

WIT: at the heart of 21st century manufacturing

3DWIT, a designated activity company (DAC) which will be instrumental in both training industry in new manufacturing techniques as well as providing prototype development services, was launched at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) on Friday last by Business Minister Heather Humphreys. Minister Humphreys was in Waterford to launch a new Regional Enterprise Plan for the South-East to support enterprise growth and job creation through collaborative initiatives.

3DWIT is an initiative of SEAM (South Eastern Applied Materials) Research Centre, an Enterprise Ireland Technology Gateway Centre based in WIT and headed by Dr. Ramesh Raghavendra. Following the opening of its metal 3D printing centre in 2014 SEAM is now spinning out 3DWIT for the support and education of industry needs in the high potential and fast growing field of Additive Manufacturing (AM).



Dr Ramesh Raghavendra (Centre Director of SEAM and CEO ThreeD DAC), with Minister Heather Humphreys (Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation) and Minister John Halligan (Minister of State for Training and Skills & Innovation). | Photos: Leo Murphy

Speaking at SEAM, Minister Humphreys said: “The collaboration in evidence here at SEAM is a superb example of what these new Regional Enterprise Plans are fundamentally about. The Regional Enterprise Plan for the South-East that I am launching today sets out a number of key strategic areas where regional stakeholders working together will provide a basis for future enterprise development and job creation that is sustainable in the longer term.

“I am pleased to note that jobs growth has been strong in all regions, including the South-East. There are 18,500 more people at work today in counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford than at the beginning of 2015, when the Government first launched regional jobs plans, and the unemployment rate has reduced significantly, from 11.7 percent down to 7.7 percent today.”

Turning to the 3DWIT opening, the Minister added: "In December 2017, I was delighted to announce that 3DWIT was being allocated just over €1.3 million under my Department's Regional Enterprise Development Fund. This funding has supported the creation of the 3DWIT manufacturing facility in the South-East. It is a tremendous asset for the region and will support industry needs in the high potential and fast-growing field of Additive Manufacturing. 3DWIT will give manufacturing companies in the South-East a competitive edge, and in turn will help to create jobs in many industrial sectors from biomedical devices to precision engineering and micro-electronics."

In addition to the launch of 3DWIT, SEAM also celebrated 10 years of its service to industries and achievement of securing €1.9m Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund funding as part of a consortium. The SEAM-led consortium comprised of two SMEs Schivo Medical & Graph Engineering, MNC Stryker Ireland and CREST-TUD. Altogether the project is worth €2.6m.

Dr. Ramesh Raghavendra, SEAM Centre Director said: "Launching 3DWIT and celebrating SEAM's 10th birthday on the same day as the South East Regional Enterprise Plan launch highlights how WIT is at the cutting edge of industry-relevant innovation. SEAM constantly strives to advance the cutting edge of innovation by bringing novel technologies with a view to transferring the knowledge acquired to Irish based industries."

WIT President, Prof Willie Donnelly said: "Today we are celebrating 10 years of SEAM and the launch of the 3DWIT which is funded by Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund. 3DWIT was set for the support and education of industry needs in the high potential and fast growing field of Additive Manufacturing (AM). The relationship between SEAM and the regional manufacturing sector has been instrumental in the transformation of Waterford as one of Ireland's leading advance manufacturing regions. However SEAM's impact has been felt throughout Ireland as SEAM has become the partner of choice for the advance manufacturing industry irrespective of choice. The establishment of 3DWIT DAC establishes SEAM as Ireland's centre for 3D printing, one of the most exciting and transformative technologies at the very heart of the 21st century manufacturing."

SEAM has a strong reputation in addressing the materials engineering issues affecting manufacturing industries with fast turn-around times so as to reduce industry downtime costs and product reject rates and enhance competitiveness. One of the services offered by 3DWIT is product/prototype development services for the manufacturing sector.