



URMAN Annual Report 2020-21

1. URMAN Advisory Group

There have been a number of changes to the URMAN Advisory Group membership during the last year. It still comprises 9 members who represent different areas / units from across the university including: Ciara O'Connor (Chair), Caitriona Devery*, Rosemarie Gannon, Aidan McElwaine, Pauline Power*, Justin Synnott, Colleen Thomas, Caroline Treacey, John Wyatt*. The three new members marked with an asterisk commenced in July 2021 following a call for new members at the AGM in February, and the departure of three members from the Advisory Group: Antonella Ferrecchia, Will Fitzmaurice and Irene Ward. We thank each of them for their important contribution to URMAN AG over their years of service. Caroline Treacey came to the end of her very successful term as chair (24 months as referenced in the terms of reference) and Ciara O'Connor was nominated to fill this position in May and assumed the role from July 2021.

We thank Aileen Doyle, assigned by UCD Research to provide Secretariat support to the Group, for her support over the years before leaving UCD this year. This ongoing support is very much appreciated.

The terms of reference of the Advisory Group were reviewed without change in Nov 2021 and are presented in **Appendix 1**. The Advisory Group meets once a month, and continues to do so remotely via zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the pandemic, this was an exciting year for the Advisory Group. In addition to the regular URMAN Working Group activities, and a reorganisation of the Working Groups in the Summer with the incorporation of new AG members, the 'All-Island Research Excellence Network – AIREN' project commenced in January 2021 in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster with support from InterTradelreland's Synergy initiative (reported under item **2.4**). Events continued very successfully in an online format, meeting needs of the members for connection as well as covering very relevant topics with high levels of engagement. We were delighted to have our request approved to carry forward the remaining budget of €4.2k to support URMAN events and activities post-Covid 19, when they can take place again in-person (reported under item **2.2**).

2. Working Groups

Early in 2019 the URMAN Advisory Group set up 6 Working Groups and their work has continued since then, with some updates to the structure in Summer 2021. It was deemed that three of the Working Groups had come to a natural end point or could be merged together and that an additional Working Group would be required to manage the AIREN project. All Working Groups are chaired by AG members and some have additional involvement from URMAN members. The Terms of Reference and Membership of each Working Group were refreshed and are presented in **Appendix 2 and 3**.

2.1 Membership & Communications Working Group (also incorporating Induction from July 2021):

Membership of URMAN is open to all UCD staff who work in research management and administration. Members self-select if they wish to become a member and join either through a form on the [website](#) or by emailing urmanexec@ucd.ie. There was a small turnover in membership

during the year as 10 new members joined and 14 members left. As of October 2021, URMAN has 160 members.

The channels used for URMAN communications include the URMAN website at <https://urman.ucd.ie>. The website includes a contact sheet that members can use to submit enquiries / contact the Advisory Group and/or they can use the URMAN dedicated email address at urmanexec@ucd.ie. There is also a mailing list of all members which is used to send out details of URMAN Events and activities. We are in the process of switching over to use a Google Group to manage the membership email list. We also list URMAN events in the UCD Staff E-Zine to increase the visibility of URMAN, its events and activities. We continue to use the URMAN LinkedIn Group with 108 members, and are exploring further use of the Google Currents URMAN community.

The Induction function was merged with the Membership and Communications WG in July 2021, as it ties in well with welcoming new members and the process is now running smoothly with most new members taking part in the virtual welcome sessions this year which are offered on a monthly basis when there are new members. These are hosted by two rotating members of the WG and over an informal chat over coffee the **URMAN Induction Resources Signposts (Appendix 4)**, updated in September 2021, forms the basis of the information provided to new members.

The URMAN AG, Training Provisions WG and Induction WG met with Joyce McLoughlin from HR re Training & Career Development matters and Induction on Tuesday 19th January 2021.

1. Training needs / provisions to support URMAN Members / Research & Innovation Job Family
2. Impact of COVID-19
3. Access to Training
4. Mentoring Programme for Research Managers & Administrators
5. Induction / URMAN reach-out

Following this meeting, Ciara O'Connor participated in the UCD Orientation review being coordinated by Suzanne Matthews, and a slide highlighting URMAN as a Community of Practice was added to the university's orientation session for new staff. A follow up to include URMAN/Communities of Practice in general in the onboarding checklists has not been successful to date.

2.2 Events Working Group

Four URMAN Events were held during 2020-21 which are listed in the following Table.

Table 1: URMAN Events held in 2020-21	Date	Attendees
UCD Research Briefing on Funding Horizon	27-Oct-20	27
University Research Support Structures - Finnish & Irish Perspectives	02-Dec-20	50
UCD HR Career and Training	02-Feb-21	37
Aine Moore, UCD Research on Horizon Europe + AGM + AIREN Launch	27-Apr-21	63

The average attendance was 44 members, which is a significant increase in comparison to the 2019-2020 average of 28. The Events Committee scheduled fewer events this year, 4 rather than 6 or 8 of previous years, which contributed to the higher attendance at each. The reduced number of events has been in consideration of our members working from home and potentially suffering from zoom fatigue. Attendance was likely boosted by the less frequent meetings but also certainly

by relevant topics. Our membership is avidly interested in career progression for research managers as indicated by the high attendance at the event focussing on this issue. There was an excellent response from the membership to the presentation made by international guest speaker Dr Katja Ritari, University of Helsinki Grant Coach and subsequent discussion with Peter Scott, UCD Research and Donnacha O'Driscoll, General Manager, UCD Insight. Our best attended event featured updates on Horizon Europe and URMAN's own initiative for the AIREN project. Plans for other URMAN events for 2021-22 will continue to respond to member needs and work in tandem with AIREN events.

