

# Curiosity Capability Competitiveness

Charting Ireland's Research  
and Innovation Future

2026–2030





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## Foreword

### Minister James Lawless, TD



**James Lawless, TD**  
Minister for Further and  
Higher Education, Research,  
Innovation and Science

#### Ireland stands at a defining moment.

**In our fast-changing world, research and innovation are powerful catalysts – reshaping economies, enriching societies, and improving how people live their lives. When we invest boldly in knowledge, ideas, and the talent of our people, we unlock the potential to shape our own future rather than have it shaped for us. Ireland is determined to stand among the world's leaders in this effort.**

The establishment of Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland represents a step change in how we support and develop research and innovation for the State. For the first time, Ireland has a single, statutory agency with responsibility across the full breadth of disciplines – empowered to fund excellence, to connect people and ideas, and to strengthen the research and innovation system as a whole.

This strategy sets out how Research Ireland will help secure Ireland's place as a leading knowledge and skills economy. It is a clear statement of intent, positioning Research Ireland to contribute fully to the Government's wider economic and competitiveness strategy, working alongside IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland as one of the State's key enterprise and innovation agencies. Research and innovation underpin Ireland's future prosperity,

our international standing, and the wellbeing of our people – economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally.

Ireland's progress over the past quarter-century has been remarkable. From a standing start, we have built a globally respected research base and a strong reputation for research and innovation. But the world around us is moving at extraordinary speed. To remain competitive, and to lead, Ireland must now invest in infrastructure and talent at scale, with a clear focus on the future.

Research Ireland will help drive that next phase. It will invest in excellent research, nurture and attract world-class talent, and strengthen the connections between academia, enterprise, public policy, and society. It will champion interdisciplinary approaches, ensure all disciplines are valued, and translate ideas into impacts that benefits people and

communities in every part of the country. This strategy aligns with the Programme for Government, the National Development Plan, Impact 2030, the Action Plan for Competitiveness, and Ireland's wider economic and innovation ambitions. It reflects a strong, shared commitment across Government to place research and innovation at the heart of Ireland's future.

The ambitions set out here are deliberately bold. Research and innovation are not optional extras; they are the essential foundations of a resilient economy, a creative society, and a confident, outward-looking Ireland.

I am delighted to endorse this strategy and to support Research Ireland as it works with researchers, institutions, enterprise, and communities to deliver lasting benefit for the people of Ireland.



## Foreword

### Research Ireland's Chair and CEO



**Michael Horgan**  
Chairperson,  
Research Ireland

**This strategy marks the beginning of a new chapter for research and innovation in Ireland.**

Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland was established to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system – one that empowers talent, enables discovery research, accelerates innovation, strengthens our economy, enriches our society, and delivers lasting impact for Ireland.

Built on extensive engagement across academia, enterprise, Government, and civil society, this strategy sets out how we will be a strategic leader, partner, and connector for the national system. It reflects a shared ambition to raise Ireland's performance and reputation as a place where research

and innovation can thrive – in our cities, towns, and regions, and through strong collaboration across the island.

As a new agency, Research Ireland is uniquely positioned to take on a broader system-leadership role, working closely in partnership with the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Higher Education Authority, other Government Departments, and research and innovation funding agencies. We will fund excellent discovery research across all disciplines, while also working proactively to accelerate innovation and impact – connecting researchers to enterprise, investors, policymakers, and international partners; strengthening pathways from discovery to application; and reinforcing the link between research excellence, innovation-led growth, and regional development.

We will be a development agency for the system by being More than a Funder: we will help shape the conditions under which research and innovation deliver maximum benefit for Ireland.

Our strategy is structured around three interconnected impact themes – Talent, Economy, and Society. Together, they reflect our belief that people are at the heart of the system; that research-driven innovation is essential to competitiveness and productivity; and that research must ultimately serve the public good.

For researchers, we will provide predictable, high-quality funding across career stages; support risk-taking, knowledge development, curiosity, and creativity; enable the testing of radical new ideas; and strengthen international connectivity.



For enterprise and entrepreneurs, we will strengthen partnerships, enhance translation and commercialisation, and help build the research capability needed to scale Irish companies, embed global investment, and support regionally anchored innovation and job creation.

For Government and society, we will help ensure that policy is informed by excellent research, and that research contributes to social cohesion, cultural enrichment, national wellbeing, and long-term resilience.

This strategy is deliberately ambitious. The challenges Ireland faces – from climate change and digital transformation to demographic change and global competition – demand ambition, collaboration, and sustained commitment. We invite all our stakeholders to join us in delivering this agenda. Together, we can build a research and innovation system that is globally renowned and actively shapes Ireland's future with confidence and purpose.





# 1.0

## Executive Summary



## 1.0 Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, Ireland has transformed into a globally respected location for research and innovation. Sustained strategic investment in research excellence has built a vibrant system characterised by a growing cohort of PhD-trained researchers, rising levels of industrial research and development investment, enhanced higher education competitiveness, and the increasing use of research and innovation to shape public policy.

Ireland is well positioned, with continued investment and ambition, to become one of the world's leading knowledge economies.

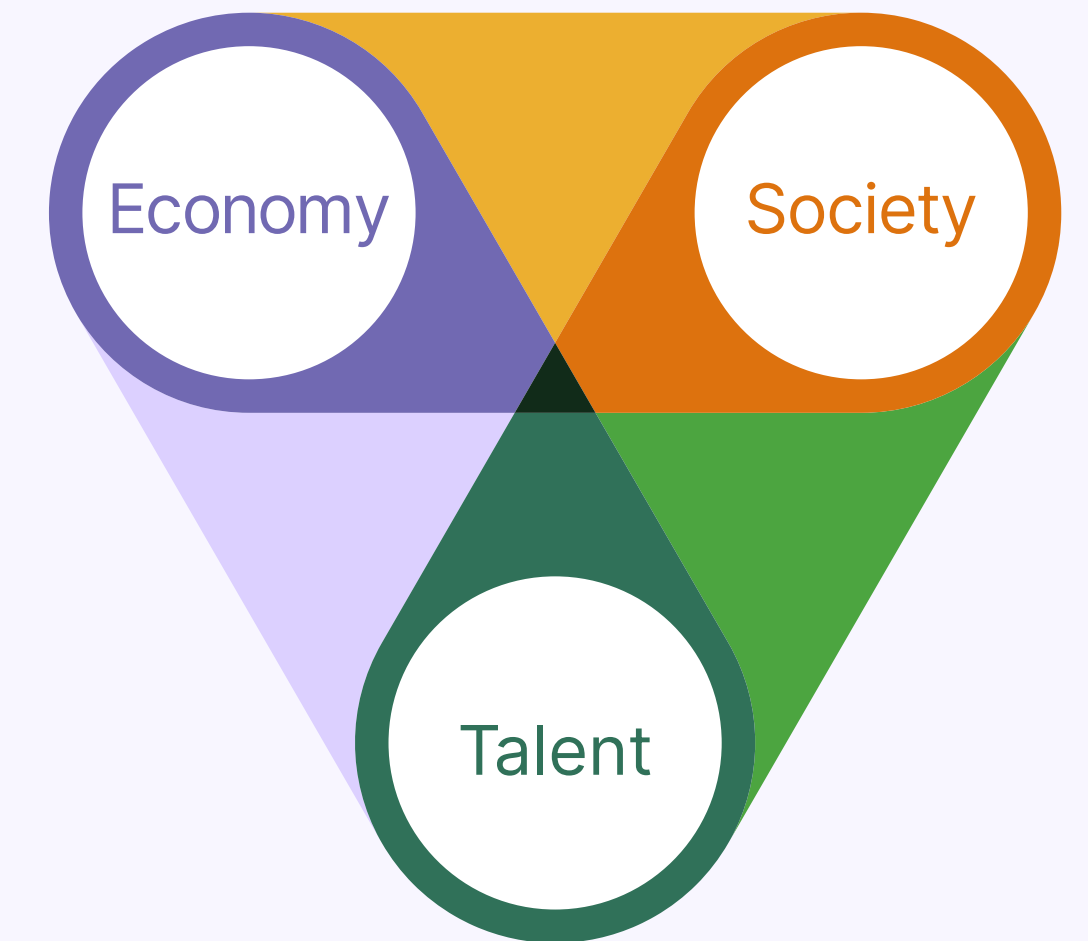
The establishment of Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland marks a pivotal moment in this journey by unifying funding streams, aligning governance, and enabling a more coherent national strategy. As the national research and innovation funder, Research Ireland will serve the research community yet be More than a Funder. We will be a strategic leader, partner and connector. We will drive integration across the full spectrum of Ireland's research and innovation system and deliver national economic, societal, environmental and cultural impact.

### Our Purpose

To develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system for the prosperity of the people of Ireland.

### Strategic Framework

The **Research Ireland Strategy** is structured around three interconnected impact themes: **Talent, Economy, and Society**. Together, these themes demonstrate how excellent research and innovation across the breadth of disciplines will be critical to ensuring future economic competitiveness, securing higher productivity, addressing global challenges, and supporting Ireland's future prosperity for generations to come.





## 01 Talent Empowering People.

A competitive economy, thriving society, creative culture, innovative public service, and an excellent higher education system all require a pipeline of trained researchers, at every career stage and across the breadth of disciplines. To attract, retain, and develop this talent, Research Ireland commits to: building national capability across the breadth of disciplines; appropriately balancing our investment in research across large thematic initiatives and investigator-led funding; recognising the importance of discovery research and enabling the space for new knowledge creation; and running annual programmes that will provide certainty for our research community to plan and build successful research careers. We will also provide an enhanced suite of funding programmes coupled with a renewed investment in facilities. Research Ireland will enable researchers to reach

an internationally renowned level, and to be connected across the research and innovation system globally. We will ensure that all programmes can be linked directly to enhancing Ireland's research and innovation system by empowering and developing Ireland's research talent.

## 02 Economy Strengthening Competitiveness

A resilient, innovation-led economy requires a research system that engages dynamically with both indigenous enterprise and FDI companies to enhance their innovation capacity and long-term competitiveness. Research Ireland will fund programmes in areas of importance to our economy, working closely with Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, relevant Government Departments, and industry partners to increase private sector research in Ireland to achieve scale and become internationally renowned.

We will connect our researchers and institutions to the venture capital and entrepreneurship communities. We will activate and enable relationships that can both frame ambitious research challenges and enhance research impact.

Our investment in research and talent will be designed to drive private-sector innovation, attract and retain FDI, and support indigenous companies in Ireland to scale, powered by enhanced research capability.

## 03 Society Driving Solutions

Research and innovation benefits all of society. Research Ireland will prioritise societal development through public engagement, engaged research, training programmes, and stronger connections between researchers, public policy, and wider research users and performers to achieve tangible improvements in people's lives. We will enhance mechanisms ensuring that public policy is informed by excellent research. Our strength in arts and humanities research can be a national differentiator, strengthening Ireland's ability to address complex societal challenges. We will fund interdisciplinary research and innovation that addresses opportunities and challenges we face as a country – such as the bioeconomy, public health, economic development, energy, climate change, housing, disinformation, and the erosion of public trust.



## Key Messages

We are a new agency with a new purpose: to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation capability for Ireland. We will invest in the long-term development of Ireland's research and innovation system to ensure Ireland is competitive with other small advanced economies.

01

We will invest across the breadth of disciplines, and will ensure that Ireland is a globally attractive location to build a research career in academia and beyond.

02

We will support discovery research, recognising its value in shaping Ireland's long-term research and innovation capability. This will attract, retain, and facilitate excellent research and researchers, in turn driving benefit for the State.

03

We will take an international approach, connecting our research and innovation system to Europe and the rest of the world.

04

We will co-deliver the Inspire programme with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Higher Education Authority to ensure the provision of appropriate research infrastructure and facilities.

05

We will be More than a Funder. This developmental role will comprise strategic leadership, proactive partnering, and connecting. Close collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders will enhance our ability to deliver substantial benefits to the Irish economy and society.

06

## Conclusion

Research Ireland is a strategic asset for the country.

- We will support the growth of excellent research and the development of exceptional talent
- We will deliver an internationally renowned research and innovation system
- We will strategically seize new opportunities
- We will proactively partner and lead.

**We will ensure a prosperous future for the people of Ireland.**



1.0 | Executive Summary

2.0 | Introduction

3.0 | Impact Themes

4.0 | Route to Impact

5.0 | Appendix

2.0

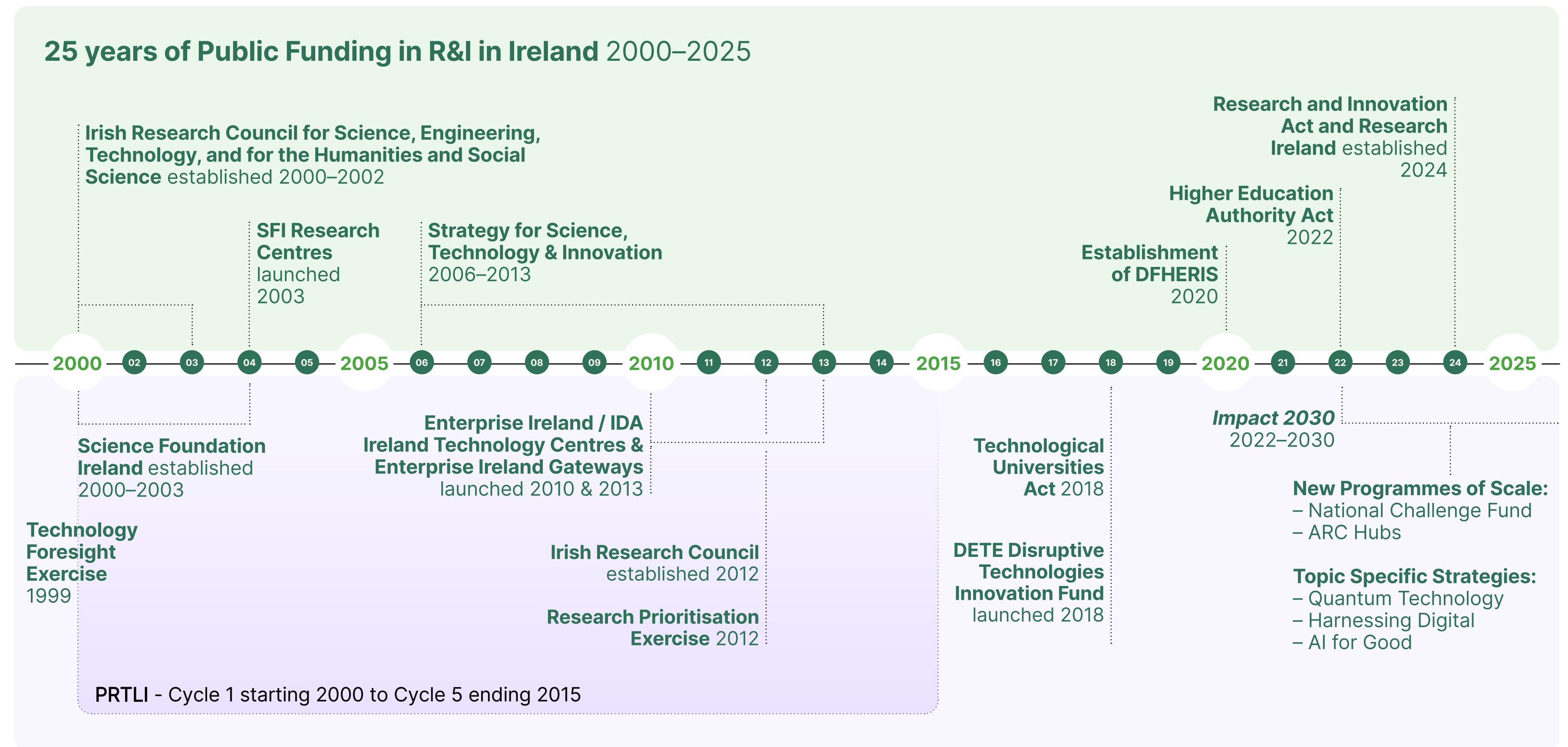
# Introduction



## 2.0 Research in Ireland Today

Ireland has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 25 years, evolving into a globally respected location for research and innovation. Evidence of this change can be seen through a growing number of PhD-trained researchers working in industry and the public sector; increased research investment by industry; more competitive higher education with enhanced research capability; and increasing use of research and innovation to shape national policy.

