



A National Conversation  
on Research in Ireland

# Creating Our Future Campaign Report



An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,  
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta  
Department of Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science



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# Foreword by An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD



Ireland today is a world leader in many of the fields which shape our modern society and economy. In fundamental fields like core communications technology and medical devices, Ireland is a centre for global innovation. Many of the companies which employ thousands of Irish people, and pay taxes which support our social, cultural and economic life, are actually driven by innovations which were largely unknown as recently as twenty years ago.

This transformation of opportunity in our country didn't happen by chance, it has been based on putting in place a long-term and sustained commitment to Ireland as a global centre for generating new ideas through research and innovation.

As recently as 25 years ago Ireland had little or no support in place for research and innovation. That changed and a new system of supports was created. At first there was a concentration on a small number of national priority areas, but very quickly a wider approach was taken – and at all stages the core principle has been to fund excellent ideas wherever they emerge. This remains our commitment – a truly innovative and creative system needs a broad base of expertise and it has to be open to taking new direction.

If there's one thing we should all understand it is that we cannot take our success for granted – and to keep Ireland at the cutting edge we need research and innovation more than ever.

That is why it is important to take the time to encourage a broader engagement with research and innovation.

It was for this reason that the government launched Creating Our Future last year. I'm delighted that it has been so successful in engaging with and involving the public in a conversation on the role research can and should play in addressing opportunities, challenges and hopes for the future. I would like to thank everyone who participated.

Further developing Ireland's world class research is a priority for this government. Creating Our Future has provided important insights so researchers and policy makers can progress existing work, and undertake new endeavours, more cognisant of what is important to people.

The enthusiastic engagement and immense response from the public gave the Expert Committee and Working Groups a mammoth task of analysing the 18,000 submissions. The voice of the public expressed through their submissions has been captured and reflected back to us all within the Expert Committee report. The database of ideas will serve as a source of insights, captured at a particularly unique point in time, and will help to inspire future research in Ireland.

We have faced significant challenges together as we dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, and many things have changed, but we can use this shared experience to improve our society, supporting ideas and innovation at a national level, as well as in local communities up and down the country, and across all sectors, from arts and culture, to sport, agriculture, marine and many more, for the benefit of everyone in Ireland.

# Foreword by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD



We had a vision at the beginning of Creating Our Future that the starting point for all research and innovation is a good idea.

We wanted to open the discussion to everyone, to discover what was important to people, to find out what they would like to explore to create a better future for all.

Over 18,000 ideas were shared with us by people from all over the country. Through conversations and engagement, the public shared their ideas and provided inspiration for future research. I want to thank each and every one of them.

I want to assure you that your ideas will help us shape research in Ireland going forward.

Our role across Government is now to ensure that what matters to the public is brought to light through the implementation of the campaign recommendations. These recommendations are aligned with *Impact 2030: Ireland's Strategy for Research and Innovation*.

I would like to thank all of those involved in the campaign, the organisations across all sectors of society and in every county that ran engagement events and hosted dialogues with the public, the researchers that participated in these discussions, the members of the Steering Committee, Expert Committee and its Working Groups, Advisory Forum, and Campaign Team, for their commitment to ensuring we engaged and reached all sectors of our society and that the voice of the public has been reflected in the findings.

I'd also like to thank our Ambassadors, Prof Luke O'Neill, Emer O'Neill, Dr Shane O'Donnell and Prof Emilie Pine, and our Gen Z group Jack O'Connor, Adam Lambe, and Megan O'Connor, for their commitment to Creating Our Future.

The findings as outlined in the Expert Committee Report provide real insights into what is important to the public, our communities and wider society.

Creating Our Future has allowed us to have a conversation with our citizens. To tell us what difficulties they believe need to be addressed, the opportunities they see for research to improve our society, what injustices need to be tackled and what ideas they have for making our society as fair and inclusive as possible.

It is my commitment to ensure these are our priorities going forward.

## Statement from the Chair of the Advisory Forum



Creating Our Future has been an amazing opportunity to build a bridge between researchers and communities right across Ireland. Real and interesting conversations took place about the concerns people have today, how research is already addressing those concerns, and importantly, the fantastic ideas they have to create a better future that researchers can now explore. Every member of the Creating Our Future Advisory Forum got behind what we set out to achieve – to reach every corner of society. They mobilised their networks, ran events and promoted the campaign throughout the entire journey. Not only that, their insights and perspectives helped us to frame our message to the public. The members challenged the campaign team in the very best way so that we remained true to our north star of an inclusive and accessible dialogue to elicit ideas from the public. The work of the Advisory Forum does not end on the publication of the report – we will continue to act as advocates in our daily work so that the findings and recommendations are carried forward. It has been my privilege to Chair the Advisory Forum. I look forward to seeing how the outputs of this campaign will have a lasting impact on research and policymaking in this country.

**Julie Byrne**  
Head of External Collaborations  
Nokia Bell Labs

## Statement from the Chair of the Expert Committee



Creating Our Future captured a moment in time in the collective consciousness of Ireland, reflecting people’s hopes and fears for the future. The receipt of over 18,000 submissions demonstrated that people want their voices to be heard and that they have confidence in the promise and potential of research to transform lives and create sustainable societies. The astonishing breadth of the submissions received tells us that people are concerned about the great challenges of our time but also, that there are unique and personal perspectives that must be considered by the research community and policymakers that can only come from lived experiences. This is what truly excited me about Creating Our Future – it created the opportunity to bring those perspectives out into the light and have a conversation about what research can do to address them. I am grateful to everyone who shared their insights and ideas, during what has been a unique and exciting process.

The passion and dedication of the Expert Committee and the >70 individuals who volunteered to work with us to analyse the submissions creatively and holistically was humbling. The Expert Committee was charged with accurately conveying the voice of Ireland and with bringing forward recommendations to government that will inspire future research and future-proof Ireland’s research system.

I hope that this is just the beginning of the journey and that the outcomes of this process will be taken forward to deliver a better future for all in Ireland.

**Professor Linda Hogan**  
Trinity College Dublin

# Executive Summary

**Creating Our Future was a first of its kind initiative in Ireland brought forward by Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in 2021.**

As an all of government endeavour, the aim was to create an opportunity for the people of Ireland to have their say and contribute to the future direction of Irish research and innovation. Recognising that good ideas and curiosity are the starting point for most research, Creating Our Future was introduced so that idea generation could be democratised. The underlying belief is that anyone, anywhere can have a good idea. The campaign was an opportunity to stimulate discussion and debate on what is important to people and communities, to invite researchers to take part in those discussions with the public and together, to curate new ideas that could inspire future research. This focus on dialogue between researchers and the public was what set Creating Our Future apart from other public consultations.

## The question

**“Tell us your idea for what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future”**  
was put to the public

The primary motivation behind Creating Our Future was to gather the public’s ideas and to generate a snapshot of what is important to the people of Ireland. The campaign was designed to facilitate the collection of ideas but importantly, it was done so with an emphasis on dialogue, inclusion, and shared perspectives. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was tasked with operationalising this unique endeavour in early 2021. The first action was to engage a diverse network of partners and collaborators in the campaign. This included a Steering Committee, led by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, an Advisory Forum comprised of representatives from just under 80 organisations, and an Expert Committee comprised of individuals with a diverse range of expertise and interests.

The Creating Our Future Roadshow visited every county in Ireland at least once during October and November. Despite the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic, over 1,500 online and in-person brainstorms and events were held to gather ideas. An aspirational target of 10,000 submissions was set based on the experiences of similar exercises in other countries. The public engaged with Creating Our Future with enthusiasm and interest and this target was massively exceeded, with over 18,000 submissions received.

A committee of experts examined every idea and studied what the people of Ireland had to say. Great care was taken to ensure that no bias would be introduced. The analysis and synthesis of the ideas have been captured in 16 themes and summarised in five areas the public would like researchers to explore to create a better future. Shown in the graphic below, they paint a picture of what is on the minds of the people of Ireland now, so that future research and policy areas can be informed and inspired by the challenges, curiosity, concerns and creativity of the public.

