

The official launch of Hatch Lab in Wexford

Eight months after opening its doors to some of the South-East's brightest entrepreneurs, Hatch Lab officially launches.

The Hatch Lab is a tech incubator space located in Gorey, Co. Wexford where people can set up their own businesses, experimenting at an early stage whether their concept is viable or not. It's also designed for IT companies that may be growing who can use the space to continue their growth.

Over 150 people have used Hatch Lab since opening last September with 20 full-time residents and 60 people using hot-desks at the moment. The building has also hosted more than 40 events including the popular Founder Friday evenings where successful entrepreneurs come in and chat with the residents about the trials and tribulations they faced.

Partnered with Bank of Ireland, Hatch Lab came about largely thanks to Tom Enright, CEO on Wexford County Council, who was instrumental in its establishment. He conducted research with Maynooth University which showed that over one thousand people were leaving Gorey every day to work in Dublin in the ICT sector.

"With Tom's research, the obvious thing to do was to build an ICT hub for those people commuting up to Dublin," says John O'Connor, manager of Hatch Lab.

"The Redmonds, who own Amber Springs Hotel next door were looking to build a commercial space and the council backed them with the build and the idea of having it as an incubation space made it attractive as it could pull investors into the area," adds O'Connor.

MC for the day of the official launch was Noel Davidson from the Entrepreneurs Academy. "From an entrepreneur's point of view, setting up a business can be a very lonely road. An incubation space like the Hatch Lab is so important as it gives entrepreneurs a great facility to work from. Once they come through that door for the first time, that's when the support starts – the networking, the events, it's peer to peer with other people on the exact same journey and they can help and support one another on that journey," says Davidson.

Vicki O'Donnell, CEO and founder of [Wilder Wander](#), has been a resident at Hatch Lab from day one and admits that the space has played a key role in her company's progress. "I've been in Hatch Lab since I started my company and it's been really important to our growth, particularly with the supports available to startups. We wouldn't have known all of this without Hatch Lab."

John O'Connor predicts that over the next few years, a number of the current residents will establish successful companies that will lead to many people being employed in the Wexford area, thus leading to a knock-on effect whereby more people will want to use the Hatch Lab to set up their own company.