**Figure 1:** Forward-looking policy decisions made over the last 20–25 years created a competitive research and innovation system in Ireland. The establishment of Research Ireland can take these developments to the next level.





This success has not happened by accident. Rather, it is the result of implementing and achieving a clear objective to build enhanced research capacity and strength in areas that are aligned with Ireland’s enterprise priorities – including semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, medical devices and digital technologies – while also improving the research capacity and ambition of our Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across all disciplines.

This clarity of purpose has helped transform Ireland from a services- and manufacturing-based economy to a leading knowledge economy. Figure 2 illustrates this transformation.

While Ireland has made undeniable progress during this period, other small advanced economies (such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands) have continued to prioritise investment in research and innovation. Competition is intense and ongoing. Compared to these small advanced economies, Ireland still faces a significant gap in Government investment in research and innovation, an imbalance between public and private investment, lower levels of intellectual property creation, and lesser innovation performance (see Figures 3a–d). Although Ireland is moving in the right direction, these shortcomings now pose a direct threat to Ireland’s long-term competitiveness as it transitions further to a knowledge-led economy, and in particular looks to build a strong indigenous economy.

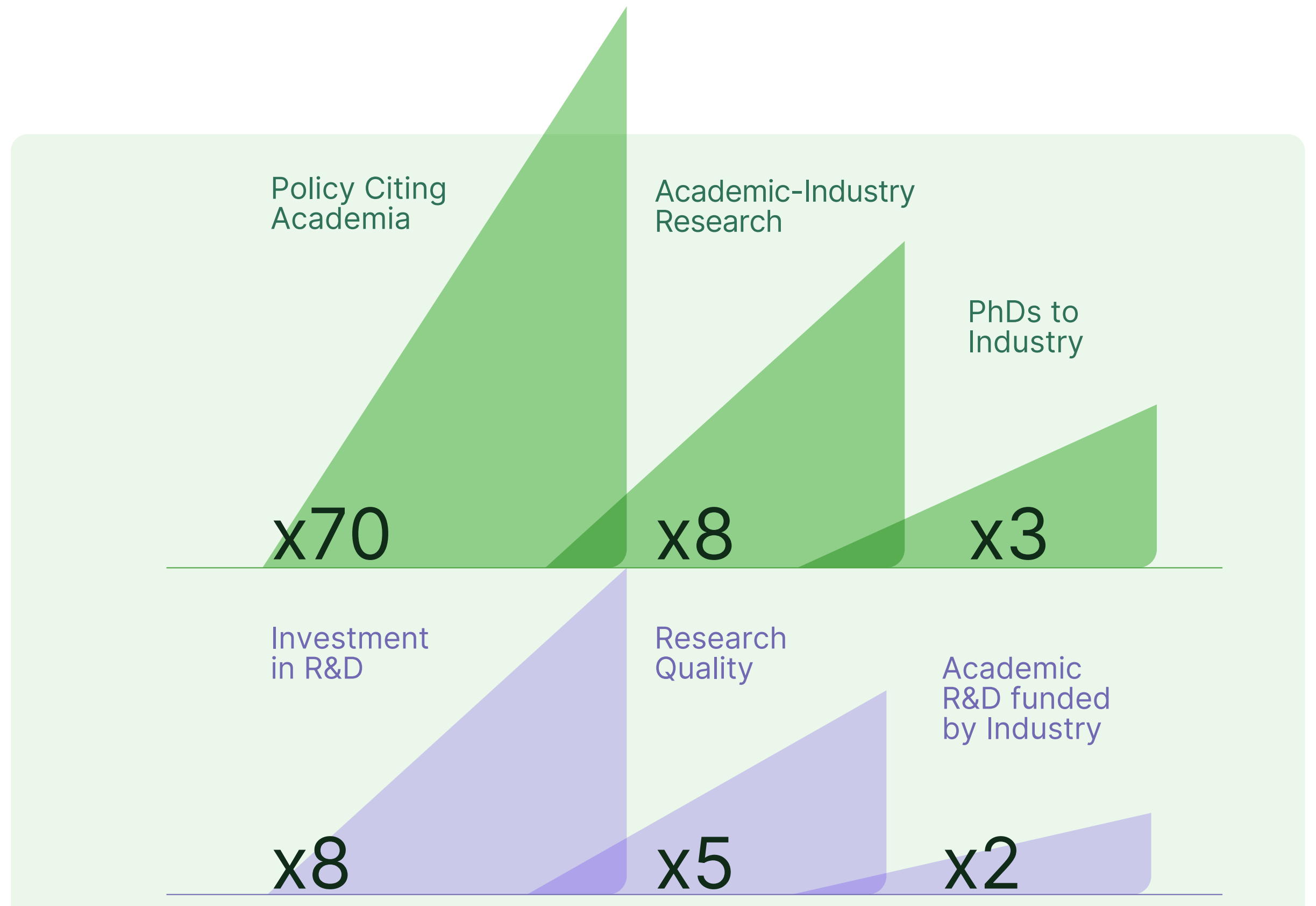
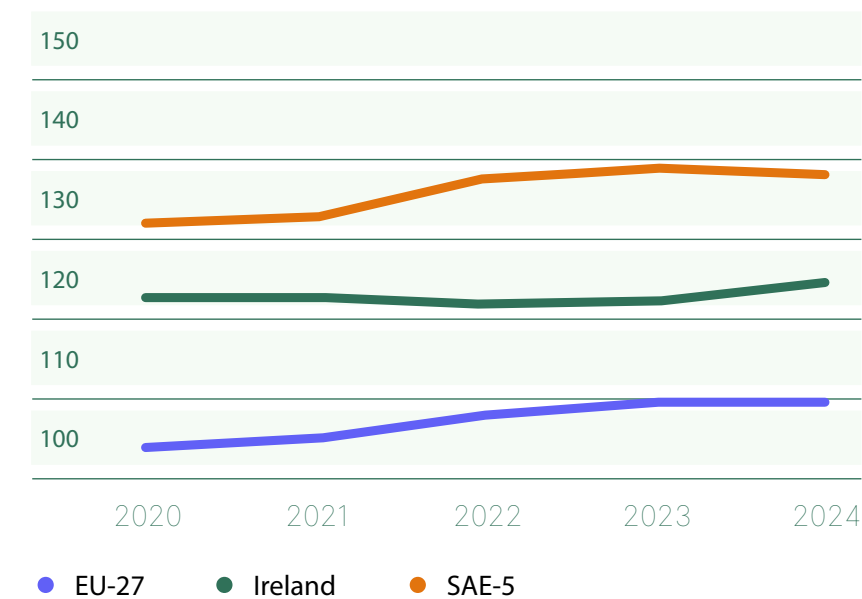


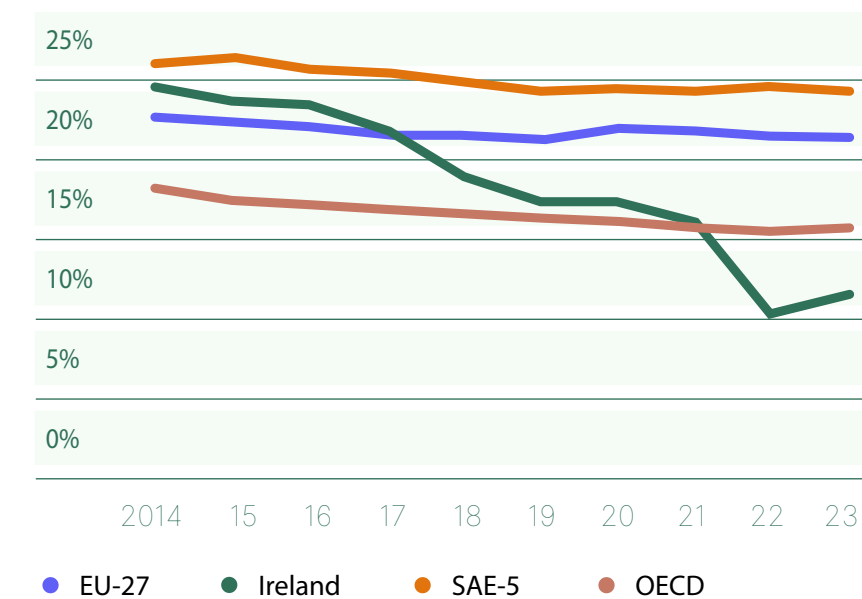
Figure 2: Step change in the Irish R&D system over the last 20 years (for more information, see Appendix 5.2)



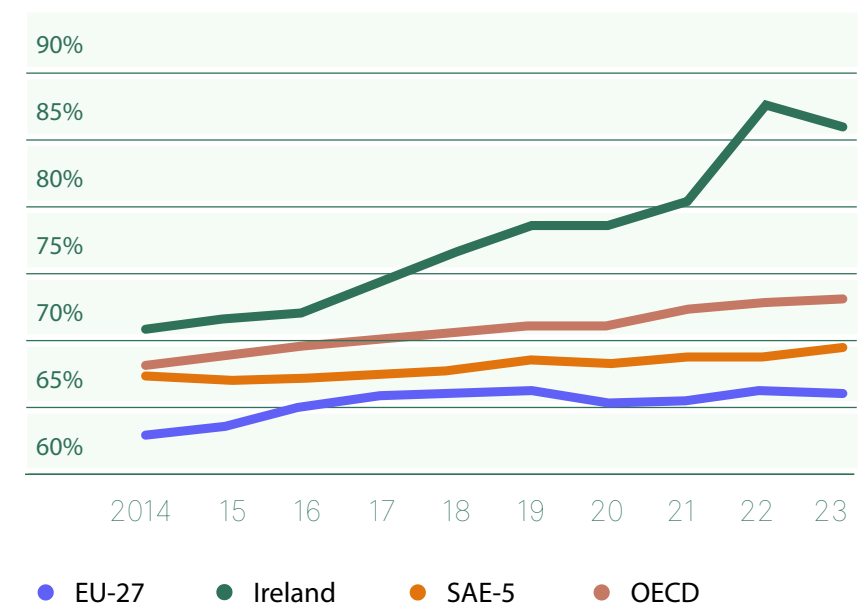
**Figure 3a:**  
European Innovation Scoreboard<sup>1</sup>



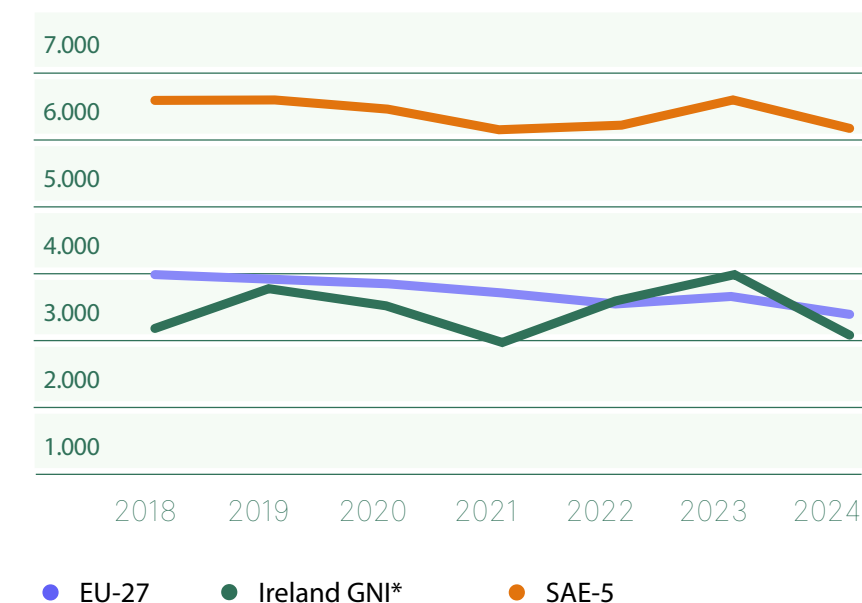
**Figure 3c:**  
HERD as a percentage of GERD<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 3b:**  
BERD as a percentage of GERD<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 3d:**  
Patent applications (per billion EUR GDP)<sup>4</sup>



Beyond these small advanced economies, the world is mobilising in relation to research and the ways in which local economic and societal value can be captured. *The Draghi Report on EU Competitiveness* has placed research and innovation at the forefront of building future European competitiveness, calling for doubling investment in both the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Innovation Council (EIC).<sup>5</sup> In Asia, the level of investment in research continues to grow, with China now recognised through many metrics as the leading research nation in the world.<sup>6</sup> The UK has placed research and development at the centre of its economic growth strategy and is significantly increasing its research commitments.<sup>7</sup>

In this competitive world, Ireland must urgently focus its research resources strategically to help maximise impact and ensure the long-term development of a research and innovation system capable of matching and surpassing other small advanced economies.



