



THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE



ESRI RESEARCH STRATEGY 2008-2013

Research for a Changing Ireland



THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Economic Research Institute was established in 1960 by a group of senior academics and public servants, led by Dr T.K. Whitaker, who identified the need for independent research to support economic policymaking in Ireland. Its remit was later extended to social policy, and hence it became the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Almost 50 years later, the Institute's importance in providing authoritative evidence-based research to inform public policy is widely recognised. This public good role is supported by an annual grant-in-aid from the Department of Finance currently comprising about 30 per cent of the Institute's income. Most of the rest of the funds needed to sustain the research of the ESRI comes from research programmes with government agencies and departments, commissioned research projects and competitive research programmes (e.g., EU Framework programmes, IRCHSS, HRB). Membership subscriptions and sales of publications also contribute.

The ESRI is a company limited by guarantee, and answerable to its subscribing members and governed by a Council made up of interested individuals drawn from the academic, public and private sectors (see Chapter 6 for a list of Council Members). The Institute's constitution stresses its independence and the practice has been to publish all research that reaches an appropriate academic standard.

CONTENTS



Foreword	3
1. Context and Overview	4
2. ESRI's Vision, Mission, Values and High-Level Goals	12
3. Research Goal and Strategies	14
4. Research Programme Areas	20
5. Supporting Goals	30
6. Implementation of Strategy	40
Appendices	42



Since its foundation, the ESRI has played a key role in informing policy debate and has helped to shape and enhance Ireland's economic and social development. The Institute has built up a world-class reputation as a centre of excellence for policy-relevant research in the social sciences. Its independence is widely acknowledged and respected. This is reflected in the extent to which its research informs domestic policymaking, and is used by international commentators and organisations.

From the perspective of the Council, there are four key standards that the Institute must achieve: its research must be relevant to the current challenges facing Ireland; it must commit to the highest academic standards; it must demonstrate academic independence; and it must ensure value for money. One of the major responsibilities of the Council is to ensure that internal systems are in place to guarantee these standards (see Appendix 1).

In today's complex world, our need for research continues to grow, both to inform policy and to ensure that civil society can participate in an informed manner in the democratic process. In mid-2007, the Council determined that it was timely for the ESRI to develop its research plans in an increasingly strategic manner, given recent and anticipated developments in Ireland, including

- significant demographic changes,
- challenges of environmental change,
- development of an all-island economy,
- continuing impact of global integration, and
- increased emphasis on the knowledge society.

The long-term nature of the challenges facing Ireland points to the value of a strategy that

establishes a sustainable research agenda, based on Ireland's research needs in this changing context. Key to the strategy is the identification of the research areas on which the Institute will focus its attention. The choice of areas, contextualised in terms of three national objectives (economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability), recognises the need for specialisation if the Institute is to retain its status as a centre of excellence for social science research. Furthermore, to be able to address certain key policy issues, the Institute must form new relationships with other research groups, and to ensure continued policy relevance, it must form closer working relationships with the policymaking community.

This strategy document sets out the research agenda of the ESRI, together with the associated organisational developments, for the six-year period 2008-2013. In broad terms, the strategy aims to ensure the continual maturing of the ESRI's role in informing debate and policy formulation as Ireland's development proceeds. It is intended that there will be a full review of the plan at the end of the third year, with quarterly reports to the Council on its progress. Stakeholders will be informed of progress on the Institute's website: www.esri.ie.



Mary Finan
Chairman



Frances Ruane
Director



1. CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

NEW CONTEXT FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

The extraordinary transformation of the Irish economy in recent years has changed the context for economic and social research. Prior to the economic boom, the issues and challenges to be addressed were those of a nation lagging behind its neighbours in terms of economic development, with associated consequences for social provision. In that period, ESRI research focused on the key social and economic issues of the time, such as emigration, unemployment, and structural decline in agriculture and protected manufacturing. Starting in the 1980s, the research also drew attention to the growth potential inherent in the economy due to demographic change and increased educational attainment, if macroeconomic stability could be achieved.

Since the late 1990s, the key issues and challenges Ireland faces are those of an advanced economy, although with distinctive features associated with the highly globalised nature of the Irish economy. These changes have already altered the Institute's research agenda, with a shift in focus from, for example, emigration to immigration, from the consequence of unemployment to demands of growing employment (investment in human capital; work-life balance), and from agricultural decline to restructuring into high value-added manufacturing and to internationally traded services. Further development of the Institute's research agenda is needed to ensure its relevance as Ireland faces a new set of interrelated challenges. These challenges, which encompass one or more of the economic, social and environmental domains, include:



- Developing **competitive and innovative enterprises** that can compete in a changing world economy.
- Participating effectively in the **development of EU policies** that will impact on Ireland.
- Responding appropriately to the **environmental targets** set by EU and international agencies and achieving a local environmental quality that meets the standards required by Irish society.
- Realising the full potential of a more **integrated economy** on the island of Ireland.
- Scoping the full implications of a **changing demography** that is set to create a larger and older population.
- Increasing the speed of **transition to a knowledge-based economy and society** as technological change continues to impact on productivity and lifestyles.
- Securing **labour-market flexibility** and **up-skilling programmes** to facilitate the continual structural adjustment required by changing international factors.
- Developing a physical and social infrastructure to facilitate **work-life balance** in the context of a more diverse labour force.
- Targeting and designing our social policies to ensure that the growth in income is accompanied by increased **social inclusion**.
- Ensuring the **efficient delivery of health and educational programmes** appropriate to our new higher level of economic development.
- Meeting the challenges of integrating immigrants and **creating a harmonious, culturally-diverse society**.

These challenges arise primarily from seven change factors, with understanding of the fundamental nature of these change factors informing our research agenda. This agenda is also informed by changes in the policymaking and research environments. We look at each of these change factors in turn.

The Institute's research agenda is changing in response to the new set of interrelated challenges facing Ireland



CHANGE FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE NEW IRELAND

The ESRI's strategy on research for the coming decade is driven by the new issues and problems policymakers will face. While many of the areas where the ESRI is currently making a major contribution will continue to be important for Irish policy, future research must respond to the new economic and social questions facing Ireland.

Change in the International Environment

Since Ireland is one of the most open economies in the world, its policies need to take specific account of the international environment in which it operates. This changing environment involves:

- Increased competition from newly-emerging countries;
- New patterns of international integration;
- Extension of international trade in services;
- New patterns of foreign direct investment and outsourcing; and
- Developments in Ireland's major markets.

Competitiveness and flexibility in all sectors of the economy are key to Ireland's success in responding successfully to these changes.

The next decade is likely to see further economic integration in the EU and the extension of Union-wide policies in areas such as energy and the environment. Ireland will need to participate actively in the formulation of these policies, to ensure that the perspective of small open economies is taken into account. Ireland's own economic and social policies will also have to respond to these changes, both to meet EU requirements and to help achieve its own goals.

Environmental Change

The impact and importance of environmental change have risen dramatically in recent years as concern about global environmental issues, and especially climate change, has increased. In Ireland, rapid economic growth over the last twenty years has caused very substantial growth in greenhouse gas emissions. Our dispersed pattern of physical development also poses problems for energy use and for the environment, including growing congestion in and around Ireland's major urban centres.

- How can higher consumption levels be reconciled with pressures on the environment?
- Will higher incomes see a change in preferences in favour of public policy to promote sustainable development?
- How will EU policies impact on Ireland and what position should Ireland adopt in contributing to the European policy debates on the environment?



Ireland needs to respond appropriately to environmental targets set by EU and international agencies and to achieve a local environmental quality that meets the standards required by Irish Society

Change on the Island of Ireland

The next decades are also likely to see further economic integration on the island of Ireland, with potential benefits of larger scale economies and new opportunities for enterprises on both parts of the island. From a policy perspective, the emerging pattern of relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is likely to raise new issues regarding the extent to which certain policies might take account of all-island dimensions, e.g., hospital provision, research centres, transport infrastructure. Major developments so far include the creation of an all-island energy market and increasing labour market integration.

