



Catalyst

# Director of Innovation Partnerships

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**Candidate Briefing Pack**  
November 2024





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# Foreword

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining the remarkable team at Catalyst. Since 1999, Catalyst has served as a dynamic hub for innovation, providing state-of-the-art workspaces and fostering a thriving community for ambitious entrepreneurs and innovators. Today, we are home to over 2,700 talented individuals and 174 pioneering companies, supported by an extensive network of 500 pro-bono business mentors. We have become a cornerstone of Northern Ireland's innovation economy, advancing economic growth, job creation, and enhanced standards of living through our comprehensive support programs and community-focused initiatives.

As we look forward, Catalyst is committed to amplifying our impact across Northern Ireland. The past few years have posed significant global challenges, yet we continue to see high investor confidence and renewed government support through Northern Ireland's evolving economic strategy. Key partnerships, such as Innovation City Belfast and UK R&D levelling-up initiatives, are paving the way for a vibrant future for innovative companies.

The position of Director of Innovation Partnerships is pivotal to Catalyst's ambition to support and foster world-class innovation in NI. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you will play a critical role in extending Catalyst's influence by building and nurturing strategic relationships with key partners and large industry leaders. This role will drive new projects in Northern Ireland, aiming to deliver long-term, sustainable economic growth. It's a challenging and exciting opportunity for a leader passionate about making a real difference and championing meaningful change.

If our mission resonates with you, and you are driven to shape the future of innovation in Northern Ireland, we encourage you to apply.

For a confidential discussion about this opportunity, please contact Shauna McPeake, Director of People & Culture at [shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org](mailto:shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org)

We look forward to the possibility of welcoming you to our team.

Best regards,



Steve Orr,  
**CEO, Catalyst**

# Who We Are

## About Catalyst

Catalyst is an independent, non-profit science and technology hub dedicated to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland. By reinvesting all surplus profits, we cultivate a community-led ecosystem that empowers start-ups, entrepreneurs and innovators to create, scale and thrive.

Recognising that innovation is challenging and that few companies can meet all their innovation needs internally alone, we bridge the gaps that hinder progress; whether for multinational corporations, scaling businesses or individuals from underrepresented communities. Our mission is to make it easier for people and companies to innovate, helping Northern Ireland to become a leader in global innovation and making it accessible and impactful for all.

At Catalyst we champion inclusive innovation by fostering a diverse society where creativity and participation from all backgrounds drive solutions to local and global challenges, shaping an economy that makes a meaningful difference to the world.

## Working at Catalyst

A certified Great Place to Work® and awarded as one of the top 100 Best Workplaces in the UK for 2024, Catalyst is one of Northern Ireland's most exciting employers.

With a strong vision of Opportunity for all from world-leading innovation, this is a workplace brimming with ambition to create social, cultural and economic advantage. We are a force for good, bold in our approach with integrity at our core and passion in everything we do.

## Diversity and Inclusion at Catalyst

Diversity and inclusion aren't boxes to tick on a CSR list. At Catalyst, they are part of our DNA lived, breathed, seen and heard across our community, projects and co-working spaces. We not only want to foster and empower a culture of innovation but also an environment where people can be their true, authentic self and thrive and we are proud to be recognised by the Diversity Charter for achieving silver status, with ambitions to progress to Gold.

As an equal opportunity employer, we recruit based solely on the individual's ability to perform the role and that's allowed us to create an inclusive workplace which celebrates the diversity of our teams and community.

**Belong to  
something  
amazing**

**2700**

People working on  
our sites everyday

**1000**

Engaging  
entrepreneurs

**570**

Business experts  
and mentors

# Our Strategic Focus

Our Strategy is guided by a clear vision and mission, supported by 3 strategic areas.

## Vision

**Opportunity for all from world-leading innovation.**

We want to help to create a society whose economy makes a difference to the world, contributing to solving global challenges, achieving this because of the breadth of participation and creativity of all people from all backgrounds. This is what 'inclusive innovation', means to us.

## Mission

**We make it easy for you to innovate.**

Innovation is very hard, and few companies possess the resources to meet all of their innovation needs internally. Innovation is often made harder by the fragmentation that exists between parties with a role to assist and stimulate innovation; and the bureaucracy and the risk aversion applied to those interventions.

This is not just in Northern Ireland; this is the case in nearly every city in the world. Whether the innovator is a multi-national corporation (MNC), a start-up or scale up, or a young person farthest from opportunity, Catalyst's role is to help make the process of innovating or collaborating to innovate easier.

## Focus Areas

**Future Workspace** – Providing state-of-the-art, flexible workspaces for businesses of all sizes, our spaces are designed to foster collaboration and creativity, coming with all the amenities they need to live and work.

Coupled with the Catalyst Community of entrepreneurs, mentors, and members this combines to create a competitive advantage from where you work.

**Open Innovation** – Enabling companies that want to become Innovation Driven Enterprises, academia, and government to accelerate technology-based research and development.