**“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





## 2.1 A New Agency

**The establishment of Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland, a new national research and innovation funding agency, represents Ireland’s most ambitious commitment to developing national research competitiveness and ensuring research and innovation will be central to Ireland’s long-term economic, societal, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.<sup>8</sup>**

Research Ireland has no discipline boundaries. We can holistically deliver more creative, innovative, sustainable, and high-quality research and researcher talent to benefit the people of Ireland for generations to come. Research Ireland will play a leading role in achieving the Government’s ambitions for research and innovation, as set out in *Impact 2030*.

Research Ireland is tasked with delivering the internationally renowned research and innovation system required for Ireland to meet its long-term economic and societal objectives.

We will do this task through supporting the research and innovation strategies of Ireland’s HEIs and the ambitions of the researchers within these institutions. We will strengthen the international research competitiveness of the HEIs by investing in developing and attracting the best

researchers, and ensuring Ireland has the skills, infrastructure, and people needed to capitalise on national opportunities and address pressing societal challenges.

This strategy focuses on: building an enhanced research capability; closing the international competitiveness gap with other small advanced economies; and helping Ireland respond to strategic opportunities (see next section for details).

Research Ireland will: deliver the internationally leading talent and knowledge essential for the long-term competitiveness of our country; work tirelessly to maximise the translation of these research activities to produce impact; ensure the societal benefits from research are obtained; and support the growing research and innovation ambitions of enterprise partners.

We will deliver this mandate with a partnership mindset while reinforcing our commitment to excellence in discovery, innovation, and research talent.



**“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



## 2.1.1

# Delivering excellent research and economic and societal impact for Ireland

### Impact



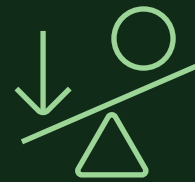
**1831**  
Researchers engagements with Multinational Companies



**€5.4bn**  
Multinational Companies spend on R&D



**€1.6bn**  
Small & Medium Enterprises spend on R&D



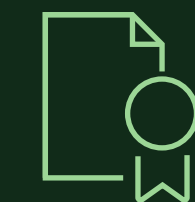
**€176.4m**  
Leveraged investment from Industry & EU funding



**€589m**  
Horizon funding leveraged by our investment in HEIs\*



**25**  
Spin-outs generated



**221**  
Licenses, options & assignments



**€25.4bn**  
Enterprise value of startups led by PhD-graduates; 1/4 of total enterprise value of startups in Ireland

### Research Excellence



**1100**  
New postgrad & postdoc positions funded



**19**  
ERC Grant Awards Secured



**33**  
Most highly cited researchers



**6th**  
Ireland ranked in Attractive Research Systems between EU member states



**1.88x**  
Irish researcher publications top global average

**Figure 4:** Delivering excellent research and economic and societal impact for Ireland (data reflects annual output unless specified. \*Horizon Europe [2021–2024] funding leveraged by our investment in HEIs).



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## 2.2 Selected Strategic Opportunities

Alongside the global context, there are many national opportunities where Research Ireland will play a strategic role for the country. Examples of these opportunities are illustrated below.

### Connecting our research and innovation system

The most successful innovation economies have intentionally and successfully connected their research, entrepreneurship and enterprise systems. This model is clearly evidenced in the UK's Golden Triangle (Oxford-Cambridge-London), the Boston and Bay Area clusters in the US, and Singapore in Asia. More recently European countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland have made substantive progress. Building the required linkages between Ireland's research, academic, industry, entrepreneurial, and venture capital communities is a challenging but urgent task. While sustaining and developing the research capacity that is currently in place, Research Ireland must focus on connecting Ireland's research and innovation assets to enhance economic and societal impact. We are ready to play this critical role working collaboratively across the system to achieve this goal.

### Further embedding FDI and scaling Irish companies

Ireland's economy continues to perform at an internationally leading level. However, to ensure long-term economic resilience, an improved economic balance between Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and indigenous growth is essential. The goal is to achieve this balance while sustaining and growing both economic engines. A critical factor in delivering this outcome is a growth in research and innovation capability. Research Ireland will contribute significantly to further embedding our FDI companies and strengthening our indigenous economy. We will work with partners to support exporting Irish companies to grow through the development of increased research talent, allow new intellectual property to be transferred to business, and support the creation of investable spin-outs.

### Enhancing the balance between publicly and privately funded research and innovation in Ireland

Private investment has grown at a rate that far outstrips public investment in research. This success story demonstrates the commitment from industry to developing research capability in Ireland. As the private sector investment grows, public sector outcomes will need to be monitored to ensure they continue to enable, and are sufficient for, private sector growth. Strategic public action is required. Research Ireland will play a key role in providing the research-trained talent, the research infrastructure, and the opportunities to collaborate with academia that are needed to support the continued growth of private Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) investment.



### Growing Ireland's international reputation and relations

Research is a global endeavour. The most successful research and innovation economies are often the most connected. This is particularly true for small advanced economies. Research Ireland can enhance how Ireland's research community is connected to Europe, the UK, the US, and beyond, both through our existing and new international partnerships with research funders, and the quality of our research activity across the breadth of disciplines. In partnership, we will ensure research security receives appropriate consideration. Research Ireland will help support new strategic relationships with Ireland's global partners – continuing to support talent flow, international research collaboration, international investment in Irish research, and improved trade linkages. As we continue to evolve Ireland's international offering, research can play a key role in reshaping our international positioning.

### Strengthening social cohesion and improving quality of life

Ireland, like all countries, must reflect on how we maintain and improve social cohesion and a high quality of life for its people. In parallel, we must also respond to opportunities and challenges such as digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), a global climate emergency, public health, housing, national security, and an unprecedented movement of people. Housing, social integration, renewable energy, national security, public health, and climate adaptation are global and national challenges. Research Ireland will invest in research that can shape our public policy, provide the experts and expertise to inform a societal conversation, and create a civil-society-informed research agenda.



**“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’Keeffe, CEO, Cuan**





## 2.3 Commitment to Stakeholders

Research Ireland is a critical agency for Ireland, but our impact can only be achieved by working in partnership with key stakeholders across the research and innovation system. We commit to being a proactive, agile, and ambitious partner to our stakeholders.

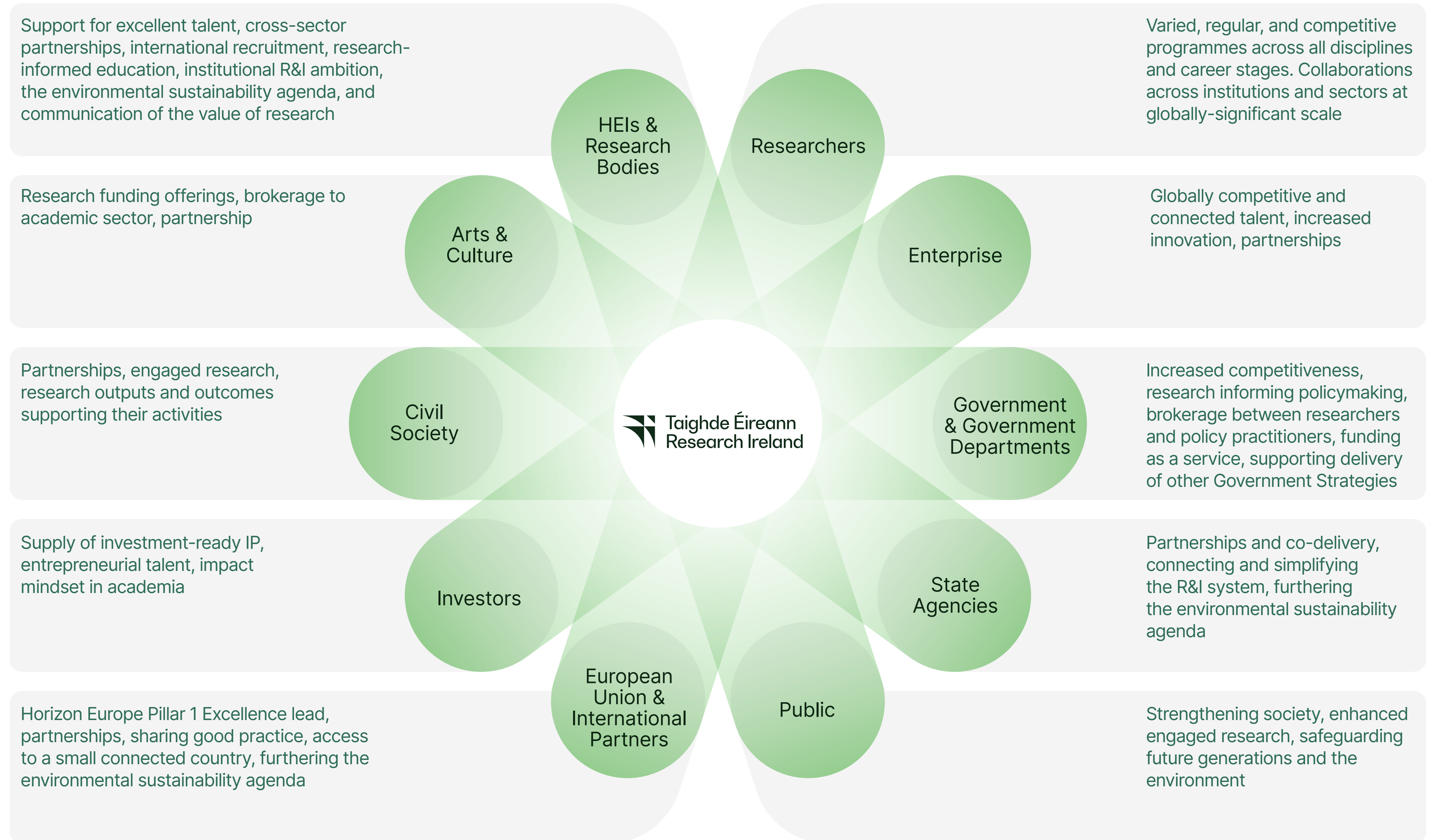
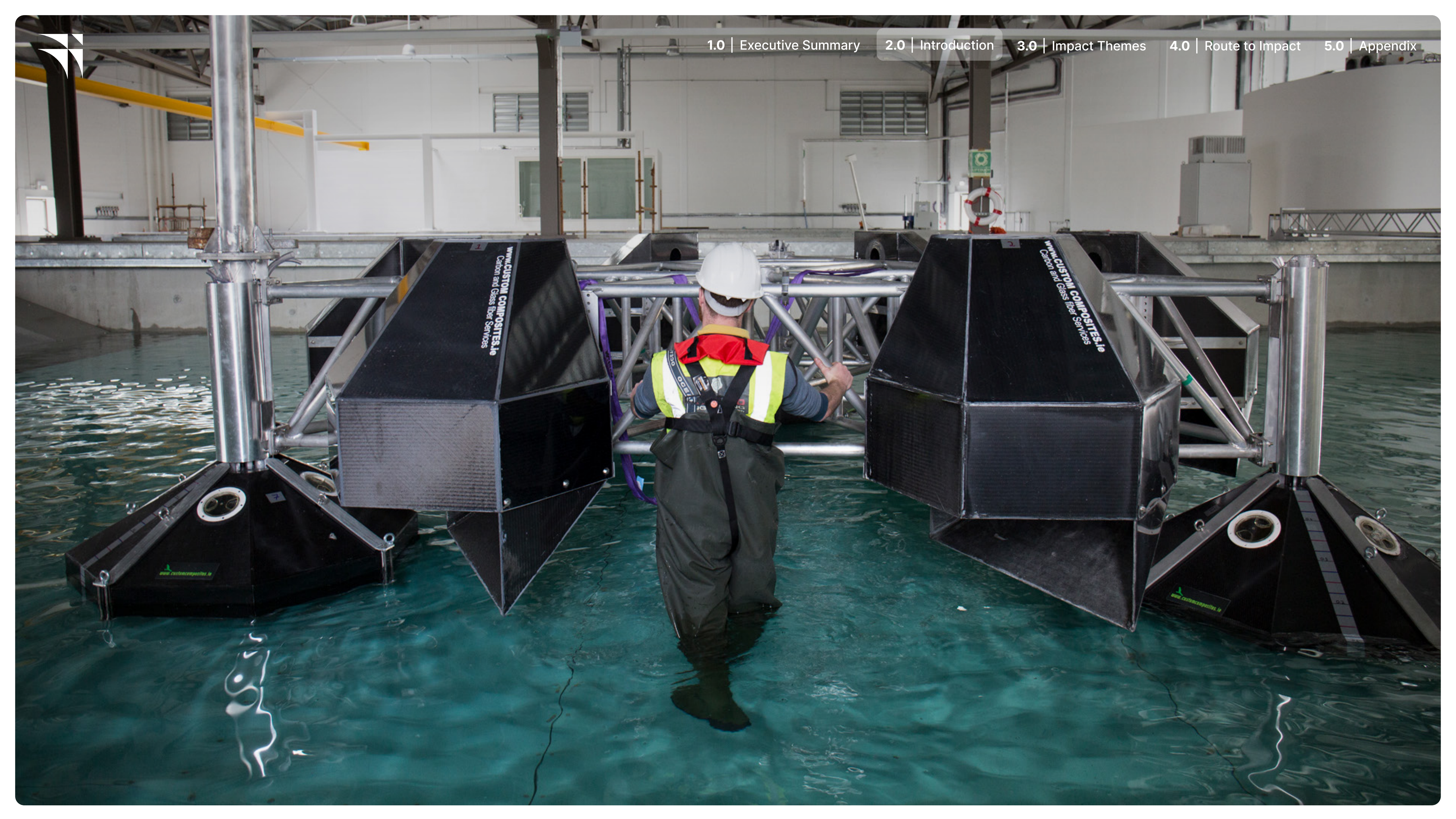


Figure 5: Research Ireland's offering to stakeholders across the R&I system





## 2.4 Purpose Statement

Develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system for the prosperity of the people of Ireland

Delivering this will require Research Ireland to:

1

Prioritise excellence as we award research funding, ensuring the best return for the taxpayer's investment.

2

Support excellent researchers to progress their careers and to fuel the broader knowledge economy.

3

Connect the research and innovation community to enterprise, investors, policy practitioners, and international stakeholders, taking a developmental approach.

