

# ESRI ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Council is the Institute's overall governing body and acts as its board of directors. In association with the Director and staff, the Council is responsible for the development of the Institute's research strategy. The Council meets quarterly and is supported by its three sub-committees: Audit and Risk, Business and Operations, and Governance and Nominations. Section 6 provides a short biography of Council Members.

## *The Council*

### **MEMBERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021**



***Mr S. O'Driscoll,  
President and Chairperson***



***Professor A. Barrett,  
Director***

MR SEAN O'DRISCOLL, President and Chairperson

PROFESSOR ALAN BARRETT, Director

PROFESSOR KATY HAYWARD, Queens University Belfast

PROFESSOR SANDRA MCNALLY, University of Surrey, UK

MR GABRIEL MAKHLOUF, Central Bank of Ireland

MR DAVID MOLONEY, Secretary-General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

MR RONAN MURPHY, former PwC, current board member of Davy, ICON PLC and Greencoat Renewables PLC

PROFESSOR CIARÁN Ó hÓGARTAIGH, President NUI Galway

PROFESSOR ROWENA PECCHENINO, Maynooth University

DR ORLAIGH QUINN, Secretary General of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

MR PAT RABBITTE, former Minister and former leader of the Labour Party, and Chairperson of Tusla – Child and Family Agency

*\* MR PADRAIG DALTON stepped down from the Council in February 2021.*

*\* MR JOHN MARTIN stepped down from the Council in May 2021.*

*\* PROFESSOR SALLY SHORTALL stepped down from the Council in May 2021.*

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) aims to produce economic and social research on key issues facing Ireland and to communicate research results to inform public policymaking and civil society. The Council of the ESRI supports this work by setting and overseeing the Institute's strategic objectives, establishing the required quality standards and ensuring that the independent analysis provided by the Institute remains relevant to the economic and social issues facing policymakers in Ireland. While the Council is responsible for internal governance, Council members play no role in preparing or commenting on specific research.

This introduction sets out the Council's views on how the Institute maintains its reputation as a centre for excellence in independent policy-focused research. It also includes a brief overview of the Institute's governance and its research output in 2021, the third year of its 2019-2023 research strategy.

## **Independence and funding**

The Institute's research strategy reaffirms the importance of the ESRI's commitment to producing research that is independent, objective and of high quality. Independence is assured through the contractual relationships between the Institute and its clients and underpinned by a policy of publishing research, regardless of the findings or source of funding. Quality, objectivity and independence are further supported by a rigorous peer review system, which is examined regularly by the Council, and by peer reviews of the Institute itself.

In recent years, the Institute has focused on building financial sustainability through multi-annual programmes of research funded by a number of government departments and agencies. The Council acknowledges the importance of the continued support from Government in the form of the annual grant-in-aid which is provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. It recognises the significant contribution of many government departments and agencies that funded research programmes in 2021. Competitive funding processes, both within Ireland and the European Union (EU), represent another major source of research funding for the Institute.

In 2021, the Institute set about re-designing and re-launching our membership programme. Our goal was to generate a new fund for research on some of the critical medium to long-term issues facing Ireland. We have been very gratified by the positive response from both existing and new members, all of whom have signalled a strong commitment to supporting the independent, policy-focused research which the ESRI undertakes. Our Whitaker patrons and corporate members are listed below.

## **Council governance**

The Council of the ESRI continues to ensure that its standards of corporate governance operate to the highest level. There is a high level of awareness regarding where potential conflicts of interest can arise and a strong commitment to ensuring that Council membership is appropriately balanced. The Council's Governance and Nominations sub-committee monitors membership to ensure that the Council has the requisite skills, broad sectoral coverage and gender balance.

Normally, Council membership is for a three-year period, with a renewal being common for a further three years. Council members are not paid any fees for their membership of the Council. Members are nominated through a formal process and elected at the Institute's annual general meeting.

In 2021, Pdraig Dalton, John Martin and Sally Shortall stepped down from the Council, having each served for six years. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their service and particularly for serving on many research promotions boards, which involved considerable time inputs and the exercise of sound judgement. Also in 2021, Katy Hayward, Sandra McNally and Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh joined the Council and we were pleased that such eminent people were enthusiastic about bringing their expertise to the Council.

In 2021, John Martin, Sandra McNally, Rónán Murphy, Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh and Rowena Pecchenino served on the Audit and Risk sub-committee. Alan Barrett, Katy Hayward, David Moloney, Pat Rabbitte and Sally Shortall served on the Business and Operations sub-committee. Sean O'Driscoll, Rowena Pecchenino, Orlaigh Quinn and Pat Rabbitte served on the Governance and Nominations sub-committee. A new membership sub-committee was formed with members Alan Barrett, Gabriel Makhoul, Sean O'Driscoll and Rónán Murphy.

## **Research outputs in 2021**

The COVID-19 crisis continued to be the dominant feature of all our lives in 2021 and this was true for the Institute, with a continuation of the remote working model. Despite the ongoing disruption, its research output remained strong, with researchers continuing to publish in a wide range of outlets throughout the year. This included 65 articles in peer reviewed journals, 43 reports and 6 book chapters. In addition, 31 Research Bulletins were published in which journal article content was presented in a succinct, accessible manner. Works in progress were disseminated via 24 Working Papers.

The dissemination of research continues to be a core part of our work and, in 2021, ESRI researchers were interviewed on radio and TV on 86 occasions. Researchers also appeared before Oireachtas committees on 9 occasions. In addition, we organised 25 events such as workshops and conferences.

While the research output is too broad to provide a comprehensive overview, we will point to a limited number of important outputs here. Further details are available on our website ([www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)) and in our annual review of research.

First, over the years the Institute has specialised in developing statistical models, which are run and maintained with a view to answering questions on economic and social processes. Through 2021, we continued to draw on our macroeconomic model (*COSMO*) and our tax-welfare model (*SWITCH*) in analysing a range of policy challenges. We have also been developing our climate model (*ISE*) and our model of the healthcare system (*Hippocrates*) so that our analytical capacities are expanded.

Second, while the ESRI has often undertaken work on Northern Ireland and all-island issues, our work in this area expanded considerably in 2021. Partly through our work with the Shared Island Unit of the Department of the Taoiseach and also through a new joint programme with IBEC on the all-island economy, in 2021 we produced important work on Northern Ireland, something we will continue to do in 2022.

Third, our Behavioural Research Unit continued to provide important research inputs into COVID-19 related policy through 2021 and into 2022. We hope to see the work of this unit returning to a more expansive agenda, something that is already underway through an innovative study on attitudes to climate change.

Finally, the Quarterly Economic Commentary continued to provide analysis of developments in the Irish economy as well as short-term forecasts for key economic indicators. The key challenge in 2021 was to assess how the various COVID-19 related measures – both public health measures and supports to household and businesses – would impact on the path of the economy.

### ***Growing Up In Ireland (GUI)***

In late 2018, a decision was taken jointly by the ESRI, the Central Statistics Office and the then Department of Children and Youth Affairs that the *Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)* study would be transferred to the Central Statistics Office after 2022. This decision recognised that the study is now of such importance that it should become more embedded in the State's official data collection systems. On foot of this decision, discussions began in 2019 between the three agencies on how the transfer would be managed in such a way that the study's richness was maintained. Work on the logistics of the transfer of GUI continued in 2021.

