



Press Release

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€5.8 MILLION EU FUNDING ANNOUNCED TO DEVELOP CROSS-BORDER ENGINEERING RESEARCH & INNOVATION

The SEUPB has announced a funding offer of €5.8 million from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme to South West College for the 'Renewable Engine' project, which will create a new Research & Innovation focused 'super cluster'.

The project will focus on the disciplines of advanced manufacturing and renewable energy to help SMEs become more 'innovation active' and competitive.

Upon completion it aims to generate 57 years' worth of research developed at PhD level and above. This research will lead to commercial advantage for the participating businesses, on both sides of the border.

Project partners involved within the creation of the 'super cluster' include Queen's University Belfast, the Institute of Technology Sligo, the University of Strathclyde, Manufacturing NI, Action Renewables and Mid Ulster Council.

Recognising the importance of the funding Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the EU's INTERREG VA Programme said:
"The region as a whole is adversely affected by low levels of Research & Innovation within certain business sectors. The 'Renewable Engine' project will help to address this through the creation of a new cross-border collaborative partnership that will generate industry-relevant research.

"This research will prove invaluable for businesses working within the renewable energy sector in terms of increasing both their competitiveness and profitability. It will also help to deliver upon one of the core aims of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme which has been specifically designed to enhance Research & Innovation, on both sides of the border," she continued.



Lasting over four years the project will be led by South West College and aims to increase the commercialisation of new products and processes within the renewable energy sector.

It will also facilitate access to state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing equipment to ensure that the 'super cluster' research can be delivered to a world class standard.

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

Welcoming the project Ireland's Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mary Mitchell O'Connor, said: **"Approval of this project is very welcome and I am delighted that my Department have been involved in co-funding what is a valuable cross border project, which will bring benefits to the the colleges, to industry and to the wider economy. This research on renewable energy and advanced manufacturing will be very worthwhile in a time of fast changing technologies and competitive pressures for business.**

Commenting on the announcement a spokesperson for the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland said: **"Investment in research and development is critical to future economic growth. Encouraging innovation is a central part of re-balancing the Northern Ireland economy. This project will not only enhance innovation and competitiveness but is also an excellent example of collaboration between business, particularly those in the advanced manufacturing and renewable energy fields and the Further and Higher Education sectors."**

- ENDS.

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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