

Curiosity Capability Competitiveness

Charting Ireland's Research
and Innovation Future

2026–2030



Research Ireland is a new agency with a new strategy and purpose: to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system for the prosperity of the people of Ireland.

Ireland has transformed its research and innovation capacity over the last 25 years, with a higher volume and quality of research outputs, more PhD-trained researchers, growth in private R&D investment, and increased impact of research on public policy and societal well-being.

However, international competition is intense, with many countries growing investment in research and actively connecting their research and innovation systems.

In response, Research Ireland will ensure the continued development of Ireland's research and innovation proposition.

We will invest across the breadth of disciplines, and we will support discovery research. We will invest to enable the attraction, retention and development of research talent, the growth of our economy, and the delivery of societal impact which improves quality of lives.

We will focus on strengthening connections between academia, enterprise, public policy, and society.

We will work in partnership with all key stakeholders to ensure increased ambition, improved alignment and a proactive approach to maximising benefit for Ireland.

We will support trained researchers bringing their skills and expertise from academia to the private and public sectors; the attraction and further embedding of foreign direct investment; the development of scaling spinout companies; improved policy making and society; and an enriched culture.

Research and innovation are critical to Ireland's societal and economic future.

Talent
Economy
Society

Curiosity Capability Competitiveness

Purpose: **Develop an internationally renowned research & innovation system for the prosperity of the people of Ireland**

Themes

Talent

Empowering People

Economy

Strengthening Competitiveness

Society

Driving Solutions

Actions

Enhanced Suite of PhD Programmes

Predictable Funding Programmes at all Careers Stages

Mobility Programmes

International Recruitment

Research Infrastructure

Research Centres

Research Translation and Commercialisation

Enterprise-academic Partnerships

Regional Partnerships

Future Skills Needs

Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research

Cross Sectoral Engagement and Collaboration

Delivery Agency for Government's R&I Ambitions

Public Engagement

Diverse Skills and Training

KPIs

3800

PhDs

2000

Postdoctoral Fellows

1000

Investigator-led Grants

14

Research Centres

36%

Co-Funded by MNCs

16%

Co-Funded by SMEs

10%

Co-Funded by Societal Partners

150

Grants in Partnerships with Govt. Dept.

5

Initiatives Connecting R&I System



30

International Recruitment Grants

3300

Publications in top 10%



10

Strategic Partnerships

50

Active Spin-Out Companies



€650m

In Trans-disciplinary Research

1250

Researchers Engaging with Policy

Route to Impact:

