Ireland has been a net beneficiary from the EU Budget since accession in 1973. By the beginning of 2015, Ireland received over €72.5 billion. However, this does not include payments made directly to beneficiaries, such as research receipts.

The majority of Irish funding from the EU has come through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), providing direct income and market support to the agricultural sector. In 2015, Structural Funds provided €150m and the European Social Funds contributed over €24m towards education and training, social inclusion and supports for vulnerable sectors of Irish society.

For the 2014-2020 Programme, the majority of Irish funding will continue to come through CAP and Ireland can also still expect to receive significant receipts under structural fund spending. As in recent years, structural funding will continue to focus on areas such as research, technology and innovation supporting SMEs, ICT, energy efficiency and education, training and labour activation measures. Additional funding opportunities will arise under the Horizon 2020, Erasmus, Connecting Europe and Cosme EU level programmes which cover research, education, infrastructure networks and SME competitiveness and a number of other smaller programmes.

With this support from Europe, Ireland is continuing to develop a clean, innovative and highly skilled economy, providing world-class leadership and competitiveness in areas such as IT, Research and Technology. Furthermore, Irish farmers are producing high-quality products for world markets, with a reputation for excellence.

This information leaflet provides an insight into some of the ways that the EU has recently supported County Kildare.

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the laboratory to the market.

Ireland has been awarded a total of €273.3m for 622 participations and 472 projects. Here are some examples of how organisations in County Kildare have been benefiting:

**Graphene makes the Leap to Consumer Products**

Intel in Leixlip and Trinity College Dublin were recent partners in a successful €10.5m EU-funded project which has demonstrated a cost-effective method to ramp up graphene production on an industrial scale. The new scale approach opens up the possibility to commercialise products based on this wonder material.
Graphene properties have opened up new avenues of research in a variety of fields from high-energy particle physics to optoelectronics and energy. The main barrier to transferring the wealth of innovation from lab bench to market arises from the lack of suitable large-scale production techniques.

The EU-funded project GRAFOL (Graphene chemical vapour deposition: Roll to roll technology) was initiated to address this issue by combining a common mass manufacturing technique with an effective technique of growing graphene and by using advanced spectroscopy to evaluate graphene growth.

**Artic Observation System (INTAROS)**

The National University of Maynooth (NUI Maynooth) is a partner in a €15.5m project that aims to develop an integrated Arctic Observation System (iAOS) by extending, improving and unifying existing systems in the different regions of the Arctic.

Climate change is significantly affecting the extent and thickness of sea-ice, on snow cover on ice-sheet melting, on permafrost thawing and on marine and land ecosystems. Monitoring and improved understanding of the Arctic climate system and its teleconnections, as well as of ecosystem change and the socio-economic impacts on offshore operations, new shipping routes, mining activities, tourism etc. are important prerequisites for effectively assessing climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in the Arctic and elsewhere.

INTAROS will have a strong multidisciplinary focus, with tools for integration of data from atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and terrestrial sciences, provided by institutions in Europe, North America and Asia. An integrated AOS will enable better-informed decisions and better-documented processes within key sectors (e.g. local communities, shipping, tourism, fisheries), in order to strengthen the societal and economic role of the Arctic region and support the EU strategy for the Arctic and related maritime and environmental policies.

**Kildare company partners in the Forensic Detection of Drugs in Animals**

Irish Diagnostic Laboratory Services Ltd, based in Johnston, County Kildare is a partner with Queen’s University, Belfast in a project that is looking at forensic detection of the illicit use of drugs in performance and food-producing animals. The MET-A-FOR project will be the first European training platform solely focussed on the development and practical advancement of animal forensic testing based on new concepts in metabolomics. This European Industrial Doctorates (EID) programme will train three early stage researchers (ESRs) to be creative, problem-solving and entrepreneurial European scientists with skills in high level interdisciplinary and intersectoral analytical techniques. Then these researchers can aid the translation of emerging discoveries from the academic sector to the commercial sector.

**Combating Parkinson's Disease**

NUI Maynooth are also partners in a €6m project that is trying to identify and develop drugs capable of slowing down the progression of neurodegeneration in a subset of Parkinson’s disease patients.

**Horizon 2020 Gaming for Peace Project (€2m)**

NUI Maynooth and Trinity College Dublin are partners in this new project that started in September 2016.

EU Personnel in Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (CPPB) missions come from diverse organisations and nations, yet they must coordinate together in the temporary network or umbrella organisation that comprises each CPPB mission. Current training puts few resources into training personnel in critical soft skills. Gaming for Peace (GAP) provides an efficient and effective means of developing and delivering a curriculum in those skills. GAP designs a multiple player online role-playing game which simulates scenarios from CPPB missions. It provides an interactive process of curriculum development and refinement through end users (military, police and civilian personnel) evaluating the game and embedded base curriculum by playing the game and in doing so, bringing their own experiences to the game, thus further developing the curriculum of CPPB relevant soft skills. The game can be accessed anywhere via the Internet and there is no limit on the number of personnel who can be trained. The game can be customised at low cost by different stakeholders.

