

Supporting the biopharma and chemical sectors



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The impact of the crisis on the Irish biopharma and chemical sectors

The BioPharma and Chemical sectors stayed essentially operational with most sites employing remote working for 50% of their workforces. A number of critical construction projects were suspended. Some sites have become involved in supplying sanitisers and critical reagents to the HSE.

Shortages in some raw materials is emerging as an issue; freight costs have increased significantly. Talent development and availability will also present a challenge to the biopharma sector due to a less mobile workforce in the medium to short term; investment decisions may be postponed or delayed.

Phase 1 Actions to support the Irish biopharma and chemical sectors in the next 100 days

- 1. Establishing a return to work protocol:** With a view to ultimately identifying individuals that may be best placed to return to work, it is recommended to keep track of the evolving scientific understanding of acquired immunity and the improving technical performance of point of care antibody tests. Neither can form the basis of such a protocol at this stage.
- 2. Retain open and secure supply chains:** Sites in the EU should look to produce ingredients and intermediates currently produced in India and China as supply problems are being experienced from these locations.
- 3. Progress key construction projects quickly:** Increasing capacity through new and/or, upgraded facilities must be prioritised. This is necessary to ensure critical and essential medicines are available for patients.

Phase 2 Actions to support the Irish biopharma and chemical sectors by end of 2020

- 1. Maintain the availability of talent pools:** Monitor and address limited access to talent pools overseas due to quarantine requirements.
- 2. Support training and development:** Put in place additional supports for training and development programmes such as the BioPharmaChem Skillnet and the BPCI Laboratory Apprenticeship scheme.
- 3. Enable and enhance investment in the biopharma and chemical sectors:** Utilise Government and Agency resources to maintain and increase investment.

Phase 3 Actions to support the Irish biopharma and chemical sectors by 2023

- 1. Position Ireland as a leader in the Advanced Therapeutics and Cell and Gene Therapy space:** Invest in infrastructure and support for company-based R&D.
- 2. Sustain Ireland's existing strength in both small and large molecule-based manufacturing and development:** Invest in advanced manufacturing and industry 4.0 principles.
- 3. Maintain attractive corporation tax rate and R&D supports:** Ireland's corporate tax regime is a key incentive for biopharma foreign direct investment, it is vital that it remains fully intact in all aspects.

Impact of phased action on the Irish biopharma

and chemical sectors: Ireland is a global sourcing location for biopharmaceuticals and chemicals. It is important that Ireland's continued competitiveness continues to attract employment; supply chains must remain open, secure and resilient. Undoubtedly the COVID-19 crisis has greatly disrupted the economy and healthcare system. From a global supply perspective, Irish companies should look to manufacture more components in the supply chain such as ingredients, intermediates and excipients. These are key to the security and supply of important medicines.

‘BioPharmaChem Ireland and its members have worked hard to ensure that patients continue to receive the medicines that they need and we will continue to do this.’

Paul McCabe

Site Leader, Alexion and Vice-Chair of BioPharmaChem Ireland

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