In December 2019 an URMAN budget proposal for €5k was approved by UCD Research Senior Managers. This budget enables the Events Working Group and Advisory Group to deliver a stronger programme of events that better respond to member interests. A statement of how this budget allocation has been used to date is presented in **Appendix 5**. As much of the budget is to support URMAN in-person events, we were delighted to have our request approved to carry forward the remaining budget (€4,205.93) to support URMAN events and activities post-Covid 19, when they can take place again in-person.

2.3 Career Development Working Group (new name for the Training Provisions WG from July 2021)

The Career Development Working Group has maintained the same terms of reference which was previously in place for the Training Provisions Working Group. As outlined in **Appendix 2** it includes two strands:

- 1- Looking to fill gaps in career development initiatives for URMAN members
- 2- Exploring mentoring to support knowledge exchange and career development for URMAN members.

Responses in the URMAN Survey 2019 to questions relating to career development, training needs, and mentoring has informed work on both strands. This survey shows a high level of awareness amongst respondents of the range of training courses available in UCD, with suggestions for other new courses. The survey also indicates a strong appetite for a Mentoring Programme amongst URMAN members. The Working Group intends to consult again with the membership in the upcoming URMAN survey and identify areas which require ongoing activity and areas where new initiatives are needed.

Following the meeting with HR in January (see section 2.1) Joyce McLoughlin and Tara Hughes from UCD HR People and Organisation Development ran a special URMAN session in February on UCD HR Initiatives to Support Staff Training & Career Development, covering:

- P4G Development Toolkit - launching a new prototype that combines training & development programmes with the university's Job Family Framework
- LinkedIn Learning - an on-line eLearning portfolio of courses and tutorials
- Mentoring at UCD - UCD's Individual Mentoring programme which includes training for Mentors and Mentees which is scheduled in March 2021 and other future dates tbd
- InfoHub 'My Development Workspace' - to record and capture individual career contributions.

The Working Group also met with UCD HR in August in order to have curator access enabled for UCD LinkedIn Learning. Given that the university's P4G framework is underpinned by the 70/20/10 model for development (with 10% of staff development taking through training courses), the Working Group has created a LinkedIn Learning pathway for the Research & Innovation Job Family. Further LinkedIn Learning pathways in areas such as CPD related to URMAN events are also planned for the upcoming 21/22 academic year.

Lastly, the Working Group has outlined plans to identify URMAN members who are already assisting colleagues in a formalised mentoring capacity, and signposting these domains of mentorship available to the rest of the membership. Similar to the above, the upcoming survey will allow the Working Group to identify additional areas within the mentor/mentee space to focus on for the upcoming year.

2.4 AIREN Working Group (commenced as a separate WG in July 2021)

In July 2021 we set up the URMAN AIREN Working Group to lead and manage the 'All-Island Research Excellence Network – AIREN' project which is a 2-year project that commenced in January 2021. AIREN is led by UCD URMAN in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster with support from InterTradelreland's Synergy initiative. The overall aim of AIREN is to support cross border collaborations between universities and industry in the post-Brexit era and covid-19 pandemic. We do this through a range of events and initiatives. To date we have held 3 'Away Day' events for research managers and administrators in UCD, QUB and Ulster to share knowledge and best practice in research management, and planning is underway for 4 further events:

Away Day 1: Organisational Structures for Research Management & Development, held on 12th May 2021

Away Day 2: Governance & Management of Large Scale Research Centres, held on 8th September 2021

Away Day 3: Developing global partnerships /networks to develop research collaborations, held on 10th November 2021

Away Day 4: Research Impact, January 2022

Away Day 5: Postdoc Careers, March 2022

Away Day 6: Attract & Retain Research Talent, May 2022

AIREN also held a Workshop event on 30th June on 'North / South Research Collaboration Opportunities' which presented an overview from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Horizon Europe and the PEACE PLUS Programme about the strategies and initiatives they each have in place to support North / South research collaboration. It also presented insights from US Agencies - the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) - on the US Ireland Research & Development Partnership Programme. A second North / South Workshop on Industry Academia Research Collaboration will take place on 8th December 2021.

The AIREN Project has also developed and launched the AIREN webportal to receive registrations to join the AIREN Network, which aims to help research support staff to connect and learn from each other about opportunities for North / South collaboration through:

- o funding programmes
- o helping to connect researchers to collaborate on proposals
- o enhancing our research management supports and professional development
- o and leveraging the benefits of all-island research

To date there are over 160 members already signed up to the AIREN Network, and it is an important building block for the long term ambition of the AIREN Project of establishing an all-island network of research managers and administrators throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland. We aim to launch the AIREN Network at the AIREN Conference event being planned for October 2022.

