



Irish Participation in EU-funded Dementia Research
A short report on Current Landscape & Future Opportunities
June 2026



Purpose

This brief paper provides an overview of Irish participation in European Union (EU) funded dementia research since 2015. It outlines the extent and nature of Ireland's involvement in major European dementia research programmes, identifies key institutional contributors, and highlights opportunities to strengthen Ireland's participation and leadership in future collaborative research initiatives.

Background

Dementia is one of the greatest health, social and economic challenges facing Europe. As populations age and the number of people living with dementia continues to rise, there is an increasing need for research to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support. Many of the scientific and societal challenges associated with dementia cannot be addressed or financed by individual countries alone, making international collaboration essential.

The EU has played a leading role in supporting collaborative dementia research through initiatives such as the Joint Programme for Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND), Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. These programmes bring together researchers, clinicians, people with lived experience and industry partners across Europe to accelerate scientific discovery, improve care, develop new technologies and strengthen research capacity. They also provide opportunities for countries to attract research investment, build international partnerships and influence the future direction of dementia research.

Participation in these programmes offers significant benefits for Ireland, including access to international expertise, increased research funding, employment, opportunities to lead multinational studies and stronger pathways for translating research into policy and practice in the Irish context. Understanding Ireland's current level of participation can help identify opportunities to strengthen future engagement and maximise the impact of dementia research nationally.

Search Strategy

To identify these projects, a search was conducted of:

- The European Commission [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) using keywords 'dementia' OR 'alzheimers'.
- The Alzheimer Europe [Research Projects Database](#) filtered by country (Ireland).
- [The EU Joint Programme](#) – Neurodegenerative Disease Research.
- [Dementia Research Network Ireland](#) Research Database.
- Consultation with Dementia Research Network Ireland who have a membership of under 250 research professionals.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
• EU-funded Research Programmes that included an Irish university or non-profit organisation as a coordinator, partner or collaborator with funding attached. • Research or establishing doctoral research training with a primary focus relating to dementia.	• Projects with an end date prior to 2015. • EU-funded projects only involving for-profit companies as Irish partners or participants.

Irish Participation in EU-funded dementia research grants

Ireland has been a participant, collaborator or coordinator of 34 EU-funded projects (please see Table 1). The list may not be exhaustive, as there is no single comprehensive database of EU-funded dementia research involving Irish organisations. Information was collated from multiple sources, each with different search functionality, indexing methods and project classifications.

Ireland has participated in several significant EU-funded dementia research programmes since 2015, primarily through Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and JPND. Participation is concentrated within a relatively small number of universities, with TCD, DCU and UCC being the most active institutions.

Irish researchers have contributed to several high-profile projects, including SENSE-Cog (€6.8 million), AI4HOPE (€6.4 million) and In-Touch (€7.5 million), helping to advance knowledge in areas such as sensory loss, palliative care innovation and digital health technologies. Despite these achievements, Ireland's overall participation remains modest compared with many European countries. In the Alzheimer Europe [European Dementia Monitor 2023](#), Ireland achieved 43% of the maximum available score for dementia research activity.

Strengthening Ireland's Role in EU-funded dementia research

While Ireland has made valuable contributions to European dementia research, participation remains concentrated within a relatively small number of institutions and there are opportunities to strengthen both participation in, and leadership of, future EU-funded programmes.

International Collaboration

International research networks play an important role in facilitating collaboration, sharing expertise and developing the partnerships often required for successful EU funding applications. Networks such as INTERDEM and Alzheimer Europe provide opportunities for researchers, clinicians, charities and people with lived experience to build international collaborations, exchange knowledge and contribute to European research priorities.

INTERDEM is a European research network focused on early detection and psychosocial interventions for people with dementia and their caregivers. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration to improve care, enhance quality of life, and influence policy through innovative and evidence-based approaches. Of the 229 INTERDEM members, just 17 are working in Irish research institutions (according to current published membership information), suggesting there is scope to improve engagement.

Alzheimer Europe also plays an important role in supporting dementia research across Europe through policy development, dissemination of research, stakeholder engagement and initiatives such as the European Dementia Monitor. It provides an important platform for collaboration between national Alzheimer associations, researchers and policymakers.

