Research System Development in Ireland

1995

Basic Research Grants Scheme €830k p.a.

1998

Programme for Research in 3rd Level Institutions (PRTLI)

2000

Science Foundation Ireland established – Basic Research Grants Scheme M€6.3 p.a.

2003

Centres for Science, Engineering and Technology established

2006

PRTLI Cycle 5 (last cycle)

2020

Target of 2.5% of GNP
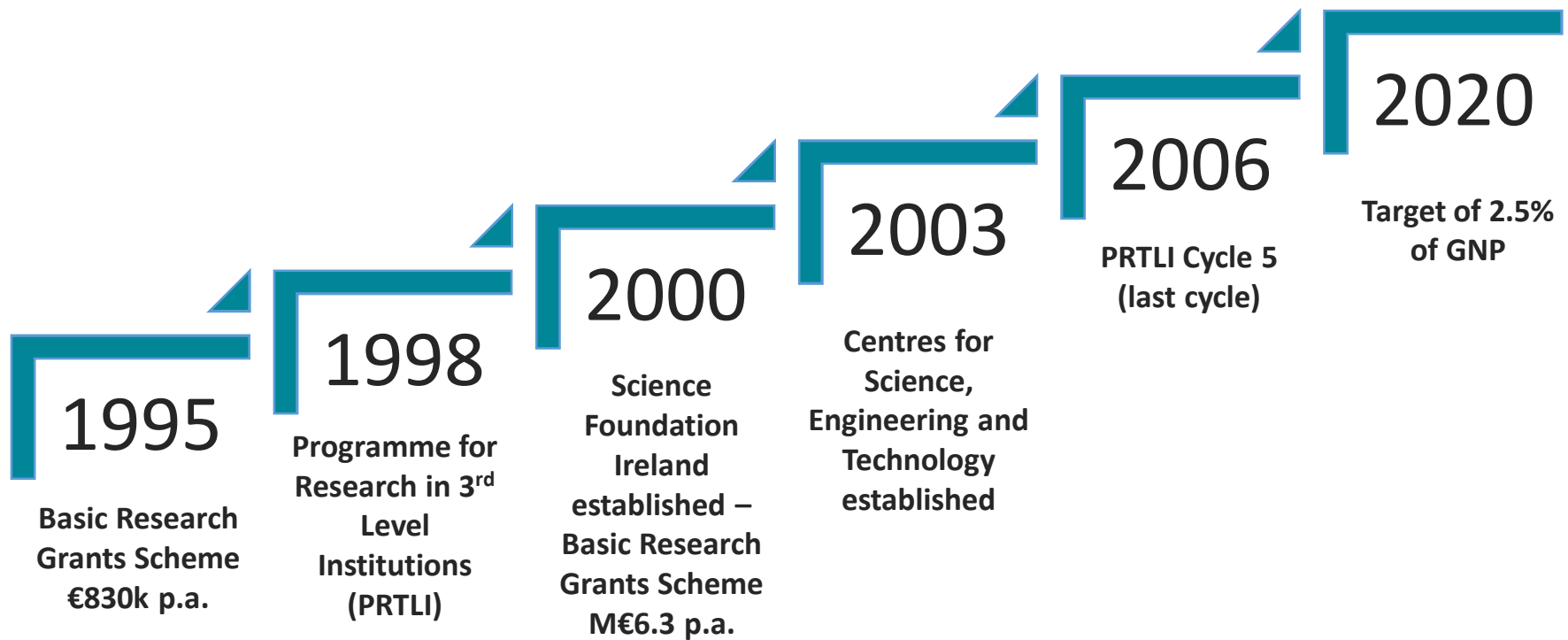
Growth in Research Impact

Impact 5 Year trends
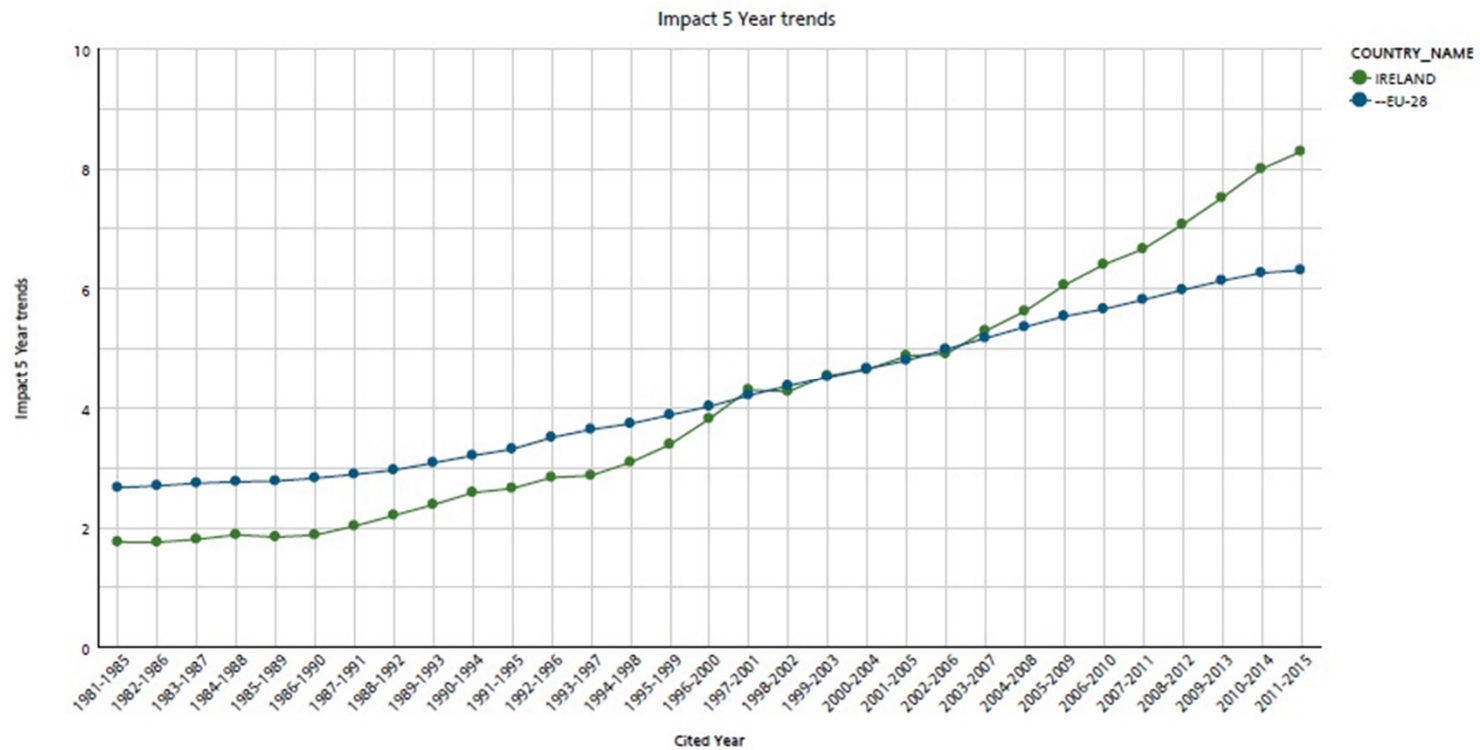
Starting a dialogue about Research Integrity

