



Annual Report 2023

ABOUT THE ESRI

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) advances evidence-based policymaking that supports economic sustainability and social progress in Ireland. ESRI researchers apply the highest standards of academic excellence to challenges facing policymakers, focusing on 12 areas of critical importance to 21st Century Ireland.

The Institute was founded in 1960 by a group of senior civil servants led by Dr T.K. Whitaker, who identified the need for independent and in-depth research analysis. Since then, the Institute has remained committed to independent research and its work is free of any expressed ideology or political position. The Institute publishes all research reaching the appropriate academic standard, irrespective of its findings or who funds the research.

The ESRI is a company limited by guarantee, answerable to its members and governed by a Council, comprising up to 14 representatives drawn from a cross-section of ESRI members from academia, civil services, state agencies, businesses and civil society. Funding for the ESRI comes from research programmes supported by government departments and agencies, public bodies, competitive research programmes, membership fees, and an annual grant-in-aid from the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform.

Further information is available at www.esri.ie.

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

The Council

MEMBERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023



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



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

MR SEAN O'DRISCOLL, President and Chairperson

PROFESSOR ALAN BARRETT, Director, Economic and Social Research Institute

MR SHAY CODY, former General Secretary, Fórsa

PROFESSOR KATY HAYWARD, Queen's University Belfast

PROFESSOR THIA HENNESSY, University College Cork

PROFESSOR BRIGID LAFFAN, Emeritus Professor, European University Institute

MR GABRIEL MAKHLOUF, Governor, Central Bank of Ireland

PROFESSOR SANDRA McNALLY, University of Surrey, UK

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

PROFESSOR CIARÁN Ó hÓGARTAIGH, President, University of Galway

Ms ANNE O'LEARY, Head of Meta Ireland and VP, Global Business Group, EMEA

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

** Mr Rónán Murphy, Mr Pat Rabbitte and Professor Rowena Pecchenino stepped down from the Council in February 2023.*

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1.	INDEPENDENCE AND FUNDING	2
1.2.	RESEARCH OUTPUTS IN 2023	3
1.3.	CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY	5
	Council membership	5
	Gender pay gap	5
	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.....	6
	Environmental sustainability.....	6
	Protected Disclosures Act	7
	Official Languages Act 2003	7
1.4.	PEOPLE	8
2.	SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023	9
	2.1 Research	9
	2.2 Funding	9
	2.3 Communications.....	10
	2.4 Human Resources.....	10
	2.5 Business Processes	10
3.	RESEARCH IN 2023	11
	1. Behavioural Science	11
	2. Competitiveness, Trade and FDI	11
	3. Education	12
	4. Energy, Environment and Infrastructure	14
	5. Health and Quality of Life	15
	6. Labour Market and Skills.....	15
	7. Macroeconomics.....	16
	8. Migration, Integration and Demography	17
	9. Social Inclusion and Equality	19
	10. Tax, Welfare and Pensions	20
4.	RESEARCH AREA COORDINATORS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023.....	22
5.	STAFF AT 31 DECEMBER 2023	24
6.	ESRI COUNCIL – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION	26
7.	WHITAKER PATRONS AND CORPORATE MEMBERS	29

1. INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report is an opportunity for us to reflect on progress and achievements in 2023 and on how the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) fulfils its mission to provide evidence to inform policymaking and public debate.

The Council of the ESRI is responsible for the strategic direction of the Institute and for monitoring its activities and the effectiveness of its internal governance. As the Institute has full academic independence, the Council does not control or have influence on the research output.

In 2023, the fifth and final year of our 2019-2023 strategy, the Council and Management Committee began the process of developing a new strategy for the Institute, with the aim of ensuring the achievement of our overarching mission of providing independent, robust research to support policy development for the betterment of Ireland, while ensuring the sustainability of the Institute. This comprehensive and collaborative process was informed by the insightful feedback from our stakeholders in the recently conducted independent peer review of the Institute, analysis of the Institute's performance over the previous strategy period, and challenges and opportunities in the context of our internal capabilities and resources. *Strategy 2024-2028* was published in October 2023, and is available on our website (www.esri.ie). It is anchored in our commitment to delivering a clear and focused research agenda which will provide robust evidence on critical areas of policy for Ireland.

This introduction outlines the Council's view on the effectiveness of the Institute in achieving its mission of providing a strong evidence base to guide policy. It also includes a brief overview of the Institute's environmental, social and governance (ESG) arrangements, and research output in 2023, the fifth and final year of its 2019-2023 strategy.

1.1. INDEPENDENCE AND FUNDING

The Institute's research strategy underscores its commitment to producing independent, objective and high-quality research. This commitment to independence is ensured through contractual arrangements with clients and reinforced by a policy requiring the publication of research findings, irrespective of funding sources. To maintain quality, objectivity and independence, a robust, peer-review process is implemented, which is subject to regular scrutiny by the Council. Additionally, the Institute undergoes an independent peer-review process every five years, to ensure adherence to these principles. The most recent peer review was carried out in 2022, and the report is accessible on our website (www.esri.ie).

With the transfer of the Growing Up in Ireland project from the Institute to the Central Statistics Office at the end of 2022, a financial challenge for the Institute arose. In 2023 we focused on maintaining existing multiannual programmes of research, funded by a number of government departments and agencies, while developing new programmes with the support of a number of new government departments and agencies. The annual grant-in-aid (GIA) from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform was increased in Budget 2024. The GIA is vital in supporting the mission of the Institute. The Council acknowledges and greatly welcomes this support. Much of the rest of the funding required to sustain the research of the Institute came from research projects, commissioned mostly by public bodies and competitive research grants. The contribution from Corporate Member and Whitaker Patron subscriptions increased in 2023, and the Council is gratified by the commitment of both existing and new members in supporting the independent, policy-focused research which the ESRI undertakes.

1.2. RESEARCH OUTPUTS IN 2023

The Institute continued its strong record of producing high-quality, independent research output in a wide range of outlets. This included 46 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 36 reports and 8 book chapters. In addition, 14 Research Bulletins were published in which journal article content was presented in a succinct, accessible manner. Works in progress were disseminated via 29 Working Papers.

The effective dissemination of this research continued to be a core part of our work. The ESRI was referenced in the media over 5,600 times, researchers appeared before Oireachtas committees on 8 occasions, and the ESRI was mentioned in Oireachtas proceedings over 600 times. A total of 29 events were held, and our regular research seminars, which had been paused during the pandemic, were resumed in 2023.

Detailed summaries of research outputs in 2023 are provided later in this document. Here we briefly outline some of the highlights in key policy areas.

Immigration became an increasingly prominent issue in 2023 and the ESRI was well placed to contribute evidence to debates on the topic. The Institute is Ireland's National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN) and, during the year, the EMN team examined the labour market integration of international protection applicants. While many asylum-seekers choose to work when allowed to do so, the data show that most enter jobs characterised by low wages and poorer working conditions. The Institute also published our biennial Monitoring Report on Integration. It presents a wide range of indicators on how well immigrants are being integrated into

various facets of life in Ireland. Among key findings, it showed improvements in migrant labour market outcomes, which had been severely affected by COVID-19-related restrictions. However, migrants had a higher ‘at risk of poverty’ rate (at 17 per cent) than Irish-born (12 per cent).