Demographic Change

The population is ageing rapidly with the average age rising each decade by about a year and a half, due both to the changing structure of the population and increasing life expectancy. This raises medium-term challenges for healthcare and pensions as well as for labour supply. The population is also growing rapidly, which creates new opportunities and challenges for Ireland's infrastructure and planning processes. How do we meet the educational needs of the growing population? How do we design a social and economic infrastructure for a population that could rise to 5 million over the next two decades?

Structural and Institutional Change

Ireland has gone through exceptional structural change over the past four decades, with the shift from low-value added manufacturing into high-tech manufacturing and internationally-traded services. Such structural change is set to continue as the economy seeks to maintain international competitiveness. Maintaining competitiveness will require:

- A wide and fast diffusion of new technologies, especially Information and Communication Technologies (ICT);
- Faster rates of innovation;
- Increased use of Research & Development; and
- Increasing levels of education and skills.

Competitiveness will also require increased efficiency in the delivery of public sector services. Such increased efficiency will emerge in the context of the institutional changes that are taking place in the relationships between the public and private sectors in Ireland.



Immigration has contributed to our economic growth and it has given rise to new social challenges and opportunities

Labour Market Change

The rapid growth in labour force participation and the very high proportion of the population in the working-age group brings a range of new issues to the fore, including:

- Up-skilling of the workforce on a continual basis;
- Flexibility in the types of contracts offered by employers; and
- Social welfare schemes that take account of the growing participation of women in the workforce.

Flexible working arrangements for parents and carers will become important as women account for a growing share of the most highly-educated segment of the population. This is not just a social issue but impacts on the workplace of the future, and emphasises the important interaction between economic and social policies.

Social and Cultural Change

For many years the social consequences of unemployment were reflected in high levels of poverty and income inequality in Ireland. With the decline of unemployment, many problems have disappeared but new social issues are emerging. Ireland is becoming a much more diverse society, with significant rates of immigration. This immigration has contributed to our economic growth over the past decade, and it has also raised social challenges and opportunities with regard to cultural diversity and integration. In addition, while unemployment is much less of a problem now than in the 1980s and 1990s, social exclusion remains a problem in some communities and areas, demanding policies informed by systematic research.

While our current analysis points to these seven factors as the key elements of change facing Ireland, it is not possible to foresee all the social and economic changes that will occur over the coming decade. Furthermore, we recognise that it is in the interaction between these different factors that many specific policy challenges will emerge. While it is important that we plan a research strategy based on present and prospective needs, it is equally important to monitor changes and to build adaptable research capacity to address changing policy agendas and needs, so as to provide state-of-the-art research in a timely manner.



NEW POLICYMAKING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to key economic and social changes, there are developments in the policymaking environment to which the Institute's research strategy should respond:

- The continuing evolution of longer-term planning frameworks, as evident in *Towards 2016* and the *National Development Plan 2007-2013*. These longer-term perspectives suggest that the policymaking community would benefit more from the Institute's pursuing longer-term research programmes rather than short-term projects. These programmes would have the added benefit of ensuring the relevance of the research, and helping to support continuity and team-based research specialisation.
- The growing need for evidence-informed policymaking, a trend that naturally boosts the demand for rigorous empirical research.
- The growing focus of policy on cross-cutting issues and the more precise targeting of policies, as, for example, in the life-cycle approach.
- The increasing recognition of the need to grow analytical capability within government departments and public agencies. This is likely to augment the demands for capacity building through skills transfers as well as collaborative relationships between ESRI researchers and public bodies.

NEW RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The Institute's approach to research needs to respond to the continuing evolution in the social science research environment, both internationally and nationally. International comparability is a major driver of many research programmes, as European economies seek to learn from each other's experiences. This is a key recommendation in the Lisbon Strategy. There is now increased funding for cross-country research, which points to the importance of expanding existing networks and growing new ones.

Nationally, there is increased emphasis on the development of a cooperative environment in research, which points to the benefits of cross-institutional relationships, especially where policy challenges are multi-dimensional. A further argument in favour of cross-institutional links is the new emphasis on investment in postgraduate training in third-level institutions. This relates to the government's wish to expand Ireland's knowledge base and move into the top quartile of OECD countries in terms of research and higher-education metrics. In this context it is timely for the Institute to:

- Explore how it can increase engagement in research projects with relevant researchers in the third-level system;
- Examine how it might contribute to formal training programmes at PhD level and supervision of PhD students;
- Explore further how it can increase cooperation with other Irish institutions that are undertaking policy-related research in order to maximise synergies and minimise duplication.



WHAT DOES THE ESRI DO?

The ESRI produces high-quality research that contributes to understanding economic and social change and that informs public policymaking and civil society in Ireland and throughout the European Union



Research

Since its establishment, ESRI researchers have leveraged their conceptual and empirical research in economics and sociology to contribute high-quality research that informs economic and social policymaking in Ireland. Key features of the research are its strong empirical base, its policy focus and its coverage of many of the major areas of relevance to Irish policy. Since first-rate research requires top quality data, ESRI researchers have also collected primary data for research purposes in Ireland, through state-of-the-art surveys and through the use of administrative records. The Institute's principal output is knowledge that is disseminated widely in books, research papers, journal articles, reports, and public presentations. All knowledge output is quality assured through rigorous peer review processes.



National Research Infrastructure

The ESRI's major contribution to the national research infrastructure is the creation of a centre of excellence for policy-focused research in economics and sociology. It also adds to the national research and policy infrastructure through:

- maintaining and developing economic models;
- maintaining and developing databanks;
- providing expertise on survey research;
- providing specialised library facilities;
- assisting individual academic researchers;
- advising international organisations such as the OECD, the IMF, and the ratings agencies etc.;
- undertaking policy reviews;
- placing data in the national data archive (ISSDA).

International Dissemination of Research

ESRI researchers interact with the international research communities, especially through publications, and through:

- (a) participating in international research networks;
- (b) presenting papers at, and organising international conferences; and
- (c) engaging in academic peer reviewing and editing of journal papers.

These activities enable the Institute to benchmark its work against the highest international academic standards and increase Ireland's visible presence in international academic circles.

National Dissemination of Research

The Institute seeks to communicate its research to diverse institutions, interest groups and individuals in Irish society today. It sees its key national target audiences as:

- (a) public service departments and agencies;
- (b) wider policymaking community;
- (c) civil society; and
- (d) the Irish research community.

To meet the needs of the first two groups, technical reports are prepared that are targeted at policymaking professionals, and the research findings are communicated directly by:

- presenting research findings at seminars and conferences;
- providing briefings to departments, agencies and other key national and visiting international groups;
- participating on national and international advisory committees; and
- commenting on policy initiatives.

To meet the needs of civil society, increasing attention is paid to preparing accessible summaries of publications and to media interactions that ensure the widest possible understanding of the research findings. With regard to the Irish academic community, ESRI researchers engage actively in research collaborations, contribute as appropriate to teaching programmes, and participate in and organise conferences, etc.

A world map is centered on the page, overlaid on a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The map is rendered in a light blue color against a darker blue background. The grid lines are thin and light blue.

2. ESRI'S VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

As part of the strategic process, we have developed our Vision, Mission and Values to ensure that they match our current role in research and policy formation advice. These are set out in this chapter together with the Institute's High-Level Goals. In subsequent chapters we detail our primary goal and the framework in which we enunciate our research strategies, and the two supporting goals which will underpin our research. Further details of the strategic planning process can be found in Appendix 3.

VISION STATEMENT

To be an internationally recognised, independent, multi-disciplinary centre for team-based, policy focused, empirically driven research in the social sciences.

The value of the ESRI's contribution in Ireland is greatly enhanced by its international recognition as a centre of excellence and by the widespread acknowledgement of its independence. External agencies seeking an unbiased view of Ireland by informed researchers turn to the Institute for views that are grounded in empirical research that has, where relevant, a strong multi-disciplinary dimension.

VALUES

The quality of the Institute's work depends on the talent and commitment of its staff, and the appropriateness of the supporting structures. The organisational environment must recognise excellence, support self-development and foster collegiality in all areas. As a body whose funding derives primarily from public institutions, the Institute recognises the importance of demonstrating that it adheres to best practice in delivering its research agenda and provides maximum value for the resources that come indirectly from Irish taxpayers. The key values of the Institute are:

- Quality, professionalism and transparency.
- Academic excellence.
- Independence.
- Integrity and highest standard of ethics.
- Relevance of its research to Ireland's policy agenda.
- Engagement with policymakers regarding evidence and analysis.
- Collegiate practices that promote efficiency and staff well-being.
- Equality of opportunity for the Institute's staff.

