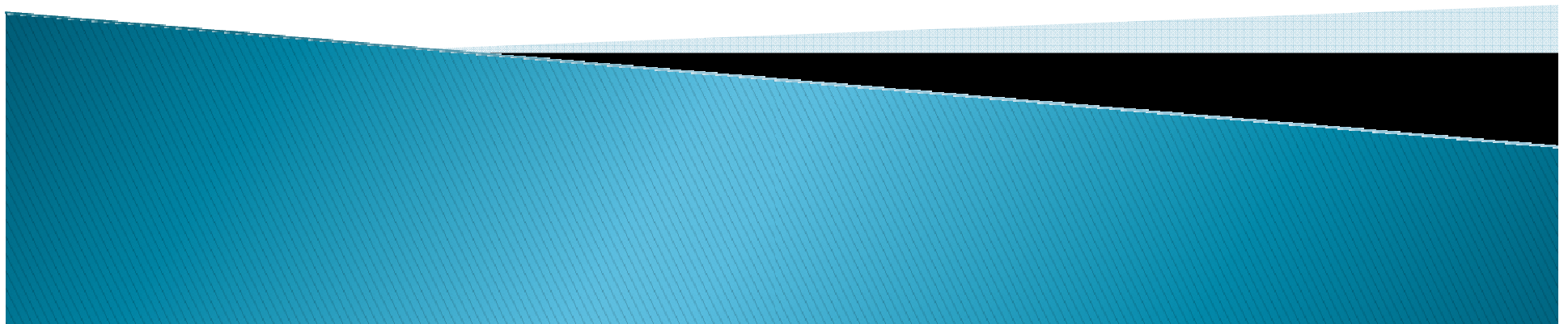


Relating Policy and Programme  
Perspectives in **Ireland**  
to R&D and Higher Education (SF)  
measures in **Estonia**

*Helena Acheson*

*Tallinn, 17th August 2011*



# No shortage of National Strategies for research, innovation and education....e.g.

- ▶ 1999. **National Development Plan 2000–2006**

*Gov strategic decision to develop a world-class research system; significant PRTL and SFI investments*

- ▶ 2006. **Science, Technology & Innovation 2006–2013**

*Joined up thinking, followed by joined up action – for the first time, STI strategy developed on a whole of Government basis with a strong human capital focus. New Governance structure*

- ▶ 2008. **Building Ireland's Smart Economy, a Framework for sustainable economic renewal**

*Securing the Enterprise Economy and Restoring Competitiveness; **Building the Ideas Economy – Creating 'The Innovation Island'**; Enhancing the Environment and Securing Energy Supplies; Investing in Critical Infrastructure; Efficient and Effective Public Services and Smart Regulation*

- ▶ 2010. **Innovation Ireland – report of Innovation Task Force**

*Objective is to have a significant number of large, world leading, innovation – intensive companies, each having a global footprint, many of which are Irish headquartered and owned.*

- ▶ 2010. **Making it Happen – growing enterprise for Ireland**

*A coherent narrative for enterprise policy within the context of the Smart Economy. Actions needed to ensure a competitive, sustainable enterprise base that will deliver growth and jobs within the medium-term to 2015 are identified.*

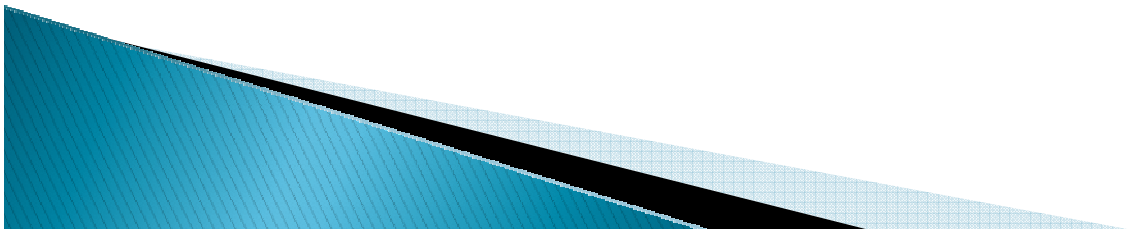
- ▶ 2011. **Higher Education to 2030**

*Larger and more diverse student cohorts; need to simultaneously enhance quality and relevance, connecting better with the wider needs of **society** and the **economy**, while operating in a more competitive globalised environment. **plus** Forum of Enterprise Employers*



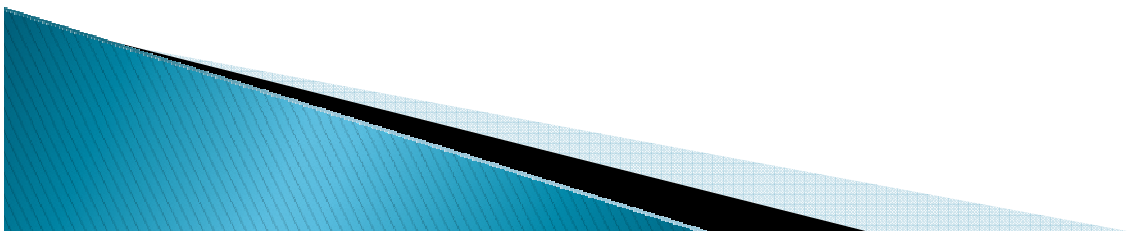
# .....and with all that.....

