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Global Positioning of Irish Higher Education: the way forward

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Global Positioning of Irish Higher Education: The Way Forward

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Presentation to HE Review Group, 18 September 2009



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- Setting the Context
- Creating a world-class HE system for Ireland
- Where to from Here?

1. Setting the Context



Setting the Future Global Context (1)

1. Globalisation is forcing change across all knowledge-intensive industries, creating a 'single world market'. The 'battle for brainpower' complements traditional struggles for natural resources. '
2. Application of knowledge is the source of social, economic and political power. Knowledge production (research) transcends national boundaries requiring membership of global networks. Today, knowledge is a geopolitical issue forcing HEIs to respond to a diverse range of global, national, regional and local stakeholders.
3. Simple distinctions between basic and applied research have been replaced by the 'knowledge triangle': the inter-relationship between education, research and innovation.

Setting the Future Global Context (2)

4. Worldwide comparisons are becoming increasingly significant. Global rankings measure the knowledge-producing capacity & talent-attractiveness of HEIs.
5. The EHEA and ERA are being reshaped/restructured to ensure the EU can better compete. At the same time, other nations are investing heavily in higher education and human capital.
6. The 'Golden-age' of Higher Education is disappearing at a time when the 'reputation race' is accelerating. This puts particular pressure on small, publicly-funded HE systems.

