

Higher education and research in Ireland

A developmental perspective

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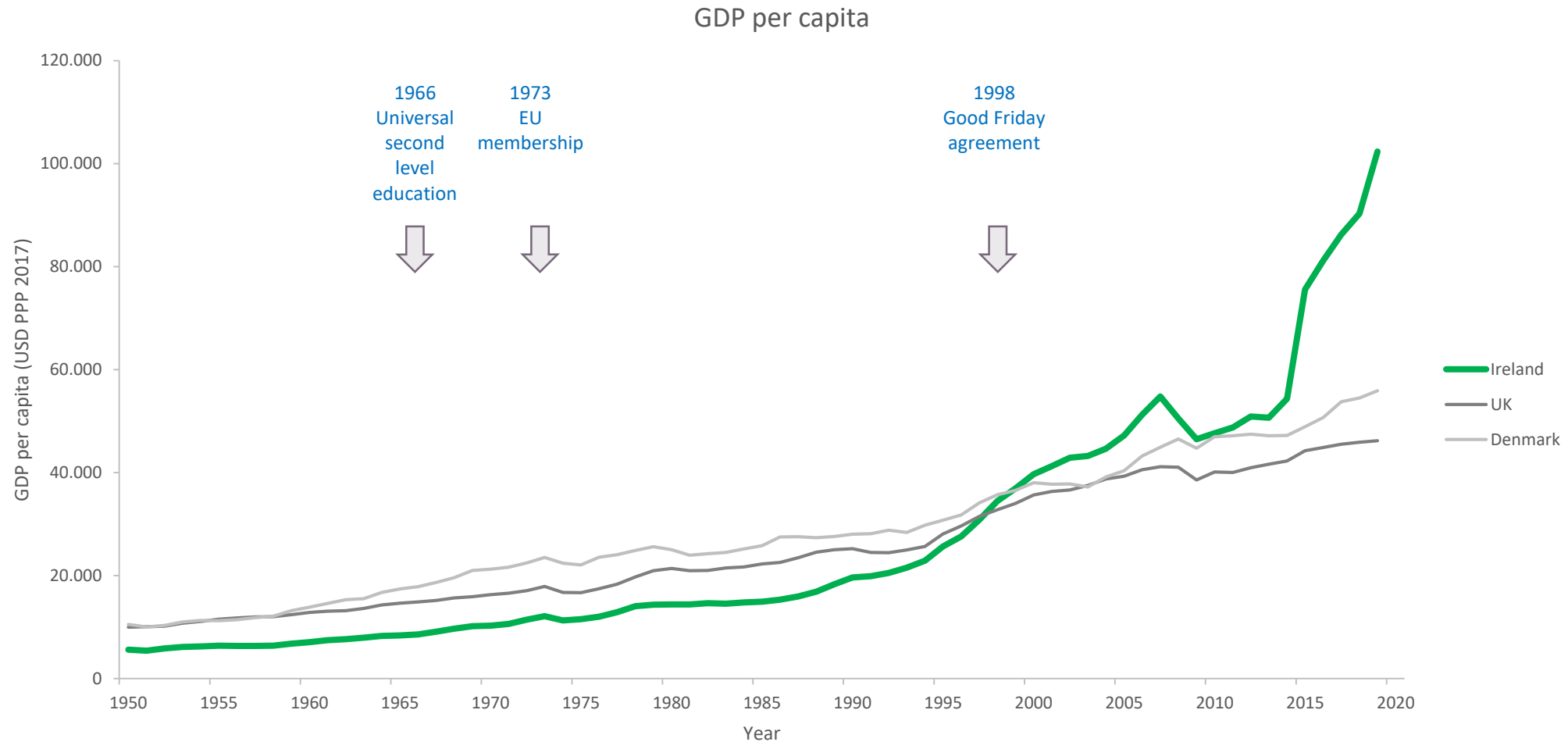
Conference of Rectors and Presidents of European Universities of Technology