1. Strategies are developed in an integrated way – with varying degrees of success
  - ✓requires a ‘strong’ ministry to champion
2. However, integrated implementation is a much more challenging task
  - ✓Cabinet Sub-Committee accountable to Cabinet
3. Programme Evaluation culture from ERDF period currently being ‘rediscovered’
  - ✓in part motivated by crisis in public finances
4. Nevertheless, some initiatives work well and could be useful for Estonia to consider in the context of the current evaluation:
  - Alignment of labour market with industry needs
  - Stimulating better industry–higher education collaboration
  - Alignment of research outputs with industry needs
  - More strategic and integrated collaboration between higher education research actors



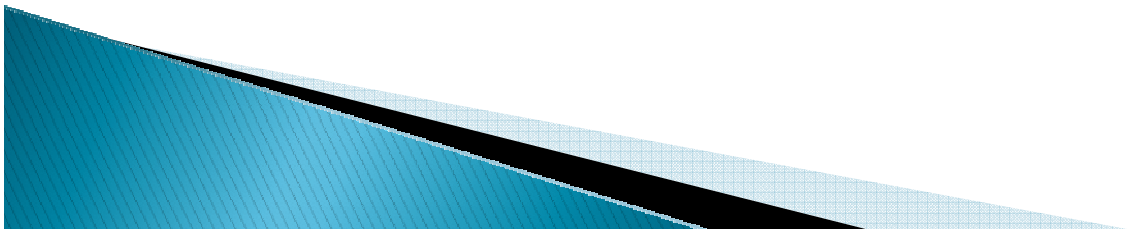
# Expert Group on Future Skills Needs – EGFSN

- ▶ Established in 1997
- ▶ Makes recommendations to Government regarding actions needed to address labour market development and skills needs for enterprise in Ireland
- ▶ Recommendations targeted to education and training
- ▶ Methodologies employed
  1. Skills foresight & benchmarking
  2. Data collection and analysis on demand and supply of skilled labour
- ▶ Also engage in influencing and monitoring implementation
- ▶ Membership composition is key to success



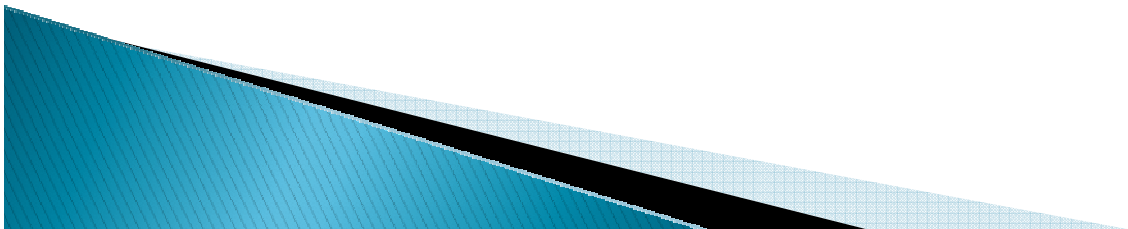
# .....EGFSN outputs...and some impacts

- ▶ Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy
- ▶ All Island Skills Study
- ▶ **Raising Mathematical Achievement**
  - Bonus points for Honours Mathematics in final second-level State examination
- ▶ Skills Needs in the Irish Economy; The Role of Migration
- ▶ Future Requirements for High-Level ICT skills in the ICT Sector
- ▶ Future Skills Need of the Irish Medical Devices Sector
- ▶ **The Future Skills and Research Needs of the International Financial Services Industry**
  - FMC<sup>2</sup> –Financial Management & Computation Research Cluster [www.fmc-cluster.org](http://www.fmc-cluster.org)
- ▶ International Digital Media Industry: Implications for Ireland



# Stimulating and supporting Higher Education – Industry collaboration

- ▶ Demand-led (industry) versus supply-push (HE researchers) ?
- ▶ **Working with other companies**
  - Industry-led Research Networks Programme (ILRP) and the Competence Centres Initiative
  - Pooled Innovation Vouchers
  - Enterprise Ireland R&D Fund
- ▶ **Working with research teams in Irish Higher Education Institutes**
  - Innovation Vouchers
  - Innovation Partnership Programme
  - Applied Research Enhancement Centres