Meantime the extremely positive response to date in terms of AIREN Event registrations and AIREN Network Membership signals a very high level of interest in the research support community from across the island of Ireland to connect with each other. We look forward to continuing our work to lead and manage the AIREN project over the coming year to deliver on the project objectives. In

June 2021 the Project's first 6-monthly progress report was submitted to InterTradeIreland a copy of which is attached as **Appendix 6**.

2.5 Research Area Communities (ended as a separate WG in July 2021)

URMAN supported 2 Research Area Communities of local networks of research managers and administrators in the University by creating opportunities to meet, exchange knowledge and network in an informal setting with colleagues from relevant research areas in an informal setting. The Environment network which met monthly in the Earth Institute having been established through URMAN in 2018. The College of Health and Agricultural Science Research Support Network established itself with support from URMAN in 2019/2020 and met monthly in the Conway Institute. The meetings haven't been taking place since the lockdown and it was also determined that these groupings can still be encouraged and facilitated through networking at URMAN events and using the platforms of Google Currents and LinkedIn.

2.6 Communities of Practice (ended as a separate WG in July 2021)

The Communities of Practice Working Group was initially set up in 2019 with the primary purpose of looking into URMAN's status as a Community of Practice in the university. It was confirmed by UCD Agile that URMAN is indeed the longest and most established Community of Practice in UCD, and is listed on the Work Smarter together [website](#), with a separate landing page for [URMAN as a Community of Practice](#). Following an article in the March 2020 WST newsletter, a further update from URMAN was included in the [August 2021 WST newsletter](#), this time focussing on the set up of the AIREN project. While it was determined that the working group had completed its course of action for the moment, the URMAN AG will continue to monitor Communities of Practice activities. There may be opportunities for URMAN to participate in some of UCD's Work Smarter Together events, and/or to identify potential work areas for future UCD Agile projects.

Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference - UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN)

Title	UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN)
Purpose	To provide a network within UCD for Research Managers and Administrators to deliver benefits to the University and those individuals working within the research management and administration space.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved recognition and identity for the profession of research administration and management ● Improved opportunities to share knowledge and best practice with a view to developing standardised processes and procedures where appropriate. ● To provide a “voice” to the groups in terms of lobbying and influencing UCD policies and practices as they pertain to research activities ● To identify common training and professional development requirements for the group and ensure delivery of same. ● To provide a forum for engagement with outside parties – e.g. funders, NCPs, IUA, EUA etc.
Authority / Champion	VP for Research, Innovation and Impact
Secretariat	To be provided by UCD Research
Membership	Self-Selection to the Network by eligible employees as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All personnel providing services to the research community in UCD
Advisory Group (AG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The advisory group (AG) will provide oversight to URMAN. ● This group will have 8-9 members drawn from URMAN members. ● Appointment to the AG will be by self-nomination. If more than 8 members volunteer initially then an election will take place. ● Annually 3 members of the group should step down to allow for new members within the AG. ● No member can serve on the AG for more than 5 consecutive years. ● The group will have a rotating chair (selected by the AG members). The chair should rotate at least every twenty four months. ● UCD Research will provide the secretariat. ● The purpose of the group is to strive towards the achievement of the objectives outlined above.
Quorum	The advisory group will have a quorum of 5 members. In the absence of the Chair the advisory group members present will appoint a Chair.
Sub-groups	From time to time it may be necessary to set up sub-groups to look into specific projects. Each sub-group should have at least one member of the advisory group to act as a communications link between the sub-group and the advisory group.
Established	September 2013
Reviewed & amended	Reviewed May 2018. Amended April 2019 to increase AG membership from 6-8 members to 8-9 members, and to increase quorum from 4 members to 5 members. Reviewed November 2021.
Next review date	September 2023

Appendix 2 - URMAN Working Groups: Terms of Reference and Membership as at September 2021