In addition to a direct analysis of the 18,000 submissions from the public, the Expert Committee also completed an innovative, human-centric analysis of the ideas. Through this approach the Expert Committee developed a deeper understanding of the national context and sentiment which underpin the submissions. What emerged is an understanding that we live complex, interconnected and entangled lives where technology shapes our societies and culture shapes our behaviour. There is also a degree of pessimism about an uncertain and challenging future, where we may have arrived at the end of abundance thinking. This is countered by a strong belief that research has a key role to play in helping realise people’s hopes for a better, inclusive and more sustainable future.

# 16 Themes



**Enhancing a Human Centred Approach to Health and Social Care**



**Reimagining Learning and Development across the Life Course**



**Advancing Solutions for Housing**



**Safeguarding Public Interest and Trust in the Digital World**



**Improving Policymaking and the Political System**



**Promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Ireland**



**Fostering Regional Strengths**



**Valuing and Connecting Communities**



**Embedding Climate Action Across Society**



**Supporting Innovation in Farming and Food**



**Future-proofing Energy and Water Systems**



**Connecting Ireland through Green Transport Systems**



**Nurturing the Humanities, Culture, and the Arts**



**Harnessing the Benefits of Fundamental Research**



**Building Resilience and Preparedness: Insights from the Pandemic**



**Strengthening the Research Landscape and Public Engagement**

## Five areas the public would like researchers to explore to create a better future

1. Solutions for the future cannot be developed in silos – everything is connected. Researchers should explore ways to live within our planetary boundaries with integrated sustainable solutions.
2. Accelerated research efforts are required in mental health and infectious diseases to improve quality of life and strengthen Ireland's resilience in the face of future disruptions.
3. Researchers should design, implement, and evaluate bespoke Irish solutions for services and infrastructure (from housing to transport and energy). These efforts should account for our unique geography, society, and heritage so that they benefit all.
4. Irish research needs to be at the cutting edge of emerging digital technologies that improve people's lives, increase public trust, and make for a more inclusive and fair society.
5. Research is required to harness the power of communities to generate local and systemic change in Ireland (from green initiatives to education and the future of work).

The Creating Our Future Expert Committee report contains a rich narrative around the themes and areas in which the public believe research can play a role. The voice of the public was handled with great care and respect and the humanity that was expressed through the submissions is reflected in the Expert Committee findings.

The themes are not in any priority order, and they do not equally reflect the volume of submissions received under any given theme. Although treated separately, many topics or threads covered within themes were relevant to multiple themes – an indication that people are aware that many of the issues facing us are entangled so thus cannot be addressed in isolation. The Expert Committee report sets out detailed commentary and calls to action under each of these 16 themes. The reader is encouraged to mine this detail to gain a deep understanding of the concerns and calls to action from the public under each of these themes. It is within the narrative and commentary under each of these 16 themes that one will find topic specific responses from the public. It is where the ideas, suggestions, creativity and curiosity of the public is reflected in response to the question posed to them.

As well as the synthesis of the submissions from the public, two sets of recommendations have emerged from the campaign. The independent Expert Committee sets out recommendations that focus on what is required to enable the research called for by the public to be delivered. These recommendations can be found within the Expert Committee Report.

The second set of recommendations are actions that are put forward by the campaign and are contained within this report. They have been developed through the lessons we have learned from this conversation on research and are designed to ensure that we honour our commitment to build the bridge between research and the public.

**Creating Our Future  
was built around a  
premise of inclusion.**



# Campaign Overview

## What is Creating Our Future?

**Launched in July 2021, Creating Our Future was a government-led national brainstorm that brought the people of Ireland into a conversation on the role all areas of research can and should play in addressing opportunities, challenges and hopes for the future.**

Creating Our Future was brought forward at a time when Ireland and the rest of the world was grappling with a global pandemic and when the public was engaging with research like never before - researchers and public servants became household names.

Scientific terminology was accepted as part of our everyday language. The importance we, as a society, place on being connected with other people, on community and on culture came to the fore.

Creating Our Future took place during an era of increased public consultation, with Citizen Assemblies playing an important role in building trust through the deliberative process. It was, and continues to be, a time when the Irish public, particularly young people, were demonstrating their desire to be heard and to connect with decision-makers in areas of significant challenges such as climate change. In addition, the creation of a new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in 2020 provided the Irish Government with a fresh view of the country's entire research system.

CASE STUDY

## Schools' Engagement

The Creating Our Future campaign team visited schools across the country and online during the campaign. These engagements resulted in meaningful discussions with young people where they could capture their comments, concerns, and questions. In-classroom engagements included a visit to Loreto Convent, Navan where over 90 Transition Year students held discussions about what was important to them. An opportunity to call in to the school yard of Marino Community School in Greystones saw young people with special education needs share their hopes and dreams for the future. Three virtual sessions were held with different classes at Sligo Grammar School with active discussion on how technologies relate to carbon neutral farming and AI solar panels impact their day-to-day lives.

From the outset, the vision was one of inclusion and a determination for an understanding of the public's needs in relation to research investment for the good of society. This included everyone's needs – from the most vulnerable in society to employees in large multinationals. Creating Our Future was proposed to create an opportunity for everyone in Ireland to tell the government what was important to them, what challenges they face and what opportunities they could see which would lead to a better future. The outputs of the initiative would serve to paint a picture of what is on the minds of the people of Ireland at a particular point in time and the role research and innovation can play in addressing those concerns and harnessing opportunities.

Inclusive dialogue was a fundamental tenet across all aspects of the campaign. The campaign was designed to create a space for those that would not, in usual circumstances, have an opportunity to engage, to come together, to share their perspectives and out of those conversations submit ideas that researchers should explore. Researchers met with the public on the streets of Ireland, at coffee mornings, at business events and overseas through Ireland's Embassy network, to talk about their work.

All research starts with an idea. A driving motivation behind Creating Our Future was to open a conversation with all people so that those research ideas come from new and additional places. Those carrying out research would then benefit from a fresh source of inspiration that is born out of specific life experiences and needs.



CASE STUDY

L to R: Aine O'Toole, a member of the NCBI visually impaired community, Prof John Nolan, South East Technological University and Tracy Bailey, Iona Deputy Resource Centre Manager at a Creating Our Future event discussing what more could be done to improve the lifestyle of those living with visual impairment.

## National Council for the Blind Ireland

The National Council for the Blind Ireland hosted two Creating Our Future events at the Iona Resource Centre in Drumcondra, Co. Dublin. Researchers Prof John Nolan (South East Technological University) and Dr Dónal Fitzpatrick (National Disability Authority) joined approximately 30 service users with visual impairment in a conversation about how technology and other advancements have impacted their lives for good and bad – and what more could be done to improve the lifestyle of those living with visual impairment. These open conversations over cups of tea in the welcoming environment of the Iona Resource Centre led to just under 30 specific ideas that were curated through informed dialogue with the researchers.

Notwithstanding the pivotal importance of research for Ireland’s economic and social progress and resilience, there is evidence to suggest that while the public recognise the critical role of research, the concept of the research process can still seem remote from the public. There is a risk that opportunities may be lost to align with public priorities and policy objectives. Creating Our Future was brought forward to bridge those gaps so that research and innovation can play its rightful role at a time when we are faced with complex global societal and ecological challenges. Providing researchers with the perspectives of the “end user” of their work is a powerful insight which can only lead to more impactful outcomes. The intent of the campaign was not to generate a prioritised list of research areas in which the government or other research funders should invest; rather, it was to discover the areas of concern and interests of the public which could be addressed through any research discipline.

The campaign is based on international best practice, with other countries having successfully carried out a national dialogue on research at this scale in recent years. Examples include the Flemish Science Agenda which saw over 10,000 questions to be addressed by science being submitted from all corners of Flemish society. Similarly, the Dutch National Research Agenda was initiated by the Dutch Government to develop a unifying agenda for research in the Netherlands. The experiences and the openness of colleagues involved in those initiatives to share their knowledge were most valuable to the Creating Our Future journey.

