



Final Placement Presentation

Civtech Comparator Project

Belfast City Council & UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

JUNE 15, 2023

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1. Objective & Process
2. Context
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1. OBJECTIVE & PROCESS

Objective & Scope

Original Task

Civtech Comparator Project

“The Council would like to investigate how the Civtech model might be adapted to support Belfast’s ambition for collaborative place-based innovation.”

Key expected outcomes

- Thorough overview of Civtech funding model
- Recommendation as to whether model is likely to prove effective in the Belfast Region
- Suggested adaptations to existing Civtech model to maximise effectiveness in achieving ambitions of the Belfast Region (if applicable)



Evolution of Project

Originally, our objective was to assess the **suitability and implementability of the Civtech Challenge Fund model** in the context of the Belfast innovation ecosystem and the BRCD.

To assess challenge design elements in different contexts, we proceeded to **analyse alternative models**.

To gain a better understanding of alternative models and to engage in mutual learning, we initiated **introductions** between representatives from different challenge funds.



Objective & Scope

Original Task

Civtech Comparator Project

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Key expected outcomes

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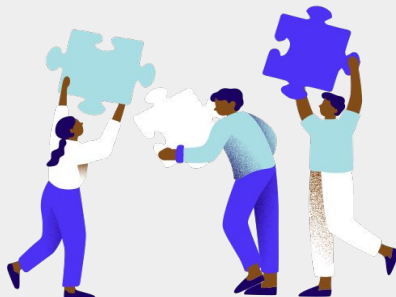


Evolution of Project

We broadened the scope to include a diversity of models and best practices that Belfast can learn from.

Key outcomes

- Thorough review of Civtech and five other challenge models
- Identification of key design elements
- Design of a flexible challenge fund model
- Innovation ecosystem map
- Linkages between Belfast City Council and other challenge fund representatives
- Recommendations and next steps



Stakeholders

See Annex for the
Innovation Ecosystem Map

Belfast & Stakeholders Meetings ...

- May 2: Alistair
- May 5: Civtech (Barbara) & Alistair
- May 9: Alistair
- May 11 (Belfast): Intro Meeting, Mark McCann, Deirdre F...
- May 11 (Belfast): BRCD Programme Office, Stephen Wall...
- May 11 (Belfast): Innovate UK / Invest NI, Paul Malcolmson
- May 11 (Belfast): City Innovation Office, Brenda
- May 11 (Belfast): BCC Economic Devpt Unit, Brendan Mc...
- May 12 (Belfast): DfE, Eoin McFadden
- May 12 (Belfast): Challenge Fund (Venture), Conor Quinn
- May 16: Alistair
- May 16: GovTech Alliance (Brazil), Sylvia
- May 18: Catalyst, Adrian Johnston
- May 23: Alistair
- May 25: Civtech (Hailegh) & Alistair
- May 25: Debrief with Alistair
- May 30: Alistair
- June 5: Impact Canada (Julie Greene) Eoin, Alistair
- Email correspondance: IdeiaGov
- June 6: Alistair
- June 8: DoF Innovation Lab, Malcolm Beattie
- June 9: Alistair
- June 12: CFNI, Roisin Wood
- June 13: Alistair