4

Maximise the benefit arising from the research we fund, building competitiveness in the private sector and strengthening Irish society.

5

Ensure provision of the appropriate environment, facilities, research infrastructure, and programme offerings required to do excellent discovery research.

6

Focus on the long-term development of Ireland's research and innovation system to ensure Ireland is competitive with other small advanced economies.



## 2.5 Balance

To achieve our purpose, we will carefully balance multiple related priorities. We need to:

- Invest in discovery research while also investing at scale to build research and innovation centres of international stature.
- Invest across all disciplines, while also enabling both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.
- Support Irish HEIs to be internationally competitive, while also ensuring the development of the Technological Universities.
- Invest in developing our research talent at all career stages, and enable researchers to win international, and specifically European, funding.
- Co-deliver a national research infrastructure plan which rectifies the recognised infrastructure deficit from recent years, while also developing a research infrastructure road map for

the next decade to ensure long-term competitiveness.

- Invest in research which can develop the research and innovation talent that supports Ireland’s future economic growth.
- Build linkages that connect our researchers with internationally leading researchers and infrastructure, and that benchmark Ireland’s progress against our peers.
- Invest to ensure that research is informing public policy development.
- Connect the research and innovation community to enterprise, investors, policy practitioners, the arts and culture sector, civil society, and international stakeholders, taking a developmental approach.

- Invest in research that enables the continued growth of research and innovation in our FDI companies, while also supporting the development of research and innovation capacity in Irish industry.
- Balance investments which bring short term economic and societal benefits with a clear vision to develop a sustainable, internationally competitive research and innovation environment.
- Partner effectively with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and other research and innovation funders.



## 2.6 Strategy Summary





3.0

# Impact Themes





## 3.0 Impact Themes

**Excellent research, knowledge, evidence, and critical thinking provide a country and its people with better choice and agency in its decision making. It builds sovereign capability and strategic autonomy; with increasing geopolitical uncertainty, strengthening Ireland’s research and innovation system has never been more important.**

Research, and the talent that drives it, are essential for a mature, prosperous society and a competitive and resilient economy.

These three themes (Figure 6) are interconnected and interdependent. For example, economic benefits are maximised in a well-functioning society, and vice versa.



“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 societal impact.”

Professor Veronica Campbell, President, South East Technological University

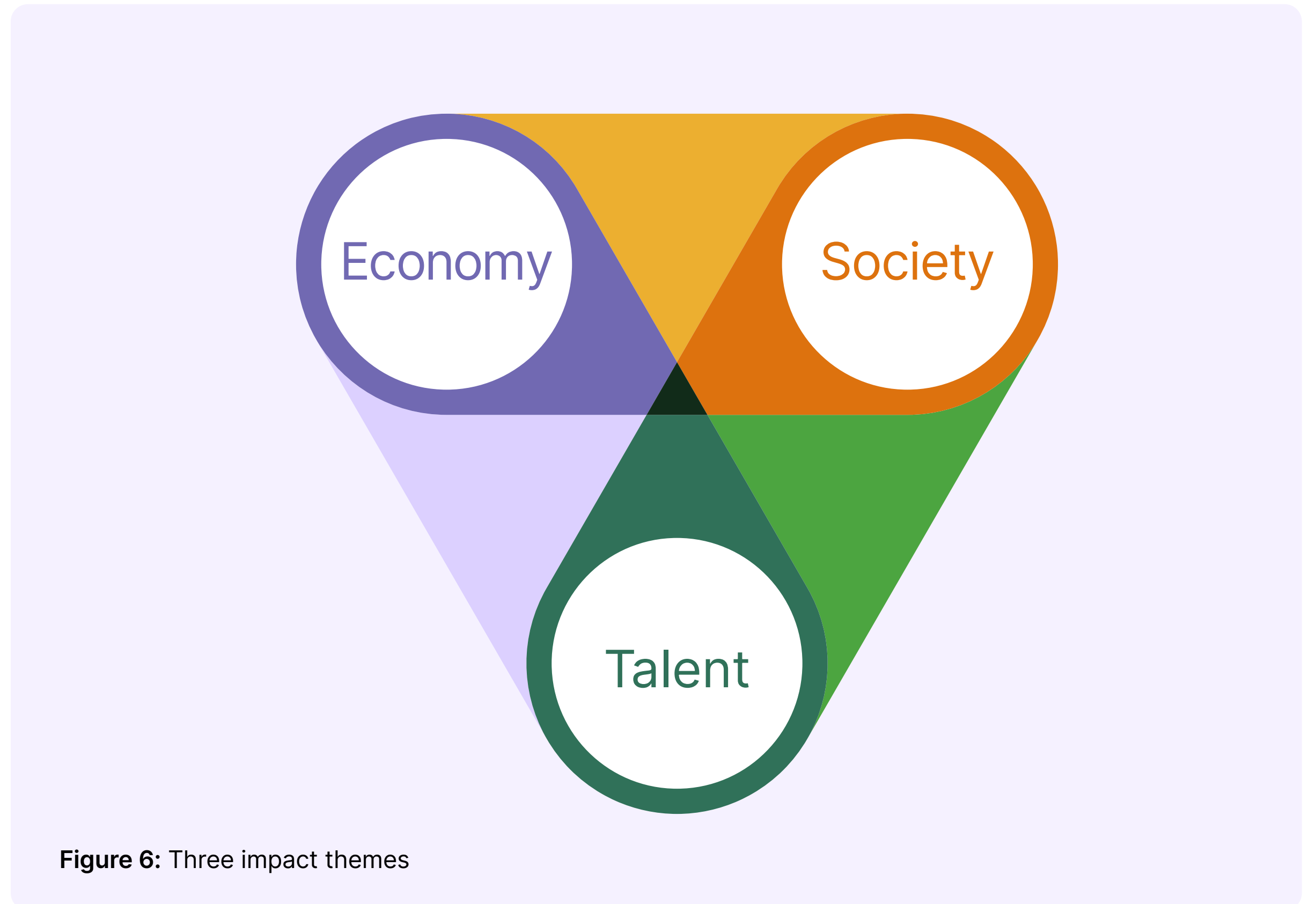


Figure 6: Three impact themes



## 3.1 Talent

### Empowering People

**Ireland is renowned for its talent. A thriving economy, an innovative public service, and a competitive higher education system require a diverse pipeline of trained researchers who are motivated, supported, and have the space to pursue new knowledge, take risks, explore new ideas, and pursue excellent research. Ireland's culture and society are similarly underpinned by creativity and research.**

Across the range of Ireland's economic priorities (e.g., semiconductors, life sciences, AI/digital, quantum technologies, advanced manufacturing, Agri-food, creative industries) there is one consistent need – a requirement for trained researchers. The strategies of IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland target a total combined growth of €10bn in research and private-sector innovation activity, cumulative over the lifetime of this strategy. Increased research talent will be needed to deliver this growth. In the public sector, the increasing need for evidence-informed policymaking will similarly require new knowledge, PhDs, and trained researchers. Finally, enhancing the HEIs in Ireland will necessitate globally competitive researchers, connected to international leaders in research and providing research-informed higher education.

To enable our researchers across the breadth of disciplines, it is essential to provide the appropriate facilities in which to carry out their research and to be globally competitive. Working in close partnership with DFHERIS and the HEA, Research Ireland will deliver a step change in research infrastructure provision, addressing both institutional research equipment and large-scale shared advanced infrastructures designed for collaboration through the Inspire Programme. This approach will enable HEIs to deliver on both national priorities and their own institutional strategies for talent development and innovation.

Research Ireland will increase our efforts in the development of the researchers we fund, partner with the HEIs to attract new academic faculty, and ensure the effective transition of research talent from our HEIs to address economic and civic needs.

The actions in this impact theme will allow Research Ireland to achieve our objectives to be More than a Funder (Figure 10) regarding world-class researchers, the competitiveness of Ireland's HEIs, and the global reputation of Irish research.

#### More than a Funder Benefits to Ireland:

- 01 Attract & Support Excellent Researchers
- 02 Boost the Competitiveness of Ireland's HEIs
- 03 Raise the Global Reputation of Irish Research



## Actions

1

In partnership with the HEIs, review our existing PhD-funding programmes and develop an enhanced suite of PhD programmes supported by Research Ireland with the ambition to make Ireland the leading location in Europe for PhD training. We will also explore our role in supporting Research Masters.

2

Strengthen and develop competitive funding programmes for researchers from PhD candidates to advanced-career-stage academics, prioritising consistency and predictability, with targeted supports at each career stage.<sup>9</sup> Ensure these investments produce internationally competitive research, thus enhancing Ireland's global reputation.

3

Develop programmes that support a highly porous research system in Ireland, with strong mobility of researchers between academia, industry, and public services.

4

Attract international researchers to Ireland at all career stages and, where sensible, accelerate this recruitment by aligning funding programmes with international schemes (e.g., European Research Council).

5

Provide research infrastructure and other supports so that Ireland is a location where researchers can have a globally competitive career.



## Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Target
Number of PhDs funded	3,800
Number of postdoctoral fellows funded	2,000
Number of investigator-led grants	1,000
Number of international recruitment grants	30
Number of publications in top 10% per million population – Ireland	3,300

The KPI targets and other quantitative targets in the document will be applied in conjunction with qualitative measures of progress. The KPIs have been set to maintain current performance; we will endeavour to enhance performance to meet more ambitious national objectives through the following stretch objectives:

## Stretch Objectives

Not developing sufficient research talent would be a significant risk to Ireland successfully achieving its economic objectives. Based on the private sector RDI growth targets of the Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland strategies, we estimate that Ireland needs more than 4,600 additional PhD-trained researchers over the lifetime of this strategy to meet the needs of the private sector. This number represents a significant uplift above current levels of PhD provision by Research Ireland.

It is vital that the national research system leverages Horizon Europe/Framework Programme 10 and other European funding sources.<sup>10</sup> We will work collaboratively to help achieve Ireland’s target of obtaining €1.5 billion from Horizon Europe programmes, and we will also proactively target additional European mechanisms.

To ensure that our HEIs can compete globally to attract the required talent and deliver excellent research, Research Ireland, in partnership with DFHERIS and HEA, will deliver a national research infrastructure renewal programme, Inspire, at consequential scale.<sup>11</sup>



## Case Study **Delivering Ireland's Talent Pipeline for Global Pharma Leadership**



**“Through a PhD-related industrial placement with APC Ltd. and VLE Therapeutics, I worked with highly skilled, multidisciplinary, and technical scientists across bioengineering, innovation, and commercial teams. Building these strong relationships and upskilling in new areas while also seeing how research can translate to commercial value and patient impact is hugely valuable for my career development.”**

**Laura Foley**  
University of Limerick

### **An innovation industry partnership approach is exposing graduates to a competitive career**

SSPC the Research Ireland Centre for Pharmaceuticals focusing on process innovation and advanced manufacturing is the largest provider of PhD graduates for the (bio)pharma industry in Ireland.

SSPC researchers are highly sought after; 400 PhD graduates have been trained and 70% of those, and 40% of postdoctoral researchers, have transitioned directly into industry. Crucially, 57% of SSPC's international alumni have chosen to remain in Ireland, directly strengthening the national skills base and addressing critical talent shortages in the sector.

Alumni hold leadership roles in global firms such as Pfizer and Eli Lilly while driving indigenous enterprise such as APC Ltd.

and VLE Therapeutics. Co-founded in 2011 by UCD faculty and alumni, APC Ltd. has grown from start-up to a global leader in process development, partnering with 8 of the top 10 pharma companies. The company has invested €100 million in a 130,000 sq. ft. 'medicine accelerator' site in Dublin to deliver treatments for cancer, Alzheimer's, and HIV, and plans to expand to over 600 scientists, digital experts, and manufacturing professionals. APC Ltd. and VLE Therapeutics is now investing in gene therapy research with NIBRT, and setting an ambitious benchmark for other Irish spin-outs.

By advancing talent and fostering impactful partnerships, Research Ireland is securing Ireland's competitiveness in the life sciences sector for decades to come.

**Partners:** SSPC the Research Ireland Centre for Pharmaceuticals is hosted by UL. APC Ltd. is a spin-out from UCD, NIBRT, TCD.



## Case Study **Global Influence in the Mission for Accountability in AI**



**“A future where human dignity, justice, and rights guide AI development is possible. Continual dialogues and meaningful measures for accountability in the development and deployment of AI systems is central to achieving this.”**

**Dr Abeba Birhane**  
Trinity College Dublin

### **From PhD graduate to Time100 Most influential people in AI**

Abeba is a world leading cognitive researcher in Ireland and is globally recognised beyond academia as a leader in AI accountability.

Abeba joined a select group of global leaders in AI who convened at the Vatican AI Summit in 2025, producing “The Global Appeal” – a first of its kind report calling on global leaders, policymakers, Industry, researchers, and all of society to follow a core set of principles to determine how AI can best serve all of humanity.

Abeba’s research journey began with a UCD-based PhD with the Lero Research Ireland Centre for Software, where she exposed harmful bias in AI training data. This led to the withdrawal of 80 Million Tiny Images, an image dataset from MIT.

Abeba has since featured in the Time100 list of most influential people in AI in 2023, advised the UN Secretary General, and is on the Irish Government AI Advisory Council.

Currently the Director of the AI Accountability Lab at the ADAPT Research Ireland Centre, Abeba and her team continue to challenge systemic inequalities.

Abeba’s career reflects Research Ireland’s role in supporting early career researchers through to independent research leadership, ensuring Ireland has the talent, skills, and supports to have global impact.

**Partners:** TCD, UCD, MacArthur Foundation, Omidyar Group, Luminate Foundation, European AI & Society Fund, Bestseller Foundation, and UK Dept For Science, Technology, and Innovation.



## 3.2 Economy

### Strengthening Competitiveness

**A resilient, innovation-led economy is underpinned by a research system that engages dynamically with Irish businesses, FDI companies, start-ups, and investors to enhance their innovation capacity and long-term competitiveness.**

Research Ireland will fund enhanced national Centres at an international scale.<sup>12</sup> These Centres and other large-scale programmes will focus thematically on areas of critical importance for our economy (e.g., the vision of Government to fund large-scale doctoral cohorts in 2018 has resulted in Ireland having a talent base that can respond to the AI opportunity).

Through investment in research, we will create the intellectual property that will underpin spin-out creation and provide the future deal flow for venture capital investment. We will work in partnership with our HEIs and industry to build public-private research partnerships at scale.