22 Sept 2023

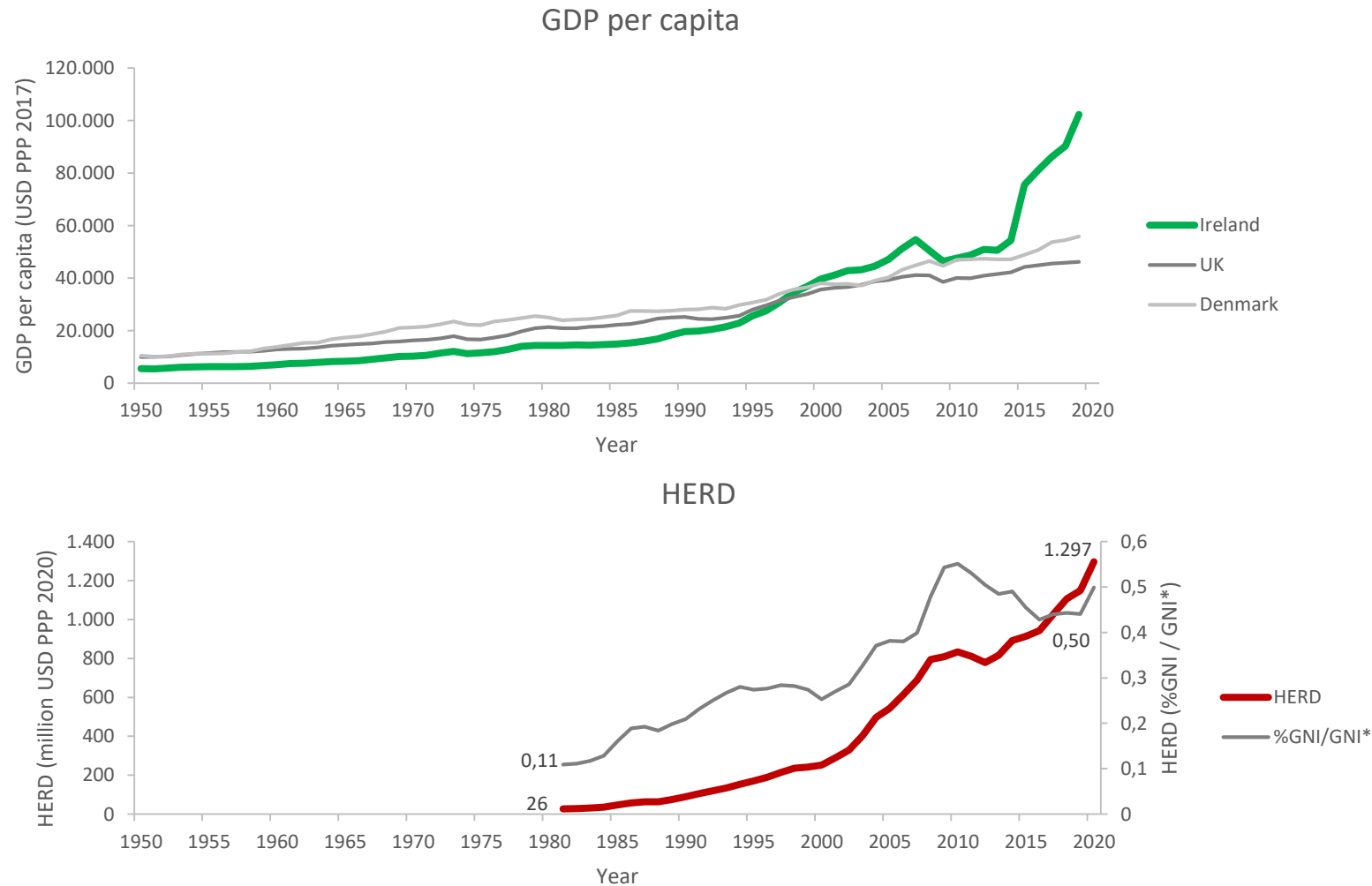
Key points

- Rapid and recent development of higher education and research system
- A diversity of higher education institutions
 - not (just) a binary system
 - different histories, path dependencies and capacities
- A mature and ambitious Government strategy for research and innovation