CivTech®



Belfast
City Council

impact canada



Department for the
Economy

ideiagov



Department of
Finance

CHALLENGE WORKS
a nesta enterprise

An Roinn
Airgeadais



Catalyst

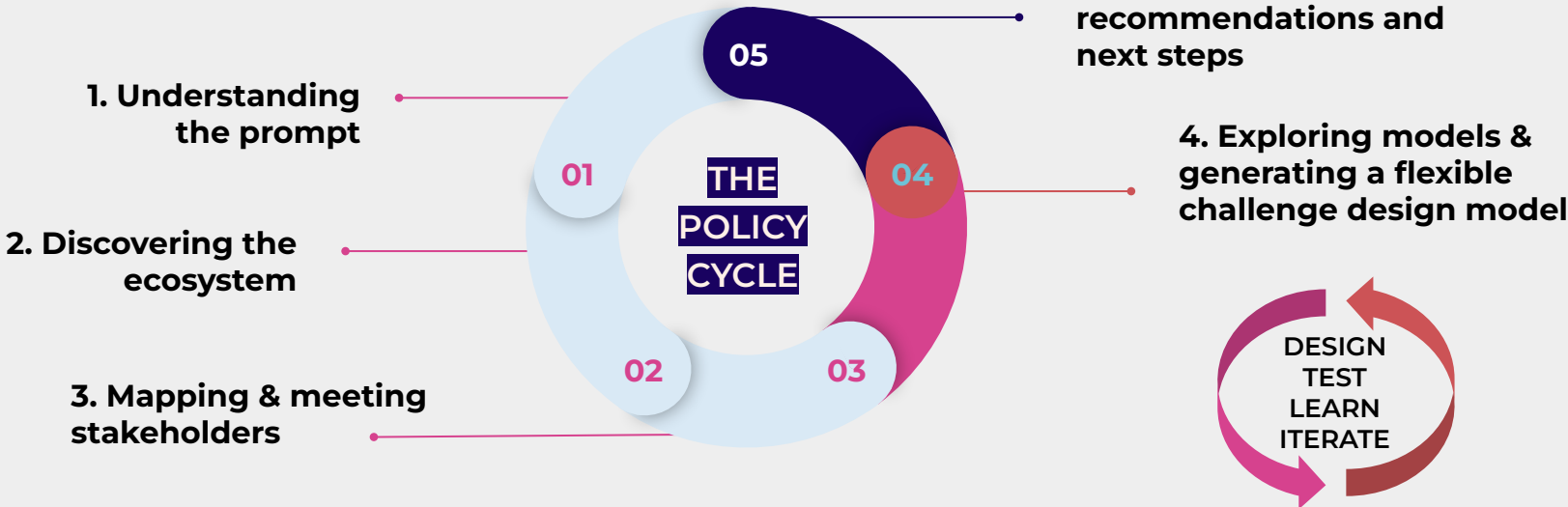


Innovate
UK

The *elle*
Community
Foundation

Invest
Northern
Ireland

Our Process



THE CHALLENGE DESIGN PROCESS

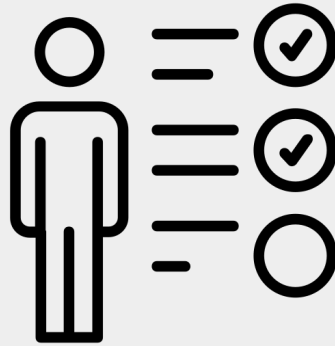


2. CONTEXT

Belfast Context



Large FDI

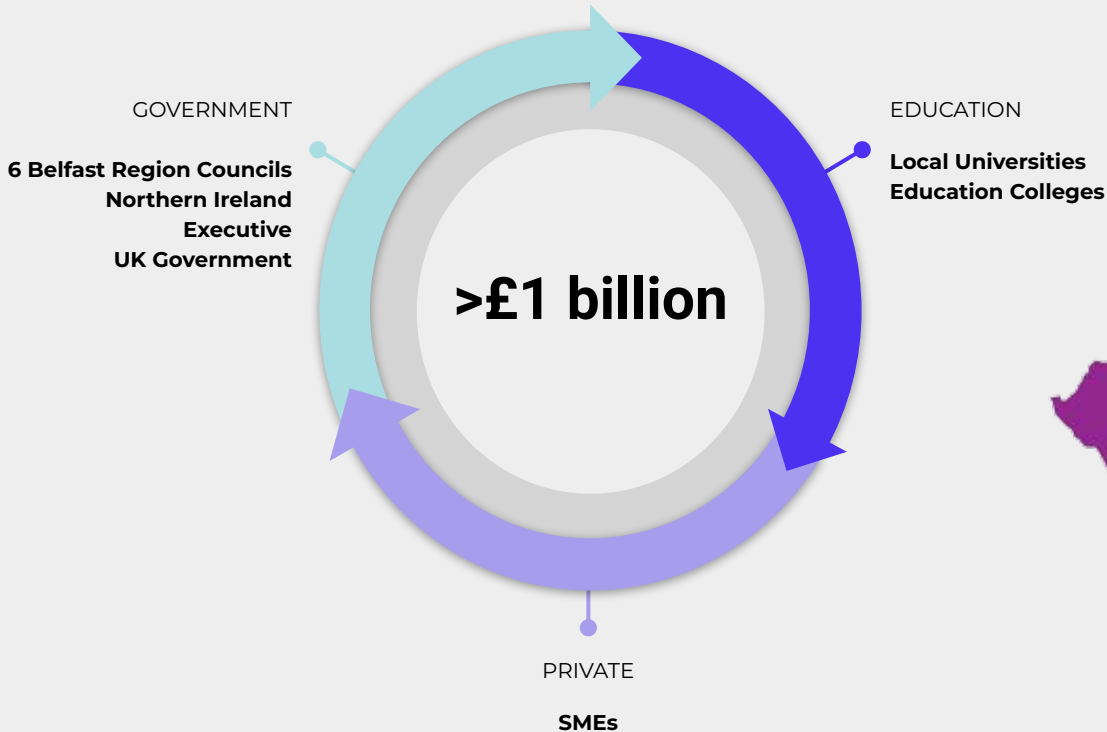


Maintaining skill set

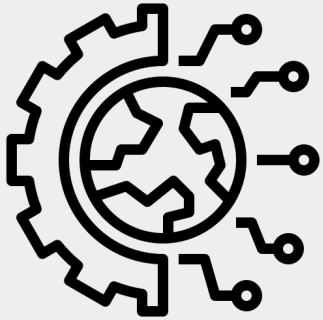


Profit repatriation

Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD)



BRCDD 4 Pillars of Investment



**Innovation and
Digital**



**Tourism and
Regeneration**



**Employability
and Skills**



Infrastructure

Challenge Funding



Belfast Region Innovation Challenge Fund

- £55 million to provide an agile funding environment to address the emerging needs and unique characteristics of the region
 - Venture Capital | £20 million
 - Grants | £20 million
 - **Innovation for Societal Impact** | £15-20 million