The ESRI continued to use the GUI data in 2021 to produce insightful studies drawing on the richness of this unique data source. Reports were published on topics such as 'health and wellbeing in childhood and adolescence' and 'fathers and children from infancy to middle childhood'.

### **People**

The Council would like to commend the Institute's staff whose expertise and commitment enables the Institute to continually identify new solutions to policy challenges. It was another very challenging year for the staff and the Council would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by all staff members in ensuring the continued successful operation of the Institute. The Council would also like to thank the government departments, state agencies, Whitaker patrons and corporate and individual members who support critical research programmes and the many stakeholders who engage with the work of the Institute. Such support enables the Institute to work towards realising its vision of being 'the leading source of independent, high-quality socio-economic research in support of informed policy for a better Ireland'.

### **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014**

The Institute is committed to the implementation of policies and actions which are consistent with the duties conferred on public bodies by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The Institute is in the process of applying for Athena SWAN accreditation. This is a quality charter accreditation scheme that recognises good practice in higher education and research institutions towards the advancement of equality across the grounds enshrined in Irish legislation.

### **Protected Disclosures Act 2014**

There were no protected disclosures made to the ESRI in 2021.

Finally, it was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of two former colleagues in 2021 – Professor Damian Hannan and Professor Gerry Hughes. Damian Hannan played an enormous role in the development of sociology in Ireland from the 1960s to the 1990s, spending most of his career at the ESRI. Gerry Hughes produced many important papers on topics such as migration, pensions and the skills needs of the economy. Both Damian and Gerry were wonderfully generous colleagues who epitomised the goals and culture of the Institute and who will remain inspirational figures.

Sean O'Driscoll  
Chairperson

Alan            Barrett  
Director

## 2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

The implementation of the Institute's research strategy ensures that the Institute continues to strive for enhanced performance in our work. The strategy outlines the Institute's priority actions for the period in the context of the Institute's mission, vision, goals and values. These were developed by the Council in agreement with the staff, following a comprehensive strategic process in 2018. Our goals of research excellence and relevance, effective communications and policy impact are being pursued through sets of strategic actions related to: research; funding; dissemination and communications; *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI); human resources; and business processes. These goals and actions help to ensure that the Institute stays focused on its key role as a centre for excellence in policy-focused research in Ireland in the economic and social domains.

The Council oversees the implementation of the research strategy through twice-yearly reports to the Business and Operations sub-committee. The reports cover the research agenda across the 11 research areas, as well as the implementation of the strategic actions. This section briefly sets out the progress made in 2021 in delivering on the actions designed to meet our goals.

### 2.1 Research

Our Research Strategy requires us to 'continuously review emerging issues for Ireland in the policy and academic spheres, nationally and internationally, with a view to proposing new programmes and projects'.

The creation of the Shared Island Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach reflected a renewed interest in all-island issues and our engagement with the Shared Island Unit has allowed us to undertake new and interesting research. As an example of this new research, colleagues undertook a study which provided new insights into the way in which the education and training systems, north and south, shape educational outcomes.

This project addressed another strategic aim, namely, to 'leverage the complementary skills across the Institute, particularly across the disciplines of economics and sociology, to enrich our research', as both economists and sociologists are involved.

In the context of research on 'emerging issues', new ESRI work on blockchain is noteworthy. The Institute is a partner in an EU-funded project (ERASMUS+) called CHAISE, the core mission of which 'is to develop a strategic approach on blockchain skills development for Europe'. In addition, 'CHAISE will deliver future-proof training solutions, in order to tackle blockchain skill shortages and to respond to the current and future skill needs of the European Blockchain workforce'. In October 2021, ESRI colleagues published a report on the labour market for blockchain skills in the EU. The objective of the research was to establish the structure of current blockchain employment, the type of organisations employing such professionals, the educational profile of blockchain workers and the skills and competencies currently required by employers. This is a new and cutting-edge topic for the Institute, on which it is ideal to be working with EU partners.

## **2.2 Funding**

The Institute's grant-in-aid is a key foundation in our funding. For this reason, the decision to increase the grant-in-aid in Budget 2021 was very welcome. The increase of €225,000 brings the grant to €3 million for 2021 and it has been agreed that the extra funding will be directed towards social issues such as inequality.

The most notable stream of new funding which was agreed in 2020 was from the Shared Island Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach. Part of the remit of the Unit is to undertake research on issues such as the all-island economy and the potential to enhance social policy delivery through an all-island approach. The Department will provide €400,000 to the Institute over the two-year period 2021–2022 and projects are planned for the first stage of the programme on cross-border trade in services and access to primary healthcare.

In addition to this new funding stream, 2021 also saw the extension of some existing research programmes. The Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners renewed their programme on macroeconomics, taxation and banking. The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications renewed their programme on modelling climate and the economy. The Environmental Protection Agency also renewed our joint research programme with a substantially increased budget.

## **2.3 Dissemination and communications**

While publication remains our core output, we continue to disseminate our work actively through webinars and 2021 saw a number of very successful events. For example, in June, Minister Heather Humphreys opened a webinar on 'COVID-19 and the welfare system' at which one of this year's Budget Perspectives papers was launched. We also welcomed Minister Roderic O'Gorman to a number of webinars and Tánaiste Leo Varadkar recorded a video message for the launch of two of our papers for the Shared Island Unit.

In June, we held a joint conference with Microsoft Ireland called 'Advancing a digital healthcare future for Ireland'. Co-hosting an event with a private sector partner was somewhat unusual for us and was successful in terms of providing a different audience compared to other events of ours.

The Strategy highlights the need to place a 'renewed emphasis on what sets ESRI research apart when communicating research results'. In this regard, a noteworthy example was set by the Behavioural Research Unit during the COVID-19 crisis, especially the Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach. Each of the researchers continually quoted their data when responding to questions and this adherence to the data, as opposed to opinion or anecdote, has been very effective in showing 'what sets ESRI research apart'.

## **2.4 Human resources**

As with most organisations, the ESRI has had to develop a policy on remote working/blended working, to be rolled out on a pilot basis from early 2022. In order to ensure that the development of the policy was well-informed by the views of staff, we established a consultative forum made up of a representative group from across the different areas and different grades of the Institute. This group

provided a report to the Management Committee. A number of themes raised therein were addressed, while work continues to address its central issue: the challenge of balancing flexibility for staff with the needs of the Institute, such as in relation to maintaining corporate culture, providing supervision and mentoring and connecting with stakeholders. Spring 2022 will see the roll-out of the remote working/blended working policy and this will be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout 2022.

The Research Strategy contains an action point on ‘develop(ing) our performance management and development system so it becomes an ongoing process as opposed to an annual review’. This has now been implemented. We launched our revised performance management process pilot in the second half of 2021. The revised process is based on a model of continuous performance feedback through regular structured one-to-one meetings between staff and line managers. All managers received external training in the new process and all staff members received training from HR.

Finally, another aim within our strategy is to ‘invest in continuous professional development for staff at all career stages’. While we hire in specialist training, the training courses provided by our own staff are often the most highly rated. Through 2021, our staff ran courses on topics such as writing skills and statistical software, again earning high praise from the colleagues who attended.

## **2.5 Business processes**

With regard to governance, the Governance and Nominations Committee was re-convened and met to discuss possible new Council members. Four new members were appointed on foot of the Committee’s deliberations, with three joining in 2021 and a fourth person to join in 2022.