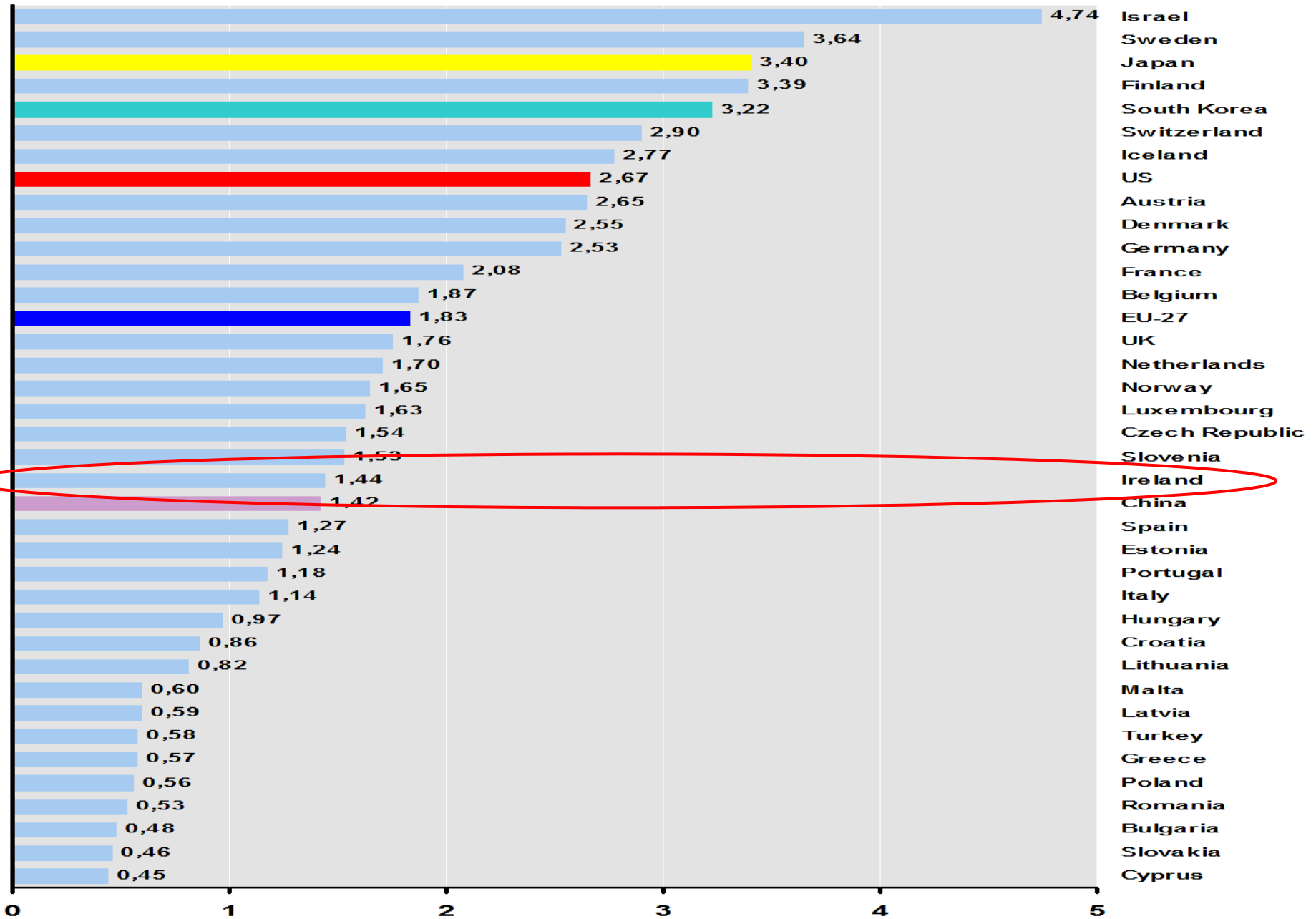
Setting the National HE Context

- Irish higher education policy has tended to be largely inwardly-focused, with a strong emphasis on massification and access – getting more people well-educated.
- Because most students attended their proximate HEI, universities provided similar experiences; diversity was achieved through a government-regulated binary system.