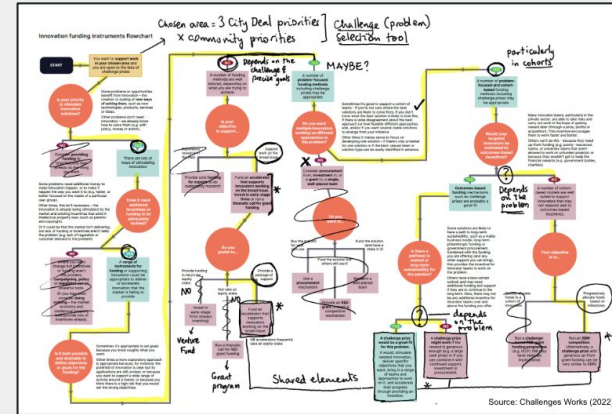
Innovation for Societal Impact (ISI)

- Programme to provide a supportive environment for SMEs to develop proofs of concepts through to real-world prototyping and commercialisation

3. DESIGN ELEMENTS

Exploring Design Elements

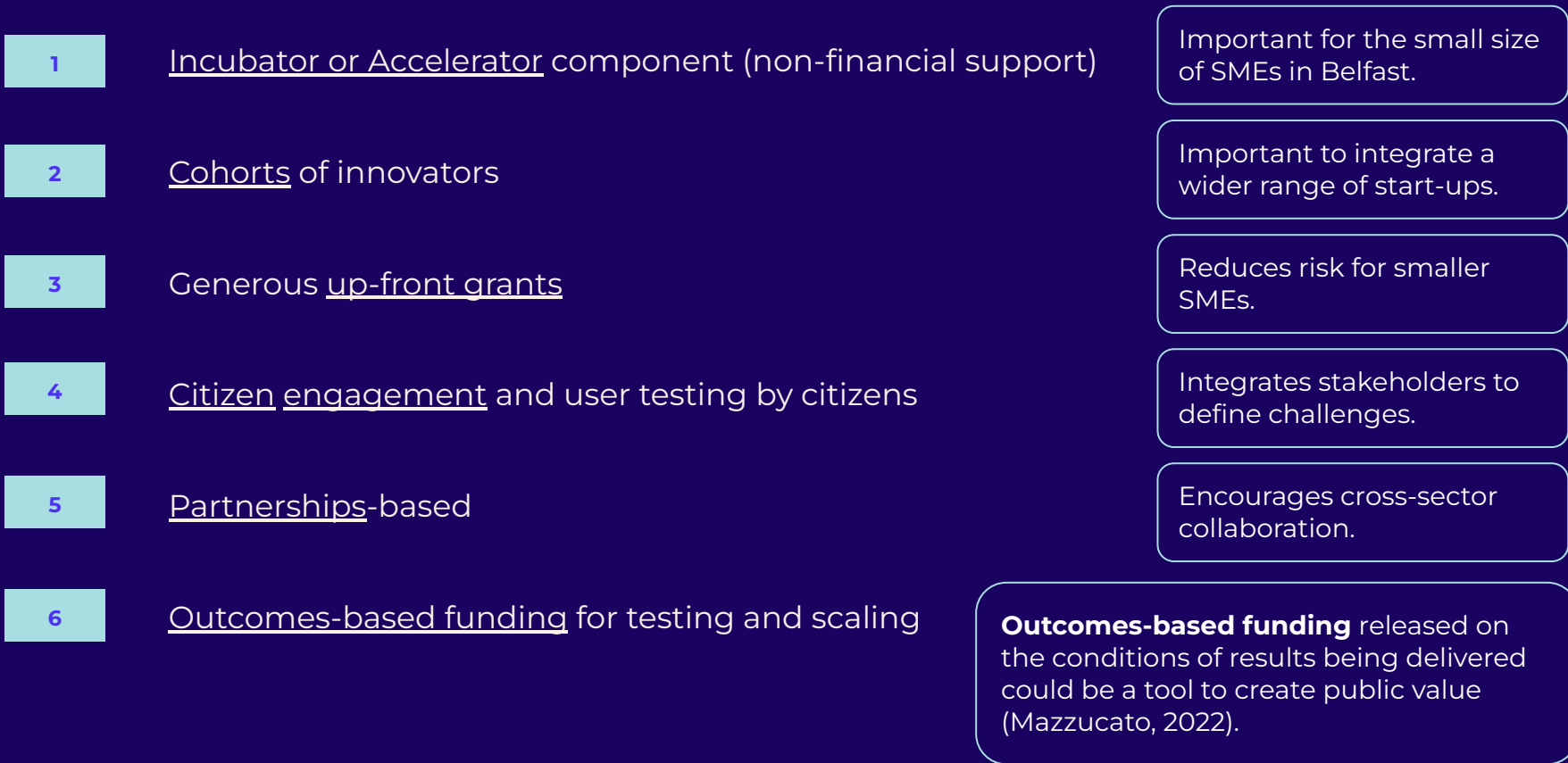
By engaging in discussions with stakeholders, analysing alternative challenge fund models, and following the Nesta Challenge Works decision-making tree, we **identified key design elements** which we believe to be important for Belfast.