1. **Membership & Communications Working Group:** Manage the URMAN Membership registrations and induction process. Maintain the URMAN website and mailing list and email account. Manage URMAN LinkedIn and Google Currents accounts. Advise on and co-ordinate all URMAN EXEC communications to URMAN members, and to other units within the university as required. Carry out URMAN surveys with the URMAN membership every 2-3 years and liaise with UCD units such as HR on the same as relevant.
2. **Events Working Group:** The Events Working Group plan and organise regular URMAN Events to support career development, training, and knowledge sharing for URMAN members. URMAN Events complement, and address gaps, in the current training and development provisions that are offered in the university; and add value by designing / tailoring the URMAN Events to specifically meet URMAN member needs. Events typically cover topics from across the entire research project life-cycle / researcher journey. Suggestions and requests for URMAN Events are submitted from URMAN members through various channels including the URMAN Advisory Group, the URMAN Website, and URMAN Survey, and are also informed by needs identified through the work of other URMAN Working Groups.
3. **Career Development Working Group:** There are 2 strands to this Working Group:
 - *Identify Gaps in Current Training Provisions in UCD:* Drawing on the mapping of training provisions carried out by the URMAN Careers Development Working Group (Report appendix 3.1) identify where there are gaps in the training provisions offered in UCD and where new training provisions (including on-line provisions) are required to support URMAN members. In collaboration with HR this will help inform the university of training required to support the core and functional competencies for the Research Management Job Family.
 - *Mentoring Programme:* Explore requirements and appetite within URMAN for a Mentoring Programme to support knowledge exchange and career development for URMAN members. This should be carried out in collaboration with UCD HR and draw on the expertise, training and resources that UCD HR provides to support the roll out of Mentoring in the University.
4. **AIREN Working Group:** The AIREN Working Group will project manage and deliver the AIREN Project which is a 2-year project between UCD (lead institution), Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, and is funded by the InterTradeIreland Synergy Programme. AIREN aims to: share knowledge and best practice in research management; raise awareness of funding opportunities to support North South collaboration; establish an all-island research excellence network for research managers and administrators. Project management includes: setting up the project; holding monthly Project Team Meetings; liaising with and reporting (6-monthly reports) to the funding sponsor; managing the AIREN Project budget; developing and maintaining the AIREN webportal; managing the AIREN email account; preparing / sending AIREN event notices and post-event follow up. Project delivery includes holding 6 Away Day events, 3 Workshops and 1 Conference, and each of the 3 participating universities takes a lead in organising a number of events. UCD is also the lead organisation for organising the AIREN Conference (October 2022).

Appendix 3 - URMAN Advisory Group and Working Group Members as at September 2021

URMAN Advisory Group	Ciara O'Connor (Chair), Caitriona Devery, Rosemarie Gannon, Aidan McElwaine, Pauline Power, Justin Synnott, Colleen Thomas, Caroline Treacey, John Wyatt Secretariat provided by UCD Research
Membership & Communications Working Group	Rosemarie Gannon and Pauline Power (Co-Chairs), Ciara O'Connor.
Events Working Group	Colleen Thomas and Catriona Devery (Co-Chairs), Sinead McGinley, Yvonne Smith, Aidan McElwaine, Meadhbh O'Halloran
Career Development Working Group	John Wyatt (Chair), Caitriona Devery, Conor McDermott, Aisling Jackman, Tara Hughes
AIREN Working Group	Caroline Treacey (Chair), Rosemarie Gannon, Matt Sheridan, Catriona Devery, Sinead McGinley, Ciara O'Connor

Appendix 4 - URMAN Induction Resources Signposts



UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network (URMAN)



URMAN Induction Resource Signposts

There is a wealth of information relevant to induction and orientation for new staff available on the UCD website, accessible in a number of locations but all linked through the **UCD People & Organisation Development: Supporting New Starters in UCD page**. A part of this includes local induction. However, sometimes the most relevant support can actually come from relationships across different units in the University. URMAN, the **UCD Research Managers and Administrators Network** was established in 2013 to facilitate these relationships, especially for Research Managers and Administrators, who may be hired in centralised support units or directly working with researchers in many capacities. URMAN has created this summary document to help signpost the information that is available, with particular reference to Research Managers and Administrators moving into new roles in UCD.

  <p>https://urman.ucd.ie</p>	<p><u>URMAN Website</u></p> <p>URMAN holds regular networking and information events throughout the year and provides resources to members. Sign up on the membership tab: URMAN welcomes applications from all personnel with a research manager or administrator role in UCD and all personnel in Support Units providing services to Researchers. New members are invited to meet with members of the Advisory Group for a monthly informal welcome and induction over coffee. If you would like to become more involved, consider joining one of our working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Events Working Group ● Membership & Communications Working Group ● Career Development Working Group ● AIREN Working Group <p>Join the conversations in our Google Currents Community and LinkedIn URMAN network. You can get in touch with URMAN Advisory Group though urmanexec@ucd.ie</p>
 <p>https://airen.network/</p>	<p><u>All-Island Research Excellence Network</u></p> <p>University College Dublin (UCD), Ulster University (Ulster) and Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) have joined forces to connect Research Managers and Administrators across the island of Ireland. The AIREN project, which runs from 2021 – 2023, is being delivered with support from InterTrade Ireland’s Synergy initiative. Sign up on the membership tab, and join the Away Days, Workshops and Conference to deliver the following 3 objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share Research Management best practice and knowledge ● Identify and develop research thematic areas and maximise funding opportunities ● Establish an All-Island Research Excellence Network

