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Research: Creed announces 2017 Call for Research Proposals

Research community invited to undertake research aimed at addressing the major challenges facing the Agri-food and forestry sector

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, TD, today announced a new Call for Research Proposals under the Department's Research Funding Programmes. The Call has been framed with a view to helping to realise the opportunities and address the challenges outlined in Food Wise 2025.

The Minister reiterated his commitment to research and innovation within the sector, stating: *"Publicly funded research is now even more necessary to help drive innovation, competitiveness and long-term sustainability in the agri-food, forest and marine sectors as we prepare for Brexit".* The Minister added *"It is critical that we invest also to research our approach to key challenges such as climate change and the environment".*

The content of the 2017 Call is heavily influenced by the strategic research and innovation agendas, Sustainable Healthy Agri-Food Research Plan and Forest Research Ireland, drawn up by industry-led, stakeholder advisory groups. A number of thematic areas across the agriculture, food (including sea-food), and forest sector are covered in the Call ranging from Animal/Plant Breeding, Biodiversity/Ecosystem services, Food Processing Technology, Food Chain Integrity to Forest Resource Protection.

Importantly, as part of the on-going North-South cooperation on agri-food research and innovation, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland, has teamed up with the Department to provide funding under a number of research topics to enable three research performing organisations north of the border to participate in this Call. In addition, the Minister welcomed the Environmental Protection Agency's agreement to co-fund two Call topics in areas of mutual strategic importance.

Concluding, the Minister wished the applicants every success with their applications and stated *'I expect the new technologies and innovations that will emerge from this Call to be important enabling tools to help us meet the strategic growth targets set out in Food Wise 2025 and the Government's Action Plan for Jobs. I have no doubt that the research and innovation community will take full advantage of this opportunity by submitting excellent proposals and I look forward to following the process over the coming number of months'*.

The deadline for proposal applications is Thursday, **14th September 2017** at 1:00pm. All documentation in relation to this Call is available on the research section of the Department's website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/research

Notes for editor:

The Department has three competitive research funding programmes that cover the Food, Agriculture and Forestry thematic areas and are collectively referred to as the 'Department's Research Funding Programmes'. The three programmes are described briefly here:

1. *Food Institutional Research Measure (Food)* aims to develop platform/'public good' technologies that will underpin a competitive, innovative and sustainable food manufacturing and marketing sector some of which can be exploited through more industry facing public support programmes.
2. *Research Stimulus Fund (Agriculture)* aims to support sustainable and competitive agricultural production practices and policies, and contribute to building and maintaining a knowledge economy and research capability in the primary agriculture sector.
3. Programme of Competitive Forest Research for Development (Forestry) aims to develop a scientific foundation and support for a sustainable, competitive, market orientated and innovative forest industry.

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