- Universities and IoTs established to reflect different skill/labour market requirements;
- Overtime, labour markets have matured and professional/academic disciplines have moved up the value chain;
- Current system is constrained by historical circumstances and unresponsive to changing national and global requirements.

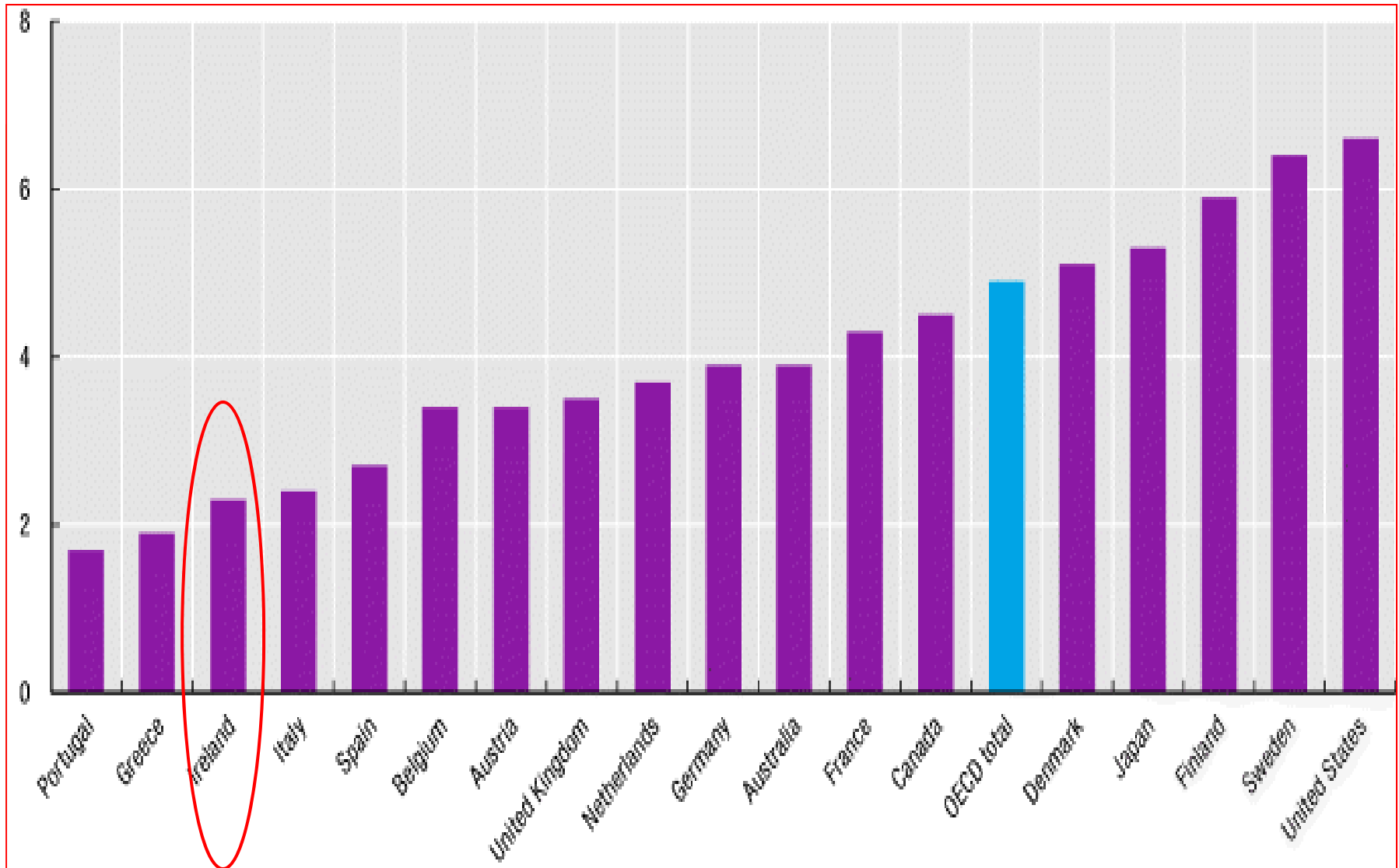
Indicator of Global Competitiveness?

