

EU SWIM Project - innovative cross border outreach to schools

The EU SWIM Project is a cross-border project representing a real step-change in how bathing water quality is monitored and is currently engaging pupils in an exciting new project.

The EU SWIM (System for Bathing Water Quality Monitoring) Project is developing a facility to enable bathers to check the water quality of their chosen bathing spots live before taking a dip. During the bathing water season from June 2019 the EU SWIM project will provide invaluable, real-time information on water quality for the general public on both sides of the border. The information will be made available on the website and an app and onsite beach signage. The system will also make a significant contribution towards meeting the EU's Bathing Water Directive, and therefore help meet one of the core environmental protection objectives of the INTERREG VA Programme.

The infrastructure required for the water quality prediction has included weather stations and associated river sensors and gauges for the 9 designated SWIM beaches.

As part of the project two schools have been chosen for their proximity to Enniscrone and Waterfoot beach. The schools are hosting weather stations at Scoil Chríost Rí, Enniscrone, Co Sligo and St Patrick's Primary School near Waterfoot beach in Glenariff, Co Antrim. This has provided an exciting opportunity for both schools to collaborate on a project to share the data coming from their SWIM weather stations and to compare and interpret their results.

During recent visits the EU SWIM team had the opportunity to spend time looking at the instalments and talking to the children about how the weather station data works. The principal of St Patrick's Primary School, Roisin McCarry, commented "*at the minute, St. Patrick's Primary School is the only school in this area to have a weather station. The information is very detailed for Primary School use, but we are working with our partner school, UCD, AFBI and KNIB in devising some practical worksheets to use the data in our projects on Weather and the Environment*".

Grace Mulligan, the principal of Scoil Chríost Rí, Enniscrone, Co Sligo commented “we were delighted to have been selected as part of this project and it is a unique opportunity for the pupils to use the weather station as a rich source of learning as it is woven into the 6 week programme that will be replicated with our counterpart school. The pupils can’t wait to share their findings with St Patricks Primary School”.

The EU SWIM Project water quality updates will be ‘going live’ for the next bathing water season June – September 2019. In the meantime regular updates can be found on <https://swimproject.eu> on Facebook and Twitter @EUSWIMproject

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Notes to Editors:

To speak to a press spokesperson, please contact Debra Castles, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful debra.castles@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org on 02890 736920 or 07769733595.

EU SWIM Project: The project combines the expertise of lead partner University College Dublin (UCD) and Northern Irish project partners Agri-Food Bioscience Institute (AFBI) and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB). The project is match-funded by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland, this research takes place across sites in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Visit <https://swimproject.eu/>

FUNDING:

- 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

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