Housing continued to dominate the discourse in 2023, with the supply of housing remaining well below estimated needs. The ESRI continued to produce research on this topic, including: the impact of poor housing conditions on children’s health and social and emotional wellbeing; comparing housing challenges in Ireland with similar households in 14 European countries; and housing supply across the island of Ireland. The ESRI also continued to produce the quarterly Rent Index on behalf of the Residential Tenancies Board and published a report exploring the differences in rents between existing and new tenancies.

The cost-of-living crisis was prominent in 2023. The annual post-Budget briefing in October looked at the distributional impact of tax and welfare policy changes announced as part of Budget 2024. This work showed that, while the permanent tax-benefit measures did not keep pace with inflation, the one-off measures introduced in response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis did ensure a substantial cushioning of incomes, particularly for lower-income families. The Quarterly Economic Commentary reported the underlying trends in growth and potential exposure to external risk factors, particularly the impact of the energy crisis with the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. The Institute’s model of the macroeconomy informed analyses of various scenarios and other economic developments and policies, including the National Development Plan.

Public discourse on energy and calls for action to address the escalating climate crisis continued. With increasing evidence of extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and rising global temperatures, there was a growing sense of urgency among the public and policymakers to implement effective solutions. Research carried out by the ESRI recognises the interconnectedness of environmental, social and economic challenges. Research was carried out on topics such as residential energy efficiency, energy poverty, and electricity markets. Several studies examined aspects of fuel poverty, including investigating the equity effects of different types of energy affordability policy interventions.

Summaries of research outputs in 2023 are provided in section 3 of this document, on our website (www.esri.ie) and in our annual Review of Research, which was published in Q2 2024 and is available on our website (ESRI Review of Research 2023 | ESRI).

1.3. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Institute takes action on non-financial matters such as environmental, social and governance (ESG) concerns. We believe this has benefits not only for the environment but also for the Institute, our stakeholders and the wider community. In the sections below we report on how we manage these challenges in an effective and accountable way.

Council membership

The Council of the ESRI is committed to upholding the highest standards of corporate governance. One of the Council's sub-committees, the Governance and Nominations Committee, plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the Council possesses the necessary expertise, diverse sectoral representation and gender balance. Typically, Council members serve a three-year term, often renewed for an additional three years. Council members do not receive compensation for their service. Nomination and election procedures are formalised, with members being elected at the Institute's annual general meeting, further reinforcing transparency and accountability in its governance practices.

It was a pleasure to welcome new Council members in the year: Mr Shay Cody, former General Secretary, Fórsa, Professor Thia Hennessy, University College Cork, and Professor Brigid Laffan, Emeritus Professor, European University Institute. Mr Rónán Murphy, Professor Rowena Pecchenino and Mr Pat Rabbitte retired from the Council in February 2023. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their enormous contribution to the Council.

During 2023, Sandra McNally, Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh and Brigid Laffan served on the Audit and Risk sub-committee; Anne O'Leary, Katy Hayward, David Moloney and Alan Barrett served on the Business and Operations sub-committee; Sean O'Driscoll, Orleigh Quinn and Alan Barrett served on the Governance and Nominations sub-committee.

Gender pay gap

The Gender Pay Gap Act 2021 requires organisations to publish a Gender Pay Report. While the reporting requirement will not apply to organisations of our size until 2025, we have published our results on our website ([ESRI Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 | ESRI](#)) to reflect our commitment to gender equality. The results show that the mean pay gap is in favour of females at 5.3%. This reflects the fact that a greater proportion of senior and higher-paid staff are female. The median, not as affected by extremes, is much higher in favour of females, at 30.9%. This reflects not just the higher proportion of females in senior roles but also the fact that pay scales are wider at senior levels.

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

The Institute is committed to implementing policies and actions which are consistent with the duties conferred on public bodies by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The Institute's work in this area was recognised when it was awarded the Athena Swan Bronze award in November 2023. This quality charter accreditation scheme is underpinned by a framework for higher education and research institutes to implement impactful and sustainable gender equality work and to build capacity for evidence-based equality work across the equality grounds enshrined in Irish legislation.

Environmental sustainability

As the climate crisis has become more urgent, the ESRI has committed to taking action to reduce its impact on the environment. At an organisational level, we undertake a number of green measures and implement actions to reduce our environmental impact.

Procurement: It is ESRI policy to implement Office of Government Procurement (OGP) guidelines on best practice in Green Public Procurement (GPP) by integrating sustainable and environmentally friendly criteria into our procurement processes, where relevant. We avail of OGP and HEAnet frameworks, wherever relevant. In 2023, ICT hardware was purchased under HEAnet frameworks that included award criteria for environmental and energy characteristics. ESRI building utilities are procured via the OGP Energy Framework Agreements.

Waste/refuse: The ESRI has limited its environmental impact through a number of measures. Waste is recycled where possible; for example, in 2023, 464 kgs of IT and WEEE was recycled (in accordance with Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament). Waste service providers implement measures such as waste segregation and recycling where possible. ESRI research reports are disseminated digitally first, with few reports being printed. The ESRI uses recycled paper in our printers. Confidential waste is shredded onsite, certified, and then sent for recycling.

Energy/greenhouse gas emissions: The ESRI complies with the requirements of public sector bodies by reporting its energy efficiency and greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions performance data to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), annually. The currently available SEAI Annual Report (2022) reports the ESRI's achievements: energy consumption minus 43%, non-electricity GHG emissions minus 57%, total GHG emissions minus 55%, and reports that the ESRI is on track to achieve the targets. The ESRI implements various projects ranging from greater focus on building energy management, behavioural change such as a reduction in business travel, and the promotion to staff of energy-saving actions such as recycling and switching off lights and equipment. The ESRI

previously implemented a project to make lighting in our office more environmentally friendly, with many communal areas now equipped with motion-sensor LED lighting, which is important as office occupation continues to vary due to hybrid working.

However, the ESRI is cognisant of the challenges it faces in continuing to deliver on its energy efficiency goals due to its ageing building. In 2023, the ESRI's Management Committee and Council discussed its office space requirements in the context of this and the reduction in office occupation due to hybrid working arrangements. While a decision has yet to be made, the ESRI commits to incorporating energy efficiency and GHG emissions reduction criteria in future building renovations or procurements related to new offices.

Sustainable travel: ESRI staff are required to take public transport wherever possible for business purposes. The ESRI offers the Cycle to Work scheme to its staff, and provides secure bike parking to encourage the use of bicycles to travel to and from work.

The future: The Institute commits to developing and implementing a sustainable procurement policy in 2024 and to including green criteria in all procurements. While we have made very good progress towards achieving our sustainability goals, we are committed to continuous improvement. In 2024 the ESRI will prepare its Climate Action Roadmap to clearly set out our plans to achieve our decarbonisation and energy efficiency targets, in accordance with the National Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23).