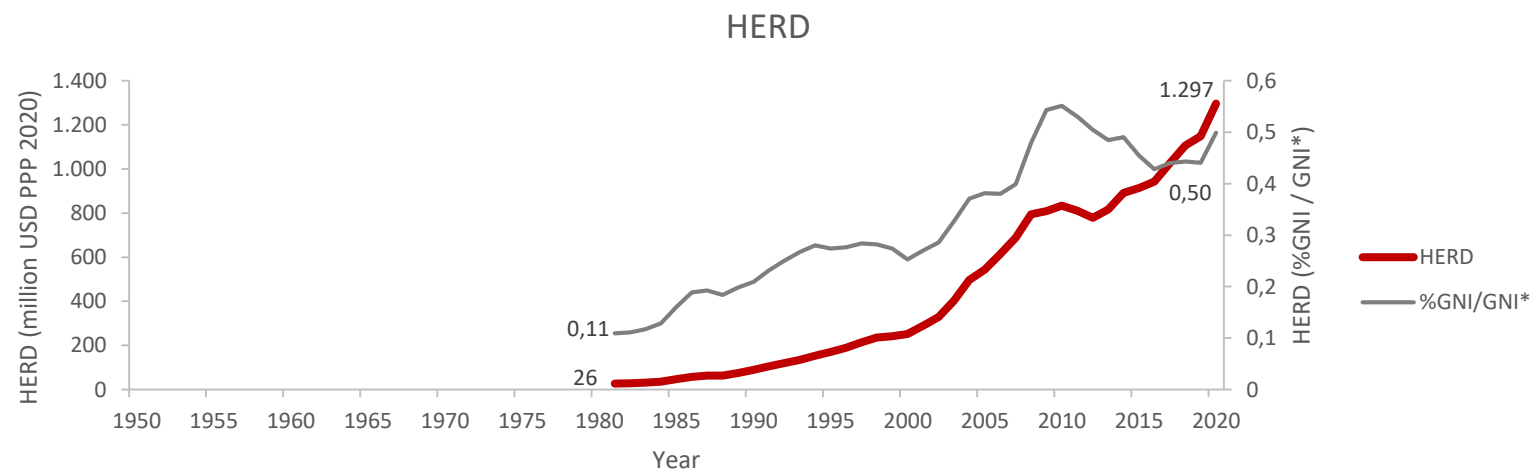
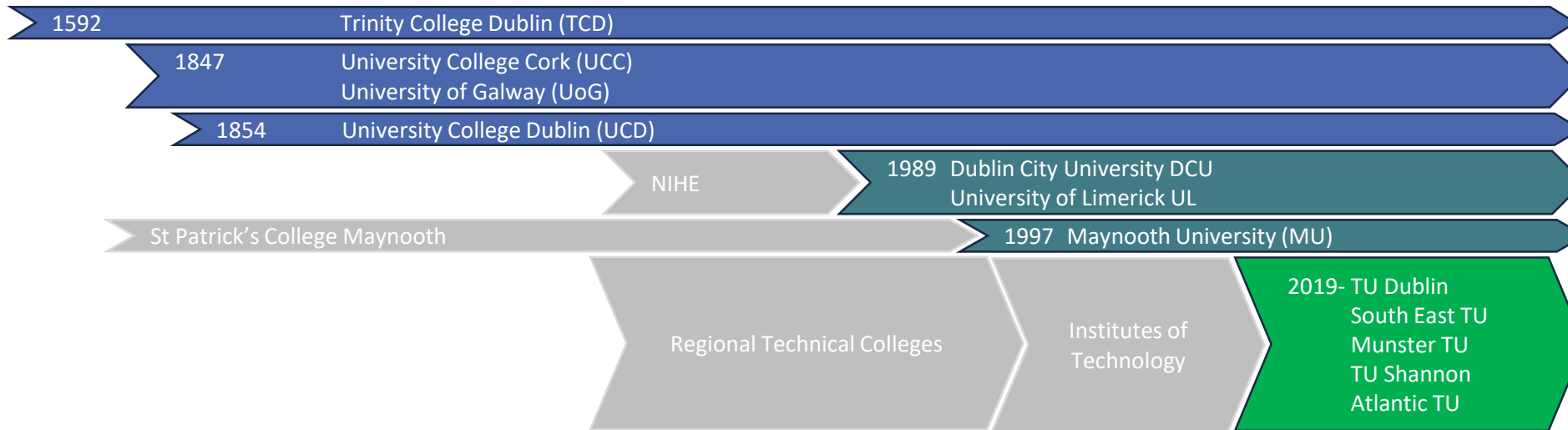
The economic context



