

FROM THE MINISTER



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Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
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Our Ref: SUB/1090/15

17 June 2015

Dear *Michaela*

FOLLOW UP FROM TOPICAL QUESTION 3 – 2 JUNE 2015

I agreed to write to you to provide information about cross border research collaboration projects and the press release for the launch of the SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership.

Details of the current cross border research programmes and projects are attached at Annex A. The SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership press release of 14 May 2015 is at Annex B.

Yours sincerely,



DR STEPHEN FARRY MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning
Enc

cc: The Speaker's Office
NIA Library



DETAILS OF CROSS BORDER THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION RESEARCH

COLLABORATION PROJECTS

SFI-DEL INVESTIGATORS PROGRAMME PARTNERSHIP

In January 2014 the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) announced a ground-breaking collaboration which allows Northern Ireland universities to participate as full academic partners in SFI's prestigious 'Investigators Programme'.

The 'SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership' will support collaborative projects involving universities from both jurisdictions to undertake internationally peer reviewed, leading edge, discovery and fundamental research.

DEL has made funding of up to £8.4million available over six years to enable Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster to participate in the 2014 and 2015 Investigator Programme calls.

The results of the 2014 call were announced at the end of April 2015, with seven projects involving Queen's being recommended for funding under the 2014 SFI Investigators Programme peer review. These projects will commence in September 2015. Details of project thematic areas and partners are as follows:

- Thematic area: Theme 10: Water and Waste
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway
Project title: i-PAD: Innovative biological phosphate (bioP) and anaerobic digestion (AD) technology for waste treatment, energy generation and phosphorus recovery.
- Thematic area: Sustainable Food Production and Processing
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and the Marine Institute

Project title: Creating the knowledge for precision fisheries management: spatially aware 'nudging' to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield using real-time fisheries incentives

- Thematic area: Theme 12: Parallel Computing
Partners: Queen's University Belfast and University College Dublin
Project title: Meeting the Future Challenges of Heterogeneous and Extreme-Scale Parallel Computing
- Thematic area: Theme 8: Processing Technologies and Advanced Materials
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and Trinity College, Dublin
Project title: Development of Fixed Dose Combination Products using Advanced Pharmaceutical Processing Technologies
- Thematic area: Theme 15: Personalised Medicine
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
Project title: Development of personalised medicine approaches for the clinical application of IAP antagonists in metastatic and high risk early stage colorectal cancer
- Thematic area: Theme 6: Sustainable Food Production and Processing
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and University College Dublin
Project title: Application of New and Emerging Technologies to Develop Vaccines against *Fasciola hepatica*
- Thematic area: Theme 15: Personalised Medicine
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast and Dublin City University
Project title: Metabolomic and array-based biomarker approaches to understand human exposure to potent carcinogenic fresh water toxins

The 2015 call will close in June 2015 and, subject to funding being available, results are expected to be announced in April 2016.

This programme will provide a real opportunity to develop new cross-border research collaborations which will help NI universities to take full advantage of funding opportunities under Horizon 2020 and will consequently lead to economic and societal gain for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

US-IRELAND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME PARTNERSHIP

The US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership continues to represent an important opportunity for the Northern Ireland universities to undertake strategically important research collaboration with US and RoI universities in the following agreed priority areas; nanotechnology, sensors, telecommunications, energy / sustainability and health. The Department has supported seventeen US-Ireland projects to date, thirteen from Queen's University and four from the University of Ulster. Five of the projects have been completed. Two further health projects have been supported by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

Details of project thematic areas and partners are as follows:

- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Dublin City University and University of Maine

- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, National University of Ireland, Galway and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

- Thematic area: Nanotechnology
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Tyndall National Institute and University of Texas at Dallas

- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: University of Ulster, National University of Ireland, Galway and Scripps Institution of Oceanography University of California, San Diego

- Thematic area: Nanotechnology
Partners: University of Ulster, Dublin Institute of Technology, University of Cincinnati and Florida International University
- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: Queens University, Belfast, University College Dublin and University of Alabama
- Thematic area: Telecommunications
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, University College Dublin and Rice University Houston, Texas
- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: University of Ulster, National University of Ireland, Galway, University College Dublin and University of Connecticut
- Thematic area: Sensors
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Tyndall National Institute and Georgia Institute of Technology
- Thematic area: Energy / Sustainability
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, University College Dublin University of Texas at Austin
- Thematic area: Nanotechnology
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Cork Institute of Technology, Tyndall National Institute and University of California, Los Angeles
- Thematic area: Nanotechnology
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Trinity College, Dublin and Colorado State University
- Thematic area: Energy / Sustainability
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork and Stanford University

