



# BioConnect

## PRESS RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2022**



## Inauguration of new €7 million BioConnect Project

With the appointment of Midland Construction (Kells) to build the new Innovation Centre, BioConnect's Board is delighted to host Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister for Social Protection to formally inaugurate the €7 million, 1,639 square metre, research and innovation centre situated along the Armagh Road at **Knockaconny in Monaghan** at **11am on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2022**.

**Minister Humphreys TD** said, *"I am delighted to turn the sod to commence construction on this landmark project for County Monaghan. In my previous role as Minister for Business, I allocated almost €5million for the BioConnect Research and Innovation Centre under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund. This project will bring together a cluster of household names in the agri-food sector including Lakeland Dairies, Manor Farm, Bio-Marine Ingredients, Silver Hill Food and Herbal Crest and allow them to partner on ambitious research agendas with leading academic partners such as Queens University, Ulster University, Letterkenny and Dundalk Institutes of Technology and Monaghan Institute. Once complete, the new research centre will create hundreds of skilled jobs locally and will drive collaboration, innovation and research ensuring County Monaghan has a competitive advantage and will be at the cutting edge of food research nationally and internationally."*



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**Enterprise Ireland Regional Manager for the North East, Aidan McKenna**, added: *“Enterprise Ireland is proud to back this important project. The BioConnect Innovation Centre draws on the strong agri-food reputation of County Monaghan and the North East region. The Centre will be a focus for innovation in the rapidly evolving agri-food business and ensure that our producers and entrepreneurs are at the leading edge of sustainable food production into the future.”*

**Paul Clifford, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Monaghan County Council and BioConnect Board Member**, explained the strategic importance of the project, *“Monaghan County Council is delighted to see works commence on this strategic, ground breaking project, with Monaghan Mushrooms, Enterprise Ireland and all our commercial and academic partners. We hope that BioConnect Innovation and Research Centre will create the platform for regional transformation, supporting biotechnology research and providing opportunities for graduate employment. The Centre will help companies throughout the region meet competitive challenges and develop enhanced new products for global markets.”*

Construction of the facility is expected to take around 50 weeks with hand over at the end of 2022.

**Thomas Stronge, Director at Midland Construction** added, *“We’re delighted to win this contract as Main Building Contractors and to be working with BioConnect on this prestigious project. We are looking forward to working with local businesses to provide a global centre for cutting-edge research and development.”*

**BioConnect Chief Executive, David Macauley**, said, *“I am delighted to see Midland Construction, a progressive and high quality Irish company win the public tender to construct the new BioConnect facility. Midland have shown a real enthusiasm and passion for the project in the face of a very difficult 2021 for the construction industry in Ireland. They have demonstrated a steadfast focus on getting the project to this critical stage in a spirit of true partnership with the Design Team.”*

**David** added, *“I would like to take this opportunity to encourage entrepreneurs, investors and existing businesses to make contact with me directly to explore how BioConnect can support their vision for growth, new product development and novel opportunities.”*

**David** can be reached by email at [david@bioconnectireland.com](mailto:david@bioconnectireland.com) or on 087 359 4944.

In addition, BioConnect hosts a Discord communication platform. See Notes to Editors below for details.

**Notes to Editors follows...**



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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

- **Photo opportunity** and chance to meet and talk to the BioConnect team at the BioConnect Inauguration (Sod Turning) on Monday 31 January 2022 at 11am at Knockaconny site
- **Directions** - Coming from Monaghan on the Armagh Road (N12), at the Monaghan Institute roundabout, take the third exit (turning right off N12) and proceed towards the M-TEK building turning first left and proceeding along towards the Monaghan Education Centre. The site access is on the corner.
- **Refreshments** will be available after the event at Grahams of Monaghan (back towards Monaghan at the first roundabout).
- The BioConnect website can be viewed at [www.bioconnectireland.com](http://www.bioconnectireland.com)
- The BioConnect Project, driven by Monaghan County Council and founding industry partners, Monaghan Mushrooms, Manor Farm, Lakeland Dairies and Bio-Marine, in partnership with major food producers from the region, together with tertiary educational institutions, will provide up to 125 jobs in phase one of the development
- The BioConnect Project is supported by a grant from Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2017 – 2020
- Trading for over 40 years Midland Construction, based in Kells, County Meath, have a long and established reputation for delivering for both clients and design teams. They have a young, dynamic and innovative team and bring a wealth of experience to the project
- How to engage with BioConnect
  - Whether you are a school age entrepreneur, seasoned producer, decision taker, investor or somebody with a great idea, BioConnect wants to hear from you
  - BioConnect has setup a new communications platform to allow all interested parties, wherever they are located, to engage in a dialogue  
24/7/365
    - The platform that has been chosen is called **Discord**
    - To join the discussion, go to our website – **[bioconnectireland.com](http://bioconnectireland.com)** – select the “**Take Action**” button on the top right of the home page and then click “**Get My Link**”.



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- What are the benefits of joining up?
- Conceived as a community of like-minded people who want to see the food, health and agricultural sectors in Ireland grow and diversify, BioConnect's Discord forum is, first and foremost, a platform for users to enjoy - one that will offer ongoing value and insights