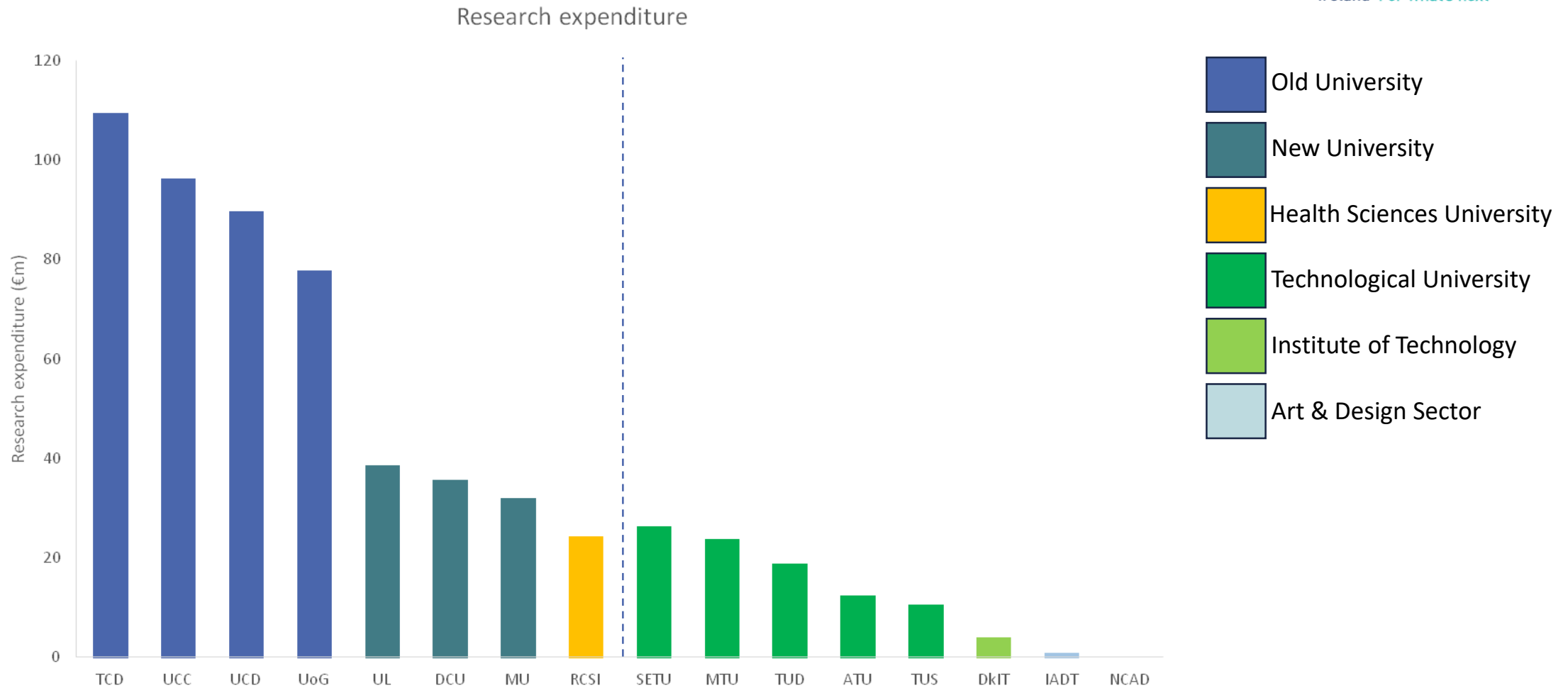
A short history of research investment



Institutions



A diversity of institutions



Impact 2030



Research and innovation make a real and positive impact across **society, the economy and the environment**, both domestically and internationally.



Research excellence is enabled by a world class, accessible environment supported by a **clear strategy architecture and institutional landscape**.