This helps to ensure that Northern Ireland remains at the forefront of innovation.

**Entrepreneurship & Scaling** – Offering a variety of entrepreneurial support programmes, including mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to funding opportunities.

These programs are designed to help entrepreneurs create and scale new innovative businesses.

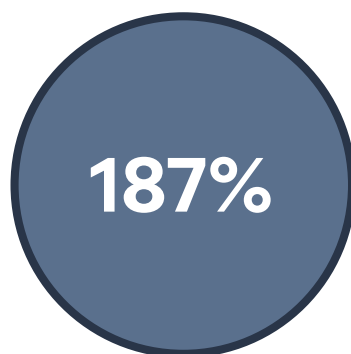
# Our Impact

In 2021 Catalyst commissioned an independent research study carried out by Capaxo and economist Maureen O'Reilly, which assessed the value added to entrepreneurs through Catalyst support and entrepreneurial programmes over the previous five years.

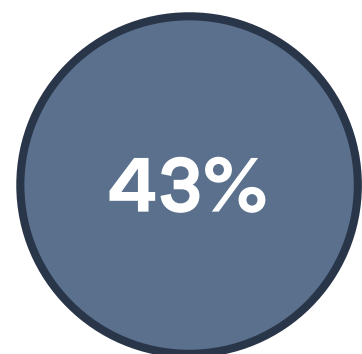
- For every £1 that Catalyst invested into entrepreneurship and growth initiatives, £41 was generated in sales generated by companies that Catalyst helped create and scale.
- Companies that participated in the programmes run by Catalyst and its partners reported a 187% increase in their combined workforce from 2017-2021, with 51% of those having increased the number of people they employ.
- Companies attributed 45% of their turnover growth to Catalyst programmes, while 43% of the companies surveyed said support provided by Catalyst was the main driver for their start-up starting up in the first place.



**Sales generated by  
companies that Catalyst  
helped create and scale**



**Company headcount  
increase reported from  
Catalyst members**



**Companies that reported  
Catalyst was the main  
driver of starting up**

# Our Locations

With headquarters steeped in over 150 years of world-changing industrial innovation and campuses reaching from the heart of Belfast to the breath-taking edge of the North Coast, we are creating cutting-edge environments where people love to come to work.