Funder

Best Practice

More than a Funder

Accelerating Impact

Connecting Internationally

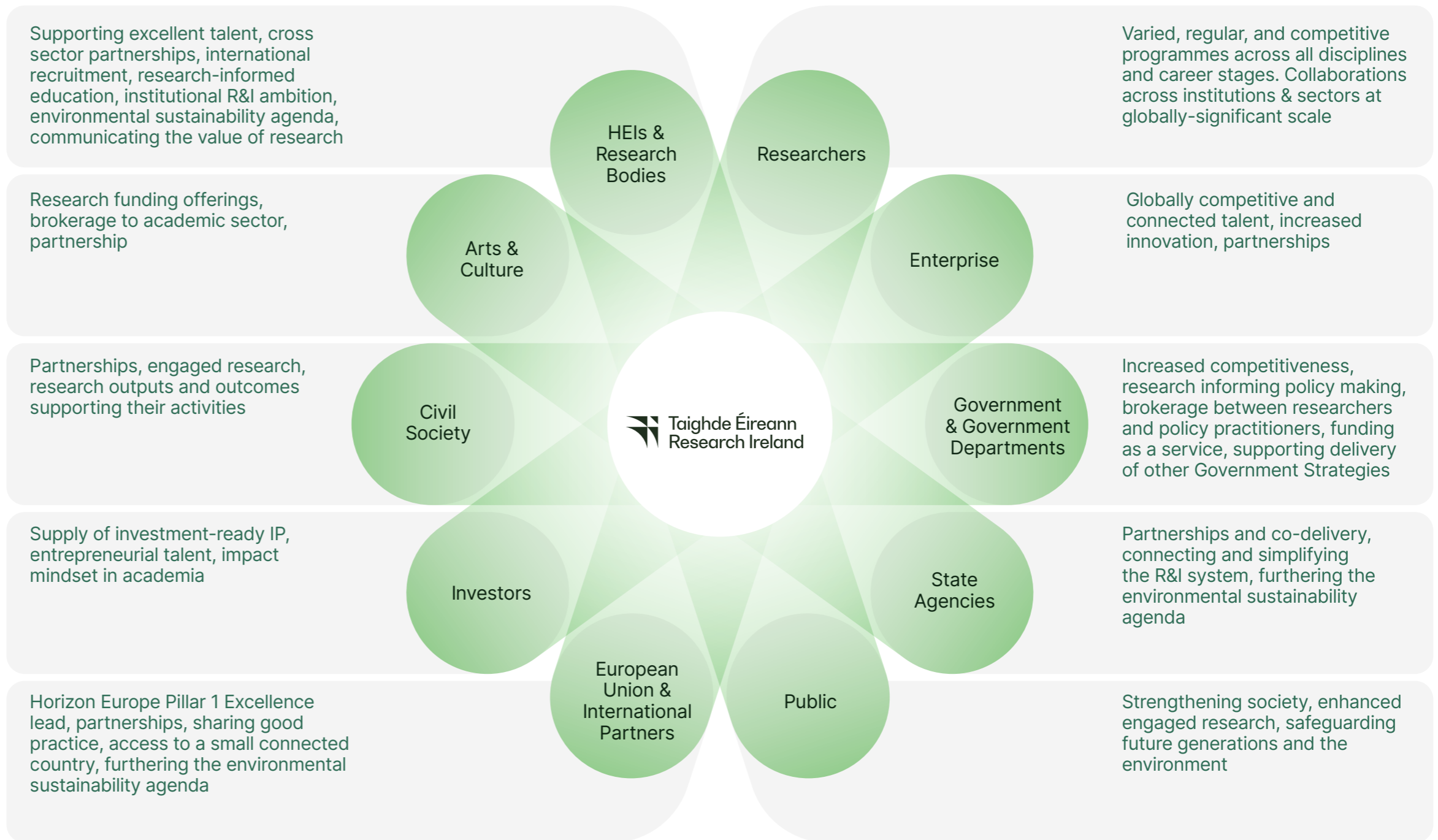
Global Reputation

A New Agency

The establishment of Research Ireland represents Ireland's most ambitious commitment to developing national research competitiveness and ensuring that research and innovation will be a central pillar of Ireland's future.

There are many areas where Research Ireland can play a leading role for the country. Working in partnership with the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, we will deliver the ambitions of *Impact 2030*, the *National Development Plan*, and the *Programme for Government*.

Research Ireland will be a research and innovation development agency for the country, working in close collaboration with all our stakeholders to enhance our ability to deliver substantial benefits to the risk economy and society.



Case Study Talent

Global Influence in the Mission for Accountability in AI



During her PhD, Dr Abeba Birhane exposed harmful bias in AI training, leading to the withdrawal of 80 Million Tiny Images, an image dataset from MIT.

Now Director of the AI Accountability Lab at the ADAPT Research Ireland Centre, Abeba has

- featured in *Time100's* most influential people in AI
- advised the UN Secretary General
- joined Ireland's AI Advisory Council

Partners:

Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, MacArthur Foundation, Omidyar Group, Luminate Foundation, European AI & Society Fund, Bestseller Foundation, and UK Dept For Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Case Study Economy

From Start-up to a Global Leader



APC Ltd., co-founded in 2011 by UCD faculty and alumni, are now partnering with 8 of the world's top 10 pharma companies to accelerate the delivery of medicines to patients through industry-leading science and digital.

Currently investing €100m at the Cherrywood, Dublin 'Medicine Accelerator' site, to include an additional 300 R&D jobs, driving demand for PhD-trained researchers.

APC Ltd. partner across the R&I system in Ireland setting a benchmark for Irish spinouts collaborating with Universities to accelerate global impact.

Partners:

University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, NIBRT, SSPC the Research Ireland Centre for Pharmaceuticals, Enterprise Ireland.

Co-Founders APC Ltd. & VLE Therapeutics:

Dr Mark Barrett (CEO) and Prof. Brian Glennon (CTO).

Route to Impact

To deliver this strategy we will: be an agile and innovative funder following best international practice; accelerate impact by being more than a funding agency; and connect our research and innovation system to Europe and the rest of the world.



Best Practice Funder

Principles

The following six principles will be used to guide implementation of all Research Ireland funding programmes.

Excellence



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Open Research



Simplification



Sustainability



Trust



Commitments to the Research Community

- Retain a balance in our core investment between investigator-led and thematic
- Implement minimum thresholds across three discipline domains
- Increase predictability through annual / regular calls
- Streamline and simplify the programme offering

Research Ireland's Indicative Offering

A C T I V I T I E S

Science Week
 Curious Minds
 Discover
 RTÉ Programming
 Engaged Research

PI Infrastructure
 Infrastructure Access
 National Infrastructure
 INSPIRE

Doctoral Programmes
 Fellowships / Mobility
 Pathway

Investigators
 Global Talent Ireland
 Research Professorship
 Programmes
 Professor of Practice
 Meta-research

Strategic partnerships
 Challenge / Mission
 Based Funding

National Research Centres of
 International Scale
 ARC Hubs
 Societal Initiative

**Public
 Engagement**

Infrastructure

Early Career

PI Funding

Multi-PI

**Programmes
 of Scale**

Improved Society
 Enhanced Public
 Awareness of Research
 Strengthened Regional
 Connection to Research
 Increased Diversity
 in Research

