

COUNTRY REPORT

Social Sciences and Humanities in Ireland

2011 Report

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- regularly updated country profiles of SSH systems in 42 countries;
- a news service;
- annual monitoring reports for all countries covered;
- synthesis reports bringing together key points;
- links to relevant reports and websites.

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1. Country Overview

1.1 Overview of SSH System

1.1.1 Brief description of the structure of the SSH research system

The three main levels of the Irish SSH research system are the political level, the operational level and the research performers level.

At the top of the SSH research structure is political sub-sector of which the cabinet is the primary decision-making entity. A cabinet sub-committee on science, technology and innovation (STI) was established in 2004 to oversee the State's investment in research and development.

Decisions taken at the political level are implemented at operational level. The main actors here are the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, which are the main providers of funding for SSH research. Both are represented on the Inter Departmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation which comprises the main government departments with significant research budgets and whose main responsibilities are to take policy direction from the cabinet sub-committee on STI, develop policies that reflect those policy directions and oversee the implementation of those policies. The Inter Departmental Committee plays a key role in ensuring a "*joined up government*" approach to science and technology.

The Department of Education and Skills is the provider to the universities and institutes of technology of the core or "block" grant provided which is an important source of funds for SSH research. The block grant is provided through the Higher Education Authority (HEA), which has a statutory planning and policy development role in relation to higher education and research in Ireland.

The Department of Education and Skills is also the parent ministry of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) which is the only dedicated funder of SSH research in the Irish system. The IRCHSS provides funding for individual SSH researchers and, more recently, funds collaborative and project research in both national and international contexts. The IRCHSS also provides policy advice to the Department on SSH issues.

The Department had been responsible for a large research funding programme, the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI), which supports building strategic institutional research capacity, enabling the establishment of research centres and facilities, and joint research programmes and national initiatives. In 2010, the government transferred responsibility for the PRTLTI to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Established in 1998, the PRTLTI has, in latter years, been an important source of funds for a number of large scale inter-institutional SSH research projects.

A number of policy advisory organisations are found in the operational level and include Forfás (the policy and advisory body for enterprise and science), the Chief Scientific Adviser, the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the Competitiveness Council.

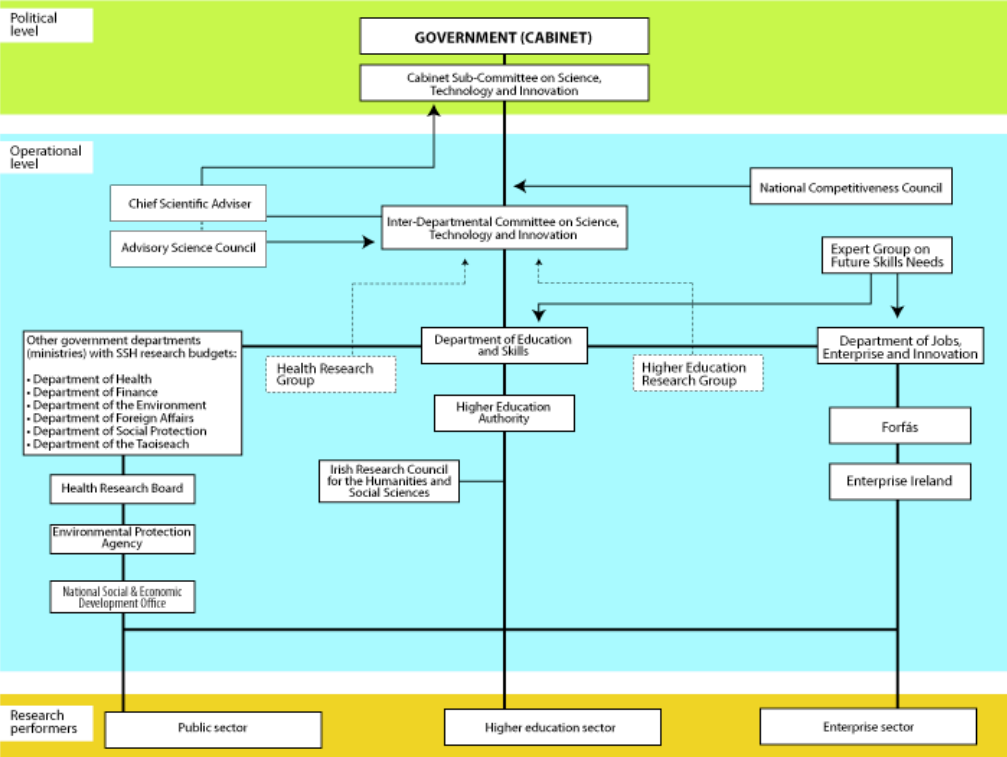
A number of government departments and agencies under their aegis both fund and perform SSH research. In recent years, the Health Research Board has emerged as a significant funder of SSH research.

Eurostat estimates that the total amount of SSH research undertaken by research performers in Ireland amounted to €216m in 2008 of which the higher education sector accounted for €201m and the public research sector accounted for the balance of €15m.

1.1.2 Overview of structure

The diagram below provides an overview of the SSH system in Ireland with special focus on the political, operational (policy advice and implementation, funding providers) and research performer levels.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (SSH) RESEARCH SECTOR IN IRELAND



1.2 Policy challenges and developments

1.2.1 Main societal challenges translated into SSH research

The main Irish policy documents are relatively silent on the issue of translating societal challenges into social sciences and humanities research. The main policy document that references SSH research is the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2007-2013* (SSTI) [1]. The strategy document identifies targets for the number of SSH PhDs to be achieved by 2013 and for the structure and composition of SSH research teams. The SSTI while it highlights national thematic priorities in relation to biotechnology, ICT, energy and health does not, however, identify any SSH research thematic areas.

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences has, since 2003, been funding thematic projects involving individual researchers or groups of researchers. The main thematic areas that the IRCHSS has funded include:

- Research infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences;
- Innovation and Society;
- Migration and Cultural Diversity;
- The ‘New Economy’: Problems of Definition and Strategies for Growth, Development and Inclusion;
- Thinking Globally: Issues and Investigative Practices;
- The Making of Ireland: Paths to Modernity.

The thematic areas funded were approved by the academic council of the IRCHSS in consultation with the social sciences and humanities research community. The IRCHSS has not, however, funded any further thematic research projects since 2008.

The *Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions* (PRTLTI) has funded research projects submitted by third level institutions that focus on broad thematic areas. A number of recent SSH research institutes funded by the PRTLTI have focused on widening access to, and preserving, Irish culture through a digitisation programme, which was a commitment in the National Development Plan 2007-2013. The most recent funding cycle of the PRTLTI, Cycle 5, provided funding of €6.8m to the Digital Arts and Humanities Structured PhD Programme promoted by Trinity College Dublin, National University of Ireland, Galway, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Royal Irish Academy, Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork.

The digital humanities were identified by the HEA/IRCHSS foresight report into the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS) as being a key development to underpin the success of the AHSS in the future.

1.2.2 New SSH policy developments

In 2010, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) published the results of a major foresight exercise, *Playing to our Strengths: the role of the arts, humanities and social sciences and implications for public policy* [2].

This report was commissioned in 2008 by the HEA and IRCHSS, at the invitation of the Minister for Education and Skills. The document was a response to a report prepared by the Royal Irish Academy in March 2007, *Advancing Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland*.

The *Playing to our Strengths* document underlined the significant role that the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS) play in the Irish economy and society both directly and indirectly. It recognised that while the AHSS provide skills for specific economically important occupations and sectors, they also enhance quality of life generally and help to make Ireland an attractive place in which to live and do business. It is important to point out that the document covers the AHSS and is thus wider in the SSH sector.

The document identified a number of proposals for progress which were endorsed by the HEA and IRCHSS including changes to the structures and delivery of third level educational programmes, enhancing cooperation between third level institutions and other agencies, and developing the future role of the IRCHSS.

In January 2011, the government published the *National Strategy for Higher Education* [3], and endorsed it as the future blueprint for the sector. The Strategy set out changes for the higher education sector that are aimed at providing for:

- a more flexible system, with a greater choice of provision and modes of learning for an increasingly diverse cohort of students;
- improvements in the quality of the student experience, the quality of teaching and learning and the relevance of learning outcomes; and
- ensuring that higher education connects more effectively with wider social, economic and enterprise needs through its staff, the quality of its graduates, the relevance of its programmes, the quality of its research and its ability to translate that into high value jobs and real benefits for society.

The report made a series of wide-ranging recommendations and while some of these dwelt on the focus and impact of research activity within the third level sector the document was relatively silent on the issue of SSH research.

Since its publication, a new government was elected and the new Minister for Education and Skills is considering the report's conclusions and recommendations.