Protected Disclosures Act

There were no protected disclosures made to the ESRI in 2023. The ESRI is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency, integrity and accountability. We support and comply with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act. To ensure compliance with the Act, we have put in place a policy and procedures that outline the process for making protected disclosures, either through designated internal channels or via external channels, as prescribed by the legislation.

Official Languages Act 2003

The ESRI does not currently have a dedicated Irish Language Officer but seeks to comply with the Official Languages Act 2003 where possible, subject to budget constraints.

1.4. PEOPLE

The Council recognises the expertise and commitment of the staff of the ESRI, who are highly trained, professional and dedicated. Many researchers are internationally recognised for their expertise and excellence. The researchers are supported by an equally dedicated team in Corporate Resources.

The Council would like to thank the government departments and state agencies, Whitaker Patrons and corporate and individual members who support critical research programmes, and the many stakeholders who engage with the work of the Institute. Such support enables the Institute to work towards realising its vision to be a ‘world-class research institute supporting the achievement of a more inclusive, prosperous, sustainable and decarbonised Ireland’.

Sean O’Driscoll
President and Chairperson

Alan Barrett
Director

2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

The Institute's Strategy 2019-2023 concluded in 2023. During the five years of the strategy, the Council oversaw progress on achieving the Institute's goals of research excellence and relevance, effective communications, and policy impact and its strategic actions, via regular reports to its sub-committee, the Business and Operations Committee. The Council's view on the effectiveness of the Institute in achieving its mission has been reported annually in the Institute's Annual Reports.

As 2023 was the last year of reporting on progress under the 2019 to 2023 Strategy, we reflect below on some of the areas of progress over the five years of the strategy, while recognising some areas where progress has been slower and where actions have carried forward into the next strategic period.

2.1 Research

While the Institute continued to maintain the quality and quantity of independent, peer-reviewed research output, we also focussed on ensuring that our research agenda remained relevant, capturing many of the challenges facing the country. The COVID crisis provided an example of the ESRI's ability to turn its attention to a new issue and to produce a high volume of quality, impactful research in a timely manner. Across many teams, analysis was undertaken that helped to inform decision-making at that time.

The creation of the Shared Island Unit (SIU) in the Department of the Taoiseach coincided with a renewed interest in all-island issues, post-Brexit. The SIU and the ESRI developed a programme of research to support this work; by early 2024, 11 reports had been produced, accompanied by numerous events, including two in Northern Ireland.

As the climate crisis became more acute, and with relatively slow progress in Ireland's efforts to reduce GHG emissions, ESRI work on climate continued and expanded, partly in response to new requirements from government departments.

2.2 Funding

Over the five years of Strategy 2019-2023, financial sustainability remained a key focus. The Institute successfully maintained many of our existing multiannual programmes of research, by delivering excellent, relevant, peer-reviewed research. We also developed new areas of research to reflect emerging national research priorities. Many of these programmes were funded by government departments and agencies. By the end of 2023, with the completion of our new strategy development process and the Institute's clearly articulated strategy, the Institute welcomed news of an increase in the annual grant-in-aid from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. The increase reflected the positive view of the ESRI among ministers and civil servants. In 2023 the Institute's relatively new Membership/Patron programme continued to grow and made an increasingly significant contribution to the Institute's finances.

2.3 Communications

The Institute's policy-relevant research is disseminated actively at conferences and workshops, through the media, and on social media and the ESRI website. One strategic action focused on expanding the use of social media and technology to build engagement, and another on broadening the Institute's pool of spokespersons in the media. During the strategy period, social media became an increasingly important avenue for disseminating research, promoting events and engaging with stakeholders and the public. Over the strategy period, subscriber numbers on LinkedIn increased by over 500%, and on Twitter/X by over 75%, while many more of the Institute's researchers actively engaged on social media. In addition, with the requirement to pivot to online webinars during COVID, videos of our launches and outputs have been made available on YouTube, and greater use of video content is planned for this new strategy period.

The Institute recognised the need to develop a broader, more diverse pool of spokespersons in the media. During the strategy period, this group expanded, with more colleagues and in particular more female colleagues making regular appearances in the media.

2.4 Human Resources

While the Institute continually focuses on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, highly motivated staff, two additional strategic actions focused on maintaining the Institute's culture and the wellbeing of staff during the COVID pandemic and the transition to a blended working environment, and on achieving formal recognition of the Institute's progress and policies in equality, diversity and inclusion.

The ESRI's strong culture of collegiality and mentorship is recognised and valued across our staff and we are committed to protecting it. To maintain this culture, and the high levels of staff satisfaction and wellbeing as captured via regular staff surveys, half-day internal conferences were regularly held, where all staff came together. This proved to be successful in maintaining connections. There was also renewed emphasis on training programmes and seminars in areas such as stress management and managing in a hybrid working environment.

Recognising the importance of gender equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the ESRI achieved an Athena Swan Bronze Award for its EDI Action Plan, 2023-2027. One such action was to publish the Gender Pay Gap report ahead of the statutory requirement to do so. The 2023 Gender Pay Gap results show a high level of gender equality, and we have committed to examining and, where applicable, taking action to address processes, cultures and structures that produce and sustain inequalities across gender and the other equality grounds.

2.5 Business Processes

The Institute continued to adhere to the standards required of public sector organisations in governance and compliance. Robust governance arrangements guide our management practices.

The Institute ensures that it operates effectively, efficiently and ethically while achieving its strategic objectives and complying with legal and regulatory requirements, via implementation of its policies and procedures, and having clear roles and responsibilities.

3. RESEARCH IN 2023

This section provides an overview of our research activities and outputs in 2023, with brief summaries of research across the 11 research areas. Further details on the research and the researchers involved are available on the ESRI website (www.esri.ie).

1. Behavioural Science

The **Behavioural Research Unit (BRU)** uses controlled laboratory, online and field experiments to investigate decisions and behaviours across multiple policy areas. Most of the BRU's work centres on environmental, health and financial outcomes.

The BRU was funded by the **Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland** to measure the rates of problem gambling in Ireland. It carried out an anonymous online survey of a nationally representative sample of the population and found that rates of problem gambling are around 10 times higher than previous studies using face-to-face methods found. The results were corroborated by aggregating expenditures for comparison with industry revenue figures.

In work funded by the **Department of Health**, the BRU undertook a diagnostic survey experiment to compare public beliefs about obesity in Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States to those of experts. The study found large differences between public and expert beliefs, with the public less likely to recognise the impacts of the obesogenic environment on obesity. Beliefs about obesity influenced which policies people thought would be effective. As part of the same study, an experiment found that giving information about the historical rising rates of obesity moved public and expert beliefs closer to each other.

The BRU undertook a field trial funded by the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** to test whether behaviourally informed communications could increase the number of households taking radon tests. The study sent different versions of a letter to households in areas at high risk of radon exposure. The behaviourally informed version of the standard EPA letter increased uptake by 50 per cent. The results can be used to inform public health communications with households and show the potential for using behavioural science techniques to help mitigate environmental risks.

