

Thoughts on Horizon 2020 in a North/South context

Observations

According to InterTradeIreland, data the total drawdown from FP7 projects with participants from Ireland and Northern Ireland as of July 2012 is valued at €60.7 million, distributed across 69 successful N/S projects.

Northern Ireland's strategy for Horizon 2020 has been to put in place a more sophisticated support system including the direct approach of supporting dedicated EU funding staff in the University of Ulster and Queens University Belfast, in addition to support offered by InterTradeIreland and InvestNI. This gives a central role to universities in securing EU funding.

The Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Amendment Bill 2012 will alter longstanding restrictions which prevent disbursement of State research funds to a scientist or project based outside the jurisdiction.

Horizon 2020 bids from this island could have greater impact if made from Ireland as a whole. Given the fact that both the EU and US support cross-border initiatives, joint funding would likely help to leverage additional international support.

Questions :

Is there a sufficient understanding and appreciation in Northern Ireland that to secure funding means crossing at least two borders to create new relationships of trust and/or broaden and deepen existing ones:

- Within and between third level institutions in both jurisdictions
- Between those institutions and local firms and especially SMEs
- Extending and engaging partners in the rest of the EU or beyond?

de facto need to secure additional funding is new research/projects/partners so is effort to date sufficiently outward looking especially in NI (no mention of EU beyond here in INI Guide and will point persons in Unis look beyond existing networks to engage firms)?

If one was to prioritise a small number of target areas where most potential opportunities for N/S synergy exists would it be e-health and food?

Suggestions

An event to bring lots of new people into a N/S space (eg action orientated brokerage/speed dating style event)

Everyone agreeing the ultimate aim is high quality jobs and lots more of them North and South and wherever in EU or beyond other partners are from

More attention is paid to leveraging Ireland's high grade network connections with US firms and academic institutions for the benefit of local applicants

A target is set for the total amount of Horizon 2020 funding drawn down for the island as whole that is 1/3 higher than the current combined figure for both jurisdictions