In September 2010, the previous government initiated a National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) with the purpose of identifying those areas of opportunity or challenge for Ireland with potential to deliver the greatest return to the economy via jobs and/or the exploitation of tangible or intangible goods. The findings from the NRPE — which is expected in October 2011 — will shape priorities for public R&D investment and may have an impact on SSH research funding.

While not specifically a SSH policy development issue, the severe economic and fiscal situation facing Ireland — which in November 2010 necessitated a bail-out programme from the EU and International Monetary Fund — has had, and is continuing to have, an adverse impact on the availability of research funding in the higher education and public research sectors. The new government has indicated that it will prioritise funding for close-to-market research in the manufacturing and internationally traded service sectors and for the commercialisation of research in the higher education sector. A consequence of this is reduced funding the IRCHSS; according to the Forfás publication, *Research and Development Funding and Performance in the State Sector 2009-2010* [3], its actual allocation of R&D funding was €14.4m in 2009 but this was anticipated to fall to €11.7m in 2010.

2. Policy Setting System

2.1 Government policy making and coordination

2.1.1 Policy formulation and coordination

The government, and in particular, the cabinet sit at the apex of the SSH policy formulation and coordination structure. In 2004, a new cabinet sub-committee on science, technology and innovation was established given the importance attached to R&D policy development and the size of the government's investment in research.

The cabinet sub-committee has access to a wide range of advice including the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation.

The policy directions issued by the sub-committee are followed through by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (IDCSTI) on which ministries with significant STI-related budgets are represented. The role of the IDCSTI is to develop policies that reflect those policy directions and oversee the implementation of those policies. The IDCSTI also has a key role in the implementation of the government's main research strategy document, the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013* (SSTI).

The SSTI while mainly focusing on research in the science, engineering and technology sectors sets targets for increasing the annual number of PhD graduates and post-docs from 284 in 2006 to 315 in 2013. Additionally, it specified the optimum size and structure of SSH research teams which by 2013 should consist of 1 principal investigator, 2 post-docs and 3 post-graduates.

A number of sub-groups have been established to assist the IDCSTI in the implementation of the SSTI. These include Technology Ireland, the Higher Education Research Group and the Health Research Group.

As there is no national SSH-specific policy document, the main government departments having a significant influence on SSH research policies are the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Department of Education and Skills is the parent ministry for the Higher Education Authority which is responsible for the allocation of the core or "block" grant to the recognised higher education institutions and for the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences which is the only dedicated funder of SSH research within the Irish system.

Both the block grant and IRCHSS's programmes are important sources of funding for research carried out in the higher education sector.

In 2010, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation was allocated responsibility for the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) which is an important funding programme for the development of the research infrastructure within the third level sector. The PRTLTI programme had previously been the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills. Recent PRTLTI funding cycles had seen significant allocations of funding being provided to the social sciences and humanities; in Cycle 4, the programme allocated €51.8m to three SSH projects.

2.1.2 SSH policy advice

There are a number of agencies that provide advice on SSH policy of which only the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences provides dedicated policy advice on SSH.

The Council reports to the Department of Education and Skills on issues relating to the advancement of SSH research in Ireland. It interacts with other advisory bodies such as the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation and the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser.

Other agencies and organisations provide advice on SSH issues as part of a wider policy advice remit. These include:

- The Higher Education Authority (HEA), the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research;
- Forfás, the enterprise and science policy and advisory board;
- The Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser;
- The Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation.

The Higher Education Authority has extensive advisory powers throughout the whole of the third-level education sector. In addition, the HEA is the funding authority for the universities, institutes of technology and a number of designated higher education institutions. It provides advice to the Department of Education and Skills on a range of research policies, including SSH.

The HEA and IRCHSS published the foresight report in 2010, *Playing to Our Strengths: the role of the arts, humanities and social sciences and the implications for public policy*. It is important to point out that the report covered the arts, which is not within the remit of IRCHSS.

Forfás also provides advice on SSH policy issues as part of a wider science policy remit. It was responsible for the preparation of the *Catching the Wave – a Services Strategy for Ireland* (2008) which recommended that economic policy give more explicit recognition to developing the services sector and to developing the contribution made by specific arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines in providing skills for the services sector.

Forfás provides secretariat supports to two national STI research policy advisory bodies, the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ACSTI).

The Chief Scientific Adviser is charged with providing scientific advice to the government across a spectrum of disciplines, providing scientific input and review in relation to the SSTI and providing scientific input to the work of the ACSTI.

ACSTI provides policy advice to the government on medium and long-term science, technology and innovation issues and contributes towards the development and implementation of a coherent and effective national strategy for STI. It provides the primary interface between stakeholders and policymakers in the STI arena.

ACSTI has prepared a number of reports, which impact on SSH research including career paths for researchers and Ireland's international research relationships.

The Rural Economy Research Centre (RERC), a unit within Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority (parent ministry is the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food), provides social science research and policy advice to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of Irish agriculture and to enhance the quality of life in rural Ireland. It undertakes research on issues such as spatial analysis, environmental policy analysis and agriculture and trade.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, has responsibilities for a wide range of licensing, enforcement, monitoring and assessment activities associated with environmental protection. Its responsibilities include assessing and informing the public and policy makers of the general state of the environment. The EPA's research funding programme for the period 2007-2013 is entitled Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE). Core research topics relating to SSH included in the STRIVE programme are socio-economics/sustainable development and waste and water resource management.

2.1.3 Main implementing bodies

The main SSH policy implementation bodies are the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The HEA is responsible on behalf of its parent ministry, the Department of Education and Skills, for the allocation of the core or "block" grant to the recognised higher education institutions. The survey of research and development expenditure in the higher education sector indicated that the block grant accounted for €87.9m of SSH research undertaken in 2008.

The HEA also provides support services to the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences; one of its staff members is the current temporary director of the IRCHSS.

The HEA currently manages the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (PRTL); previously, responsibility for this programme had rested with the Department of Education and Skills. Established in 1998, the Programme seeks to strengthen national research capabilities by investing in physical infrastructure.

There have been five cycles of the PRTL and latter cycles have seen the provision of funding for a number of large-scale, inter-institutional SSH research projects (€51.8m in Cycle 4) such as the €29m Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS) project comprising eight higher education institutions. Other SSH research institutes that have been established with PRTL funding include the Humanities Institute of Ireland, the Institute for International Studies, the Urban Institute and the National Programme of Research on Innovation, Society and Space.

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences is the only provider of SSH specific research funds in the Irish system. The IRCHSS was established in 2000 by the Minister for Education and Skills and is a member of the European Science Foundation. Its goal is to encourage excellence and the highest standards in the humanities and social sciences; to encourage co-operation between the humanities and social sciences; to develop opportunities and policies for the promotion of research; to support research and promote interdisciplinary collaboration; to facilitate communication and research networks; to promote cross-border co-operation on the island, and to maximise research funding.

The Research Council promotes international research collaboration through its role as the national agency for the Humanities and Social Sciences in FP7 and the European Research Areas NETWORKS HERA and NORFACE.

The IRCHSS has been providing postgraduate scholarships (since 1999), postdoctoral fellowships (since 2000), research and senior fellowships (since 2001) and thematic research project grants (since 2003). Between 2000 and 2009, IRCHSS's budget increased from €1.6m to €14.4m. Most funding from the IRCHSS is of responsive mode research projects.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation now has a more pronounced involvement in SSH policy implementation as a result of assuming responsibility for the PRTL following its transfer from the Department of Education and Skills in 2010.

In 2008, the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation published a report on development a framework for researcher careers. The implementation of ACSTI's recommendations are being taken forward by the Higher Education Research Group which was set up under the auspices of the Inter Departmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation to assist with the implementation of the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013.

Other organisations, which have responsibility for implementing SSH policies within their respective sectors, include the Health Research Board (HRB) which is under the aegis of the Department of Health and the EPA which is under the aegis of the Department of the Environment.

The HRB has responsibility for supporting and funding health research. It manages a number of health information systems and carries out health research in several nominated areas. The HRB manages funding programmes and commitments with a value of €180m. Funding covers all areas of health research from biomedical, translational, clinical and practice-based research, including population health and health services research. It is estimated that the HRB provided €18.3m to the higher education sector in 2007 for social sciences, humanities and arts research. The HRB supports a number of research fellows in health services research as well as a dedicated PhD Scholar's Programme in Health Services Research (the Health Services Research Institute in RCSI). The HRB also offers a number of funding schemes targeted at the health services, namely Strategic R&D Awards and projects grants in population health and health services.

The EPA commissions knowledge development research and policy analysis research that has a SSH dimension.