Other BRU work in 2023 included: investigating, for the **National Screening Service**, how well the cervical screening materials inform those eligible to participate, and designing supplementary materials to aid comprehension of the screening system; designing a follow-up study to investigate why experts and the public differ in beliefs about obesity, for the **Department of Health**; a diagnostic study of farmer beliefs and behaviour around biosecurity, for the **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine**; a survey experiment on public attitudes to disability policy, for the **National Disability Authority**; designing and testing a tool to try to increase switching and shopping around for financial products, for the **Department of Finance**; experiments investigating communications around active travel schemes, for the **National Transport Authority**; testing a heating controls app in a nationwide field trial in research funded by the **Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland**; investigating how the public perceive environmental risks, for the **EPA**; and running an experiment to test the effects of greenwashing on consumer choice, for the **EPA**.

2. Competitiveness, Trade and FDI

ESRI research in this area focuses primarily on structural and microeconomic factors and policies underlying competitiveness and economic growth in Ireland and other European countries, in the context of international economic integration.

In 2023, research in this area addressed the following overarching themes: attractiveness to foreign direct investment (FDI) and associated economic, social and spatial effects; trade impacts of Brexit; artificial intelligence, digital technologies and productivity; digitalisation and sustainability across enterprises.

Research funded by the **Department of Finance** explored the potential effects of the global minimum corporate tax rate on Ireland's attractiveness to FDI and the wider economy. Taken together, the results of this analysis suggest that effects of the global minimum corporate tax rate on new FDI and FDI-related new jobs in Ireland in the medium and long term are likely to be negative but not sizeable. Ireland's attractiveness to FDI could be maintained and increased through other factors that influence the location choice of FDI, such as public and private investment in R&D, adult life-long learning, investment in housing, and broadband access.

Research funded by the **European Commission's Horizon Europe Programme** found that inward FDI and foreign-owned firms with dominant market shares – international superstar firms – contributed over and above other factors to increased wage inequality between firms across European regions. It is suggested that policy measures aimed at enhancing spillovers from highly innovative and productive international superstar firms to domestic firms could help to achieve a more equal income distribution across firms and mitigate potential unfavourable economic and social effects associated with increased income inequality.

As part of the joint research programme with the **Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec)** on the all-island economy, a detailed exploration of goods trade for Ireland and Northern Ireland was undertaken. This research examined the broad international flows for both economies and placed the structure of cross-border trade on the island of Ireland within this broader context.

Research on understanding the impact of Brexit on trade between the UK and EU found a sharp decline in trade from the UK to the EU and significant but smaller reductions in trade from the EU to the UK relative to a no-Brexit counterfactual. The research examined the broader impact on the UK's global exports, which have grown relatively more slowly than those of the EU, and the importance of taking into account breaks in the measurement of trade flows concurrent with the UK's exit from the EU Single Market and Customs Union.

Research on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and firm productivity indicated that the propensity of firms to adopt AI was positively associated with firm size, industry market share and the adoption of other digital technologies. Estimates indicate that using AI and the intensity of using AI are positively associated with firm productivity over and above other capital inputs. This research was presented in November at an **OECD Workshop on AI, Digital Technologies and Economic Outcomes**.

Research funded by the **Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications** found that digitalisation was associated with a higher propensity of enterprises to adopt ICT-related sustainability practices over and above other factors such as enterprise size, employing ICT specialists, and investing in intangible assets. Further results indicated that enterprises using AI were more likely to adopt ICT-related sustainability practices. This research started in 2023 and results are expected to be published in 2024.

3. Education

The ESRI Education research area covers all levels of the Irish educational system, including early childhood education, primary, second-level, and further and higher education. Research in 2023 focused on policy and provision for students with additional needs, early-years education, student

mobility, educational inequality and comparative analyses. The work spanned cross-national research and studies focusing on education in Ireland.

Education researchers are centrally involved in a range of comparative European studies, and one researcher is the Irish National Expert at the **European Commission** Independent Experts on Education and Training network.

Work drew to a close on the PIONEERED study, a **Horizon 2020**-funded project on educational inequality across Europe, with research focusing on school segregation, a comparative analysis of shadow education, and a review of policy.

Work continued on the ESSPIN study, a **Horizon Europe**-funded study on social, economic and spatial inequalities in the European Union in the context of increased global challenges.

Finally, work also began on EFFEct (Enhancing Efficiency and Effectiveness in Education), a four-year **Horizon Europe**-funded study, focused on enhancing the quality of education across the EU. ESRI researchers will focus on addressing inequality in educational achievement and the role of digital technologies in education.

Comparative research undertaken for the **Shared Island unit at the Department of the Taoiseach** highlighted similar policy challenges in Ireland and Northern Ireland around affordability of early-years provision and the employment conditions for staff. Social inequalities in cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes were equally prevalent among young children in the two jurisdictions. A paper, based on Shared Island research, pointed to the role of educational selection in producing lower levels of intergenerational educational mobility in Northern Ireland than in Ireland.

Another **Shared Island unit**-funded study, published in September, indicated the modest scale of cross-border mobility for higher-education students. It highlighted the way in which entry requirements appeared to disadvantage students from Northern Ireland, providing an evidence base for current reform of the process. Also on higher education, a paper based on a mixed-methods study showed the importance of supervisor support in encouraging international students' engagement in postgraduate education.

A book on post-school pathways among migrant-origin youth, published in May, brought together the work of leading international scholars to examine the influence of different education systems on the nature of transitions to higher education and the labour market. The book highlighted the need for host countries to put in place comprehensive policies to counter ethnic inequalities and discrimination in their education and labour market systems while facilitating and supporting immigrant youth in pursuing their post-school pathways.

Work was completed for the **National Council for Special Education** on a large-scale study looking at the post-school pathways of young people with special educational needs. The results will be important in shaping provision for students with additional needs in special and mainstream schools and across the post-school landscape.

Work was also completed on a mixed-method study, for the **Joint Managerial Body for Voluntary Secondary Schools**, which looks at what the schools provide to students and the community across different contexts and settings. A new mixed-methods study was begun for **Tusla Education Support Service** reviewing the School Completion Programme, which provides supports for children and young people at risk of school disengagement.

4. Energy, Environment and Infrastructure

Energy and climate research is funded by the **Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, Department of Finance, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities, ESB, European Horizon, Gas Networks Ireland, EirGrid, SSE Ireland, Energia, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.**

Research related to the environment is funded by the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the Climate Health Alliance (CHA)**, while research on electronic communications networks and services is funded by **DECC and the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg).**

The climate research team continued technical development of their analytical model, Ireland Environment, Energy and Economy (I3E), to facilitate further analysis of climate policies. Research output included assessments of the impact of removing fossil-fuel subsidies, projecting similar emissions reduction as envisaged by the carbon tax reaching €100 by 2030. Work has continued that provides underpinning economic and energy emissions projections supporting the EPA's emissions projections that it reports to both the EU and the UN.