Top 100	Times QS		SJT Ranking	
	2007	2008	2007	2008
US	37	37	53	54
Europe	35	36	34	34
Australia/New Zealand	9	8	2	3
Asia Pacific (incl. Israel)	13	14	7	5
Canada	6	5	4	4
Latin America/Africa	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	1	3	3	3
UK	19	17	11	11
France	2	2	4	3
Germany	3	3	6	6
Japan	4	4	5	4
China (incl. HK)	5	5	0	0
Ireland	1	1	0	0
Sweden	1	2	4	4
Russia	0	0	1	1

R&D Intensity (GERD as % of GDP), 2007 ⁽¹⁾



Investment in Knowledge, 2004

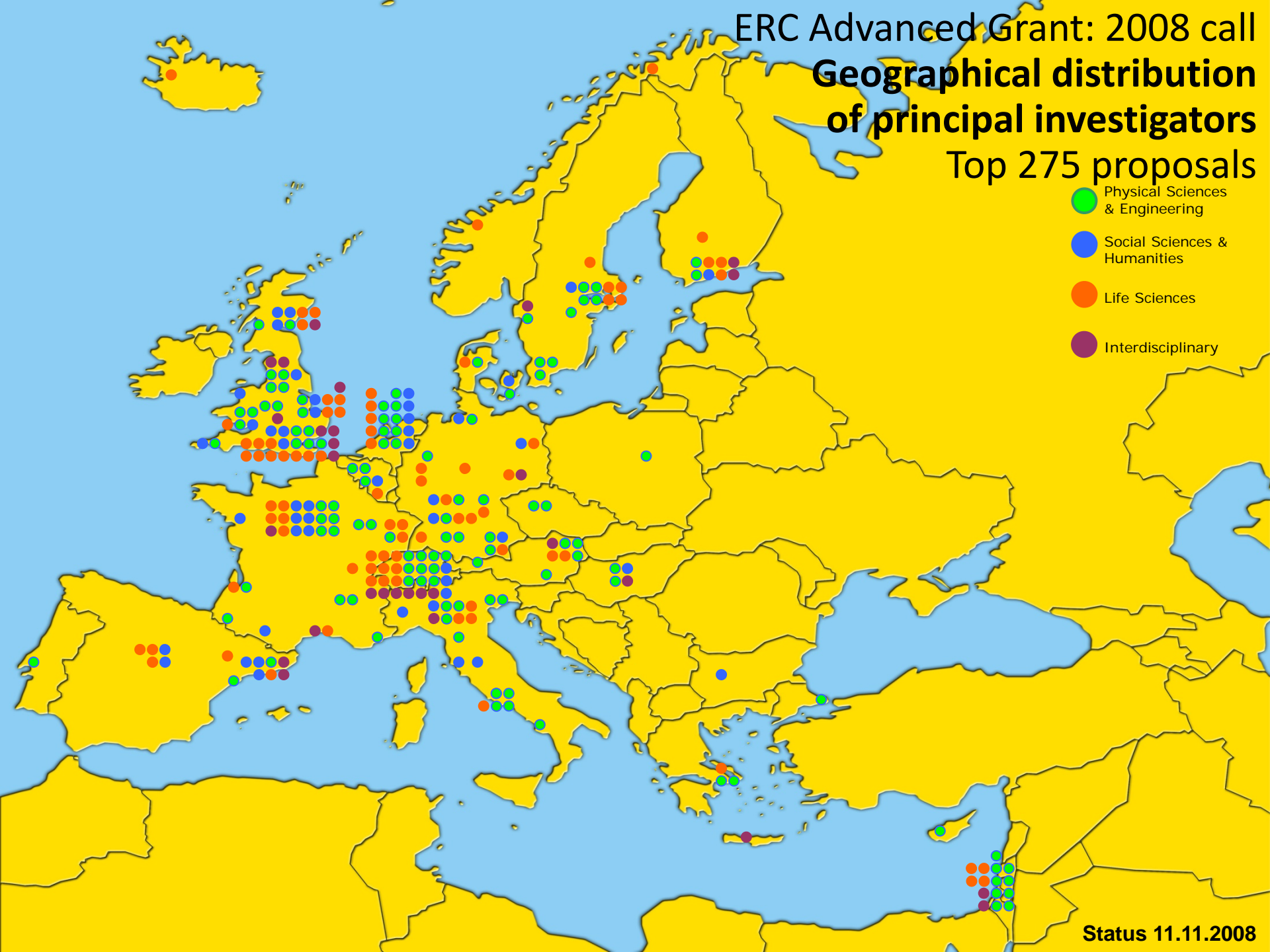


ERC Advanced Grant: 2008 call

Geographical distribution of principal investigators

Top 275 proposals

- Physical Sciences & Engineering
- Social Sciences & Humanities
- Life Sciences
- Interdisciplinary