Source: Challenges Works (2022)



Key challenge design elements



Model						
Overview	SBIR/Challenge programme led by Scottish Gov, solving challenges from gov departments and community orgs. Stage-gated pre-procurement process.	SBRI is a pre-commercial programme designed by Innovate UK to encourage private sector businesses to provide innovative solutions to public sector challenges.	Federal government challenge programme (CPs, accelerators and Grand Challenges) supporting depts to launch outcomes-based (and often stage-gated) challenges on well-defined problems.	Evolution from the hackathon model into 4-weeks pre-incubation programme led by a financial cooperative to support early-stage growth of the Quebec innov. ecosystem.	NFP organization offering a suite of pgs for early-stage and scaling startups, including Co-Founders, a programme for team formation.	Future Screens is a programme which provides pre-commercial R&D and expert technical skills to SMEs in the creative industry of Northern Ireland.
Who leads / funds?	Public sector led and funded	Public sector led and funded	Public sector led and funded	Private / plural sector, privately funded	Private / plural sector, mixed funding	Private / plural sector, publicly funded
Non fin. support	✓		✓	~	✓	✓
Cohorts-based	✓	~	✓	✓	✓	✓
Up-front funding	~	✓	~		~	✓
Outcomes-based			✓			
Citizen engagement	~		~	✓	✓	~
Partnerships	~	~	~	✓	✓	✓

Alternative Initiatives

ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVES

- Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund (Wales)
- Greater London Authority Grants (England)
- National Challenge Fund (Ireland)
- IdeiaGov (Brazil)
- Impact Jersey (Jersey)



IMPACT
Jersey

There are opportunities to learn from exploring the **Impact Jersey** model further due to:

1. Similar challenge fund size
2. Similar stages of development
3. Composition of grants and challenges
4. Focus on technology start-ups
5. Comparable approval process
6. Strive to do something new



GREATER
LONDON
AUTHORITY

NATIONAL
CHALLENGE
FUND

*From Ingenuity
to Research
and Solutions*



Flexible Challenge Design Model

This is a **flexible framework** designed by the team as a result of research and discussions with stakeholders in the Belfast innovation environment. The purpose of this framework is to propose a model with relevant design elements specific to the Belfast investment environment.



Stage 0

Pre-Launch



Stage 1

Conceptualise



Stage 2

Prototype



Stage 3

Scale

Goals: 1. Refine challenge goals
2. Engage & connect innovators

Non-financial support: pre-incubation support, workshops, team formation

of winning teams: open to all

Led by: Partner organisation (incubator, community sponsor)

Goal: Formulate the concept (paper prototype)

Non-financial support: Early 'social innovation' workshop to refine concept and PMF

of winning teams: 10+
Monetary prize: 5-30k

Led by: Belfast City Council
Community partners support

Goal: Build & test the prototype

Non-financial support: accelerator

of winning teams: 3-5
Monetary prize: 50-100k

Led by: Belfast City Council
Accelerator support

Goal: Scale up the solution

Non-financial support: Scaling, growth, PR and comms, links to investors

of winning teams: 1 + runner ups?
Monetary prize: 100-500k

Led by: Belfast City Council
Accelerator and community partners support

Layers of Decisions: Designing a Challenge Fund

Define objective

Define the objective(s) of the ISI Challenge in the context of the digital pillar guided by BRCD's 3 grand challenges.

1

Select challenge fund model

Define the challenge fund model by assessing elements including:

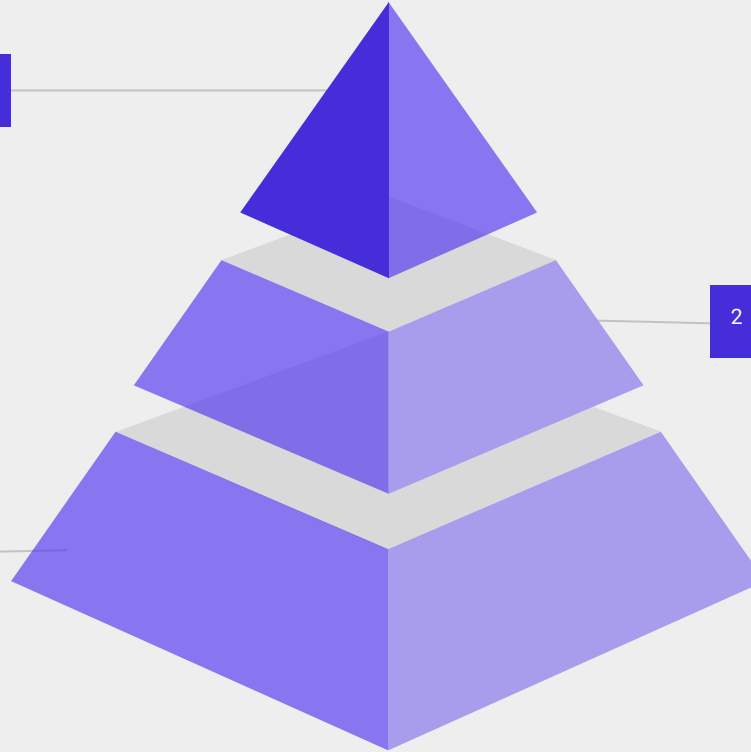
- Who will lead the challenge?
- Will there be an accelerator element?
- Which non-financial support would be provided?
- Will there be outcomes-based stages?
- Who will the partner organisations be?
- Will the fund be stage-gated?

