

Regional Action Plan to support the governance of Responsible Research & Innovation in the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020



Authors / Partner organisations: Southern Regional Assembly & South East Business & Innovation Centre (SEBIC)

Country: Ireland

NUTS 2 region: Southern & Eastern Region

Contact Person: Karen Coughlan

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Acronym	Meaning
BERD	Business Enterprise Research Development
CAO	Central Applications Office
EDP	Entrepreneurial Discovery Process
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GP	Good Practice
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IB	Intermediate Body
IP	Investment Priority
MA	Managing Authority
NFQ Level 8	Equivalent to an Honours Bachelor's degrees
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
PI	Policy Instrument
RDI	Research Development & Innovation
RI	Responsible Innovation
RIS3	Research & Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy
RRI	Responsible Research & Innovation
RSES	Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy
RTDI	Research, Technology Development & Innovation
S&E	Southern & Eastern
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEBIC	South-East Business & Innovation Centre
S&E ROP	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme

SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategy
STEM	Science Technology Engineering & Maths
STI	Science, Technology & Innovation

MARIE: the project and the Action Plan

The European Commission states that **“research and innovation must respond to the needs and ambitions of society, reflect its values, and be responsible.”** This means that while innovation is essential for our enterprises to compete on the global market, it also has the potential to change lives for the better.

However, there are too many examples of innovations that have reached the market only to reveal negative impacts. We have seen examples of medicine that has had fatal consequences; we have seen the impact that large-scale transport and mass-agricultural production techniques have had on our environment; we are still finding out about the health and safety issues surrounding digitalisation.

Responsible Innovation (RI) is an attempt to anticipate such negative impacts and to redirect innovation towards a model that reflects on impact from the start of product invention,



design and production. RI engages with the public, the end-users of the product, in all development phases. RI encourages innovators to reflect on diversity, on ethics, on openness. It encourages them to anticipate and to govern their innovation.

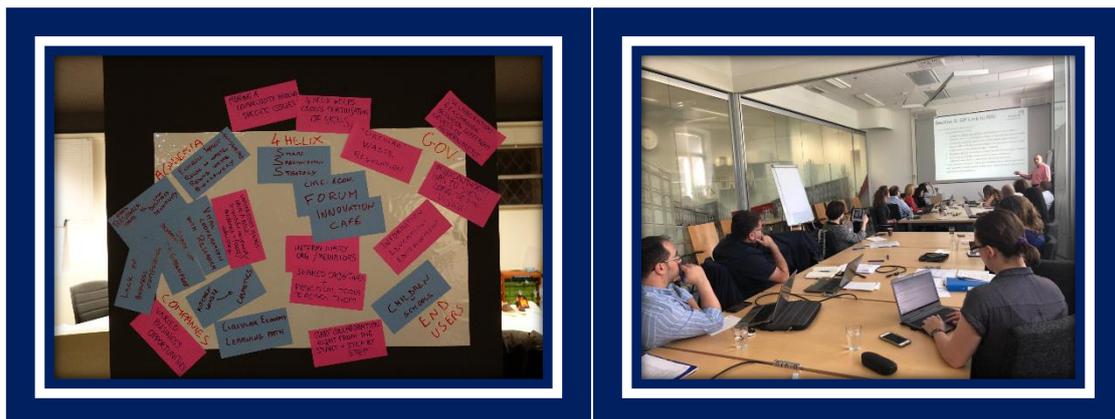
RI is a new concept and enterprises, particularly SMEs, are not always aware of it and of its potential benefits, or ready to apply it in their innovation

processes. Public Authorities have a role here: they can raise awareness and capacity; they can provide incentives for its uptake; they can create favourable, collaborative environments for RI; they can provide funding to experiment with tools to integrate RI into innovation processes.

The MARIE project, co-funded by Interreg Europe, was designed to help the public sector to do just that. Public Authorities from 8 European regions have worked together to share experiences in RI in the context of their smart specialisation priority sectors. They have developed Action Plans that detail how major innovation funding programmes, including ERDF Regional Operational Programmes, will promote RI across their territories. Their objective is to ensure that regional public policy supports delivery of RI to enterprises’ product, process and service design, production and distribution.

Interregional exchange has helped partners to learn and to design improvements to their own policy. Exchange has included:

- **8 Interregional Learning Events**, organised across Europe and using different methods to share ideas, knowledge and challenges;
- Analysis of **11 Good Practices**, coming from different areas of Europe and representing different aspects of the RI process;
- **An Enterprise Survey** carried out with 23 companies from across the MARIE regions, to gather feedback from the ground, from the enterprises that can and must drive Responsible Innovation and that represent the beneficiaries of public policy for research, development and innovation;
- **RI Maturity Assessment**¹ carried out in all MARIE regions and then grouped for an interregional comparison;
- **2 large scale public events** organised in Dublin in October 2018 and October 2019 and engaging with other international projects working on RI.



The MARIE Action Plan template² was designed to lead partners through various stages of interregional exchange leading to definition of concrete activities for policy improvement. The steps included within the Action Plan template were carefully designed to create a seamless flow between:

- ↳ the current (“where are we now?”) and envisaged (“where do we want to be?”) policy situation;

¹ The templates and methodologies for both the Enterprise Survey and the Maturity Mapping were both designed by MARIE Exchange Manager, Athens University of Economics and Business – RC, who was also responsible for the interregional comparison and preparation of the joint reports.

² The methodological flow of the project and the template was designed by MARIE Exchange Manager, Athens University of Economics and Business – RC, with some input used from templates provided by the programme and by previous, successful projects (Interreg Europe Action Plan Template / COGITA Interreg IVC project Road Map Template).

- ↳ the description of the policy improvement and its positioning within the MARIE RRI concept;
- ↳ the utilisation of the collected GPs, and
- ↳ the alignment with the regional RRI maturity level and needs.

The MARIE Action Plan development strategy, showing the relationships between the current policy context, the envisaged policy improvement, the MARIE outputs, and the Action Plan development and implementation, is illustrated in *Figure 1* below.