As the number, scale and complexity of our projects have grown, the need for improved project management has also increased. Our Projects Office has implemented systems for monitoring a number of the larger and more complex programme areas. While this is welcome, an integrated project management system is currently being reviewed as further progress in this area is needed.

Procurement is an area where we must ensure that our processes are fully compliant with public sector rules. Reviews have been carried out in a number of areas to identify procurement requirements and also possible savings. We had become conscious of a number of small contracts being awarded to single providers whereby the sum totals exceeded the limits where formal tendering processes were required. The reviews have prompted us to arrange tendering processes as needed.

Data protection and data security remain key issues for us. Refresher training on data protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was provided by the Data Protection Officer during the period. Approximately 55 staff members attended over a number of sessions, which were offered between August and September 2021. As is standard, new staff also attended one such session within their first few months of joining the Institute.

IT security was very much to the fore nationally in 2021, due in part to the Health Service Executive (HSE) difficulties. In December 2021, a consultant carried out a penetration test of the ESRI’s external facing firewall and a vulnerability assessment of the internal network. A firewall and server configuration review was also undertaken as part of this work.

### **3. RESEARCH IN 2021**

This section provides an overview of our research activities and findings for 2021, with brief summaries of research across the 11 research areas. Further details on the research and the researchers involved are available on the ESRI website ([www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)).

#### **3.1 Behavioural science**

The Behavioural Research Unit (BRU) uses controlled laboratory, online and field experiments to investigate decisions and behaviours across multiple policy areas. For the BRU, 2021 continued to be dominated by work on COVID-19.

The largest project undertaken by the BRU in 2021 was the development and analysis of the Social Activity Measure (SAM), in a project commissioned by the Department of the Taoiseach. SAM is a fortnightly, anonymous, online study that uses ‘prompted recall’ methods from behavioural science to gather information about people’s activities during the previous week. It records how they spent their time, how many people they met, for how long, whether they kept a 2m distance, whether they wore a face mask and so on. SAM aims to inform policy in the process of re-opening the economy and society, while keeping COVID-19 under control. The BRU team gathered and analysed data every two weeks throughout 2021, producing 24 reports posted on the website of the Department of the Taoiseach. The study continues in 2022.

At the beginning of the year, the BRU was commissioned by the Department of Health to investigate the extent of and reasons for vaccine hesitancy in Ireland. A large-scale online study revealed important differences in the extent of knowledge and understanding among people who did not intend to take the COVID-19 vaccine or who were unsure about whether they would take it, compared to others. It demonstrated that people who were vaccine-hesitant had not absorbed or understood the benefits of the vaccine. The study also established a strong link between vaccine hesitancy and people who did not follow news coverage. The findings informed Ireland’s successful vaccine roll-out campaign.

In addition to work on COVID-19, the BRU undertook a mixture of online studies and field experiments designed to diagnose behavioural factors behind policy problems and to test potential interventions. These included:

- an experiment to test different methods of communicating the risks of radon gas to householders, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency;
- work for the Insolvency Service of Ireland on how to improve awareness and comprehension of debt relief solutions;
- a collaboration with the Geological Survey of Ireland to investigate how people understand and respond to the possibility of mineral exploration in their local area;
- a test of consumers’ ability to comprehend and choose between health insurance products, undertaken for the Health Insurance Authority;

- a randomised controlled trial to test methods to increase precautionary household savings, for the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission;
- investigations of farmers' engagement with and understanding of measures to reduce the spread of bovine TB, for the Department of Agriculture;
- a test of the effectiveness of a recently developed nutritional label (Nutri-Score), for the Department of Health; and
- a study funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to test methods of giving feedback to households about energy used and lost when heating their hot water tanks.

Work also began on a new research programme, funded by the Department of Finance, to develop interventions to increase consumers' abilities to save money by switching financial products.

### **3.2 Competitiveness, trade and FDI**

ESRI research in this area focuses primarily on structural and microeconomic factors and policies underlying competitiveness and economic growth in Ireland and other European countries in the context of international economic integration. In 2021, research in this area addressed the following three overarching themes: trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) across the island of Ireland; skill needs to support Ireland's enterprise innovation and the transition to a low-carbon economy; and the impact of Ireland's policy on greenhouse-gas emissions.

A wide-ranging research programme with the Shared Island Unit of the Department of the Taoiseach included work on services trade and attractiveness to high-value FDI across the island of Ireland. The work on cross-border trade in services found considerable scope for expansion, particularly given that services trade is currently much lower than cross-border trade in goods. Examining the characteristics of services firms active in cross-border trade, the research found that exporting firms in services are systemically larger and more productive than non-exporters. The research on the attractiveness to high-value FDI provided novel evidence on factors and policies underlying the attractiveness of Ireland and Northern Ireland to FDI in knowledge-intensive sectors. The results of this research suggested that attractiveness to high-value FDI across the island could be enhanced by considering complementarities between Ireland and Northern Ireland, in particular with respect to EU market potential, availability of workforce skills and investment in R&D in the government and higher education sectors. Taken together, the results of this research suggested that policy co-ordination and co-operation in these areas on an all-island basis could contribute to maximising benefits both north and south of the island.

A study commissioned by Skillnet Ireland examined current and emerging skill needs in Ireland's private enterprise sector to enable innovation and support the transition to a low-carbon economy. The research found that the top skill sets needed in the medium term to support innovations with environmental benefits are: climate change and sustainability strategy skills; marketing skills; and financial skills relating to investment and access to finance. The identified top skill sets needed in the medium term to support the transition to a low-carbon economy are: waste management skills; corporate sustainability strategy skills; carbon management skills; and sustainable finance skills.

Research funded by the Environmental Protection Agency examined the impact of Ireland's landfill policy on greenhouse-gas emissions from the waste sector over the past three decades. The results indicated that Ireland's landfill policy has been associated with substantial reductions of methane emissions in the waste sector. In particular, the landfill levy has been an important policy instrument to reduce the proportion of municipal solid waste disposed to landfill. The research also found that, despite those achievements, the recycling rate of municipal waste (the proportion of recycled waste in total municipal solid waste) was below the EU's targets.

A new study funded by the European Commission that began in 2021 examines the economic importance of middle-sized companies (mid-caps) in Ireland and other European countries. The results of this research will identify the specific challenges these companies face as well as the opportunities they provide, particularly in the areas of innovation, digitalisation and sustainability. Research results will be forthcoming in 2022 from a newly launched programme between the ESRI and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 'the productivity challenge and its interaction with climate, digitalisation and human capital'. The results from this joint research programme will inform both the Department and the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council in their analysis of productivity issues and will identify and recommend productivity-enhancing reforms.

ESRI research on FDI and productivity was highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its report, *FDI qualities assessment of Ireland*. The report has informed the development of IDA Ireland's new strategy, *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth 2021–2024*, published in January 2021.

ESRI research on innovation and productivity was also highlighted by the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council in its report, *Ireland's competitiveness challenges 2021*, published in September 2021, in relation to recommendations for the National Research and Innovation Strategy 2021–2027, to be published by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

### **3.3 Education**

The ESRI Education research area covers all levels of the Irish educational system, including early childhood education, primary, second-level, and further and higher education. Research in 2021 focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, policy and provision for students with additional needs, school effects on socio-emotional wellbeing and behaviour, and educational inequality. The work spans cross-national research and studies focusing on education in Ireland.