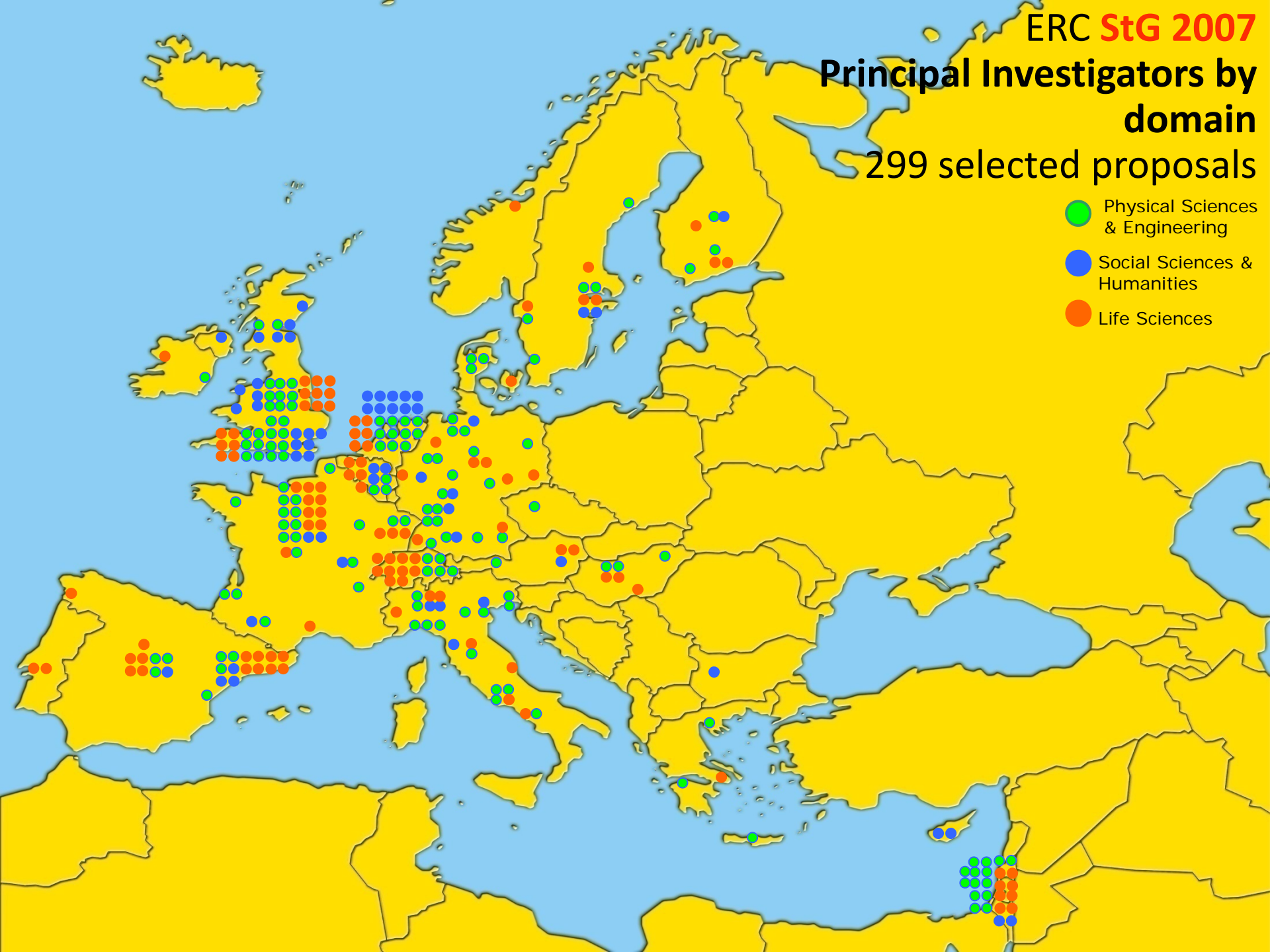


ERC StG 2007

Principal Investigators by domain

299 selected proposals

- Physical Sciences & Engineering
- Social Sciences & Humanities
- Life Sciences



Funding Gap

- ‘World-class University’ estimated to cost min. \$1.5b — \$2b-a-year operation + \$500m for medical school (Usher 2006; Sadlak & Liu 2007).
- This would require min. 600% increase for the largest Irish HEI and diverting the entire HE budget to a single institution.
- According to Sheil (2009), institutional budgets of Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Stanford provide ~ \$149,000 — \$227,000 per enrolment.
- Rough equivalent figures for Ireland, based on published accounts 2007-08, means UCD provides \$22,786, TCD provides \$26,458 and DIT provides \$20,757.

Strategy for Small Nations

- Small nations face particular difficulties seeking to build world class universities without sacrificing other policy objectives.
- Ireland should develop a strategic response which:
 - Establishes a coherent portfolio of horizontally differentiated high performing, globally-competitive institutions and student experiences;
 - Ensures Ireland can participate across the spectrum of world science;
 - Mobilises the whole HE system and its benefits for society at large.

2. Creating a World-Class HE System for Ireland



What is meant by diversity?