Competitive Research
 Environment
 Attracts and Retains
 Excellent Research Talent
 Enables World-leading
 Research
 Enhanced Academic-
 Industry Interactions

Skilled people
 Next Generation of
 Research Leaders
 Transfer of Knowledge
 and Skill to Industry,
 Society, and Academia

Forefront of Research
 Public Policy
 European Funding
 Patents
 Attract International
 Talent
 Better Positioned for
 Future Opportunities
 and Crises

Transfer of Knowledge
 to Industry and Society
 Spinouts
 Public Policy
 Increased FDI
 Improved Industry
 Research
 Enriched Culture
 Patents

Increased FDI
 Thematic Capability at Scale
 PhDs aligned with Industry
 Industry Partnerships
 Spinouts
 Patents
 Culture of Commercialisation
 Licenses
 Policy and Societal
 Transformation

O U T C O M E S

More than a Funder

To be the development agency for the research and innovation system we will be a strategic leader, partner, and connector, working with the research and innovation community, with the public and private sectors, and with wider society, nationally and internationally.



Attract and Support Excellent Researchers

01

Boost the Competitiveness of Ireland's HEIs

02

Raise the Global Reputation of Irish Research

03

Increase Enterprise Collaboration and Innovation Capacity

04

Catalyse Regional Economic Growth

05

Strengthen Ireland's Resilience

06

Shape Evidence-Informed Public Policy and Practice

07

Provide Evidence-based Research and Innovation System Insights

08

Enhance Engaged Research to Strengthen Irish Society

09

Connecting Internationally

We will advance Ireland's global reputation as a leading destination for research and innovation. Through showcasing the excellent talent and research base in Ireland and building stronger international partnerships, we will attract people, companies, funding, and investment to Ireland.

Our international Strategy is built around 5 pillars:

Europe

International Partnerships

International Recruitment

Trade and Research Diplomacy

Mobility



Language as a Path to Justice & Healing



A mature society has a moral imperative to confront historical injustice, and researchers play a critical role.

The Language, Terminology, and Representation project worked directly with those affected and informed the Government's response to the *Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes*.

This work set a benchmark for respectful public dialogue with those affected by historical institutions.

Partners:

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at University of Galway and Collaborative Forum of Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes. Jointly funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

Co-authors: Prof. Caroline McGregor (pictured), Dr Carmel Devaney, Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley.

Key Messages

- 01 Our new agency has a new purpose – to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation capability for Ireland.
- 02 We will develop and connect Ireland's research and innovation systems to ensure that Ireland is competitive with other small advanced economies.
- 03 We will invest across the breadth of disciplines and will support discovery research, recognising its value in shaping Ireland's long-term research and innovation capability.
- 04 We will ensure that Ireland is a globally attractive location to build a research career – across industry, public policy, civil society, and academia.
- 05 We will be “more than a funder”. This developmental role will comprise strategic leadership, proactive partnering, and connecting. Close collaboration with all stakeholders will enhance our ability to deliver substantial benefits to Irish economy and society.
- 06 We will take an international approach, connecting our research and innovation system to Europe and the rest of the world. This will advance Ireland's reputation, enable talent flow, increase international funding of Irish research, and connect Irish researchers globally.



Research Ireland is central to developing Ireland's talent pipeline, from skills development to cutting-edge research, embedding the strategically critical research and innovation system needed to continue attracting and scaling international companies in Ireland.

James O'Connor

Corporate Vice President for Microsoft Global Operations Service Centre and Microsoft Ireland Site Leader

Research Ireland is a strategic agency for Ireland that, in partnership with universities, can enable the country to attract and develop global talent across all disciplines and career stages, connect our research and innovation systems, build partnerships with industry, enhance Ireland's competitiveness in winning international research funding, and deliver impact for society.

Professor John O'Halloran

President, University College Cork, and Chair, Irish Universities Association

Cuan is proud to partner with Research Ireland. I welcome Research Ireland's ambition to deliver a step-change in collaboration, enabling researchers across the breadth of disciplines to address pressing societal issues, thereby contributing to social cohesion and national wellbeing.

Dr Stephanie O'Keefe

CEO, Cuan

Research Ireland is critical to Ireland's future, enabling the development of talent, intellectual property, and entrepreneurial capability that together create a consistently high-quality, investable pipeline of university spin-out companies. These companies will be well positioned to attract venture capital in key sectors, from seed to growth, enabling them to scale internationally from universities.

Elaine Coughlan

Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Atlantic Bridge

Research Ireland is critical to unlocking the full research and innovation potential of our technological universities, enabling us to deliver transformative regional and national economic and social impact.

Professor Veronica Campbell

President, South East Technological University



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