 <p>https://earma.wildapricot.org/</p>	<p><u>EARMA – European Association of Research Managers and Administrators</u></p> <p>UCD is an institutional member of EARMA, so all research managers and administrators working in UCD are eligible to be members. This can be arranged through the institutional contact point, Andrea Forde, or by emailing urmanexec@ucd.ie. EARMA provides a useful European network, and provides training and events throughout the year, including an annual conference.</p>
 <p>http://www.ucd.ie/research/portal</p>	<p><u>UCD Research & Innovation Services Portal</u></p> <p>The UCD Researcher Portal includes a comprehensive suite of documents, information and points of contact, spanning the entire research project lifecycle, based on the “researcher journey”. It is a “one stop shop” of virtually all the resources needed to manage Research within UCD.</p>
 <p>http://www.ucd.ie/peopledevelopment/ourservices/newtoucd</p>	<p><u>UCD People & Organisation Development: Supporting New Starters in UCD</u></p> <p>UCD People & Organisation Development, a part of HR, has a landing page for Supporting New Starters. This provides links to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Work@UCD page • the UCD onboarding page is available through InfoHub which provides comprehensive checklists, information and actions pre-arrival, first week and first month • information on booking the centralised Orientation for New Employees Programme which is run a number of times per year • information on the Local Induction Process which includes a Local Induction Checklist and Employee Orientation Policy document and a number of other resources.

Appendix 5 - URMAN Budget Statement as at September 2021

Date	Event	Budgeted Cost	Allocated Expenses	Over/Under
November 19, 2019	Research Integrity Workshop w/Jill Boyle	€ 175	€ 57.89	€ 117.11
December 11, 2019	Festive Social	€ 350		
	Catering		€ 255.00	
	Supplies (reimbursable expenses)		€ 0.00	€ 95.00
January 8, 2020	Intellectual Property Workshop w/Stephen O'Donoghue	€ 175	€ 54.48	€ 120.52
February 5, 2020	URMAN AGM	€ 175	€ 68.10	€ 106.90
May 26, 2020	Horizon Europe Briefing w/Aine More	€ 175		
Mar-20	Impact for Research Administrators Workshop w/David Bennet	€ 175		
Apr-20	Mentoring (collaboration w/women@STEM)	€ 800		
May-20	Overheads Workshop w/Aiden McElwaine & Stephen Manuel (postponed from October 2019)	€ 175		
Jun-20	Year-End Networking	€ 275		
Jun-20	WHEF Priorities for International Research Conference - Colleen Thomas delegate (€190)	€ 211	€ 211.00	€ 0.00
Sep-20	Invite EARMA speaker/Keynote Irish Universities Network	€ 1,000		
	Materials	€ 300		
	URMAN Induction meetings for new UCD research admin	€ 200		
	URMAN pop-up banner and collateral	€ 200		
	Banner		€ 147.60	€ 52.40
	Travel to build external collaborations w/Irish universities	€ 525		
		€ 4,911	€ 794.07	€ 491.93

Balance: €4,205.93

Appendix 6 - AIREN Project First 6 month Monitoring Report

AIREN Project First 6 month Monitoring Report follows.

InterTradelreland Synergy Programme Monitoring / Progress Report from January - June 2021

Project Title: All Island Research Excellence Network (AIREN)

Project Duration: 24 months

Effective Project Dates: 4 January 2021 - 31 January 2023

Project Partners: University College Dublin (UCD); Ulster University (Ulster); Queens University Belfast (QUB)

Monitoring Report: First 6-month report covering from 4 January – 30 June 2021

1. Policy Facilitation Activities

Number of multi-stakeholder meetings facilitated by the cluster/network partnership i.e. refers to the number of project team meetings held.

Since the AIREN Project was awarded the Project Team have meet via zoom on 13 occasions. There was representation from each of the 3 partner institutions at every meeting. The InterTradelreland Project Manager, Damien McConville, also attended 2 meetings (1 pre-project planning meeting on 17th December 2020, and a Project Management Team Meeting held on 9th June 2021). The 13 Project meetings include:

Two pre-Project planning meetings: In advance of the Project start date two meetings were held to discuss and organise the Project Management arrangements and set up. They took place on: 1st & 17th December 2020.

Six monthly Project Team Meetings: The AIREN Project Team has a schedule for monthly AIREN Project Management Team Meetings, where we typically meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 3-4.30 p.m. We have held 6 such meetings from January – June 2021 held on the following dates: 20th January; 10th February; 10th March; 14th April; 5th May; 9th June. Going forward the scheduled dates for Project Meeting meetings taking place in September, November and December will be revised as the pre-set dates will be used for AIREN events: Away Day 2 will take place on 8th September; Away Day 3 on 10th November; Workshop 2 on 8th December 2021. Notes of the 6 Monthly Project Team Meetings are attached separately to this Report as Appendix 1. In future notes of Project Team Meetings will the submitted to InterTradelreland as the occur to facilitate the on-going monitoring of the Project.

Two Away Day / Workshop Programme Planning Meetings: We held two dedicated meetings to plan the topics, potential speakers, event format etc for the first number of Away Day Events and Workshop Events. The meetings took place on 3rd March and 21st April 2021.

Two Rehearsal Meetings: In advance of Away Day 1 and Workshop 1 we held rehearsal meetings for internal Agenda Participants to run through the Agenda and arrangements for the respective events.

One interim Project Team Meeting: We held one interim-Project Team meeting on 27th May specifically to review the AIREN Project Schedule and subsequently submitted a request to InterTradeIreland to adjust the timing of Away Day 2 from May to September 2021.

