



WIDER ATLANTIC FUTURES TEAM

INTRODUCTION

This research is part of Atlantic Futures - a €4 million, four-year cross-border project funded by the North-South Research Programme under the Shared Island Fund. As one of six research streams, this research is led by **University of Galway, University of Limerick, and Ulster University**, focusing on business scaling across the West of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Through cross-border collaboration, it delivers strategic insights, addresses regional challenges, and drives sustainable growth.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

The West of the island of Ireland faces persistent economic challenges. By linking three regional hubs, **Derry~Londonderry, Galway, and Limerick**, we address shared issues through place-based, collaborative research that strengthens research culture and supports regional growth.

AIM

The aim of this research is to:

- Understand the key enablers & barriers of business scaling across the island
- Identify cross-border advantages and disadvantages
- Foster long-term academic collaboration, cultural awareness and partnership

RESEARCH TEAM

By working across institutional, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries, the team exemplifies a diverse, integrated research culture that supports mutual learning, innovation, and inclusive academic practice.

- All-island research collaboration between **University of Galway, University of Limerick, and Ulster University**
- Team includes both early-career and senior researchers, promoting mentorship and experience-sharing
- Regular virtual meetings and in-person workshops facilitate active engagement and sustained collaboration
- Fosters a diverse, cross-border research culture built on shared learning and interdisciplinary exchange



RESEARCH TEAM AT A WORKSHOP

METHODOLOGY

- 24 qualitative case studies of scaling businesses (now in recruitment)
- Businesses selected from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- Research design emphasises cultural sensitivity and regional awareness
- Qualitative analysis explores sustainable growth factors and cross-border enablers and barriers
- Cross-border collaboration supports knowledge exchange & mutual learning
- Engagement with key stakeholders fosters knowledge for inclusive and sustainable regional development.
- Provides strategic insights into regional differences in scaling across the island



CONTRIBUTIONS

The project also aims to deliver:

- A strong cross-border research culture
- Actionable insights for business growth
- Teaching cases for all levels of education
- A regional evidence base for scaling research
- Policy recommendations for enterprise support



AUTHORS

Amanda Calderwood, Ulster University
Ben Kiely, University of Limerick
Pamela Patayon, University of Galway
Dr. Conor Carroll, University of Limerick
Professor Kristel Miller, Ulster University
Professor Esther Tippmann, University of Galway

Contact: Amanda Calderwood
Email: calderwood-a4@ulster.ac.uk
Website: atlanticfutures.com