2.2 Impacting factors

2.2.1 Policy fields influencing SSH policies

The main policy fields influencing SSH policies are encapsulated in the vision statement underpinning Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2011 (SSTI) that *"Ireland by 2013 will be internationally renowned for the excellence of its research, and will be to the forefront in generating and using new knowledge for economic and social progress, within an innovation driven culture."* The two main and interlocking goals of the SSTI are to build a sustainable system of world-class research teams across all disciplines and to double Ireland's output of PhDs.

The main research funding programmes, the PRTL and the largely individual based research funding provided by the IRCHSS, are seen as being complementary contributors to the achievement of these national policy objectives.

In the absence of a national SSH-specific policy document, the SSTI is the main strategy, which specifies SSH policy targets: increasing the number of SSH PhDs and post-docs and developing SSH research teams with an optimum size and structure. The report of the Innovation Taskforce (March 2010), *Innovation Ireland* [5], referenced the importance of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) in supporting innovation, enterprise and employment, a theme that was also picked up in the AHSS foresight report, *Playing to Our Strengths* (September 2010).

The Innovation Taskforce report also noted there were great opportunities to be grasped by merging the potential of the AHSS with scientific possibilities and said that AHSS could contribute to innovation at a societal and individual level.

The HEA/IRCHSS foresight report highlighted that economic policy should focus explicitly on developing programmes for promoting services growth and development and on the contribution that can be made by specific AHSS disciplines in providing the skills for the services sector (including tourism, creative arts, media, etc.). This would build on the Forfás report *Catching the Wave – a Services Strategy for Ireland*. It also recommended that structures should be created through which the research capacity of AHSS disciplines can be incorporated into public policy development and public policy issues requiring research could be identified to the AHSS community. Applications for funding of research in the AHSS should, where appropriate, demonstrate how the outcomes of the research will be utilised and transferred.

2.2.2 Influence of European and International Developments

The HEA/IRCHSS foresight report, *Playing to Our Strengths*, identified developments at EU level, including the European Research Area and a reconfigured Framework Programme as a key influencer in highlighting the importance of investment in research and development to promote creativity and innovation.

The report also noted that recent Irish SSH developments echoed the Lund Declaration, particularly the focus on researcher collaboration. It said that in recent years Irish AHSS researchers have been developing such collaborations both within, and between, institutions and in turn, between Irish and international partners. Such collaborations can assist mobility at all levels of the system, from that of the student to that of the most experienced researcher. These collaborations had been assisted by the PRTL (primarily through funded research institutes) and the IRCHSS (through collaboration between individuals on a designated theme).

The foresight report also underlined the importance of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) as a critical forum for both policy-making and funding. Following a review in 2006 it was re-configured to co-ordinate strategic thinking and identify strategic goals for the digital humanities within the EU. As a result, an amended roadmap of projects was drawn up, including 6 in the AHSS. Of these, one each in the humanities and the social sciences, DARIAH and the ESS, were adopted by the IRCHSS for further development.

2.2.3 Relevance of European and International SSH research

EU and international SSH research has an important bearing on the SSH research sector in Ireland.

Irish organisations were partners in 26 SSH-related projects under FP6 (three as coordinators). The relevant projects were:

Project acronym	Project title
INCLUD-ED	Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education
AIM	Adequate Information Management in Europe
EMEDIATE	Media And Ethics Of A European Public Sphere From The Treaty Of Rome To The "War On Terror"
PROFKNOW	Professional Knowledge In Education And Health: Restructuring work and life between the state and the citizens in Europe
AIM-AP	Accurate Income Measurement for the Assessment of Public Policies
DYNREG	Dynamic regions in a knowledge-driven global economy: lessons and policy implications for the EU
ESEC	European Socio-Economic Classification
LOWER3	The Insecure Perspectives of the Low Skilled in the Knowledge Society
EQUALSOC	Economic Change, Quality of Life and Social Cohesion
ENBR	European Network for Better Regulation
CONNEX	Efficient And Democratic Governance In A Multi-Level Europe
NEWGOV	New modes of governance
ANOVASOFIE	Analysing and overcoming the sociological fragmentation in Europe
ICONNECTEU	ICConnectEU - Developing and testing a model for integrated dissemination of outcomes from complementary research projects
CIVICACTIVE	Active Civic Participation
EU-CONSENT	Wider Europe, deeper integration? "Constructing Europe" Network
CLIOHRES.NET	Creating Links and Innovative Overviews for a New History Research Agenda for the Citizens of a Growing Europe
LLL2010	Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System
AIM-AP	Accurate Income Measurement for the Assessment of Public Policies
CORASON	A Cognitive Approach to Rural Sustainable Development the dynamics of expert and lay knowledges
DYNAMO	Dynamics of National Employment Models
GARNET	Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: The Role of the EU
UP2YOUTH	Youth - actor of social change
ACRE	Accommodating Creative Knowledge: Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions Within the Enlarged Union
REFGOV	Reflexive Governance in the Public Interest
IREN	International Radio Research Network

(Source: DG Research)

Irish SSH organisations have also been successful in securing funding for research projects under FP8. Projects featuring Irish organisations either as co-ordinator or participant are shown below:

Project acronym	Project title
REMC	Religious education in a multicultural society: School and home in comparative context
PLATONPLUS	Strengthening the role that Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) have on the ERA development
SERVICEGAP	The Impact of Service Sector Innovation and Internationalisation on Growth and Productivity
NET4SOCIETY	Trans-national co-operation among National Contact Points for Socio-economic sciences and the Humanities
NORFACE PLUS	NORFACE Transnational Programme on Migration in Europe
DERREG	Developing Europe's Rural Regions in the Era of Globalization: An Interpretative Model for Better Anticipating and Responding to Challenges for Regional Development in an Evolving International Context
CREATING	Cooperative research on East African Territorial Integration with Globalisation
HI-POD	Historical Patterns of Development and Underdevelopment: Origins and Persistence of the Great Divergence
SOM	Support and Opposition to Migration. A cross national comparison of the politicisation of migration
FLAWS	Impact of local welfare systems on female labour force participation and social cohesion
ALACS	Promotion of Participation and Citizenship in Europe through the "Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs)" of Transparency International
REMC	Religious education in a multicultural society: School and home in comparative context
ACCEPT PLURALISM	Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion. Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe
GINI	Growing Inequalities' Impacts
ICATSEM	Institutional Changes and Trajectories of Socio-Economic development Models

(Source: DG Research)

There are a number of ERA-NETs that have a SSH focus in which Ireland has an involvement. These include HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) and NORFACE (New Opportunities for Research Funding Co-operation in Europe: A Strategy for Social Sciences). The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences is the Irish co-ordinating body for both of these networks, which afford Irish SSH researchers with the opportunity to participate in European and international research networks and policy forums.

IRCHSS's membership of the European Science Foundation (ESF) offers opportunities for Irish researchers to associate with researchers outside Ireland.

There are a number of reasons why European research developments are having a larger impact on the SSH research community in Ireland. Firstly, the government has taken a policy decision to encourage Irish researchers to access a larger share of EU research funding under the Framework Programmes. The Government has set a target draw-down of €400 million to be achieved by Irish participants in FP7. Secondly, to assist the achievement of this target, a revised State support infrastructure has been put in place to facilitate a more co-ordinated approach by Irish researchers in accessing FP7 funding. The IRCHSS is the National Contact Point (NCP) for SSH-related priorities under the EU Framework Programme. Thirdly, FP7 has given a larger prominence to SSH research issues and has allocated a larger budget to SSH research.

One of the terms of reference for the Arts, Humanities and Social Science (AHSS) foresight exercise was that it should reflect on European developments in the arts, humanities and social sciences and seek to align Irish activities with European opportunities.

The *Playing to Our Strengths* report highlighted the importance of European research collaboration to Irish AHSS researchers:

- Since January 2009, there have been 73 applications with Irish participation under the Joint Research Programmes (JRP) for HERA. These have had varying degrees of Irish participation: 20 with an Irish project leader, 48 with Irish principal investigators, and 4 with Irish associated partners. The final outcome of the JRP is due for publication in December 2009;
- Irish participation in the Marie Curie and Leonardo programmes is also high, underlining the international reputation of Irish researchers in the SSH and promoting Ireland as a destination for researchers. In 2009, the IRCHSS was awarded €2.7m in external funding (FP7 Marie Curie COFUND) to implement an international mobility postdoctoral scheme. This award is the second largest award made to an Irish applicant in FP7.

The AHSS foresight report also pointed out that in a wider context, the Irish Aid Programme also supports international collaborations. The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (RCB) brings together all nine universities on the island of Ireland and four in Sub-Saharan Africa in a unique, high-level partnership to develop a coordinated approach to RCB in higher-education institutions.