CASE STUDY

### Ballinasloe Brainstorm

Senator Aisling Dolan hosted a Creating Our Future discussion and brainstorm in Ballinasloe Co. Galway. Representatives from Galway and Roscommon based business and community groups joined researchers living and working in the area to discuss what message they wanted to send to government through Creating Our Future submissions. They were joined by Brendan Smith, Education and Public Engagement Manager at Insight, SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics who delivered an inspiring presentation on the impact that research from that Centre is already having and its potential for the future. The conversation continued after the event and the community in Oranmore is now part of the citizen science project Crowd4Access, which involves citizens and professional technology researchers coming together to learn how accessible the footpaths of Irish cities and towns are. Not only that, Insight is also working with the Europe Direct Centre based at the Ballinasloe Library to provide Citizen Science projects to secondary schools in the locality.

*Members of the Mór Community group in Maree and Oranmore with Brendan Smith, Insight, SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics*



## What was the public asked to do?

Defining the right question to put to the public was a critical component of the campaign. Significant consideration was given to developing a question that would allow us to decipher what is important to people and what they want research to focus on to create a better future. Priority was placed on developing a very flexible open-ended question that allowed the public to respond in the way they felt best/most comfortable with.

The question “Tell us your idea for what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future” was put to the public. This question was carefully phrased to provide enough space for the public to express what they care about without putting the onus or burden on the submitter to develop a fully formed research idea. Equally, the question catered for those innovative ideas for research projects to be submitted. Capturing what the nation was curious about was also an ambition.

The focus was to capture what the public cared about and what they wanted to see researched in terms of an opportunity or challenge they had identified, or a topic they were curious or passionate about.

To assist those who needed more specific instruction, additional descriptive text and possible thematic areas covering every aspect of life to build an idea from were developed.

An accelerator session was hosted involving multiple stakeholders from government, state agencies, academia and societal representative bodies to refine this question. Further testing and consultation was undertaken with the campaign Advisory Forum as well as a small sample group.

**Tell us your idea for what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future**

Your idea could be based on:

- an opportunity or challenge you see for yourself, your community, Ireland or the world
- a topic you are curious or passionate about and would like researchers to explore



# Recommendations and next steps

The people of Ireland were asked to come forward and tell the government what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future. The public responded with great interest and enthusiasm – demonstrating their desire to learn more about research and to have a say in what research and researchers should consider so that the researchers are cognisant of the needs of the public as they develop research questions.

Ireland’s new national strategy for research and innovation sets out that all Government Departments and Agencies are asked to consider the findings and recommendations and to develop relevant actions within their respective remits.

The new strategy inter-departmental and agency oversight group will have responsibility for monitoring the progress of these actions and will actively encourage and enable stakeholders to use the findings and submissions as a source of inspiration for the direction of research in the years ahead.

The following specific recommendations are put forward to support all actors, including the new strategy oversight body, in ensuring that tangible actions are undertaken in response to Creating Our Future.

## Research to deliver solutions

*The public and the research community responded to Creating Our Future with great interest and enthusiasm. The strength of the response to Creating Our Future has resulted in an insightful snapshot of what is on the minds of the people of Ireland. To directly address societal challenges, research performers should be supported to engage with communities to identify opportunities and to accelerate the development of solutions.*

*Carrying out research with a focus on a specific mission or societal problem is an increasingly important element of a modern, well balanced research system. Research funding bodies around the world are setting up new funding programmes which facilitate research that delivers tangible impact for society in the form of practical solutions. It is an outcome focused and complementary approach to funding research. Importantly, this mode of research funding is designed to bring many actors together to understand the complexity of the problem and to co-create potential solutions. This includes researchers from diverse backgrounds, companies, philanthropic organisations, government bodies and members of society and their representative bodies.*

- A new national research fund of €65.4m will launch in 2022 as part of Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The purpose of this fund will be to identify and support research that can contribute to addressing societal challenges. It will invite researchers to submit proposals for research in defined areas related to green transition and digital transformation. The findings of Creating Our Future reflect significant levels of submissions in these areas. Those findings will contribute to informing the definition of the focus areas under this new endeavour.
- The Creating Our Future campaign team will act as the connecting tissue between this large-scale initiative and those that engaged with, and partnered with, the campaign through its advisory structures. Furthermore, it will close the loop, more broadly between those communities that engaged with the campaign and researchers working in their areas of interest. Particular attention will be paid to reach those audiences that are traditionally more difficult to reach.
- It is recommended that the findings of Creating Our Future contribute to informing relevant research funding schemes developed by public funding bodies in Ireland.

## A Book of Inspiration

The public have come forward with their ideas and concerns, which are outlined in the Expert Committee report. Some submissions were detailed, others brief, but the collective outputs capture the key areas which the public see potential for research to improve our lives. All of the public's submissions have been published on an interrogable database. The database can act as a book of inspiration for existing and future research projects.

- Researchers from all backgrounds, as well as policymakers, are invited to review the report and interrogate the database with the benefit of their domain or topic specific expertise. It should be used as a new and complimentary source of ideas for research. It is a source of inspiration as opposed to prescription.
- The Higher Education and Research sector introduces a mechanism to promote the Creating Our Future database so that it is available to those who wish to interrogate it as part of the process to define research projects for Masters and PhD candidates.
- The Higher Education Institutes and research funders actively promote the use of the database so that researchers have the opportunity to gain insights into the needs and interests of the public with a view to existing and future research being informed and inspired by those needs.
- The Creating Our Future report and findings will be delivered and promoted to organisers of education events and competitions which facilitate young people to propose their own research projects so that they may inspire the direction of candidates' proposals
- Materials will be developed for and circulated to primary and secondary schools which will enable teachers and students to access and engage with the findings. Dedicated engagement activities will be organised to support the delivery and interaction with these materials. This activity will be aligned to Science Week engagement.
- Enterprise and industry representative bodies will be provided with tailored briefings on the findings and how they may be used to further their endeavours in line with the interests of the public and their employees.



## Continuing the conversation and spirit of collaboration

*Creating Our Future brought together a truly unique and diverse stakeholder cohort through its programme framework. It saw community and interest groups sitting alongside research funders and other bodies discussing how best to engage their respective communities in a conversation on research. The impact of this collaboration was clear through the level of audience reach achieved which resulted in high submission numbers from all corners of Ireland – and beyond.*

*The campaign also revealed a desire for more information on, and engagement with, research. Building the relationship between the public and research was an ambition of this campaign. This momentum must be maintained and continued.*

- The new national Research & Innovation strategy will propose new governance structures which will facilitate an environment of dialogue and collaboration. A new national Research and Innovation Advisory Forum will be Chaired by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and will provide an agreed structure for engagement between members of the research and innovation community and policy decision-makers.
- A wider Implementation Forum of Government Departments and Agencies that fund and/or perform Research and Innovation will also be established. The Implementation Forum will be tasked with working together to maximise the collective return on public investment in Research and Innovation. This will include embedding best practice, coordinating relevant activities, sharing information and consulting on common issues in a structured manner. The Implementation Forum will seek to improve consistency of approach and coherence across funders and performers, in particular across different research and innovation groups, ensuring that R&I priorities best reflect our national agenda and contribute to the impact of the public research and innovation system.
- The Creating Our Future conversation between research actors and the public must not end on the completion of the campaign. Efforts must be made by research funders and research performing organisations to reconnect with the public by responding to the themes identified and sharing information on research already taking place in these areas.

## Improving evidence-based policymaking

*Research, particularly publicly funded research, can and should inform policymaking endeavours. Creating Our Future has shone a light on the pressing needs of society. This moment should be leveraged to connect the research being undertaken with policy areas relevant to the public needs.*

- A national policy summit and platform will be established to provide a space for stakeholders to discuss national policies and challenges as identified through Creating Our Future, with relevant researchers and vice versa.
- Further mechanisms to place academic researchers within public service bodies to inform policymaking will be put in place.