MISSION STATEMENT

To produce high-quality research that contributes to understanding economic and social change and that informs public policymaking and civil society in Ireland and throughout the European Union.

Good policymaking, at both national and EU levels, requires rigorous empirical research to inform it, and researchers who engage with the key policy challenges of the day.

HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

The Institute has identified its primary research goal and the two supporting goals that are required to support its achievement.

Primary Goal

To develop and implement a sustainable research agenda that matches closely the key long-term economic and social challenges facing Ireland in the new international context over the next decade.

Supporting Goal 1

To contribute evidence for research and policymaking by developing statistical techniques, conducting surveys, and developing administrative data sets in a manner consistent with the Institute's primary goal.

Supporting Goal 2

To implement organisational and business strategies to support the developing research agenda and to help ensure that ESRI institutional values are sustained.

3. RESEARCH GOAL AND STRATEGIES

Having defined our primary goal in Chapter 2, in this chapter we present our research agenda for the period of the strategy. Developing the research agenda involves embedding our research in the current economic and social policy context, while recognising that policymaking in Ireland takes place in a highly integrated manner. We begin by establishing a research framework, and then outline the rationale for the choice of research programme areas, given the policy context and the potential contribution of the ESRI. We then identify the nine key institutional actions we see as essential to supporting this research agenda.

THE PRIMARY GOAL

To develop and implement a sustainable research agenda that matches closely the key long-term economic and social challenges facing Ireland in the new international context over the next decade

FRAMEWORK FOR EVOLVING THE ESRI RESEARCH AGENDA

Economic and social advancement involves three dimensions:

- **Maintaining economic growth** – which requires the development of a dynamic internationally competitive, knowledge-based economy.
- **Ensuring social progress** – which supports the evolution of a caring, inclusive and integrated society.
- **Securing environmental sustainability** – which involves decoupling economic growth from the pollution of the environment and the degradation of natural resources.

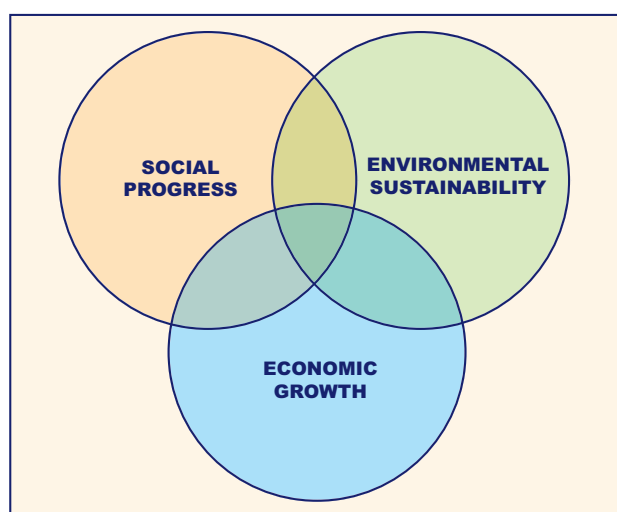


Figure 1: Three-Dimensional Framework for the ESRI Research Agenda

These three dimensions are interrelated and it is useful to think of them in a connected framework. They are in line with the Lisbon Agenda, to which Ireland is strongly committed. This Agenda sees competitiveness and more and better jobs as key priorities for Europe. Development of active social policy and reform and development of the labour

market and social institutions are critical in pursuing the opportunities and challenges associated with globalisation. Policies need to be mutually reinforcing to ensure parallel progress on employment creation, competitiveness, social cohesion and protection of our environment.

Dimension 1: Economic Growth

Ireland has successfully pursued an economic growth strategy over the past two decades that has yielded unprecedented success in European terms. The ability to maintain a high rate of growth is a continuing challenge in an internationally competitive world, and we need to understand the changing factors that are important in this context. While the ESRI has always had a strong focus on growth and development, the particular issues addressed in the first pillar of the Lisbon Agenda are now a key focus of research, i.e. technology diffusion and innovation, and productivity linked to producing higher quality goods and services.

Dimension 2: Social Progress

While economic growth is important for Ireland, it is essential that it is accompanied by social progress. This means ensuring that our society has greater social equality and that it is as socially inclusive as possible. It also means ensuring that Ireland has health and education systems that can better meet the needs of the nation.

Dimension 3: Environmental Sustainability

ESRI research in support of policies for sustainable development is not new. However, in identifying its importance for the future of the EU generally, and of Ireland in particular, and situating it in this framework, the research will reflect the connectedness between the environment and the relevant economic and social policies.



Dimension Overlaps

The overlaps between these three dimensions provide a useful organisational framework as indicated in Figure 1. For example, research related to labour-market participation has both economic and social dimensions, as does education. A characteristic of much ESRI research over the past two decades is that it populates the interface between the Economic Growth and Social Progress dimensions. This reflects the interconnection between social and economic issues, and the fact that policymaking in Ireland is inherently socio-economic in its approach. A key challenge is to develop policies that ensure both knowledge-led economic growth and greater social cohesion.

Similarly, achieving environmental sustainability has implications for economic growth as growth affects the environment. Thus, energy and transport naturally populate the interface between the Environmental Sustainability and Economic Growth dimensions – our transport policies feed into our economic growth models and at the same time have implications for our ability to meet our environmental targets.

Looking ahead, the research agenda of the ESRI will be framed in terms of these three dimensions. Since the range of areas that might be considered is immense, and the scale of the Institute is relatively small, a set of criteria has been established to help determine which areas should be the focus of research over the coming six years.

BASIS FOR THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH PROGRAMME AREAS

The four criteria used to determine relevant research areas are:

- Policy significance for Ireland over the next decade.
- Significant gaps in the research required to inform policy.
- Potential for the Institute to achieve research excellence, building on existing capability.
- Potential for the Institute to secure long-term funding so as to allow research-capacity building and skills transfer.

In the remainder of this chapter we set out the strategic actions which will support the implementation of the new research framework. Details on the specific research areas are set out in Chapter 4.



ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME AREAS

The Institute will set in place four types of strategic actions that will:

- (i) Enhance the quality and quantity of research,
- (ii) Contribute to policy formation,
- (iii) Increase the wider understanding of policy issues, and
- (iv) Seek resources to support the research agenda.

The success of the implementation of these strategies will be measured using a set of agreed internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

RESEARCH QUALITY AND QUANTITY ACTIONS

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Ensure Research Excellence

As part of the ongoing commitment to quality, researchers will:

- Continue to seek to publish in peer-reviewed journals;
- Have access to opportunities to expand and develop their skills;
- Participate in and organise national and international conferences.

These actions will continue to assure the policymaking community that the ESRI's work achieves academic excellence. The Institute is planning to undertake an international peer review in 2008/2009, benchmarking itself to national and international best practice in terms of its academic and policy outputs. Details on the current peer review process for internal ESRI publications are outlined in Appendix 2.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Enhance Research Collaborations

Delivery of the research agenda will require:

- Enhanced collaboration with research communities within and outside Ireland;
- Closer interaction with policymaking communities within Ireland and the EU;
- A more coordinated approach to research within the ESRI.

The ESRI has a long history of collaboration with researchers in other institutions which helps to ensure that:

- The Institute's work incorporates the best insights available;
- The Institute can cover a wider range of important research areas through leveraging the expertise of the broader research community.

Over the strategy period this collaborative approach will involve discussions with the third-level sector on relationships with their research and graduate programmes. The development of visitor programmes and research associate agreements will help to foster these relationships.



POLICY CONTRIBUTION ACTIONS

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Extend Programme-based Research

We believe that moving to a programme basis for research will help the ESRI to contribute more effectively to policymaking in Ireland over the next decade. This will allow:

- A longer time scale to build up research expertise through recruiting new staff or through the redeployment and further training of existing staff;
- ESRI staff to interact systematically with other researchers;
- ESRI to contribute more substantially to Ireland's research infrastructure.

From past experience, this capacity building will benefit not just the ESRI, but also the wider policymaking and academic communities. It is also consistent with the government's commitment to strengthen Ireland's research base.

