



# LIDAN DESIGNS FOUND NEW WAYS TO SCALE SUSTAINABLY

*Agile Innovation Fund, supported by Enterprise Ireland & Local Enterprise Office.*

## Do you wish to develop a new product or improve an existing one?

Enterprise Ireland's Agile Innovation Fund supports the development of new or substantially improved products, services, or processes, where the total project cost is no more than €300,000. It features a streamlined online application form with fast track approval.

The fund is open to Companies who are;

- new to R&D
- operating in short, product life cycles
- undertaking small/short projects

Grant rates range from 25% to 50% and applications can be submitted online anytime. Most importantly, the fund is open to eligible Local Enterprise Office clients, like Lidán Designs.

## Learn how Lidán Designs benefited from the Agile Innovation Fund.

We're all familiar with garden rooms, cabins, and ready-made buildings and since the onset of the pandemic, acquiring a separate space to work from home has never been more popular.

But while Lidán Designs in Roscommon specialise in off-site manufacturing and installation of premium wood buildings, the quality, design, and sustainability of their product puts them in an entirely different league. And this, according to managing director, Dan O'Brien was facilitated, in part, by the Enterprise Ireland Agile Innovation Fund.

"When we started out, we focused on remote working offices, but with an eye on modular design, which is a very big industry globally," he says.

“Our buildings are different to most as they are designed to a permanent standard and meet all the building regulations – we wanted to ensure that whatever we made would be portable and modular but had to be high end.



**Making It Happen:**  
Dan O'Brien of Lidan Designs

“Initially we produced high end garden rooms, then we slowly moved into creating bigger buildings which were more complex and involved a lot of structural engineering.”

In 2019 O'Brien and company co-founder Liam Casey, applied for funding from Enterprise Ireland in order to allow them to create bigger structures such as offices, houses and amenity buildings which are BER A1 or A2 certified as near Zero Energy buildings, part L compliant and fully sustainable.

Further R&D was necessary to achieve their goals and the Agile Innovation Fund, which supports the development of new or substantially improved products, services, or processes, allowed them to do that.

With fast-track approval and streamlined online application form, the fund allows companies to access up to 50% in support of innovation projects with a total cost of up to €300,000,” says Debbie Nolan, Enterprise Ireland.

“It is open to eligible clients of Enterprise Ireland, Local Enterprise Office and Údarás na Gaeltachta, who are trading with positive EBITDA. It is a great fit for companies that need to rapidly develop solutions or are planning a first R&D project.”

Dan O'Brien agrees and says this is why Lidan Designs applied for the fund.

“We looked at the Agile funding programme because it was specifically aimed at R&D,” he says.

“Our plans involved both wide span and multi-storey formats and there were challenges involved in achieving the right solution for our buildings as they had to be fully compliant and of the highest standards and building regulation controls. They also had to be 100% off-site modular in-factory construction while still being suitable for transport on trucks and put in place by a crane – so there is a lot involved in the process.

“Another of the challenges was around air tightness, and there was a lot of structural engineering needed along with a great deal of consultancy. But we managed to come up with a solution, thanks to the Agile Innovation Funding which comprised a 50% input from EI combined with our own 50% share”

With support from their Local Enterprise Office, Lidan Designs was successful in its application for funding and O'Brien says the process was very simple and concise.

“I found that acquiring the fund was very straightforward,” he says. “Essentially, we had a couple of meetings with Enterprise Ireland and LEO, which I thought were excellent as they really knew what we were trying to do.

“We had a lot in place in already as we weren't just starting out and had quite a few high-end clients in the pipeline, so they knew if we got the funding, it wasn't just going sit on a shelf somewhere. We were going to make use of it straight away – and we did. Of course, it is important to have all your ducks in a row and make a decent presentation, but overall we found the process very easy.”

The successful application put the company in a position to construct and compete for any size of building in the market and to further fund research for advancements on their modular building solutions in the future.

Innovation plays a very important role in Lidan Designs, and with 12 full-time staff onboard, it has big plans for the coming year, with several large projects already underway.

“Our vision is all about innovation – and while we have come up with challenges along the way, we designed our own system around this,” says O'Brien. “We won a national award last year on sustainability and innovation and are doubling our turnover every year. Sustainability is also huge for us as we make sure to use Irish timber and as much local produce as possible. We also use recycled paper and wood fibre as insulation products, so our carbon footprint is a fraction of what it is for other companies.

“We have some big clients on board for 2022 and are also expanding our factory – which is being built in timber, so we are scaling sustainably. We are looking forward to a positive year ahead and the Agile Innovation Fund helped to play a role in that.”

**Don't delay, apply today.**  
**For more information,**  
**visit: [localenterprise.ie/agile](https://localenterprise.ie/agile)**