The GAP consortium is multidisciplinary with expertise in the social sciences, computer science, end users including military and police, and SMEs in game design, curriculum development and skill standardisation and harmonisation and has support from stakeholders including the European Security and Defence College, UN bodies and NATO.

**€4.7m project Fighting Cyber Crime**

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Clean Communications Ltd, (a company based in Naas, County Kildare) are partners in a €4.7m project that involves Information Driven Cyber Security Management.

PROTECTIVE is designed to improve an organisation’s ongoing awareness of the risk posed to its business by cyber security attacks. PROTECTIVE makes two key contributions to achieve this enhanced situational awareness. Firstly it increases the computer security incident response team’s (CSIRT) threat awareness through improved security monitoring and increased sharing of threat intelligence between organisations within a community. Secondly, it ranks critical alerts based on the potential damage the attack can inflict on the threatened assets and hence to the organisations business. High impact alerts that target important hosts will have a higher priority than other alerts.

The PROTECTIVE system is designed to provide solutions for public domain CSIRTs and SME’s who both have needs outside the mainstream of cyber security solution provision.
New EU developments aim to support entrepreneurship and innovation among SMEs to drive new firm creation, expansion and employment and to help with the need to overcome a range of operational barriers.

Kildare has one Local Enterprise Office (LEO) delivering the Entrepreneurship in Micro-enterprise scheme that is based in Naas. Kildare LEO supplies business information and advice clinics, training and mentoring, financial supports and networking opportunities as well as links to the Enterprise Europe Network and Enterprise Ireland’s New Frontiers programme. A Kildare company has achieved great success through this support.

A Naas start-up has developed a Children’s pocket money app (application) called PennyOwl which has recently raised 1.2m in a seed funding round that included support from Enterprise Ireland.

The app company, which aims to teach children about money management, is expected to use the funding to expand its team as it officially launches. The company, which is led by brothers Seamus and Gene Matthews, was also named as one of Enterprise Ireland’s high-potential start-ups. Angel investor Kevin Neary, who set up Gamesworld in 1993 was an early backer and is chairman of PennyOwl.

Enterprise Awards

A manufacturing company from Kill, that uses modern techniques to design and craft lifestyle and corporate goods represented Kildare at the National Enterprise Awards.

Alan and Gary McCormack from CarveOn Ltd, (www.carveon.com) won the top prize at the County Enterprise Awards competition. This local company employs five people and was set-up in 2011.

Student Enterprise

Pow Pac from Cross and Passion College won the County Final of the Student Enterprise Awards programme delivered by LEO Kildare. Their mini company addresses the problem of charging mobile devices on the go.

Overall winners, Cross and Passion College, Kilcullen, students, Mini Company ‘Pow Pac’, Michael Ermstrang, Fiachra Healy, Eoin Cahill, Caolán Byrne, at the Student Enterprise Awards County Final

Other Award winners were:

• St Wolstan’s Community School in Celbridge who received the Innovation Award for their Paper Garden project.
• The Social Media Award was scooped up by Newbridge College for their Excite Your Appetite project.
• Scoil Dara in Kilcock was awarded the Best Display for Sweet Temptations.
• The Best Business Report went to CBS, Naas for their Crest to Cards Enterprise.
A strong emphasis is being put on supporting employment and social inclusion for youth. The EU Youth Programme is strongly focused on helping the unemployed to return to the labour market, with particular attention to youth and long-term unemployed people.

Kildare has one Education and Training Board (ETB) that is based in Maynooth, called Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The training board supports three Youthreach centres in Athy, Leixlip and Naas.

Erasmus+ provides funding to Irish educational organisations to carry out a wide range of projects involving staff, learners and the wider educational community. Recent figures show that there were 4,714 participants from Ireland, which was a 9% increase in the last year.

The Crooked House Theatre Company in Newbridge received over €27k for their project ‘Speak Out’ which focused on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Kildare Youth Theatre, which is based at the Crooked House, received funding through Erasmus+ to hold an international theatre training course, using Drama Methods for Youth Development. The group also participated in ‘theatre.camp’, another Erasmus funded project that took place in Austria.

The Curragh/Newbridge Garda Youth Diversion Project is a community-based project that supports young people by diverting them from crime or anti-social behaviour. The project works with young people aged between 12-18 years, who have been in trouble with the law or at risk of engaging in criminal activity.

The Food Dudes Initiative was designed to enable children to enjoy eating healthy diets, and to create a healthy eating culture within schools. Currently, 72 schools in Kildare are participating in this healthy initiative.