ESRI's energy research spans topics such as residential energy efficiency, energy poverty and electricity markets. Research in 2023 included investigation of the energy system scale implications of switching to hydrogen, using supply-chain modelling, and identification of the likely timescales of cost-effective deployment of hydrogen and associated policy interventions.

The cost-of-living crisis was prominent in energy research during 2023; several studies examined aspects of fuel poverty, including the equity effects of different types of energy affordability policy interventions. Research examining barriers to residential energy efficiency renovations found a weak association between financial literacy and fuel poverty across several metrics.

Work continued on the **EPA** research programme on environmental economics in 2023, covering 14 projects in behavioural science, health and climate. As part of the programme, the ESRI continued to provide evidence for the National Radon Control Strategy, publishing a number of papers relating to radon testing, communication with householders, and protective measures for new homes.

Other research from the EPA programme, released in October 2023, showed that participation in the Clean Air Together citizen science project in Dublin led to a significant increase in awareness of air pollution among participants. A project on the health effects of climate change, funded by the **Climate Health Alliance**, continued into 2023. The water research programme, in collaboration with **DHLGH**, examined homeowners' attitudes and motivations with respect to domestic wastewater treatment system maintenance.

Research in the electronic communications research programme, funded by **DECC and ComReg**, examined excessive Internet use among adolescents; it found that spending time home alone is a specific risk factor but that regularly playing games or sports together with parents is a protective factor.

This research area hosted seven public conferences and workshops during 2023, including giving evidence to the Oireachtas Committee on Budgetary Oversight.

5. Health and Quality of Life

In 2023, research on health and quality of life focused on health service reform and public health. Health service reform research focused on capacity requirements in the healthcare system, changes and challenges to the long-term residential care sector since the onset of the pandemic, and issues of barriers to access to services. Public health research examined the impact of environmental conditions on health and wellbeing, changes in mental health and wellbeing from childhood to young adulthood, and the determinants of sexual health among young people.

Research funded by the **Department of Health**, using the ESRI's Hippocrates Model and published in January, examined the cost implications of extending eligibility for general practitioner (GP) care. Reflecting varying assumptions on population growth and ageing, take-up rates and payments to GPs, the analysis found that extending eligibility for GP care to all in 2026 would cost the State between €381 million and €881 million.

Funded through the **Research Collaborative in Quality and Patient Safety initiative**, a paper published in May examined COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term residential care (LTRC) settings. The research found that two-thirds of all LTRC settings had at least one COVID-19 outbreak between March 2020 and March 2021. Over the same period, there were over 8,500 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2,100 deaths among LTRC residents. Being located in a county with high community rates of COVID-19 was found to have the largest association with the probability of a COVID-19 outbreak.

In July, a paper was published from the **EPA** research programme on the impact on the health of older people of the roll-out of smoky coal bans across the country. Using data from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), the research found that those living in areas covered by the smoky coal bans had better respiratory health than those living in areas not covered by the bans.

In 2023, work continued on a number of projects, including workforce projections, sexual health and wellbeing in young adulthood, funded by the **HSE**, and the Housing and Healthcare Planning model.

New projects begun in 2023 included a **Department of Health**-funded capacity review of the healthcare system and a **HRB**-funded project examining mental health and wellbeing from childhood to young adulthood.

Throughout the year, presentations were made to a wide range of academic conferences, stakeholders and policymakers, including the Irish Economic Association, the Health Economics Study group, the Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies, the Institute of Public Health, the Department of Health, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

6. Labour Market and Skills

In 2023, research was undertaken covering a diverse range of topics, resulting in several newly released or finalised publications. The team launched two reports, funded by the **Low Pay Commission**, examining the quality of minimum-wage jobs and the incidence of sub-minimum pay rates in Ireland. A study, funded by **Pobal**, was published examining the link between the labour market impacts of COVID-19 and social disadvantage. During the year, the team conducted a study examining the link between area-level deprivation and the health impacts of COVID-19, also funded by **Pobal**.

Researchers finalised a report, and accompanying implementation guide, funded by the **Department of Rural and Community Development**, on the identification of key indicators for monitoring welfare levels in rural areas and the effectiveness of policy interventions. The team continued to research North/South issues and made progress on studies examining cross-border workers and differences in

cross-border inactivity rates, funded under the ESRI's joint research programmes with the **Department of Finance** and **Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec)**, respectively. Finally, in 2023 as part of a new research programme, with the **Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**, the team advanced a study on the demand and supply of skills in emerging technology areas in Ireland.

Work progressed on a number of EU-funded projects. As part of our **ERASMUS+** funded **CHAISE** programme, researchers published the report presenting the 2023 blockchain skills forecasts for Europe. Research focusing on youth unemployment in Europe continued under a Cowork4YOUTH award financed by the **EEA and Norway Grants Fund**. In 2023, researchers were part of two successful bids funded under **Horizon 2023** calls on the topics of skills mismatches. Research projects under both the **TRAILS** and **SkillsPULSE** projects will commence over the 2024-2027 period, fostering collaboration with international partners. These projects align with our commitment to contribute to critical issues in skills development and labour market dynamics at a European level.

2023 highlights

- The research carried out for the Low Pay Commission during 2023 was particularly impactful. The study on job quality found that minimum-wage employees are more likely than higher-paid employees to fear job loss, to hold temporary employment contracts and to work unsociable hours. The study on sub-minimum wages found that the incidence of sub-minimum wage employment in Ireland is low. In 2022, just 1.4 per cent of all employees were sub-minimum wage employees; in the same year, 5.6 per cent of employees were earning the full-rate minimum wage.
- The study on the labour market impacts of COVID-19 and social disadvantage indicated that the employment situation of individuals in deprived areas (as measured by the HP Deprivation Index) was more heavily affected by pandemic lockdown conditions than that of individuals from more affluent areas. Specifically, it found that unemployment rates increased more rapidly for workers in more deprived areas during periods of heightened pandemic restrictions. Conversely, these rates declined more rapidly when restrictions were eased. The results indicate greater vulnerability for workers in deprived areas, who were more likely to lose their jobs as a result of COVID-19 and also had less discretion on when to return to the labour market when infection rates fell, relative to individuals from more affluent areas.

7. Macroeconomics

The ESRI's Macroeconomics division aims to improve understanding of economic growth, the property market, and the relationship between the macroeconomy and the financial sector. Throughout 2023, the research agenda was strongly influenced by these themes. Notable areas of focus encompassed monetary policy adjustments, the evolving dynamics in the rental market, the ongoing impact of the conflict in Ukraine, and examination of investment and trade activities in both the private and public sectors.

In 2023, research under the joint programme with the **Department of Finance** and the **Revenue Commissioners** examined issues that included estimating the potential medium-term impact of the war in Ukraine on the Irish economy, and exploring the impact of a number of ECB policy interest-rate increase scenarios on the Irish economy.

