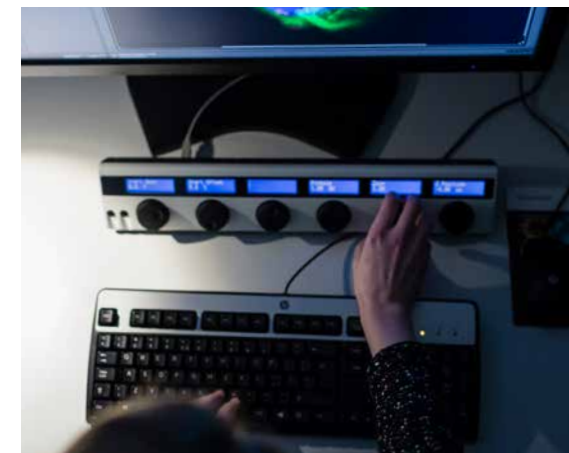
## Putting Ireland on the World Stage for Innovation

Over the last decade, an exciting new development has been happening in the world's leading cities – **a new kind of urban centre known as an *innovation district*** – with large and fast-growing companies, universities, tech and creative start-ups all locating closely to each other and innovating intensively within one dense city centre location. Innovation districts are authentic communities that can achieve amazing commercial and academic success, while also acting as a magnet for the best of global talent and new investment.

## Ireland as an Innovation Leader

**In conjunction with the other Dublin universities, Trinity College Dublin is bringing forward a vision to develop a new campus at Dublin's Grand Canal Quay.**

Dedicated to innovation and developed in partnership with enterprise, it will act as the catalyst for the development of a globally-competitive innovation district for Ireland, to be delivered in cooperation with the government and key state agencies.



# Where does this idea come from?

The Grand Canal Innovation District proposal is taking its lead from many locations around the world – such as Kendall Square in Cambridge Massachusetts, Rotterdam in Holland and MaRS in Toronto.