- Diversity seen as a basic norm of HE policy because it best meets educational and labour market;
- Focus is usually on differences between HEIs – on assumption that institutions are internally homogeneous;
- Vertical vs.. horizontal differentiation
 - Horizontal: equal value attributed to different types of institutional profiles/missions;
 - Vertical: one type of institution favoured over others.
- Binary systems most common in Europe - maintained by government regulation/steering;
 - Other systems: university dominated (Italy); unitary (Australia, UK); stratified (USA)

Diversity can be Much Broader

- *Institutional mission and core tasks*: emphasis on teaching, basic and applied research, services, continuing education or professional development, outreach;
- *Research*: spectrum from basic (e.g. CERN) to national/policy relevance, across all disciplines, and multi/inter-disciplinary;
- *Student profile*: ethnic, religious, or social background, gender, qualifications;
- *Staff profile*: ethnic, religious background, gender, previous academic and professional qualifications, functional emphasis, e.g., time spent on education, research, continuing education, innovation services;
- *Internal organisation*: governance, functional orientation of different units, funding mechanisms, reward structures;
- *Programme and pedagogical profile*: diversity of disciplines and their interactions, professional and academic orientation, pedagogical programme profiles.

(adapted from Reichart, EUA, 2009)

Drivers of Diversification or Convergence

- Ongoing tension between desire to maintain/effect diversity and other factors has created interplay of forces:
 - Social/economic developments, knowledge society and globalisation;
 - Demand for greater applied research, technology transfer and innovation;
 - International developments – rankings, reputation, student mobility.
- Institutional diversity results from complex interplay between:
 - National regulations, policies and funding instruments + other rewards and incentives;
 - Bologna and QA;
 - Professional culture and academic mobility/career advancement practices;
 - Social /national culture + stakeholder values;
 - Regional policies and support.
- Policy needs to take account of whole array of forces to be effective.

(Reichart, EUA, 2009)

Policy Trends

2 Main Policy Approaches:

- Create greater vertical or hierarchical (reputational) differentiation (e.g. German, Japan, China, Korea, France):
 - Concentrate excellence and funding in small number of elite universities;
 - Create greater differentiation between teaching and research universities;
 - Using research performance and international visibility + competitive mechanisms and rankings as market indicator/shaper.
- Create greater horizontal (mission or functional) differentiation (e.g. Australia, Norway):
 - ‘Create diverse set of high performing, globally-focused HEIs’ to support excellence where it occurs – field specialisation;
 - Close correlation between teaching and research functions;
 - Link ‘compacts’ to mission and performance.

Some countries are restructuring higher education to create 'Harvard here' model:

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field ...
PhDs and research intensive	Institution A1			
Masters and some research	Institution B1			
	Institution B2			
Baccalaureates and scholarship	Institution C1			
	Institution C2			
	Institution C3			
	Institution C4			
Diplomas and extension services	Institution D1			
	Institution D2			
	Institution D3			
	Institution D4			
	Institution D5			

An alternative is to create institutions of field specialisation:.

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5	Field 6	Field 7	Field 8	Field 9	Field 10
PhDs and research intensive	Institution 1	Institution 2	Institution 3	Institution 4	Institution 5	Institution 6	Institution 7	Institution 8	Institution 9	Institution 10
Masters and some research										
Baccalaureates and scholarship										
Diplomas and extension services										

Learning Lessons: What Works

- International
 - Australia (2008): ‘whole of system’ approach’; mission-based funding compacts;
 - Finland (2006): institutional realignments; planning agreements for differentiated missions; regional role of universities;
 - Norway (2007): binary breaking down; encourage clustering/‘professional concentration’;
 - Denmark (2003): management reform and performance contracts;
 - France (2005, 06): PRES: competitive process to establish supra-structures joining different institutions.
- Ireland
 - PRTL: institutional strategy; centres of excellence; rise in citations;
 - SIF: HE collaboration within and across binary;
 - IDA, EI, SFI: targeted programmes;
 - HSE: top-down restructuring and endless political wrangling.

