



**Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil:** WFD-C14-CRWAT-4

**Stádas:** Submitted

**Submission:** Industry/Craft residency

**Údar:** Walton Institute

**Comhairliúchán:**

Creative Waterford Strategy 2023-2027

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## Litir Chumhdaigh

A cornerstone of ICT research and development activity, Walton Institute has been operating for over 25 years in the West Campus of South East Technological University and undertakes cutting edge research blending fundamental science with real world commercial applications. Walton employs over 80 research scientists and engineers, graduated over 21 PhD Students and manages an active international network in excess of 700 partners from industry, academic and research institutes spread across 35 countries worldwide.

The aim of the Institute is to create a unique ecosystem to take multi-disciplinary blue sky research through to industry application. The organization is self-funded, meaning it lives through the development of competitive research proposals targeting national and international funding programmes. Each dedicated research division focuses on fundamental ICT domains such as wired and wireless communication infrastructures, artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, pervasive sensing systems, augmented / virtual reality, data analytics and machine learning, Internet of Things, quantum and satellite communication, biological nano communication, and mobile application development.

The TSSG Technology Gateway at Walton Institute, funded by Enterprise Ireland is the commercial arm of the Institute and provides supports to local and national companies from Innovation Vouchers that support preliminary studies into new technologies or solutions for companies, as well as Innovation Partnerships that focus on larger R&D projects. The aim of the Innovation Partnership is to de-risk industries that want to pursue research to enhance their products and solutions. TSSG Technology Gateway also engages directly with SME's and MNC's on business funded Contract R&D projects of various sizes and across various disciplines. By collaborating with Walton, companies are able to access the basic as well as applied research in cutting edge areas that will be difficult to pursue given the cost in infrastructure as well as expertise.

## Observations:

### Supporting our Creative Sector - Strategic Priority 2

**Caibidil:** Ag tacú le hEarnáil na  
Cruthaitheachta

One of the latest additions to Walton Institute is the eTextiles lab is funded by the Enterprise Ireland Technology Gateway Capital Call with an aim of supporting start-ups and SME's to leverage this emerging field by advancing technologies to provide more intelligent smart garments and fabric-driven innovative applications.

The e-textiles lab's 'Re-Fashioning the Future', project, funded by Waterford City and County Council and Creative Ireland Waterford, brought together a community of traditional textile craft practitioners with experts from Walton Institute's Electronic Textiles (eTextiles) and Smart Materials Living Lab. The workshop series saw these two juxtaposed industries come together by collaboratively exploring and investigating eTextiles with the Lilypad sewable range of electronic components, conductive fabrics, and conductive thread. It is based on the outcomes and ongoing impacts of this project that this suggestion is being put forward as it is clear to us that collaborations between diverse disciplines that have common roots in either the skills or materials used is beneficial to both parties.

In a similar structure to the many existing artist in residence schemes we are suggesting there may be untold benefits in establishing industry / craft residencies. These could potentially be run as open calls. Driving partnerships between creatives and complementary organisations allows for exploration into new modes of production and collaborative learning which can be used as "a vehicle to create points of connection between these skills and organisations and agencies who can benefit from creative approaches to their work" (par 3).

A key aim of any such residency should be to financially support the artist/creative while de-risking industry in the pursuit and support of collaborative creative applications. For example, this could take the form of re-examining, adapting and utilising existing production line materials or waste by-products. We would envisage such a residency to be most effective where there is a common ground from a materiality standpoint which could create several untapped opportunities. For example, a fashion design graduate could take a residency in a charity shop to work with non-saleable fabrics or a Quarry might engage a potter in a residency. We know at Walton Institute we would thoroughly embrace an opportunity to engage with a knitter or an individual with strong embroidery skills for an extended period. For that reason, we would suggest a 6-month residency at a minimum, along with an estimated cost of €15-20k to cover artists fees and materials.

#### Suggested Action:

Creative Waterford will seek out funding opportunities to support an industry/craft residency to drive the development of Creative and Cultural industries, in areas of specialisation and in areas that support circular economic activity.

#### *Main opinion:*

With innovation 'written into Waterford City and County Council economic and development policies as a key driver of our economy' (par 5) we are proposing industry craft residencies as a means to open opportunities to drive experimental creative applications, in addition to examining new ways to utilise waste and by-products through a cross pollination of industries with craft sector at the core.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl

**Teorainneacha Gafa ar an léarscáil:** Níl