



# The Ireland Funds Business Plan Competition

## Supporting Ireland — one entrepreneur at a time.

The Ireland Funds is committed to supporting Ireland's economic recovery. The Ireland Funds Business Plan Competition was founded by Bill McKiernan, The Ireland Funds America Board Member, and is modeled on a similar initiative run at Harvard Business School. The competition nurtures creativity and entrepreneurial skills amongst recent graduates and post-graduate students.

On August 9th, the final of The Ireland Funds Business Plan Competition in partnership with Ireland's National Digital Research Centre (NDRC), an early stage investor in tech companies, was hosted in Dublin's Digital Quarter. Now in its sixth year, the competition offers a top cash prize of €10,000 and an opportunity to pitch business ideas in front of leading entrepreneurs, executives

and venture capitalists from the US and Ireland. The judging panel was made up of industry experts: Avril McHugh, Director of Global Marketing at Cpl Resources plc; Gene Murphy, Entrepreneur in Residence at Bank of Ireland; Dermot Casey, Investment Leader at NDRC; and Gareth Quinn, MD of Digital DNA.

Dublin-based start-up Aurius won €10,000 in August of 2017. Aurius offers affordable, high-quality hearing aids paired with an app on a phone or tablet that allows users to tune the device at home. This breakthrough technology means that a visit to the audiologist is no longer required when common glitches occur, thereby saving the user both time and money.



LOOK AT  
BANK OF IRELAND

**"THE STANDARD OF PRESENTATIONS FROM TEAMS THIS YEAR WAS REALLY PHENOMENAL. IT IS GREAT TO SEE THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN PUT IN BY THE IRELAND FUNDS AND NDRC. IT'S GREAT TO SEE THE IRELAND FUNDS SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN THIS SPACE, TO CREATE THE NEXT LEVEL OF INDIGENOUS TALENT THAT IS IRISH-BASED AND THAT CAN SCALE AROUND THE WORLD'."** — Panel judge Gene Murphy, Entrepreneur in Residence at Bank of Ireland

Daniel Beere and Luke Sexton of Victor the Visabot which came in 3rd place, Paul Allan of Aurius which won The Ireland Funds 2017 Business Plan Competition and Nimesh Pinnamaneni of Helixworks Technologies which came in 2nd place.



Photos: Sean Curtis



"THE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION HELPED US GREATLY IN UNDERSTANDING THAT, WHILE WE MIGHT HAVE A BRILLIANT PRODUCT, IT IS OUR MARKETING STRATEGY THAT WILL BE KEY TO ANY FUTURE SUCCESS. THE MENTORSHIP AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY BOTH THE IRELAND FUNDS AND NDRC IS SECOND TO NONE AND I WOULD ENCOURAGE ANY EARLY STAGE START-UPS TO CONSIDER APPLYING FOR NEXT YEAR'S COMPETITION WHEN THE TIME COMES." — Paul Allan of Aurius



Photos: Sean Curtis



Past participants and winners of The Ireland Funds Business Plan Competition have gone on to great things:

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## Coindrum **Lukas Decker, CEO (2012 inaugural winner)**

Coindrum provides self-service machines in airports that passengers use to convert unwanted coins into airport shopping vouchers. This solves the foreign coin inconvenience for travellers, increases the percentage of people that shop for retailers and speeds up security checks for airports.

## Artfetch **Katie Tsouros, Co-founder/CEO (2013 first runner up)**

Artfetch is an ecommerce platform for emerging artists. Artfetch also offers a curated experience from the selection of artists to personal recommendations and service. In 2016 Artfetch was acquired by UK company Rise Art with Katie Tsouros staying on as brand marketing manager.

## UniTuition **Sean Judge and Orla McCallion, Co-founders (2016 second runners up)**

UniTuition is an online grinds service designed to help third-level students fill crucial gaps in their knowledge by partnering with third-level institutions to connect students with peer tutors. All tutors are senior students and recent graduates who provide exam-focused individual and group lessons to junior peers from their university campus. Since placing in The Ireland Funds BPC, UniTuition has successfully launched their second site for Junior and Leaving Cert students called TutorHQ.