3. Where to from Here?



Choices

- Do nothing and Maintain the status quo
 - System not fit for purpose: lack of sufficient diversity and responsiveness
 - Continuing tension regarding equality of esteem and nomenclature
- Top-down system restructuring
 - Possible mergers/re-designation for speedy rationalisation and efficiency
 - Difficult to pre-determine/imagine new opportunities
 - Buy-in would be difficult and potentially acrimonious
- Set an ambitious vision to globally position Irish higher education over 3-5 years.

Key Elements to Maximise Ireland's Position

- National capacity in knowledge formation, research and training, in the main disciplines and inter-disciplinary applications;
- Investment in human capital formation to fuel sustainable social and economic health and wealth, and attract international investment and talent;
- Strategic clustering of HE and research institutes actively engaged with government, industry innovation and arts via the formation of global knowledge cities/regions.
- Balanced, multi-purpose global engagement across teaching, research and doctoral training.

Next Steps

- Identify values and goals for HE: skilled labour force, equity, regional growth, better citizens, future Einsteins, global competitiveness;
- Set benchmarks or targets for clusters or associations of HEIs to meet, and identify benefits or rewards for meeting those targets;
- Encourage innovation and buy-in via bottom-up process within an overarching framework of optional models for realignment;
- Begin time-defined process whereby 'clusters' incentivised by benefits when they meet the benchmarks.

Objectives

- Regional and/or strategic specialisation via clusters/mergers to support excellence where it occurs, and maximise opportunities of critical mass and inter-disciplinarity;
- Alignment with national spatial strategy to create global knowledge cities;
- *Sensible* economies of scale by sharing/merging resources between proximate institutions;
- Institutional profiling and mission differentiation supported & encouraged by varying system of rewards and underpinned by parity of esteem;
- Merit-based/mission-based funding system to avoid mission drift and micro-management, award past and recognize potential, enable responsiveness and change, and ensure transparency;
- Adopt 'whole of country strategy' to ensure matriculation within HE sector, and formal integration with FE and private HE sector;
- Policy, funding and regulatory system in which autonomous & mature HEIs can play to strengths.

Ingredients

- Specify key elements to be included in different combinations: Basic-applied research; Innovative teaching; Continuing education; Contribution to business or societal innovation; Knowledge dissemination, transfer and application; Community engagement, etc.
- Suggest possible mission types (e.g. civic, technological, liberal arts, classical, professional, open & distance learning, specialist) but actively encourage imaginative possibilities;
- Ensure reward system reflects diversity of HE activity/institutional profiles;
- Robust processes and criteria for new university designation;
- Professionalise HE leadership and management, underpinned by institutional performance management;
- Enhance policy-relevant research and analysis covering the whole HE/FE sector, and co-ordination of labour-market intelligence.

Caveats

- HEIs for conducting research, research training & advanced teaching must be of critical mass to achieve quality and efficiencies;
- National competitiveness is as important as global competitiveness;
- Not possible to be excellent across every field; therefore greater specialisation/focus is required, accompanied by instruments to realise interdisciplinarity;
- Governance/funding system must avoid focusing on the past which would freeze institutions, and sector, at a point in time: balanced measures to reward past performance and incentives to encourage forward-looking strategy;
- Because the status quo is not tenable, HEIs will need to engage actively and realistically in the process, especially in terms of institutional track record and performance.

Why this Strategy makes Sense for Ireland

- HE is a vital element of the Smart State strategy. Yet, Ireland's performance and level of investment remains comparatively low;
- The pace of change is so quick and the future is unpredictable, the system should encourage institutions to change and adapt over time;
- Ireland needs to maximise capability beyond individual capacity via strategic clustering which will also lead to excellence and greater efficiency;
- Using a mix of regulatory, financial and reward instruments within an agreed framework and timeframe will ensure buy-in, transparency and accountability.

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