



Press Release

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EUROPEAN UNION OFFERS €9.3 MILLION FOR A NEW WAVE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY RESEARCH

The SEUPB has announced funding of over €9.3 million from the EU's INTERREG VA Programme to Queen's University Belfast, that will create a 'virtual centre of competence' to support cross-border research into bio-energy and marine-based renewable energy sources.

Working with a number of cross-border partners including the University of Highlands and Islands, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Ulster University, the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Donegal County Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council, the project will create the largest amount of cross-border research in this specific area to date.

This research includes the use of tidal power at Strangford Lough and the North Antrim Coast, ocean energy sites in Western Scotland, as well as the potential for wave and tidal power generation in Donegal.

Known as the 'Bryden Centre for Advanced Marine and Bio-Energy Research', the EU funded project will recruit 34 PhD students and six post-doctoral research associates to produce industry relevant research that has the potential for strong commercial benefit.

The project will also focus on bio energy specifically heat, biogas and electricity which can be produced through the anaerobic digestion of agri-food waste. The research findings produced will benefit many SMEs struggling to enhance their innovation capacity within the renewable energy sector.

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.

The Bryden Centre is named to pay tribute to the dedication of the late Professor Ian Bryden, who was a leading expert in marine renewable energy, with a 30 year research career in fields associated with energy and hydrodynamics. This expertise, combined with



his work as Vice-Principal (Research) at the University of the Highlands and Islands, means he played an instrumental role in developing the project that now bears his name.

Welcoming the project Ireland's Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mary Mitchell O'Connor, said: **"I am delighted that my Department is co-funding this initiative together with our counterpart Department in Northern Ireland. The project involves practical cross border cooperation which will benefit colleges and companies from both jurisdictions. Advanced research on Renewable Energy is a very worthwhile project and this work will contribute many benefits, including a long term legacy for the future."**

Announcing the funding award Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the EU's INTERREG VA Programme said: **"The region has a low level of industry-relevant Research & Innovation within the renewable energy sector. The Bryden Centre project will help address this issue by creating a new centre of competence made up of dedicated PhD students creating high quality research with strong commercial potential.**

"This is one of the core objectives of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme as it has allocated a total of €71.7 million worth of funding to enhance and develop the Research & Innovation capacity of businesses on both sides of the border."

A spokesperson for the Department for the Economy said: **"This is an exciting and innovative project to explore the potential of renewable energy with benefits for this region and beyond. Collaboration between industry and academia will be critical in ensuring success. The new centre will enhance the commercial potential in this area and contribute to economic growth."**

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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 and Personnel 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