2.2.4 Impact of evaluations

Evaluations are used in the Irish system for a number of purposes, primarily to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of policy interventions. In 2006, the government introduced the Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative as part of a framework introduced to secure improved value for money from public expenditure. The objectives of the Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative are to analyse Exchequer spending in a systematic manner and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions can be made on priorities within and between programmes. The initiative replaced the Expenditure Review initiative which had a more narrower focus and with a view to moving public sector management away from a traditional focus on inputs to concentrate on the achievement of results.

There has been renewed interest in evaluations as a result of the economic crisis. The reduced amount of funding for research has focused attention on the need to allocate resources that give the highest return. Additionally, a number of funding agencies are now publishing data on programme/project outcomes in their annual reports.

Attention is also being given to a review of the science, technology and innovation governance system but as of yet no details have emerged from this process. Many of the existing structures within the STI governance system have been in place since 2004 and a number of new bodies have been established since then to assist with the implementation of the SSTI.

Though there has been no systematic evaluation of the SSH system, in September 2010 the Higher Education Authority and the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences published the report on the foresight exercise on the arts, humanities and social sciences. The report was commissioned at the invitation of the Minister for Education and Science in 2008 and was a response to *Advancing Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland*, a report prepared by the Royal Irish Academy in March 2007. The foresight report underlined the significant role that the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) play in Irish economy and society both directly and indirectly. It recognised that while the AHSS provide skills for specific economically important occupations and sectors, they also enhance quality of life generally and help to make Ireland an attractive place in which to live and do business.

It is important to note that the AHSS *Playing to Our Strengths* publication was not an evaluation but a foresight report though it did review existing structures and research programmes. Additionally, the foresight exercise covered not only the social sciences and the humanities but also the arts.

The methodology for the AHSS foresight exercise drew on commissioned studies, submissions from higher education institutions, and public and other interested agencies in Ireland and internationally.

The foresight exercise reviewed the context of the AHSS including its impact on society, culture and the economy as well as education. It examined the delivery of AHSS in terms of life skills, the creation of knowledge and the use of digital tools.

It made a series of recommendations in relation to education, research and public policy including:

- Higher education institutions should design a mandatory undergraduate course in the arts and humanities which would be cross-disciplinary and which must incorporate Information and Communications Technology training;
- A clearer stress on the links between teaching and research demands that there must be an immediate end to the practice where researchers are not obliged to teach at undergraduate level over prolonged periods of time;
- Public servants and researchers should be more engaged in developing creative alliances with business and there should be more active use of secondment policies placing entrepreneurs in the public sector and public servants and researchers in business;
- Research in the creative and digital arts must be prioritised and a programme of support involving all relevant agencies created as a matter of urgency.

The report is currently being considered by the new Minister for Education and Skills who took office in March 2011.

2.2.4.1 Project evaluation

There has been no recent published review of SSH research projects. The most recent evaluation of SSH-funded projects were those funded through the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions which was carried out in 2004.

The IRCHSS carries out intensive assessments of applications for project funding; it uses international peer review to determine funding allocations. The AHSS foresight study noted that developing criteria for measuring the distinctive impact of the AHSS was of critical importance. Within the debate of value for money and/or performance and peer-reviewed criteria for professional progression and promotion, appropriate metrics must be identified for measuring the impact of AHSS research. The report stated that the IRCHSS and the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) are currently consulting on appropriate benchmarks.

A preliminary discussion of the key relevant issues was recently published by the IRCHSS/RIA in Key Performance Indicators in Humanities Research in Ireland (RIA and IRCHSS, June 2009). The publication was an attempt to address the continuing anxiety on the part of higher-education administrators and public-research funders to have measures in place to assess the quality and impact of publicly funded research. In the absence of humanities-specific indicators, it was possible that the measures long-used and approved by the science community would become the de facto measures used to assess quality and impact of research in the arts and humanities. The RIA/IRCHSS publication argued that such measures failed to capture the diversity of output, methodology and experience across the range of disciplines in the arts and humanities and reveal little of real meaning concerning the quality of research in this area.

Additionally, the IRCHSS has initiated a project to capture data on first destinations of researchers that it has funded. It will also be collecting more information on project outcomes and impacts.

2.2.4.2 Programme evaluation

There has been no evaluation of SSH programmes since 2004 when the Programme for Research In Third Level Institutions was evaluated. The number of projects funded by the PRTLTI during its early cycles were small and the actual amounts of funding were low by comparison to science, engineering and technology-related projects.

2.2.4.3 Institutional evaluation

There has been no evaluation of an SSH institution since the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences was reviewed by a team of international experts in 2003.

2.2.5 Impact of infrastructures

The HEA/IRCHSS AHSS foresight report noted that from the perspective of AHSS researchers, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) had emerged as a critical forum for both policy-making and funding. In 2006 it was re-configured to co-ordinate strategic thinking and identify strategic goals for the digital humanities within the EU. As a result, a roadmap of projects was drawn up, including 6 in the AHSS (5 in the SSH). Of these, one each in the humanities and the social sciences, DARIAH and the ESS, were adopted by the IRCHSS for further development (see Section 2.6.2 below).

2.2.6 Impact of other factors

As noted earlier, the previous government in January 2011 published the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, and endorsed it as the future blueprint for the sector. The document made a number of recommendations including a smaller number of higher education institutions of greater strength, critical mass and governed according to international best practice and a closer alignment of public funding for the sector with national priorities and needs. It also proposed a more performance oriented system, with much more transparent flows of data and greater interaction between the higher education and enterprise sectors. It also sought to ensure much greater assessment of the wider outcomes and impacts of the higher education sector, together with strengthened accountability for institutions according to agreed performance contracts. The new government (elected in February 2011) is in the process of considering the strategy document and how it should be implemented.

The second factor that might impact on the SSH sector is the forthcoming publication of the report of the National Research Prioritisation Exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to identify those areas of opportunity or challenge for Ireland with potential to deliver the greatest return to the economy via jobs and/or the exploitation of tangible or intangible goods. The findings from this exercise — which is expected in October 2011 — will shape priorities for public R&D investment, including the SSH.

2.3 Important policy documents

The main policy document impacting on SSH research is the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013 (SSTI), which outlines a whole-of-government strategy for science, technology and innovation in Ireland:

- Government of Ireland (2006): *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013* (downloadable from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation: www.djei.ie); see also the ERAWATCH web site: (<http://cordis.europa.eu/erawatch/index.cfm?fuseaction=policy.document&UUID=29E25808-040B-6BF4-D63621A3225DE345&hwd=>);
- Other policy documents having SSH-related themes include:
- Department of Finance (2010): *National Recovery Plan 2011-2014* (downloadable from the Department of Finance: www.budget.gov.ie);
- Department of the Taoiseach [Prime Minister] (2007): *Towards 2016 – Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015* (downloadable from the Department of the Taoiseach: www.taoiseach.gov.ie);
- Department of the Taoiseach (2008): *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy* (downloadable from the Department of the Taoiseach: www.taoiseach.gov.ie);
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2009): *Science, Technology and Innovation — Delivering the Smart Economy* (downloadable from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation: www.djei.ie);
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2007): *Ireland – National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* (downloadable from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: www.environ.ie);
- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2007): *Tomorrow’s Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy* (downloadable from the Expert Group’s web site: www.skillsireland.ie);
- Innovation Taskforce (2010), *Innovation Ireland* (downloadable from the Department of the Taoiseach: www.taoiseach.gov.ie).

2.4 Thematic priorities at national level

The report of the HEA/IRCHSS foresight study noted that because Irish people had not “*considered what the arts, humanities and the social sciences signify to us in Ireland or to our own grand challenges, we are not prepared psychologically or in terms of resources to begin to address them.*” [2] Consequently, there are few Irish policy documents that have clearly specified SSH thematic priorities.

The *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013* (SSTI) identifies a number of generic thematic priorities particularly in terms of developing a world-class researcher skill base to achieve the government's vision of making Ireland internationally renowned for the excellence of its research, and at the forefront in generating and using new knowledge for economic and social progress, within an innovation driven culture. The two main and interlocking goals of the SSTI are to build a sustainable system of world-class research teams across all disciplines (including SSH) and to double Ireland's output of PhDs.

The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* includes a commitment under the Culture sub-programme to the digitalisation of Irish culture. The HEA/IRCHSS foresight report recommended that targeted initiatives should be put in place to allow private enterprise, including those in computer-based technologies, to interact with funding agencies and institutions to promote digitised projects in the AHSS.