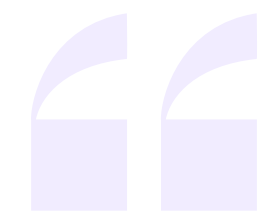
Our investment in research and talent will enhance private-sector innovation, attract and retain FDI, and support the development and scaling of indigenous companies in Ireland.

The actions in this impact theme will support our objective to be More than a Funder (Figure 10) to increase enterprise collaboration and innovation capacity and catalysing regional economic growth.

**More than a Funder** Benefits to Ireland:

04 Increase Enterprise Collaboration and Innovation Capacity

05 Catalyse Regional Economic Growth



“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



## Actions

1

Deliver an enhanced Research Ireland Centres programme that will enable the development of national centres of international scale in areas of key strategic importance to our economy.

2

Develop new initiatives collaboratively with Enterprise Ireland to enhance Ireland's ability to translate research into spin-out companies and to enable existing companies to scale.

3

Expand enterprise-academic partnership programmes through new and innovative co-funding models that increase investment in research and innovation, operate at scale, enhance academic collaborations, and have measurable impact outcomes. Working collaboratively with HEIs, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and relevant Government Departments to build a seamless research and innovation system that is frictionless for enterprise partners is a key priority.

4

Work collaboratively with Universities, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, and relevant Government Departments to run programmes (e.g., the ARC Hub programme) linking regional research and economic specialisms, building domain- and location-specific systems, driving regional innovation, economic growth, and the creation of high-value jobs.

5

Ensure that programmes are in place to meet the current and future skills needs of the private sector. This includes research masters, industry PhDs, doctoral, and postdoctoral levels, and also connecting our talent pipeline more effectively with Irish-based companies.



## Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Target
Development of enhanced Research Centres – which have partnerships at scale with both global and Irish companies – across the key sectors critical to the Irish economy	14
Co-funding by MNCs as a percentage of relevant grants	36%
Co-funding by SMEs as a percentage of relevant grants	16%
Enable new strategic partnerships of scale (>€10m total) between enterprise and other organisations and the research community	10
Number of active spin-out companies founded by Research Ireland funded researchers or Centres	50

The KPI targets and other quantitative targets in the document will be applied in conjunction with qualitative measures of progress. The KPIs have been set to maintain current performance. We will endeavour to enhance performance to meet more ambitious national objectives through the following stretch objectives:

## Stretch Objectives

Ireland’s long-term economic competitiveness is linked to two challenges – further embedding FDI companies in Ireland and building increasingly innovation-led Irish companies. Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland are targeting combined growth of €10 billion in research and private-sector innovation activity cumulatively over the lifetime of this strategy.

The long-term ambition stated by Enterprise Ireland is that “exporting Irish companies become the primary driver of the Irish economy.”<sup>13</sup> Ensuring that public levels of investment in research keep pace with the substantial increase in private investments in research will make a foundational contribution towards continued success in embedding FDI and upscaling the growth of Irish companies.

Working in close collaboration and cooperation with IDA Ireland, Research Ireland will establish ever-increasing linkages between the leading FDI companies in Ireland and Irish HEIs, further embedding their activities in Ireland.

Research Ireland will ensure that researchers in Ireland have every opportunity to successfully translate their research to create economic impact. This approach will be achieved through the growth of proof-of-concept funding, by offering programmatic supports that enable new company creation, and by working in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to attract international venture capital investment to Ireland. Additional potential initiatives (e.g., a national spin-out activation programme) are in the Appendix.



## Case Study **From Curiosity to Global Impact**



**“It always strikes me how devastating a diagnosis can be for people. I want to give people hope. I want them to know scientists are working on options that could help in the future.”**

**Prof. Luke O'Neill**  
Trinity College Dublin

### **Investment in discovery research leads to advancements in global healthcare**

Luke O'Neill's early fascination with interleukin-1, a key immune molecule, sparked a lifelong pursuit of understanding inflammation and immune responses. A world-class scientist, Luke has built his career in Ireland. He is renowned for excellence in frontier research, engaging with the public, and has won several international prizes.

Driven by a passion for translational science, Luke has translated groundbreaking discoveries from his research in the university into real-world impact. Luke has successfully raised millions in capital for his ventures including three Irish spin-out biopharmaceutical companies: Opona, Inflazome, and Sitryx.

Through his work, hundreds of scientists have been trained, and new potential drug candidates for treating a wide range of devastating diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and depression have been identified.

A breakthrough in his lab linking a particular protein to Type 2 diabetes paved the way for Inflazome, later acquired by Roche. Its drug candidates are now in clinical trials, showcasing how Irish research can lead globally with the potential to deliver transformative health solutions. Research Ireland's support across career stages enables talented researchers to realise their ambitions.

**Partners:** TCD.



Case Study

## Driving Discovery to the World's First Silicon-based Quantum Computer Server



**“The Research Ireland Professorship Programme enabled me to move to Ireland to build an expert team in UCD. Commercialising this research through Equal1 has helped put Ireland at the forefront of global quantum research and innovation.”**

**Prof. R. Bogdan Staszewski**  
University College Dublin

### **Strategic investment attracting world-leading talent laid the groundwork for Equal1 breakthrough**

Investment in frontier research has positioned Ireland at the cutting edge of next generation technologies such as 5G and quantum computing. Bogdan, then a professor at TU Delft in the Netherlands, was recruited in 2014 to build an expert team at UCD in an area where Ireland previously lacked research capability at scale.

This ground-breaking research resulted in a spin-out, Equal1, co-founded with Dr Dirk Leipold and Mike Asker. By putting the world's first portable quantum computer system on a single chip into production, Equal1 set a new benchmark for scalable quantum computing.

Since 2024, they have partnered with leading chip manufacturer NVIDIA, and as of 2026, they have raised €73 million in public and private funding. Equal 1 and CeADAR have signed an MOU to develop a national testbed to accelerate the innovation pipeline for Irish enterprise.

From lab to market, Research Ireland ensures Ireland is at the forefront of quantum computing and digital transformation, delivering national priorities under *Impact 2030* and *Quantum 2030*.

#### **Partners/Co-funders:**

UCD, EIC, CeADAR – Centre for AI and the European Digital Innovation Hub for AI in Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Ireland Strategic Investment Fund.



## 3.3 Society

### Driving Solutions

**Research and innovation deliver benefit for all of Ireland's society. The research we fund will elevate the country, enrich our culture, and improve our quality of life. We will prioritise societal transformation through evidence-informed policy. We will fund research and innovation that focuses on the opportunities and challenges that we face as a country: life sciences, bioeconomy, housing, social cohesion, competitiveness, demographic change, etc., as well as global existential threats such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and infectious diseases, including pandemic preparedness and anti-microbial resistance. The globally leading research excellence we fund will manifest impacts and benefits around the world.**

The creation of Research Ireland provides a tremendous opportunity to both strengthen and increase collaboration across all research disciplines and across sectors. Research involving multiple disciplines drives and enhances impact, particularly policy and societal impacts. We include multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and postdisciplinary research in this discussion. This research is built on strong individual disciplines that will be delivered by the Talent impact theme above.

*Impact 2030* commits Research Ireland to driving interdisciplinary research. Our ability to fund impactful research beyond discipline boundaries provides tremendous opportunities for the country. We will work in partnership with Government Departments, Agencies, and funders of research and innovation in developing and delivering our programmes.

Research Ireland funds research and innovation that benefits society. Research is not just shared with society; it is shaped by society. We recognise the need to embed meaningful engagement in research culture that will directly inform the research being undertaken. Engaged research is transparent, collaborative, and inclusive, where stakeholders are partners, not just passive recipients, and impact is measured through societal change and real-world benefits. Engaged research emphasises co-creation, shared ownership and decision-making, engagement and partnerships, inclusivity, and reciprocity between researchers and other stakeholders.

The actions in this impact theme will support our objectives to be More than a Funder (Figure 10) around strengthening Ireland's resilience, shaping evidence-informed policy, providing research and innovation system insights, and enhancing engaged research to strengthen Irish society.

#### More than a Funder Benefits to Ireland:

- 06 Strengthen Ireland's Resilience
- 07 Shape Evidence-Informed Public Policy and Practice
- 08 Provide Evidence-based Research and Innovation System Insights
- 09 Enhance Engaged Research to Strengthen Irish Society



## Actions

1

Invest in strengthening capacity across the breadth of disciplines, which will enable interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research that brings together diverse perspectives, expertise, and cross-government support to tackle key societal challenges.

2

Strengthen engagement and collaboration with wider research users and performers such as enterprise, NGOs (e.g., not-for-profit organisations and charities), our National Cultural Institutions, and the arts and culture sector to drive and showcase greater benefit to society.

3

Act as the delivery agency for research and innovation across Government, and strengthen the interface between researchers and public policy to support evidence-informed decision-making.

4

Establish Ireland as an international lead on public engagement with research, for example, through supporting community-based participatory research and engaged research (i.e. including a broader and more diverse range of stakeholders in the development, implementation, and outputs of the research).

5

Expand programmes to support more diverse training (e.g., entrepreneurship, innovation, policy engagement, engaged research) to help maximise impact.



## Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Target
Co-funding by societal partners as a percentage of relevant grants	10%
Awards in partnership with Government Departments targeting societal impact	150
Number of engagements between Research Ireland-funded researchers and Government Departments and Agencies	1,250
Number of Research Ireland initiatives bringing together Ireland's research and innovation system	5
Investment in transdisciplinary research	€650m

The KPI targets and other quantitative targets in the document will be applied in conjunction with qualitative measures of progress. The KPIs have been set to maintain current performance; we will endeavour to enhance performance to meet more ambitious national objectives through the following stretch objectives:

## Stretch Objectives

Research Ireland has a key role to play in addressing Ireland's opportunities and challenges (e.g., AI, climate, housing, geopolitics, a strong democracy, national security, public health, impact of technology on society, and national infrastructure). The research we fund and the researchers we support will enable Ireland to seize these opportunities and resolve the challenges. Considering the scale of these opportunities, meaningful contributions from research will require a step change in collaboration and brokerage activity, and increased research funding.

We will drive progress in line with Ireland's *Well-being Framework 2025*: Research Ireland will support *Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression; Environment, Climate and Biodiversity; Safety and Security; Housing and Built Environment; Knowledge, Skills and Innovation; and Mental and Physical Health*.

Research Ireland stands ready to meet Government's research needs and will partner across Government to ensure the benefits of our research investment enables enhanced public policy outcomes.



## Case Study **Funding Innovation to Cut Agricultural Emissions**



**“The Challenge funding model enabled Farm Zero C to put the farmer at the centre of the solution, and informed how we pivoted our resources within BiOrbic, which shaped our vision for this project.”**

**Prof. James Gaffey**  
Munster Technological University

### **Research Ireland positions Ireland as a global leader in sustainable agri-tech and the bioeconomy, helping to meet climate goals**

Agriculture is central to Ireland’s economy, but it is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. The BiOrbic Research Ireland Centre is delivering transformative solutions while also supporting food security and rural livelihoods, ensuring future generations see farming as a viable and sustainable option.

BiOrbic, in partnership with the Carbery Group, developed a flagship project ‘Farm Zero C’ on a 250-acre dairy farm in Cork. Together, with strong community engagement, they have achieved the following:

- 27% reduction in carbon emissions since 2018, surpassing Ireland’s 2030 target for agriculture
- 75% cut in methane emissions from slurry
- 40% reduction in synthetic fertiliser use

The farm’s carbon footprint is 33% below the national average and its biodiversity targets are five years ahead of schedule.

Research Ireland’s investments demonstrate the potential for research and innovation to enable Ireland to meet national climate goals.

**Partners/Co-funders:** BiOrbic Research Ireland Centre for Bioeconomy, Shinagh Estates, Dairy Research Ireland, MTU, Teagasc, TCD, UCC, UCD. Farm Zero C is co-funded by the Carbery Group and AIB.



## Case Study Language as a Path to Justice and Healing



**“We cannot change past experiences, but our research can shape the public response to these experiences – creating new policy, and supporting victims’ voices being heard and reducing stigma.”**

Prof. Caroline McGregor  
University of Galway

### Humanities research is central to addressing the legacy of institutional trauma

A mature society has a moral imperative to confront historical injustice and discrimination. As trusted, neutral facilitators, researchers play a critical role in challenging harmful narratives and supporting healing. The Language, Terminology, and Representation project, led by researchers in University of Galway, transformed public dialogue around institutions historically known as ‘Mother and Baby Homes’.

The researchers worked directly with those affected by the institutions to understand how language impacts memory, identity, and dignity, and can perpetuate stigma.

Their 2023 report highlights the emotional and psychological toll of historically used language, and offers clear, informed guidance on the

use of respectful, context-sensitive language across media, policy, education, and public life.

The study informed the Government’s response to the *Final Report of Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes*, highlighting the vital role research can play in addressing complex societal challenges. This work set a benchmark for respectful public dialogue informed by lived experience.

