



**RESEARCH  
INTEGRITY**  
NATIONAL  
FORUM

# The Irish National Research Integrity Forum

A National Approach to Responsible  
Conduct of Research

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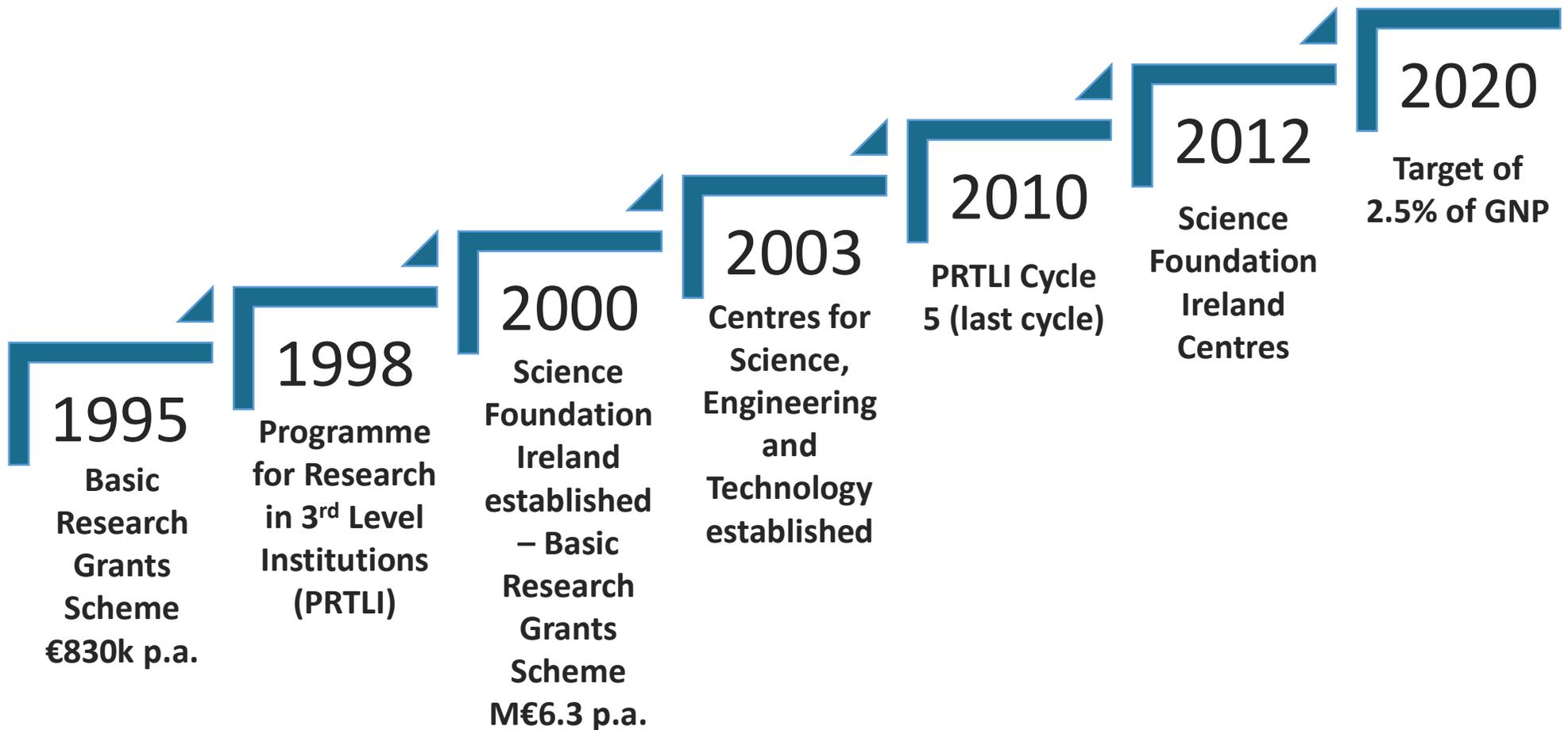
PRINTEGER Conference  
Bonn, Germany  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2018

# R&I in Ireland



- Ireland is a small EU-MS with a population of 4.76M
- Publically-funded research activity is concentrated within the 25 Higher Education Institutes and two specialist state research performing organisations (Agriculture and Marine Research)
- Six main funding agencies
- EU Innovation Scoreboard 2017 classifies Ireland as a Strong Innovator, leading in:
  - Innovation in SMEs
  - Employment impacts of innovation
- Accords with government policy to invest in research for economic and societal benefit
  - Increased focus on supporting research activities in industry – often collaborative with higher education

