

## Ireland needs a strategic and focused approach to secure share of €80 billion European research and innovation fund

In a statement published today the Advisory Council for Science Technology and Innovation (ACSTI) has called for a strategic and focused approach to secure a significant share of future European research and innovation funding for Ireland. Negotiations are underway at European level to create a Community Support Framework that will see €85 billion invested in research and innovation from 2014 to 2020.

“This is a new opportunity for Ireland in European fund spending where we can secure a more than proportionate share of the funding” according to ACSTI Chair Dr Tom McCarthy. “Irish researchers have performed well in Framework Programmes to date winning more than the national target and engaging in wide-ranging partnerships and projects” he added.

“Horizon 2020 mirrors many of our national priorities” said Professor Anita Maguire, ACSTI member and Chair of the national consultation on Horizon 2020. “Where national priorities and European priorities match we will find the areas of greatest opportunity. The Government’s Action Plan for Jobs specifically provides a focus on policies to increase the translation of investments in research, development and innovation into job creation, very much in line with the Horizon 2020 objectives. We need, however, to be mindful to ensure that we put in place the supports to enable Irish researchers to fully participate in European research, to secure the best collaborations and maximise grants through Horizon 2020.”

With the aim of strengthening Ireland’s participation in European research, according to national priorities, the Council recommends in its statement, *Playing Our Part in Europe*, that:

- Work should begin soon on developing the right national support structure for Horizon 2020, drawing on the experiences of the research community and the current support structure, to assist and encourage Irish participation.
- There should be a substantial strengthening of support for participation by industry and SMEs, building on the already successful national support for Research for the Benefit of SMEs and drawing on the industrial development bodies and the academic and industrial communities.
- Commitment should be given, at the highest levels, to sustained multi-annual funding for research infrastructure in areas of national importance to enable Ireland to benefit from being a full partner in European Research Infrastructure.
- Measures in Ireland should complement those at European levels in ensuring optimal mobility for researchers in Ireland, both from academia and industry. Any national barriers to mobility should be addressed now.
- The selection process of the European Research Council identifies researchers of the highest excellence but cannot fund all of them. Excellent researchers in Ireland should continue to be supported nationally to keep specific expertise here, to work on areas of national priority and to maintain and reinforce the attractiveness of Ireland for research and technology-based industry alike. A further flexible and rapidly reacting research fund could support Irish researchers to compete for European funding for basic research excellence including the large and prestigious grants awarded by the European Research Council.

ENDS.

*Playing Our Part in Europe* is available at [www.sciencecouncil.ie](http://www.sciencecouncil.ie) and [www.forfas.ie](http://www.forfas.ie) and was informed by the views expressed at the national consultative workshop on Horizon 2020 which the ACSTI held in Dublin in December 2011.

### **About Horizon 2020:**

Horizon 2020 will combine all research and innovation funding currently provided through the Framework Programmes for Research and Technical Development, the innovation related activities of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). It will provide for major simplification through a single set of rules.

The proposed support for research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will:

- Strengthen the EU's position in science with a dedicated budget of € 25 billion. This will provide a boost to top-level research in Europe, including an increase in funding of 77% for the very successful European Research Council (ERC).
- Strengthen industrial leadership in innovation € 18 billion. This includes major investment in key technologies, greater access to capital and support for SMEs.
- Provide € 32 billion to help address major concerns shared by all Europeans such as climate change, developing sustainable transport and mobility, making renewable energy more affordable, ensuring food safety and security, or coping with the challenge of an ageing population.

### **National Research Prioritisation:**

The recently published report from the Research Prioritisation Steering Group, which has been adopted by Government, identifies 14 priority areas that are the focus of future State investment in research and innovation. The priority areas build on existing research strengths and investments and target public investment towards areas which will ensure that Ireland is a top-tier location for knowledge and innovation intensive enterprises and jobs for the future. It also outlines how the priority areas are to be implemented within the wider STI system.

### **About the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation:**

The Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation is the Irish Government's high-level advisory body on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy issues. It serves as the primary interface between stakeholders and policymakers in the STI arena.

The Council's remit is to contribute to the development and delivery of a coherent and effective national strategy for STI and to provide advice to Government on medium and long-term policy for STI and related matters.

### **About Forfás:**

Forfás is Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. It provides independent and rigorous research, advice and support in the areas of enterprise and science policy. This work informs the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation and wider Government. Forfás works with IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland to ensure the coherence of policies across the enterprise development agencies.

Forfás manages the work of and provides research and analytical support to:

- Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
- National Competitiveness Council

Forfás manages the accreditation services of the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) and hosts the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser to Government.