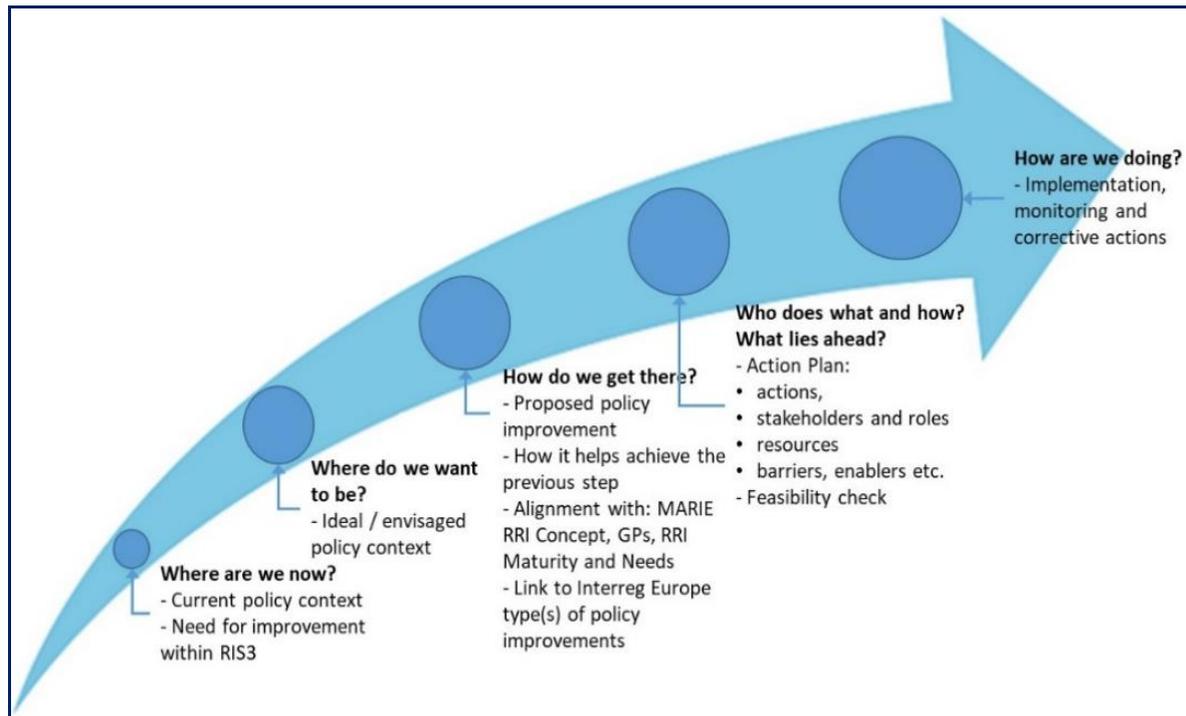


Figure 1. MARIE Action Plan development and implementation strategy

The Action Plan is, as such, divided into three parts:

- **Part 1 – Policy Context:** this part describes the current policy situation, the need(s) that render necessary its improvement and the envisaged / enhanced policy context;
- **Part 2 – Policy improvement(s) and relevance to MARIE:** this part describes the proposed policy improvement(s), how it contributes towards the enhancement of the policy context, and its alignment with the MARIE outputs and the Interreg Europe policy improvement classification;
- **Part 3 – Actions and feasibility check:** this part describes the actions and other dimensions included in the development of the Action Plan and to assess the feasibility of its implementation.

Part 1: Policy context of Action Plan

Description of the Regional Policy Context

The Southern & Eastern (S&E) Region of Ireland has strengths in many priority sectors in the Irish Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) through the presence of twelve HEI's in the region. The S&E region is categorised as an 'innovation leader' in the National Needs Analysis and is on track to meet EU 2020 targets in research, development and innovation (RDI) intensity. The Irish Government's Action Plan for Jobs focuses on regaining lost competitiveness, boosting productivity, increasing export intensity and market diversity, taking measures to improve Ireland's attractiveness as a location for foreign direct investment and increasing start-ups and entrepreneurial activity.

The Action Plan for Jobs highlights Ireland's strong science base, but the focus of science, technology and innovation (STI) policy must be on accelerating economic and societal return on STI investment, strengthening enterprise engagement with public research and driving commercialisation of public research. There are limitations in the capacity of HEIs to generate RDI activity and commercialise RDI outputs. Performance is hindered by lack of academic industrial linkages and limited resources available for business-based research and innovation.

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) has prioritised strengthening links between HEIs and industry to increase RDI within enterprises and accelerate commercialisation of research outputs. It is imperative to promote level, quality and commercial applicability of RDI, ensuring that industry leads the response to rapid changes in customer and societal needs/demands.

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is a relatively new concept in the S&E region of Ireland but could respond to the needs outlined above in terms of linkages between HEI's and high RDI quality. Ireland does not have a separate RRI framework but applies general principles to national Research, Technology Development and Innovation (RTDI) policy and the associated investment priorities under the Regional Operational Programme (ROP). The S&E ROP has integrated the 3 horizontal principles of sustainable development, gender equality & non-discrimination and social inclusion into programme design and project selection. SRA has refined policies, procedures and monitoring metrics to reflect this with the aim of further refinement by introducing RRI elements based on learning from Project MARIE.

Description of the need(s) to be addressed through the policy improvement

Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI) has evolved from the acknowledgement that research needs to address societal as well as science & technological goals. RRI is an expansive and ambitious research model, connecting diverse aspects of the relationship between Research & Innovation and Society through; public engagement, open access, gender equality, science education, ethics, and governance. The wider inclusion and involvement of society is a fundamental principle of RRI. RRI's ambition is to create a shared understanding between the EC, governments, business and research institutions; as a pre-requisite to building the trust and confidence of the public and other stakeholders, in the safe and effective systems, processes and products of innovation. RRI as an output and outcome aims to generate the 'right' solutions, products and services, which benefit people and planet as well as generate profit.

There is no refuting that science has changed the world and continues to be a driving force for the progress of humanity. Science and technology have improved quality of life for many of us, but in some cases, innovation has led to controversial or unintended consequences. Some of the world's greatest catastrophes have been driven by human activity due to lack of consideration for the outcomes. Research & Innovation must be fostered by a code of ethics informed by principles of sustainability and equity. Conducting research responsibly that not only answers questions and solves problems but is also in line with the ethical values and needs of society, must be a primary focus for government.

In practical terms what does the inclusion of RRI principles mean for the S&E ROP?

- SRA through the administration and governance of the S&E ROP will be setting the agenda for the region by providing leadership, direction and resources to researchers and business innovators, and platforms to engage civil society organisations and science educators;
- Integration of RRI principles into current and future RDI co-funded projects that are aligned to the process and outcomes of RTDI policy and S&E ROP priorities;
- Facilitate an increase in the level and quality of research taking place in the S&E region of Ireland by incorporating company engagement with applied research through the co-funded SFI Programmes. SFI are ROP Intermediary Bodies (IB's) and manage 2 schemes under Priority 1:
 - ✚ **Research Centres Programme:** to develop a set of world-leading large-scale research centres (9 co-funded to date) aligned to S3 priorities;

✚ **Associated Spokes Programme:** to incorporate new areas of research and establish new industrial & academic collaborations to existing SFI research centres.

RRI dimensions are considered in the process of evaluation, selection and impact assessment of RDI co-funded projects. However, there is a need to integrate a more comprehensive system to embed the RRI dimension in the management, delivery and governance of the process (designing calls for projects, evaluation criteria for RRI elements, supporting potential applications in understanding the new procedures, monitoring metrics) and to raise awareness of policy managers of the RRI dimension and its potential application. This will assist the S&E region of Ireland to increase the level of commercialisation of research by the HEIs in the programme area in line with the S3 strategy.

