



UK Science
& Innovation
Network



UK Science & Innovation Network Country Summary

Ireland

1. Science and Innovation Landscape

Quality of Research and Innovation

Ireland has transformed itself over the past 40 years into one of Europe's top innovation nations. Ireland is currently 1st in the world for knowledge diffusion, 3rd for knowledge impact, 6th for university-industry R&D collaboration, 7th most innovative country in the EU and 15th in the world, and 15th in the global scientific ranking for overall quality of scientific research.¹ In terms of global thematic performance, Ireland ranks , 2nd for Agricultural Sciences, 4th for Immunology, 4th for Neuroscience and Behaviour, 6th for Microbiology and 7th for Pharmacology and Toxicology.² Several Irish-based agriculture scientists and immunologists feature in the 2020 Web of Science list of Highly Cited Researchers. Ireland had secured €1.06B in funding from Horizon 2020 programmes with a success rate of 15.29% (EU average is 12.09%)³.

Research Strategy

Ireland has a strategic focus on developing its research ecosystem and sees it as an integral part of Ireland's offer to attract foreign direct investment and to ensure a prosperous and stable economy and society. Ireland strives to become a Global Innovation Leader in research areas of strategic importance and seeks to facilitate, develop and exploit global research cooperation. Ireland aims to be at the cutting edge of new technologies, particularly in the realms of emissions reductions and digitisation. By Eurostat ranking, Ireland is the most research and innovation (R&I) efficient country in Europe^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}.

Government funding for research and innovation R&I programmes in the higher education sector is mainly administered by the Government Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Higher Education

¹ [SFI Annual Report 2022](#)

² [SFI Annual Report 2022](#)

³ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/0c8af38b-b73c-4da2-ba41-73ea34ab7ac4/state/analysis/select/Country/Ireland:>

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<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/uk-science-and-innovation-network>



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Authority, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)⁴, the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Irish Research Council (IRC).⁵

2. UK- Ireland Partnership on Science, Innovation and Technology

UK-Ireland Science & Innovation Partnerships

There are strong links between Ireland and the UK in research collaboration. The proximity between Ireland and the UK, the history, common language, and similar cultures, have led to decades of UK and Ireland-based researchers entering into fruitful and lasting bilateral scientific collaborations of mutual benefit. **On a research publications basis, the UK is Ireland's most significant collaborator.**⁶

Several bilateral funding partnerships exist between Ireland and the UK. SFI has existing bilateral partnerships with UKRI councils, the Royal Society and Wellcome. These include the EPSRC-SFI Centres for Doctoral Training and individual investigator partnerships, the Royal Society - SFI University Research Fellowships fund, and Wellcome – SFI-HRB biomedical and clinical research programme. The US-Ireland Programme is a tri-jurisdictional programme linking researchers in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the USA at an individual or Centre to Centre collaborative level. SFI also funds joint Research Professorship appointments between a UK and an Irish University. The IRC has bilateral partnerships with UKRI councils including the AHRC and ESRC.

A significant and novel funding partnership was agreed between the Ireland, GB and Northern Ireland in 2023. The Co-Centres programme will deliver two virtual research centres in climate and sustainable food systems over 6 years, with joint funding of £60million.

3. SIN Contact

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⁴ In 2023, Research Minister announced that the funding bodies SFI and IRC would merge in 2024 to become Research Ireland.

⁵ Additional State R&I funding is administered through Enterprise Ireland, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency, Teagasc, the Marine Institute and IDA Ireland.

⁶ [SFI Annual Report 2022](#).



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