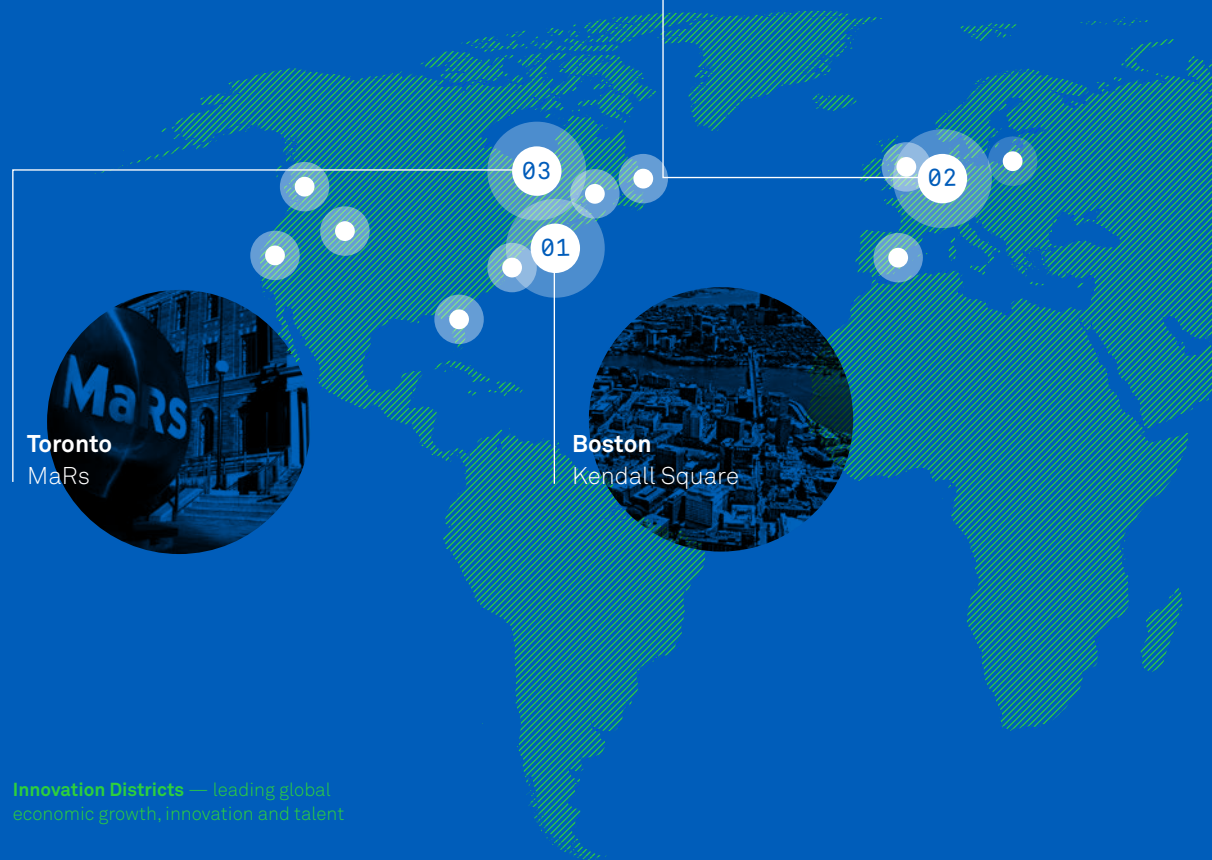
Rotterdam  
Innovation District



Boston  
Kendall Square



Toronto  
MaRS



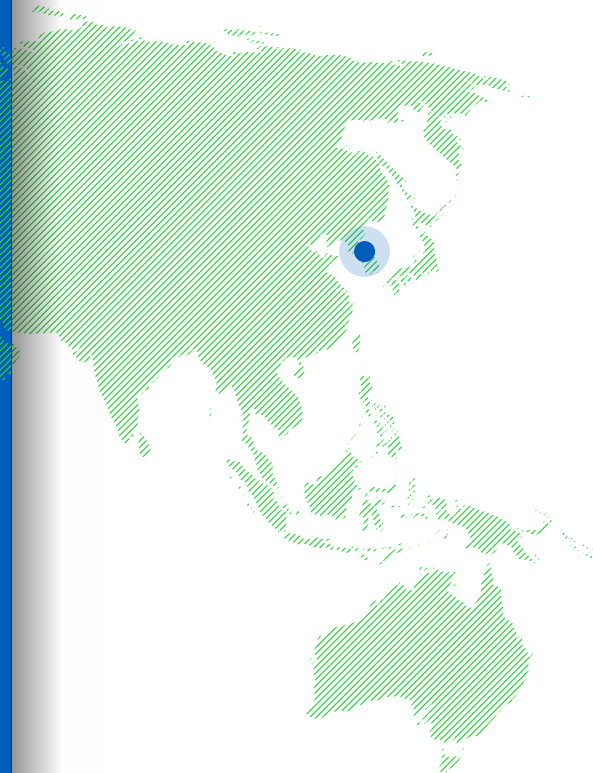
**Innovation Districts** — leading global economic growth, innovation and talent