Enterprises, particularly SMEs, start succeed and transform through innovation, knowledge exchange, research commercialisation and access to highly skilled people.



Research talent is supported at all career stages, and excellence and impact are rewarded.



Research and innovation contribute to a **shared island** and an **innovative Europe** through strong North-South, European and global R&I collaborations.



Investment in research and innovation is increasing, with investment rising to **at least 2.5% of the domestic economy before end 2030**.

Broad tangible impact

Cohesive ecosystem

Enterprise partnership

Talent and skills

International collaboration

Increased investment

New Research Agency

A landmark Research Bill will be brought to Government to create **a new competitive research and innovation funding agency**, combining and building on the missions of the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland. This is an **exciting opportunity** to place **all research areas on an equal and statutory footing** and to drive a **step-change in interdisciplinary research activity**.

Introduction

Impact 2030, Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy represents a significant inflection point in the development of research and innovation in Ireland. *Impact 2030* positions research and innovation at the heart of addressing Ireland's societal, economic and environmental challenges.

Already Ireland is leading the way across many areas of innovation in health, technology and climate but we know we have much more to do to strengthen and support research and innovation in our higher education institutions, in our enterprises, in our public service and for our people. As the attraction and retention of talent becomes increasingly competitive on a global level, Ireland needs to be a location of choice in order to realise our ambitions.

There is no doubt that the nature and intensity of challenges faced by Irish people, businesses and policy makers has shifted significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing external challenges. However, with every challenge comes an opportunity, a chance to do better and to be better. Through *Impact 2030*, research and innovation in Ireland will demonstrate and deliver impact to respond to the twin transition challenges of climate change and digitalisation and the many other national priorities such as competitiveness, health, food security, biodiversity, equality and inclusion.

A landmark Research Bill will be brought to Government to create a new competitive research and innovation funding agency, combining and building on the missions of the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland. This is an exciting opportunity to place all research areas on an equal and statutory footing and to drive a step-change in interdisciplinary research activity.

As an Island of Innovation, *Impact 2030* will intensify our commitment to Ireland's knowledge-based economy, increasing and deepening enterprise research and innovation activity, which will be central to long-term economic and social sustainability at national and regional level.

Impact 2030 prioritises the nurturing and development of talent and excellence to build on Ireland's reputation as an Island of Talent and a location for research excellence and impact. We recognise that the quality of our researchers is fundamental to the quality of our research system, its collaboration with partners in industry and policymakers, both in Ireland and abroad. The strategy also highlights the need to foster an environment within the research and innovation community that supports our ambition to be an Island of Inclusion and Engagement.

Finally, *Impact 2030* will strengthen our support for all-island, EU and global research collaboration, guaranteeing our position as an International Island, a leader in research and innovation on the international stage.