STRATEGIC ACTION 4

Increase Collaboration with Policymakers

Linked to the move to programme funding, the ESRI is establishing steering committees to bring together ESRI researchers with outside experts and the wider policymaking community, especially those providing funding. These steering committees will:

- Provide an enhanced channel of communications with stakeholders;
- Ensure the continuing policy relevance of the ESRI's work.

In addition, the Institute will establish a new seminar series specifically designed for interaction with policymakers.

STRATEGIC ACTION 5

Facilitate Knowledge Transfer to Government Departments and Agencies

Knowledge transfer is of central importance in a knowledge society such as Ireland's. In science and technology, this means transferring knowledge between research centres in universities and business. In policy terms, this involves knowledge and skills transfers between social science researchers and policymakers. This development will be a key part of our strategy and it will involve:

- Organising schemes to allow policymakers to participate on relevant research projects;
- Providing specific training for policymakers in relevant research methodologies.

ENHANCE SOCIETAL UNDERSTANDING

STRATEGIC ACTION 6

Promote Effective Dissemination of Research

ESRI staff devote significant time to presenting research results and providing briefings directly to stakeholders and to interested parties from outside Ireland.

Requests for presentations and briefings come primarily from public bodies such as the Departments of Finance, Foreign Affairs and An Taoiseach, as well as Forfás, the IDA, etc.

In recognition of the very broad nature of the policymaking community, which includes much of civil society, the ESRI is endeavouring to make its research accessible to the wider public through:

- Participating in meetings and conferences open to the wider Irish public;
- Preparation of material for the print media to inform debate;
- Participating in radio and television broadcasts.

Staff members have received training in how best to explain complex results to the wider public.

STRATEGIC ACTION 7

Increase Access to Research Outputs

Since its foundation the ESRI has published the results of its research in formats accessible to the policymaking community in Ireland. The ESRI will continue to develop this by:

- Making the key results of its research available in an easily accessible format;
- Providing its own publications free of charge on the Institute's website.

This new policy, which has financial implications for the Institute, will meet the increasing demand for access to research results from across a broad range of civil society, thus ensuring the rapid and wider dissemination of the ESRI's policy relevant research to all interested parties.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

STRATEGIC ACTION 8

Develop a Comprehensive Data Strategy

The ESRI's research tradition is grounded in empirical research. This has led to the extensive use of major statistical resources (e.g., Central Statistics Office data), the generation of new data (e.g., the Living in Ireland Survey) and also the use of administrative records (e.g., Hospital In-Patient Enquiry data). A comprehensive data strategy is now required to ensure that maximum benefit is being obtained from major data sources, in particular Central Statistics Office data. Such a strategy, discussed further in Chapter 5 below, will enhance the resources available to researchers.

STRATEGIC ACTION 9

Secure Additional Resources to Underpin the New Research Agenda

While the proposed research agenda can commence on the basis of current resources, additional resources will be required to bring it to fruition. These resources will be linked directly to the priority research areas. Additional resources will be sought from the private sector, recognising that the Institute's independent status should not be compromised. Where possible philanthropic sources will be sought to support particular schemes, such as student internships, graduate scholarships, etc.



4. RESEARCH PROGRAMME AREAS

The ESRI has defined some 15 interrelated areas in which it will focus its research over the next six years. These research areas were identified using the set of criteria outlined in Chapter 3. The relatively small size of the Institute also influenced the selection of the research areas, in that:

- If it is to be a centre of excellence, it must specialise;
- If it is to position itself to address key policy issues, it must form relationships with other research groups;
- If it wants to ensure policy relevance, it must form closer working relationships with the policymaking community.

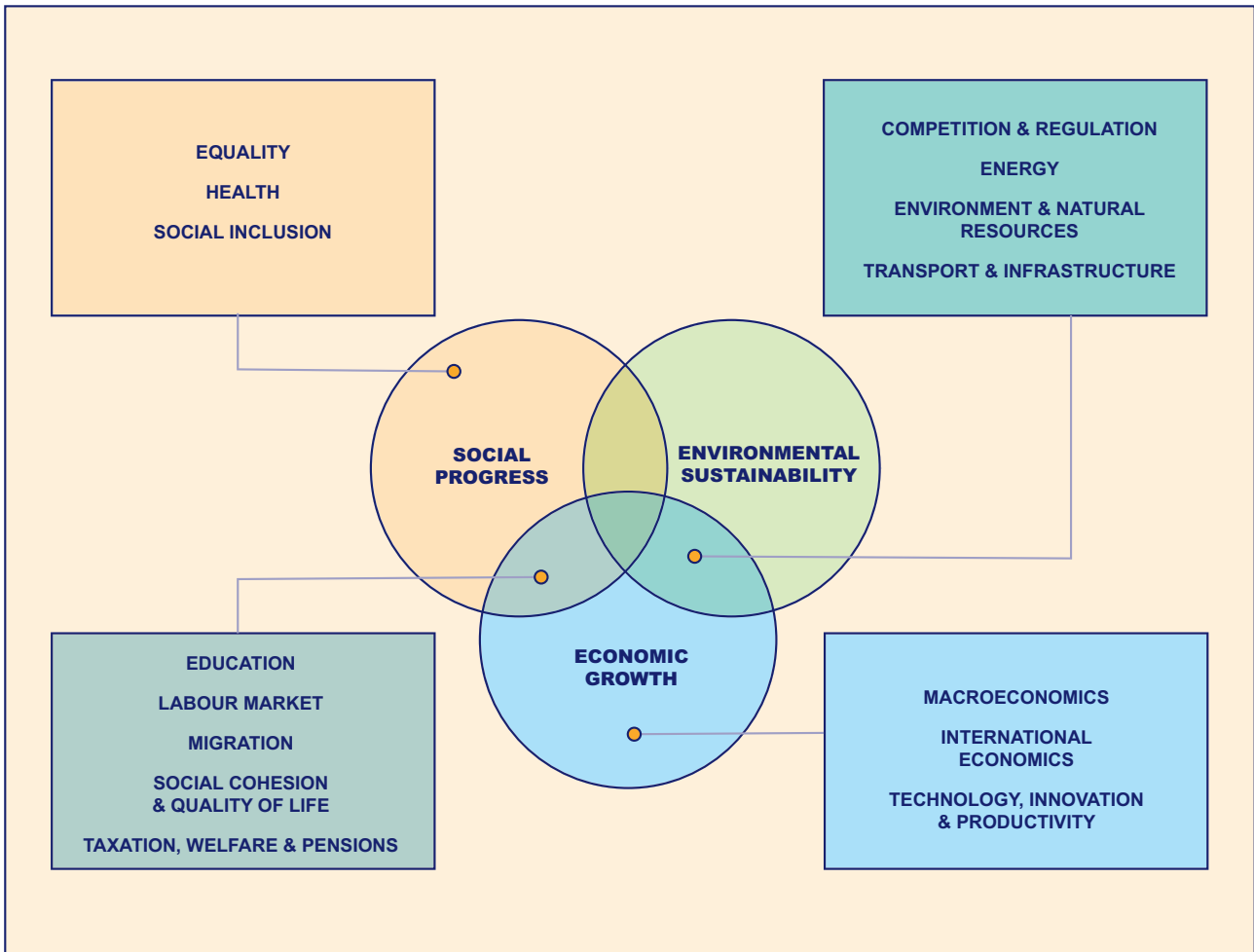


Figure 2: ESRI Research Programme Areas Across the Three Over-Arching Dimensions

Figure 2 shows how the areas interconnect across the three over-arching dimensions. Most occur in the overlap between dimensions, suggesting the growing importance of cross-cutting issues and the value of team-based approaches to research. Furthermore, some cross-cutting issues cover different research areas, e.g., commuting has transport, environmental, labour-market (in terms of access to employment), and quality-of-life dimensions. Issues relating to children (a major research focus in the Institute based on the children’s longitudinal study), cut across many areas in the social and economic domains (see Figure 3 on Page 33). In addition, we recognise that Ireland’s changing demography is likely to have a very significant impact on a whole range of research areas (e.g., Education, Migration, Pensions, Health) over the coming decade, necessitating the acquisition of new demographic skill sets in the Irish research community.