National Capacity

Increasing Ireland's participation in EU-funded dementia research also depends on maintaining a strong national research ecosystem. Dementia Research Network Ireland (DRNI) plays a key role in strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration across basic science, clinical research, health and social care, and public and patient involvement (PPI). In 2025, DRNI was awarded €1 million by the Health Research Board to continue and expand its work over five years. A core priority of the network is to strengthen Ireland's international research profile and increase participation in collaborative funding opportunities through improved visibility, stronger international partnerships and expanded researcher networks.

Ireland has also developed a range of initiatives that strengthen its capacity to participate in international dementia

research. Alongside DRNI, Dementia Trials Ireland is expanding national capacity to deliver dementia clinical trials and supporting collaboration across academic, clinical and industry partners. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) has also established infrastructure that supports meaningful PPI and research participation through initiatives including the Dementia Research Advisory Team (DRAT), and TeamUp for Dementia Research. Collectively, these initiatives provide a strong foundation for increasing Ireland's participation in collaborative European dementia research programmes.

In addition to research infrastructure, maintaining a sustainable research workforce is essential. Limited long-term funding opportunities, particularly at doctoral and postdoctoral level, continue to present challenges for attracting and retaining dementia researchers. Strengthening research career pathways will be important if Ireland is to increase its capacity to lead and participate in large-scale European collaborations.

The role of The ASI

The ASI has experience delivering EU-funded initiatives through two Erasmus+ projects led by its Learning & Development Team. Although these projects focused on education and workforce development rather than research, they demonstrate the organisation's experience in securing and delivering European-funded programmes as part of international collaborations. As Ireland seeks to strengthen its participation in European dementia research, The ASI is well placed to support this ambition through its expertise in PPI, research participation, dissemination, policy, advocacy and collaboration.

The ASI's Research Strategy sets out a commitment to champion increased investment in dementia research and influence research priorities through awareness raising, collaboration and empowering diverse stakeholders. Building on its experience of European-funded programmes, the organisation can help strengthen partnerships, advocate for investment, facilitate collaboration between researchers and people with lived experience, and contribute to international initiatives that advance dementia research and improve outcomes for people affected by dementia.

In addition, The ASI will co-host the Alzheimer Europe Conference in October 2026 during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference will bring together stakeholders from across Europe and provide an important opportunity to showcase Irish dementia research, strengthen collaborations and support future European research partnerships.

Looking Ahead

In 2023, The ASI and DRNI's Research Impact Workshop and Seminar¹ identified several priorities for strengthening Ireland's dementia research ecosystem, including increasing investment, improving research career pathways, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening PPI, and enhancing the translation of research into policy and practice.

Addressing these priorities would also strengthen Ireland's competitiveness for European funding. EU programmes increasingly place emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration, international partnerships, meaningful PPI and demonstrable societal impact. Building on recent investment in DRNI, increased engagement with international networks and Ireland's existing research strengths provides a strong foundation for expanding participation in future European dementia research programmes.

Conclusion

Ireland has established a credible presence within European dementia research and has contributed to several significant international collaborations. However, participation remains concentrated within a relatively small number

¹ [Knowledge-Exchange-Seminar-Report-Final-.pdf](#)

of institutions and falls short of that seen in several comparable European countries.

Strengthening Ireland's position will require sustained investment in research careers, greater engagement with international networks, stronger support structures for EU funding applications, and continued collaboration across academia, healthcare, charities and policymakers. Organisations such as DRNI, INTERDEM, Alzheimer Europe and The ASI, together with universities, funders and policymakers, all have an important role to play in strengthening Ireland's contribution to European dementia research.

Table 1. Examples of Irish participation in EU funded research.