Education researchers are involved in a range of work for the European Commission, including critically assessing education policy developments as part of the Directorate General for Education and Culture's network of independent experts in education and training. In April, an ESRI researcher was appointed as one of 15 experts from across Europe to support EU Member States to invest more effectively and equitably in education, as part of the European Commission Expert Group on Quality Investment in Education and Training. Work was also started on the PIONEERED study, a Horizon 2020-funded project on educational inequality across Europe.

Work undertaken as part of a research programme with the Department of Children, Equality, Diversity, Integration and Youth, published in May, drew on *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) data to show that the individual school attended makes a significant difference to student behaviour, with the quality of teachers emerging as a particularly important factor. In a study published in December and funded by the HSE, positive interaction with teachers emerged as reducing internalising difficulties (emotional symptoms and peer problems) among adolescents, while being disengaged from school was found to heighten such problems.

Building on earlier research funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and ComReg, findings published in November indicated that reduction in student engagement during the period of COVID-19 related school closures was almost three times more likely in schools located in areas characterised by lower coverage of high-speed broadband. This related to student engagement being better supported when distance teaching methods were more interactive and collaborative. The extent to which the pandemic reinforced inequality was further explored in a December publication.

Based on GUI data, research published in November showed gender stereotyping in the assessment of children's mathematics performance. Both teachers and mothers rated boys' maths performance more highly than that of girls, at all levels of achievement. As part of a research programme with the National Disability Authority, another paper drawing on GUI data showed that, with the exception of young people with physical disabilities, young people with all types of special educational needs made less academic progress than other students between 9 and 17 years.

Work was initiated for the National Council for Special Education on two large-scale studies: an evaluation of the School Inclusion Model, and a longitudinal study on post-school pathways among young people with special educational needs. Both studies will be important in shaping provision for students with additional needs in primary and second-level schools, and across the post-school landscape.

Researchers drew on a large body of work on second-level education to address the Oireachtas Committee on Education on senior cycle reform.

### **3.4 Energy, environment and infrastructure**

Energy and climate research is funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Transport, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities, the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), Ervia, Gas Networks Ireland, EirGrid, SSE Ireland, Viridian, Terra Solar, Science Foundation Ireland and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Research related to the environment is funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Environmental Protection Agency, while research on electronic communications networks and services is funded by the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

The ESRI's research programme on climate, energy and the economy examined the economic and environmental impacts of aviation taxation in Ireland. The research shows that in terms of cost-

effectiveness, taxing carbon inputs directly (through kerosene taxation and the removal of free EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) allowances) results in lower costs (both in terms of reduced aviation VA and GDP) per tonne of emissions reduced. An increase in the EU ETS allowance price has a larger impact both economically and in terms of emission reduction.

The energy research programme spans a wide range of topics. Research on green hydrogen, produced through the electrolysis of water powered by renewables-generated electricity, finds that deployment of hydrogen electrolyzers on the power system does not necessarily lead to an unambiguous improvement in carbon emissions. The research shows that hydrogen has a potential role to play in decarbonising the economy, particularly where decarbonisation alternatives are challenging, but also that the carbon benefits are not unambiguous and that, given the complex interaction of electrolyzers and the power system, projects should be carefully assessed.

Electricity will play a key role in the energy transition. Research on electricity tariffs shows how deviations from an efficient tariff structure can create considerable welfare losses and inequity among householders, especially in the context of growing penetration of home-based photo-voltaic generation. Other research examines the vulnerability of households to the energy transition, and how social transfers can alleviate the impacts, and identifies the barriers to uptake of energy retrofit supports among lower-income households.

Under the research programme on environmental economics, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, papers were published on factors driving firms' green investments, and the links between perceptions and objective measures of urban green space. Other research included an ex-post analysis of the impact of national landfill policy for greenhouse-gas emissions in the waste sector, and a paper showing that older adults exposed to high levels of environmental noise have lower scores for some indicators of cognitive function.

The water research programme, in collaboration with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, evaluated initiatives to change behaviours in the community that can affect water quality, and examined knowledge and awareness of water quality protection issues among local authority staff who have responsibility for day-to-day activities related to water quality protection.

Research in the electronic communications research programme funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and ComReg considered the role of broadband infrastructure and digital applications as secondary schools switched to remote learning during the pandemic.

### **3.5 *Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)***

*Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)* is the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland. It is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and is jointly managed by the Department and the Central Statistics Office.

The research is conducted by a consortium of independent researchers at the ESRI and Trinity College Dublin. The study covers two cohorts: Cohort '98 (followed from nine years of age) and Cohort '08 (followed from nine months old).

The year 2021 was a busy one for GUI, with the publication of three research reports and extended key findings as well as the start of fieldwork with Cohort '08 at 13 years of age. In addition, two technical reports and a total of five datasets were published.

The first research report of the year was published in early March. Authored by GUI–TCD colleague Elizabeth Nixon, it dealt with the very topical area of social-emotional and behavioural outcomes in early adolescence, using the longitudinal data from Cohort '98 at ages 9 and 13 years. It considered the relevance of key features of early adolescence, puberty and changing relationships with family and peers, for key outcome measures in mood and behaviour.

In late March, findings from a COVID-19-specific survey of GUI participants from both cohorts (conducted in December 2020) showed the significant impact of pandemic-related restrictions on wellbeing, learning, employment and day-to-day activities. This short report highlighted important findings highly relevant to policy in a unique and evolving context. For example, during the first period of school closures, a significant proportion of 12 year olds said they did not have access to suitable computer equipment or a quiet place to study, and most did not have access to online classes. Almost half of 22 year olds who had been in employment lost their job or were temporarily laid off as a result of the pandemic. Of concern is the large increase in reports of depressive symptoms among young adults (from 27 per cent at age 20 to 48 per cent at age 22).

A publication in December looked in detail at this group of young adults in the pre-pandemic period. The report findings pointed to an extended transition period for this cohort, with most still in full-time education or training, living with their parents and dependent (at least partially) on them financially. The findings pointed to less healthy behaviours than had been the case at 17 years of age, with a reduction in physical activity, higher rates of overweight/obesity and significant levels of hazardous drinking.

Looking at nine year olds from Cohort '08, a report published in June showed the way in which their lives are influenced by their gender and family circumstances. Day-to-day activities among girls and boys were quite different, with girls being much more involved in structured cultural activities (like music and drama) and boys more engaged in team sports. Children from more disadvantaged backgrounds were much more likely to have poorer health, higher rates of overweight/obesity and more socio-emotional difficulties, and were less positive about their school subjects. The socio-economic gap in reading test scores had widened since the children started primary school; children from disadvantaged backgrounds who were early high performers were being outperformed by children from more advantaged backgrounds by nine years of age.

The survey of young people and their families from Cohort '08 at 13 years of age started in the summer. Because of pandemic-related restrictions, data collection was conducted by telephone (for the main survey) and online (for the sensitive questionnaire). The fieldwork phase concluded in May 2022.

In parallel to ongoing fieldwork, the GUI team published five sets of data from previous waves of GUI. These were anonymised microdata files (AMF) and research microdata files (RMF) versions of the data

from the special COVID-19 survey, AMF and RMF versions of data for Cohort '98 at age 20, and the RMF from Cohort '08 at age 9.