**Click on each of the campus images below to find out more about our innovation hubs.**



**Titanic Quarter, Belfast**



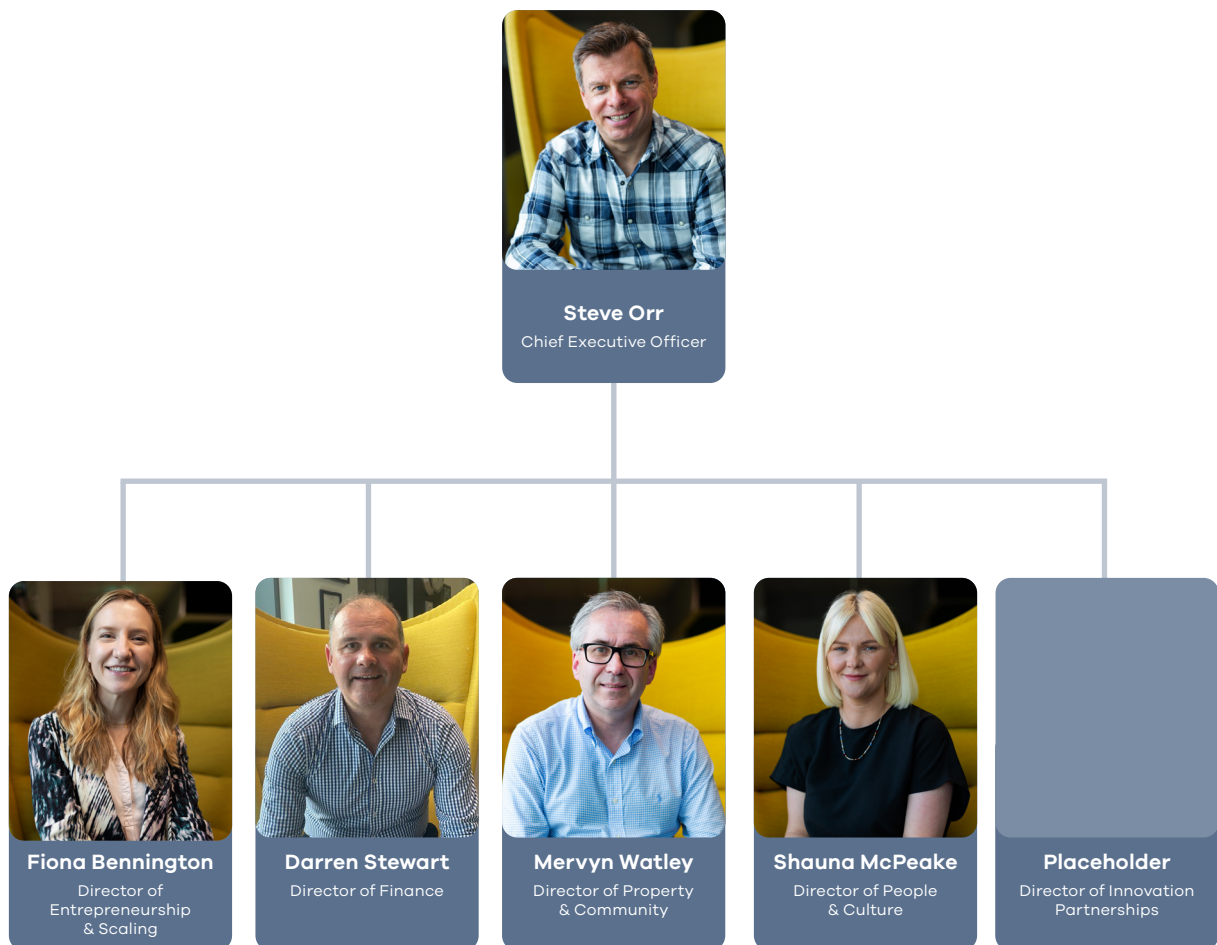
**Derry~Londonderry**



**Bedford Street, Belfast**

# Operating Structure

The incoming Director of Innovation Partnerships will play a pivotal leadership role in steering Catalyst's journey.





# Job and Person Specification

## What we are looking for?

As the Director of Innovation Partnerships, you will lead the development of high-impact consortiums bringing together industry leaders, academia and funders. You will drive collaborations that result in strategic competitive advantage for both multinational corporations and scaling companies by leveraging Catalyst's open innovation ecosystem to solve real-world challenges and create sustainable growth. This role focuses on delivering commercial outcomes that support Catalyst's mission to make it easy for companies to innovate.

This is a key leadership role within Catalyst. As part of the Executive Team, you will play a critical role in enabling strategic partnerships that will impact the Northern Ireland economy as a whole while also delivering new sustainable income streams to support the Catalyst vision and goals.

## Key information

- **Reporting to:** CEO
- **Location:** The role will be based Catalyst, Belfast. Hybrid working arrangements are available.
- **Salary & benefits:** In line with the seniority of this role, an internationally attractive salary will be available in addition to a comprehensive benefits package including private healthcare and generous pension contribution.

## Key responsibilities

1. **Strategic Partnership Development:** Drive impact for the Northern Ireland economy by leading high-value partnerships with industry partners, research institutions and funding bodies (including public sector and government agencies) to build R&D consortiums and ecosystem development addressing real-world challenges.
2. **Business Development & Relationship Management:** Develop and manage key strategic relationships in innovative multinational corporations and scaling companies, identifying opportunities for commercial growth and target impact aligned with Catalyst's goals.
3. **Technology Exploitation:** Drive commercial value by identifying and leveraging emerging technologies and intellectual property (IP) within consortium projects. Ensure that innovations translate into sustainable business opportunities.
4. **Income Generation:** Generate new revenue streams through innovative R&D partnerships and public-private collaborations.
5. **Leadership:** Provide strategic leadership across multi-disciplinary teams, fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration and high performance.

## Essential criteria

1. Proven leadership experience in highly innovative, commercial science or technology-driven private sector environments.
2. Proven track record in strategic business development, relationship management at executive level and value creation.
3. Understanding of global innovation ecosystems and the ability to translate research and development into commercial value for Catalyst and companies in the Catalyst ecosystem.
4. Successful experience convening or managing complex partnerships high-impact consortiums with diverse partners, including industry, academia and regional, national and European funders.
5. Demonstrated success in generating sustainable revenue through innovative partnerships and/or R&D collaboration.
6. Proven track record in leading and developing diverse, high-performing teams in fast-paced, innovative environments.

## Personal Attributes

- **Innovative Mindset:** Demonstrates a proactive approach to identifying and capitalising on emerging technologies and intellectual property, with a passion for translating ideas into tangible business opportunities.
- **Technically Credible:** Possesses deep expertise in science, technology, and innovation, with the ability to engage confidently and knowledgeably with industry, academic, and technical stakeholders to build trust and foster collaborative partnerships.
- **Strategic Thinker:** Skilled at balancing long-term vision with short-term priorities, with a demonstrated ability to see the big picture, analyse complex challenges, and make decisions that align with Catalyst's mission and goals.
- **People-Centric Leader:** A strong communicator and relationship-builder who prioritises collaboration, listens to diverse perspectives, and inspires high performance in teams and partners alike, ensuring everyone feels valued and empowered.

## How to Apply

Application is by submission of a tailored CV, and cover letter submitted via our recruitment portal.

**Click [here](#) to apply.**

Catalyst will carry out an initial paper-based shortlist assessment of candidate application, and then invite short-listed candidates to attend a first stage interview to assess candidates' suitability for the role.

Should you have any queries relating to any aspect of this appointment process or wish to have an informal and confidential discussion please contact Shauna McPeake, Director of People & Culture or email: **[shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org](mailto:shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org)**.

