

For immediate release

## ***South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association is MSD in Ballydine's 'Neighbour of Choice'***

- Tipperary volunteer group to receive €12,000 to upgrade new base facility

19<sup>th</sup> February 2015: South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA), a 24 hour mountain search and rescue service, has been chosen to receive funding as part of MSD in Ballydine's Neighbour of Choice initiative, as part of the company's dedicated corporate responsibility programme. SEMRA will receive €12,000 to upgrade its newly constructed base facility to make it fully operational for a sustained emergency search and rescue service in the South East.

MSD's Neighbour of Choice programme is a global initiative that provides support to projects that address the needs of local communities. A core part of MSD's employee volunteer programme, Neighbour of Choice demonstrates MSD's ongoing commitment to the communities in which it operates.

SEMRA provides a search and rescue service in the mountains of the South East of Ireland 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. SEMRA is staffed exclusively by approximately 45 highly trained volunteers, who attend an average of 25 callouts annually and work to make the hills and mountains of the South East a safer place. The charity has recently constructed a base facility in Clonmel. The funding it receives from MSD will be used to upgrade the organisations' resources and equip the volunteers with the tools and equipment they need to respond to emergency calls.

Speaking at the presentation of the grant, Ray Bradfield, Team Leader of SEMRA said, "While we encourage everyone to embrace the outdoors, our members are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year should the unforeseen occur. An upgraded base facility will mean that our volunteers can respond even quicker and will considerably reduce response times to incidents. This generous contribution will significantly enhance the service we provide for the South East of Ireland and for this we would like to say a huge thank you to MSD."

Ger Carmody, Site Lead at MSD's facility in Ballydine, said: "We are delighted to support SEMRA, a truly valuable organisation in our community. MSD is committed to helping improve health and wellbeing in our communities, and together with our employees and local partners, we are privileged to support projects that will make a real difference now and into the future."

As a global leader in healthcare with a strong presence in Ireland, MSD is committed to leading in the implementation of best practice by addressing critical social, environmental and economic challenges both nationally and internationally. In recent years, MSD has become a leader in corporate responsibility in Ireland through a focus on four priority areas - Access to Health; Environmental Sustainability; Employees; and Ethics & Transparency. Over the past two years alone MSD has contributed over €4 million to support worthwhile and sustainable causes in these areas.

**-ENDS-**



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## Notes to the Editor

### About MSD

MSD, known as Merck in the United States and Canada, has operations in more than 140 countries. In Ireland, MSD employs over 2,000 people across its five sites in Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Tipperary and Wicklow. Its extensive Irish operations encompass manufacturing, commercial and marketing facilities.

MSD is a leader in healthcare, dedicated to helping the world be well through a wide range of innovative health solutions. This includes the development, production and distribution of prescription medicines, vaccines and biologic therapies as well as animal health products.

MSD's commitment to research and to increasing access to healthcare across the world is demonstrated by clearly focused policies, far-reaching programmes and life-enhancing partnerships.

### About South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association

SEMRA is a voluntary, non-profit organisation affiliated to Mountain Rescue Ireland. SEMRA is responsible for conducting searches and rescues in the mountains of the South East of Ireland including the Comeraghs, Galtees, Knockmealdowns, Slievenamon and Blackstairs. All team members are volunteers and are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All team members are trained in Remote Emergency Care.

SEMRA collaborates with national agencies including An Garda Síochána, the Health Services Executive (HSE), Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA), the Irish Coast Guard, Civil Defence and the Irish Air Corps. SEMRA also works closely with other national mountain rescue teams including Dublin/ Wicklow, Glen of Imaal, Mayo and Kerry to assist in search and rescues in these areas.

In 2014 SEMRA responded to a total of 28 incidents, which included 17 rescues and 4 searches. The presence of SEMRA in the community makes the hills and mountains of the South East of Ireland a safer place. It encourages local communities to embrace this environment and enjoy the physical and psychological benefits of the outdoors. If anything unforeseen occurs there is a team of highly trained and professional volunteers available to come to their assistance.