The 2021 GUI Annual Conference in November was a virtual event, opened by Laura McGarrigle, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and with an address by the Minister, Dr Roderic O'Gorman TD. The keynote address was given by Professor Nicholas Timpson, Principal Investigator of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children. In addition, there were 3 parallel sessions of 27 presentations using GUI data. ESRI researchers presented papers on a wide range of topics, including what is important in getting on in life; technology use and academic performance; the prevalence of online gambling; the impact of the pandemic on those with disabilities; multigenerational educational inequality; disruptions to the transitions of young adults; and adaptations to survey methodology during a pandemic.

The GUI team also undertook an extensive consultation and research review exercise in connection with the development of the planned next wave of the study, Cohort '98 at age 25. This took place over the course of 2021, in partnership with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and included an online survey, virtual roundtable workshop, focus groups with young adults and a literature review. A final report was submitted in December 2021 with publication expected early in 2022.

### **3.6 Health and quality of life**

Health research was carried out on several areas of health service reform and public health during 2021. Health service research focused on further developments to the Hippocrates projection model of healthcare demand and expenditure, as well as on supporting policymakers in relation to current initiatives concerning home care, COVID-19 and workforce requirements. Public health and quality-of-life research examined socio-economic inequalities in mortality, barriers to access to healthcare services, mental health and wellbeing among children and young people, and labour-market challenges of those with a cancer diagnosis.

Research funded by the Department of Health using the ESRI's Hippocrates Model indicates that expenditure across a range of primary, community and long-term care services will increase significantly between 2019 and 2035, with the largest increases observed for high-tech medicines dispensed in the community, long-term residential care and home support services. The cost of delivering care, particularly pay-related costs, is the main driver of expenditure growth.

Another report funded by the Department of Health found that about 24.7 million home support hours were provided in 2019 to over 65,000 people aged 65 years and older. It included scenarios for a possible statutory scheme. Providing care to those waiting for a support package or additional hours would require about 3.5 million extra hours; halving the number of home support recipients who enter long-term residential care by providing them with adequate intensive home support packages could require an extra 4.2 million hours; and up to 8 million additional hours of home support could be needed to meet increased demand from people with difficulties in activities of daily living who may have previously relied on unpaid and family care.

Using data from GUI, research funded by the HSE found that, while levels of wellbeing were generally high among young people in Ireland, young women experienced a steeper decline in socio-emotional wellbeing as they aged through adolescence than young men.

Research funded by the Health Research Board using data from The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) found that individuals who are both lonely and socially isolated have significantly higher all-cause mortality rates, even after controlling for other risk factors such as age and smoking.

An agreement was reached to extend the ESRI research programme on Healthcare Reform funded by the Department of Health for the period 2022–2024. In addition to the reports noted above, papers were published on private hospital expenditures, hospital waiting times, the potential cost of reducing and managing waiting lists, and user profiles of oral examinations. Members of the research team also sat on the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group, providing projections of demand for hospital care due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Health Research Board-funded project on inequalities in GP care finished in 2021. Papers on the impact of cost-sharing for prescription drugs on the older population, the effect of area-level deprivation on use of GP services, and differences in the use of healthcare services between migrants and the Irish-born population were published in 2021.

The Irish Cancer Society-funded project on barriers and challenges to returning to employment following a cancer diagnosis concluded in 2021, and the associated report was launched in February 2021.

Future work in this area includes a three-year (2018–2021) project funded by the Health Research Board examining the potential cost, outcomes and challenges of alternative approaches to achieving universal healthcare, with a number of publications due in early 2022.

Other healthcare-related projects that started in 2021 are: a research project funded by the HSE that is developing projections of future workforce requirements for acute healthcare services on a regional basis; a one-year project funded by the Health Research Board examining the sustainability of long-term residential care in Ireland; a 10-month project funded by the Department of the Taoiseach examining the primary care systems of Ireland and Northern Ireland; and a one-year programme of research on inequalities in mortality in Ireland, funded by the Institute of Public Health.

### **3.7 Labour market and skills**

Research in this area focuses on a wide range of policy areas, examining how workers are faring in the labour market and what skills workers need to meet the needs of an evolving economy. Research topics include pay, unemployment, training and skills.

During 2021, research was undertaken on a range of issues and a number of new publications were either released or finalised. The team launched research, funded by the Department of Regional and Community Development, reviewing international approaches to evaluating investments in rural and community development. Three studies, funded by the Low Pay Commission, were published: (a) a comparative study of minimum wages in Europe; (b) a study of the heterogeneous impacts of

minimum-wage changes on hours worked; and (c) a study on the impact of the 2016 minimum-wage increase on average labour costs, hours worked and employment in Irish firms.

A report produced under a research programme funded by Pobal measured the incidence of childhood disability in Ireland and assessed the extent of educational supports for disabled children in early-years provision. A study funded by the Department of Employment and Social Protection, recalibrating the PEX statistical profiling model currently in use in Intreo offices, is awaiting publication. Researchers also continued to provide regular reports on Ireland's labour-market progress to the European Commission's European and Employment Policy Observatory. Finally, throughout 2021 the team continued to publish academic papers in leading international and national journals.

Work progressed on a number of EU-funded projects. A report was published on blockchain skills demand in Europe under the Erasmus-funded Chaise project. Work was started on a more detailed examination of the blockchain industry in Ireland, as part of UNTANGLED, a Horizon 2020-funded project. Research into youth unemployment in Europe commenced under a Cowork4YOUTH award funded through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. Researchers were also involved in a comparative study of educational provision in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, funded by the Shared Island Unit.

The research on childhood disability, funded by Pobal, examines the future needs and requirements of children with disabilities, using data from the Census of Population and the GUI study. The research is important for planning purposes, but also highlights the sensitivity of disability estimates to survey measurement approaches. Using the most recent Census, 4.5 per cent of 3 to 5 year olds were reported as having a disability. Using GUI data and based on teachers' assessment for children aged 5, the comparable estimate of disability is 8.8 per cent.

A study on the heterogeneous impacts of minimum-wage changes analysed the dynamic impacts of three consecutive minimum-wage increases in 2016, 2017 and 2018. While it was found that the hours worked of minimum-waged employees fell slightly as a consequence of these changes, falls were more pronounced among specific groups of workers. However, despite some declines in hours worked following the minimum-wage increases, the take-home pay of minimum-wage employees increased over the study period.

### **3.8 Macroeconomics**

The macroeconomic research programme in the ESRI in 2021 addressed issues such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, the housing market, Brexit, the economic impacts of the transition to a low-carbon economy and the all-Ireland economy.

Research highlights include a report examining the extent of cross-border trade in services on the island of Ireland and the characteristics of the firms participating in this trade. These services included transportation and storage, business services and computer consultancy. A key contribution of the report is a stocktake of the various data sources available on cross-border services trade.

A model-based update of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Irish economy, using data collected since the evolution of the pandemic including the third wave of early 2021, was

published. The research also used early indicators to anticipate the evolution of the economy in the short term.

The impact of the pandemic on both the aggregate macroeconomy and the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were examined as part of the ongoing joint research programme between the ESRI, the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners. COSMO, the macroeconometric model, developed a range of potential recovery paths based on the most recent data available on the epidemiological and economic developments. The work on the impact of the pandemic on SMEs shows that a sizable percentage experienced financial distress as a result of the restrictions but that government supports were important in mitigating the extent of the impact.