## Awareness of needs at local level

Many members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and local government representatives actively engaged with the campaign to ensure that the voice of the communities they represent were heard. Members and representatives should benefit from the insights delivered through Creating Our Future. These insights can be a valuable tool to gain understanding of the needs of their constituents and they can also inform the work of Oireachtas Committees.

- The Creating Our Future reports will be delivered to every member of the Oireachtas.
- The findings of Creating Our Future will be submitted to the Clerk of every Oireachtas Committee.
- The findings will be provided to local authorities to consider topics raised by their communities.

## Knowledge Sharing

The strength of the response received reflects the public's interest in democratic dialogue. Bodies such as Government Departments and Agencies should learn from the experiences and reflections from Creating Our Future when considering future public engagement exercises with the aim of ensuring the voice of the public is reflected in public policymaking

Creating Our Future was informed by international best practice. Notably, by the experiences of the Dutch Research Agenda and the Flanders Science Agenda. Ireland now has its own valuable story to share with other countries embarking on similar projects.

- The partnership and public engagement aspects of Creating Our Future are held up as exemplars of broadening democratic dialogue to more expansive audiences.
- The campaign team, led by Science Foundation Ireland, will seek out opportunities to promote both the outputs of the campaign and the campaign journey to international networks so that others may learn from our experiences.
- The findings and experiences will be shared with colleagues in other countries that have carried out similar exercises in a bid to grow our information sharing network.

### CASE STUDY

#### Ballymun Regional Youth Resource

The mission of the Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (BRYR) is to empower young people from Ballymun and surrounding areas to reach their full potential, by putting in place a range of resources that will support them to make a happy, healthy and successful transition to adulthood, promoting health, well-being and resilience at all stages of their development. A pop-up discussion was held with young people and staff from BRYR on what research is being carried out in Ireland and nearby in Dublin City University and to hear what ideas the young people (aged 10 to 18) would like researchers to focus on and the areas of importance to them. Prevailing topics of discussion included youth mental health, education, local amenities and housing.

# Campaign Journey

## The campaign timeline



## Building and sustaining awareness and engagement

Communications and social media plans were designed to create awareness of the Creating Our Future initiative with the ultimate goal of encouraging people to go to the website where they could enter their submission. The communications plan was also a core element of bringing the dialogue on research to the public. The role of the communications activity was to help overcome some of the barriers that might prevent a person from participating. It was recognised that the success of this initiative would lie in getting as many people involved as possible, and to ensure that ideas come from a diverse range of people and communities. The true strength would lie in people feeling that their idea matters and that every idea received builds towards a better future. We needed to transform any disengagement, cynicism or sense of powerlessness into empowerment and positive action.

A suite of creative assets was developed around a central theme of anyone can have a great idea and by bringing all of those ideas together we can create a better future.

A multi-faceted communications campaign was launched in July 2021. The national TV channels were targeted to run a TV commercial campaign during late August and into early September. This was complemented through presence of the animation across On Demand services during the same period. A radio advertisement campaign ensured further reach with a particular focus on regional engagement.

Campaign materials were generated with priority placed on our guiding principles of inclusion and accessibility. A steady flow of content was delivered and shared with stakeholders. The role that the Advisory Forum played in amplifying the Creating Our Future message was a key success factor. Audiences were reached, through the combined social media campaign that no single state agency or Government Department could ever hope to achieve. The real impact of creating this diverse stakeholder network was clear to see from the outset.

Members of the Oireachtas were kept abreast of the campaign journey. The influence of public representatives within their constituencies was viewed as an important channel for further audience reach. Two sessions were hosted with members of the Oireachtas to brief them on the campaign.

### Overview of coverage mentioning “Creating Our Future”

Publication Period 01/03/2021 - 30/11/2021

**Total volume of coverage - 6.8K**  
**Total Reach - 100.3M**



**Press**  
**114** Articles  
 Total Reach  
**6.8M**



**Online**  
**142** Articles  
 Total Reach  
**7.7M**



**Broadcast**  
**18** Radio and **2** TV  
 Total Reach  
**996.6K**



**facebook**  
**221** Posts  
 Total Reach  
**1.1M**



**twitter**  
**6,300** tweets  
 Total Reach  
**83.7M**



Anyone, anywhere  
can have a  
great idea  
for the future!



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## CASE STUDY

### Teagasc Festival of Farming and Food

Broadcaster Jonathan McCrea was the master of ceremony at the Creating Our Future event at the Teagasc Festival of Farming and Food. Jonathan was joined by Creating Our Future Ambassador and former researcher at Teagasc, Shane O'Donnell. Talks also featured Teagasc leadership Declan Troy and Maeve Henchion who spoke with attendees from the farming community on the cutting-edge research on agriculture and food taking place at Teagasc. The engagement led to many ideas being submitted inspired by the talks.

## Campaign Ambassadors

The experiences of our colleagues in the Netherlands and from the Flemish Science Agenda spoke to the need for high profile Ambassadors to garner public interest and support. We wanted to emulate that model in a way that would fit within the Irish context. Shane O'Donnell, Emer O'Neill, Luke O'Neill and Emilie Pine were invited by Minister Harris to join our endeavours in reaching the public to talk about research and to encourage their followers to take this opportunity to have their voice heard. The Ambassadors generously volunteered their time to conduct TV and radio interviews, to write press articles, to take part in and host thematic events and to promote the campaign through their social channels. Their contributions played a big role in galvanising our audience right across Ireland.



Shane O'Donnell



Emer O'Neill



Luke O'Neill



Emilie Pine

**40** Roadshow events in 26 counties

Almost **1,500**  brainstorming and events

**36** Stakeholder information and campaign support sessions

### CASE STUDY

## Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

A shared passion that the voice of members of the traditional music, song and dance community needed to be heard in Creating Our Future led to a partnership with Comhaltas to design a thought leadership event. The event explored the role that research should play into the cultural and economic advantages of maintaining traditional Irish music and dance and research into how we can preserve the Irish language. The response from this community was overwhelming with over 300 submissions received. Guest speakers from media and business joined the event to express their support for ensuring that Irish music and culture was a prominent feature of the campaign.

## Gen Z Group

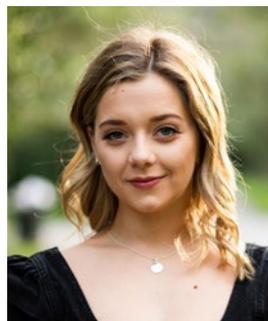
The future belongs to the younger generation, therefore, taking all measures to ensure that younger people had the opportunity to engage with the campaign was a priority. A small group of Gen Z partners (Youth Ambassadors) was established. This group was asked to provide perspectives and insights on campaign messaging and what was likely to resonate with their generation. Like the Ambassadors, this group joined our team with passion and generosity. They took the time to internalise the campaign and to share its purpose with their peers through their social media following, networks and at events.

The Gen Z group was made up of Jack O'Connor, a social entrepreneur from Limerick; Megan O'Connor, Deputy President of the Union of Students in Ireland and Monaghan-based Adam Lambe, Deputy President of the Irish Second-level Students Union.

The Gen Z Group hosted a large-scale youth brainstorm in partnership with Gaisce, Scouting Ireland, Foróige and the National Youth Council of Ireland in November 2021. The brainstorm captured almost 250 submissions from young people across Ireland. The Group also organised for the Creating Our Future team to travel to Carlow and present at the National Union of Students of Ireland conference with over 90 student representatives. A brainstorm was also held at this event capturing over 300 submissions from student representatives from across Ireland.



Jack O'Connor - Gen Z



Megan O'Connor - Gen Z



Adam Lambe - Gen Z

### CASE STUDY

#### Union of Students in Ireland Conference

To ensure that the student voice was heard in the campaign, Creating Our Future Gen Z Ambassador, Megan O'Connor brought the campaign conversation to the National Council Meeting of the Union of Students in Ireland. Evan Boyle from the MaREI SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine Dingle Peninsula 2030 project spoke about the team's goal to transition the peninsula into a low-carbon society, in partnership with local schools, communities and business.