Research under the joint programme with the **Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec)** focused on the economy of Northern Ireland and the all-island economy. A macroeconomic model of Northern Ireland is being developed in collaboration with the National Institute for Economic and

Social Research (NIESR) in London. In addition, research has focused on the structure of international goods trade for Ireland and Northern Ireland and on labour supply issues on the island.

In 2023 research under the joint programme with the **Department of the Taoiseach** on the economic and social opportunities from increased co-operation on a shared island focused on student mobility, gender and labour market inclusion, social attitudes, and housing supply across the island of Ireland.

The joint research programme with the **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage** continued into 2023 and was renewed for a further three years. In 2023, the focus continued to be on projects at the 'coal face' of research and policy. In particular, research was published exploring how the housing affordability challenges faced in Ireland compare with similar households in 14 other European countries. This extensive research provided cross-country insights into the affordability challenge and allowed the Irish situation to be placed in a European context. Further work focused on the investment requirements for energy efficiency upgrades for residential private rental properties, while projects on short-term lets, residential land prices and the determinants of homeownership were started.

The ESRI continued to produce the quarterly Rent Index for the **Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)**. The indices are used by the RTB as part of the qualification criteria for Rent Pressure Zones, and thus have an extremely high policy value. Work in 2023 focused on the introduction of Existing Tenancies Rent Index measures, which for the first time capture the rent levels and changes over time faced by sitting tenants, in addition to the longstanding New Tenancies Rent Index measures. This greatly enhances the monitoring capacity and market surveillance of the private rental sector overall. As part of this process, a detailed report was published exploring the differences in rents between existing and new tenancies. The ESRI team also continued to publish on rent control issues in academic journals such as the *International Journal of Housing Policy*.

The **Quarterly Economic Commentary (QEC)** continues to provide analysis of recent economic developments in the Irish economy as well as short-term forecasts for key economic variables. In 2023, much attention was given to the dual economy and the continuing difference in performance between the sectors of the economy dominated by domestic firms and those dominated by multinational firms (MNEs). Work also focused on developing an alternative labour market indicator for the Irish economy, bed-capacity levels in the Irish health system, analysis of the public finances, and continued refinement of the nowcasting methodology.

8. Migration, Integration and Demography

Research in this area focuses on the integration of migrants, as well as migration trends and policy. In 2023, research examined labour market-related themes, including the wages and working conditions of non-Irish nationals and the labour market integration of international protection applicants.

2023 highlights and findings

The ESRI is Ireland's National Contact Point (NCP) for the European Migration Network (EMN), funded by the **European Commission** and the **Department of Justice**. In March, EMN research examined the labour market integration of international protection applicants and found widespread take-up of permissions, with high approval rates, since access was first granted to applicants in 2018. However, the available data show that most enter jobs characterised by low wages and poorer working conditions.

Also in March, the biennial Monitoring Report on Integration was published under the **ESRI/Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** research programme. It presents a wide range of indicators. Among key findings, it showed improvements in migrant labour market outcomes, which had been severely affected by COVID-19-related restrictions. By early 2022, the migrant employment rate (77 per cent) was higher than that of the Irish-born (72 per cent) and exceeded the migrant employment rate immediately prior to the pandemic. Improvements were particularly marked among African migrants, who have long faced disadvantages in the labour market. Migrants had a higher 'at risk of poverty' rate (at 17 per cent) than Irish-born (12 per cent) and faced more issues relating to housing affordability; 29 per cent of migrants spent more than 30 per cent of their income on housing compared to 8 per cent of the Irish-born population.

In late January, another study in this research programme was published which examined wages and working conditions among migrants in Ireland. The study used data from the Labour Force Survey, matched with Revenue data on earnings. Key findings were a large migrant wage gap, particularly for East Europeans, who earn 40 per cent less per hour than their Irish counterparts. Migrant women face a double wage penalty, though the study found that the migrant wage penalty dropped between the recession period (2011-2013) and the recovery period (2016-2018).

A collaborative study with the **Shared Island unit at the Department of the Taoiseach** was also published in March, comparing migrant integration in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The study showed a higher proportion of migrants in Ireland than Northern Ireland, and very high rates of employment among migrants in both jurisdictions. In 2018, attitudes to migrants were more favourable in Ireland than Northern Ireland. A consultation event with migrant organisations north and south highlighted the challenges for migrants in terms of cross-border travel, work and study, especially post-Brexit.

During the year, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) launched a public consultation to inform the development of a new national strategy for migrant integration. ESRI submissions highlighted the importance of both monitoring and evidence as a core part of any future strategy, as well as key policy implications arising from the Monitoring Report on Integration series to date: the need to improve qualification recognition, jobseeker engagement, labour market activation policies appropriate to the needs of migrants, and consideration of targeted integration supports for refugees and protection applicants.

The **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** commissioned ESRI to complete a pilot project to inform the design of a large-scale study on why people come to Ireland to seek international protection. A research design protocol was produced, with recommendations on how high-quality and ethical qualitative research on this topic could best be conducted.

Work also began under the research programme on integration, investigating the drivers of attitudes of the population in Ireland to immigrants, protection applicants and Ukrainians, and how these have changed over time. Two outputs will be published in 2024.

Ireland does not participate in certain EU migration and asylum-related legislation unless it notifies the EU of its intention to do so. In December, EMN Ireland published an online, quick-reference guide to Ireland's participation in EU migration and asylum legislation.

In June 2023, ESRI researchers edited a book about post-school pathways for migrant-origin young people in Europe. The book compiles contributions from prominent international scholars, offering comprehensive coverage of various European jurisdictions. The book was launched at an ESRI in-person event in December, with a keynote presentation by Professor Irena Kogan from the University of Mannheim.

At the International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE) annual conference in Warsaw in July, ESRI researchers presented a study on measures to combat racial discrimination. This study was compiled to inform the *National Action Plan Against Racism*. Ongoing research on the academic achievement of migrant-origin primary schoolchildren, drawing on the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) '08 cohort, was presented at this migration conference in Warsaw and also at the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR) annual conference in Prague in September.

9. Social Inclusion and Equality

Research on social inclusion and equality investigates factors influencing access to the material and other resources required to participate in economic and social life, and the processes that lead to inequalities in opportunities and outcomes. In 2023, researchers investigated a diverse range of topics, including poverty and social exclusion, disability supports and attitudes to disability, (in)equality in children's achievement and their wellbeing, early childhood care and education, and gender balance in the financial sector.

2023 highlights and findings

In February, a study funded by the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** found that, while most children live in decent housing, those in poorer conditions experience lasting negative effects. They report increased social and emotional difficulties, fewer positive interactions with peers, and negative physical health outcomes, especially with heightened respiratory problems due to dampness and inadequate heating.

A study funded by the **National Disability Authority**, released in October, investigated Personal Assistance Services for Disabled People in Ireland. The research highlighted persistent challenges in the Personal Assistance system, including issues related to insufficient funding, incomplete administrative data records, disparities in allocation, and uneven service provision across the country.

In November, a report funded by the **Department of Social Protection** provided a comprehensive review of the advancement of the Government's social inclusion targets for 2025. The research found that Ireland was performing relatively well on the indicators for older people and children but less so for people with disabilities and lone parents, highlighting the imperative of additional support for these groups.