MARIE is the first project in Ireland to directly address the lack of RRI in regional policy giving it much needed visibility.



Description of the policy instrument selected for improvement

The Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (S&E ROP) 2014-2020 is a funding package of €500million, co-funded through the ERDF, the Irish Exchequer and Public Funds to be invested in the region over the programme period. This funding supports a significant programme of investment in research, technological development & innovation, and entrepreneurship in both enterprises and research centres which seeks to improve the region's international competitiveness while boosting job creation.

S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 – Priority 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation:

The overall objectives of this Priority are to increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with company engagement by supporting applied research and to increase the level of commercialisation of research by the HEI's in the region. This priority seeks to enhance research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and to facilitate capacity building in order to develop R&I excellence and promote Competence Centres. This priority also has a focus on promoting business investment in R&I through developing links and synergies between enterprises, research & development centres and the higher education sector. The priority has been aligned with Ireland's identified priority research areas as set out in the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

Priority 1 comprises 2 Investment Priorities (IP) (1a & 1b):

- ✚ Under IP 1a: the objective is to increase the level of research taking place in the Region with company engagement by supplying applied research;
- ✚ Under IP 1b: the objective is to increase the level of commercialisation of research by the Higher Educational Institutions (HEI's) in the region.

Description of the envisaged / enhanced policy context

While the S&E ROP has a very strong emphasis on Research & Innovation it only inadvertently promotes aspects of RRI primarily the quadruple helix cooperation. It does not currently include a specific, comprehensive focus on responsibility. In order to meet societal challenges and expectations, broader societal involvement in R&I is needed to collaboratively reflect on the futures we aspire to as societies. Further integrating the values, guiding principles and requirements of RRI into our policy instrument, whether existing or brand new, can contribute to increasing the ethical acceptability, sustainability and social desirability of the processes and outcomes of a programme.

The MARIE project is an opportunity to integrate and embed RRI as a horizontal principle into the S&E ROP in order to improve the quality of responsible innovation delivery and enhance the governance of RRI principles. By enhancing the governance of RRI principles the S&E ROP will:

- Be robust and adaptable to the unpredictable development of R&I;
- Share responsibility and accountability among all actors;
- Enhance governance and reporting on RRI by providing governance instruments to foster shared responsibility;
- Encourage an increase in the number of researchers embedding RRI principles into their work;
- Facilitate better alignment of RTDI to the values, needs and expectations of a wider public;
- Lead to an increase in the level of public engagement and science education;
- Provide an opportunity to increase awareness of the benefits of RRI in all societal actors;
- Alleviate the perceived complexity of the concept and means of application of RRI by facilitating an appropriate approach for public authorities;
- Influence how RRI is integrated into future policy/programme;
- Provide an opportunity to ensure any changes and outcomes of the enhanced reporting is sustainable going forward.



Part 2: Policy improvement and relevance to MARIE outputs

The proposed policy improvement	
Title	Enhancing governance of RRI principles in the implementation and monitoring of the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 (S&E ROP).
Description of policy improvement	<p>Dimensions of RRI are currently considered in the policy instrument through integration of the 3 horizontal principles of 1) sustainable development, 2) gender equality & non-discrimination and 3) social inclusion into programme design and project selection. However, it has been recognised that there is a need to integrate a more comprehensive system to further embed the RRI dimension into the management, delivery and governance of the process, this can be complemented by raising awareness with the policy managers of the enhanced RRI dimension and its potential application.</p> <p>Improvement of the policy instrument focuses on enhanced governance. The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) are Managing Authority (MA) for the ROP. A Monitoring Committee (MC) was established at the outset of the programme to review all progress and impact made under the ROP and have the authority to make strategic decisions. SFI, as IB, are required to complete and submit a progress report against pre-determined targets and milestones to the MC in advance of the annual committee meeting. The scope to make changes to the reporting template is limited and a case must be presented and approved through the MC at the annual meeting. SFI and SRA negotiated and agreed a revised reporting template which was presented and approved by the MC.</p> <p>Specifically, this revised template will now require SFI to incorporate additional reporting on two RRI keys: Public Engagement and promotion of Science Education in all their Research Centres and Associated Spokes Programmes co-funded through the S&E ROP.</p> <p>The policy improvement will be implemented over 2 phases:</p> <p>Phase 1 - the policy improvement outlined in this action plan has been achieved, the additional RRI reporting has been agreed with SFI and</p>

	<p>approved by the ROP Monitoring Committee. The indicators to be reported on have been agreed with SFI who will commence the revised reporting in 2020 for the activities carried out in 2019.</p> <p>Phase 2 – SRA will be measuring and reporting on results against the agreed Impact Assessment Indicators.</p> <p>Whilst the policy improvement is being implemented, measured and reported on for the years 2020 and 2021, in line with the Interreg Europe requirements, the SRA are considering this improvement as a pilot stage to be further enhanced and carried over into future programming periods and potentially into other measures. The learning from phase-1 and results reported in phase-2 will be instrumental in determining how best to incorporate RRI elements into future programming periods. As detailed above a revised reporting template has been agreed and approved with the purpose of incorporating it into the next programme. SRA are in talks with the EC around the details of the post 2020 programming periods.</p> <p>Going forward this will require the engagement of all actors (from individual researchers, policy-makers, innovators, civil society organisations, SMEs, HEIs, government bodies and State Agencies) to adopt and incorporate additional RRI principles in their reporting requirements under S&E ROP.</p>
<p>Improvement over current policy instrument</p>	<p>While the S&E ROP has a very strong emphasis on Research & Innovation it only inadvertently promotes aspects of RRI, namely quadruple helix cooperation. It does not currently include a specific, comprehensive focus on responsibility. Further Integrating the values, guiding principles and requirements of RRI into our policy instrument, whether existing or brand new, can contribute to increasing the ethical acceptability, sustainability and social desirability of the processes and outcomes of the programme.</p> <p>The MARIE project is an opportunity to fully integrate and embed RRI as a horizontal principle into the S&E ROP in order to improve the quality of responsible innovation delivery and enhance the governance of RRI principles.</p>

