

Minister English announces senior football All Ireland winner Dr Anthony Maher as winner of SFI Research Image of the year competition



Athlone, 3rd November – Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation Damien English TD, today unveiled Dr. Anthony Maher, former researcher at the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) in University of Limerick and member of Kerry’s Senior Football All Ireland winning team, as the winner of Science Foundation Ireland’s Research Image of the Year competition for his picture ‘Starship Enterprise’ at the SFI Science Summit in Athlone. His image will appear on the front of the 2014 SFI Annual Report.

The SFI Research Image competition celebrates images captured by SFI-funded researchers during the course of their research. Dr Maher, a Pfizer employee, was a researcher in the SSPC at University of Limerick from 2008-2012 and carried out his PhD work in the area of polymorphism in pharmaceutical compounds. Most of the medicines people consume are made up of compacted powders - the individual particles are in fact tiny crystals of the active compound, which can have a number of different crystal forms, known as polymorphs. Dr Maher’s winning entry in the competition, ‘Starship Enterprise’, is an Optical Micrograph image that shows a Form II piracetam crystal (rough, dissolving) undergoing a polymorphic transformation to a more stable Form III crystal (smooth, defined faces) in methanol at 25°C.

Speaking at the SFI Science Summit, which was attended by 300 researchers, Minister English said: “Dr Maher’s image, ‘Starship Enterprise’, captures the wonder and curiosity that science is all about. It is an instantly accessible picture that grabs the attention of the viewer, regardless of whether they are a world class researcher or a child in a classroom. His image is such an effective way of showing the cutting edge research that takes place every day at SSPC and the other SFI research centres across the country.”



Dr Anthony Maher

Launched in July 2013, the SSPC at University of Limerick, supporting 90 top-class researchers, is the largest research collaboration in Ireland, and one of the largest globally, within the pharmaceutical area. The SSPC represents a significant combined industry and Science Foundation Ireland investment of €40 million. The SSPC research programme aims to deliver relevant solutions that address the manufacturing needs of the pharmaceutical industry and in-turn lead next generation drug manufacture.