



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

### **ULSTER UNIVERSITY AWARDED €23M WORTH OF EU FUNDING FOR THREE REVOLUTIONARY NEW PROJECTS**

**Over €23 million has been offered to Ulster University, under the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, for three truly innovative projects within the fields of Health & Life Science and Renewable Energy.**

€6.4 million has been offered for the 'SPIRE 2' project that will help develop a range of wide-scale mass renewable energy storage devices to meet current and future electricity market needs. The cross-border project will develop energy usage scenarios to help better understand what size such storage systems need to be to meet rising demand.

It will contribute to the region meeting targets set under the EU's 2020 Renewable Energy Directive, which has been designed to increase the use of renewable energy sources across all member states. SPIRE 2 will also generate understanding and commercial possibilities for wide scaled mass energy storage to contribute to renewable energy targets beyond 2020.

€8.1 million has been offered for the 'Eastern Corridor Medical Engineering Centre' (ECME) project which will help collate research data and knowledge to use in the fight against disease. The project will collect cross-border data on cardiovascular and respiratory disease to help develop early point-of-care detection systems. It will also investigate the usage of wearable technologies that will record and monitor patient vital-signs outside of a hospital setting during cardiac rehabilitation.

€8.6 million has also been offered for the 'Centre for Personalised Medicine, Clinical Decision Making & Patient Safety' (CPM) project which will improve clinical decision-making, personalised to the individual patient through collaborative academic, clinical and industry based research. This will contribute to improved, safer and more cost effective healthcare for people living on both sides of the border.

The project will focus on five common disease areas including primary coronary intervention (PCI) in myocardial infarction; emergency surgery; acute kidney injury; diabetes care and dementia. Through close collaborative working between the academic, clinical and commercial sector the project has the potential to improve the health of thousands of people, on a cross-border basis

Match-funding for the projects has been provided by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland.

Welcoming the funding awards Northern Ireland's Minister for the Economy Simon Hamilton MLA, said: **"I am delighted that my Department is able to fund this investment in business and industry relevant collaborations which will develop leading edge research and innovation capacity, ultimately attracting further investment to these shores and creating an environment for the creation of additional high value added jobs.**

**"The targeted sectors offer high growth potential opportunities to our local economy, and as new markets open and opportunities emerge, it is vital that we invest further in the research capacity and capability necessary for Northern Ireland to realise its ambition to be a global destination for innovative healthcare and renewable energy enterprises," he continued.**

Recognising the significance of the projects, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor said: **"I am delighted that my Department is co-funding these Life Sciences and Renewable Energy initiatives. The projects involve valuable cross-border cooperation which will benefit colleges and companies from both jurisdictions. The INTERREG programme has conferred significant benefits for cross-border enterprise development over previous years and I am confident that the new Programme, which is now getting underway, will further build on that positive impact".**

Outlining the importance of the funding awards Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the EU's INTERREG VA Programme said: **"These projects will have a significant impact in developing cross-border collaboration within the renewable energy and health and life sciences business sectors. The European Union's INTERREG VA Programme recognises that both these**



**sectors have a lot of potential to develop economic growth, and therefore warrant significant support from this EU funding within the region.”**

- ENDS.

**For more information please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB on Mob. 07834 778018 or via e-mail [john.mccandless@seupb.eu](mailto:john.mccandless@seupb.eu)**

#### **Notes to Editor:**

#### **SEUPB**

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)