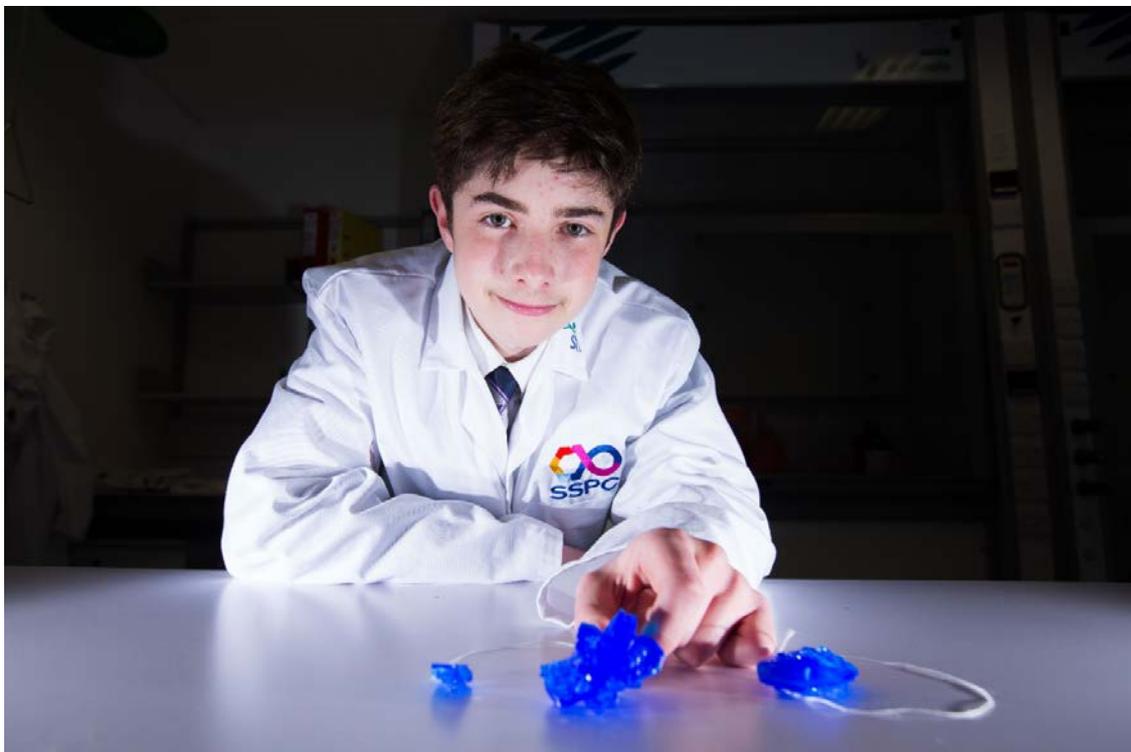


SSPC partners with iCRAG for SSPC's National Crystal Growing Competition



Pictured, at the award ceremony held in the Bernal Institute at the University of Limerick was first place winner, Kieran Barrett from Clongowes Wood College SJ, Kildare.

Photo: Oisín McHugh True Media

Monday, April 3 - The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) with iCRAG (Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences), both funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), announced winners of the 2016 National Crystal Growing Competition at the national awards ceremony today.

The very successful SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition, now in its third year, has seen interest soar in schools nationally. For this reason, SSPC partnered with iCRAG to enable the acknowledgement of multiple schools achievements.

Speaking at the awards ceremony at the Bernal Institute in the University of Limerick, Dr Sarah Hayes, Education and Outreach Officer said:

“2016 was a hugely successful year with a record number of schools taking part in the competition. To acknowledge this we are holding two national finals, one in Limerick and one

in Dublin. Crystal growing not only gives students an excellent opportunity to develop their interest in science, it broadens their minds and crystal growing is an exciting challenge. Congratulations to all the deserving winners, it looks like the bar has been set even higher for the next competition.”

At the University of Limerick event, the crystal growing winners were, Kieran Barrett Gomez, 1st place from Clongowes Wood College SJ, Kildare, Cathy O’Neill, 2nd place, from Ardscoil Na Mara Secondary School Tramore, Waterford and Ava Downey O'Mahoney, from Portumna Community School, Co. Galway, 3rd place. Scoil Ide primary school, Corbally, Limerick, were invited along to acknowledge the fantastic crystals they entered at primary school level.

Dr Fergus Mc Auliffe, Education, Public Engagement and Communications Manager, iCRAG added:

“We are delighted to be involved in such an innovative competition, as both centres run formidable science outreach activities, we play a vital role in encouraging and developing interest in science among Irish students. The standard of crystals were excellent this year, making it very hard to choose a winner.”

The second awards ceremony, held later in the week, at University College Dublin, acknowledged winners, Dominika Dacus, from Cabinteely Community School, 1st place, Adrianna Matynia, from St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills D12, 2nd place and Josh Healy, from Cabinteely Community School, 3rd place.

The SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition is an important element of SFI’s public engagement remit. The aim of the competition is to have fun with science and to inspire young minds to explore careers in the field. The competition was open to primary and post-primary schools in Ireland and aimed at students challenged to grow a single crystal from a variety of compounds such as Salt (Sodium Chloride), Alum, Sugar, or Copper Sulphate.

The competition originated in 2014 with the IUCr Crystal growing competition, as part of the celebrations for the International Year of Crystallography. It has since grown from strength to strength and is a great addition to the many SFI outreach programmes hosted in Ireland.

End

[About the SSPC](#)

The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC), a Global Hub of Pharmaceutical Process Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, funded by Science Foundation Ireland and industry, is a unique collaboration between 24 industry partners, 9 research performing organisations and 12 international academic collaborators.

The SSPC transcends company and academic boundaries and is the largest research collaboration in Ireland, and one of the largest globally, within the pharmaceutical area. The role of the SSPC is to link experienced scientists and engineers in academia and the pharmaceutical industry, to address critical research challenges.

The SSPC leads the way for next generation drug manufacture and spans the entire pharmaceutical production chain from synthesis of the molecule, to the isolation of the material, and the formulation of the medicine. The aim of the SSPC is to deliver industry relevant solutions, which result in job growth and retention within the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland.

SSPC Mission

Recognised as the leading centre of excellence shaping the future of global pharmaceuticals.

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About iCRAG

iCRAG is the Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences supported by Science Foundation Ireland. Established in 2015, iCRAG is Ireland's national geosciences research centre. Comprising 150 researchers, and collaborating with more than 50 industry partners, our vision is to become a world leader in applied geosciences research, securing maximum benefit from our natural resources while protecting the environment.

iCRAG's research is helping to unlock Ireland's natural resources through developing improved technical knowledge and innovative techniques, which will then increase the success rate of energy, mineral and groundwater exploration. Our research results are, insofar as possible, embedded within industry. In this way, the Centre ensures maximum impact of its research output; both scientifically for the wider geosciences and economically for the island of Ireland.

iCRAG facilitates a collaborative research environment, allowing for the invaluable cross-fertilisation of ideas between disciplines. Our multidisciplinary research teams address four major research challenges:

Supply of raw materials

Energy security
Securing & protecting groundwater resources
Safeguarding the geomarine environment

iCRAG Mission

iCRAG's mission is to transform geoscience research and education in Ireland, by driving discovery, delivering economic and societal benefit and advancing public understanding of our science.

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