Type of policy improvement	The policy improvement being implemented comes under Type 2 – Management of the Policy instrument i.e. methodology for monitoring and evaluating has been refined.
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Impact of the proposed policy instrument	
Impact of proposed policy improvement on the envisaged / enhanced policy context	<p>The enhanced governance of additional RRI elements in the S&E ROP will ensure RTDI in the region is increased and enriched by ensuring better alignment to the values, needs and expectations of a wider public in the S&E region. It has been proven that policies/strategies and practices based on RRI can open up R&I to all relevant actors and improve co-operation between science and society resulting in the pairing of scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility. The SRA, through the administration and governance of the S&E ROP, will be setting the agenda for the region by providing leadership, direction and resources to researchers and business innovators, and platforms to engage civil society organisations and science educators.</p> <p>The enhanced governance will incorporate monitoring metrics which will allow us to measure the impact of the promotion of science education through SFI.</p> <p>By enhancing the governance of RRI principles the S&E ROP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be robust and adaptable to the unpredictable development of R&I; • Involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the Regional Action Plan thereby embracing and promoting the RRI holistic approach; • Share responsibility and accountability among all actors; • Provide governance instruments to foster this shared responsibility; • Influence how RRI is integrated into future policy/programmes; • Ensure any changes and outcomes of the enhanced reporting is sustainable; • Facilitate the pairing of scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the level of commercialisation of research by the HEIs in the programme area in line with the S3 strategy. <p>As a result, the improved S&E ROP will strengthen RTDI capacity and outcomes in the region, producing better science, making research agendas more diverse and taking better account of real-world complexities and opportunities.</p> <p>The SRA, through the administration and governance of the S&E ROP, will be setting the agenda for the region by providing leadership, direction and resources to researchers and business innovators, and platforms to engage civil society organisations and science educators.</p> <p>RRI principles, aligned to the process and outcomes of RTDI policy, will be integrated into current and future RTDI co-funded projects and ROP priorities. This is expected to maximise the potentials of smarter growth in the region by taking an approach to innovation that will drive growth and build a better more inclusive society, thus future proofing the region to remain robust and adaptable to the unpredictable development of R&I.</p> <p>S&E ROP already addresses some aspects of RRI. However, significant improvement is possible through a more integrated approach and the introduction of enhanced governance of additional RRI principles in the S&E ROP.</p>
<p>Elements of improvement of the current policy context</p>	<p>As stated previously the S&E ROP has elements of RRI within the programme however it does not have a specific focus on the monitoring and metrics of the impact of RRI. The additional reporting on public engagement and science education will significantly enhance the overall governance and embedding of RRI principles within the S&E ROP.</p> <p>This enhanced reporting and monitoring policy will focus and strengthen RTDI which in turn will increase the level of research with company engagement taking place and better align RTDI outcomes with the values and needs of society.</p>
<p>Impact assessment indicators</p>	<p>The indicators that will measure the expected impact the policy instrument aims to achieve are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Technology Engineering & Maths (STEM) Leaving Certificate participation numbers and % change year-on-year;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM Leaving Certificate female participation numbers and % change year-on-year; • STEM Level 8 first preference numbers and % change year-on-year; • STEM Level 8 first preference female numbers and % change year-on-year; • Number of research projects approved under the SFI Discover Programme. <p>These indicators will enable SRA to quantitatively assess the change based on year-on-year outcomes and will inform future policies of national and regional organisations including SFI.</p> <p>Baseline will be taken from the State Examinations Commission and the CAO for results published in 2018 for the academic year 2017-2018.</p>
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Policy improvement and relation to MARIE RRI concept		
MARIE RRI Concept Dimensions	Components of RRI dimension	How?
RRI dimensions	Public Engagement	Sentinel stakeholder SFI to now report on outreach activities and public engagement.
	Gender Equality	The monitoring of female participation in STEM subjects will be reported on through the impact assessment indicators.
	Science Education	Sentinel stakeholder SFI to now report on science education promotional activities at second level
RRI support actions	Quadruple Helix	All aspects of quadruple helix will be incorporated into policy engagement.
	Research	Enhanced reporting and monitoring should lead to increased interest in STEM which in turn should increase the numbers of researchers and level of research taking place in the S&E region of Ireland.
	Assessment	Enhanced Governance of RRI principles in the implementation and monitoring of the S&E ROP for all

research Centres Programmes and associated Spokes Programmes by our Sentinel Stakeholder.



Good Practice 1 - used to define the Policy Improvement

Title of Good Practice 1	Cooperation between research Institutes and/or universities and companies through high level structuring R&D programmes (Ambition Research Development 2020)
GP owner (region)	Dev-Up, Region Centre-Val de Loire, France
Can this GP address the policy need(s) identified in the previous	Yes, the good practice Ambition Research Development 2020 addresses the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance system in place to better manage projects in line with stakeholders;

<p>section? If yes, how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of projects and introduction of RRI elements which is done on an annual basis by their Regional Council; • Objective that R&D should provide socio-economic impacts as well as scientific outcomes. <p>In line with Ireland's 'Action Plan for Jobs' and 'Smart Specialisation Strategy' the SRA prioritises strengthening links between HEIs and industry to accelerate economic and societal return on STI investment, strengthening enterprise engagement with public research and driving commercialisation of public research. There are limitations in the capacity of HEIs to generate RDI activity and commercialise RDI outputs, by following the principles of this Good Practice to measure the success of socio-economic impacts the aim is to see an acceleration in the commercialisation of research going forward.</p> <p>Adopting the governance and monitoring principles outlined in this good practice by incorporating a stronger governance system and subsequent metrics into the S&E ROP 2014-2020 will facilitate stronger embedding and governance of RRI elements thereby improving the policy Instrument. As defined in this Good Practice the enhanced governance of the S&E ROP will follow a quadruple helix approach in collaboration with the primary stakeholder integrating them into the process and fostering a more vested interest into the improvement and reporting on the RRI elements. The primary stakeholder, in this case SFI, is responsible for administering the funding for Ireland's Research Centres Programme and Associated Spokes Programme making their involvement and ongoing commitment crucial to the success of the policy improvement.</p>
<p>What elements of this GP are included in the policy improvement presented</p>	<p>As previously noted while the S&E ROP has a very strong emphasis on R&I it has no specific focus on Responsibility. Review of the good practice 'Ambition Research Development 2020' highlighted the impact stronger governance could have on the S&E ROP, through the enhancement of the governance system in place they are better able to manage projects in line with stakeholders. Going forward SRA will emulate this by incorporating enhanced governance through the addition of reporting on RRI elements on an annual</p>

