

Research

A Critical National Investment



The Programme for Government 2025 recognises the necessity of increased and sustained research investment, committing to:

“Increasing funding for research which adds value to our economy, grows future jobs, and strengthens our competitiveness.”

In the face of major geopolitical challenges, it is critical for Ireland to invest in the next wave of innovation, ensuring a pipeline of highly skilled talent and world-class research facilities to compete on a global stage. Without such investment, we risk falling further behind our international competitors, jeopardizing economic growth, job creation, and societal progress.



We've done it before!

€1.2 billion was invested in the **Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTL I)**, between 1998 and 2015. PRTL I was transformative, delivering a step-change in Ireland's research capacity and positioning us as a research powerhouse. It attracted billions in follow-on funding from industry, philanthropy, and international funds, including the EU.

But the benefits have run out. Over **one-third (36%) of research equipment is obsolete, and nearly 60% is over a decade old.** Our Government Budget Allocation for R&D (GBARD) stands at just 0.21% of GDP—a fraction of the EU average of 0.73%.

If Ireland is serious about becoming an innovation leader, **we must act now**, taking bold steps to drive technological progress while also tackling critical societal issues.



Why it matters?

Investing in research is a proven success for Ireland, addressing real-life societal problems and laying the foundation for economic success. For example:

Health

In 2023, 990 men in Ireland died from heart attacks. University of Galway researchers are developing wearable and implantable sensors to alert high-risk patients of impending heart attacks.

Housing

In Ireland, there is a growing need for energy efficient homes with cost-effective insulation. Researchers from DCU are taking old clothing made from fossil fuels and turning it into external insulation for houses. This also tackles the need to effectively reuse textile waste, which otherwise ends up in landfill or is incinerated.

Mental Health

With growing concerns about social media's negative impact on young people's body image, Maynooth University's MoreThanASelfie programme, reaching more than 250,000 students, helps boost self-esteem and reduce the risk of eating disorders.



Flooding

The EPA projects a rising risk of river and coastal flooding in the coming decades. UCC researchers use satellite imagery and data analysis to predict floods, providing real-time information for proactive management of extreme weather events.

Energy

In 2020, the transport sector in Ireland accounted for ~20% of greenhouse gas emissions. Researchers at the University of Limerick are advancing next-generation batteries for electric vehicles and large-scale energy storage, advancing a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Water

With increasing boil water notices across the country, TCD's graphene-based filtration technology offers a cost-effective, scalable solution by removing heavy metals, bacteria, and viruses to improve water quality.

Farming

UCD's research on an Irish algal biostimulant reduces chemical fertiliser use by 25% without lowering crop yields, helping protect water quality and support sustainable farming.






We must do it again!

In line with the Programme for Government commitment, we need a **€600 Million Plan** to drive Research and Innovation. The **Research Infrastructure and Talent Development Fund (RITDF)** will fund new equipment and infrastructure and the people to drive the next wave of innovation.

This call to action comes at an important moment as the Government prepares to revise the National Development Plan - the all-of-Government multi-annual plan for capital expenditure.

The RITDF will deliver for Ireland and reinforce our position as a hub for cutting-edge research, world-class education and high-value job creation for the knowledge economy. It will help build our competitiveness to attract global investors in a fiercely competitive era while also driving societal progress and innovation to tackle the pressing global challenges of our time.

Research Infrastructure and Talent Development Fund Summary

	2025 - 2029	Total
 Equipment Renewal	€50 million per year	250 Million
 New Infrastructure	€50 million per year	250 Million
 Talent Excellence	€20 million per year	100 Million
		Total: 600 Million

Return on Investment: A Proven Model for Growth

Investing in research will fuel economic expansion, create thousands of jobs, and support the IDA in attracting FDI.

Ireland has two choices: Invest now in research and innovation to secure Ireland's future as a global leader in the AI / knowledge economy - or fall further behind.

The time for action is now!

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