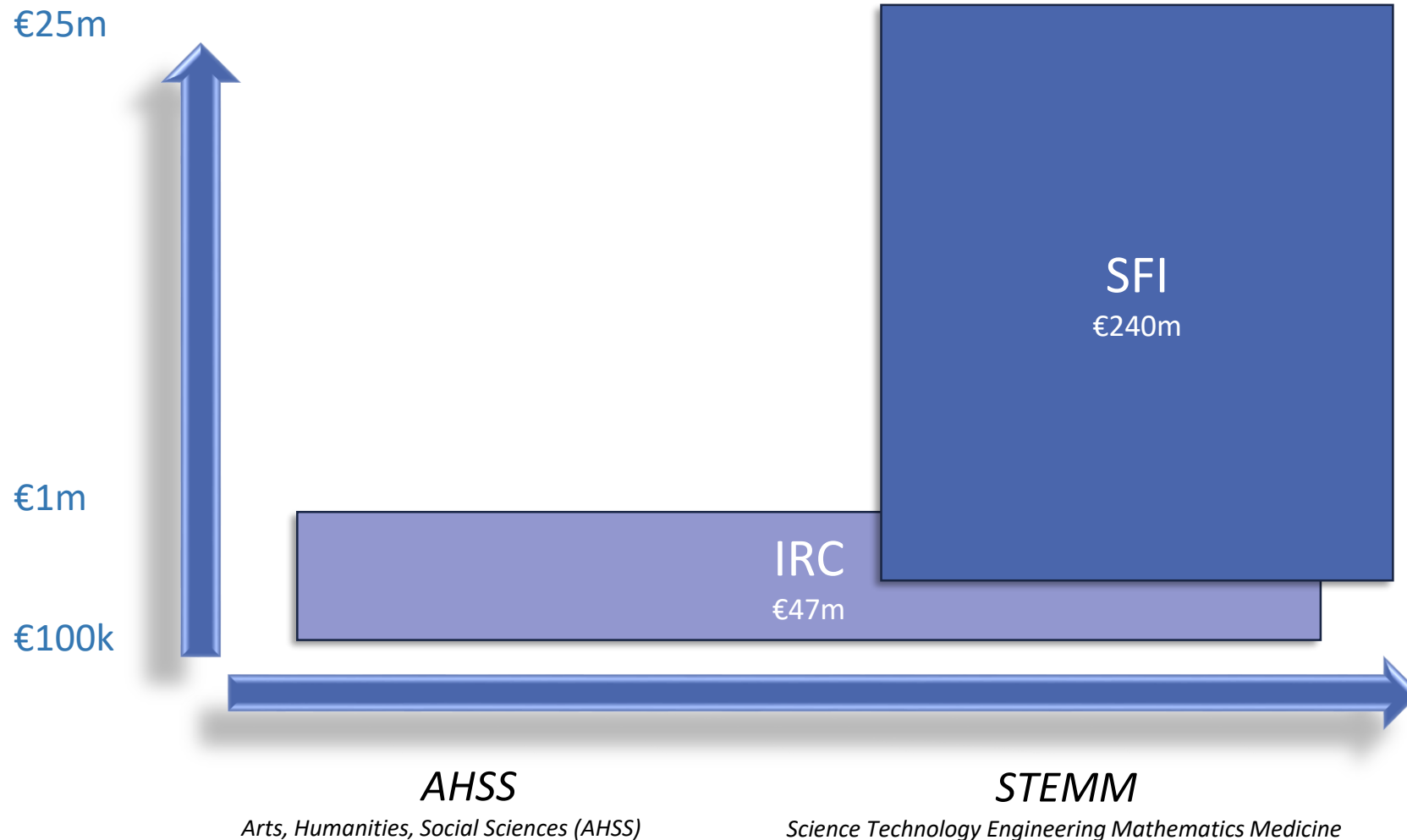
I am confident that, in implementing this strategy, *Impact 2030* will be transformational in strengthening the capability and capacity of the research and innovation system by the end of this decade.

I look forward to working across Government and with the wider research and innovation community to realise the vision and ambition of *Impact 2030*. Together we will ensure that research and innovation delivers lasting impact for the country and its people.

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



IRC and SFI portfolios



- SFI: STEMM only, PI grants (€250k - €1m) to major research centres (€25m)
- IRC: All disciplines, focused on talent development and PI awards (€100k-€1m)
- Both agencies: strong commitment to enterprise collaboration

Strategic priorities

- Research and scholarship of international quality and value
 - Excellence: quality, rigour, originality, creativity, integrity, importance, value
 - Impact: recognising the full range of outputs, outcomes, effects, artefacts
- Talent and skills
 - support talent of all types, across all career stages, in all research settings, building capacity in all parts of the research and higher education system
- Engagement and partnership
- Innovation
 - the gap between research/scholarship and application/policy
- International collaboration
- Long-term stable State investment