	Behaviour, cognition,
	Competitiveness, Innovation
	Conflicts, peace, security and human rights within the EU and beyond
	Crime and Crime prevention (including drugs, organised crime etc.)
X	Cultural heritage (including preservation and conservation): <i>National Development Plan 2007-2013</i>
	Democracy, governance, accountability and responsibility
	Demography (Ageing, Fertility)
	Economy and finance
X	Education, skills, knowledge and life-long learning: <i>Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013</i>
	Employment, Work, Working conditions
	Ethics
	Families, life-styles and well-being
	Gender, gender equality
	Globalisation
	Health and Health systems
	Identity, religion, language, multiculturalism
	International relations
	Migration
	Social cohesion, exclusion, inequalities, poverty
	Sustainable development
	Urban and rural development
	Others

2.5 Important research programmes

The following are the most important SSH research funding programmes.

Programme title	Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme 2011/2012
Start date	October 2011
Planned end date	1-3 years (award holders receive between one and three years of funding depending on registration date)
Planned total budget	€3,440,000 (estimate)
Budget 2011	€989,000
Implementing organisation	Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences
Target group	Postgraduate Scholars undertaking a Research Masters/Integrated Masters Doctorate Programme/Stand Alone Doctorate
Key goals	The IRCHSS Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme is intended to support research masters and Ph.D. candidates pursuing or intending to pursue research in the Humanities and Social Sciences including Business and Law.
Website	http://www.irchss.ie/schemes/scheme01/index.html
Tags	The IRCHSS Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme is intended to support research masters and Ph.D. candidates pursuing or intending to pursue research in the Humanities and Social Sciences including Business and Law. A competitive award process for all Scholarships is administered by IRCHSS. Scholarships are currently valued at up to €16,000 per annum. They will be awarded initially for one year, but subject to terms and conditions, are renewable for up to two additional years.

Programme title	Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme in the Humanities and Social Sciences 2011/2012 <u>and</u> Government of Ireland CARA Postdoctoral Mobility Fellowships in the Humanities and Social Sciences Co-funded by the European Commission 2011/12
Start date	October 2011
Planned end date	1-3 years (award holders receive between one and three years of funding depending on the fellowship applied for i.e. Fellowship 1, 2 or 3)
Planned total budget	€5,055,626* (estimate)
Budget 2011	€1,113,509**
Implementing organisation	Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences
Target group	Postdoctoral Research Fellows
Key goals	The IRCHSS Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme is intended to support early stage postdoctoral researchers pursuing or intending to pursue research in the Humanities and Social Sciences including Business and Law
Website	http://www.irchss.ie/schemes/scheme02/Index.html
Tags	The IRCHSS Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme is intended to support early stage postdoctoral researchers pursuing or intending to pursue research in the Humanities and Social Sciences including Business and Law. In 2009, IRCHSS was awarded funding by the European Commission Marie Curie Programme to co fund a postdoctoral fellowship scheme with a mobility element. This fellowship, called CARA is co-funded by IRCHSS and the European Commission. A total of 25 fellowships have been offered in 2010 and 2011. The key aim of this fellowship is to encourage researchers based in Ireland who have gained most of their research experience in Ireland, to avail of a structured period of overseas mobility with associated career development actions, followed by a corresponding return period in Ireland.

*Please note this estimate includes the cost of funding the Fellowship 3 Cara awarders over the three year term which is estimated at €3,992,409. Fellowship 3 award holders are cofunded by the European Commission and IRCHSS. The €3,992,409 estimate includes EU income of €1,388,665.

**Please note this estimate includes the costs of funding Fellowship CARA award holders in 2011. The costs of funding Fellowship 3 holders in 2011 is €798,482 approx, including funding of €277,733 from the European Commission.

Programme title	Senior Research and Research Fellowship Projects 2011/12
Start date	October 2011
Planned end date	12-15 Months
Planned total budget	€1,200,000*
Budget 2011	€960,000
Implementing organisation	Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences
Target group	Academic staff who have held an appointment for a minimum of two years
Key goals	The IRCHSS Research, Senior Research or Fellowship Project Scheme is intended to support members of the academic staff of recognised higher education institutions pursuing or intending to pursue research projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences including Business and Law.
Website	http://www.irchss.ie/schemes/scheme09/index.html
Tags	This scheme has been established to facilitate senior researchers working within a small team to bring existing research activities or short-term projects to successful completion by way of teaching buy-out, postdoctoral support and limited project funding. Thus this scheme will also support research-based teaching and knowledge transfer initiatives.

*Please note, this scheme is co-funded by the National Disability Authority and the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme

Programme title	Social Policy Research Development Initiative 2011
Start date	June 2011
Planned end date	June 2012
Planned total budget	€92,117
Budget	€92,117
Implementing organisation	Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences
Target group	Full time members of academic staff
Key goals	The IRCHSS Research Development Initiative (RDI) was established with the objective of facilitating researchers and research teams to expand their activities into new research areas by way of stimulus project grants and knowledge transfer initiatives.
Website	http://www.irchss.ie/schemes/rdi/index.html
Tags	<p>The rationale for this scheme was to provide funding for researchers to expand their research activities in new directions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-medium sized projects such as exploratory investigations which may lead to larger and more sustainable research projects and programmes; • Knowledge transfer initiatives; and • Networking and collaboration. <p>This round of the scheme funded projects submitted under strand 3 (Summer Schools) and Strand 9 (Social Policy Research Projects)</p>

Programme title	Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions
Start date	1998
Planned end date	2013
Planned total budget	€1.2bn
Budget 2011/2012	€60m (estimated annual average)
Implementing organisation	The Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Target group	Third level institutions
Key goals	The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTL) is the principal means for channelling State support to increase and enhance research capacity within the higher education sector. PRTL enables higher education institutions develop the necessary infrastructure and facilities to formulate and implement research strategies that will give them critical mass and world level capacity in key areas of research.
Website	http://www.heai.ie/en/prtli
Tags	Research infrastructure third level institutions

2.6 SSH research infrastructures

2.6.1 National infrastructures

A major review of national research infrastructures was undertaken by Forfás and the Higher Education Authority in 2006. The purpose of the review was to take stock of existing investment and to inform decision-making in relation to future rounds of Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) and related investments under SSTI; the objective of the PRTLTI is to facilitate third-level institutions with the opportunity to build infrastructure, invest in capacity and promote institutional strategies and inter-institutional collaboration. Forfás and the HEA took a deliberate decision to involve partners from the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) network in order to maximise the alignment between any future national infrastructure strategy and the ESFRI Roadmap.

The key finding of the review was that notwithstanding the significant investment of funds in research infrastructure since 1998, and the remarkable transformation of the Irish research landscape since that time, weaknesses exist and gaps remain in the higher education and national research infrastructure. This finding, in the context of the lack of investment prior to 1998, means in effect that Ireland was still in 'catch up' mode whilst at the same time trying to compete with its international competitors.

The Forfás/HEA report reviewed SSH research infrastructures and made recommendations on space provision, data management and archiving facilities. It said that there were deficiencies in space provision and data management, and stressed the need for archiving facilities to be developed in way that promotes collaboration in research and excellence in scholarship.

The report was a key guiding document for fourth and fifth cycles of the PRTLTI programme which allocated funding for a number of large-scale SSH projects in Cycles 4 and 5 including:

- Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS): €28.9m
- National Programme of Research on Innovation, Society and Space: €22.1m
- Arts Humanities Social Sciences Research Building: €10.6m
- National Audio Visual Repository: €5.2m

In 2010, responsibility for the PRTLTI transferred from the Department of Education and Skills to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation though the HEA is still the management agency.

The IRCHSS has prioritised two infrastructures from the ESFRI Roadmap (the European Social Survey and a digital research facility for the arts and humanities). These were prioritised on the basis of alignment with IRCHSS objectives and potential reach to the research community in Ireland.

2.6.2 International infrastructures

Irish organisations are members of all five SSH-related ESFRI initiatives:

- Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) project (Irish partner: Irish Social Science Data Archive). CESSDA is an umbrella organisation for social science data archives across Europe and its members are seeking to improve access to data for researchers and students. CESSDA research and development projects and Expert Seminars enhance exchange of data and technologies among data organisations. <http://www.CESSDA.org>
- European Social Survey (ESS) project (Irish partners: Economic and Social Research Institute, Ipsos-MORI (Ireland) and the University of Limerick). The ESS is an academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse populations. <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>
- Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) project (Irish partner: University College Dublin). The SHARE project is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of more than 45,000 individuals aged 50 or over. <http://www.share-project.org>
- Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH) project (Irish partner: Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences). DARIAH's mission is to enhance and support digitally enabled research across the humanities and arts. DARIAH aims to develop and maintain an infrastructure in support of ICT-based research practices across the arts and humanities. <http://www.dariah.eu>
- Common Language Resources and Technological Infrastructure (Clarin) project (Irish partner: National University of Ireland, Galway). Clarin seeks to establish an integrated and interoperable research infrastructure of language resources and its technology. It aims at lifting the current fragmentation, offering a stable, persistent, accessible and extendable infrastructure and therefore enabling eHumanities. <http://www.CLARIN.eu>

Policy-makers regard Irish participation in EU infrastructure projects as being important in terms of gaining access to large-scale facilities that smaller countries such as Ireland could not otherwise afford.

