

Press release

Innovation of Defence Forces and Department of Defence participants showcased at DefenceSparx event

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Today (Friday 2 June) showcased the work completed by the Defence Organisation during DefenceSparx, an Innovation Mindset and Skills Development Programme for Defence.

DefenceSparx is an initiative of the joint civilian/military Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Unit for the Defence Organisation. The RTI Unit was established in January 2021 to assist in developing a research, technology and innovation ecosystem across Defence, government, academia and industry nationally, and to coordinate Irish engagement in defence and dual use focussed research technology and innovation across the EU.

Participants in the programme from the Defence Forces and Department of Defence commenced the part-time programme in September 2022, and today pitched the ideas that they have developed to improve activities within Defence and help transform the Defence Organisation.

An assessment panel comprising the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Lt General Sean Clancy; Secretary General of the Department of Defence, Jacqui McCrum; and John Hussey from Microsoft will assess the proposals and recommend for funding those ideas which have the potential to have a positive impact on the Defence Forces or Department of Defence.

DefenceSparx, is a three month part-time Accelerator Programme for innovation within the Defence Forces and Department of Defence that has been delivered by Furthr (formerly Dublin BIC).

The Programme aims to contribute towards the creation of a thriving culture of innovation by equipping Defence Forces and Department of Defence personnel with the mindset, skills and tools to innovate.

The programme participants will then be able to contribute to the organisational transformation of capabilities, structures and culture that is required to respond to the increasingly complex and dynamic international security environment.

The participants in the programme, working in teams, were issued with six challenge statements:

1. How might we ensure the protection of Defence assets, information and installations
2. How might we make the Defence Organisation an employer of choice
3. How might we break down silos within the Defence Organisation
4. How might we ensure that the Defence Organisation is socially responsible
5. How might we enable every Defence employee to make their best possible contribution to the Organisation
6. How might we improve employee-management relations across the Defence Organisation

The projects:

- Career Compass: innovative career planning for the defence organisation
- Evolution Bridge: A system to develop creative and innovative ideas from academic research being conducted throughout the Defence Organisation from the theoretical stage through development to implementation

- SCIA Framework: standardised security services for access control and visitor security management, automated number plate recognition (ANPR), digital security reporting, Security Patrol Verification, Specialised Security Training and possible Civilianisation/Specialisation of security roles at access control
- SMAART: Secure, Measurable, Accurate, Accountable, Realtime Tracking to modernise logistics management
- Collabor8: A proposal to introduce of a framework of jointness events, in an informal setting within the Defence Organisation, to accelerate transformation of culture, as well as enhancing productivity and employee well-being

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