Email contact: In addition to the afore listed zoom meetings, there is very regular email contact between the Project leads in each of the 3 universities to progress the project. This includes for instance correspondence to set up: Project Collaboration Agreements between the 3 partners: Data Protection_Joint Sharing Agreements; AIREN Data Privacy Statement; the AIREN Logo design; to set up and review the AIREN Webportal.

Summary Listing of AIREN Project Meetings to date	
Date	Meeting Type
01-Dec-20	Pre-Project Start / Planning Meeting
17-Dec-20	Project Team Meeting with ITI attendance
20-Jan-21	Project Team Meeting
10-Feb-21	Project Team Meeting
03-Mar-21	Away Day Planning Meeting
10-Mar-21	Project Team Meeting
14-Apr-21	Project Team Meeting
21-Apr-21	Workshop Planning Meeting
05-May-21	Project Team Meeting
11-May-21	Away Day Rehearsal
27-May-21	Planning meeting to review AIREN Schedule
09-Jun-21	Project Team Meeting with ITI attendance
24-Jun-21	Workshop Rehearsal

2. Networking Facilitation Activities

*Number of matchmaking and networking events, meetings, visits facilitated by the cluster/network partnership;
 Number of multi-cluster/network agreements established.*

Webportal Development

New collaborations and funding proposals arising from AIREN's networking facilitation activities will take some time to develop. At this stage the project is in the early stages of setting up opportunities for AIREN Members to connect and network with each other. The AIREN Events held to date have all take place virtually, and we expect events will continue to be held virtually for the remainder of this year. While virtual events help us access presenters / attendees who might not otherwise be able to give travel time to attend an event, it can make it more difficult to seed chance introductions / collaboration opportunities. This has placed greater emphasis / need on the AIREN Webportal development to help AIREN Members connect virtually. We brought the webportal development forward in our programme of work to ensure the first phase of the portal was in place to receive AIREN Membership Registrations immediately following the first AIREN event that took place on 12th May. Since then we are continuing

to review and refine the AIREN webportal and have modified the layout of the membership registration from, for members to also provide information about their role / job title and organisation. This information will help fellow members to identify who else in the network they might wish to connect with, and is in compliance with the AIREN Privacy Statement which was drawn up with input and advice from the UCD Data Protection Officer. We will continue to enhance and develop the AIREN webportal throughout the Project. UCD has recently appointed a new Web Manager who will join the AIREN Project Management Team and advise on Phase 2 of the webportal development.

Post-Event Feedback Forms

The AIREN post-event Feedback Form specifically asks AIREN Event attendees if there are any specific introductions / connections they wish AIREN Network to facilitate for them. While there were only a few responses following Away Day 1, they included:

- A general comment that buy-in / connections with other HEIs in the Republic and the Dublin region will be important. We have already taken this on board by opening the Workshop 1 event to external attendees from across other universities / institutes / research organisations across the island.
- An individual request to identify someone in QUB in similar role to connect with, which we are now facilitating.

Post Event Feedback responses following Workshop 1 have yet to be received. However we have already had an expression of interest from within UCD to explore opportunities to set up an all-island network for diabetes research. We are also aware some AIREN members wish to know more about the PEACE PLUS Programme, and how researchers can engage with the funding mechanisms it offers, once it's new strategy is launched at the end of this year. We also know anecdotally that the AIREN events have given momentum and new energy to some existing connections between the AIREN partner institutions.

Attendee Lists

Starting with the post-event follow up for Workshop 1, we plan to circulate Attendee Lists after each AIREN event to help attendees to keep connected and to facilitate post-event networking. This is in line with the AIREN Privacy Policy.

3. Effectiveness of facilitation activities

Number of cluster/network members associated with at least one relevant formal business network activity conducted by the cluster/network partnership.

AIREN Membership Registration

AIREN is in the early stages of building a network of research managers and administrators across the island. The aim of building such a network has been announced in the project Press Releases, and at each AIREN event held to date on 12th May and 30th June, and in the respective post-event follow ups. The first phase development of the AIREN webportal includes a membership registration area, and to date 121 people have signed up as AIREN Members. The following table presents a breakdown, including the split by jurisdiction, of the membership to date.

AIREN Registered Members as at end of 2nd July 2021

UCD	QUB	Ulster	External*	Unknown	Total	Ireland	Northern Ireland	Unknown
19	32	47	20	3	121	34	84	3
16%	26%	39%	17%	2%		28%	69.5%	2.5%

- * Of the 20 External Registered Members: 45% are from the university / further educations sector; 25% from Research Centers; 20% from Funding Bodies; and 5% Other.

Other aspects of AIREN’s facilitation activities are long ranging and will take time to achieve, meantime the benefits of AIREN members are highlighted at each event and outlined on the webportal - the include:

- Being connected and part of a professional research management network
- Receiving information and updates on research funding opportunities to support North / South collaboration
- Sharing knowledge and experience of specific funding programmes to support North / South collaboration
- Facilitating introductions to seed new research collaborations and partnerships
- Providing opportunities to widen the dissemination of research impacts and the benefits of all-island research
- Building the foundation for establishing an All-Island Research Excellence Network as a legacy of the AIREN Project
- Interacting with other professional networks through the All-Island Research Excellence Network

4. Level of involvement

Share of cluster/network organisation members involved in joint actions established by the cluster/network partnership;

During this reporting period, 2 AIREN events have taken place: Away Day 1 on 12th May 2021 and Workshop 1 on 30th June.