3. Funding System

3.1 Overview of funding flows

The diagram below shows the main social sciences and humanities research funding flows. It does not take into account research funding flows from outside of the State e.g. EU funds.

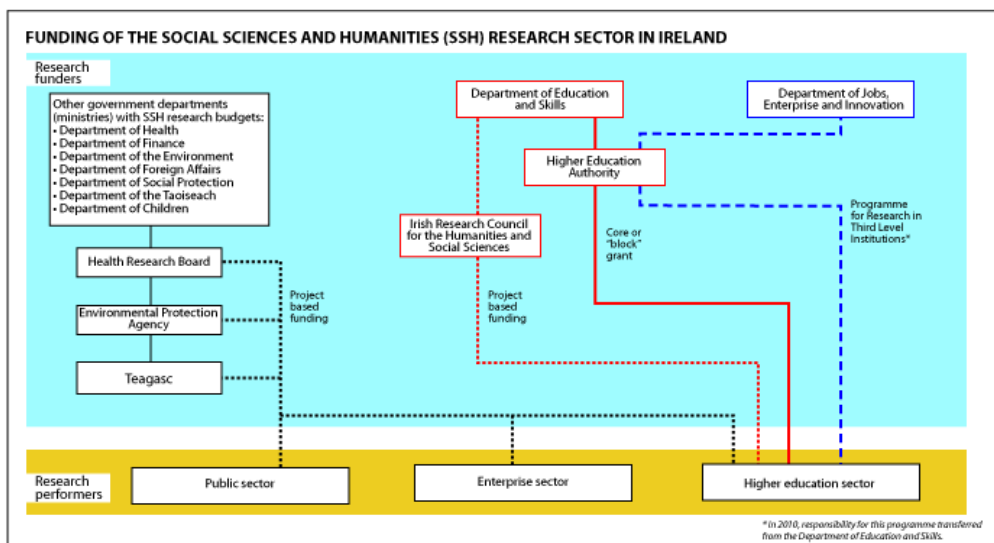
The Department of Education and Skills is a key provider of HSS research funds to third level institutions. It provides:

- project-based funding through the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. The IRCHSS provides funding for specific research projects carried out in the social sciences and the humanities either by individual academic researchers or groups of researchers;
- the core or “block” grant via the Higher Education Authority. This funding is intended to cover the operating costs of higher education institutions, of which a large component is salaries of academic staff. A proportion of the core or block funding is accounted for by SSH research.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has taken over responsibility from the Department of Education and Skills in 2010 for the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions which provides funding for the development of research infrastructures. The Higher Education Authority, which is under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills, is currently the management agency for the PRTLTI.

There have been five cycles of PRTLTI funding and Cycles 4-5 have seen disbursements of significant funding for the development of SSH research institutes.

Other government departments and agencies also provide funding for SSH research carried out by research performers primarily in the higher education and public research sectors. Recent data indicate that the Health Research Board is not only a significant funder of HSS research but also undertakes HSS research itself. Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority and the largest public research organisation, is also a SSH research performer.



3.2 National public SSH research funding

3.2.1 Overview of funding importance

The data in Table 3.1 which were extracted from the Higher Education R&D Survey published by Forfás in December 2010 indicate that the provision of funding for SSH research undertaken within the higher education sector grew by over 68% over the period 2004-2008. Funding for SSH research amounted to €120m in 2004 and rose to €145m in 2006 and grew further to €201m in 2008.

The table shows that R&D expenditure on social sciences increased to €145m in 2008, a 42% increase over the 2006 figure and a 77% increase over the 2004 figure of €82m. Funding for the humanities increased by 30% between 2006 and 2008 (from €43m to €56m) and by 13% between 2004 and 2006.

Table 3-1 Higher education expenditure on R&D in SSH in current prices (€m), 2004-2008

Sector	2004	2006	2008
Social sciences	82	102	145
Humanities	38	43	56
Total SSH	120	145	201

(Source: Higher Education R&D Survey 2008)

The following table, Table 3-2, shows the main sources of funding — both direct and indirect — for SSH research carried out within the higher education sector in 2008.

Total funding for SSH research carried out in the higher education sector amounted to €201m in 2008 of which indirect sources accounted for €87.9m with direct sources of funding contributing €113.1m. Of the three categories of direct funding sources, the Irish public research system provided €69.1m (61%), the EU was the source of €15.5m (14%) and industry and other accounted for the balance of €28.5m (25%).

Table 3-2 Sources of SSH research funding (€m), 2008

Sector	Direct sources of funds			Indirect government	Total
	Irish public research	EU	Industry and other		
Social sciences	54.0	14.6	19.0	57.0	144.6
Humanities	15.1	0.9	9.5	30.9	56.4
Total SSH	69.1	15.5	28.5	87.9	201.0

(Source: Higher Education R&D Survey 2008)

The table shows that direct sources of funds for social sciences research amounted to €87.6m in 2008 or 60.5% of total funding.

Indirect government funding (the core or “block grant”) accounted for the balance of €57m or 39.5% of funding for social science. The EU accounted for 10% of all funding sources and just under 17% of all direct sources of funds.

A slightly different picture emerges in relation to the funding of research in the humanities. Here, direct sources of funds amounted to €25.5m or 46% of total funding. Indirect funding for humanities research came to €30.9m or 54% of total funding. EU sources of funding for research in the humanities came to 2%.

3.2.2 Institutional funding

The main form of institutional funding is the core or “block” grant distributed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to the universities and other higher education institutions. The block grant is allocated primarily on the number of taught undergraduate students. The main function of the block grant is to fund the salaries of staff (more than 75 per cent) and teaching-related infrastructure.

The size of the R&D component of the academic part of the block grant is decided upon by measuring the amount of time spent on research at the institution by academic staff, and proportioning that part of overall funding to departmental R&D activities. In 2008, the R&D element of the HEA block grant was €219m, a decline from the €248m recorded in 2006.

3.2.3 Individual funding

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences is the main dedicated SSH funding provider for individual researchers. The Science Budget 2008-2009 indicates that the IRCHSS provided €12.5m in 2008 and an estimated €14.4m in 2009, the majority of which was provided to individual researchers.

The funding programmes offered by the Research Council that are directed at individual researchers include the following:

- Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme;
- Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme and Government of Ireland CARA Postdoctoral Mobility Fellowships;
- Senior Research and Research Fellowship Projects;
- Social Policy Research Development Initiative.

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences also manages a number of research funding programmes aimed at individual researchers on behalf of other government departments and agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Disability Authority.

3.2.4 Programme Funding

The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) has been a major source of funding for the development of research infrastructures within the higher education sector. As the AHSS foresight report noted: *“To date the PRTLTI has allocated a total of €865m (consisting mainly of exchequer and significant private funds) to strengthen national research capabilities by investing in excellence and physical infrastructure. The ultimate aim of the programme is to consolidate Ireland’s position as a leading hub for carrying out world-class research and development.”*

There have been five cycles of PRTLTI funding and the provision of funding for AHSS projects has been successively increased with each cycle. The programme allocated €53.9m to four ASSH projects in Cycle 4.

AHSS projects funded under Cycle 5 include Arts Humanities Social Sciences Research Building (€16.6m), the Digital Arts and Humanities Structured PhD Programme (€6.8m), Economics and Political Science (€3m) and National Audio Visual Repository (€5.2m).

The PRTLTI has been instrumental in fostering inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary collaboration and this is also evident in its funding of large-scale SSH research institutes. The Programme has provided funding for the €29m Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS) project comprising the Royal Irish Academy, Queen’s University, Belfast, University of Ulster, University College Cork, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Dublin City University and University of Limerick which aims to develop an inter-institutional research infrastructure for the humanities.

The centrepiece of the HSIS collaboration is the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO), a sophisticated web-based humanities resource, which will store, preserve and provide access to the increasingly complex range of e-resources now being created in the humanities.

Another HSIS project is An Foras Feasa, an inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary Institute for Research in Irish Historical and Cultural Traditions. This consortium which brings together staff from Humanities and Computer Science departments in National University of Ireland Maynooth, Dublin City University, Dundalk Institute of Technology and St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, supports individual and collaborative research projects in the following four research streams: ICT: Innovation and the Humanities; Multiculturalism and Multilingualism: Textual Analysis and Linguistic Change; Ireland and Europe; and Cultural Heritage and Social Capital in a Global Context.

