Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) Consultation: Summary

Submission by Edmond Connolly Manager, South East Regional Skills Forum

Section 1: Comments on Identified and Emerging Regional Strengths

The draft consultation document **identifies the following sectoral strengths for the Southern Region (including the South East):**

Identified sectoral strengths	Emerging Opportunities
- ICT - Advanced Manufacturing - Food/Agri-Tech - Automotive/Aerospace - Pharma/MedTech - Marine/Maritime - Renewable Energy - Financial Services - Design	- Renewable Energy - New opportunities in ICT (Quantum) - Advanced Manufacturing - Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) Sector

1. Q: Do you agree with the suggested areas of strength for the three Southern regions as set out above? **Are there other areas of strength to be highlighted?**
   Two additional areas come to mind:
   - **Transport & Logistics – significant employment. International expertise.**
   - **Human Health – many centres of excellence. Significant employment,**

2. Q: **What, in your opinion, are the key sectors in your region**? What are the skills, assets and capabilities within your region?
   - The key sectors are included in the list in the table above.
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3. Q: Which **sectors could achieve critical mass in Ireland** over the next seven years? Where are the opportunities and what needs to be done to unlock these opportunities?

   - Advanced Manufacturing / Agri-Tech
   - Food Manufacturing
   - Pharma/MedTech
   - ICT
   - Renewable Energy
   - Financial Services

   There needs to be significantly more development of the relationship between education/research and industry. Sectoral clusters need to be greatly enhanced and the involvement of industry with higher education in research & innovation needs to grow dramatically.

Section 2: Comments on Digitalisation and Digital Transformation

4. Q: Is **digitalisation impacting your sector or region**? How?

5. Q: Could your business or sector benefit from new digital technologies? **What support would you need to adopt these digital technologies?**

6. Q: How can we **improve the alignment of the country's ICT and digitalisation expertise, initiatives and investments**?

Section 3: Comments on Green Transformation for Enterprise

7. Q: What **opportunities can you see as arising from Green Transformation** for your sector or region?
    - Significant opportunities for manufacturing and renewable energy
        - Advanced Manufacturing
        - Food Manufacturing
        - Pharma/MedTech
        - Renewable Energy
    - Policy needs to empower indigenous / small enterprise as well as large enterprise. Eg farmers have the capacity to engage heavily in renewable energy production but require policy support (feed in tariffs, etc).

8. Q: What **challenges exist for enterprises trying to reduce emissions** or introduce sustainable practices?
    Recycling / circular economy is very under-developed.
    Huge ongoing dependency on fossil fuels

9. Q: How **could government or enterprise agencies assist you in meeting those challenges**?
    Greater incentivisation / encouragement of recycling and more ambition to move away from fossil fuels.

Section 4: Comments on Innovation Diffusion

10. Q: What are the barriers for innovation diffusion in Ireland? **How can these barriers be broken down? Are their regional differences in these barriers?**

11. **Q: What channels for diffusion are used by your business or sector?**

12. **Q: How can we enhance collaboration between industry and the higher education sector?**

Develop and properly fund sector specific clusters at a regional level. At present there is very little industry collaboration on research & innovation at a regional level. Industry is not proactively driving the research & innovation agenda.

Section 5: Comments on International collaboration on RD&I

13. Q: What areas of **research or industry sectors does Ireland have an international competitive advantage** in? How can we build on that advantage?

14. Q: In what areas or **sectors should we be concentrating our international research collaboration** activity? What supports do these areas or sectors need to be competitive on a world stage?

15. Q. How **can Ireland's regions use Ireland's international links and memberships** to support their strengths and emerging areas of future opportunity?

Section 6: Comments on actions to improve the national or regional enterprise research and innovation system

16. Q: Which RD&I initiatives have been successful for your sector/region? **Which programmes should continue? Which RD&I programmes for enterprise are not working?**
Enterprise Ireland funded 'Technological Gateways' with IOTs/TUs have achieved much. However, most lack the critical mass to have significant impact on sectors. Many are dependent upon a small number of experts and a large number of PhD candidates. Some of the less successful gateways should be discontinued and new ones established where needed. There should be greater access to SFI funding for these Gateways also.

17. Q: How do we generate a **stronger, unified ecosystem approach to RD&I across the country** to strengthen the visibility of our RD&I supports?
Much stronger commitment to enterprise led clusters with strong links to academia.

18. Q: How do **we target RD&I spend in a way which maximises impact** for the economy and which addresses the market failure evident in low RD&I in the indigenous SME sector?
Much stronger commitment to enterprise led clusters with strong links to academia.