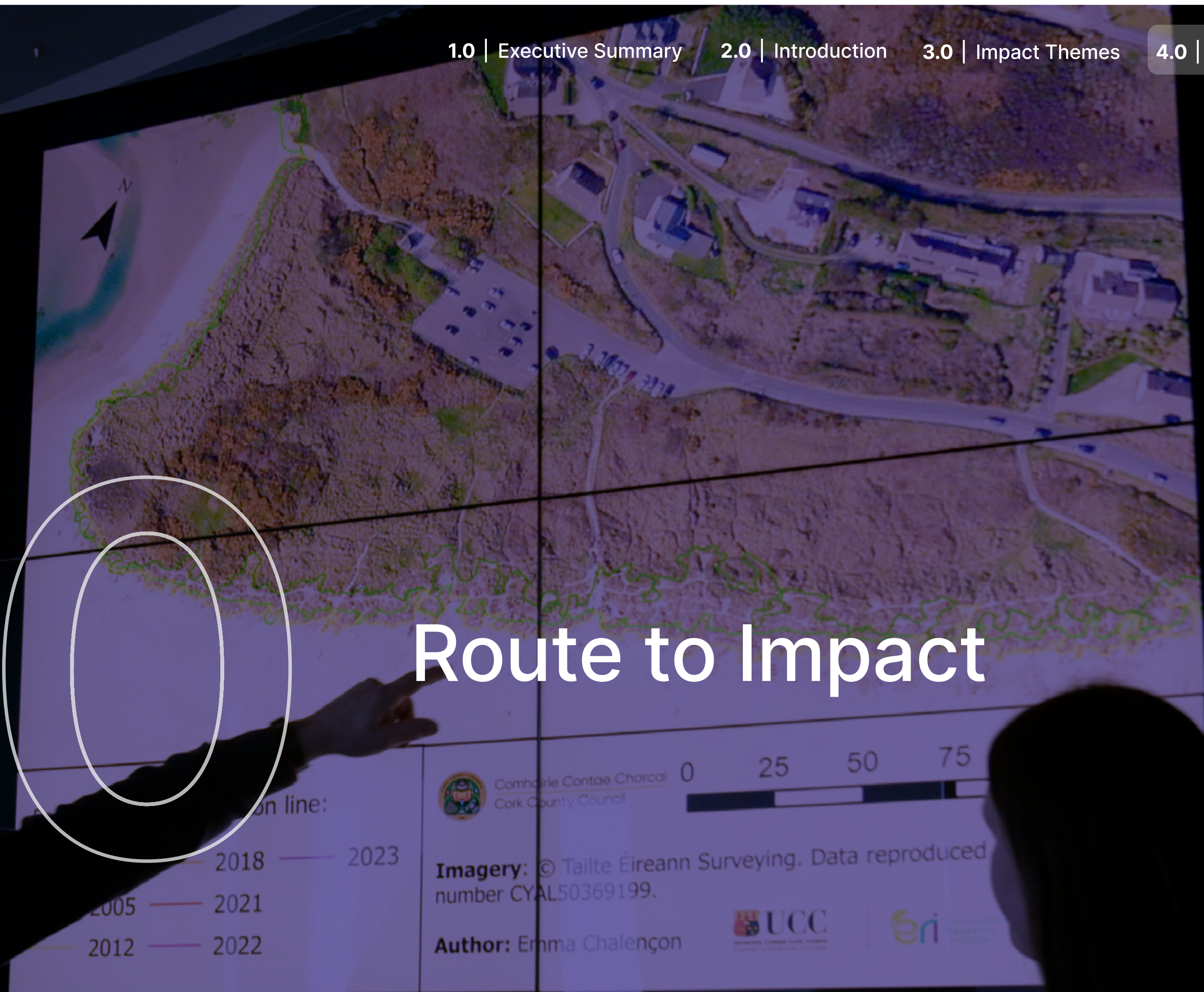
This research, supported by Research Ireland, is one of many projects across law, history, and the humanities that have shaped Ireland’s response to addressing institutional historical abuse.

**Partners:** UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at University of Galway and Collaborative Forum of Former Residents of Mother and Baby Homes. Co-authored by Prof. Caroline McGregor, Dr Carmel Devaney, Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley. Jointly funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.



# 4.0

## Route to Impact





## 4.0 Route to Impact

**To deliver this strategy, Research Ireland will:** be an agile and innovative funder following best international practice; accelerate impact by being more than a funding agency; and deliver on an international research strategy for Ireland.



Figure 7: Route to Impact



## 4.1 Best Practice Funder

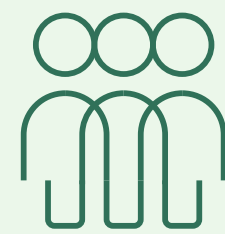
### 4.1.1 Principles – Underpinning Our Research Funding

The following principles will be used to guide implementation of all Research Ireland funding programmes and activities. These principles have been determined following an extensive stakeholder consultation process.



#### Excellence

Excellent research both creates and maximises impact. We will drive research excellence by implementing global best practice in research and innovation assessment and evaluation.<sup>14</sup>



#### Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Diverse teams perform better and drive research excellence. We will ensure that all pillars of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are embedded within the research funding system, as part of a broader, more inclusive and flexible research culture, which ensures the best outcomes for research and society.



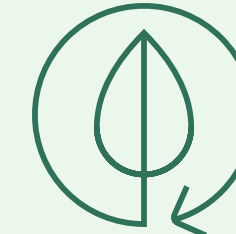
#### Open Research

Ensuring that all outputs of research (including research publications and associated data) are openly accessible to all is a key enabler of innovation and impact. As a taxpayer-funded organisation, Research Ireland has an obligation to ensure that research outputs resulting from our funding are accessible to the public. We will also support the creation of a sustainable and equitable scholarly communication system for Ireland.



#### Simplification

Increasing alignment and cohesion across the national research and innovation system will streamline application and other processes. More efficient application and post-award online systems will allow researchers and partners to maximise their time spent undertaking the research and reduce researcher bureaucracy.



#### Sustainability

Research and innovation systems must play their part in responding to the defining issue of our time. Research Ireland will ensure that the activities we fund are conducted and procured in an environmentally sustainable way and that we are leading nationally and internationally to develop and implement best practice.



#### Trust

Increasing our transparency and open communications will build trust in Research Ireland and improve how researchers and partners engage with us, supporting higher quality research and maximising impact.



## 4.1.2 Our Commitments to the Research Community

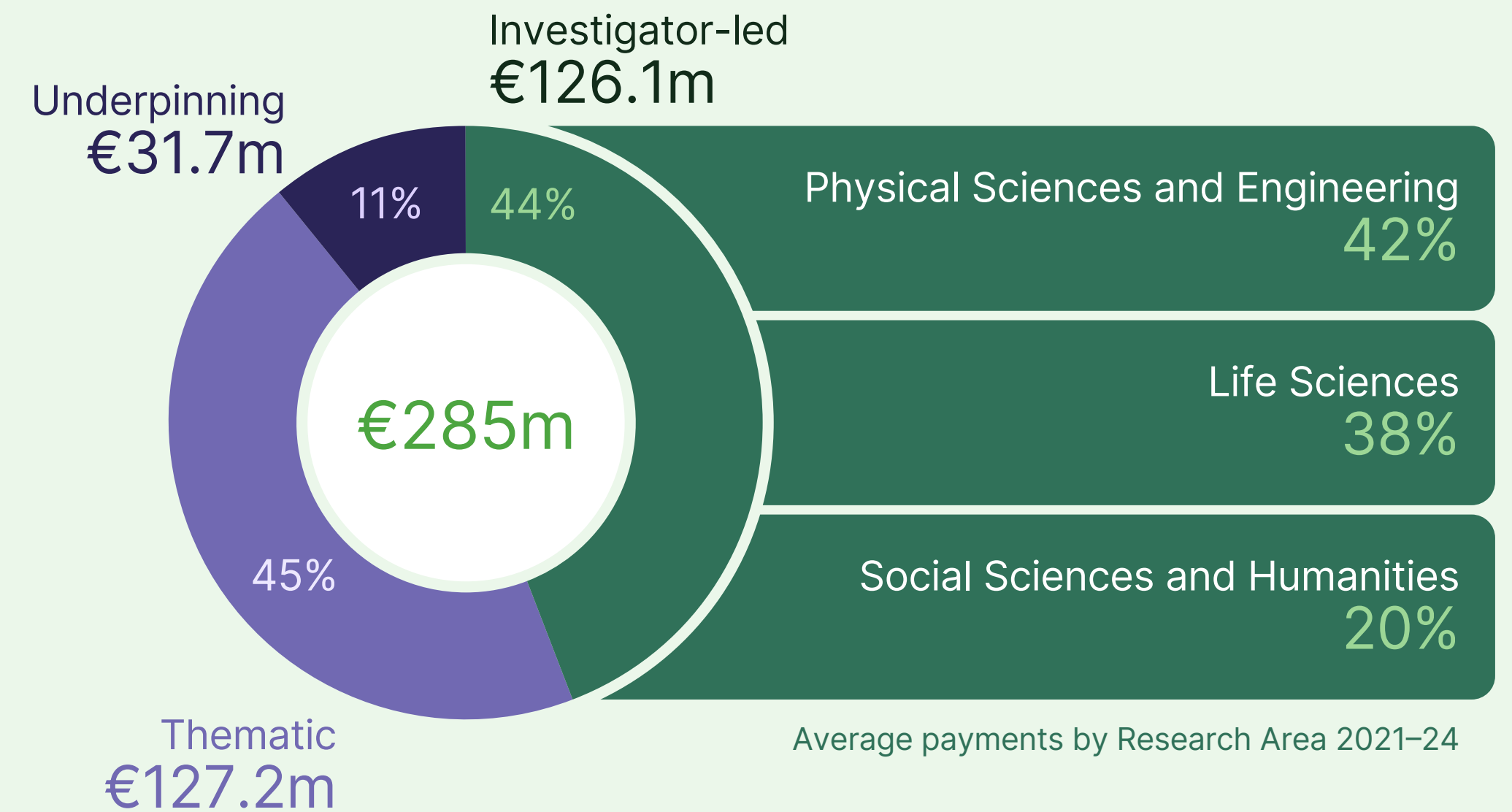
**Maintain** a balance between investigator-led and thematically defined research and innovation calls to deliver a wide range of impacts and ensure a broad provision of research capacity.

**Ensure** a minimum threshold of investment in discipline domains. This threshold is not a cap but an underpinning commitment that each domain has value and that excellent research will be supported.

**Implement** annual calls open to all disciplines in programmes that are central to the capacity and capability of Ireland’s research community. This includes calls that support Investigators, postgraduates, and early career researchers. We will also run calls for large-scale key programmes (such as Research Centres) on a regular, predictable schedule, ensuring that we communicate early and often with the community.

**Complete** the final stages of the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and Irish Research Council (IRC) integration, closing historical programmes, streamlining and simplifying our processes and programmatic offerings by the end of 2026. We will carry out this process in consultation with the research community.

### Maintaining a Research Investment Balance:



**Figure 8:** Research Ireland’s current portfolio breakdown, including the current domain breakdown of the Investigator-led portfolio only. Preliminary figures/indicative only.



Programmes for investigator-led research will support a broad base of excellence across the breadth of disciplines. The defining element of these programmes is that the applicant will have limited constraints and will be able to bring forward a proposal focused on their preferred research topic. Programmes that fall into this category include for example, an evolved Investigators Programme and evolved Government of Ireland schemes.

Thematic research programmes will be defined from within Research Ireland and through engagement with system stakeholders often with the goal to create a concentration of investment in areas of defined national need that leverage our small advanced economy advantages. Programmes that fall into this category include, for example, Research Ireland Centres.

In both streams we envisage excellence to be the defining criterion and that there will be a range of short-, medium-, and long-term impacts delivered.

Research Ireland’s annual core budget spend is balanced between investigator-led and thematic research (see Figure 8); we will retain this balance going forward. Research involving multiple disciplines will be encouraged. It will be recorded against either category as appropriate for the programme.

Furthermore, we will set minimum thresholds (see Table 1) for investigator-led programmes (applied on a multi-annual basis) to ensure a consistent level of investment in all domains. This approach has been used internationally to enable a balance between predictability and flexibility, and the thresholds are aligned with approaches identified through

international benchmarking (e.g., UK and EU programmes).<sup>15</sup> This approach also allows different research communities to engage in discussion with Research Ireland on what the optimal distribution of investment can look like for their research.

Domain <sup>16</sup>	Minimum Threshold
Life Science	25%
Social Sciences and Humanities	13%
Physical Sciences and Engineering	25%

**Table 1:** Minimum levels of investment per domain applied on a multi-annual basis across investigator-led programmes only.

The headroom left above these minimum thresholds will allow for:

- Outstanding proposals in any domain to compete for funding with no restrictions; and
- Growth of new investigator-led activity in consultation with the research community.

We will keep this approach under review and clearly communicate any changes to the community.



## 4.1.3 Programme Offering

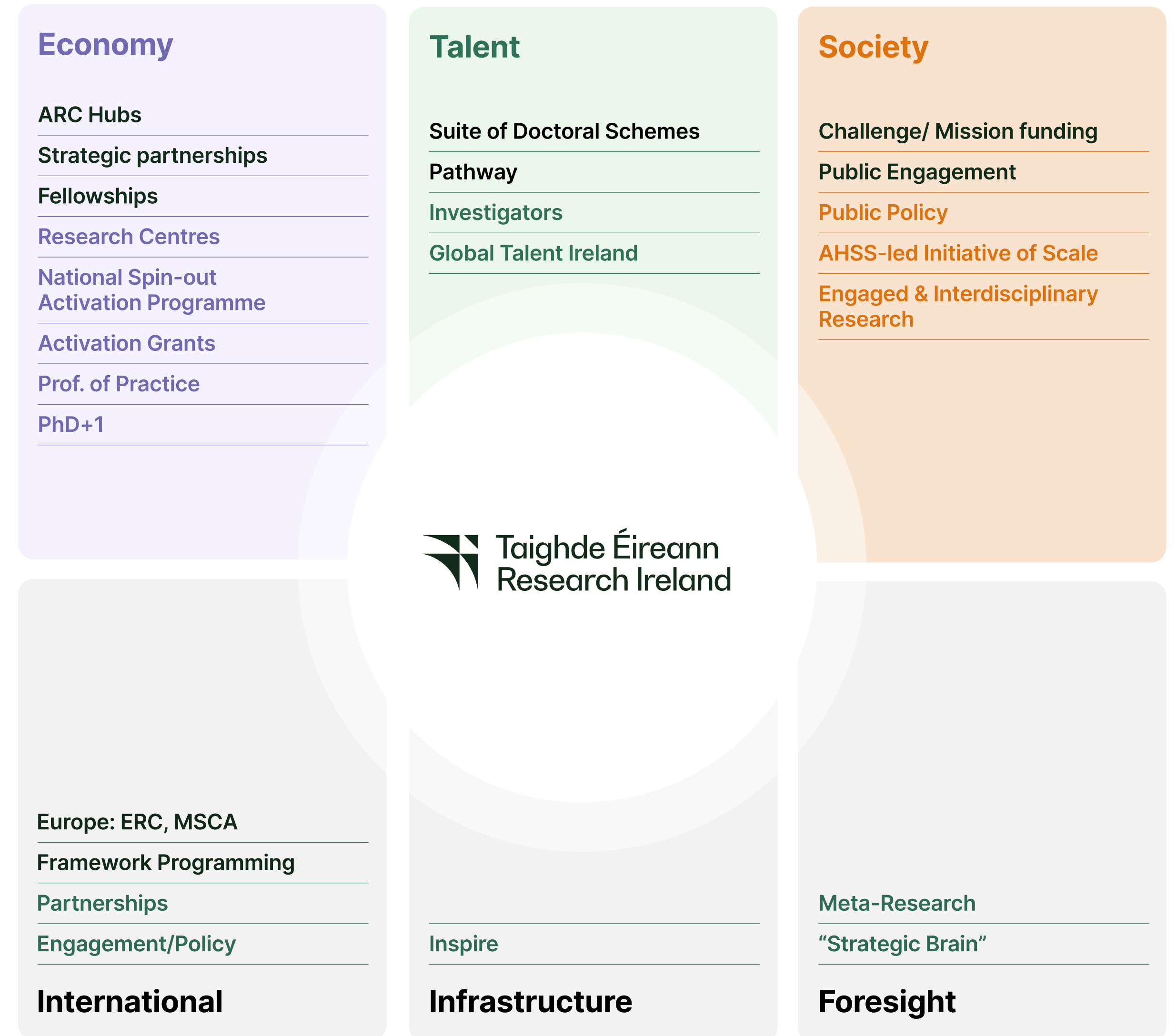
**Ireland’s excellent researchers require an internationally competitive environment in which to deliver their work. This section outlines the types of programmes we will offer.**

An extensive multi-stakeholder consultation process was carried out in the first half of 2025 to contribute to the development of Research Ireland’s strategy. The consultation identified critical core programmes as well as new programmatic opportunities and new mechanisms for delivery. An indicative sample is provided here. We will examine these possibilities in more detail over the course of the strategy in partnership with HEIs, enterprise agencies, other funders, and Government Departments. We commit to delivering some of these initiatives, and we will work with stakeholders and DFHERIS to identify opportunities to grow

investment that will unlock the full potential of these programmes, maximising the additional impact we can achieve across the research and innovation system. All programme names provided (Figure 9) are subject to evolution and rebranding.