In our approach to each of these areas, future research will take account of demographical, all-island, environmental and global dimensions, where appropriate and feasible. We now outline the current and future research agendas in each of these areas.

The Irish Economy is undergoing significant structural change as international integration and technological innovation continue

ECONOMIC GROWTH



MACROECONOMICS

Current research covers three broad areas:

- Structural change.
- Macroeconomics of the labour market.
- Factors driving long-term change.

Because of Ireland's openness to the outside world, this research also considers how external factors, especially in the wider EU context, affect the Irish economy.

The Irish economy is currently undergoing significant structural change. As a result, **future research** will focus on:

- The changing balance between services and manufacturing in the wider economy.
- The likely decline in the share of the economy accounted for by building and construction.
- The effect on competitiveness of human capital and investment in infrastructure and R&D.
- The impact of migration, investment in human capital, demographic change and institutional changes on the labour market.

The influence of external developments on Ireland will remain a key feature of the research in this area. Central to the macroeconomics research effort is the development of models to further understanding of the complicated processes driving the economy. These include the *HERMES* macroeconomic model, the ESRI's *Demographic Model* and, more recently, its *Small Labour Market Model*. Over the coming five years these models will be further developed to integrate insights derived from the microeconomic research carried out elsewhere in the ESRI.



INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS

This research programme focuses on the analysis of key factors, economic effects and policies of international and European integration. It covers three main areas: International Macroeconomics, International Trade and Investment, and International Finance.

Current research focuses on:

- Macroeconomic adjustment in the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the enlargement of the Euro Area.
- International transmission of business cycles.
- Factors and policies underlying economic growth and competitiveness in the context of increased global interdependencies, and current account adjustment.
- Macroeconomic effects of international migration.
- Enterprise activity and overseas direct investment.

Building on current research, **future research** will focus on:

- Macroeconomic effects of the EMU and policies in the Euro Area.
- Determinants of the location of multinational enterprise activity.
- Economic effects of international outsourcing.
- International economic linkages and cross-country spillover effects.
- Trade modelling and trade policy analysis.

TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

This research programme focuses on the diffusion of new technologies, innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

Current research focuses on:

- Human capital and output growth in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) industries and enterprises.
- Determinants of ICT diffusion at country, industry and enterprise levels.
- ICT diffusion and the demand for skills.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), technology intensity and productivity spillovers.
- Evaluation of centres of excellence.

Building on current research, **future research** will focus on:

- ICT, structural change and productivity growth.
- Demand and supply effects of ICT diffusion.
- ICT infrastructure, connectivity and e-readiness.
- Entrepreneurship, innovation and productivity growth.
- ICT, R&D and innovation complementarities.
- Science, R&D and innovation policy.
- The contribution to research and productivity of public institutions, particularly through post-graduate education, life-long learning, research-intensive universities, and collaboration between public and corporate research.

Social Progress requires that we have a caring, inclusive and integrated society

SOCIAL PROGRESS



EQUALITY

ESRI research investigates inequalities in opportunities and in outcomes, exploring the processes that lead to inequality. The research has a strong policy focus, assessing the role of public policies in underpinning or reducing inequalities.

Current research focuses on:

- Differences in employment and labour market participation, on the basis of gender, age, family structure and disability.
- Access to education and training, particularly variations by socio-economic group and gender.
- Income inequality and poverty.
- Social attitudes to minority groups and their experience of discrimination.

Future research, which builds on the current programme, will address new issues and exploit new data sets, focusing on:

- Immigrants and ethnic minorities in the Irish labour market.
- Gender differences in paid work, household work and caring.
- Trends in income and wealth distribution.
- Inequalities in health outcomes and use of healthcare, including mental health.
- Social participation and leisure, including volunteering and sport.
- The relationship between equality and efficiency.



HEALTH

The Health research programme builds on the ESRI's high-quality databases (see Chapter 5).

Current research covers a range of issues including:

- The implications of demographic change for health service demand.
- Equity in the use of health care.
- GP services on the island of Ireland.
- The public/private mix in acute hospitals.
- Cross boundary flows for acute hospital services.
- The determinants and impact of health behaviours.

Future research will seek to understand the social and economic determinants of health, quantify and evaluate efficiency in health care and monitor health service performance. It will contribute to health service planning, policy and delivery, and address issues in the following areas:

- Healthcare structures and their impact on provision and outcomes.
- The interface between primary, secondary and tertiary care.
- Variations in hospital performance and the implications for efficiency.
- Resource implications of changing patterns of use of pharmaceuticals and health technology.
- Implications of environmental factors, e.g., air quality, for health and health service use.
- Healthcare and the wider society with a specific focus on equity.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Research in this area focuses on access for all to levels of resources regarded as acceptable by Irish society.

Current research focuses on:

- Multi-dimensional measurement of deprivation and poverty.
- Spatial distribution of poverty and deprivation.
- The dynamics of poverty and deprivation.
- Educational and labour market disadvantage.
- Social exclusion and the life cycle.
- Social capital and participation.

Future research will focus on the following areas:

- Poverty and social exclusion in an enlarged EU.
- A comparative perspective on the intergenerational transmission of social exclusion.
- A multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic perspective on parenthood, childhood, schooling and the social implications of ageing.
- An extension of our work relating to social cohesion particularly in the context of understanding the consequences of migration.

Research must reflect the interconnection between social and economic issues in Irish policymaking

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

EDUCATION

ESRI research covers all levels of the educational system, including early childhood education, the primary, second-level and tertiary sectors, and continuing education and training.

Current research addresses the following areas:

- The influence of the institutional context on learning processes and outcomes, particularly within second-level education.
- Pathways through the educational system.
- The relationship between education and labour market outcomes.

Future research will build upon existing research to explore:

- The impact of differences between primary schools on children's learning outcomes, building on the research at second-level.
- The role of third-level institutions in shaping outcomes such as qualification level and skill acquisition.
- The medium- and long-term effects of education on post-school outcomes:
 - ◆ How do earlier choices shape later trajectories?
 - ◆ What aspects of education influence subsequent labour market outcomes, including employment chances, occupational group and wages?
 - ◆ Does education influence social outcomes?

LABOUR MARKET

Employment has increased dramatically for more than a decade, and over the course of that expansion there have been substantial changes in the structure and nature of employment.

Current research focuses on:

- The impact of education and training on employment and earnings.
- Labour market dynamics – transitions into employment from unemployment, school, home.
- Equality and the labour market.
- Working conditions, including wages, hours of work, job security.

Future research will build on existing work and focus on emerging issues utilising new data sets:

- Human capital, the knowledge economy and social progress.
- Labour and skill shortages and their economic impact.
- Labour market institutions.
- Equality, including gender, disability, immigrant workers.
- Transitions to employment from unemployment, education and training.

MIGRATION

The role of demographic factors in economic and social developments has always been a key aspect of ESRI research. Most recently, the focus of work in this area has been on migration. Given the large inflows of immigrants into Ireland over the last decade, **current research** has addressed:

- The impact of immigrants on economic growth, average earnings and the distribution of earnings.
- The earnings of immigrants relative to Irish employees.
- The occupational attainment of immigrants.

Future research will look at wider dimensions of immigration such as:



- The demands placed on schools by the presence of immigrant children.
- How labour market outcomes for immigrants evolve as they spend longer in Ireland.
- The extent of integration by migrants through participation in community activities.

We will also develop other strands of demographic research such as how immigration impacts on patterns of fertility and mortality.

SOCIAL COHESION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Social cohesion refers to social connectedness, solidarity and the extent and quality of social participation. Quality of life research focuses on collective as well as individual resources, in addition to the actual choices people make and the observed outcomes.

Current research focuses on:

- Comparative quality of life in the EU.
- Time use, work-life balance and quality of life.
- Participation in sport.

Future research will focus on new and emerging issues including:

- Environmental factors and quality of life.
- The role of the built environment in determining health and well-being.
- The extent and impact of social participation and volunteering.
- Ethnic and national diversity as a challenge to social cohesion.
- Civic participation including the participation of migrants in social and political life.

- The quality of family and partnership relationships and their impact on the provision of care for children and older people.

TAXATION, WELFARE AND PENSIONS

Taxes and transfers (including pensions) play a key role in influencing both the welfare of households and the behaviour of individuals and firms. Analysis in this area has been an important ongoing area of research for the Institute, feeding directly into the government's annual budgetary process.

