Co-Founders programme awards 10 startups £10,000 each to develop product ideas

A total of 10 start-ups from across Northern Ireland have been awarded £10,000 each to develop their business ideas.

They have completed entrepreneurship programme Co-Founders at Catalyst – the former Northern Ireland science park organisation which supports early-stage businesses – which helps entrepreneurs to develop new products in the science, engineering and technology fields.

The teams had to pitch for the funding as part of the programme and will now go on to progress to Co-Founders+, Phase 2 of the programme where the ideas are further developed and given access to mentors and industry specialists to accelerate their idea.

“Co-Founders provides the opportunity for anyone with an entrepreneurial spark to come together and co-found a start-up in a supportive environment,” Hannah Cummings, Co-Founders Programme Manager at Catalyst, said. “We believe increasing the number of individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset will have huge benefits to the Northern Ireland economy.

“Celebrating the achievement of the teams this year at the in-person Showcase Event in the MAC Belfast was an added bonus. The energy of the evening was palpable and really captured the momentum of the start-up ecosystem here in NI. The £10k POC awards will be invaluable in keeping their momentum going.”

The proof-of-concept grant is being funded by the Department for the Economy.

“I am delighted that my Department has provided £100,000 of

support for the Co-Founders programme, delivered by Catalyst," Economy Minister Gordon Lyons said. "Our 10X Economic Vision focuses on how we will nurture a decade of innovation, to transform Northern Ireland into one of the world's leading small economies.

"The Co-Founders initiative, providing tangible financial support for business ideas with a focus on science, technology and engineering, aligns well with this vision. I wish all of the companies that have been awarded £10,000 the very best as they look to take their product plans to the next level."

The successful teams are:

Pneuvo – A novel software platform to design better drugs to benefit humanity.

Insurin – A mobile app that aims to help newly diagnosed diabetics to manage their condition.

ProspectRx – AI directed precision medicine solution aimed at improving treatment options for poorly served patient populations.

MEDIK.AI – AI making it easier to analyse symptoms and direct patients to appropriate medical services.

Stable Manager – An equestrian digital hub to quantify equine performance and simplify horse care.

Pocket Angler – A dedicated fishery management system for owners and real time travel partner for anglers.

Win it Together – A digital solution for fundraising raffles.

Tapa – Connecting students in university to local employers seeking workers.

Exapt Feedback – Making online learning work for everyone.

Unify – A business and brand-building platform for the creator

economy.

Since launching in 2017, Co-Founders has delivered eight cohorts involving 611 people who have formed 134 teams. Over a third of the teams formed are continuing to work on their start-up and have raised £3 million in funding.