

Press release

Minister Noonan announces a further €1.2 million INSTAR+ archaeological research funding

From [Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage \(/en/organisation/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/).

Published on 23 June 2023

Last updated on 26 July 2023

The Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, has today announced additional funding of €1.2 million to the INSTAR+ archaeological research programme funded by the National Monuments Service, in partnership with the Heritage Council and administered by the Irish Research Council (IRC).

Building on a first round of €1.32 million INSTAR+ funding awarded to six research projects in 2022, this second round under the IRC COALESCE Programme will fund up to five collaborative projects aiming to contribute to a better understanding of Ireland's archaeological heritage by tackling key questions about our past.

The INSTAR+ programme, aligning with the respective policy objectives of the National Monuments Service, the Heritage Council and the Irish Research Council, is a successor to the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research (INSTAR) Programme, which ran from 2008 to 2014 and which delivered a number of key collaborative projects in areas such as Neolithic agriculture, ancient human remains and early medieval settlement.

Operated by the IRC as part of the COALESCE Programme, INSTAR+ funds 24-month collaborative projects aimed at addressing key knowledge gaps in Irish archaeology and building research capacity. The interactions between commercial, academic and State archaeologists and local communities under INSTAR+ are fostering greater co-operation and resilience across the sector, ensuring that archaeological work undertaken in the context of development-led excavations is translated into knowledge about Ireland's past.

INSTAR+ centres on a number of themes:

- Cultural Identity, Territories and Boundaries

- Resources, Technology and Craft
- Exchange and Trade
- Religion and Ritual
- Environment and Climate Change
- Landscapes and Settlement
- Archaeology and Contemporary Society

Researchers in IRC-eligible Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research-Performing Organisations (RPOs) in Ireland will be invited in September 2023 to submit collaborative applications for funding.

Announcing the additional €1.2 million INSTAR+ funding, Minister Noonan said:

"We are delighted to continue our significant research investment into our built heritage and about our archaeological past. We are extremely grateful to the Irish Research Council and Heritage Council for working with us on this very exciting programme.

"The €1.2 million investment in INSTAR+, bringing our total investment to €2.5 million over the last 2 years is growing bonds between Ireland's highly experienced commercial archaeological sector and our Higher Education Institutions, it is growing research capacity, and is transforming our understanding of Ireland's past."

Minister Noonan added:

"I have recently been fortunate to meet researchers from the current INSTAR+ projects who are exploring some of the key issues that our society faces today. It is fascinating research, showing we have much to learn from how past societies grappled with the challenges of change."

IRC Director, Dr Louise Callinan, remarked:

"The Irish Research Council is delighted to deepen our successful and impactful partnership with the National Monuments Service and deliver further exciting opportunities for researchers to address present national challenges through exploring our past. The INSTAR+ awards are administered as part of the IRC's COALESCE scheme, which contributes to the achievement of objectives within Impact 2030, Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy in strengthening the connections between our research system and government departments and agencies. We look forward to welcoming applications to the INSTAR+ awards when the COALESCE scheme opens later this year."

CEO of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan said:

"The Heritage Council is delighted to see the INSTAR programme continue to develop. A long-standing objective of the Heritage Council has been the promotion of research on archaeological data derived from planning-led archaeology in partnership within the archaeological profession, the community and with other disciplines. This current call builds upon the previous rounds of funding and will help to ensure Irish archaeological practice contributes to international research. The projects funded through this will demonstrate the potential of our archaeological resource and the ability of researchers and field staff in Ireland."

INSTAR+ Round 2 will open for applications in September 2023.

Notes

Current projects funded under INSTAR+

Six projects have already been awarded INSTAR+ funding through the Irish Research Council, being allocated total funding of €1.3 million over the next two years. The projects being led by UCD and UCC are below:

- Archaeology of the Irish Revolution (UCD)
- Digital Atlas of Early Irish Carved Stones –DAEICS (UCC)
- New Pastures. Livestock and lifeways of the Irish Iron Age (UCC)

- developing the resource of museum collections of Ireland's ancient animal bones: climate change, ecosystem reconstruction, and indicators of Pleistocene human from past excavation archives (UCD)
- FOODSEC: Food security in Bronze Age Ireland (UCD)
- Irish Peatland Archaeology Across Time (UCC)

Useful links

The [IRC website \(https://research.ie/funding/coalesce/\)](https://research.ie/funding/coalesce/) features more information on INSTAR.

Projects funded under the original INSTAR can be [accessed on the Heritage Council website. \(https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/INSTAR_reasearch_programme_2_year_review.pdf\)](https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/INSTAR_reasearch_programme_2_year_review.pdf)

Projects funded under Round 1 of the INSTAR+ Programme are [available on the Irish Research Council website. \(https://research.ie/partnerships/national-monuments-service-of-the-department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage-in-partnership-with-the-heritage-council/\)](https://research.ie/partnerships/national-monuments-service-of-the-department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage-in-partnership-with-the-heritage-council/).

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