Other work under the research programme with the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners investigated the initial impacts of Brexit on trade, showing a shift in import sourcing from Great Britain to Northern Ireland for many sectors. The programme also funded work on climate adaptation costs, examining the impact of policy initiatives relating to carbon taxation, electric vehicle (EV) and retrofitting targets. The results showed that an increase in carbon tax has substantial impacts on emission reduction, and that EV adoption and HP installations can further reduce emissions, though to a lesser degree than the carbon-tax increase.

In 2021, research under the joint programme with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government focused on the issues of rent regulations, continued the theme of affordability and undertook work on modelling the construction sector for Ireland. Research was also conducted on issues relating to the spatial distribution of healthcare demand, as well as commuting patterns and housing activity. The ESRI also continued to produce the quarterly Rent Index for the Residential Tenancies Board through 2021. The index is used to determine which local electoral areas are designated as rent pressure zones.

The year 2021 saw the launch of a new research programme with the Department of the Taoiseach on the economic and social opportunities from increased co-operation on a shared island. The purpose of the programme is to produce research outputs that will add to understanding of current and potential linkages across the island of Ireland in a range of economic, social and environmental domains. Three main research outputs were published in 2021: scoping papers on four possible research topics (May 2021); a report on cross-border trade in services (December 2021); and a report on the potential for securing all-island FDI (December 2021).

The Quarterly Economic Commentary continues to provide analysis of recent economic developments in the Irish economy as well as short-term forecasts for key economic indicators. There was strong focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the Irish economy. Research was produced on the potential impact of COVID-19 on the public finances, Ireland's debt sustainability, and provision of publicly provided housing.

### **3.9 Migration, integration and demography**

Research in this area is conducted under a number of strands. The first strand relates to the ESRI being Ireland's National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN), funded by the European Commission and the Department of Justice.

In August, EMN Ireland published a study on how data are managed during the international protection procedure, from biographical data to the details of a person's protection claim. In November, the EMN published a report on immigration-related detention. The absence of a dedicated immigration detention facility was highlighted, and the use of prisons and Garda Síochána stations instead. The report found that alternatives to detention are used routinely. The study was launched at an EMN Ireland webinar, which provided an EU overview of the use of immigration detention and alternatives, as well as perspectives from the Border Management Unit, the Department of Justice and civil society.

A second strand of research falls under the research programme on integration and equality, funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, which commenced in 2017. Researchers reviewed research evidence on measures to combat racial discrimination and promote diversity in the labour market, including diversity initiatives, affirmative action, unconscious-bias training and new technologies. The report was presented to the Independent Anti-Racism Committee in November 2021. Researchers also prepared a submission to this committee in July 2021, drawing on ESRI research in the area, to inform the development of the National Action Plan Against Racism.

During 2021, EMN Ireland contributed input to the *Annual report on migration and asylum 2020*, an EU-wide review of asylum and migration policy developments. It compiled national submissions to studies on trafficking in human beings and the integration of migrant women. Both submissions will be published in 2022, along with a study on irregularly-staying migrants. EMN Ireland also contributed to a wide range of shorter EU studies, including on international researchers, skills mobility partnerships, transition to adulthood of unaccompanied minors, and mental health supports, many of which will be published in 2022.

Another report drafted in 2021 under the integration programme explored the housing and family situation of migrants using 2016 census microdata, analysing housing tenure, overcrowding, homelessness, household composition, number of children and intermarriage. A final project commenced in this programme analysed the wages and working conditions of non-Irish nationals in Ireland using labour-force survey data matched to Revenue records of earnings. Finally, in July 2021 researchers presented a summary of lessons for policy from the integration research programme to the Migrant Integration Strategy Monitoring and Coordination Committee led by Dr Roderic O'Gorman TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### **3.10 Social inclusion and equality**

Research on social inclusion and equality investigates factors influencing access to the material and other resources required to participate in economic and social life, and the processes that lead to inequalities in opportunities and outcomes.

The tenth report in a research programme funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, *Monitoring adequate housing in Ireland* investigated six dimensions of housing adequacy: accessibility, affordability, security of tenure, cultural adequacy, quality, and location. Lone parents and their children account for 53 per cent of all homeless families and are much more likely to experience poor housing than other household types. Young people, migrants, people with disabilities, Travellers and others experience disadvantage in the Irish housing system. Another report, published in June 2021, *Monitoring decent work in Ireland*, developed indicators of decent work and assessed pre-pandemic evidence in Ireland.

In the social inclusion area, the Community Foundation for Ireland funded a report called *Poverty, income inequality and living standards in Ireland*, published in May 2021, which explored long-term trends in incomes, income inequality and poverty in Ireland. A report funded by the Department of Social Protection, published in October 2021, confirmed the validity of the official deprivation and consistent poverty measures used in Ireland. Research was also undertaken to assess the impact of simulated changes in employment levels and welfare rates on rates of income. This research is due to be published in early 2022.

Work on a programme of research with the National Disability Authority examined the experiences of people with disabilities across a range of key policy areas, including personal assistance services to support community living and employment patterns of this group. A report published in September 2021 highlighted the education and employment disadvantages experienced by people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities. Research on disability among pre-school children, undertaken with Pobal to inform the ongoing development of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) childcare programme, was published in November 2021.

Three studies were published as part of a research programme with the Department of Equality, Children, Disability, Integration and Youth. The first was a study of the 'risk and protective factors in adolescent behaviour'. A second study examined the nature of father-child interactions and the quality of father-child relationships from infancy to middle childhood (nine years). This study found that early paternal involvement in care was linked to greater bonding between the father and infant and had a lasting effect on relationship quality measured in later childhood. Working longer hours emerged as a barrier to paternal involvement, while family-friendly working practices were found to facilitate ongoing involvement. A third study on the dynamics of child poverty examined accumulated exposure to poverty over nine years for both the '98 and '08 GUI child cohorts. This study also highlighted family and labour-market events that trigger entry to and exits from poverty.

A scoping project funded by the Public Appointments Service, commenced in December, aims to develop an equality monitoring dashboard to better understand equality and diversity in public-sector recruitment.

ESRI researchers appeared in April before an Oireachtas Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community, in a session focusing on Travellers in the labour market, drawing on previous ESRI research.

### 3.11 Tax, welfare and pensions

This research area examines the design of the tax, welfare and pensions system, with a focus on the effect it has on redistribution and incentives to work. Much of this work uses SWITCH, the ESRI tax and benefit model, to simulate the impact of reforms on households. In 2021, research in this area was concentrated on the themes of: the tax and welfare system in a post-pandemic Ireland; childcare affordability; pension auto-enrolment; homecare support; and gender inequality. Each of the outputs mentioned below is part of the Tax, Welfare and Pensions work programme, supported by funding from the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Health, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Department of Finance, as well as through the grant-in-aid provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

In May, researchers presented the paper, 'Options for raising tax revenue in Ireland', at the annual Budget Perspectives conference. Future spending pressures combined with potential declines in corporation and motor tax receipts mean that significant tax increases are likely to be needed in the years ahead. The research showed that increases in income tax, VAT or local property tax could raise significant sums of revenue. Co-authors Barra Roantree and Theano Kakoulidou subsequently gave evidence on this topic to the Oireachtas Budgetary Oversight Committee.