	<p>basis by SFI, Intermediate Body on the ROP, and establishing monitoring metrics.</p> <p>This will facilitate SRA in monitoring the socio-economic impacts and meet the overall objective of improving regional public policy that supports delivery of RRI to enterprises' product, process and service design, production and distribution.</p>
<p>Exchange / Transfer process</p>	<p>The good practices were initially introduced in a poster format at ILE2 in Athens on the 30th & 31st May 2017. This gave the opportunity to review the main learning points and question elements that were unclear. At this same event Natalie Boulanger from Dev-Up spoke of the 'Ambition Research Development 2020' GP clarifying the aim of their approach was to launch a real partnership not only among the research institutes and the universities, but also by involving companies in the R&D projects. This is one of the main priorities for the SRA further cementing the value in applying the learning from this GP. ILE3 in Orleans in November 2017 provided the opportunity to meet the stakeholders involved in this GP.</p> <p>Group discussions at ILE4 in Tampere, Finland on the 29th-30th May 2018 gave a more rounded and in-depth understanding of the GP and how best to apply it to achieve the desired influence over the S&E ROP.</p> <p>The ongoing discussions and subsequent learnings taken from GP prompted us to not only look at Governance in isolation but to also apply relevant monitoring metrics to measure the impact of the policy improvement.</p>
<p>Match between Regional RRI Maturity and selection of GP</p>	<p>This GP addresses elements of stronger Governance which the S&E region of Ireland scored a <u>modest rating</u> in the maturity mapping exercise.</p> <p>Through adoption of the principles outlined in this GP the SRA aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the governance of RRI elements into the S&E ROP; • Mirror their quadruple helix approach by integrating SFI into the process and fostering a more vested interest into the improvement and reporting on the RRI elements.

	There is a match between the actual and required level of RRI maturity.
Good Practice 2 - used to define the Policy Improvement	
Title of Good Practice 2	RIS3 Galicia: Shared vision and entrepreneurial discovery
GP owner (region)	Galician Agency for Innovation (GAIN), Spain.
Can this GP address the policy need(s) identified in the previous section? If yes, how?	<p>Yes. The good practice (GP) <u>'Shared vision and entrepreneurial discovery'</u> deals with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement; • Stronger governance improving efficiency and effectiveness; • More focused allocation of funding; • Involvement of stakeholder and innovation players in defining the regions strategic challenges and objectives; • Agreement on shared vision and conclusions. <p>This GP effectively links the elements of RRI with the establishment of a stronger governance structure for conducting analysis and increased public engagement. On review of this GP the SRA were prompted to revisit our maturity mapping exercise and to revise the current reporting requirements in order to address areas flagged for improvement namely governance and public engagement. The enhancement of the governance structure within the S&E ROP requires additional engagement from SFI, our primary stakeholder, further consolidating their commitment to embedding RRI into their work thereby increasing public engagement and strengthening RTDI in the region.</p> <p>By following the lead of this GP in their extensive quadruple helix approach and involving a wide array of stakeholders in a shared vision for the region the SRA can ensure all relevant stakeholders are fully informed of the potential impact of embedding RRI elements into their work. This can help facilitate the objective of increasing the level</p>

	<p>of commercialisation of research by the HEIs in the programme area in line with the S3 strategy.</p>
<p>What elements of this GP are included in the policy improvement presented</p>	<p>This GP addresses both public engagement and the establishment of a governance structure for managing better outcomes and analysis of the impact of embedding RRI into research practices.</p> <p>The influence over the S&E ROP will focus on enhanced governance and stronger public engagement. The SRA has recognised the need for additional reporting and governance and will adopt the approach outlined in this GP by enhancing the governance of the S&E ROP through refinement of reporting requirements from funding recipients and encouraging stronger public engagement and science education. This will require the engagement of all actors, most specifically SFI, which will call on the need for extensive public engagement.</p>
<p>Exchange / Transfer process</p>	<p>The good practices were initially introduced in a poster format at ILE2 in Athens on the 30th & 31st May 2017. This gave the opportunity to review the main learning points and arising from discussions with GAIN ascertain that the governance and public engagement elements of this GP were of relevance to the policy improvement being sought.</p> <p>Group discussions at ILE4 in Tampere, Finland on the 29th-30th May 2018 gave a more rounded and in-depth understanding of the GP and how best to apply it to achieve the desired influence over the S&E ROP.</p> <p>At each partnership meeting there have been ongoing discussions between SRA and GAIN on respective good practices submitted. At ILE7, which took place in Kiel, Germany on the 13th-14th June 2019, GAIN informed us of modifications being made to the GP. There was discussion as to what format this would take however nothing would be confirmed until the end of July. A meeting took place between SRA and GAIN on the 29th July 2019 in the offices of the SRA in Waterford, Ireland. At this meeting refinements to the <i>'Shared vision and entrepreneurial discovery'</i> were discussed and shared and GAIN sought more clarification on the GP submitted by the SRA <i>'Broadening the Scope of Impact'</i>.</p>

	<p>It was acknowledged that Galicia and the S&E region of Ireland are at similar stages of development and as such could benefit in sharing work practices in the future. SRA and GAIN have agreed to schedule further meetings with the intention that we continue to build on this exchange of good working practices that has arisen from our involvement in the MARIE project.</p>
<p>Match between Regional RRI Maturity and selection of GP</p>	<p>This GP is concerned with Public Engagement and Governance both of which the S&E region of Ireland scored a modest rating for in the maturity mapping exercise.</p> <p>Through adoption of the principles outlined in this GP the SRA aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the lead of this GP in their extensive quadruple helix approach; • Enhance the governance through refining the reporting requirements of funding recipients; • Encouraging stronger public engagement and science education. <p>There is a match between the actual and required level of RRI maturity.</p>

Other elements of the MARIE Interregional Exchange process used to define the Policy Improvement

The information and learning that we drew from in the development of this action plan was:

- Good practices referenced above;
- The Maturity Mapping exercise highlighted three areas of improvement in Ireland prompting us to concentrate on enhanced governance elements of the policy instrument;
- The Enterprise Survey which supported the findings of the maturity mapping exercise and focused our efforts on improving reporting requirements on Public Engagement & Science Education.

An amalgamation of the learning from the above-listed exercises led us to concentrate on improving the governance of RRI within the S&E ROP 2014-2020 and more specifically, on reporting elements of public engagement and promotion of science education.

In addition to the above we found the exchange of learning from the partnership meetings, seminars and the mid-term event to be of immeasurable value. At the kick-off meeting, in Cessna, Italy on the 09th February 2017, speaker Dr Simone Arnaldi of CIGA, University of

Padua, clarified the role of RRI in the regional context. She spoke of the shift in RRI and the recognition of the importance of governance to the extent that it is now one of the key pillars. She stated “Governance” can be seen as the integrative dimension of social needs, responsibility practices and political/institutional framework’. This insight informed us when reviewing and selecting the relevant good practices and determining how to influence the policy instrument. Another key learning point from this initial event was not to underestimate the role of intermediary organisations as they are key to the objective of mainstreaming RRI. Also emphasised was the importance adopting of a long-term methodology to achieve true quadruple helix cooperation, a cornerstone of RRI.