Several initiatives span more than one impact theme but for illustrative purposes are assigned to one category. For further detail on our existing and potential new programmes, and their schedule, see Appendix 5.1.

**Figure 9:** An illustration of Research Ireland's potential programme offering.





## 4.1.4 Research Impact

**The research funded by Research Ireland will support transformational benefit for Ireland. Our aim is to maximise the impact arising from the research we fund. We will take an enabling and partnering approach to working with the grant holders and engaging with other stakeholders (e.g., enterprise, entrepreneur, public policy practitioners, civil society) to drive adoption and uptake of research outcomes.**

We will proactively manage our research portfolio to deliver on national needs and seize national opportunities. This active management will enhance impact.

We will expand our public engagement activities to include engaged research, increasing the societal impacts of the research we fund.

Research for policy programmes will support DFHERIS's strong progress in connecting policy-relevant researchers and national and local policy practitioners, driving societal impact.

For our investigator-led programmes, we will move towards an updated understanding of impact, requiring, at a minimum, research talent impact via the training of PhD students and ensuring we recognise the importance of discovery research and new knowledge creation.

We will develop a new and comprehensive impact framework for Research Ireland catering for all research activities, all disciplines, and all potential impacts. We will develop the framework in consultation with representatives of all stakeholder groups and with reference to a broad cross section of research outputs and outcomes, including, for example, trained research talent, industry partnerships, intellectual property, international partnerships, leveraged funding, European funding, and public policy setting.

We will work with all funded researchers to support an improved articulation of how their research has the potential to benefit Ireland, whether through training, direct economic impact, policy relevance, or cultural, environmental, and societal impacts.







## 4.2 Accelerating Impact More than a Funder

**Ireland faces an array of opportunities that can be enabled by research and innovation. Research Ireland, as a new agency, must proactively ensure that the nation benefits from our research investment.**

**It is not sufficient to do more of the same. Our purpose is clear: to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system for Ireland. To be successful we must reset our understanding of the role of a research funder, operate differently, and become a development agency for the research and innovation system.**

We will be a strategic leader, partner, and connector, working with the research community, with the public and private sectors, and with wider society, nationally and internationally.

We will build on Ireland’s small economy advantages of agility, flexibility, connectivity, and responsiveness. We will advance the national research and innovation system, underpinning an intensified whole-of-Government approach, to achieve innovation objectives (e.g., as per *the Draghi Report on EU Competitiveness*) and deliver greater benefit for Ireland.

Success requires close collaboration and partnership with HEIs, industry, start-ups, investors, entrepreneurs, enterprise and funding agencies, policymakers, the arts and culture sector, and civil society.

We will build strategic and collaborative relationships and connect the public and private sectors to Ireland’s best researchers at scale and with a shared purpose.

We will place particular focus on addressing the opportunities and challenges for Ireland identified in the introduction:

- Connecting our research and innovation systems.
- Starting and scaling Irish companies, while enhancing how we embed FDI.
- Enhancing the balance between public and private investment in research and innovation.
- Growing Ireland’s international reputation and relations.
- Strengthening social cohesion and improving quality of life.





## 4.2.1 Maximising Benefit to Ireland

01

**Attract and Support Excellent Researchers**

02

**Boost the Competitiveness of Ireland's HEIs**

03

**Raise the Global Reputation of Irish Research**

04

**Increase Enterprise Collaboration and Innovation Capacity**

05

**Catalyse Regional Economic Growth**

06

**Strengthen Ireland's Resilience**

07

**Shape Evidence-Informed Public Policy and Practice**

08

**Provide Evidence-based Research and Innovation System Insights**

09

**Enhance Engaged Research to Strengthen Irish Society**

Figure 10: More than a Funder objectives



## 4.2.1 Maximising Benefit to Ireland

01

### Attract and Support Excellent Researchers

We will **partner with** HEIs to support diverse, dynamic research careers and offer an attractive environment for global researchers. This action will ensure Ireland has a globally competitive researcher base, developed locally and recruited internationally, driving economic growth and addressing societal challenges.

02

### Boost the Competitiveness of Ireland's HEIs

Research Ireland will **support** HEIs to implement unique research strategies and deliver research-informed education through strategic investments in researchers, infrastructure, and research management professionals. This will ensure Research Ireland helps HEIs to raise their ambition level and increase focus on research strengths, becoming more internationally competitive.

03

### Raise the Global Reputation of Irish Research

We will **partner with** DFHERIS and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to communicate Ireland's research and innovation offerings internationally, build strong EU and global partnerships, and position Ireland as a trusted destination of choice for research and innovation. These partnerships will progress the *Action Plan on Market Diversification*. These actions will attract excellent researchers and inward investment, enhancing both the competitiveness and global reputation of Ireland's research system.



## 4.2.1 Maximising Benefit to Ireland

04

### Increase Enterprise Collaboration and Innovation Capacity

In partnership with IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, we will **connect** publicly funded research activity and outcomes with businesses, social enterprise, investors, and entrepreneurs to foster competitiveness, boost innovation, and grow private research activity. We will increase the scale of research in academia funded by the private sector, including suggesting adjustments to the R&D tax credit to incentivise this activity. By activating collaboration and cohesion across academia, industry, and the wider innovation system, we will attract and embed inward investment, support indigenous enterprise, deliver talent and skill needs, and collectively build an impact mindset, thus positioning Ireland as a global leader in research-driven innovation for both economic and societal benefit.

05

### Catalyse Regional Economic Growth

Develop programmes (e.g., the ARC Hub programme) that **link** regional research and economic specialisms, building domain- and location-specific systems, driving regional innovation, economic growth, and the creation of high-value jobs. In close partnership with the Technological Universities and universities in the regions, we will build research and innovation capacity and capability in specific regions, building on concepts from place-based research. We will achieve this growth in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

06

### Strengthen Ireland's Resilience

We will **build** research capability to respond to pressing challenges now and into the future, such as climate, housing, public infrastructure, transport, public health, public trust, cybersecurity, and emerging national and global priorities and risks. We will also build capacity in future-facing areas such as AI and quantum technology, and within sectors such as the creative industries, bioeconomy, and life sciences.



## 4.2.1 Maximising Benefit to Ireland

07

### Shape Evidence-Informed Public Policy and Practice

We will **serve** all of Government to derive greater policy and practice impact from the research system, working with and learning from the several sectors who exemplify best practice in this space. We will be a trusted advisor to DFHERIS, other Government Departments, and the Government Science Advisor by embedding research into policymaking and supporting the development of a more innovative public sector. We will work with individual Government Departments to support and facilitate their research ambition.

We will do this work by providing supports and brokering connections between Government, policy practitioners, end-users, and the research community.

08

### Provide Evidence-based Research and Innovation System Insights

We will **create** a meta-research unit within Research Ireland to provide a national policy intelligence function and a “strategic brain” for Ireland. Through strategic collaboration across the system and international benchmarking and evidence gathering, we will support Ireland to right-size its investment in research to remain a globally competitive economy with a high quality of life. The congruence of research metadata, AI tools, and patent metadata all provide a tremendous opportunity for Ireland. We will accurately broker new partnerships and make connections, leveraging meta-research to increase the impact of our funded portfolio, strengthen the delivery of our services, and better match our offerings to the needs of the research community.

09

### Enhance Engaged Research to Strengthen Irish Society

Research Ireland will reimagine how our funded research engages with the public, to **strengthen** Irish society. We will enhance public engagement to include engaged research, which will grow public trust in research and demonstrate its value in everyday life as well as increase the relevance and impact of the research itself. This trust will challenge misinformation and contribute to greater social cohesion and resilience.



## 4.2.2 Partnerships

**To implement a partnership-orientated approach, and work directly with Ireland’s research and innovation system, Research Ireland will engage in proactive consultation with our stakeholders on an ongoing basis.**

To support this increased level of consultation, we will establish a new council, in line with the legislation, to assist and advise the agency and the Board.<sup>17</sup> This council will operate in conjunction with a network of key stakeholders across academia, industry, and civil society.

The intent of the council is to ensure that: Research Ireland is connected to and listening to its stakeholders; is proactively shaping calls and strategies to maximise impact; and is partnering effectively. The council will be advisory but will provide a mechanism for ongoing feedback, promote a culture of continuous improvement, and ensure regular and informed discussions.

The council will provide constructive advice as to how Research Ireland, in context, and with constraints, can best serve Ireland and the research community. In addition, the council will help Research Ireland understand the role of research in enabling enhanced competitiveness, and how our funding calls and initiatives can support enhanced translational research and talent development for all routes to impact.

**Advisory Council:** The council will be comprised of a range of stakeholders including:

- Diverse researchers by field, stage, and institution, including international researchers.
- Representatives from FDI and Irish enterprise (including social enterprise).
- Entrepreneurs and venture capital investors.
- Policy practitioners, and representatives from the cultural and civil communities.



In addition to the advisory council, we commit to strong cooperation and collaboration with relevant Government Departments and Agencies. Through leadership and collaboration, Research Ireland will establish more formal and regular engagement and partnership mechanisms with the main research and innovation funders in Ireland. We will identify areas of opportunity to work together on funding partnerships and complementary initiatives as well as system-wide improvements.

We particularly recognise the importance of the relationships between Research Ireland, DFHERIS, and relevant Government Departments and Agencies, including other research and innovation funders.

- **DFHERIS:** We will collaborate closely with DFHERIS on numerous actions, playing a leading role in implementing DFHERIS's Statement of Strategy, *Impact 2030*, and working across all of Government. Examples include collaboration on European Research Area actions, research security (with the HEA), and provision of research infrastructure.

- **HEA:** We commit to constructive engagement and a positive collaborative working relationship targeting, *inter alia*: all-island research; the renewal of Ireland's research infrastructure; communicating the importance of research; and sharing data and statistics on research and innovation system performance.

- **Enterprise Ireland:** We will work collaboratively to use research and innovation to strengthen productivity, competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability of Irish companies, and to jointly build a strong pipeline of scalable spin-outs from research.

- **IDA Ireland:** We will use research and innovation to strengthen long-term inward investment, scale cutting-edge private sector innovation, and grow public-private research partnerships.







## 4.3 Connecting Internationally

Strong international visibility, partnerships, and connectivity are critical in attracting people, companies, funding, and investment to Ireland. A changing global geopolitical climate and the noticeable escalating importance of research cooperation across the EU and worldwide, require Research Ireland to create new global connections and to deepen existing partnerships. We will showcase Ireland's excellent talent and research base internationally, and identify new national and European strategic opportunities for Ireland, building on existing strengths. This will advance Ireland's global reputation as a leading destination for research and innovation.

**Our International Strategy is built around five pillars:**

- Europe
- International Partnerships
- International Recruitment
- Trade and Research Diplomacy
- Mobility

### 01

**Europe:** Research Ireland will be a launchpad for success in Europe. We will work with the research and innovation community to optimise the drawdown of European Framework Programme funding under the current Horizon Europe programme, and its successor from 2028 onwards, and will look to increase Ireland's competitiveness for such funding.<sup>18</sup> Under Horizon Europe, Research Ireland has the opportunity to lead on national success within the Excellent Science pillar, particularly the European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), and support access to International Research Organisations. Where warranted, we will collaborate across Europe to provide the required scale for excellent research.

We will engage with Enterprise Ireland and relevant Horizon Europe programmes to obtain increased support to enable the effective translation of our funded research. We will target additional European funding streams to support ambitious new initiatives as achieved previously for the ARC Hubs and the National Challenge Fund.<sup>19</sup> We will participate in multilateral partnerships, growing Ireland's participation and influence within the EU's Research and Innovation landscape and addressing challenges of international importance.



02

**International Partnerships:** Academic and enterprise collaboration and cooperation across national boundaries have become characteristics of today's research and innovation system. The need to create strategic cross-border cooperations is proving even more important for research and innovation communities of smaller countries. Growing the successful relationships and partnerships with Northern Ireland, maintaining our unique relationships with the UK and the US, and building new relationships will all be of importance. For example, the Co-Centres between Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the UK, as well as the long-standing US-Ireland-Northern Ireland research and development partnership programme.<sup>20</sup> We will coordinate regular study visits to ensure that we continue to benchmark our aspirations and structures against best international practice.

03

**International Recruitment:** We will recruit globally competitive researchers at all career stages to Ireland, using programmes such as Global Talent Ireland, and an evolved international recruitment programme.<sup>21</sup> Through targeted outreach and strategic communications, we will promote Ireland as a leading destination for globally competitive research.

04

**Trade and Research Diplomacy:** Science and research play an important role in Ireland's market diversification. In accordance with the national strategies *Government Action Plan on Market Diversification* and *Global Citizens 2030*, we will utilise research and innovation to support the growth of Ireland's market. This work will include the potential to co-locate Research Ireland staff in key international locations and identifying opportunities for partnership between large-scale Research Ireland grants and international counterparts. Research Ireland also envisages research as an excellent tool for building new connections and relationships with countries with which we are aspiring to establish deeper connections. We will work across Government and key agencies to align and to identify key opportunities.