# Ireland's Opportunity

**Ireland today is one of the world's most open economies, highly responsive to global change.**

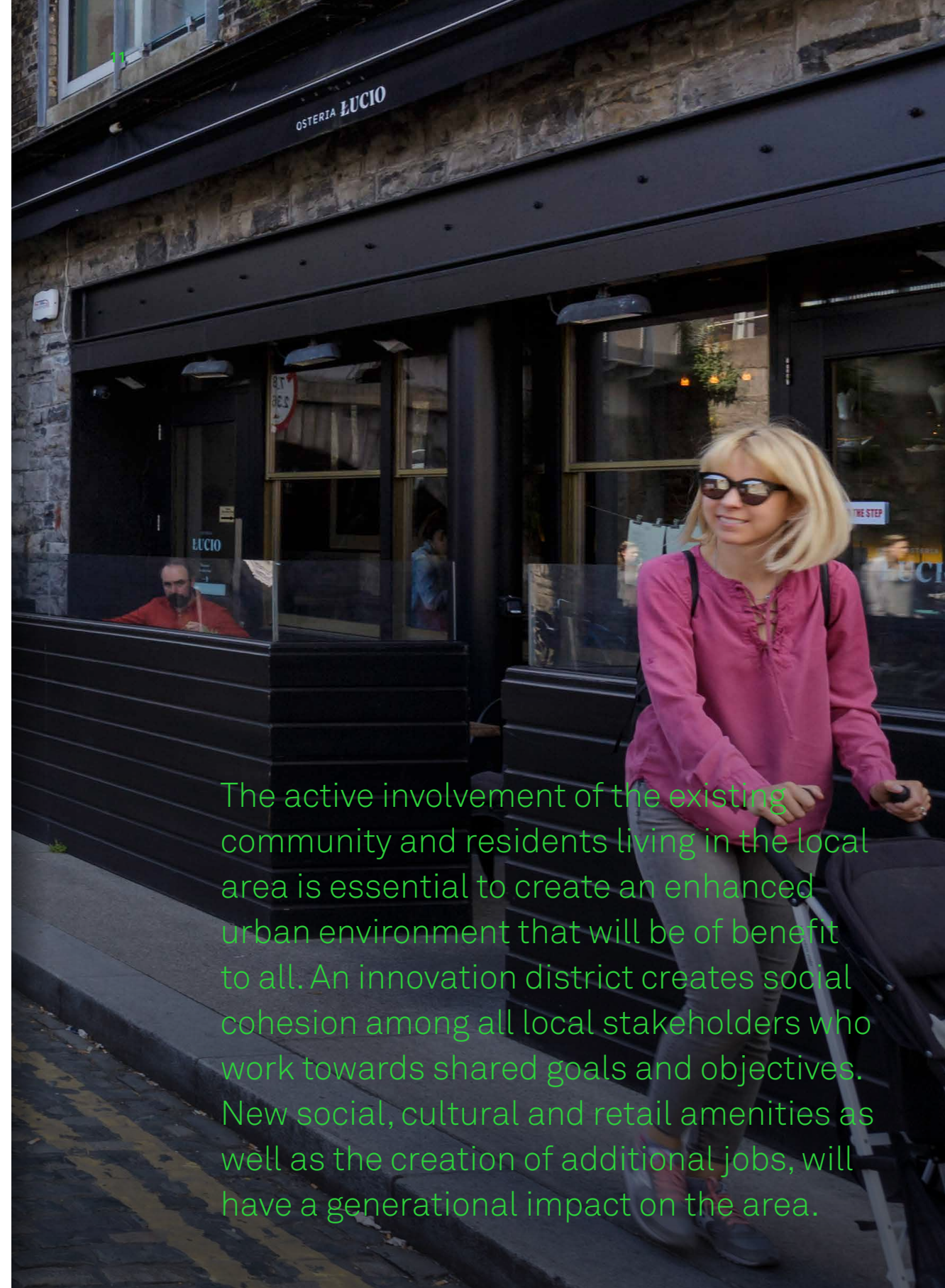
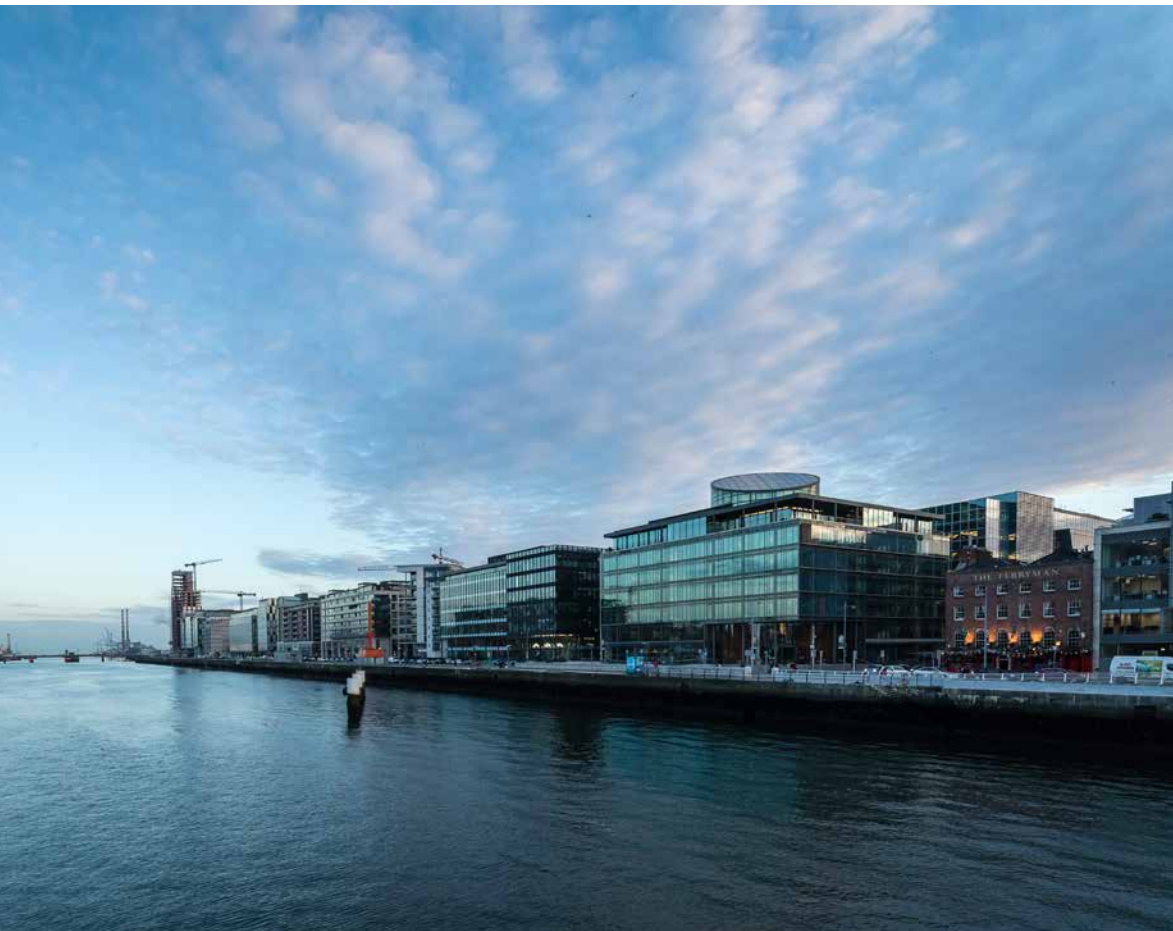
'Talent' and 'Innovation Ecosystems' are now recognised as the newest drivers of global economic growth and national competitiveness. With long established sectors now converging rapidly, ideas and concepts from one discipline are leaping over traditional boundaries and merging with new applications every day. This new type of innovation happens best in an ecosystem where people can easily meet, interact and collaborate with peers from related disciplines.