Participation & Attendance

Agenda Participants at each Event include:

- Presenters involved in giving Presentations / Opening Remarks / Chair the Q&A and Discussion / as Guest Speaker.
- AIREN Project Team representatives – a member from each of our 3 universities - to introduce and give a short report on the AIREN Project / manage the Agenda Programme and introduce Presenters / manage the Q&A and zoom chat box.

The Agendas for both events, including each Presenter’s full name, title and organization, are attached in Appendix 2. The following is a breakdown of Agenda Participation and Attendance Registration numbers showing the breadth of involvement from the AIREN Project Partners, external bodies, and also a split by jurisdiction:

Away Day 1, 12th May 2021

Actual Attendance on the day ~ 120	UCD	Queens	Ulster	External*	Unknown	Total	Ireland	Northern Ireland	UK	Unknown
Agenda Participants	2	2	2	2	0	8	38%	50%	12%	0%
Registered Attendees (excluding Agenda Participants)	30	50	44	4	4	132	25%	71%	1%	3%

*Away Day 1: The 2 external Presenters were from InterTradelreland and Durham University. The 4 external registered Attendees included 2 from InterTradelreland, 1 from a Hospital and 1 research services consultancy. Away Day 1 was an 'internal event' and the invitation to attend was circulated to staff to UCD, Queens, Ulster and ITI only.

Workshop 1, 30th June 2021

Actual Attendance on the day ~ 156	UCD	Queens	Ulster	External**	Unknown	Total	Ireland	Northern Ireland	Other (EU/US)	Unknown
Agenda Participants	1	1	1	6	0	9	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0%
Registered Attendees (excluding Agenda Participants)	48	76	109	47	0	280	26.8%	72.86%	0.34%	0%

** Workshop 1: External Presenters were from: Letterkenny Institute of Technology; Science Foundation Ireland; Interreg VA Programme Monitoring Committee; the UK Research Office, Brussels; the Office of International Science and Engineering, National Science Foundation; Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health. Given the wide interest in the topic of Workshop 1 it was held as an 'external' event and in addition to inviting staff at UCD, QUB and Ulster, the invitation to attend was also extended to representatives / contacts in central offices at universities / institutes / and research organisations. Of the 47 External Registered Attendees: 32% are from the university / further educations sector; 45% from Institutes and Research Centres; 17% from Funding Bodies / Govt. Departments; and 6% other / unknown.

See also Q8 below re Business Activities for report on event topics and presentations.

5. Accessibility of services

Number of cluster/network members supported by services

AIREN Events

The AIREN Events – including Away Days and Workshop – are an important ‘service’ provided by the AIREN Project as it creates the forum for Research Managers & Administrators to share knowledge and experience in professional research management, and to learn about funding programmes to support North South research collaboration opportunities. The Participation and Attendance at AIREN Events held to date is given in Q4 above which outlines the Level of Involvement and engagement with the AIREN Events.

AIREN Webportal

The AIREN Webportal is another important ‘service’ provided by the AIREN Project. As outlined in Q2 above the portal was launched in time to receive AIREN Membership registrations following the AIREN Away Day Event held on 12th May, and since then 121 members have registered via the portal. Google Analytics was installed on the portal wef 20th June 2021 and the report analysing usage from then to 6th July is attached as Appendix 3. It shows that during that 2½ week period 64 new users accessed the AIREN webportal, with almost 33% from Ireland and 66% from the UK (NI), and a few representing 1% from other parts of Europe. Most views are on the Membership and Events sections which we expect reflects that the AIREN Workshop event took place during this time.

6. Partnership involvement in policy initiatives

Not applicable to AIREN.

7. Technology Development & Innovation

Not applicable to AIREN.

8. Business Activities

Impact of the work of the cluster/network partnership on business activities of the related cluster/network organization members

AIREN Away Days: Throughout the Project AIREN will organise and deliver 6 Away Day events to directly enhance the professional development of Research Managers & Administrators through the sharing of best research management practice. Since the project started in January Away Day 1 has taken place, and planning for the remaining 5 Away Days has progressed. We have identified the following broad range of topics, each highly relevant to the profession, noting that topics for Away Days 5&6 emerged from the presentations and insights that were shared during Away Day 1:

AIREN Away Day Events

Away Day 1: Organisational Structures for Research Management & Development, 12th May 2021

Away Day 2: Governance & Management of Large Scale Research Centres, 8th September 2021

Away Day 3: Developing global partnerships /networks to develop research collaborations, 10th November 2021

Away Day 4: Research Impact, January 2022

Away Day 5: Postdoc Careers, March 2022

Away Day 6: Attract & Retain Research Talent, May 2022

Away Day 1 presented 'Organisational Structures for Research Management & Development' on 12th May 2021. The Agenda Programme (see Appendix 2) included presentations from:

- Ms Kerry Curran, Director Strategy & Policy InterTradeIreland, gave opening remarks highlighting the importance of cross-border collaboration and her congratulations to the AIREN Project which will connect Research Managers and Administrators initially across the 3 participating universities, with the long-term ambition of establishing an all-Island Research Excellence Network.
- Dr Wendy McLoone, Acting Director of Research and Enterprise at QUB; Mr Peter Scott, Senior Research Manager, UCD; Mr Tim Brundle, Director of Research & Impact, Ulster. They each outlined the research management and development structures in their respective institutions, shared valuable insights on the varying approaches and support models, and participated in a Panel Discussion on a range of related issues including access to accredited training, and funding strategies and initiatives to support research management.
- Ms Lorna Wilson, Head of Research Development at Durham University, for sharing her perspective on the challenges the research management & development profession face, and for highlighting the importance of initiatives - such as networking and mentoring - to support career development, and the opportunities professional networks such as ARMA and EARMA offer.

AIREN Workshops

The AIREN Project will hold 3 Workshop events to facilitate cross border collaborations between universities and industry in the post-Brexit era and covid-19 pandemic.

Workshop 1: Since the project started in January Workshop 1 has taken place on 30th June and the topic focused on 'North / South Research Collaboration Opportunities' and presented an overview from **Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)**, **Horizon Europe** and the **PEACE PLUS Programme** about the strategies and initiatives they each have in place to support North / South research collaboration. It also presented insights from US Agencies - the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** and the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** - on the **US Ireland Research & Development Partnership Programme**. The Agenda Programme (see Appendix 2) included presentations from the following, representing a broad range of research funding organisations and interests. A short report outlining the respective contributions is given in the attached Appendix 4:

- Paul Hannigan, President of Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Ciarán Seoighe, Deputy Director General, Science Foundation Ireland
- Michael D'Arcy, Member, Interreg VA Programme Monitoring Committee
- Jon Brookes, European Advisor, UK Research Office, Brussels
- Roxanne Nikolaus, Lead, Countries and Regions Cluster & Acting Program Manager (Central European Region, EU, Ireland, Switzerland, UK), Office of International Science and Engineering, National Science Foundation

- Sarah Scharf, Regional Program Director, Europe, Israel & Multilateral Organizations, Division of International Relations, Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health

Workshop 2: The topic for Workshop 2 will focus on North / South **Industry** Collaboration Opportunities and it will take place on 8th December 2021. Grainne Lennon from InterTradeIreland is already confirmed to present at this event. Other Presenters will be identified / confirmed over the coming months. We plan that it will include presentations from other Funding Bodies with programmes to support industry-academic collaboration; share case studies for some already established collaborations; discussion on some of the barriers / challenges for industry-academia collaboration.

Workshop 3: Planning for the AIREN Conference & Workshop 3 that are scheduled to take place in October 2022 has yet to commence.

AIREN Webportal

The first phase of the AIREN Webportal was launched immediately following Away Day 1 on 12th May 2021. It includes a Membership Area for AIREN Members and for members to connect and network with each other, with 121 already registered (see also Q.5 above).

9. Sales

Value of incremental revenue of cluster/network partnership members on an annual basis
Not applicable to AIREN.

10. Visibility

Number of media references, articles, etc.

Google Analytics

The AIREN Webportal analytics Report is attached as Appendix 3 and reported on also in Q. 5 above.

Twitter

We set up an AIREN twitter account in this period. A spreadsheet showing the level of Twitter Activity is attached as Appendix 5. Of the 4 tweets do date, the number of users who view a tweet (impressions) has ranged from 76-1100 users, and the number of users who have engaged with each tweet either by retweeting, liking, replying has ranged from 2-35. We will use twitter to help promote AIREN's activities and to develop our network further going forward.

AIREN Logo & Banner

Early on the AIREN Project we designed an AIREN logo and banner to help create a brand / identity for the Project and Network to use on the AIREN webportal, Press Releases and other AIREN communications.

Press Releases

In April 2021 we issued AIREN Project Press Releases in each of our respective institutions – UCD, QUB and Ulster – announcing the launch of the AIREN Project, together with the invitation to attend the first



Away Day event. We also issued a joint external Press Release in June 2021 to research offices in other universities / institutes / research organisations in Ireland and Northern Ireland, together with the invitation to attend Workshop 1. All Press Releases were prepared in consultation with InterTradeIreland Comms team, and are attached as Appendix 6.

The following are attached as separate documents.

Appendix 1 – Notes of AIREN Monthly Project Team Meetings January – June 2021

Appendix 2 – Agendas for AIREN Events held to date: Away Day 1, 12th May & Workshop 1, 30th June 2021

Appendix 3 - Google Analytics Report on the AIREN webportal

Appendix 4 – Report on Presentations presented at Workshop 1 on North South Research Collaboration Opportunities that took place on 30th June 2021

Appendix 5 – AIREN Twitter Report

Appendix 6 – AIREN Press Releases