In June, researchers presented a second paper, 'COVID-19 and the Irish welfare system', at the Budget Perspectives conference. This research considered why additional measures, such as the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme, were deemed necessary by policymakers to support household income during the pandemic, and estimated that these additional measures halved the magnitude of household income losses. While concerns had been raised that the PUP was disincentivising employment, the study estimated that the vast majority of PUP recipients would be financially better off in employment.

In October, the tax, welfare and pensions team held its post-Budget briefing. They showed how changes announced in Budget 2022 would, on average, compensate households for forecast price growth and leave poverty slightly lower than would an inflation-proofed budget. Karina Doorley subsequently gave evidence to the Oireachtas Budgetary Oversight Committee regarding the impact of Budget 2022, given rising inflation forecasts.

Research in this area also examined the topic of childcare affordability, finding that the National Childcare Scheme improves the affordability of childcare in Ireland while pointing out features of the scheme that may disincentivise work. In the area of pensions, research examined the distributional, poverty and inequality impacts of pension auto-enrolment, finding that middle-income households would see the largest negative impact. On the topic of gender inequality, two research articles examined the evolution of the gender wage gap in Ireland between 2011 and 2018 and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender income inequality in Ireland. A methodological contribution to the inequality literature examined the role of equivalences scales and units of analysis in headline poverty and inequality indices in Europe.

The work of the tax, welfare and pensions team has always had an important policy focus. This was reflected in the announcement in December 2021 that research on the distributional effect of the pandemic, presented by the team in April 2020, had been awarded the Miriam Hederman O'Brien

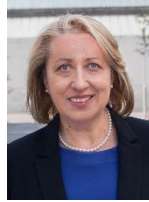
Prize, which recognises outstanding original work in Irish fiscal policy. It was also reflected in the appointment by the European Commission of team members as consultants to advise on improving the engagement of European Member States with pre- and post-Budget analysis.

#### 4. RESEARCH AREA COORDINATORS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

- **Behavioural Science** (Professor Pete Lunn)



- **Competitiveness, Trade and FDI** (Professor Iulia Siedschlag)



- **Education** (Professor Selina McCoy and Professor Emer Smyth)



- **Energy, Environment and Infrastructure** (Professor John Curtis and Professor Seán Lyons)



- **Growing Up in Ireland** (Professor Emer Smyth and Professor Dorothy Watson)



- **Health and Quality of Life** (Professor Seán Lyons, Dr Anne Nolan, Dr Maev-Ann Wren)



- **Labour Markets and Skills** (Professor Seamus McGuinness)



- **Macroeconomics** (Professor Kieran McQuinn and Professor Martina Lawless)



- **Migration, Integration and Demography** (Professor Frances McGinnity and Dr Emma Quinn)



- **Social Inclusion and Equality** (Professor Frances McGinnity and Bertrand Maître)



- **Taxation, Welfare and Pensions** (Dr Claire Keane)



## 5. STAFF AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

<b>Director</b>	Amélie Maddock	Emily Cunniffe
Alan Barrett	Seamus McGuinness	Sarah Curristan
	Kieran McQuinn	Merike Darmody
<b>Economic Analysis</b>	David Meier	Michael Doolan
Adele Bergin	Gretta Mohan	Karina Doorley
Klavs Ciprikis	Wellington Osawe	Katie Duffy
John Curtis (Head of Division)	Conor O'Toole	Leonie Hill
Kelly de Bruin	Arya Pillia	Theono Kakoulidou
Anne Devlin	Paul Redmond	Claire Keane
Wendy Disch	Eva Shiel	Conor Keegan
Paul Egan	Iulia Siedschlag	James Laurence
Niall Farrell	Rachel Slaymaker	Pete Lunn
Abián García Rodríguez	Constantine Spandagos	Bertrand Maître
Míde Griffin	Miguel Tovar Reanos	Selina McCoy
Tensay Hadush Meles	Adele Whelan	Evie McCullough
Loïc Henry	Aykut Mert Yakut	Frances McGinnity
Elish Kelly	Weijie Yan	Kieran Mohr
Eoin Kenny		Anne Nolan
Janez Kren	<b>Social Research</b>	Seamus O'Malley
Akhilesh Kumar Verma	Ylva Andersson	Alexandros Papadopoulos
Martina Lawless	Michelle Barrett	Michał Polakowski
Genaro Longoria	Aoife Brick	Olga Poluektova
Muireann Á. Lynch	Eamonn Carroll	Emma Quinn
Seán Lyons	Sheelah Connolly	Mark Regan

Barra Roantree	Órlaith Hennessy	Bernice Clancy
Deirdre Robertson	Lisa Kelly	Liz Coyle
Helen Russell (Head of Division)	Eoin Keogh	Stephen Cunningham
Anne Sheridan	Eoin McNamara	Liana D’Emidio
Amy Stapleton	Aoife Murphy	Julianne Flynn
Shane Timmons	Aisling Murray	David Gorman
Dora Tuda	Adam Nolan	Adrienne Jinks
Brendan Walsh	Desmond O’Mahony	Rachel Joyce
Maev-Ann Wren	Amanda Quail	Mark Magee
Keyu Ye	Bernadette Ryan	Francis McEvoy
	Emer Smyth (Head of Division)	Clare O’Neill (IT Manager)
<b><i>Growing Up in Ireland</i></b>	Fionnuala Waters	Charles O’Regan (Head of Finance)
Elizabeth Burke		Fiona Owens
Solange Daini	<b>Corporate Resources</b>	Stephen Sammon
Jennifer Downey	Eleanor Bannerton	Jeanne Sutton
Brendan Duggan	(Operations Manager)	LeAnnie Wilson
Ruth Gallagher	Claire Buckley (HR Manager)	
Caroline Goodwin	Sarah Burns	

## 6. ESRI COUNCIL – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

### **Sean O'Driscoll, President and Chairperson**

Sean O'Driscoll was appointed President and Chairperson of the ESRI on 27 May 2020. Mr O'Driscoll joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2017. He is a former Chair and Chief Executive of the Glen Dimplex Group and a former Partner in KPMG. He is a member of the Trilateral Commission and of the Ireland 2040 Delivery Board. He is a former Director of Allied Irish Banks, former member of the National Competitiveness Council of Ireland and a former member of a number of other government-appointed advisory groups. Mr O'Driscoll is the recipient of an OBE and a Légion d'Honneur Award.

### **Alan Barrett, Director**

Alan Barrett first joined the ESRI in 1994 and became Director of the Institute in July 2015, at which point he joined the Council. During his time with the Institute, he was seconded to the Department of Finance (2001–2003) and to The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) at Trinity College Dublin (2011–2013). He was a member of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council from 2011 to 2015. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, a Research Fellow with IZA (Institute for Labor Economics) in Bonn, Germany, and an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland. He is also a member (ex officio) of the Climate Change Advisory Council.

### **Pádraig Dalton, Director General, Central Statistics Office**

Padraig Dalton joined the Council of the ESRI in July 2012 and stepped down in February 2021. He is a career statistician who joined the Central Statistics Office in November 1991, taking up the position of Director General in May 2012. He is a member of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), which provides professional guidance to the European Statistical System (ESS) for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. He is also Chair of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) High Level Group on the Modernisation of Official Statistics and is an ex-officio member of the National Statistics Board (NSB).