Current research includes:

- Assessing the impact of budgetary policy changes.
- Developing and exploring options for future tax and welfare policies.
- Measuring financial incentives to work.
- Investigating the influence of non-cash benefits on economic welfare.

Areas of interest for **future research** include:

- The sustainability of current pension policies in the light of the changing demographic structure.
- Equity and efficiency in state support for private and public pensions.
- Taxes and subsidies on housing.
- Behavioural responses to tax and welfare policies.
- The impact of taxes on expenditure, including those on tobacco and alcohol.
- Environmental taxes: revenue recycling and distributional issues.

Research is needed to ensure we get the right balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS

COMPETITION AND REGULATION

In recent years, the ESRI has carried out many studies with a competition and regulation dimension. Recent and **current research** includes studies on the impact of regulation and competitive conditions on businesses, competition in health services and, most particularly, regulation and competition in the energy sector.

Future research will continue the strong focus on the energy sector with the addition of a new sectoral emphasis on telecommunications. We will also consider cross-sectoral competition and regulation topics, including:

- The effects of regulatory measures and institutional arrangements on efficiency, incentives for investment and innovation, competition and redistribution.
- Identifying areas of the economy where competition can be strengthened.
- Social and economic effects of public investment and related interventions, particularly on utilities infrastructure and service adoption.
- Governance, ownership and accountability arrangements in regulated sectors.

Over time, in cooperation with other ESRI research programmes, it is envisaged that research on competition and regulation will extend into other areas in which the ESRI has complementary sectoral knowledge, such as transport, waste management, health services and the determinants of firm performance and survival.

ENERGY

Current research on energy in the ESRI is focused on three broad areas:

- The operation of energy markets and their implications for competitiveness.
- Security of energy supply.
- The environmental implications of energy use.

A key tool in the research on energy has been the development and exploitation of a range of suitable models. The markets for electricity and gas are now undergoing significant structural change and the need to tackle the environmental consequences of the consumption of fossil fuels is of growing importance.

Future research will focus on:

- How the new electricity markets perform in terms of delivering energy at a competitive price.
- How changes in household behaviour and in the structure of the business sector will impact on energy efficiency and on future energy demand.
- The implications for future energy use and supply of developments in transport and infrastructure.
- The effects of climate and energy security policies.
- The long-term role of energy in the economy.

This work will be facilitated by the development of a new long-term structural model of the energy and power sector.



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Current research is focused on:

- Forecasting emissions to air.
- Valuation of environmental (dis)amenities.
- Waste policy.
- Climate policy.

Future research will build on this to provide better measurement of the interplay between society and the environment and a more comprehensive assessment of environmental policy. This will involve:

- Extending the coverage (e.g., water) and disaggregation (e.g., regional) of environmental accounts and forecasts as more data become available.
- Using and extending hedonic pricing methods to build a nation-wide, time series of the value of the environment; this research will feed into estimates of the Green Net National Product (NNP), and into estimates of the marginal externality costs.
- Exploring the determinants of emissions and resource use, using micro-data of firms and households.
- Estimating the effects of environmental quality on human health.
- Extending existing policy research on waste and climate, using ex ante and ex post analyses, to cover water quality and quantity, land use, and biodiversity.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Current research on transport and infrastructure covers:

- Infrastructure needs.
- Environmental impacts.
- Determinants of household and commercial transport decisions.

This research seeks to address policy issues, such as the effects and effectiveness of large infrastructural investments, the return to these investments, their effect on the quality of the environment, and the overall contribution of the transport sector.

Building on current work, **future research** will look at the changing nature of infrastructure and transport demand by households and firms, in response to:

- Economic and population growth.
- Changes in the roads network and provision of public transport.
- Regulatory change, such as congestion charges and sectoral deregulation.
- Transport-flow modelling.
- Regulation of transport.

A particular feature of future research will be the interconnections between energy and transport, in the context of (i) changing energy sources and technologies, and (ii) climate change policy. The research will contribute to and draw on the *HERMES-ISus* macroeconomic/environment model.



5. SUPPORTING GOALS

To progress the ESRI's research agenda, two supporting goals must be realised. The first of these relates to the data and information on which the research is based. The quality of the data and information impacts directly on the quality of the research and the value of the Institute's contribution to informing policy in Ireland. The second supporting goal relates to the development of organisational and business strategies, which can help ensure that the ESRI will deliver effectively and efficiently on its research mission.



SUPPORTING GOAL 1

To contribute evidence for research and policymaking by developing statistical techniques, conducting surveys, and developing administrative data sets in a manner consistent with the Institute's primary goal

A key feature of ESRI research is its strong empirical base. This involves using major national data sets, such as those produced by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), and engaging in major data collection exercises, based on surveys and administrative records. The most significant survey in recent times was the Living in Ireland survey. Its successor EU-SILC became part of the national statistical system in 2003. The most significant administrative data collection exercise has been the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE).

A key part of the Institute's developing strategy is the closer alignment of data collection to research programmes. The two major data-collection activities are linked to the Department of Health and Children: the *Growing Up in Ireland* longitudinal survey, which is being funded through the Office of the Minister for Children, and the hospital data collected under HIPE and the National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS), which is being funded through the Health Service Executive. In addition to making major inputs into the Institute's research programmes, both of these activities contribute to the national research data infrastructure.

The ESRI will explore with the Central Statistics Office how a cooperative agreement between the two organisations might enhance the value of CSO data. The underlying objective will be for the ESRI to maximise its effective use of nationally-collected data sets, which have expanded in content and increased in number in recent years. Many of these data sets have the added value of EU comparability. It is envisaged that the potential to make further use of these survey data, increasing the return on the investment in them by the CSO, will begin to be realised over the period 2008-2013.

In this context the increased use of administrative data for research purposes is an important objective. The CSO is currently engaged in a major project to maximise the statistical potential of administrative records. As this project progresses, the Institute will monitor its potential for research.



GROWING UP IN IRELAND THE NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CHILDREN

This seven-year programme is being undertaken jointly with Trinity College Dublin, under the auspices of the Office of the Minister for Children. The project has its own website at: www.growingup.ie.

The programme will provide a wide range of research into the well-being of children and their families focusing particularly on the processes and determinants of child outcomes.¹

The principal objectives of the programme are to:

- Describe the lives of children in Ireland.
- Chart the development of children over time.
- Identify which factors most help or hinder children's development.
- Obtain children's views and opinions on their own lives.
- Provide evidence-based research which can be used to inform the development of policy and service delivery for children and their families.

The research programme is designed to be longitudinal, meaning that the same children and their families will be interviewed on several occasions over a number of years.² This project involves two large-scale quantitative national surveys of children and their families:

- **8,000 9-year-old children**, their families, teachers and carers, who will be interviewed at 9 years and subsequently at 13 years of age.
- The families of **10,000 infants** aged 9 months, who will be interviewed at 9 months and subsequently at 3 years of age, and possibly at 5 years of age.

In addition, qualitative methodologies involving in-depth interviews will be used to complement the quantitative component of the project.

The programme will provide the first major longitudinal data set on Irish children, with analysis provided in a special series of substantive and technical papers. The data will become a national resource when an anonymised version of the data set will be deposited as a public access research data-file in the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA), thus maximising the use of the data for national and international research purposes. The ESRI/TCD Study Team's role involves national capacity building, dissemination and the development of a world-class research infrastructure for studies of children, their families and related research themes.

¹ *Growing Up in Ireland* is wholly funded by the Department of Health and Children through the Office of the Minister for Children, in association with the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Central Statistics Office.

² Such studies offer substantially more analytical power than repeated point-in-time (cross-sectional) surveys, allowing researchers to investigate processes and determinants of change at the level of the individual child and/or family.



Strategic Implications and Linkage to the Institute's Research Agenda

Figure 3 outlines the way in which *Growing Up in Ireland* will support and connect with the Institute's main research programmes, once public access data-files are lodged in ISSDA. Looking at how Ireland's children are prospering as they grow up is a classic example of a cross-cutting research topic. The data on these children and their parents links into many of the ESRI's priority research areas.