At ILE2 in Athens on 30th & 31st May 2017 Governance as a horizontal principle of RRI was clarified explaining the difference between inclusive participation and stakeholders' roles. Taking this learning into consideration we ensured SFI had hands-on involvement and a formalised role in the influence over the policy instrument. The interaction with the stakeholders provided an insight into what they require from public authorities / public policies to incorporate RRI and strengthen their work

The mid-term event in Dublin on the 16th October 2018 presented an opportunity to learn from other projects focused on RRI. The Marina project noted one of their principle findings as being ‘public engagement & science education approaches are gathering the interest of a large part of the society, but increased support from policy makers are needed for the spread of their implementation’. This learning point was applied to our performance indicators to ensure the effectiveness of the enhanced governance of the S&E ROP 2014-2020.

ILE6 in Bucharest on the 06th February 2019 allowed us to experience their good practice by participating in an innovation cafe promoting the quadruple helix approach.

Trello provided a very efficient and practical solution to sharing documents and facilitating access to learning shared or presented at meetings.



Part 3: Definition of actions and feasibility check

The European Commission (Science in Dialogue Towards a European Model for Responsible Research and Innovation, 2012) states: “we can only find the right answers to the challenges we face by involving as many stakeholders as possible in the research and innovation process. Research and innovation must respond to the needs and ambitions of society, reflect its values, and be responsible.”

The SRA as a partner on the MARIE project and in keeping with the ethos of Interreg Europe identified and co-ordinated with the relevant stakeholders throughout the project in particular stakeholders SFI and SEBIC have been actively involved in the development of the Regional Action Plan. SFI was identified as crucial to the success of the enhanced governance of the S&E ROP and in turn the improvement of the Policy Instrument. Agreement from SFI to the additional reporting requirements was sought and granted through various ongoing discussions and stakeholder meetings.

Stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the policy improvement

Name of stakeholder	Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) – Peter Clifford, Marian Boland and Joan Hynes
Type of stakeholder	<p>- Academia / Research</p> <p>Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research primarily funding research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) which promotes and assists the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland.</p> <p>SFI actively promotes and supports education and engagement around STEM and creates awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and to the growth of the economy.</p> <p>Through focused investment SFI aims to ensure that Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads the world in strategic research areas; • has globally recognised SFI Research Centres;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and is a hub for industry/academic research collaborations. <p>SFI offers a range of funding schemes which support scientists and engineers to deliver both research excellence and economic and societal impact. They currently invest approximately equal amounts of its budget in individually-led awards (e.g. SFI Investigators programme, Career Development programme, Starting Investigators programme, etc.) and in large Research Centre-type activities.</p> <p>SFI awards grants based upon the merit review of distinguished scientists. SFI also advances co-operative efforts among education, government, and industry that support its fields of emphasis and promotes Ireland’s ensuing achievements around the world.</p> <p>Engaging with industry remains one of the key mechanisms for transferring the benefits of public investment in research into sustainable economic development and creating competitive advantage for Ireland. Approximately 40% of SFI grants include an industry collaborator, these collaborations may be either to perform basic or applied research.</p> <p>SFI’s mission is to be a global leader in scientific research and innovation while staying true to their core values including integrity, collaboration and respect.</p>
<p>Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Science Foundation Ireland are authors of the good practice ‘Broadening the Scope of Impact’ for the MARIE project which has been adopted and published by Interreg Europe. 💡 SFI will assist in development and improvement of the policy framework changes at stakeholder meetings. 💡 SFI’s principal role is the collection and reporting of primary metrics and outputs upon which the policy improvement will be based.

	💡 To further assist where applicable with the development and implementation of the policy improvements throughout the project.
Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?	No

Further Background on sentinel stakeholder: Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)

SFI is the largest funder of competitive research in Ireland, funding basic and applied research aligned with SFI's goals in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). They operate 16 research centres nationally.

SFI has invested over €2.2 billion supporting over 4,000 research awards. With this investment SFI annually supports a community of 2,800 researchers in Ireland including 450 research leaders.

SFI are Intermediary Bodies (IB's) under the S&E ROP 2014-2020 and manage 2 co-funded schemes under Priority 1:

1. The Research Centres Programme: The objective of the Research Centres Programme is to develop a set of world-leading, large-scale Research Centres that will provide major economic impact for Ireland. Nine SFI Research Centres are co-funded under the S&E ROP 2014-2020;
2. Spokes Programme: The objective of the Spokes Programme is to promote the further development of existing SFI Research Centres to incorporate new areas of research and new industrial and academic collaborators. Sixteen awards have been made to Research Centres under the SEROP 2014-2020.

The overall purpose of these schemes is to foster collaboration between research centres, industry and academic partners. It also encourages research centres to link-up and collaborate with industry in targeted projects, the goal of which is research that delivers faster and more impactful economic and societal benefits.

An example of one of the research centres co-funded through the S&E ROP 2014-2020 is Lero, Ireland's national software research centre, headquartered at the University of Limerick. Lero hosts 200 researchers across all seven Irish Universities and two Institutes of Technology.

LERO has demonstrated that for the period 2005-2018 it has contributed €515.32 million to gross output and to the creation of 2,678 jobs nationally.

SFI's Strategic Plan Agenda 2020 quotes "Science and technology play an increasingly important role in addressing the economic, social and environmental problems faced by the world today. That role needs the support and active engagement of the public who fund the work and are the ultimate beneficiaries of it. An engaged public is one that understands the role of science, can judge between competing priorities and arguments, encourages young people to study STEM subjects, and feels that it has the appropriate level of engagement with, and influence upon, the researchers. SFI, as the primary investor in scientific research in this country, must form a strong relationship with the Irish people, built on trust."

The overall aim being to build on and utilise the Quadruple Helix framework; working with the government to provide the best environment for STEM education, collaborating with industry to develop cutting edge products and services and developing novel means of

communication and engagement with civil society.

Through their *Discover Programme* SFI also promotes and supports education in, the study of and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society, including at 2nd and 3rd level education, and in



particular to the growth of the economy.

The mission of this programme is to catalyse, inspire and guide the best in STEM education and public engagement. This is done by supporting and developing the education and outreach STEM sector in Ireland by investing in developing and extending capacity in this area and also exploring and encouraging novel means of public engagement and communications.

Name of stakeholder	South East Business & Innovation Centre (SEBIC) – Carole Thurston & Rosemary Ward
Type of stakeholder	<p>Civil Society – Public-Private Partnership, established in 1995 supporting SMEs to innovate and expand.</p> <p>SEBIC have a regional remit collaborating with organisations in the counties of the South-East region, including Chambers of Commerce, Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Centres, Carlow & Waterford Institutes of Technology, SRA and have a strategic partnership with Enterprise Ireland delivering enterprise development programs and services.</p>
Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEBIC have played an integral role in the development of the Regional Action Plan • To conduct the Enterprise Surveys and feedback results • To provide industry knowledge and expertise in order to assist with the development of the policy at stakeholder meetings. • To provide links into regional and local stakeholders, industry and civil society.
Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?	No, SEBIC have no political influence or backing to influence the implementation of the policy improvement.