Project	EU Funding	Institution	Irish Lead	Duration	Total Funding	Irish portion	Involvement Type	Description
ALERT	Horizon Europe	DCU	Prof Silvia Giordani	2026-2029	€2.92m	€500k	Partner	ALERT is developing minimally invasive microneedle technology that detects Alzheimer's disease biomarkers enabling rapid, precise and accessible early diagnosis
EpigenHome	Horizon Europe	TCD		2026-2028	€336k	€336k	Coordinator (Host Institution)	EpigenHome investigates how housing conditions influence Alzheimer's disease risk by developing measures and biomarkers to better understand the link between housing and brain health.
CliCBrain	Horizon Europe	TCD		2025-2029	€1.55m	€516k	Coordinator	CliCBrain investigates how climate change and environmental exposures influence brain health and dementia risk, generating evidence to inform policy and prevention.
ENSURED	JPND	DCU	Dr Louise Hopper	2025-2028	€1.56m		Partner	ENSURED aims to improve social health and inclusive care for people living with rarer dementias in the moderate and advanced stages of disease.
In-Touch	Horizon Europe	UCC	Profs. Nicola Cornally & Suzanne Timmons	2024-2028	€5.78m	€1.28m	Coordinator	The project will deliver a cross-country cluster RCT of the In-Touch intervention in 56 nursing care homes across 7 countries to evaluate its effect on comfort, social engagement and quality of life.

AI4HOPE	Horizon Europe	UCC	Prof Suzanne Timmons	2024-2027	€6.42m	€592k	Partner	Developed AI-enabled tools to support palliative care planning and quality of life for people living with dementia.
2D-BioPAD	Horizon Europe	UCD		2023-2027	€5.96m	€325k	Partner	Developed a low-cost, non-invasive point-of-care test to support earlier diagnosis and prognosis of Alzheimer's disease, particularly during mild cognitive impairment.
CADASIL-MATTR	Horizon Europe	UCD	Dr Stephen Fitzsimons	2023-2026	€288k	€288k	Coordinator (Host Institution)	This project investigates a potential therapeutic approach for CADASIL, a rare vascular disease that causes cognitive decline, to improve understanding and treatment of vascular contributions to dementia.
REMEMBER	Horizon Europe	UCC		2023-2025	€216k	€216k	Coordinator (Host Institution)	REMEMBER aims to establish an integrative functional definition of two distinct and specialised neuronal pathways arising from the vagus-innervated brainstem which are likely to carry microbiota-initiated information into the hippocampus.
HOMEDDEM	Horizon Europe MSCA	UG	Profs Eamon O'Shea & Sharon Walsh	2022-2026	€2.12m	€286k	Host Institution	HOMEDDEM established an international doctoral training network focused on design and dementia caregiving.
InterTau	EU-H2020	RCSI	Prof Jochen Prehn	2020-2025	€1.06m	€51k	Partner	InterTau investigates the structure and behaviour of tau protein to improve understanding of Alzheimer's disease and other tau-related dementias.

DISTINCT	EU-H2020 MSCA	UG		2019-2023	€4m	€ 275k	Host Institution	Developed a European doctoral training network to improve technology and care for people living with dementia and their carers.
FCDS	JPND	UCC	Dr Nicola Cornally	2019-2022	€241k		Partner	The aim of the Family Carer Decision Support (FCDS) intervention was to inform family carers on end-of-life care options for a person living with advanced dementia.
BRAIN-MEND	JPND	TCD	Prof. Orla Hardiman	2018-2020	€2.1m		Partner	BRAIN-MEND aimed to use the genetics and epigenetics to find causes of neurodegenerative diseases, combining these results to identify new drug targets.
TREGinAD MSCA	EU-H2020	TCD		2018-2020	€188k	€188k	Coordinator (Host Institution)	TREGinAD aimed to assess the effect of Aβ-specific Treg on the pathethiology of AD.
CARE-LINK	European AAL	SETU (formerly WIT)		2017-2020	€2.28m		Partner	CARE-LINK developed an intelligent wearable tracking and monitoring system to help people with dementia who are at risk of wandering while supporting them to remain living safely in the community
REMIND	EU-H2020	UG	Dr Jane Walsh	2017-2020	€1.08m	€27k	Partner	Established an international network to advance reminder technologies for people living with dementia in smart environments.