This creates a unique opportunity for Ireland, for Dublin and for Trinity.



## Why Dublin?

Dublin is already home to many of the world's most innovative multinational tech companies leading the current global technology revolution and it also has a large vibrant and dynamic start-up community operating alongside these big players. In addition, we have a highly progressive policy environment, an outward-looking investment strategy and we have world-class universities. Dublin, as Ireland's capital city, can play a unique and forward looking role for Ireland.



The active involvement of the existing community and residents living in the local area is essential to create an enhanced urban environment that will be of benefit to all. An innovation district creates social cohesion among all local stakeholders who work towards shared goals and objectives. New social, cultural and retail amenities as well as the creation of additional jobs, will have a generational impact on the area.

## How does an Innovation District work?



1

### Concentrated Urban Environment

Formed in a concentrated urban environment like Grand Canal Dock



2

### Top Talent

Has a critical mass of top talent, innovation, enterprise and finance



5

### Dedicated Urban Spaces

Dedicated urban spaces help the community to connect, develop, share ideas and act



6

### Integrated Community

Integrated in the local community enabling employment and access to education



“What’s really exciting is that not only will it attract talent, it will attract companies from outside into Ireland. You will have young Irish companies growing up side by side with these companies and it will also attract venture funds from around the world”

— Julie Sinnamon, CEO, Enterprise Ireland



3

### Proximity and Density

Has proximity, density and scale of activities



4

### World Class Universities

Anchored by world class universities providing talent and innovation



7

### Social and Commercial

Socially and commercially supported – shops, cafes and student accommodation



8

### Local and Culture

Connected to local and cultural activities creating a well-connected sense of place