In 2010, the government transferred responsibility for the PRTLTI from the Department of Education and Skills to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Higher Education Authority is responsible for the E-Journals programme which originally started in 2004 with funding from Science Foundation Ireland to allow access by Irish researchers to research publications in biotechnology and ICT. This facility is now being extended to include the social sciences and humanities. Researchers, staff and students in the seven Irish Universities will now have online access to full-text articles from more than 25,000 quality, peer-reviewed research publications across a range of disciplines. The HEA allocated €4m for this initiative in 2009.

3.3 Private research funding

There is little published national data on the extent of SSH research that is either carried out or funded by the private sector. The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA, www.tilda.ie), is being jointly funded by Irish Life, a major assurance company, Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Health.

Eurostat data shows that the amount of research (including SSH) carried out by the higher education sector with enterprise sector funding was estimated at €15m in 2007.

Data produced by Forfás in the Higher Education R&D Survey 2008 indicates that industry and other sources contributed €28.5m towards SSH research carried out by higher education institutions in 2008, of which €19m for was for social sciences and €9.5m for the humanities.

3.4 Foundations/not-for-profit funding

Foundations/not-for-profit funding has played a prominent role in the development of research activity within the higher education sector. Atlantic Philanthropies, the foundation established by the Irish-American billionaire, Chuck Feeney, was an earlier contributor to the PRTL, which has played a pivotal role in the development of research infrastructures in the Irish higher education sector.

Atlantic Philanthropies, along Irish Life and the Department of Health, is funding the TILDA project which is being undertaken by a cross-institutional, multi-disciplinary team of experts from Dundalk Institute of Technology, the Economic and Social Research Institute, the National University of Ireland Galway, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork and University College Dublin.

Total funding provided by the private non-profit sector for research carried out in the higher education sector amounted to €40m in 2008 but no information is available on what proportion of this was for SSH research.

3.5 European and international funding

European and international funding programmes are important sources of funding for SSH researchers. Data published by Forfás on R&D expenditures in the higher education sector highlight the importance of EU funding for SSH research. In 2008, EU sources of funding accounted for €15.5m of SSH research carried out by higher education institutions, representing 7.7% of total funding.

The government has established a target of €400m to be drawn down by Irish researchers in FP7. In addition, to assist in the achievement of this target it has developed an enhanced FP7 support infrastructure in which the IRCHSS is the National Contact Point (NCP) for SSH-related priorities.

The reduced funding available from national sources such as the IRCHSS is likely to encourage SSH researchers to place greater emphasis on EU and international sources of funding.

4. Performing System

4.1 Overview of the performers

The higher education sector is the main performer of social sciences and humanities research in Ireland; it is estimated that in 2008 the higher education institutions undertook research with a value of €201m (which represents about 27% of the total R&D activity carried out by the HEIs).

The seven universities account for the bulk of this research: University College Cork, University College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland Maynooth, the university of Dublin [Trinity College Dublin], the University of Limerick and Dublin City University.

University College Cork, University College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway and National University of Ireland Maynooth are constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI). The NUI also has recognised colleges including the National College of Art and Design and the Royal College of Surgeons.

The proportion of SSH research carried out by the network of institutes of technology is small but growing.

Table 4-1 HSS research performers by sector, 2005-2008 (€m)

HSS research performing sector	2005	2006	2007	2008
Government	19	22	15	15
Higher education	139	143	160	201
Enterprise	-	-	-	-
Private non-profit	-	-	-	-
Total SSH research	158	165	175	216

(Source: Eurostat)

Table 4-1 shows that expenditure on SSH research amounted to €158m in 2005 of which the higher education sector accounted for €139m with the balance being undertaken by the government sector. The total amount of SSH research carried out in 2008 had risen by 27% to €216m. Here again, the higher education sector was responsible for 93% of the €216m SSH expenditure with the remaining 7% being accounted for by the government sector.

No data was available from Eurostat on the amount of SSH research undertaken by the enterprise and private non-profit sectors.

Table 4-2 shows that SSH research expenditure as a proportion of GERD expenditure varied between 7% and 8% during the period 2005-2008.

Table 4-2 Expenditure on SSH research and GERD, 2005-2008 (€m)

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total SSH research	158	165	175	216
GERD	2,030	2,217	2,434	2,616
SSH as % of GERD	8%	7%	7%	8%

(Source: Eurostat)

4.2 Higher Education Institutions

4.2.1 HEIs as education performers

The higher education sector plays an important role in SSH education provision. Data provided by Eurostat shows the number of social sciences and humanities students as a percentage of the total student population.

Table 4-3 Number of SSH graduates by main SSH sub-disciplines, 2005-2008

Discipline	2005	2006	2007	2008
Humanities and the arts	13,867	11,328	14,871	13,170
Social sciences, business & law	17,817	20,566	16,751	19,474
Total SSH graduates	31,684	31,894	31,622	32,644
Total tertiary graduates	59,650	59,184	59,011	60,074
SSH as % of total	53%	54%	54%	54%

(Source: Eurostat)

The table shows that there have been fluctuations in the numbers of humanities and arts graduates, the numbers of social sciences, business and law graduates and the numbers of overall tertiary graduates during the period 2005-2008. However, the percentage of SSH graduates of all tertiary graduates increased to a small extent in the period under review, and now stands at 54%.

The report of the HEA/IRCHSS foresight study, *Playing to Our Strengths*, provided data on enrolments in all disciplines and in AHSS disciplines in the publicly-funded higher education system (the universities and Institutes of Technology) for the academic years, 2004-2005 and 2007-2008.

Table 4-4 Enrolments in all Disciplines in the publicly-funded HE System, 2004/05 and 2007/08

	2004-2005 Overall			2007-2008 Overall			Percentage change Male & female		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Overall
University sector									
Undergraduate	30,415	44,612	75,027	31,683	46,797	78,480	8%	-18%	5%
Postgraduate	9,859	12,457	22,316	10,788	14,283	25,071	8%	22%	12%
Total	40,274	57,069	97,343	42,471	61,080	103,551	8%	-1%	6%
Institutes of Technology sector									
Undergraduate	33,356	31,156	64,512	32,671	30,101	62,772	-2%	-5%	-3%
Postgraduate	1,141	1,076	2,217	2,305	2,404	4,709	81%	152%	112%
Total	34,497	32,232	66,729	34,976	32,505	67,481	0%	6%	1%
Total for sector	74,771	89,301	164,072	77,447	95,585	171,032	4.8%	2%	4%

(Source: HEA/IRCHSS foresight study, *Playing to Our Strengths*, 2010)

The data shows that the number of undergraduates in all disciplines enrolling in the university sector increased by 5%, though the number of post-graduates enrolling grew by 12%.

Undergraduate enrolment in the Institute of Technology sector fell slightly by 3% while the number of post-graduate enrolments jumped dramatically by 112%, albeit from a low base.

Overall enrolments for the publicly-funded higher education sector increased by 4% over the period.

Table 4-5 Enrolments in AHSS Disciplines in the publicly-funded HE System, 2004/05 and 2007/08

	2004-2005 Overall			2007-2008 Overall			Percentage change Male & female		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Overall
University sector									
Undergraduate	16,049	27,619	42,891	17,569	27,650	45,219	7%	-8%	5%
% of all disciplines	53%	62%	57%	55%	59%	58%			
Postgraduate	4,862	6,836	11,698	5,572	8,247	13,819	11%	35%	18%
% of all disciplines	49%	55%	52%	52%	58%	55%			
Total	40,274	57,069	97,343	42,471	61,080	103,551	8%	-1%	6%
Institutes of Technology sector									
Undergraduate	13,193	19,963	33,156	12,560	18,438	30,998	-6%	-9%	-7%
% of all disciplines	40%	64%	51%	38%	61%	49%			
Postgraduate	532	641	1,173	1,110	1,536	2,646	66%	242%	126%
% of all disciplines	47%	60%	53%	48%	64%	56%			

(Source: HEA/IRCHSS foresight study, *Playing to Our Strengths*, 2010)

The statistics for enrolments in AHSS disciplines indicate that undergraduate enrolments in the university sector increased by 5% over the period 2004-2005 to 2007-2008. However, post-graduate enrolments in the AHSS increased at a much faster rate, 18%.

In the university sector in 2007-2008, 58% of undergraduates and 55% of postgraduates were enrolled in AHSS courses, an increase of 1 and 3 percentage points, respectively, on the figures for 2004-2005.

While AHSS postgraduate enrolments in the Institute of Technology sector also increased substantially (126%), the number of AHSS undergraduate enrolments fell by 7%.

In the institutes of technology sector, 49% of undergraduates and 56% of postgraduates were enrolled in AHSS courses, a decrease of 2 and an increase of 3 percentage points, respectively.