## How was the public engaged?

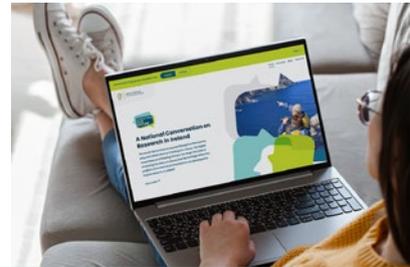
The primary objective of the Public Engagement aspect of Creating Our Future was to spark conversation and inspire ideas. The Public Engagement activities were designed to build on campaign awareness and to actively engage with the public. There was a particular focus on reaching members of the public who might not normally be engaged with research or an initiative like this.

Three primary engagement approaches were identified which built on the awareness raising work of the campaign delivered through the communications strategy.

- Connecting with the public directly through a nationwide roadshow that brought the campaign into every county in Ireland.
- Engaging existing community organisations, groups and businesses around the country as a vehicle to reach their members and reflect the voices of diverse communities across the country.
- Engaging researchers to bring their work to life through conversations with the public and enabling those conversations to spark new ideas.

Three activation events were hosted in the early stages of the campaign to brief stakeholders, to mobilise networks and to provide attendees with the supports required to run their own events. These bespoke events were targeted at three distinct groups – the research community, the business community and societal or community groups. In addition, weekly “drop-in” calls were run to provide an ongoing and open communication pathway for all stakeholders.

The vast majority of events and brainstorms were delivered online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Public Health Measures were strongly adhered to at the in-person roadshows around the country. Plans were put in place for in-person Thematic Ambassador events, however, due to the rising Covid-19 case numbers in Ireland in November those plans were amended with public safety in mind.



[www.creatingourfuture.ie](http://www.creatingourfuture.ie)

**38,300 Users**

**53,400 Sessions**

**100,500 Page-views**

### CASE STUDY

## St James' Hospital

Academic Health Science Centres (AHSCs) are a proven model internationally for promoting bench to bedside research, innovation and education to ultimately improve care and outcomes for patients. In 2021, St James' Hospital and its academic partner, Trinity College, began discussions about establishing an Academic Health Science Centre.

As part of an online information event to outline the plans, the Creating Our Future campaign ran an interactive brainstorming session with staff of the hospital and its health partners on campus, such as St Luke's Radiation Oncology, Children's Health Ireland, Irish Blood Transfusion Board, the Wellcome Trust/HRB Clinical Research Facility, and Trinity College to identify opportunities and challenges in health care that research could be used to address. Participants included frontline staff, medical researchers, administrators, management and support staff.

The session generated over 250 ideas for the campaign and provided a platform to develop wider interest in the AHSC model.

## The Creating Our Future Roadshow

**The Creating Our Future Roadshow featured a coffee truck and interactive activities to spark ideas. It encouraged members of the public to stop and have a conversation with the campaign team and researchers who lived and worked in their local area and ultimately to submit their idea.**

The Creating Our Future Roadshow travelled the length and breadth of Ireland throughout the months of September to November stopping in towns and city locations to bring the campaign to every county in Ireland.

Researchers were invited to come along and have a conversation with passers-by on research in general or specific topic areas. The roadshows served as a focal point for regional and local engagements and media, ensuring the campaign engaged with all counties. The roadshow was welcomed by local businesses and members of the public alike. It provided them with an accessible platform to share the opportunities and challenges faced at a local level. Many of the roadshows were visited by local public representatives who submitted their own ideas and supported the campaign as it made its way around the country.



# Roadshow locations



Map is not to scale and is for illustrative purposes only



Bespoke roadshow visits were also curated to complement brainstorm events taking place in locations such as Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) or in partnership with local community groups or stakeholder organisations. The HEI roadshows served as a key driver in the conversations with the student and youth population and also an opportunity to discuss research which is taking place in each HEI.

### Higher Education Institute Roadshows

- University College Dublin
- Technological University Dublin
- Maynooth University
- Technological University of the Shannon, Athlone Campus
- Technological University of the Shannon, Limerick Campus
- University of Limerick
- Munster Technological University
- South East Technological University, Waterford



### CASE STUDY

## Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)

Suzanne Smith, Centre Manager and Living Lab Manager at Netwell CASALA led the charge in engaging the Dundalk IT and Netwell CASALA network to ensure that the Louth and Meath roadshow events benefited from strong attendance by those communities. A brainstorm event was also hosted with researchers and members of the Living Lab to discuss research which translates ideas into practical solutions that improve the lives of older people and those who care for them.

## CASE STUDY

## Irish Abroad Engagement

Consulates General of Ireland San Francisco and Los Angeles brought together American academic and business leaders from the Bay Area. Attendees heard from Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, TD about the importance of capturing the voice of Ireland's global diaspora. The West Coast of the United States is home to some of the most ground-breaking research, science and technology. Professor Charles Spillane, Director of the Ryan Institute at NUI Galway joined the conversation by talking about his challenge-based research project, TAPAS, which is looking at enabling developing countries to track climate change adaptation in their agri-food sectors. Insightful conversations were had, with ideas ranging from the future of the global diet to more human-centric AI being submitted.

## CASE STUDY

## Science Week 2021

Science Week is Ireland's platform to celebrate science in our everyday lives. This 26th year of Science Week was themed Creating Our Future and brought with it an opportunity to reach a large, well established audience which has been curated over the past 25 years. It was a platform for an escalation of public engagement during the final weeks of the campaign and involved large scale national coverage and community engagement. Over 1,200 Creating Our Future events were run during Science Week. *Future Island Live* aired on RTÉ One and was presented by Liz Bonnin and Luke O'Neill. The show curated Ireland's most exciting and inspirational stories and voices into a family-friendly celebration of our nation's experts and innovators. Media partners included a range of traditional and digital partnerships. An extensive, targeted traditional and digital media strategy was developed including podcast partnerships with The 2Johnnies, Bandwagons and Blindboy. In addition, social media partnerships were entered with influencers Carl Mullan, Miriam Mullins, Fionnuala Moran and Paddy Smyth who ran social campaigns asking their followers to share their ideas to the campaign through Instagram.

Online resources were developed for primary and post-primary schools to encourage dialogue and critical thinking in areas that will affect their future. Students of all ages got involved in generating ideas from farming, space, rare diseases, future of fashion, the use of technology to enhance our cities and communities - and many more. Teachers were encouraged to gather their learners' ideas and submit them to Creating Our Future to ensure that the ideas and voices of students were captured.

## CASE STUDY

## National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority brought an audience of over 60 people together to gather ideas related to the many aspects of the lives of people with disabilities. The event was attended by individuals with disabilities, their representative organisations and others to support this community in ensuring that their voice was included. The event was designed with accessibility at its core. Materials in Easy to Read format and in Large Print were available. Irish Sign Language interpretation and real-time captioning was also provided. Participants were supported in creating their submissions many of which related to the need for a greater movement to co-designing and partnership in research programmes.

## Thematic Ambassador Events

Three thematic events were curated for Campaign Ambassadors Shane O'Donnell, Emilie Pine and Emer O'Neill.

These discussion-led events were created in partnership with the Ambassadors to provide lived experiences on topics from sport and concussion to the experiences of black people in Ireland. The events were designed to spark conversations on the role research plays in these areas, which may not ordinarily feature in the research and innovation space.