# Research System Development in Ireland



# Starting a Dialogue About Research Integrity



- 2010: Royal Irish Academy publication “Ensuring Integrity in Irish Research” – outcome of a policy workshop
- 2011: IUA established a **working group** of funders, research performing organisations (RPOs) and stakeholders
  - Led by Professor Ray O’Neill, Maynooth University
- 2014: Launched the “**National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**” in June 2014
  - OECD misconduct definitions
  - Aligned with European RI Code



<http://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland-2014.pdf>

# National Research Integrity Forum



## Established June 2015

- Chaired by Professor Anita Maguire, University College Cork
- Deputy Chair Dr. Jennifer Brennan, Technological Higher Education Association
- Funders, research performers and stakeholder organisations
- Voluntary body

## December 2015

- Tasked with responsibility for research integrity in Irish Government R&I strategy 'Innovation 2020'
- Report annually to Innovation 2020 Action Group



<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Innovation-2020-Progress-Reports.html>



# Main Responsibilities



4. Supporting the **development and roll-out of research integrity training** programmes for staff and students in the research performers;
5. Monitoring **international developments and policy** in the area of research integrity, and making appropriate recommendations for adjustments in research integrity policy and practice in Ireland;
6. Communicating the **importance of research integrity** to the Irish research community and to the general public.



# Solutions



- Devising and publishing clear **Terms of Reference** for the Forum, i.e., what we “do” and “don’t do”
- Establishing two sub-groups:
  1. **Implementation Sub-Group** (RPOs only) – a good place for an open discussion between RPOs and agreement on issues before discussion at the RI Forum. RPOs who had advanced their RI procedures shared their knowledge with all RPOs. Continuous process – lessons learned from cases are feeding back into the Forum’s knowledge
  2. **Funders Sub-Group** – harmonising RI clauses in funders T&Cs and call documents

# Solutions



- The Forum has worked through a series of **Position Papers**:
  1. Research Ethics & Research Integrity Overlap
  2. Research Integrity Officer Role and Reporting Structure
  3. RI Statistics format for publication
  4. Guidelines for the Investigation of Research Misconduct
- Many of the RPOs have joined the **UK Research Integrity Office**
- **Reporting**: A consolidated national report of research misconduct investigations will be published annually by the Forum



# Awareness-Raising

- The Forum hosted its inaugural national event on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017
- Fully booked (130 attendees)
- Keynote Speakers:
  - Prof. Nick Steneck, University of Michigan
  - James Parry, UK Research Integrity Office
- Training event for RIOs on the preceding day
- Event on RI and Open Research planned for autumn 2018



<http://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Forum-on-Research-Integrity-Seminar-Report-Feb-2017-web-version.pdf>

# Future Work



- Revising our **National Policy Statement** on RI in accordance with the European Code of Conduct on Research Integrity
- Publishing the first **national statistics report** on research misconduct investigations – a major step forward in transparency
- Monitoring the **impact of the online RI training** now available to all research performing organisations
- Examining the interface between RI and **Open Research**
- Supporting the reinforcement of robust **Conflicts of Interest** policies with respect to research
- Establishing **appropriate methods** to assure research funders and regulatory agencies that policies and procedures to support RCR are in place in the research performing organisations

# Challenges



## 1. Resourcing and supporting Research Integrity Officers

- Defining the role of RIO and ensuring that they engage as a peer group
- Recognising that RIOs will come and go, a continuing layer of senior admin support in RPOs is essential to retain institutional learning

## 2. Ongoing debate on the “**carrot vs. stick**” approach to creating a culture of RRI in Ireland.

- e.g. “carrot” = funders making RI training mandatory for all awardees and including a mandatory section on RI in proposals.
- e.g. “stick” = funders auditing research projects to identify breaches of integrity



# Conclusions



- Ireland is at an early stage in terms of a national approach to RI, but we have made substantial progress
- The National RI Forum is driving that progress, inspired by the desire to make Ireland an exemplar of Responsible Conduct of Research
- Government buy-in in terms of the Innovation 2020 Actions tasked to the Forum is a key enabler
- In many cases, advancing a national approach is not about “reinventing the wheel” but about enhancing what is already in place locally
- The Forum is an exemplar of research performers, funder and other stakeholders working together to advance a common goal

