

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **EU funds research to develop system for live bathing water quality monitoring**

**\*\*\* For immediate release\*\*\***

**Belfast, 7th December 2017:** A cross-border research project for developing a system for live bathing water monitoring is launched today at a prestigious event at Titanic Belfast, including presentations from project funders, partners and a stakeholder forum. This project has been funded by the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

The EU SWIM Project – as it is known – combines the expertise of lead partner University College Dublin and Northern Irish project partners Agri-Food Bioscience Institute and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, aiming to develop a system that will allow bathers to check the water quality of their chosen bathing spots live before taking the dip. The development of a bathing water quality prediction model will directly tie into software to support the collection of data and delivery of information to the public.

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 – a cross-border initiative supported by the Interreg VA funding scheme.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: “This innovative cross-border project represents a real step-change in how bathing water quality is monitored and will provide invaluable, real-time information on water quality for the general public on

both sides of the border. It will 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.”

Professor Gregory O'Hare of University College Dublin explains “The EU SWIM Project will not only develop a bathing water prediction model and allow water sampling and microbial tracking, it will also result in the creation of an app and a website with real-life updates; which crucially promotes good management, environmental standards and sustainability for beaches on the island of Ireland.”

The research is scheduled to take place between now and December 2019. Regular updates can be found on [www.swimproject.eu](http://www.swimproject.eu)

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To speak to a press spokesperson, please contact Dr Susann Power, Operations Manager, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful on [susann.power@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:susann.power@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org) or 02890 736920.

### **University College Dublin**

UCD is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities; an environment where undergraduate education, masters and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic spectrum of activity. The international standing of UCD has grown in recent years; it is currently ranked within the top 1% of institutions world-wide. USC is also Ireland's most globally engaged university with over 30,000 students drawn from over 120 countries, and includes 5,500 students based at locations outside the Republic of Ireland. As Ireland's largest university, with its great strength and diversity of disciplines, UCD embraces its role to contribute to the flourishing of the island of Ireland;

through the study and discussion of people, society, business, economy, culture, languages and the creative arts, as well as through research and innovation.

### **Agri-Food Bioscience Institute**

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is a multi-disciplinary scientific institute offering world-class scientific services to a wide range of customers in the agri-food sector. They provide analytical & diagnostic, research & development and scientific training & advice in agriculture, food, animal and plant health, marine and freshwater ecosystems and the agri-environment. They operate across seven sites in Northern Ireland and have a purpose built marine research vessel which operates in the Irish Sea from the Port of Belfast. Their state-of-the-art equipment is used by world-renowned scientists to provide sophisticated and reliable results. They participate in top-level research consortia with some of the world's most well-respected research organisations, universities and agencies globally, including China, the United States and Canada.

### **Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful**

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is a charity working towards the vision of a cleaner, greener Northern Ireland by running environmental education programmes and awareness raising campaigns, increasing volunteering opportunities and reporting on local environmental quality. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful runs a range of awareness raising and volunteering campaigns including the BIG Spring Clean and the Clean Coast programme as well as local environmental quality programmes such as international Eco-Schools and Blue Flag programmes, the Seaside Award, Borough Cleanliness Surveys and Live Here Love Here Green Business Awards. For more information, visit [www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).

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