2

Decide on Details

Decide on the details, including the eligibility criteria, the timeline, the prize purse size, assessment criteria, the type of non-financial support.

3



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Obstacles & Mitigation Strategies

01

Absence of a clear governance structure for decision-making

02

Approval process

03

Segmentation of the Challenge Fund

04

Difficulty in identifying the challenge scope & limited cross-sector collaboration

05

Capacity required to implement challenges



01

02

03

04

05

Absence of a
clear governance
structure for
decision-making

**Set up a Challenge Fund
Governance Board**

**Protect the innovative nature
of the design team**

01

02

03

04

05

Approval process

Create awareness around new funding approaches to ease the approval process

01

02

03 Segmentation
of the
Challenge Fund

04

05

**Set an overall strategy for the
£55 million Challenge Fund**

**Potential to start with a Grants
programme**

01

02

03

04

05

Difficulty in
identifying
challenge scope
& limited
cross-sector
collaboration

**Align challenge objectives with
NI government & communities'
priorities**

**Increase the reach and legitimacy
of BCC through stronger
cross-sector collaborations**

01

02

03

04

05

Capacity required to implement challenges

**Get surrounded by the right talent,
advisors and experts**

**Build BCC's internal capacity to run
challenges**

**Use some of the capital funding to
develop implementation capacities**

Next Steps



Keep engaging and learning

**Define the Challenge Fund
governance structure**

**Bottom-up approach to defining the
ISI Challenge scope**

**Design and launch: Grants programme,
then ISI Challenge**



Moving forward...

What we would have done with more time...

- Help setting up the Tiger Team
- Testing the Flexible Challenge Design Model
- Additional meetings with the innovation ecosystem and community sector
- Further explored the potential areas for the challenge scope / definition

What we will do... Deliverables post-placement

- **Short report** to outline our work and additional resources (i.e. ecosystem map, Flexible Challenge Design Model...)
- Send **meeting notes and resources** gathered during the placement
- If relevant, **re-do the final presentation** with various stakeholders, at BCC's request



5. REFLECTIONS

Linking it back to theory



The importance of missions setting & challenge definition



“The most crucial stage of the policy process” (Peters, 2005)

Kattel & Mazzucato (2018)

Peters (2005)

Mapping the system: understanding stakeholder needs



Mapping the system helps untangle complex environments.

Mulgan & Leadbeater (2013)

Conway et. al. (2018)

Dynamic capabilities & building internal capacity



Dynamic capabilities enable the creation public value..

Kattel (2022)

Conditionality: Outcomes-based approaches



Outcomes-based funding, released on the condition of results being delivered, allows to share risks & rewards.

Mazzucato (2022)

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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- Stephen Wallace

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insights...

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THANK YOU



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ANNEXES

1. Innovation Ecosystem Map

IDEATE

LAUNCH

GROW

Theme 1: Health and wellbeing

1. MS Society
2. CINI

Theme 2: AI and data

1. SAILOR (Service Based Professional)
2. NEON
3. Ormeau Baths (tech)
4. See Sense (using technology and data company)
5. Ignite NI
6. Tactix
7. AI NI Community
8. Digital DNA

Theme 3: Sustainability and Resilience

1. Community NI
2. Catalyst
3. SBIR NI
4. Innovate Northern Ireland
5. Ambition to Grow
6. Bank of Ireland

Idea 1

MAIN MESSAGE for stakeholder map:
There is a wealth of stakeholders in the ecosystem --> BCC should aim to leverage existing resources for the Challenge to both feed and benefit from the ecosystem

TO NOTE: This is a **first and non-exhaustive attempt** at mapping this ecosystem, based on discussions and desk research. Would require inputs and validation from actors at the heart of the startup community.

Ideate

INSPIRATION	EDUCATION	DEVELOPMENT
Meetings & Networking	Industry expertise, technical expertise, training	Exploration, building a team, prototyping
DevOps Belfast	Future Screens (Students)	Fanatic Labs (Disruptorport)
Fanatic Labs (Maker Hubs)	Berkeley Eagle Lake (Ormeau Baths)	Catalyst (Co-Founders' programme, Generation Innovators, INVENT)
NI Business Marketing meetings	Catalyst (Catalyst) Schools	Ormeau Baths
NI Chamber	Queen's University Belfast - Innovation Programme	None
Belfast Chamber	Enterprise NI (Start Up programme)	Ignite North East
Ormeau Baths (Disruption, various events)	Young Enterprise NI	CINI (Civic Innovation Programme), Tactix in Healthcare, Community Innovators
UNRI events		
Ulster & Queens University events		
RADC Ventures events		
Lean In networks (NI & Belfast)		
Catalyst events		
NI Business Info event, Inode		
FSR events		
Invest NI events		
@startni@faston Belfast		