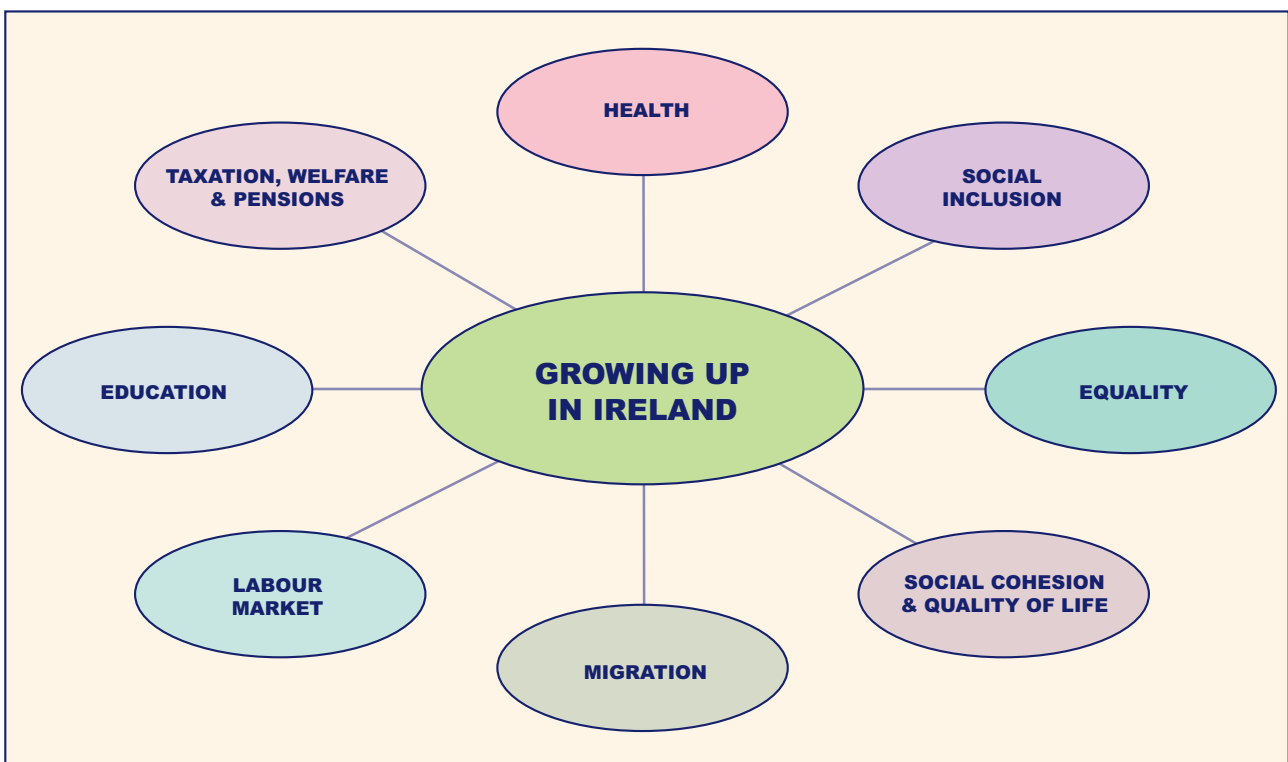


Figure 3: Relationship of *Growing Up in Ireland* Survey to ESRI Strategic Research Areas



HEALTH INFORMATION

The ESRI's Health Research & Information (HRI) Division, in association with the Health Service Executive (HSE), is engaged in the collection, processing and analysis of hospital data.

The Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) collects demographic, clinical and administrative data on discharges and deaths from all acute public hospitals nationally.³ In addition, the National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS) collects data on approximately 60,000 births annually.⁴ Data collected include morbidity, mortality and socio-economic data.

The range of applications for these information systems continues to expand as the data are increasingly used to inform policy development, guide service planning and constitute essential input to epidemiological, clinical and health services research.

Over the next six years the HRI Division is committed to:

Improving comprehensiveness and timeliness by:

- Ensuring HIPE and NPRS data are collected securely through electronic media where possible.
- Improving data coverage for hospitals where data returns are problematic.
- Undertaking an assessment of the implications of making 'uncoded' hospital discharge data available for planning and policymaking purposes.

Improving data quality and training by:

- Supporting hospitals in undertaking routine and exceptional data audits using ESRI-developed software.
- Updating, as required, automatic edits integrated within ESRI-developed software to improve data quality standards.
- Integrating training in medical terminology, anatomy and physiology within coder training programmes.

³ Over 60 acute public hospitals participate in HIPE, reporting on close to one million records annually.

⁴ This system covers 22 hospitals and 18 independent midwives.



Increasing access to, and dissemination of, data by:

- Ensuring that key data users have access to up-to-date data sets.
- Formalising arrangements for a 'HIPE User Group' supported by the HRI Division.
- Publishing statistical reports on a regular and timely basis.
- Responding to data requests from policymakers and researchers.
- Facilitating web-based access to data.
- Launching and supporting the 'Casemix Ireland' Website.

In addition to these information-system improvements, the Institute is committed to expanding its research on health. This will involve much greater analyses of these data that now cover an extended period of time. Figure 4 illustrates some of the major socio-economic issues that these data sets can help address.

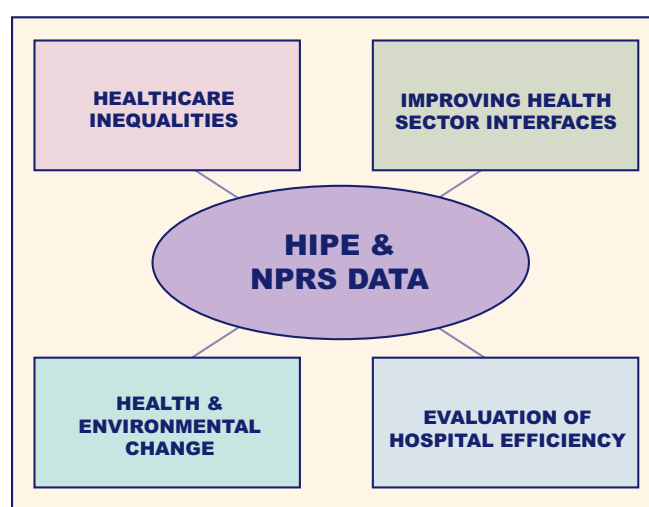


Figure 4: ESRI Health Information Systems and Health Research



SUPPORTING GOAL 2

To implement organisational and business strategies to support the developing research agenda and to help ensure that ESRI institutional values are sustained

Institutional structures are essential to support the success of any organisation, especially as that organisation changes its focus and *modus operandi*. Over the period of the Plan, the Institute's structures will require further development to support the move to more programme-based research. At the same time, there is an opportunity to incorporate administrative 'best practice'.

We identify the organisational and business strategies to be implemented under five headings: governance, financing and funding, human resources, communication and dissemination, and ICT and information management.

Governance

In recent years, the ESRI has undertaken a major reform of its governance. This has involved the restructuring of its Council, the establishment of a consultative Forum, and the creation of an internal Management Committee.

Issues currently being addressed are in the following areas:

- ESRI membership and its appropriate governance role in the context of the establishment of the Forum, and of changes in the methods of disseminating publications.
- The creation of a Research Ethics Committee to ensure that the Institute's applied research is conducted to the highest international ethical standards, with best practice adhered to in its design, implementation and dissemination.

Programme-based funding allows for greater transfers of knowledge to the policymaking community



Financing and Funding

A key feature of the move to establishing a strategic research agenda is the need to support this financially. This requires a move to programme-based research that facilitates a longer-term and more pro-active approach to research than is possible with project-based research. It also allows for capacity building in research that is essential to support the team-based approach being adopted.

This has several implications for the way in which the ESRI is funded:

- The grant-in-aid will be used more proactively to develop strategic areas.
- Programme-based funding will be sought in all the key research areas, requiring the development of closer relationships with policymakers.
- Tendering for work on a project-by-project basis will be restricted to areas where the ESRI has existing research programmes.

Operationally this means that the ESRI will:

- Adopt a more programme-based approach.
- Secure its existing financial commitments following its recent relocation.
- Adopt its resource management system to the new context, ensuring that it continues to operate efficiently and effectively.