# Creating Our Future Ambassador Event

Creating Our Future presents a Fireside Chat with Emilie Pine, acclaimed author of Notes to Self in conversation with Ruth Freeman, SFI



**Emilie Pine**  
Professor of Modern Drama at UCD, and author of the No.1 non-fiction bestseller Notes to Self



**Ruth Freeman**  
Director of Science for Society, Science Foundation Ireland

**Online**

**Monday 29 November 1-2pm**

**Free Registration**



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Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann  
Royal Irish Academy



CREATING OUR FUTURE PRESENTS

## MY DEFINING MOMENTS

A CONVERSATION WITH SHANE O'DONNELL ABOUT SPORT, RESEARCH AND LIFE

**Tuesday**  
**23 November**  
7:30pm – 9:00pm

Online and in-person at glór, Ennis

FREE ADMISSION  
COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS APPLY



**FEATURING:**  
SHANE O'DONNELL  
HURLER  
AND RESEARCHER



**HOSTED BY:**  
PAUL COLLINS  
JOURNALIST AND  
PRESENTER





Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

CREATING OUR FUTURE PRESENTS

## IRELAND 2021:

THE EXPERIENCES OF IRELAND'S BLACK COMMUNITY

**Thursday**  
**25 November**  
7:30pm – 9:00pm

Online and in-person at Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray

FREE ADMISSION  
COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS APPLY

**HOSTED BY**  
EMER O'NEILL  
RTÉ PRESENTER

**WITH**  
BOIDU SAYEH  
WESTMEATH FOOTBALLER

**AND**  
Cllr. URUEMU ADEJINMI  
LORD MAYOR OF LONGFORD

**AND MORE TO BE CONFIRMED**





Rialtas na hÉireann  
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## Stakeholder Brainstorm events

**The campaign developed a brainstorm guide and pack which enabled stakeholders and partners to run their own Creating Our Future events to gather ideas.**

The pack facilitated thought-provoking discussions on what was important to the audience. The inclusion of researchers to inform the conversation was strongly advised to facilitate a true dialogue on research with the audience. The campaign supported these events by providing brainstorm facilitators.

There were two main methods of collecting ideas at the brainstorms or other events. These were through an interactive online tool or via handwritten postcards.

The postcards provided an opportunity for the public to write their idea down during the event or to take the postcard away and following further thought or discussion with family or friends, send the postcard to the dedicated campaign address. A partnership was developed with Ireland's national postal service, An Post, which enabled free postal submissions. The utilisation of the postcards was a very deliberate act to overcome any potential digital barriers.

Using an interactive presentation tool allowed the host in both virtual and in-person events to stimulate conversations and gather submissions. The development of brainstorm sessions using the interactive online tool was an effective way to incorporate a Creating Our Future brainstorm into any gathering. The sessions facilitated the campaign in gathering thousands of submissions in an engaging way which were framed within the context of a broader discussion with that audience.

## Creating Our Future campaign events

**The campaign team curated a number of additional events where gaps were identified to ensure that all corners of society had an opportunity to submit ideas and represent their community.**

Ongoing monitoring of brainstorm events and targeted audiences was conducted throughout to ensure that we were reaching all demographics.



## CASE STUDY

## Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's (DCEDIY) mission is to enhance the lives of children, young people, adults, families and communities, recognising diversity and promoting equality of opportunity.

Given its large remit, diverse stakeholder mix and awareness of the importance of research as a key driver for change, DCEDIY was keen to get involved in the Creating Our Future campaign to ensure that ideas from its areas of expertise, and from its staff and stakeholders were captured for inclusion in the campaign.

Two interactive events were held with staff of the Department. One session was held to equip the staff members with detailed information on the campaign so that they could ensure that their stakeholder community had every opportunity to have their voice heard. The second was an interactive brainstorming session for staff to identify opportunities or challenge areas for researchers to explore.

## CASE STUDY

## Housing Forum

Creating Our Future created a platform for discussion on the role that research can and does play in addressing societal challenges. The housing crisis is an area of national concern that came up time and again throughout the campaign. Dr Rory Hearne of Maynooth University led a discussion on the pivotal role that research can play to address many aspects related to housing - including availability and accessibility. This virtual event brought representatives from the traveller, disability, academic, business and NGO communities together for an informed dialogue on what research is already taking place and where more attention is needed.

# Governance and Partnership

**Science Foundation Ireland was tasked with operationalising the programme on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.**

To ensure that the programme was executed with the rigour and professionalism required of a Government of Ireland initiative of this scale, the professional services of Havas Ireland were procured to deliver the campaign in partnership with Science Foundation Ireland.

Creating Our Future was built around a premise of inclusion. To stay true to that ideology, a governance framework involving representation from all Government Departments, agencies and bodies involved in research investment in Ireland along with societal representative bodies was established. The framework was designed to ensure efficiency and collaboration. An Advisory Forum, chaired by Julie Byrne, Head of External Collaborations at Nokia Bell labs, was established with representatives from all corners of Irish society and government.

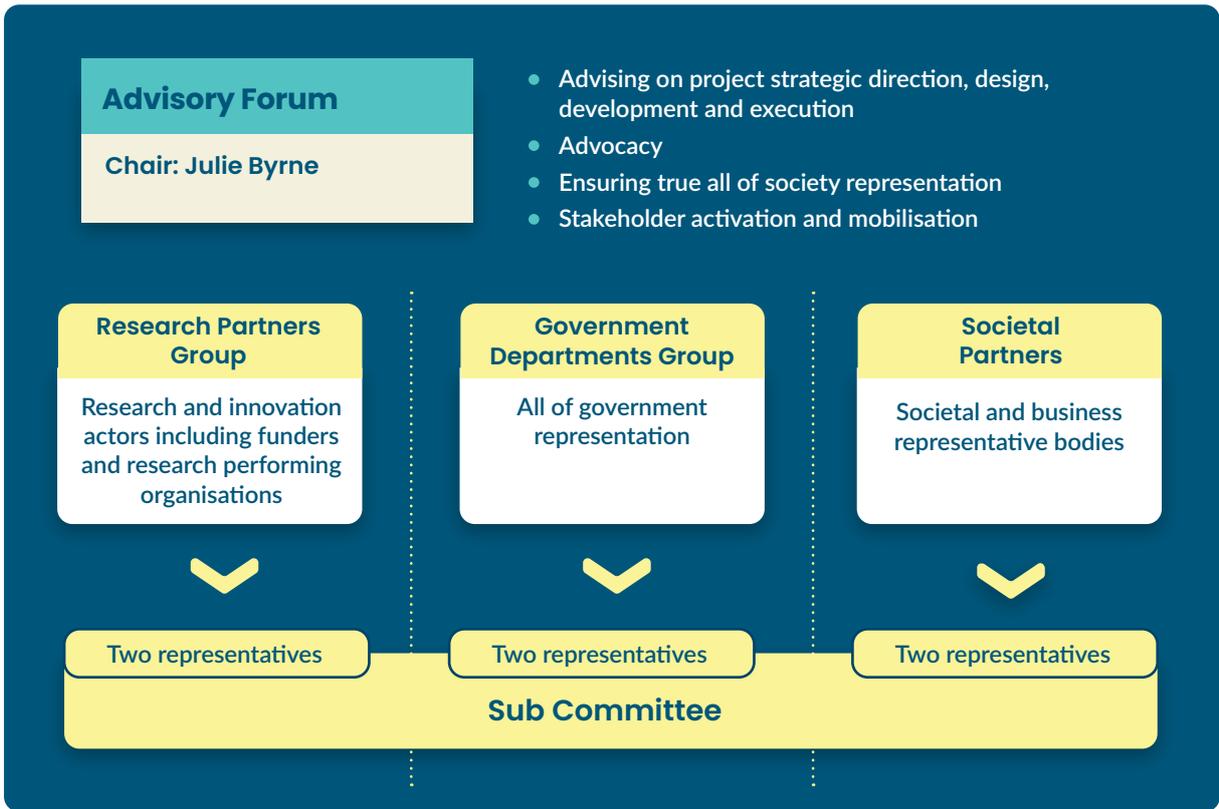
Transparency and ensuring opportunity for all perspectives to be heard was a priority for the Chair of the Advisory Forum. To facilitate this, a pragmatic approach was taken which saw the Forum divided into three pillars – Research Partners, Societal Partners and Government Departments. An additional engagement layer was introduced to support the Chair in her endeavours to have all voices heard and to mobilise networks – the Advisory Forum Sub Committee. This group was made up of two members from each Advisory Forum pillar and acted as crucial campaign advisors.