Launch

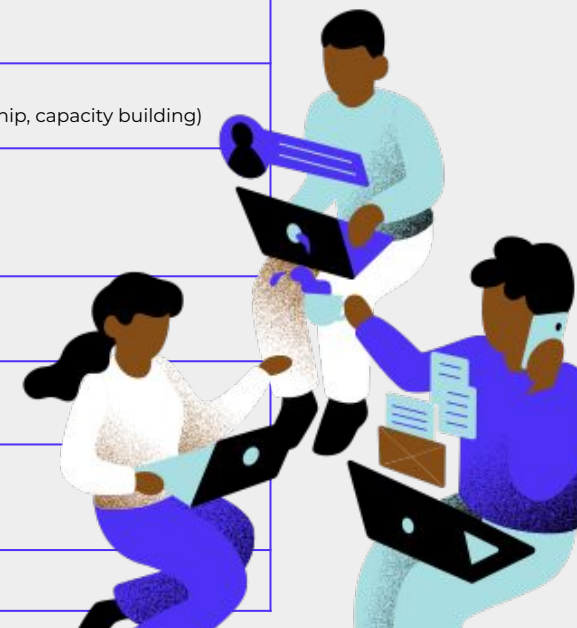
Validation	Incorporation	Financing
Service Councils	Banks	Competition
MCS Group	Bank of Ireland	TechStart Ventures
WWAVE	Ulster Bank	SBIR NI - Small Business Research Initiative
Diverse Church	Danske Bank	Female Founders Grants Competition
East Belfast Community Development Agency	AB (NI)	Catalyst (INVENT)
Community NI	RBC Bank Ireland	Aligning the City
Simon Community		Ambition to Grow
Incubation	Legal	Institutional-Government
Creative Industries Clusters Programme	ABL Goodbody	Belfast City Council
Future Screens NI	Arthur Cox Belfast	Northern Ireland Screens
Ignite NI	Carlton McDowell	Nesta
Digital Catalyst	Tactix	Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
Catalyst	Claver Fulton Rankin	Invest Northern Ireland
Ormeau Baths	Millar McCall Wyllie LLP	UKRI Challenge Fund
TechStart Ventures	M&S Solig	Horizon Europe
Raise Fund (early stage (Startups))	Smoochies LLP	
Conferences	Accounting	
InterTradeIreland Summit	Ross Boyd Limited	
Innovation Island Connect	Baker Tilly Mooney Moore	
Northern Ireland IoT & Industry Expo	McGuire & Farry Limited	
Medical Innovation and Technology Summit	McGovern & Co.	
Big Data Belfast	Claver Black	
NI Developer Conference		
Women Tech Makers Summit		

Grow

Commercialisation (commercial development)	Acceleration	Investment
Quint (Queen's University)	Ignite - NI Accelerator	Lombard Odor
Reciprocity R&D LLC	Ulster Bank (Prestech) Accelerator	ABMID
Commercial & Technology Group (Goodbody)	StartPlanet NI	Aviva
Tactix (Commercial Law Firm)	Bank Accelerator	Aligning
Belfast Commercial Funding	NEON	Investec Wealth & Investment
Diaclectix (pharma diagnostic commercialisation company)	Prospit (pre-accelerator)	Clarendon Fund Managers
	Ada Impact Accelerator	Sagan Investments
	Luminata	Investec
	Ormeau Baths	Crescent Capital
	Raise Ventures	Catalytic
	Catalyst (Springboard, Way to Scale, Inbound Investors)	Seel Legal
		Hairgreaves Larddown
		Strategic Investment Board
		PFM Asset Management
		PSG Equity
		AB

