

**Ávarp rektors Háskóla Íslands, Jóns Atla Benediktsson, forseta Aurora, vegna
upphafs Aurora Science with and for Society (Swafs) á þingi Aurora í Tarragona, 16.
nóvember 2021**

myndband – birt á fundi Aurora í Tarragona, Spáni

Dear academics, students, colleagues and friends,

As the President of Aurora and rector of the University of Iceland, I am excited to address you on this special occasion, the official launch of Aurora's research and innovation cooperation project funded by Horizon 2020.

Sadly, I am unable to attend in person, due to a rapid increase in COVID-19 infections in Iceland which means I need to stay here to help navigate and address the situation at the University

Over the past two years we have learned how to adapt quickly to changing situations and to utilise technology to bridge the gap when we are unable to meet face to face.

This biannual conference is largely focused on the Aurora European Universities program, and the success we have already had in our collaboration.

One of these successes has been the approval of our bid for EU funding to strengthen our research and innovation collaboration, pool our resources and support each other in training our researchers, staff, doctoral candidates and post docs to enhance the societal impact of their research endeavours.

Aurora Research and Innovation for Societal Impact marks the start of a new chapter for Aurora. It is wonderful to have the EU recognise the impact of Aurora hitherto by granting additional funding, and it truly demonstrates that we are on the right path towards building on our shared success.

Over the coming years, we aim to share our best practices and map potential for resource sharing. Matching scientific competence with social responsibility and enhanced awareness, the Aurora RI project has the potential to revolutionise research support practices.. Not only will the project strengthen collaboration between and within our institutions, but will also expand our scope to include external partners.

We are looking to the future, wherein we are at the forefront of European universities. By adding research and innovation to our already flourishing cooperation , we are making our impact more holistic and stronger in terms of finding solutions to tackle societies greatest challenges.

Building on the strong foundation already in place, this allows us to expand our shared vision and develop new avenues for collaboration. Through Aurora RI we are going to embed open science further into academic practice, focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, develop human resource evaluations to empower a new generation of researchers, post-docs, and PhD candidates.

On Thursday, the kick-off meeting for Aurora RI will take place in Tarragona and digitally, with our experts coming together for a full day workshop. I trust that it will be a productive, engaging, and successful meeting for all colleagues involved. We look forward to embarking on this journey together and I wish everyone involved great success!