05

**Mobility:** International researcher mobility, placements, and secondments enhance the skills, networks, and career opportunities of researchers based in Ireland. This work will allow researchers based in Ireland to visit other researchers overseas and to also bring international researchers to Ireland for research visits, bringing deep subject expertise to Ireland.





## 4.4 Implementation

### 4.4.1 Outstanding Organisation

**At Research Ireland, our team is central to delivering on our ambition to develop an internationally renowned research and innovation system. As we work to fund excellent talent across the national research landscape, we are equally committed to investing in the Research Ireland team – supporting their growth, wellbeing, and professional development.**

By fostering a collaborative, inclusive, agile, and high-performing culture, we empower staff to work in partnership with the wider research system, drive enterprise collaboration, and enhance Ireland’s innovation capacity. To further support our people and our mission, we will develop an operating model that will enable our staff to thrive and adapt to emerging challenges. Our people are not only stewards of the strategy – they are catalysts of its success, driving innovation, cohesion, and impact at all levels.

**We will place a particular focus on staff:**

- Working more closely with Government Departments and supporting them to deliver their research and policy needs.
- Enhancing strategic engagement with the HEA and the HEIs to deliver the research and innovation agenda for the country.

- Building direct and stronger relationships with industry, investors, and other state agencies (e.g., Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, other research funders) to enhance public-private partnerships, support indigenous business, increase FDI, and ensure a continuum of support from early-stage fundamental research to market.
- Proactively working with researchers and programmes of scale, partnering to maximise impact, before, during, and after the award of funding.
- Utilising internal data, expertise, and technologies (e.g., responsible AI) to identify and amplify opportunities and synergies within and between our portfolio and to provide insights for future activities, maximising efficiencies and impact.

This new direction will empower Research Ireland staff, increase their visibility, capacity and capability, and add value to the research and innovation system, ultimately maximising the impact of the research we fund.

Through an internal “People Plan”, we will work with staff to co-develop and embed shared values, culture, and new efficient, effective, dynamic, and innovative ways of working.

We will seek efficiencies and streamline operations to maximise Research Ireland’s potential, utilising technology, including responsible AI, to modernise processes and accelerate operations.



## 4.4.2 Measuring Success

This ambitious strategy will be implemented over the years 2026–2030. While many actions will commence immediately, some of the actions will start later in the life of the strategy.

Research Ireland will monitor strategic implementation and performance through:

- **Key Performance Indicators:** Associated with each impact theme above and monitored twice a year.
- **Annual Reporting:** Transparent performance and outcome tracking.
- **Performance improvement:**

- We will carry out a review of the Agency midway through the five-year cycle to ensure we continue to operate as an organisation that benchmarks against best international standards and is recognised as a thought leader by peer organisations.
- We commit to regularly and independently reviewing our funding programmes, assessing their impact and modifying them to maximise impact.
- We commit to carrying out a full economic impact study of our research investment.
- We will embed evaluation and impact thinking as a key feature of our operating model, beginning at programme initiation.



5.0

# Appendix



## 5.0 Appendix

# Key National and International Strategies and Plans

### National Government Strategies

[Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity](#)

[Climate Action Plan](#)

[DFHERIS Statement of Strategy 2026-2030](#)

[Global Citizens 2030 – Ireland’s Talent and Innovation Strategy](#)

[Government Action Plan on Market Diversification](#)

[Impact 2030 – Ireland’s Research and Innovation Strategy](#)

[National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028](#)

[National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)

[Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025](#)

[Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework](#)

[National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027](#)

[National Risk Assessment 2024](#)

[Shared Island Initiative](#)

[White Paper on Enterprise 2022-2030](#)

### Government Sectoral Strategies

[Ireland’s National AI Strategy AI – Here for Good Refresh 2024](#)

[Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030](#)

[Food Vision 2030 – A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems](#)

[Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland](#)

### Framework

[Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland](#)

[Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025](#)

[Mental Health Research Strategy](#)

[Powering Prosperity – Ireland’s Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy](#)

[Quantum 2030 – A National Quantum Technologies Strategy for Ireland](#)

[Silicon Island: Ireland’s National Semiconductor Strategy](#)

[Zero Tolerance: Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2022-2026](#)



## 5.0 Appendix

# Key National and International Strategies and Plans

### Other Agencies

[Enterprise Ireland – Delivering for Ireland, Leading Globally Strategy 2025–2029](#)

[HEA Corporate Strategic Plan 2023–2026](#)

[IDA Ireland – Adapt Intelligently: A Strategy for Sustainable Growth and Innovation 2025–2029](#)

### Research Ireland

[Climate Action Strategy 2024–2027](#)

[External Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy 2023–2028](#)

[Research and Innovation Act 2024](#)

### EU/International

[European Research Area](#)

[Horizon Europe, Next Framework Programme \(FP10\)](#)

[The Draghi Report on EU Competitiveness](#)

### Other

[Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment](#)

[National Action Plan for Open Research](#)

[San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#)

[The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#)



## 5.1 Appendix

### Programme Offering (Indicative)

This section includes potential core programmes and initiatives for further consideration by Research Ireland. A broad range of ideas emerged from the Research Ireland Consultation; these ideas are subject to further exploration, analysis, consultation, and funding. An indicative sample is provided here. Several initiatives span more than one impact theme, but for illustrative purposes have been assigned to one category. All programme names are subject to rebranding and programme evolution.

Impact Theme	Core Programme			
<b>Talent</b>	PhD Programmes (annual)	Investigators-led Programmes (annual)	Research Infrastructure (regular)	International Recruitment (regular)
<b>Economy</b>	Research Centres (every 4 years)	Industry Partnerships (regular)	Entrepreneurship / Commercialisation (regular)	
<b>Society</b>	Research for Policy (regular)	Engaged Research (annual)		



## 5.1 Appendix

### Programme Offering (Indicative)

Impact Theme	Core Programme	Opportunity for Enhanced Impact	Potential New Initiative*	Targeted Benefits
<p><b>Talent</b></p>	<p>PhD Programmes (annual)</p>	<p>Grow the national talent base, increasing success in Horizon Europe’s excellence pillar.</p>	<p>ERC Amplification</p>	<p>By supporting excellent ERC applications that are not funded due to available budget we can reduce load on peer reviewers and encourage more ERC applications.</p>
	<p>Investigators Programme (annual)</p>	<p>Enhance research connectivity and collaboration with core stakeholders, driving societal impact and knowledge transfer.</p>	<p>Professor of Practice Programme</p>	<p>Through a new Professor of Practice Programme, we can enhance the flow of people from different sectors, e.g. culture, business, and investment sectors, to our higher education research community.</p>
	<p>Research Infrastructure (regular)</p>	<p>Grow transferrable skills / T-shaped PhDs, supporting knowledge transfer.</p>	<p>PhD+1 Placement Model</p>	<p>By funding an additional PhD year, we can enhance the transfer of both ideas and people to industry, public policy, or civil society.</p>
	<p>International Recruitment (regular)</p>	<p>Step change in research infrastructure provision.</p>	<p>Inspire Research Infrastructure Programme (with DFHERIS &amp; HEA)</p>	<p>Improve funding of research infrastructure at multiple scales, to facilitate globally competitive research.</p>
	<p>Scale research and innovation networks, boosting discipline related innovation and researcher careers.</p>	<p>Researcher Networks</p>	<p>Activation of the research community through alignment behind co-created agendas.</p>	

\* A broad range of ideas emerged from the Research Ireland Consultation; these ideas continue to be explored. Only a sample is provided here. Several initiatives span more than one impact theme.



## 5.1 Appendix

## Programme Offering (Indicative)

Impact Theme	Core Programme	Opportunity for Enhanced Impact	Potential New Initiative*	Targeted Benefits
<p><b>Economy</b></p>	<p>Research Centres (every 4 years)</p>	<p>Drive company creation and deal flow for future venture capital investment, increasing number of investible spin-outs.</p>	<p>National Spin-out Activation Programme</p>	<p>By establishing a national spin-out accelerator, we can provide a central best-in-class support system to entrepreneurial researchers.</p>
	<p>Industry Partnerships (regular)</p>	<p>Support large-scale public private research and innovation partnership at internationally transformative scale, embedding FDI over the long-term and increasing inward investment.</p>	<p>Enterprise Agency Partnership at Scale</p>	<p>Through partnership with IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, we can enable a collective streamlined approach to industry to provide a holistic research and innovation offering.</p>
	<p>Entrepreneurship/ Commercialisation (regular)</p>	<p>Provide different forms of research capacity, competence, research translation capability, driving impact at international scale.</p>	<p>Independent RPO</p>	<p>By exploring the merits of an independent research-performing organisation, we can ensure the right mix of research and innovation provision is available to deliver optimal impacts for Ireland.</p>

\* A broad range of ideas emerged from the Research Ireland Consultation; these ideas continue to be explored. Only a sample is provided here. Several initiatives span more than one impact theme.



## 5.1 Appendix

### Programme Offering (Indicative)

Impact Theme	Core Programme	Opportunity for Enhanced Impact	Potential New Initiative*	Targeted Benefits
<div style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Society</div>	<p>Research for Policy (regular)</p>	<p>Bring international good practice (e.g., DARPA, SPRIND, and ARIA) to bear on mission driven research at scale, improving policymaking and Irish society</p>	<p>Mission-driven Approaches at Scale</p>	<p>Create new models of research investment targeted on opportunities that can elevate economic and societal opportunity for Ireland.</p>
	<p>Engaged Research (annual)</p>	<p>Develop insights on the public research and innovation system to identify national strengths and to align our investment with national priorities, driving responsive and agile strategic decision making, identifying national strengths, improving investment decisions, and increasing and improving brokerage.</p>	<p>Meta-Research Fund</p>	<p>Using our research data, we can determine new insights on Ireland’s research and innovation strengths that can help design and enable new programmes and calls.</p>
		<p>Develop an appropriate model for, and fund, a larger scale AHSS-led Centre/ initiative, developing collaborative scale in this sector, maximising societal and cultural impact for Ireland and internationally.</p>	<p>AHSS-led Initiative of Scale</p>	<p>An AHSS-led initiative can help connect our AHSS community across multiple institutions and disciplines, with the public and wider stakeholders in the Research and Innovation system, providing the critical mass and resources that can help enable improved collective impact from this community.</p>

\* A broad range of ideas emerged from the Research Ireland Consultation; these ideas continue to be explored. Only a sample is provided here. Several initiatives span more than one impact theme.



## 5.1 Appendix

### Programme Offering (Indicative)

Impact Theme	Core Programme	Opportunity for Enhanced Impact	Potential New Initiative*	Targeted Benefits
 <p><b>Society</b></p>	<p>Research for Policy (regular)</p>	<p>Targeted impact supports for the most successful and relevant projects is a highly efficient approach to supporting impact realisation.</p>	<p>Dissemination Fund</p>	<p>Will encompass knowledge transfer, social enterprise commercialisation, synthesis for policy purposes, spin-out generation, and overall communication of findings. Exploring complementarity and avoiding duplication with partners such as Enterprise Ireland initiatives.</p>
	<p>Engaged Research (annual)</p>	<p>Prioritise and support Green Research Practices across all publicly funded research environments nationally via institutional-scale progress on sustainable certification, accelerating progress, identifying commercial opportunities, and creating a sustainable research sector.</p>	<p>Greening Research Fund</p>	<p>Research Ireland can lead in ensuring our research practices are aligned and internationally leading to ensure environmental sustainability of the sector.</p>

\* A broad range of ideas emerged from the Research Ireland Consultation; these ideas continue to be explored. Only a sample is provided here. Several initiatives span more than one impact theme.



## 5.2 Appendix

### Step Change in the Irish Research and Development system in the last 20 years

Table of information for Figure 2.  
Data reflect annual outputs

	Area	Metric	Then	Now
	Research Quality	Publications in top 10% (per million population)	126	653
	Investment in R&D	Gross Expenditure on Research & Development (million euro)	1,176	8,099
	Academic-Industry Collaboration	Publications with academic-corporate collaborations (per million of population)	35	282
	Academic R&D funded by Industry	Business investment in Higher Education R&D (million euro)	22	44
	PhDs to Industry	PhD qualified researchers employed in business sector	370	1,160
	Policy citing Academia	Policy documents citing scholarly publications from Ireland	103	7,223



## 5.3 Appendix

### List of Abbreviations

**AHSS:** Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

**AI:** Artificial Intelligence

**ARC:** Advanced Research and Commercialisation

**ARIA:** Advanced Research and Invention Agency

**BERD:** Business Expenditure on Research and Development

**CeADAR:** Centre for AI and Applied Data Analytics

**DARPA:** Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

**DETE:** Department of Enterprise, Tourism, and Employment

**DFAT:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**DFHERIS:** Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

**EDI:** Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

**EIC:** European Innovation Council

**ERC:** European Research Council

**EU:** European Union

**EUR:** Euro

**FDI:** Foreign Direct Investment

**GERD:** Government Expenditure on Research and Development

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product

**HEA:** Higher Education Authority

**HEIs:** Higher Education Institutions <sup>22</sup>

**HERD:** Higher-Education Expenditure on Research and Development

**IDA Ireland:** Industrial Development Authority

**IRC:** Irish Research Council

**KPI:** Key Performance Indicator

**MNCs:** Multinational Corporations

**MOU:** Memorandum of Understanding

**MSCA:** Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

**MTU:** Munster Technological University

**NIBRT:** National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training

**NFQ:** National Framework of Qualifications

**NGOs:** Non-Governmental Organisations

**PhD:** Doctor of Philosophy

**PRTL:** Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions

**R&D:** Research and Development

**RD:** Research, Development, and Innovation

**R&I:** Research and Innovation

**SFI:** Science Foundation Ireland

**SMEs:** Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

**SPRIND:** German Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation

**SSPC:** Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre

**STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

**TCD:** Trinity College Dublin

**TU:** Technological University

**UCC:** University College Cork

**UCD:** University College Dublin

**UL:** University of Limerick



## 5.4 Appendix

## References

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## 5.5 Appendix

### Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Research Ireland recognises that equality and human rights are central to our service, as per the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. We will:

- **Assess** – Carryout an assessment of equality and human rights issues, relevant to our functions.
- **Address** – Identify the actions/policies/plans we propose to take to address the equality and human rights issues identified during the assessment.

These activities will be done in consideration of stakeholders leading applications for Research Ireland grants, primarily in the context of Research Ireland’s forthcoming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. The activities will also encompass Research Ireland staff.