- 2010 Royal Irish Academy publication "Ensuring Integrity in Irish Research" – outcome of a policy workshop hosted by Irish Universities Association (IUA), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Health Research Board (HRB)
- 2011: IUA established a working group of funders, research performing organisations (RPOs) and stakeholders
- Led by Professor Ray O'Neill, Maynooth University
- Launched the "National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland" in June 2014

http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/research-integrity/

National Forum on Research Integrity

Established June 2015

- Chaired by Professor Anita Maguire, University College Cork
- Coordinated by IUA – Dr. Jennifer Brennan
- Funders, RPOs and stakeholder organisations

December 2015

- Tasked with responsibility for research integrity in Irish Government R&I strategy 'Innovation 2020'

Main Responsibilities

- Supporting the implementation of research integrity policies and processes in a harmonised manner across the research performers;
- Supporting national research funders in implementing harmonised research integrity statements in grant conditions and associated audit processes;
- Agreeing a process and format for the public dissemination of the outcome of research integrity investigations having regard to existing regulations relating to misconduct and discipline in the research-performing organisations, and the Terms and Conditions of grants awarded by the research funding organisations;
- Supporting the development and roll-out of research integrity training programmes for staff and students in the research performers;
- 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;
- Communicating the importance of research integrity to the Irish research community and to the general public.

Early Lessons

- Different expectations & levels of engagement around the table
- Making clear that the Forum is only for oversight and guidance – the RPOs are responsible and autonomous
- Lack of clarity around the interface between research ethics & research integrity
- Different ideas about what the role of Research Integrity Officer is and what type of person should take it on *i.e.* academic or management staff
- Making it clear that the Forum is not a place to discuss individual cases of misconduct

Solutions

- Devising and publishing clear Terms of Reference for the Forum
- Establishing two sub-groups:
  1. Funders Sub-Group – harmonising RI clauses in funders T&Cs and call documents
  2. 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
- RI 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 UKRIO
- Innovation 2020 as a driver for change

Training

- National Policy Statement emphasises that training should be put in place for students and staff from undergraduate to Professor level – affirmed in Innovation 2020
- Existing RI training on offer in small number of RPOs
- Looking to funders to encourage take-up of training by linking it to eligibility for funding
- Good Practice Case – Dublin City University – Blended Approach
  - Online RI training module – tailored content for five broad research domains
  - Followed up by in-person workshop
  - Mandatory for all new research students
- Forum wants to put in place online training as a minimum for all RPOs for all new research students and gradually phasing in to research and academic staff (incentivised *via* promotions and appraisal)
- Negotiating with an online provider and have secured a discount - challenge now is to fund it considering the overall financial environment in the RPOs in Ireland

Reporting on misconduct cases

Each RPO will report in confidence to the IUA on an annual basis:

- The number of research misconduct investigations concluded in the calendar year;
- The number of said research misconduct investigations where the allegations were upheld;
- An overview of the types of misconduct (based on the OECD definitions included in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland).

A consolidated report for all RPOs (not broken down by individual RPO) will be published annually on the IUA Research Integrity website

Future Work

- 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
- Next year we host a National Event on Responsible Research and Innovation – not focusing solely on RI.
- Recognising that RIOs will come and go, a continuing layer of senior admin support in RPOs is essential to retain institutional learning
- Monitoring the revision of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – may update our National Policy Statement to reflect any changes

Recent issues under discussion

- What sanctions are applied to PhD Supervisors / Post-doc Mentors where their research team member has been found guilty of research misconduct?
- What can an RPO do when a former employee is under investigation for research misconduct or has been found guilty of it?
- Challenges of interinstitutional research, especially transnational collaboration
- Ongoing challenge of interfacing the research misconduct investigation process with the statutory disciplinary process of the RPO
- Ensuring training is put in place – converting voluntary engagement into mandatory training programmes
- Defining the role of RIO and ensuring that they engage as a peer group
- Different perspectives between funders and RPOs on how to manage the issues

Thank you

http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/research-integrity/