- Thematic area: Sensors and Energy / Sustainability
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Trinity College Dublin Kent State University, Ohio
- Thematic area: Nanotechnology and Energy / Sustainability
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork and University of Texas at Dallas
- Thematic area: Nanotechnology and Energy / Sustainability
Partners: Queen's University, Belfast, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork and Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago
- Thematic area: Energy / Sustainability
Partners: University of Ulster, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork and Northwestern University

**DEL PRESS RELEASE FOR SFI-DEL INVESTIGATORS PROGRAMME
PARTNERSHIP**

Farry announces £3.5million investment in research funding

Employment and Learning Minister Dr Stephen Farry today announced £3.5million of research funding for seven research projects involving Queen's University Belfast.
~ Thursday, 14 May 2015

The funding will support successful Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Investigators Programme projects through the SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership.

The Minister said: "The SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership is of significant benefit to Northern Ireland both economically and socially. I welcome that seven projects involving Queen's University collaborating as partners with research institutions in the Republic of Ireland have been successful in SFI's prestigious Investigators Programme.

"My Department will be providing £3.5million to support these ground breaking research projects in areas such as Energy, Sustainable Food Production and Processing, Parallel Computing, Processing Technologies and Advanced Materials and Personalised Medicine.

"These research collaborations will not only address fundamental research issues but will also strengthen cross border research alliances and help Northern Ireland to bring further success under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation."

The SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership supports collaborative projects involving universities from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in undertaking excellent scientific research that has the potential to impact society and the economy. The seven successful projects were selected following international competitive peer review involving 400 international scientists.

Dr Darrin Morrissey, Director of Programmes at SFI, said: "Peer reviewed by international experts, these research projects are of the highest standards for scientific excellence and have the potential to lead to new breakthroughs in areas such as wastewater treatment, fisheries management, personalized medicine, high performance computing and agriculture. These collaborative research projects will strengthen cross-border research and provide a basis for leveraging alternative funding such as the EU's Horizon 2020 Programme. It allows researchers across the island of Ireland to further their careers and build partnerships with leading industry partners who also benefit from access to some of the leading academic talent on this island."

Scott Rutherford, Director of Research and Enterprise at Queen's University, said: "We are delighted that seven research projects at Queen's have received funding from the SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership. This is a prestigious programme and this success reflects the high calibre of world-leading research being undertaken at Queen's which is having a very real impact on the economy.

"The research projects, which cover areas such as Energy, Food Security, Parallel Computing, Processing Technologies and Advanced Materials and Personalised Medicine, are further evidence of Queen's commitment to research which advances knowledge and changes lives. I am delighted that Queen's researchers have made such a strong showing in the early stages of this All-Island initiative, which opens up substantial future collaborative opportunities with Science Foundation Ireland."

Notes to editors:

1. In January 2014 the Irish Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Minister, Richard Bruton TD and the Employment and Learning Minister for Northern Ireland, Dr Stephen Farry MLA, signed a ground-breaking Collaboration Agreement to allow Queen's University and the University of Ulster to participate as full academic partners in Science Foundation Ireland's well-established and highly prestigious "Investigators Programme" on a two year pilot basis for the 2014 and 2015 calls.
2. On 24 April 2015 the ROI Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Damien English TD announced over €30 million of research funding for twenty three major research projects through the SFI Investigators Programme. Seven of the projects to be funded are SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership collaboration projects. SFI is providing funding of just over -4 million to support the ROI element of successful partnership projects.
3. The Department for Employment and Learning will be providing funding to Queen's University Belfast over a four to five year period for seven research projects. Funding will range from approximately £380,000 to £640,000.
4. Under the SFI-DEL Investigators Programme Partnership Queen's University Belfast will be collaborating with the following research bodies in the Republic of Ireland (ROI); University College Dublin (2), National University of Ireland Galway (1), Marine Institute (1), Trinity College Dublin (1), Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (1), Dublin City University (1).
5. Queen's University is a UK Top 10 Research Intensive University (REF 2014).
6. Science Foundation Ireland funds oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) which promotes and assists the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland. The Foundation also promotes and supports the study of, education in and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and in particular to the growth of the economy. For further information, visit: [the SFI website](#).
7. For a list of successful projects, visit: [the DELNI website](#).
8. All media enquiries should be directed to the Department for Employment and Learning Communications Branch on 028 9025 7466. Out of office hours please contact the duty press officer via pager number 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.