Seven meetings of the Advisory Forum were held between June 2021 and March 2022. At those meetings the Advisory Forum members were consulted on many aspects of the campaign. Members were supplied with information and tools to ensure that the communities and networks they represented had the opportunity to engage with the campaign. Members were encouraged to challenge and to ask questions so that they could come to a full understanding of the objectives of the campaign and to act as advocates.



# Campaign Structures





# Analysing and Synthesising the Voice of Ireland

The submission gathering phase of the campaign ended on the 30th of November 2021 with a final number of valid submissions received being 18,062 which far exceeded the initial target of 10,000. The efforts of so many led to a rich dataset for the Expert Committee and the seven working groups to analyse and synthesise.

The “baton” and custodianship of the voice of the people was handed over to the Expert Committee under the leadership of Prof. Linda Hogan. The Committee was composed of experts from a broad range of research disciplines and sectors.

The Expert Committee analysed and interpreted the ideas submitted by the public to produce findings that reflected the public’s voice and based on these findings, recommendations were developed to inspire research in Ireland. The Expert Committee was established in September to develop their methodology framework and implementation plans. Under their leadership, five multidisciplinary Working Groups, a data driven analytics team and a design research team were established to support the analysis of the public’s submissions.

These seven working groups, which were composed of over 70 experts from various disciplines across the public, enterprise, and the not-for-profit sectors, from across Ireland and abroad, were established throughout November and were active from December until the end of January. During this time all groups conducted offline and group analysis and participated in virtual group meetings to discuss and refine their work. The Working Groups conducted a multi-pronged, mixed-methodology analysis using both technology-driven and manual approaches. This holistic combination of approaches meant that every submission was considered in multiple ways, which reduced the potential for bias and ensured that the voice of Ireland was reflected in the findings. The Expert Committee then developed the outputs from all seven groups into an overarching Expert Committee report.

In parallel to the analysis work of the Expert Committee, ongoing dialogue was maintained with the Advisory Forum and the Advisory Forum sub-committee.



## CASE STUDY

## International Space Station case study

Creating Our Future went beyond planet Earth to gather ideas! Students from St Leo's College Carlow, Presentation College Carlow and Tyndall College Carlow, took part in a once in a lifetime live video call with a European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut on board the International Space Station (ISS) where they asked German ESA astronaut Matthias Maurer what he would like to see space researchers explore to create a better future for Earth and for future exploration. Matthias shared that he would like researchers to explore closed life cycle of products, as this plays a vital role in both space travel and on earth. From the space it takes in spaceflight to the waste both on earth and in space, Matthias would like to see more research in this area. Inspired by their call with Matthias, the students carried on the conversation through a Creating Our Future brainstorm to submit their own ideas.



To maximise engagement from the public the only field that was mandatory was the idea submission text box.

Two optional fields were available to capture location by county and age range. These data points provided additional insights on those members of the public that chose to enter that information.

Members of the public in **Carlow** submitted the highest volume per capita, followed by Sligo, Westmeath, Meath and Roscommon

The age group with the highest levels of submissions was

**40 to 49** year olds with significant engagement from **16 to 19** year olds also.

# Reflections

Creating Our Future was the first ever nationwide brainstorm of this nature in Ireland. We had the benefit of lessons learned from our colleagues in other countries that had carried out similar exercises in recent years. We have learned our own lessons from the Irish experience and hope that these reflections may support others as they embark on similar journeys at home or abroad.

## People

- The importance of partnership with a diverse set of stakeholders from the very start of the programme was clear. This was achieved through the establishment of an Advisory Forum which was mobilised in advance of the campaign being publicly launched. The Advisory Forum helped us to reach corners of society that may have otherwise been excluded.
- Defining the right “ask” of the public was crucial and was the topic that occupied the minds of those close to the campaign during the initial stages. The question to the public was developed in partnership with stakeholders through an “Accelerator” event. This event resulted in a question to the public which was further tested with both the Advisory Forum and a small sample group. That testing process revealed critical findings which informed the final question of “*tell us your idea for what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future*”.
- We had anticipated that stakeholders would have capacity to take the templates and tools that we provided to run their own events and brainstorms with their communities. In many cases, it transpired that the campaign team had to take a more proactive role in curating events. We addressed this by developing a new and interactive brainstorm experience using an online interactive tool which allowed our campaign team to insert a 15 minute Creating Our Future brainstorm into any event that was already taking place or by using it as a cornerstone of new Creating Our Future events. This additional engagement dimension facilitated the collection of many more submissions and access to communities.
- Inclusion and accessibility were core guiding principles of the Creating Our Future campaign and constantly considered during decision-making and planning right across our programme team. These principles, along with a desire to strive for simplicity and reduce complexity where possible, were critical in achieving desired outcomes in a fluid and complex campaign environment.
- Ownership for the programme at the most senior levels was crucial. Creating Our Future was led by a Cabinet Minister. Leadership from many stakeholder organisations also brought significant impact through their roles on the Steering Committee, Advisory Forum, and Expert Committee.
- Ensuring there is an adequately resourced programme team with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities was pivotal.
- The early establishment and mobilisation of an Expert Committee that is made up of the appropriate blend of skills, background and seniority was critical. Consideration for the right balance of decision-makers and do-ers was also key to success.

## Process

- Ideally, there should be a generous design period before the programme enters the delivery phase. Allocating sufficient time to design the campaign, particularly in the area of defining and understanding the diverse audience and being aware of, and open to, innovative models of engagement.
- Using a formal Programme Management Office structure and methodology to centralise the campaign ensured that we met key milestones and delivered on our objectives.
- Getting the balance right between developing and agreeing the right strategic approach while also getting stuck in and testing tactical options is wise. It is best to afford the right amount of time to strategy and planning the level of ambition for the tactical initiatives against the available resource capacity.
- Coordination with established platforms where possible will assist in accessing audiences. For example, Science Week 2021 was branded as Creating Our Future with all campaign materials provided to festival and event organisers and schools.



## Communication Channels

- Local and regional radio were key to reaching audiences right across the country and proved to be the greatest return on media investment in terms of submissions generated.
- Social media has the greatest potential for awareness raising. If used to complement other campaign activity, particularly when targeted with a specific audience and theme in mind, it can also convert into sincere public interest and generate submissions.

## Data

- How to collect, organise, store and analyse the submission data was fundamentally important for this exercise. Free text ideas require a specific approach, and we leveraged both a bottom-up and top-down approach to analysing the data. This mitigated bias and gave us an opportunity to test whether the thematic findings were consistent across both approaches. It is best to engage data analytics experts at the early stages of designing the analysis approach.
- It is tempting to try and capture more data on a campaign like this. Resisting this temptation and prioritising the simplification of the idea submission process to enhance probability of engagement was a very deliberate effort and led to Creating Our Future far exceeding our target of 10k submissions.

# Acknowledgements

Many individuals and organisations volunteered their time and resources to Creating Our Future. They did so with a shared belief in the importance of giving the public and their communities a say in how they wanted their future to look. This initiative would not have been possible without the passion and commitment of those who went above and beyond to partner and collaborate with the campaign team. We would like to acknowledge all of those who took the time to organise their own events and bring a dialogue on research to their communities.

The Advisory Forum members, under the leadership of its Chair, Julie Byrne, were instrumental in mobilising communities and the public and are recognised as being central to the delivery of this campaign.

Whilst many took a well-earned rest during the late December and early January period the Expert Committee along with over 70 Working Group members, guided by Chair Prof Linda Hogan, were taking great care to analyse the submissions we received. Sincere thanks are extended to these individuals who have been so generous with their time.

We are very grateful for the engagement of Members of the Oireachtas and local government who took the time to visit and support our roadshow when we visited their locality. A particular note of thanks to Deputy Denis Naughten who facilitated two talks on Creating Our Future and research with Members of the Oireachtas during the campaign. Senator Aisling Dolan is also thanked for hosting the campaign roadshow and a dedicated Creating Our Future in person brainstorm event so that the voices of the people of Ballinasloe were captured.