Name of stakeholder	The Impacter Development Centre – Szilvia Szabo & Maya Marquez
Type of stakeholder	<p>Business – Social Innovation Website</p> <p>The Impacter Development Centre support and manage projects which have what they refer to as the “Impact Booster” effect and help facilitate the acceleration of change through responsible innovation. They are the organisers and hosts of the annual international ‘Responsible Innovation Summit’ which provides the opportunity to interact with peers and learn from other RRI related projects ranging from science communication to project management. The overall aim of the conference is to introduce responsible innovation as an adaptable business concept.</p>
Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement	<p>The MARIE project partnered up with the Impacter Development Centre by hosting the mid-term event at the Responsible Innovation Summit which took place in Dublin on October 2018 providing the opportunity to interact with peers and learn from other projects. This pilot collaboration proved to be such a success that the decision has been made to host the final event for phase-1 of the MARIE project at the RI summit taking place in Dublin on the 30th October 2019. Impacter through the forum of the annual Responsible Innovation Summit promote the MARIE project as a partner.</p> <p>Impacter have also been very active as stakeholders attending the Interregional Learning Events which in turn have fed into the development of the action plan.</p>
Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?	No

Name of stakeholder	Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation (DBEI) – Marcus Breathnach
Type of stakeholder	Irish Government Department and Policy-making organisation
Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement	To advise & assist with the identification, development and implementation of the policy improvements in line with government policy.
Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?	<p>Yes – this is an Irish Government Department, with a wide remit. The Departments mission is the creation and maintenance of high quality and sustainable full employment across all regions of the country. They aim to achieve this by promoting enterprise and innovation across government and supporting a competitive business environment to incentivise employment, trade, innovation and investment.</p> <p>The Innovation & Investment Division is responsible for policy and delivery management for enterprise, science, technology, innovation, intellectual property and North/South activities which is delivered through multiple agencies.</p>

Name of stakeholder	Dublin City University – Dr Pdraig Murphy
Type of stakeholder	<p>Academia / Research</p> <p>Dublin City University (DCU), established in 1991, has a student population of approximately 17,000. DCU prides themselves on being a young, dynamic and ambitious university with a distinctive mission to transform lives and societies through education, research and innovation. DCU has developed its own research specialisms and created a number of national centres of excellence. They offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as postgraduate study through research. Postgraduate research supervision is provided on</p>

	<p>a broad range of subject areas across all disciplines, including technology, engineering, business, communications, humanities, science and health.</p> <p>A core element of DCU’s vision is to be a globally-significant university that is renowned for its discovery and translation of knowledge to advance society. This commitment to world-class research is central to the new Research and Innovation Strategy, which sets out a range of specific actions to advance our reputation in that regard.</p> <p>DCU Invent is the university’s commercialisation and technology transfer unit which works with companies to bring university research to the marketplace. The prime objective of DCU Invent is to help initiate collaborative research projects between DCU and industry partners. DCU have a strong track record as one of Ireland’s leading universities for licensing and innovation partnerships with Irish SMEs and multinational companies.</p>
<p>Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with the development and implementation of the policy improvements throughout the project by providing an invaluable academic viewpoint and expertise. • DCU have key contacts within government agencies that can support research and innovation activities. In their own words they can ‘give access to people that can make things happen’. • To assist in the completion of the maturity mapping exercise.
<p>Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?</p>	<p>No</p>

Name of stakeholder	Cork Chamber of Commerce – Ivan McCutcheon & Michelle O’Sullivan
Type of stakeholder	<p>Civil society – Representative body for 1,200 businesses in Cork employing over 100,000 staff.</p> <p>Cork Chamber was established nearly 200 years ago. They are a private non-profit organisation whose mission is to champion, promote and drive a strong vision for Cork as the best place to do business thereby adding value to the Southern & Eastern Region. They seek to be dynamic and forward thinking, to be purposeful change makers, to be responsible and inspiring. Members can attend any of 100+ networking events or using the member database to find business links. They provide business advice and promote member businesses in the region.</p>
Responsibilities / role within the development and implementation of the policy improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide industry knowledge and assist with the development of the policy at stakeholder meetings. • To provide a business perspective and assist in the mainstreaming of RRI going forward. • Provide guidance throughout the process having experience of being stakeholders in previous Interreg projects.
Does this organisation provide political backing to the implementation of the policy improvement? If yes, how?	No



Specific tasks and timing

Specific tasks and timing		
Task number	Task description	Timing
1	SRA to amend Monitoring Committee Template for use by SFI to incorporate additional RRI elements.	Deadline: February 2019 Result: Completed
2	SRA to agree the revised Monitoring Committee template with SFI.	Deadline: February 2019 Result: Completed
3	SRA to obtain approval of revised monitoring committee template for SFI purposes at Monitoring Committee meeting.	Deadline: June 2019 Result: Completed
4	Introduction of new reporting requirements by SFI to ensure principal investigators report on additional RRI elements. SRA to collaborate with SFI on this	Deadline: By end March 2020 Result: Ongoing
5	SFI completion of revised Monitoring Committee template annually for reporting to Monitoring Committee.	Deadlines: May 2020 & May 2021 Result: To be completed May 2020 & May 2021
6	SRA to source figures for Leaving Cert results for STEM subjects overall and by gender	Deadline: March 2020
7	SRA to source STEM Level 8 first preference numbers	Deadline: March 2020
8	SRA to collate the additional reporting from the revised monitoring committee report annually from SFI and assess against performance indicators using information sourced from CSO.	Deadlines: July 2020 & July 2021 Result: To be completed July 2020 & July 2021

9	Summarise and disseminate outcomes of Impact Assessment Indicators	Deadlines: Aug 2020 & Aug 2021
10	SRA, in liaison with SFI, to compile report detailing findings from SFI additional reporting the impact of findings	Deadlines Sep 2020 & Sep 2021
12	Continued engagement with SFI on their ongoing commitment to RRI related work to ensure all related work is being reported on	Ongoing
13	Encourage additional reporting introduced informs the reporting template for the next programming period reporting template	Before end of 2020
14	SRA to nurture and build on relationship established with SFI through the MARIE project to continue collaborating on RRI agenda into the next programming period	Ongoing

Resources required for the development and implementation of the policy improvement

No additional resources are required for the development and implementation of either of the policy improvements with the exception of staff time within SRA & SFI.

PESTL analysis of the external environment

A PESTL analysis is a tool used to analyse and monitor the macro-environmental factors that may have a profound impact on an organisation such as Science Foundation Irelands activities or performance. Many of these are outside of the organisations control.