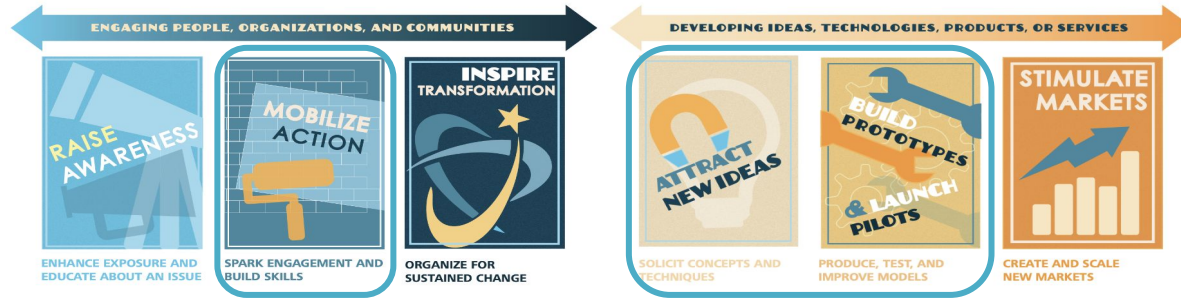
2. Functions within a Challenge team

RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and review • Environmental scan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Understand baseline and target (broad frame vs. specific technology) ◦ Current approaches (government, academic, private, not-for-profit) ◦ Existing barriers/challenges to the development or uptake of solutions • Analysis of data and approaches to determine gaps and opportunities for a challenge
CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external consultations on understanding of the problem, current approaches, barriers and opportunities for intervention • External consultation on challenge design elements, including with innovators, end users, beneficiaries, potential jurors, and intermediaries who connect solutions to end users.
COMMUNICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications/social media plan and content • Outreach to innovators and innovator networks • Liaise with corporate comms team
PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners needed in assessment process (e.g. technical review, regulatory review) • Partners needed for provision of non-financial incentives (e.g. access to labs, access to mentorship, capacity building)
PROGRAMMATIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking approval to issue prizes based on jury recommendations • Issuing Grants or Contribution Agreements, Contracts • Communication with semi-finalists/finalists • Managing budget and payments
LIAISON W/ CORPORATE SERVICES & SENIOR MGT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with finance, IT, Legal, Privacy, etc. at various levels of challenge design and approval. • Writing briefing notes, decks, briefings & Seeking approval for key challenge elements
LOGISTICS & PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations, events (outreach, launch, announcements...) • Jury meetings
SUPPORT FOR INNOVATORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prize funding, Non-financial incentives & Link to networks and expertise • Support for subsequent submissions • Off-ramp/commercialization of solutions
IMPACT MEASUREMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection, performance measurement to fulfil evaluation requirements



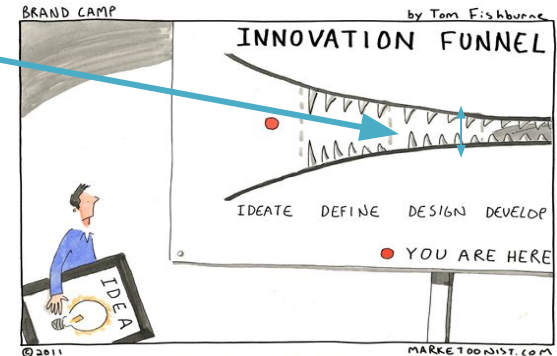
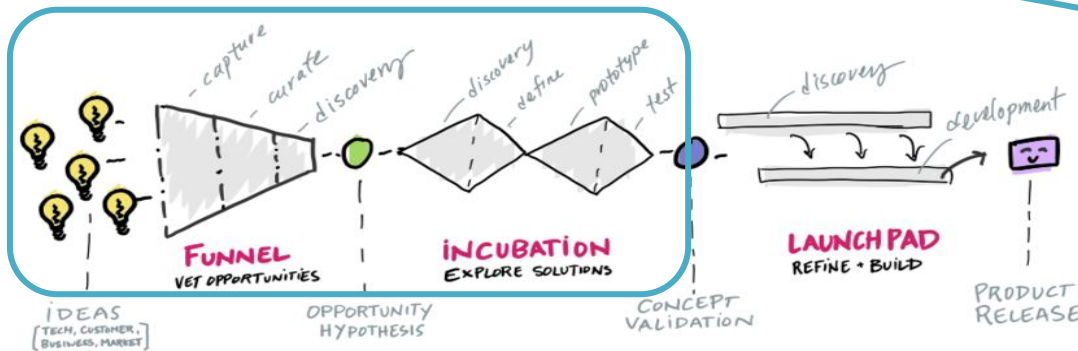
3. Innovation Pipeline

Designing for outcomes



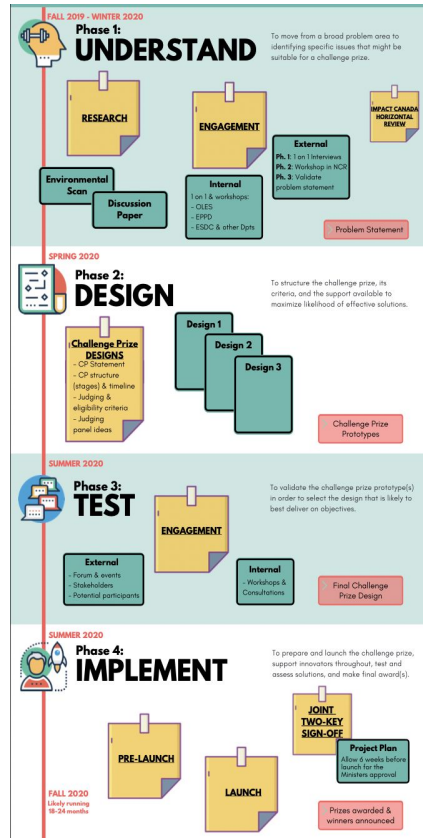
Source: Deloitte (2014)

Innovation pipeline



Source: Experience Innovation

5. Challenge Fund Steps



Source: Impact Canada

W4-7

Gather information

Continue to gather information from key stakeholders in the start up and innovation ecosystem.

W4-7

Formulate goals

Define the goal of the challenge fund. What is the main priority of the challenge fund? What problems does it aim to address?

W5-6

Model design elements

Explore which elements from the Civtech model are applicable, and which need to be adapted. Explore elements of alternative models. Come up with versions of what a challenge fund in Belfast could look like. & consider implementation capacity.

W6-7

Initiate a 'Tiger Team'

Organise a group of specialists in the challenge fund environment. Pitch the challenge fund models to stakeholders in the first meeting,

W7-8

Apply feedback and synthesise

Apply the feedback from stakeholders and adapt to context. Present the most viable options in the final presentation.

