



### Irish Coronavirus Sequencing Consortium

The Irish Coronavirus Sequencing Consortium, led by Professor Paul Cotter at Teagasc Moorepark, aims to sequence and analyse the genetic information from the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the cause of COVID-19. The consortium received funding of €378,716 from Science Foundation Ireland.

The DNA or RNA (in the case of SARS-CoV-2) sequence of an organism can change over time. These changes are known as mutations and they can be tracked by sequencing or “reading” the genetic material from different samples of the organism. By tracking these changes on the RNA sequence of SARS-CoV-2, we can map the spread of the virus across the country, supporting the response to new clusters and potentially minimising its spread. The information generated will also allow experts to quickly spot developments that could affect human health and treatment or vaccination against COVID-19. The data about the genetic sequences of the viruses will be freely available, allowing epidemiologists to monitor trends in Ireland and internationally.

The Irish Coronavirus Sequencing Consortium is led by the Teagasc/APC Microbiome Ireland Sequencing Centre at Moorepark with partners at Teagasc Grange and Oak Park, University College Cork, Cork University Hospital, the National Virus Reference Laboratory, University College Dublin, University Hospital Limerick, Beaumont hospital, Trinity College Dublin, NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth. Two private companies, Genuity Ireland and Helixworks are also supporting the initiative.

Professor Paul Cotter, a Principal Investigator with APC Microbiome Ireland and VistaMilk, SFI Research Centres at Teagasc, says: The Irish Coronavirus Sequencing Consortium has been made possible due to the remarkable enthusiasm and commitment from very many clinicians and researchers across the country. By continuing to work together, we can provide key insights into viral spread and how it is evolving over time. I’d like to in particular thank my colleague, Dr Fiona Crispie, for her key role in establishing this Consortium”.

Further information, including patient information leaflets, can be obtained on the Teagasc website: [www.teagasc.ie/CoronavirusSequencingConsortium](http://www.teagasc.ie/CoronavirusSequencingConsortium)