Human Resources

This strategic plan requires further development of the ESRI's human resources function, to ensure that the Institute attracts the best staff and continues to motivate them by positive alignment of their personal development with the success of the Institute in meeting its goals. The human capital in the Institute is central to its ability to contribute to knowledge and to policy, and this necessitates continual investment in staff members to develop their capacity.

Further steps in the development of the Institute's human resources function include:

- Aligning the Institute's human resources plan with the new strategic plan.
- Full implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
- Development of a mentoring system for new staff.
- Sustaining a spirit of team-working and collegiality.
- Ensuring that the standards of the work environment keep up to date with evolving best-practice in safety, health and welfare standards.
- Promoting work-life balance.



ESRI recognises the importance of effective communication of research results to policymakers and civil society

Communication and Dissemination

The move to programme-based research will involve developing closer contacts with major stakeholders, and the establishment of steering groups. The steering groups will make the research more responsive to policymakers' needs and facilitate communication of research results. The ESRI recognises its *public good* role to devote time and resources to the effective communication of research results to the broad policymaking community in Ireland.

To sustain its commitment to making the ESRI's policy relevant research available in an easily accessible format and in a timely manner to all interested parties, the ESRI will:

- Provide as much as possible of the ESRI's research output free in electronic form on the Institute's website.
- Devise and implement an eStrategy for electronic dissemination/ communication of research to the widest possible audience.
- Continue to make its research accessible to the wider public through the media by developing its media strategy and associated staff skills.

ESRI staff will continue to promote the understanding of the policy relevance of research through:

- Presenting the results of ESRI research directly to stakeholders and the wider public through meetings, conferences, and special briefings.
- Publishing articles on policy relevant topics in policy journals.

ICT and Information Management

The ESRI has had a stable and reliable IT network for many years. However, the continual pace of technological change, together with the changes associated with the implementation of the strategic plan, will require significant further development of the Institute's IT systems over the next three years.

Specifically, the Institute will:

- Prepare and implement an integrated information and data management strategy.
- Review and revise its overall ICT strategy with a particular focus on:
 - ◆ Provision of an enhanced communications network.
 - ◆ Asset and Acquisition Management.
 - ◆ Risk Management and Business Continuity.
 - ◆ Staff IT training.



6. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

Major benefits have already been realised in the production of this strategy, which has involved all the staff of the Institute. The strategy has been informed by comments of the Institute's Forum members. It also reflects the comments generated by a major consultation of stakeholders in 2004. To realise these benefits in full, we will follow an implementation process which grounds the strategy in the ongoing work of the Institute.



Implementation Plan 2008 - 2013

An implementation plan covering the period 2008-2013 will drive the delivery of the strategy. The plan consists of the specific actions needed to achieve the strategic objectives. It also identifies those responsible for achieving the different elements in the plan and outlines the timeline for completion.

The Institute's Council will monitor the implementation of the plan on a quarterly basis using a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI), together with twice-yearly written reports. Stakeholders and the public will be updated on progress through the ESRI Annual Report, and the Institute's website: www.esri.ie Furthermore, a mid-point review of the strategic plan will be undertaken in 2010. The peer review of the Institute in 2008–2009 will also feed into this process.

Success in the implementation of the plan will depend on success in:

- Securing appropriate funding.
- Hiring and retaining suitably qualified staff.
- Further developing the skills of existing staff members.

COUNCIL MEMBERS (FEBRUARY 2008)

Brendan M. Walsh (*President*)

Emeritus Professor, University College Dublin

Mary Finan (*Chairman*)

Chairman, Wilson Hartnell Public Relations Limited

Frances Ruane (*Director of the Institute*)

David Begg

General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Laurence Crowley

Chairman, Gaisce, The President's Award

David Doyle

Secretary General, Department of Finance

Robert Erikson

Professor, Swedish Institute for Social Research

Patrick Honohan

Professor, Trinity College Dublin

John Hurley

Governor, Central Bank and Financial Services Authority

Michael Kelly

Executive Chairman, Higher Education Authority

Pat O'Connor

Professor, University of Limerick

Padraic A. White

Chairman, Northside Partnership Limited



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 GOVERNANCE: POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council is the Institute's overall governing body and acts as its Board of Directors. In association with the Director and staff, it develops the Institute's programme of research and ensures that the Institute has peer review processes in place to guarantee the academic quality of the research produced (see Appendix 2). The Council's responsibilities do not include the evaluation, appraisal or approval of research projects or publications.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Institute states the duties of the Council. The full document is available to download from the Institute's website at www.esri.ie. The duties of the Council include the management of the business and affairs of the Institute, including:

- Financial reporting and control in line with legal requirements, and budgeting.
- Approval of new members and fixing membership fees.
- Appointing new Council members, director, assistant director and senior research staff.
- Promotion of research staff.
- Approval of major expenditure decisions (as recommended by the Audit Committee).
- Approval of pay increases (as recommended by the Audit Committee).

A written code of business conduct for the Council is currently being finalised. This code sets out the agreed standard of principle and practice which will inform the conduct of members of the ESRI Council and its Committees. Council Members are expected to comply voluntarily with this written code.

APPENDIX 2 ESRI REFEREEING PROCEDURES

All publications in the ESRI Research Series are subject to a rigorous peer review system.⁵ The system of internal review entails refereeing by two referees – normally one referee from the division of the lead researcher and one referee from another division. Each Head of Division is responsible for overseeing the refereeing process for papers whose lead researcher is based in his/her Division, except in the case where the lead researcher is the Head of Division, in which case the Director oversees the process. The Head of Division makes a recommendation to the Director regarding publication and the decision to publish is based on: the Head's recommendation, the two referee reports and the Director's evaluation of the Executive Summary.

Where time allows, all publications published jointly by the ESRI with outside agencies are also subject to the Research Series refereeing procedures, and the Executive Summary/Preface/Introduction is approved by the Director before publication. This applies, irrespective of any other outside refereeing system being in place, to any Books and Monographs published by Other Agencies as well as Other Publications by Other Agencies where the ESRI logo appears on the cover. Where time is severely constrained, a modified refereeing process can be agreed between the researcher(s), the Head of Division and the Director.

⁵ The system covers all refereed publications that carry the ESRI logo and incorporates the following previous series: PRS, GRS, Books and Monographs published by the ESRI.



APPENDIX 3

DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The ESRI's strategic planning process began in May 2007, led by a small group consisting of the Director and five staff members. All staff members participated in the process. The research agenda has been developed through discussions with external stakeholders, with individual staff members and with members of the ESRI Forum. It has been informed by the strategic approaches of peer institutes in Europe and by developments in the research landscape in Ireland. The successful implementation of the research strategy will be supported by the implementation of the two supporting goals. The strategic process involved four phases:

Phase 1: The Strategic Planning Group identified and agreed the scope, timeframe and work-programme. This was approved by the Council in June.

Phase 2: Over the following months, meetings and brainstorming sessions were held which:

- identified the key long-term policy challenges facing Ireland, and how the Institute's research portfolio could contribute to informing those involved in meeting these challenges.
- reviewed findings and updated analysis from the Institute's 2004 internal strategic review, including the environmental analysis.
- revisited the Vision, Mission and Values, and identified High-Level Goals which the Institute would work towards achieving.
- benchmarked the ESRI against selected other Institutes to identify 'best practice'.

Consultation meetings were held with specific groups of staff, and feedback was incorporated. Strategic actions were formulated to assist in achieving the high-level goals. The outline plan was presented to the ESRI Council and to all staff for comment, in September.

Phase 3: A highly-targeted approach to consultation with external policy stakeholders was followed, building on the wide-ranging consultation that had taken place in the 2004 strategic review. Further engagement with all staff on the strategic planning process took place throughout September/October.

Phase 4: A full draft of the Strategic Plan was presented to the Council for consideration in November, and the Council approved the final draft in February 2008.

The strategy will be implemented over a period of six years, with a mid-period review in 2010. Its success will be measured by the Institute's Council using a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGY REVIEW GROUP

Frances Ruane (*Director*)

Alan Barrett

John Fitz Gerald

Christopher T. Whelan

Philip O'Connell

Eleanor Bannerton (*Secretary*)





THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

Telephone +353 1 8632000 **Fax** +353 1 8632100 **Email** admin@esri.ie **Web** www.esri.ie

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