

Illumina Ventures Announces Winners of Inaugural Irish Genomics Business Plan Competition

- UCD's NAX Bioscience and TCD's Imragen recognised for novel genomics-driven technologies and commercial potential

DUBLIN, Ireland — [16/06/2026] — Illumina Ventures today announced the two winners of the inaugural Irish Genomics Business Plan Competition, an initiative established to identify and support high-potential genomics-focused start-ups and research ventures emerging from Ireland's rapidly growing life sciences ecosystem.

Following a competitive review process of submitted entries from across Ireland involving leading scientific, business, intellectual property, and legal experts, **NAX Bioscience** and **Imragen** were selected as the two winners of the competition in recognition of their innovative genomics-driven technologies and strong commercial potential.

NAX Bioscience, an emerging University College Dublin (UCD) deep-tech life science start-up, is transforming the efficiency of Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS). By developing an innovative nucleic acid extraction technology, NAX is working to ensure superior input quality to deliver more reliable, cost-effective sequencing results. NAX, a multi-disciplinary project, is supported by an Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund and is preparing for spin-out in early 2027.

The lead members of the NAX Bioscience team are, Dr Jaythoon Hassan, National Virus Reference Laboratory at UCD, Professor Michael Gilchrist, UCD School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering and Edward Simons, Commercial Lead.

Imragen is a new commercial venture being spun out of the Campbell lab at TCD's Smurfit Institute of Genetics. Imragen will develop a range of methodologies to restore the integrity of the blood-brain and blood-retina barriers. The technology was developed using an advanced functional genomics-based approach and will seek to treat a range of neurological and ophthalmological conditions

The Irish Genomics Business Plan Competition was launched by Illumina Ventures in collaboration with Illumina, the Research Ireland Centre for Research Training in Genomics Data Science, PurdyLucey Intellectual Property, and Pinsent Masons Ireland LLP. The competition was designed to support early-stage companies and advanced research projects leveraging next-generation sequencing (NGS) technologies to address challenges in human and planetary health.

NAX Bioscience and Imragen will each receive a comprehensive support package that includes access to Illumina sequencing consumables and technical expertise, strategic mentorship from Illumina Ventures, intellectual property guidance, legal support, and access to Ireland's genomics data science ecosystem.

“Ireland has become an increasingly important center for genomics innovation, supported by exceptional scientific talent, a strong entrepreneurial culture, and a collaborative ecosystem,” said Nick Naclerio, Founding Partner at Illumina Ventures.

“We were highly impressed by the quality of applications received, and we are excited to support NAX Bioscience and Imragen as they advance technologies with the potential to make a meaningful impact on healthcare and the life sciences.”

“Through this competition, we wanted to help accelerate the next generation of genomics-enabled companies in Ireland,” said Mark Robinson, VP and General Manager, UK & Ireland, and Northern Europe, Illumina. “The winning teams demonstrated compelling scientific innovation alongside a clear vision for translation and commercialization.”

Illumina Ventures is an independently managed venture capital firm focused on genomics and precision health investing. The firm invests in early-stage companies spanning life science tools, clinical diagnostics, therapeutic platforms, and planetary health. The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) is a limited partner in Illumina Ventures.

Illumina Ventures and Illumina are committed to help strengthen the genomics innovation ecosystem in Ireland and support the development of globally competitive life sciences companies.

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About Illumina Ventures

Illumina Ventures is the leader in genomics and precision health investing. As an independently managed venture capital fund, Illumina Ventures is building the genomics ecosystem and translating investment into innovation to accelerate the impact on human and planetary health. Illumina Ventures invests in early-stage companies spanning life science tools, clinical diagnostics, therapeutic platforms, and planetary health. More information is available at www.illuminaventures.com.

About Illumina

Illumina is improving human health by unlocking the power of the genome. Our focus on innovation has established us as a global leader in DNA sequencing and array-based technologies, serving customers in the research, clinical, and applied markets. Our products are used for applications in the life sciences, oncology, reproductive health, agriculture, and other emerging segments. To learn more, visit illumina.com and connect with us on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [YouTube](#).

About the Centre for Research Training (CRT) in Genomics Data Science

The CRT for Genomics Data Science is one of six Centres funded under a €100M Research Ireland initiative. It aims to train a generation of highly skilled genomics data scientists. 115 PhD students across the island of Ireland will be trained over a seven-year period, with 15 to be based in Northern Ireland and 100 in the Republic of Ireland. The CRT is a partnership between the National University of Ireland Galway, University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University College Cork, Dublin City University and Queen's University Belfast.

About PurdyLucey

PURDYLUCEY (PL) was set up in 2008 with the aim of providing a cost effective, personable, intellectual property (IP) service offering to the Irish Public Research Organisation (PRO) sector. PL is an internationally recognised Tier 1 firm in major legal directories and surveys. PL was named Irish Patent Prosecution Firm of the Year in 2020, 2022 and 2023 (Managing IP).

About Pinsent Masons

Pinsent Masons Ireland LLP is the Dublin office of Pinsent Masons, an international law firm with twenty-seven offices across four continents. The Irish Pinsent Masons team has the bench strength to support life sciences companies in Ireland with all of their legal requirements and can also provide taxation and trademark advice. Pinsent Masons globally has over 120 sector specialists dedicated to supporting the transformational growth and innovation of life sciences companies. We have deep industry experience and a variety of scientific backgrounds among our team.