The Creating Our Future campaign was operationalised by Science Foundation Ireland with staff members Rebecca Wilson, Ruth Kelly, Lorna O'Driscoll, Alva O'Cleirigh and Peter Clifford leading specific workstreams, coordinated and led by Ciara Cotter, in partnership with Havas Ireland. These operational teams were greatly enhanced through the membership of additional partners. We thank Lia O'Sullivan (Irish Universities Association), Jennifer Kenneally (Royal Irish Academy), Jackie Gorman (Atlantic Corridor), Ben Bleasdale (CaSE, UK) and Emer Cahill

(Irish Research Council) for their insights and collaboration. We also acknowledge the significant support and enthusiasm of our DCU interns who provided us with the much needed operational support within our teams and who joined the Roadshow as we made our way around the country.

Minister Simon Harris and his Department entrusted the campaign to Science Foundation Ireland and our partners, however, officials of the Department joined our operational teams and were instrumental in our success. Particular thanks are extended to Tina Prendergast and Eoghan Hanlon.

The design and execution of Creating Our Future was done with the benefit of knowledge generously shared by those who had run similar exercises in the past. We extend our thanks to our colleagues at Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), particularly Dr Gregory Absillis, Dr Tinne Jacobs and Dr Isabelle Verbaeys for their enduring patience when responding to our many questions. FWO Flanders Science Agenda partner Michiel Nuytemans of Tree Company also supplied us with helpful guidance in relation to the analysis process. Dr Jeanet Bruil, Dr Floor Frederiks and Dr Colette Bos at the Dutch Research Council (NWO) were instrumental in guiding us during the early phases of the campaign development for which we are very grateful.

Havas Ireland brought Creating Our Future from an ambitious concept to a successful reality. We benefited massively from their integrated approach, always performing as one collaborative team. Led by Programme Director, Dónal Browne, the Havas team co-ordinated and delivered on a wide range of services; from strategy, creative and media to business transformation, stakeholder management and web design. The spirit of true partnership between Science Foundation Ireland and Havas Ireland is to be commended and has been deeply appreciated.

Finally, thank you to the people of Ireland who came forward and trusted us with their ideas and hopes for a better future.

# Appendices

## Steering Committee

Organisation	Representative
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (Chair)	Keith Moynes
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	Joseph Moore
Science Foundation Ireland	Ciarán Seoighe
Science Foundation Ireland	Ruth Freeman
Irish Research Council	Peter Brown
Technological Higher Education Association	Jennifer Brennan
Irish Universities Association	Jim Miley
Nokia Bell Labs	Julie Byrne

## Advisory Forum Membership

Government Departments	
Department	Representative
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	Anna Visser
Department of Education	Dan Power
Department of Finance	Aidan Murphy
Department of Foreign Affairs	Micheál Smith
Department of Health	Chris Ryan & Robert Murphy
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Josephine Prendergast
Department of Justice	Darragh Brennan
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Jenny Connors & Luke Daly
Department of Rural and Community Development	Mark Ryan
Department of Social Protection	Dermot Coates
Department of the Taoiseach	Claire Hayes Curtin & Sorcha Dempsey
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Deirdre Mahony
Department of Transport	Claire Finn
Department of Defence	Philip Mudge

Research Partners	
Organisation	Representative
Campus Engage	Kate Morris
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Noeleen McDonald
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Marcus Breathnach & Céline McHugh
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	Justina Corcoran & Robert Mooney
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies	Eucharia Meehan
Enterprise Ireland	Zara Lonergan
Environmental Protection Agency	Jonathan Derham
Geological Survey Ireland	Koen Verbruggen
Health Research Board	Mairéad O'Driscoll
Health Service Executive	Declan O'Hanlon
Higher Education Authority	Tim Conlon
Houses of the Oireachtas Library and Research Service	Etaoine Howlett
IDA Ireland	Chantelle Kiernan
Irish Humanities Alliance	Marie-Louise Coolahan & Eugene McNulty
Irish Research Council	Eavan O'Brien
Irish Universities Association	Lisa Keating
Marine Institute	Niall McDonough
Met Éireann	Patrick Fournet
Royal Irish Academy	Daniel Carey
Science Foundation Ireland	Peter Clifford
SOLAS	Shauna Dunlop
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	Kerrie Sheehan
Teagasc	Jane Kavanagh
Technological Higher Education Association	Mark White
Technological University Dublin	Brian O'Neill
Údarás na Gaeltachta	Mark de Faoite

Societal Partners	
Organisation	Representative
Age Action Ireland	Celine Clarke
American Chambers of Commerce	Mark Redmond
AONTAS	Niamh O'Reilly
Arts Council	Maureen Kennelly
British Irish Chambers of Commerce	John McGrane
Chambers Ireland	Ian Talbot
Climate Ireland	Barry O'Dwyer
Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI)	Sandra Collins
County and City Management Association	Paula Butler
Disability Federation of Ireland	Riona Morris
Dóchas	Bobby McCormack
Economic and Social Research Institute	Deirdre Robertson
Health Research Charities Ireland	Avril Kennan
Irish Business and Employers Confederation	Claire McGee
Irish Farmers Association	Damien McDonald & Shane Whelan
Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry (IPPOSI)	Shannon Karpinski & Derick Mitchell
Irish Wheelchair Association	John Fulham
Kinia	Marianne Checkley
LGBT Ireland	Paula Fagan
Maynooth University	Katriona O' Sullivan
Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Rights	Fiona Hurley
National Adult Literacy Agency	Colleen Dube
National Parent's Council	Áine Lynch
National Women's Council of Ireland	Orla O'Connor
National Youth Council of Ireland	Marie-Claire McAleer
Pavee Point	Rosaleen McDonagh & Lynsey Kavanagh
Sport Ireland	Benny Cullen
The GAA	Pat Daly
The Teaching Council	Tomás Ó Ruairc & Carmel Kearns
The Wheel	Hugh O' Reilly
Union of Students in Ireland	Lorna Fitzpatrick & Clare Austick
University of Limerick	Maura Adshead

## Advisory Forum Sub Committee

Organisation	Representative	Advisory Forum Pillar
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	Anna Visser	Government Departments
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Micheál Smith	Government Departments
Health Research Board	Mairead O'Driscoll	Research Partners
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies	Eucharía Meehan	Research Partners
The Wheel	Hugh O'Reilly	Societal Partners
Council of National Cultural Institutions	Sandra Collins	Societal Partners

## Expert Committee Membership

**Professor Linda Hogan**, Trinity College Dublin (Chair EC)

**Professor Jose Bengoechea**, Queen's University Belfast (Chair Working Group A)

**Professor David Farrell**, University College Dublin (Chair Working Group C)

**Dr Orla Flynn**, Atlantic Technological University (Chair Working Group B)

**Professor Anita Maguire**, University College Cork (Chair Working Group E)

**Professor Brian Norton**, International Energy Research Centre, Tyndall National Institute & Technological University Dublin (Chair Working Group D)

**Ms Lorna Ross**, VHI Health & Wellbeing (Design Research Team Lead)

**Dr Niall Smith**, Munster Technological University (Stakeholder Relations Lead)

**Professor Barry Smyth**, University College Dublin (Data Team Lead)

## Ambassadors

**Shane O'Donnell**, Hurler for County Clare, Fulbright Scholar, Microbiologist

**Emer O'Neill**, Home School Hub and RTÉ Today presenter, PE teacher, Children's Education Campaigner

**Luke O'Neill**, Chair of Biochemistry, Trinity College Dublin

**Emilie Pine**, Author and Professor of Modern Drama, University College Dublin

## Gen Z Members

**Jack O'Connor**, Social Entrepreneur

**Megan O'Connor**, Deputy President of the Union of Students in Ireland

**Adam Lambe**, Deputy President of the Irish Second-level Students Union



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