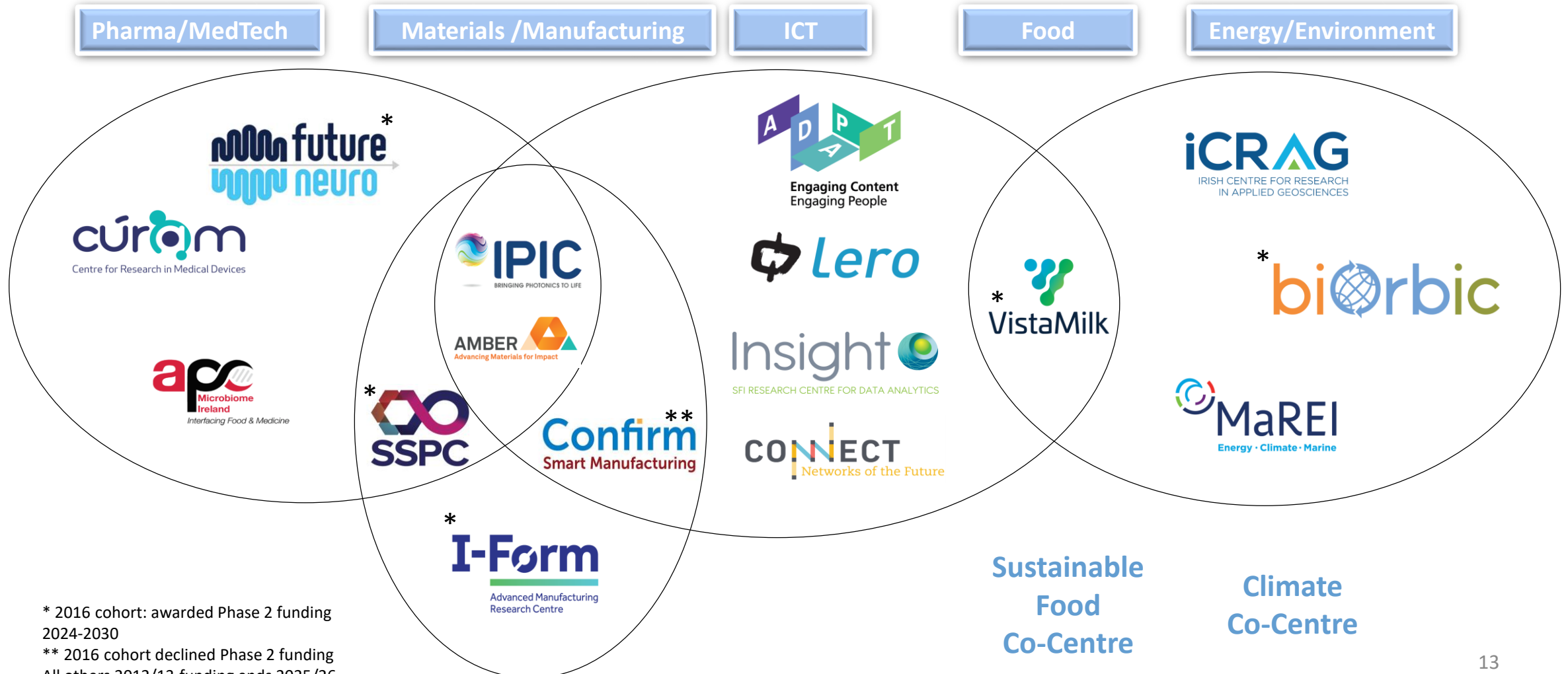
Future programme portfolio

- Projects
 - Foster talent, discovery, creativity and diversity across all disciplines and career stages
 - Establish a strong fundamental research base
 - Promote challenge research, engaged research, interdisciplinary research and innovation
- Programmes
 - Collaborative research programmes of very high quality, rigour and originality
- Centres
 - Multi-institutional collaborative research at scale with deep industry collaboration and engagement
- National Institutes
 - A large multi-institutional research centre with its own focused mission, with an additional remit to build networks and collaboration in a broad mission area (eg *digital transition, green transition*)

Research Centres

- Critical mass of outstanding researchers focused on a common mission
- Deep collaboration with enterprise (and the public service)
- Internationally competitive
- Leverage significant EU funding
- Transformative impact on research capacity and national and international collaboration in mission area
- Pivots, develops, reforms, downscales or retires after 8 years
- Currently STEM, will pilot AHSS-appropriate model in 2024

Research Centres: current landscape



Co-centres



- To establish interinstitutional centres of excellence across Ireland, NI, and GB
- Two themes: *Climate* and *Sustainable & Resilient Food Systems*.
- Total Government investment of €74million over 6 years: DAERA (*up to £17m*), SFI (*up to €40m*) and UKRI (*up to £12m*), to support joint research over 6 years.



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

Key points

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