4.2.2 HEIs as research performers

It is estimated that the vast bulk (90%) of the SSH research carried out in the Irish higher education sector takes place within the seven universities:

- University College Cork (www.ucc.ie)
- University College Dublin (www.ucd.ie)
- National University of Ireland Galway (www.nuigalway.ie)
- National University of Ireland Maynooth (www.nuim.ie)
- The University of Dublin (Trinity College Dublin) (www.tcd.ie)
- The University of Limerick (www.ul.ie)
- Dublin City University (www.dcu.ie)

The other higher education institutions that perform SSH research include the Royal Irish Academy, the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin Institute of Technology and the network of 13 Institutes of Technology (Athlone, Blanchardstown, Carlow, Cork, Dundalk, Dun Laoghaire, Galway-Mayo, Letterkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee and Waterford).

The Irish University Association (www.iaa.ie) is the representative body for the universities while the Institutes of Technology Ireland (www.ioti.ie) is the representative body for the institutes of technology.

The following table (Table 4-6) shows the total amount of SSH research expenditure as a proportion of total research expenditure undertaken by higher education sector. Research expenditure on SSH by the HE sector amounted to €139m in 2005 while this had increased to €201m. The percentage of SSH research undertaken as a proportion of HERD came to 25% in 2005 but this increased to 27%.

Table 4-6 Total expenditure by the higher education sector on SSH research and on all research disciplines, 2005-2008 (€m)

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total SSH research	139	143	160	201
HERD	550	601	660	750
SSH as % of HERD	25%	24%	24%	27%

(Source: Eurostat)

Table Table 4-7 shows the amount of research and development performed by the higher education sector and the amount of HERD that is funded by the enterprise sector. The Eurostat data indicates that the enterprise sector funds a very small amount of the research carried out by higher education institutions: 2% in 2007. Enterprise's share of HERD as a percentage of GDP is correspondingly very small.

Table 4-7 Enterprise sector's share of HERD, 2005-2008 (€m)

	2005	2006	2007	2008
HERD	550	601	660	750
HERD funded by enterprise sector (€m)	15	11	15	n.a.
% of HERD funded by enterprise sector	3%	2%	2%	n.a.
Enterprise share of HERD as a % of GDP	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%

(Source: Eurostat)

Expenditure on research and development by the higher education sector (HERD) as a proportion of Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD) remained steady at 27.1% during 2005-2007 but increased to 28.7% in 2008.

Table 4-8 HERD as a percentage of GERD, 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008
HERD as a % of GERD	27.1%	27.1%	27.1%	28.7

(Source: Eurostat)

4.3 Public Research Organisations

There are a number of public research organisations (PROs) that are involved in SSH research; data from Eurostat indicates that PROs undertook SSH research to a value of €15m in 2008. There is very limited information, however, on the SSH research budget and number of researchers of these organisations.

The main public sector organisations involved in SSH research include:

The Economic and Social Research Institute

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) is a not-for-profit organisation under the aegis of the Department of Finance. ESRI's current research activities include the areas of macroeconomics, international economics, equality, health, education, labour market, social cohesion, taxation, welfare and pensions. ESRI research staff undertake commissioned studies, surveys and data analysis on behalf of a wide range of Irish and international organisations. The ESRI's research and development budget was estimated to be €7.9m in 2009.

The Central Bank

The Central Bank of Ireland, which came into being in 1943, was re-structured and re-named as the Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland. The Central Bank undertakes research in relation to economic intelligence and forecasting, inflation and competitiveness, monetary issues, economic modelling, public finances, structural issues, housing market, productivity and growth. Its research budget in 2009 was budgeted at €1.2m.

FAS

FAS, the national training and employment agency, is under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation. The organisation's planning and research department carries out work in relation to labour market research and analysis, skills forecasting, surveys and evaluation and policy advice and analysis. Its research and development budget was forecast to just under €1m in 2009.

The government announced in July 2011 that FAS would be split in two, with some functions transferring to a new agency (Solas) and the remainder transferring to the Department of Social Protection.

Teagasc

Employing 200 research scientists and 300 research technicians, Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority, is Ireland's largest public research organisation. Its estimated research and development budget in 2009 was €62.6m. Teagasc's Rural Economy Research Centre (RERC) carries out economics and social science research. RERC's mission is to produce high quality social science research and policy advice to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of Irish Agriculture and to enhance the quality of life in rural Ireland, thus contributing to the achievement of Teagasc's key goals: competitiveness and innovation in agriculture, sustainable systems of agriculture and rural viability.

The Central Statistics Office

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) is responsible for the collection, processing and dissemination of official statistics and is an independent office under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach [Prime Minister]. The CSO has a staff of approximately 800 employees and its technical services budget amounted to €55.7m in 2009.

Health Research Board

The Health Research Board (HRB), which is under the aegis of the Department of Health is the lead agency in Ireland supporting and funding health research. It provides funding, maintains health information systems and conducts research linked to national health priorities. The HRB's aim is to improve people's health, build health research capacity and make a significant contribution to Ireland's knowledge economy. It carries out a number of research activities and its R&D budget was estimated at €3.7m in 2009.

4.4 Private research performers

No data is available from Eurostat on SSH research expenditure by the enterprise sector in Ireland. Additionally, data from national information sources on the extent to which individual private sector enterprises are involved in SSH research are either extremely limited or non-existent.

The main performers in terms of individual companies and sectors include large multinational companies having subsidiaries in Ireland such as Intel, IBM and Microsoft.

Leading companies in the banking, stockbroking and financial services sector regularly publish research work in relation to economic and financial issues. The major stockbroking companies such as Davy, Goodbody Stockbrokers and NCB all undertake research on Irish and international trends in economic, financial and monetary policy.

The large accountancy companies such as KPMG and PriceWaterhouseCoopers also publish the results of research undertaken on taxation issues.

There are a variety of consultancy enterprises that carry out research across a range of SSH disciplines. These include DKM Economic Consultants and Indecon International Economic Consultants (economics) and TNSmrb, RedC and Amarach (consumer research).

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) carries out research in relation to public administration.

Other sectors

Private sector performers of SSH research in other sectors include the Care Alliance Ireland (social policy, family carers) and the Sociological Association of Ireland (social policy).

Guidelines published by the Revenue Commissioners, the Irish tax authorities, in February 2011 confirm that expenditures on research in the social sciences and humanities are not eligible for the Research and Development tax credit of 25% of incremental expenditure by a company incurred wholly or exclusively on R&D.

4.5 Research performance

4.5.1 Scientific publications

A study of publicly-funded research performance published in 2009 by Forfás and the Higher Education Authority indicated that Ireland has improved in terms of the volume and impact of its research. The study showed that Ireland ranked 8th on the impact of research publications within a group of 20 comparator countries, including; Denmark (1), Netherlands (3), US (4), UK (6), Finland (8), Australia (10), Singapore (13) and China (17).

The study was conducted by Evidence Limited, part of the Thomson Reuters Group, and concluded that Ireland was punching above its weight in terms of the impact of its research.

The study reported that in relation to the humanities Ireland appeared to be performing well in terms of volume of humanities papers, but the total number of papers published (34 in 1998; 48 in 2007) was very low and so trends should be interpreted with care.

The Forfás/HEA study said that growth in the number of social science papers produced by Irish authors had been phenomenal over the last ten years. From a very low base in 1998 (only 112 papers, or 0.34% of total world output) Ireland in 2007 produced 246 papers, or 0.58% of world output. Within Ireland, social science was now one of the stronger project research areas considered in this report. Share of the total world output had increased by 37% — the greatest improvement amongst any of this comparator group. These dramatic percentages must be interpreted in the light of publishing patterns within social sciences, where a lot of research was published in reports rather than as papers, and where patterns of research dissemination were rapidly evolving.

4.5.2 International Cooperation

There are no known international co-operation agreements between Ireland and non-European countries that predominantly deal with SSH. Ireland has bilateral science and technology co-operation agreements with China and India and has bilateral economic relations with Russia, China, South Korea and Saudi Arabia but these mainly concern the hard sciences.

4.5.3 Main prizes

The Royal Irish Academy (RIA), is an all-Ireland, independent, academic body that promotes study and excellence in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. It is one of Ireland's premier learned societies and cultural institutions and currently has over 400 members, elected in recognition of their academic achievements. Election to RIA Membership is a public recognition of academic excellence and is the highest academic honour in Ireland. The criterion for election to Membership is a significant contribution to scholarly research as shown in the candidate's published academic work. Presently, twenty Members are elected each year, equally divided between the sciences and humanities. Membership is open only to those resident in Ireland. The RIA is funded by the Department of Education and Skills through the Higher Education Authority.

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