# National Research funding for Universities

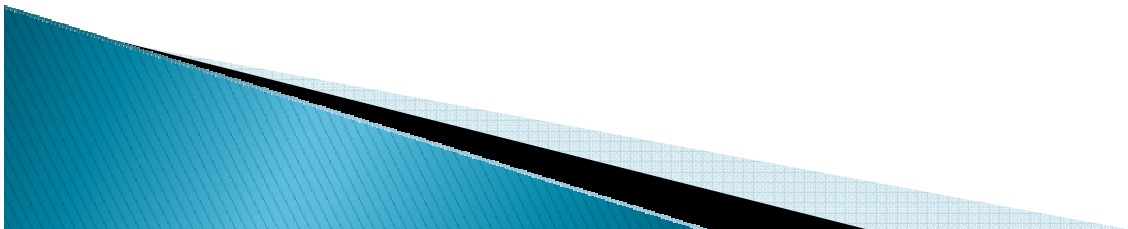
- ▶ Since 1998, the **Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTL)** has awarded €1.22 billion (includes exchequer and private matching funds) to date.
- ▶ Based over five cycles, the ultimate aim of the programme is to propel Ireland toward establishing an international profile as a premier location for carrying out world class research and development.
- ▶ PRTL provides integrated financial support for institutional strategies, programmes and infrastructure in key areas of research spread across all disciplines. The programme supports research in humanities, science, technology and the social sciences, including business and law.
- ▶ <http://www.heai.ie/en/node/233>
- ▶ The SFI **Centres for Science, Engineering & Technology (CSETs)** are major collaborative, often multidisciplinary, centres for excellence. Funding is up to €25m over 5 years with a 25% cost share from industry. New partners (industrial and academic) may join a CSET at any time. SFI currently supports 10 CSETs.
- ▶ The **Strategic Research Clusters (SRC)** are groups of researchers addressing topics of strategic importance for Ireland. Funding is up to €7.5m over 5 years and the 25% industry cost-share is only required after month 36. SFI currently supports 19 SRCs.

Higher Education Authority

Science Foundation Ireland

# Objectives & Selection for Funding

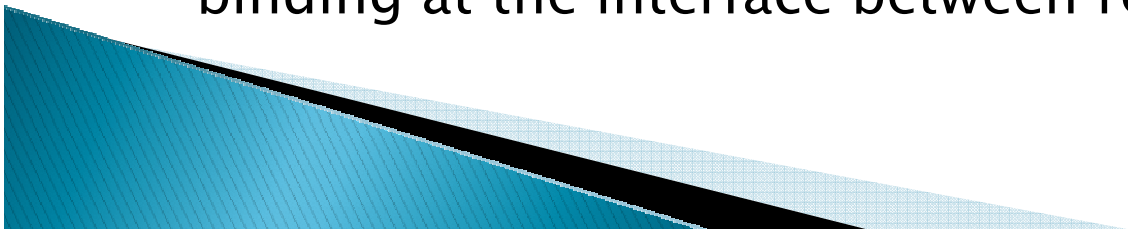
- ▶ To enable a strategic and planned approach..... to the long-term development of their research capabilities, consistent with their existing and developing research strengths and capabilities and national goals.
- ▶ To promote the development of high quality research capabilities in third-level institutions, so as to enhance the quality and relevance of graduate output and skills.
- ▶ ... to provide support for outstandingly talented individual researchers and teams within institutions and the encouragement of co-operation between researchers both within the institutions and between institutions ..... within the two parts of the binary system and within Ireland, the EU and internationally.
- ▶ The PRTL awards are evaluated by an international panel of distinguished researchers and scholars on the basis of excellence in:
  - ▶ **Strategic planning and focus**
  - ▶ Inter-institutional collaboration
  - ▶ Research quality
  - ▶ Impact of research on teaching and learning
- ▶ **Similarly for SFI / CSETs – the strategic planning and focus is a key evaluation criteria with continuous accompanying strategic policy assessments being undertaken**





## PRTL Impact Assessment Committee – *Professor Reijo Vihko, Professor Enric Banda, Professor Lauren B. Resnick and Professor John Morrill*

- ▶ Very significant levels of PRTL research funding ....being strategically and effectively deployed on a priority basis ....
- ▶ institutions beginning to adopt a more professional approach to research organisation, planning and management.
- ▶ Research quality, scale of operations, and critical mass are being achieved.
- ▶ Strong evidence of an emerging collaborative culture between all these institutions,
- ▶ The unique PRTL model seems destined to produce very highly skilled personnel for the national economy, as well as radically new scientific insights, if this level of inter-disciplinarity is maintained.
- ▶ Teaching and learning environments for third level students are being enhanced with a significantly closer binding at the interface between research and teaching.





*Tús maith, leath na hoibre.*