### **Kary Hayward, Professor of Political Sociology, Queen's University Belfast**

Professor Katy Hayward joined the Council of the ESRI in September 2021. She is Professor of Political Sociology at Queen's University Belfast and a Senior Fellow of the *UK in a Changing Europe* think tank, where she leads a major ESRC-funded project on the topic of the future and status of Northern Ireland after Brexit.

### **Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics, University of Surrey**

Professor Sandra McNally joined the Council of the ESRI in September 2021. She is a Professor of Economics at the University of Surrey. She is Director of the Centre for Vocational Education Research at the London School of Economics and Director of the Education and Skills Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

**John Martin**, former Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

John Martin joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2015 and stepped down in May 2021. He was Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the OECD from 2000 to early 2013. From 2005 to 2017, he was a member of the French Prime Minister's Employment Policy Council. He is a member of the National Statistics Board of Ireland and Chair of the Labour Market Advisory Council. His other professional roles include the following: Adjunct Research Fellow, UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy; IZA Research Fellow; and Policy Associate of the Leverhulme Centre for Research on Globalisation and Economic Policy at the University of Nottingham. In 2013, he was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

**Gabriel Makhoul**, Central Bank of Ireland

Gabriel Makhoul joined the Council of the ESRI in 2020. He is Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, chairs the Central Bank Commission, is a member of the Governing Council of the European Central Bank and of the European Systemic Risk Board, and is Ireland's Alternate Governor at the International Monetary Fund. Before joining the Central Bank of Ireland, he was Secretary to the New Zealand Treasury and the Government's Chief Economic and Financial Adviser. In addition, he was New Zealand's Alternate Governor at the World Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He was also co-chair of the Trans-Tasman Banking Council. Previously, Gabriel worked in the UK civil service where his roles ranged from policy on domestic and international tax issues through to large-scale operational delivery. He has also chaired the OECD's Committee on Fiscal Affairs and was responsible for the UK's Government Banking Service.

**David Moloney**, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

David Moloney joined the Council of the ESRI in November 2010. He is the Acting Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform since January 2021. He is head of the Labour Market and Enterprise Division of the Department, with responsibility for various expenditure areas including Social Protection, Housing, Enterprise and Agriculture and for the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES).

**Rónán Murphy**, former Senior Partner, PwC and current board member, Davy, ICON PLC and Greencoat Renewables PLC

Rónán Murphy joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2017. He is a non-executive director of Davy and ICON PLC and Chair of Greencoat Renewables PLC. He is also Chairperson of Business in the Community Ireland. Mr Murphy was previously Senior Partner of PwC Ireland, a position he was elected to in 2007 and was re-elected to for a further four-year term in July 2011. He joined PwC in 1980 and was admitted to the partnership in 1992. In 1995, he joined the firm's Leadership Team and held a number of operational leadership roles, prior to being appointed as Partner in charge of the firm's assurance practice in 2003, a position he held for four years. Mr Murphy was a member of the PwC EMEA Leadership Board from 2010 to 2015. He completed a Bachelor of Commerce and Master's in Business Studies at University College Dublin before qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 1982. He is a founding member of the British Irish Chamber of Commerce.

**Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, President NUI Galway**

Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh joined the Council of the ESRI in September 2021. He is President of NUI Galway, his alma mater, since January 2018. Previously, he was Professor of Accounting and Dean of Business at UCD having also held faculty positions at Dublin City University and the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and a Fulbright scholarship at Northeastern University, Boston. A Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland, he holds a PhD in Accounting from the University of Leeds and has published widely in the area of financial reporting. Currently also on the board of the National Library of Ireland, he is a former Independent Non-Executive Director of Avolon Holdings Limited, and has served on the Audit Committees of the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources (as Chair), the Department of Finance and the Radiological Protection Institute.

**Rowena Pecchenino, Professor of Economics, Maynooth University**

Professor Rowena Pecchenino joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2017. She is Professor of Economics at Maynooth University. After earning her PhD from the University of Wisconsin she joined the Department of Economics at Michigan State University, where she went on to be Professor and Department Chair. At Maynooth University she has served as Head of the Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. She has been a member of the Irish Research Council and the Department of Health and Children Expert Group on Resource Allocation and Financing in the Health Sector, and has just stepped down as President of the Irish Economic Association. She is Section Chair of Scholars at Risk Network – Ireland. She has published and continues to conduct research in a number of distinct fields in economics, from defence economics to Irish economic history to the conjunction of economics and theology. She has published widely in journals such as the *American Economic Review*, *The Economic Journal* and the *Journal of Public Economics*.

**Orlaigh Quinn, Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment**

As Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Dr Orlaigh Quinn advises Government and leads the Department and its 16 offices and agencies in promoting the creation of high-quality and sustainable full employment; by championing enterprise, supporting and incentivising a competitive and innovative research and enterprise base, negotiating international trade agreements and promoting fair and competitive employment and markets. A career civil servant, she has held leadership positions across several public bodies; spearheading reform of Ireland's public and civil service at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and as Head of Corporate and Head of National Pensions in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. She has also led on EU and international affairs and served as an expert adviser on employment and social policy at the European Commission. She is a former Visiting Research Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and holds a Master's in Public Management and a Doctorate in Governance from Queen's University Belfast. She is the author of two books on public policy topics.

**Patrick Rabbitte, former Minister and former leader of the Labour Party, Chairperson of Tusla – Child and Family Agency**

Patrick Rabbitte joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2017. He is a former Irish Labour Party politician who served as Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources from 2011

to 2014. He was Leader of the Labour Party from 2002 to 2007 and Minister of State for Commerce, Science and Technology from 1994 to 1997. He is Chairperson of Tusla – Child and Family Agency.

**Sally Shortall, Professor, Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy, Newcastle University**

Professor Sally Shortall joined the Council of the ESRI in May 2015 and stepped down in May 2021. She is the Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy, Newcastle University. She has served as an expert advisor to the UK Food Standards Agency, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the OECD. She was recently Principal Investigator on a report on women in agriculture in Scotland for the Scottish Government, which has set up a taskforce to consider implementation of the recommendations of this report. Ms Shortall served two terms as President of the European Society for Rural Sociology (2015–2019) and is currently the First Deputy Vice President of the International Rural Sociology Association. Her research interests include rural women, rural development theory and practice, community and stakeholder engagement in policy practice and how evidence is used to inform policy.

## **7. WHITAKER PATRONS AND CORPORATE MEMBERS**

The ESRI plays a leading role in producing independent research that allows policymakers in Ireland to better understand the economic and social landscape which shapes Ireland. One goal of the ESRI is to ensure that the Institute has a strong revenue stream to fund valuable, independent social and economic research initiatives that will have a long-term impact on Irish society. In 2021, we launched a compelling new membership programme with two categories of membership: 1) Whitaker patron and 2) corporate membership.

We are very pleased to report that revenue from both categories of membership grew significantly in 2021, which is a testament to the reputation and hard work of the team at the ESRI. We would like to acknowledge the following organisations and thank them and other members for their valuable support.

### **WHITAKER PATRONS**

AIB

EirGrid

ESB

ICON

Davy

Intel

Microsoft

### **CORPORATE MEMBERS**

Musgrave Group

OHM Group (Jaguar)

Tesco

Enterprise Ireland

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Dublin 2  
Telephone **+353 1 863 2000**  
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