6. Obstacles & Detailed Mitigation Strategies

01
02
03
04
05

Absence of a clear governance structure for decision-making

Set up a Challenge Fund Governance Board

- Establish a clear structure for decision-making, which determines who makes final decisions on:
 - Challenge Scope (overall direction)
 - Challenge Design
 - Release of the funding
- This will help define clear roles for: BCC and other councils of BRCD, Innovation Commissioner, City Innovation Office, DfE, external board of experts (Tiger Team), etc.

Protect the innovative nature of the design team

- Get inspired from innovation labs' "bullet proof vest" management position: a senior lead granted with the authorities to protect the team's freedom and creativity from administrative constraints.

01
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04
05

Approval process

Create awareness around new funding approaches to ease the approval process

- Recognize the difficulty in getting an adaptive challenge structure approved within the current dual approval process:
 - City Deal Governance
 - DfE casework process
- Secure senior leader buy-in for support in navigating the process and consult other Councils regularly
- Explore the possibility to set out a new process: seek authority to design and approve series of challenges.
- Develop relationships and socialize new funding approaches (challenges, outcomes-based funding) with corporate services and various stakeholders involved in the approval process to build confidence in the model

01
02
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04
05

Segmentation of the Challenge Fund

Set an overall strategy for the £55 million Challenge Fund

- Create synergies between the three components of the challenge fund (Grants, ISI Challenge, Venture), to ensure complementarity between each mechanism and collectively support the Belfast innovation ecosystem.

Potential to start with a Grants programme

- Create buy-in from the other BRCD Councils
- Allows to get funding to the SMEs faster, and prepares the ground while the ISI Challenge Fund is being designed and approved.
- Learn from Digital Jersey's *Impact Jersey* initiative and their experience navigating approvals.

01
02
03
04
05

Difficulty in identifying challenge scope & limited cross-sector collaboration

Align challenge objectives with NI government & communities' priorities

- Leverage existing expertise in challenge identification and systems dynamics modelling (i.e DoF Innovation Lab) and link initiative to government priorities to create buy-in.
- Leverage private and community sectors' knowledge of the ecosystem, and support the priorities they are working on (i.e CFNI's gap in addressing digital inclusion).

Increase the reach and legitimacy of BCC through stronger cross-sector collaborations

- Developing strong collaborations with external organizations will facilitate the scoping exercise (prioritization of challenges to focus on), as well as future outreach and uptake of the challenge.
- Leverage the ecosystem's expertise for delivery of non-financial supports & place BCC on the map.

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Capacity required to implement challenges

Get surrounded by the right talent, advisors and experts

- Create a **Tiger Team** to serve as an informal board of advisors, supporting the Fund development
- Recruit a challenge designer and a community engagement / communications lead
- Develop innovative recruitment practices to attract specialized talent (i.e. IC Fellowship)

Build BCC's internal capacity to run challenges

- Leverage partners to support implementation & capacity building rather than outsource the work.
- Build capacity through diverse knowledge exchanges.

Use some of the capital funding to develop implementation capacities

- Leverage capital funding to fund internal capacity development and collaboration with community partners.

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Absence of a clear governance structure for decision-making

Set up a Challenge Fund Governance Board

- Establish a clear structure for decision-making, which determines who makes final decisions on:
 - Challenge Scope (overall direction)
 - Challenge Design
 - Release of the funding
- This will help define clear roles for: BCC and other councils of BRCD, Innovation Commissioner, City Innovation Office, DfE, external board of experts (Tiger Team), etc.

Protect the innovative nature of the design team

- Get inspired from innovation labs' "bullet proof vest" management position: a senior lead granted with the authorities to protect the team's freedom and creativity from administrative constraints.

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Approval process

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Create awareness around new funding approaches to ease the approval process

- Recognize the difficulty in getting an adaptive challenge structure approved within the current dual approval process:
 - City Deal Governance
 - DfE casework process
- Secure senior leader buy-in for support in navigating the process and consult other Councils regularly
- Explore the possibility to set out a new process: seek authority to design and approve series of challenges.
- Develop relationships and socialize new funding approaches (challenges, outcomes-based funding) with corporate services and various stakeholders involved in the approval process to build confidence in the model

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03 Segmentation of the Challenge Fund

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Set an overall strategy for the £55 million Challenge Fund

- Create synergies between the three components of the challenge fund (Grants, ISI Challenge, Venture), to ensure complementarity between each mechanism and collectively support the Belfast innovation ecosystem.

Potential to start with a Grants programme

- Create buy-in from the other BRCD Councils
- Allows to get funding to the SMEs faster, and prepares the ground while the ISI Challenge Fund is being designed and approved.
- Learn from Digital Jersey's *Impact Jersey* initiative and their experience navigating approvals.

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Difficulty in identifying challenge scope & limited cross-sector collaboration

Align challenge objectives with NI government & communities' priorities

- Leverage existing expertise in challenge identification and systems dynamics modelling (i.e DoF Innovation Lab) and link initiative to government priorities to create buy-in.
- Leverage private and community sectors' knowledge of the ecosystem, and support the priorities they are working on (i.e CFNI's gap in addressing digital inclusion).

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Thank you

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