## Why Now for an Innovation District?

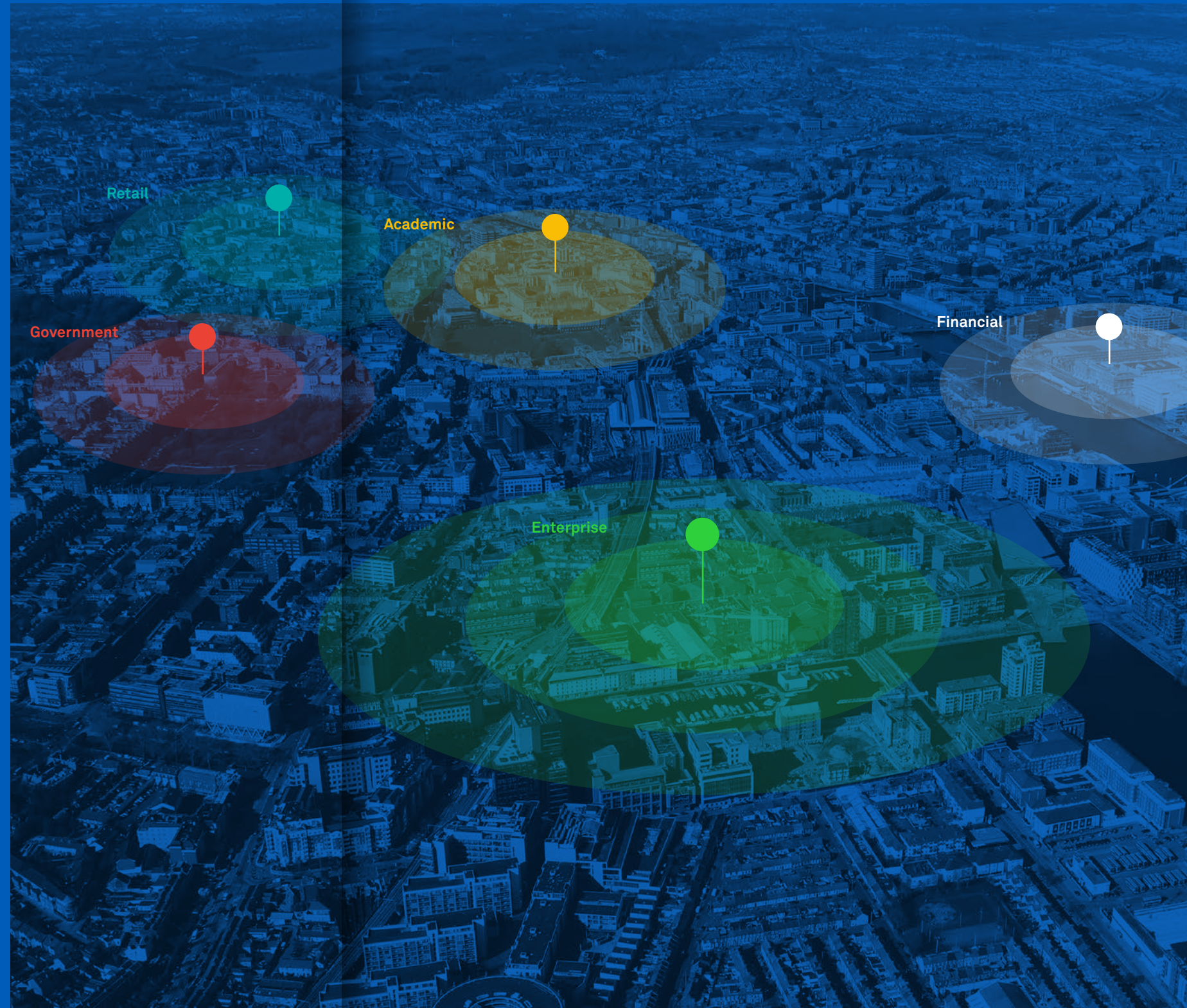
This is a big opportunity for Ireland – we already have many of the required components located within the Grand Canal Dock area of Dublin:

- **Leading global companies operating in close proximity in the heart of an urbanised part of the city**
- **Scale and a strong track record in university research and innovation**
- **A multitude of ambitious start-ups**
- **A world-standard university with land located in the area**

The challenge now is to activate and integrate these elements to create a compelling and visible innovation district for Ireland.

### Promising Transformational Change

The overall vision of the Grand Canal Innovation District is even greater than the sum of these parts. A population - dense urban district acting as a power house - forging creative and technical talent at the intensity required for today's fast moving global economy. This is a proposal to transform Ireland's innovation offering and trigger transformational change, which will be to the benefit of our entire country.





## Get Involved in the Conversation

“The multinational and start-up sectors in Dublin are like two unconnected cities – I see the university and the innovation district as the way to bridge the two”

— Stephen McIntyre – Frontline Ventures & Former MD Twitter Ireland



**This proposal is being developed by Trinity College Dublin in partnership with the Government, state agencies, locally-based businesses and the community of the Grand Canal Dock area.**

The vision will evolve and have input from other Dublin-based universities; enterprise agencies and the local community.

We want your input. A series of free meetings and open days are being organised over the coming weeks and months to consult with the public on how we should progress. If you would like to attend any of these or to be kept informed, please contact [GCID@tcd.ie](mailto:GCID@tcd.ie) or go to [www.tcd.ie/innovation-district](http://www.tcd.ie/innovation-district).



“Having an innovation district would set Dublin apart and set Ireland apart – we see other examples in capital cities across the world which add to the ecosystem of those countries – so this is very important for Ireland”

— Martin Shanahan – CEO IDA



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin



Roinn an Taoisigh  
Department of the Taoiseach

Chief Innovation  
& Enterprise Officer  
House 10  
Trinity College  
Dublin

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