A collaborative study with the **Shared Island unit at the Department of the Taoiseach**, published in November, analysed social and political attitudes across the island of Ireland since 1998. It examined trust in institutions and people, attitudes to inequality, and political views, including satisfaction with democracy, political voice and future expectations. Overall, it found that satisfaction with democracy, trust in political, judicial and media institutions, and the sense of political influence was generally higher in Ireland than in Northern Ireland.

In March, ESRI researchers gave the keynote address at an event on 'Building an Inclusive and Diverse Public Sector', organised by publicjobs.ie and attended by a wide group of public sector workers. The presentation summarised a scoping study for publicjobs.ie conducted in 2022, which analysed publicjobs.ie data from 2019 to 2021 to investigate equality and diversity in public sector recruitment in Ireland.

ESRI researchers appeared in March 2023 before an **Oireachtas Committee** on personal assistance supports for people with disabilities. They discussed their study on personal assistance supports in Ireland and the experiences of disabled people as they negotiate and engage with these services.

In June, the first annual report on the Women in Finance Charter was funded by **Banking & Payments Federation Ireland, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec), Insurance Ireland, and Irish Fund**. The charter is an initiative that seeks to improve female representation in financial services firms operating in Ireland.

In September, researchers presented on 'Housing Health and Happiness' at the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR) conference in Prague, drawing on work from the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth**.

Work also commenced on a programme of research for the **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**. One project is investigating the equality impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market in Ireland. A second project is focused on adjusting estimates of poverty for the cost of disability. Both reports are due to be published in 2024.

10. Tax, Welfare and Pensions

This research area examines the design of the tax, welfare and pensions system, with a focus on the effect it has on redistribution, poverty, inequality and incentives to work. Much of this work uses SWITCH, the ESRI tax and benefit model, to simulate the impact of reforms on households. Each of the outputs mentioned below is part of the tax, welfare and pensions work programme, supported by funding from the **Departments of Social Protection; Health; Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and Finance**, as well as through the grant-in-aid provided by the **Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform**.

At the annual Budget Perspectives conference in June, organised by the team, they presented three new pieces of work. The first examined the potential cost and distributional impacts of extending the National Childcare Scheme subsidies to childminders. In light of the Commission on Taxation and Welfare's recommendation that all 'cliff edges' – points where taxes jump or benefit entitlements drop sharply – be removed, the second paper looked at such features in the Irish tax-benefit system. The third paper looked at housing tenure, health and public healthcare coverage in Ireland. The conference also heard an address by Chief Economist of the Department of Finance John McCarthy and a presentation on minimum-income support systems in Europe by Professor Werner Eichhorst of the Institute for Labour Studies (IZA).

A chapter of a book published in August examined the role for microsimulation in understanding the drivers of inequality. The team also published a variety of articles throughout the year in peer-reviewed journals. The first detailed the SWITCH model, its workings and how the model is validated. Another examined the extent to which tax-benefit systems close gender market income gaps. One paper looked at the link between social trust and support for universal basic incomes. A working paper was also published examining the issue of non-take-up of the in-work support for families, the Working Family Payment.

In September the third annual 'Poverty, Income Inequality and Living Standards in Ireland' report, funded by **Community Foundation Ireland**, was published. This work continues to look at the evolution of income growth, inequality, poverty and deprivation over time in Ireland. It also contained an examination of options to reduce child poverty in Ireland.

In October, the team held their annual post-Budget briefing, looking at the distributional impact of tax and welfare policy changes announced as part of Budget 2024. This work showed that, while the permanent tax-benefit measures did not keep pace with sizeable inflation, the one-off measures introduced in response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis did ensure a substantial cushioning of

incomes, particularly for lower-income families. Accounting for inflation, most families were found to be slightly better off following the one-off measures, with the exception of small income losses for lone parents, pensioners and non-earning households. This work was published in more detail in December as a special article in the ESRI's *Quarterly Economic Commentary*.

The work of the tax, welfare and pensions team continued its strong policy focus. The SWITCH model continued to be used in a range of government departments to feed into policy decisions and pre/post Budget analysis. Team members made a submission to the Department of Social Protection's public consultation on the introduction of a pay-related Jobseeker's Benefit. Members of the team also appeared at various Oireachtas committees throughout the year, giving evidence on topics such as the budgetary situation, pension auto-enrolment, Budget 2024 distributional impacts, cliff edges in the tax/welfare system, and the Commission on Taxation and Welfare recommendations.

Finally, in February, it was announced that the report of the Commission on Taxation and Welfare, of which one of the team was a member, had won the Miriam Hederman O'Brien Prize, which recognises those whose work contributes to informed discussion of key fiscal, economic and social policy issues in Ireland. Another team publication, which examined home support financing in Ireland, was one of the prize finalists.

4. RESEARCH AREA COORDINATORS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

- **Behavioural Science:**
Professor Pete Lunn



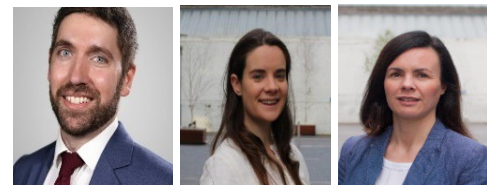
- **Competitiveness, Trade and FDI:**
Professor Iulia Siedschlag



- **Education:**
Professor Selina McCoy and Professor Emer Smyth



- **Energy, Environment and Infrastructure:**
Dr Niall Farrell, Dr Muireann Á Lynch, Professor Anne Nolan



- **Health and Quality of Life:**
Dr Sheelah Connolly and Professor Anne Nolan



- **Labour Markets and Skills:**
Professor Seamus McGuinness



- **Macroeconomics:**
Professor Adele Bergin, Professor Martina Lawless and Professor Kieran McQuinn



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



- **Social Inclusion and Equality:**
Professor Frances McGinnity and Bertrand Maître



- **Taxation, Welfare and Pensions:**
Professor Claire Keane and Dr Karina Doorley



5. STAFF AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

DIRECTORATE		
Alan Barrett		
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS	SOCIAL RESEARCH	CORPORATE RESOURCES
Marta Alvaro-Taus	Anousheh Alamir	Eleanor Bannerton (Operations and Strategy Manager)
Adele Bergin	Ylva Andersson	Claire Buckley (HR Manager)
Luke Brosnan	Aoife Brick	Sarah Burns
Klavs Ciprikis	Sheelah Connolly	Bernice Clancy
John Curtis (Head of Division)	Ciara Dalton	Liz Coyle
Kelly de Bruin	Merike Darmody	Stephen Cunningham
Çağaçan Değer	Karina Doorley	Liana D’Emidio
Seraphim Dempsey	Luke Duggan	Jennifer Downey
Kate Devane	Michele Gubello	Julianne Flynn
Anne Devlin	Garance Hingre	David Gorman (Acting IT Manager)
Juan David Duran Vanegas	Aislinn Hoy	Adrienne Jinks
Paul Egan	Harry Humes	Claudine Keegan
Andrés Estevez	Theano Kakoulidou	Francis McEvoy
Kirsten Everett	Claire Keane	Josh Nevin
Niall Farrell	Aislin Lavin	Clare O’Neill (IT Manager)
Tensay Hadush Meles	Pete Lunn	Charles O’Regan (Head of Finance)
Lea Hauser	Bertrand Maître	Fiona O’Sullivan
Pranav Kakkar	Lucie Martin	Fiona Owens
Elish Kelly	Selina McCoy	Fionnuala Quinn
Lorcan Kelly	Fran McGinnity	Stephen Sammon
Janez Kren	Ellen McHugh	
Akhilesh Kumar Verma	Keire Murphy	

