

# Cross-Border research projects to get €37m funding

Government higher education initiative aims to deliver all-island approaches to innovation

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Taoiseach Micheál Martin speaking to media after announcing the funding at Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute in Pearse Street, Dublin, on Wednesday. Photograph: Alan Betson

The Government is to fund dozens of cross-Border research projects to the tune of more than €37 million, on issues ranging from precision cancer medicine to youth crime, as part of a new all-island research programme.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin announced details of the 62 projects on Wednesday which will involve higher education institutions on both sides of the Border over the next four years. The projects are the first to be funded under a new North-South research programme, a collaborative scheme funded through the Government's Shared Island fund.

The scheme aims to deepen links between higher education institutions, researchers and research communities on the island of [Ireland](#) and deliver all-island approaches to research and innovation.

Announcing the research awards, Mr Martin said they would bring researchers from all corners of the island together to work on pioneering projects over the next four years.

This was not only strengthening existing relationships, but fostering new research partnerships, he added.

“I’m particularly impressed by the high level of interest and the calibre of the proposals, and I am confident that these cross-Border collaborations will further strengthen the island’s reputation for innovation and research excellence,” he said.

The awards range in value from €200,000 over two years to €4 million over four years. Some of the projects include:

**Artificial intelligence** A collaboration between [Trinity College Dublin](#) and [Ulster University](#) to use AI approaches in addressing mental health inequalities in Ireland through improved diet and lifestyle.

**The Irish language** *Cartlann* is a collaboration between [NUI Galway](#) and [Ulster University](#) which will use the archival records of *Conradh na Gaeilge* to track the uneven development of Irish-language policy on both sides of the Border.

**Covid-19 and pregnancy** A collaboration between [UCC](#) and [Ulster University](#) will assess risks of congenital anomalies in relation to the disease.

**Hemp** An all-island approach to sustainable high-value carbohydrates – or polysaccharides – from low-value agricultural hemp waste products by [UCD](#) and [Queen’s University Belfast](#).

**Greenhouse gases** A collaboration between [UCC](#) and [Queen’s University](#) to develop efficient and sensitive photonic sensors for monitoring greenhouse gases.

**Military heritage** Online mapping, inventorying and recording of the Army Barracks of Ireland, 1690-1921, by [UCD](#) and the [Open University](#).

Minister for Further and Higher Education [Simon Harris](#) said research, science and innovation were invaluable tools in helping us to understand challenges that face us and identify solutions to them.

He said the research projects developed by researchers across the island would deepen relationships between North and South and help create and build new ones.

[Higher Education Authority](#) chief executive Dr [Alan Wall](#) said the programme provided an opportunity for researchers to combine knowledge, expertise and skills to work collaboratively to address global, national and regional challenges.

Last year, €40 million was allocated from the Shared Island fund over five years for the North-South research programme.

As previously announced and agreed by Government, there will be a second call under the programme in 2023. The scope and scale of the second call is currently under consideration.

The funding follows a Programme for Government commitment to “support a North/South programme of research and innovation”.

The research programme will support research which will be of economic and social benefit to the island of Ireland. Key principles of the programme are:

Strengthen research, innovation, development and collaboration in and between individuals and higher education institutions by rewarding innovation and excellence, thereby enhancing the higher education sector, North and South.

Enhance research, teaching and learning continuum and the skills, quality and relevance of graduate output.

Promote networks of excellence and partnerships of scale for research, innovation and development.

Contribute to policy development relevant to the Shared Island initiative and benefiting enterprise and communities, North and South.

Contribute to capacity building, place-making/innovation districts.

The programme is being managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.



Students at the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute in Pearse Street, Dublin, look on as Taoiseach Micheál Martin makes his announcement. Photograph: Alan Betson

### *From cancer to crime: new cross-Border research projects*

**Precision cancer medicine** The All-Island Cancer [Research Institute](#) is a collaboration between [University College Dublin](#) and Queen's University Belfast, the project brings 10 academic institutions and their associated teaching hospitals across the island of Ireland together to examine the area of precision cancer medicine.

**Liquid biopsies** The All-Ireland Cancer Liquid Biopsies Consortium is a collaboration between Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast which aims to bring cohesive leadership, insights, novel approaches, excellence in research, training, and teaching collectively and on the individual components of liquid biopsies, feeding back into teaching on both sides of the border.

**Sustainable innovation** The Atlantic Innovation Corridor is a collaboration between National University of Ireland, Galway and Ulster University which will address how the region can foster sustainable innovation. Other partners in this project include Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and [University of Limerick](#).

**Youth crime** Stable Lives Safer Streets is a collaboration between the University of Limerick and Queen's University Belfast looking at youth justice, community and youth work, trauma studies and community safety.

**Antibiotic-resistant bacteria** the All-island Vaccine Research and Training Alliance – a collaboration between University College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast – will examine the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

**Gambling** "Fair Play?" is a collaboration between [Maynooth University](#) and Ulster University to assess exposure of young people to gambling marketing through sport on the island of Ireland.