RNA-NEURO	JPND	RCSI	Prof Jochen Prehn	2017-2020	€1.5m		Coordinator	Investigated RNA-based stress response molecules to improve diagnosis and identify new therapeutic targets for neurodegenerative diseases.
SENSE-Cog	EU-H2020	TCD		2016-2022	€6.87m	€456k	Coordinator	The aim of SENSE-Cog was to understand the link between sensory impairments and cognitive / mental health, develop new screening and diagnostic methods and to apply this knowledge to improve mental well-being in the EU.
SenseCare	EU-H2020	MTU		2016-2019	€504k	€153k	Coordinator	SenseCare developed sensory and machine learning technologies to better assess emotional and cognitive wellbeing, supporting more personalised care for people with cognitive conditions.
ProAct	EU-H2020	DkIT, UCC, TCD		2016-2019	€4.88m	€1.94m	Partner	Developed and evaluated a digital platform to integrate technologies supporting home-based care for people living with long-term conditions, including dementia.
E-SPACE	EU-H2020	DCU	Dr Unai Orueta	2016-2018	€188k	€188k	Partner	E-SPACE aimed to develop a battery of cognitive tests to support earlier and more accurate diagnosis of cognitive impairment across clinical settings.

MARIO	EU-H2020	UG	Prof Dympna Casey	2015- 2018	€4m	€701k	Coordinator	The main objectives of MARIO were to tackle loneliness, isolation, and dementia in older adults using service robots, and to assist caregivers and physicians in comprehensive geriatric assessments.
IN LIFE	EU-H2020	DCU		2015- 2018	€3.76m	€116k	Partner	IN LIFE offered optimised services tailored to the needs of older-persons groups, including those with dementia.
CeBioND	JPND	RCSI	Prof Jochen Prehn	2015- 2018	€1.47m		Partner	CeBioND investigated whether mitochondrial dysfunction drives Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's diseases or acts as an additional risk factor, and whether enhancing mitochondrial function could provide a novel therapeutic approach.
MissingLink	JPND	UL	Prof Damien Thompson	2015- 2018	€336k		Partner	MissingLink used technology to define a new paradigm to understand, prevent, diagnose and treat NDs (AD/PD) based on the neurotoxic proteins conformers that cause these types of pathologies.
NEUROEXERCISE	JPND	TCD	Prof Brian Lawlor	2015- 2017	€1.39m		Partner	The goal of NEUROEXERCISE was to determine the effects of an extensive exercise program on the progression of mild cognitive impairment (MCI).
NILVAD	FP-7	UCD	Prof Brian Lawlor	2014- 2017	€6.00m	€123k	Coordinator	NILVAD conducted a multi-center clinical trial for Nilvadipine, a repurposed drug, to assess its effectiveness in slowing Alzheimer's progression.

ACTIFcare	JPND	DCU		2014-2017	€2.40m		Investigated why people living with dementia experience unmet needs for formal care services despite requiring support.
BIOMARKAPD	JPND	St. James's Hospital	Prof Brian Lawlor	2012-2016	€449k	Principal Investigator	Standardised Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease biomarkers to improve diagnosis, clinical trials and harmonisation across Europe.
IN-MINDD	FP-7	DCU	Prof Kate Irving	2012-2015	€3.83m	Coordinator	This project aimed to design and test a state-of-the-art electronic system for use in primary care to profile individual's dementia risks and respond to those risks.
LANIR	FP-7	UL	Dr Syed Ansar	2012-2015	€5.46m	Coordinator	This project aimed to develop a novel Infra-Red Nanoscope (IRN) that broke diffraction limits in imaging, enabling nano-resolution 3D imaging for early-stage Alzheimer's and lung cancer diagnostics.
Dem@Care	FP-7	DCU		2011-2015	€10.76m	Partner	Dem@Care developed a multi-parameter remote care platform that provided personalised feedback to people living with dementia while giving clinicians a comprehensive view of health status and disease progression.

Please note, Funding amounts and project information are based on publicly available sources, including CORDIS, the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, JPND and institutional websites. Where partner-specific funding allocations were not publicly available, these are left blank. This list is intended to provide a comprehensive overview but may not be exhaustive. Should you wish to suggest any corrections or modifications, please contact research@alzheimer.ie.