Clement Kweku Kyei	Anne Nolan	LeAnnie Wilson
Martina Lawless	Diarmaid Ó Ceallaigh	
Muireann Lynch	Olga Poluektova	
Samuel McArdle	Dervla Potter	
Seamus McGuinness	Emma Quinn	
Kieran McQuinn	Deirdre Robertson	
Gretta Mohan	Helen Russell (Head of Division)	
Conor O'Toole	Simona Sandorova	
Paul Redmond	Anne Sheridan	
Iulia Siedschlag	Agathe Simon	
Rachel Slaymaker	Emer Smyth	
Elisa Staffa	Amy Stapleton	
Miguel Angel Tovar Reaños	Shane Timmons	
Anita Vollmer	Dora Tuda	
Adele Whelan	Michael Vallely	
Aykut Mert Yakut	Brendan Walsh	
	Keyu Ye	

6. ESRI COUNCIL – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sean O’Driscoll, President and Chairperson, ESRI

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

Alan Barrett, Director, ESRI

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

Shay Cody, former General Secretary, Fórsa

Mr Shay Cody joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2023. He was General Secretary of Fórsa, Ireland's second largest Trade Union. He served on the Executive Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Union’s Executive and on its General Purposes Committee. As Chair of the ICTU Public Services Committee, he was the lead negotiator in several rounds of public service talks. He has served as a member of the National Economic and Social Council and the National Competitiveness Council, and was a member of the Board of the Workplace Relations Commission. He is currently a member of the Central Bank Commission.

Katy Hayward, Professor of Political Sociology, Queen’s University Belfast

Professor Katy Hayward joined the Council of the ESRI in September 2021. She holds a Chair in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen’s University Belfast, where she is also a Fellow in the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute and co-Director of the Centre for International Borders Research. Katy is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Thia Hennessy, University College Cork

Professor Thia Hennessy joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2023. She is Head of School, Head of the Department of Food Business and Development, and Chair of Agri-Food Economics at Cork University Business School. She is also a board member of the Irish Management Institute and Teagasc. Her research interests include the sustainable development of the agri-food sector with a particular interest in the impact of public policy on the farm sector. Prior to joining UCC in

September 2016, Prof Hennessy was employed by Teagasc, where she managed the agricultural and environmental economic research programme.

Brigid Laffan, Emeritus Professor, European University Institute

Professor Brigid Laffan joined the Council of the ESRI in February 2023. She is Emeritus Professor at the European University Institute. She was Director and Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and Director of the Global Governance Programme and the European Governance and Politics Programme at the European University Institute (EUI), Florence until her retirement in August 2021. Previously, she was Professor of European Politics at the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe), University College Dublin (UCD), and Vice-President of UCD and Principal of the College of Human Sciences from 2004 to 2011.

Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics, University of Surrey

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

Gabriel Makhoul, Governor, Central Bank of Ireland

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

David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

David Moloney joined the Council of the ESRI in November 2010. He is the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. Prior to this, he was head of the Labour Market and Enterprise Division of the Department, with responsibility for various expenditure areas, including Social Protection, Housing, Enterprise and Agriculture and for the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES). Over the course of his career in the Civil Service, David has also served in the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Finance and the Department of Health.

Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, President, University of Galway

Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh joined the Council of the ESRI in September 2021. He became the 13th president of the University of Galway in January 2018. Previously, he was Professor of Accounting and Dean of Business at UCD.

Anne O’Leary, Head of Meta Ireland, Vice-President Global Business Group, EMEA

Anne O’Leary joined the Council of the ESRI in May 2022. She is currently Head of Meta Ireland and Vice-President of Meta’s Global Business Group, EMEA. She was previously CEO of Vodafone Ireland and President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. She is also on the boards of Meta Platforms Ireland Ltd, WhatsApp Ireland, IBEC and Greencore, and was the former Chair of GOAL Global.

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

Orlaigh Quinn joined the Council of the ESRI in 2020. She retired as Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in May 2023. As a career civil servant, she held leadership positions in several public bodies, including the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department of Social Protection and the European Commission. She is currently a board member of Business in the Community Ireland; the Convention Centre Dublin; the Economic and Social Research Institute; the Foundation for Fiscal Studies; the Institute for International and European Affairs; and University of Galway J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics. She is a former Visiting Research Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and holds a Doctorate in Governance from Queen’s University Belfast. She is the author of two books on public policy topics.

7. WHITAKER PATRONS AND CORPORATE MEMBERS

The Institute's membership programme plays an increasingly important role in supporting the long-term financial sustainability of the Institute. In 2023, the membership programme continued to grow, with the increased revenue supporting the delivery of high-quality research on important issues facing Ireland. Many successful events were organised during the year for the Whitaker Patrons and Corporate Members, which provides opportunities to connect with the ESRI's research and its people. This enhances the visibility of our research and helps to foster a sense of engagement with the Institute while maintaining our independence and objectivity.

ESRI Whitaker Patrons
Davy
EirGrid
ESB
Google
ICON
Intel
Kingspan
Microsoft

ESRI Corporate Members
AbbVie
ABP Foods
Aer Lingus
AIB
An Garda Síochána
An Post
Becton Dickinson (BD)
Bord Bia
Bord Gáis Energy
Bus Éireann
Cavan County Council
CCPC
Central Bank of Ireland
Coimisiún na Meán
Cork City Council
Cork County Council
daa
Datalex
DCC plc
Deloitte
Department of Agriculture
Department of Defence
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
Department of Foreign Affairs
Department of Transport
Dublin Bus
Dublin City Council

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Enterprise Ireland
Fáilte Ireland
FBD
Fingal County Council
Greencoat Capital
Higher Education Authority (HEA)
Ibec
IDA
Institute of Bankers
InterTradelreland
Irish Farmers' Association
Irish Life
Irish Rail
Uisce Éireann
Johnson & Johnson
Kerry County Council
KPMG
Limerick County Council
Louth County Council
Malin plc
Mater Hospital
Matheson
Meath County Council
Musgrave Group
Norbrook
National Transport Authority
NTMA
OHM Group
Portwest
PTSB
PwC
Rexel Group
Ryanair
SIPTU
Sisk
Tesco



**Whitaker Square,
Sir John Rogerson's Quay,
Dublin 2,
D02 K138**

eISSN: 2990-8086