PESTL analysis				
Factor type	Factor title	Description of factor	Scope (international, national, regional)	Importance
Political	Government Policy change	Reduction in SFI Funding	National	High
	Government Policy Change	Government withdraw funding -	National & Regional	Low

		SFI to become a commercial entity		
	Political Stability -General Election	SRA & SFI Funding review or reduction	National & Regional	High
Economic	Downturn in economy	Impacts funding available for researchers	National/ International	High
	Brain-drain of Researchers	Impacts availability of high calibre PhD research personnel	National & Regional	Medium
Social / cultural	Societal views on ethics	Societal shift to tighten science research ethical standards	National	Low
	Environmental impacts	Political agenda and funding shifted to focus on global and national environmental issues	National/ International	Medium
	Societal views of research funding	Could impact focus of funding	National	Low
	Career Attitudes	Science research not attracting high calibre PHD students	National/ International	Low/ Medium
Technological	Communications technology	Funding withdrawn/reduced for national roll-out of high-speed Broad Band	National	Medium
	Robotics/ Analytics	Increasing automation of activities that humans perform, including STEM based research	International	Medium

Legal / regulatory	GDPR	Results in legislation issues with free flow of data and information for research & industry	International	Medium
	Patent & Copyright Laws	Patent Laws become more restrictive or expensive to file	National/ International	Medium
	Education Policy changes	Funding STEM subjects or teachers reduced.	National	Low
	Legislation changes	Legislation to restrict research parameters e.g. stem cells or AI	National	Low

Enablers and barriers of Action Plan development and implementation

Enablers		
Enabler title	Description of enabler	Importance of enabler and potential impact on development and implementation of policy improvement
1	SFI	They are pivotal to the successful data gathering and analysis of the RRI indicators and implementation of the action plan and the policy improvement
Barriers		
Barrier title	Description of barrier	Importance of barrier and potential impact on development and implementation of policy improvement

1	SFI: change in policy or leadership	The voluntary participation of SFI in the increased RRI reporting requirements going forward is crucial to the successful improvement of the policy instrument. The Regional Action Plan and subsequent policy instrument improvement may be compromised if there is a change in SFI policy or leadership.
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Transferability conditions and factors

Transferability factor		
Factor title	Description of factor	Importance of factor and potential impact on regional transferability of policy improvement
1	Flexibility of the funding system	It is an important factor. If there are fixed forms of project applications (for example standardized nationally) it can constrain the implementation of this action.
2	There are no barriers envisaged to the transfer of the improvement in the Policy Instrument to other regions. Once developed it is easily transferred.	There is minimal, if any impact, the Policy improvement is easily transferable to other regions.



Risks and mitigating actions

Risks and Mitigating Actions			
Title of risk	Description of risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of mitigating action(s)
Monitoring committee	The Monitoring Committee for the ROP do not agree to the enhanced additional RRI elements in the reporting format.	Low	The political support and influence from the director of the SRA has been secured to advocate for change.
SRA data collection	SRA are unable to collect the required data to test against performance indicators	Low	Work currently underway to mitigate this risk.

SFI reporting	Insufficient actions or reporting on RRI actions	Medium	SRA to keep open line of communication with SFI throughout the monitoring phase of the project.

Description of the second policy instrument selected for improvement - Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) is one of three Assemblies in the Republic of Ireland.

Since January 2015, the SRA, in addition to its longstanding role as MA for the S&E ROP, now has a responsibility for regional spatial and economic planning which includes oversight of local authority performance and Local Economic and Community Plans, and implementation of national policy.

As part of these enhanced responsibilities, SRA have prepared and written the first Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region of Ireland. The RSES sets out a 12-year strategic framework for the development of the region embracing all aspects of life including economic, environmental, connectivity, quality of life, etc, and identifies key priorities for investment to support delivery of this ambition. This involves working closely with partners in the region in developing regional innovation and smart specialisation objectives.

The principal purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework and the economic policies & objectives of the Government. Ultimately, it strives to deliver decisive leadership for the region through the definition of Regional Policy Objectives aimed, inter alia, at Jobs and Growth by identifying regional strengths and opportunities essential to enhancing regional economic performance. Amongst them:

- Preparation of Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) for the Cork, Limerick and Waterford Metropolitan areas;
- Identification and prioritisation of key future growth enablers required to deliver full regional potential;
- Promotion and development of innovative rural communities through smart regional clusters;
- Development of Innovation Hubs and Centres of Excellence with particular opportunities for innovation.

The RSES acknowledges that a strong economy is fortified by strong enterprise, innovation and skills, which requires a competitive, innovative and resilient regional enterprise base. In order to achieve this competitiveness, innovation and resilience it must align itself with Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

The definition of smart specialisation areas and objectives at region, county and city level supported by a better coordination of the policy mix and services offered within the framework of the RSES can play an integral role for the down streaming of national S3 at the territory level i.e. RIS3.

The RSES is an ambitious strategy that will keep pace with the accelerated rate of technological, social and economic change. Innovation is at the core of the RSES filtering into every aspect with an entire chapter dedicated to building an innovative, smart and

sustainable economy based on parity of opportunity and increased well-being for the regions citizens.

With the escalated pace of innovation determining how to plan for sustainable development can be difficult to anticipate however we can condition ourselves to deal with these uncertainties in a responsible way. It is estimated that 65% of children in primary schools today will work in jobs that do not yet exist, the jobs as we know them today will have changed beyond recognition and we need to plan responsibly to help the next generation deal with these kinds of uncertainties and ensure the region is not in a talent deficit.

The RSES will set the agenda for the region for the next 12 years providing a timely opportunity to embed RRI into the very fabric of it.

Description of the envisaged / enhanced policy context

The RSES must be supportive of and compliant with the National Planning Framework and in turn, each local authority development and economic community plan must be consistent with the objectives of the RSES. To achieve this consistency, on completion of the RSES each planning authority in the region will formally review both their existing development and economic community plans and update them in line with the objectives outlined in the RSES. Consequently, the RSES provides the perfect mechanism for mainstreaming and embedding RRI into the forward planning of the region.

The RSES advocates that spatial planning be informed by both economic and societal needs. It champions the citizen by supporting both people and places. The strategic vision is delivered through 11 key components all of which are informed by the 17 UN SDG's.

This societal responsibility demonstrates the strong elements of RRI inadvertently built into the framework of the RSES such as:

- Quadruple helix approach embraced through extensive public consultation process with policy makers, government departments, educators, local authorities, local and regional councillors, civil society etc.;
- Where applicable cross-boundary working groups to enhance collaboration between the regions three cities to develop guidance for Local Authorities and stakeholders to focus on the protection of the environment;
- Aligning outcomes with the values of society by building the 11 Strategy points around the UN SDG's;
- Actions built in to promote gender equality among other equality initiatives to align the accelerated population growth targets with the UN SDG's;

- Committed to making data publicly available;
- Actions to promote sustainable development;
- Narrowing the perceived gap between a place-based approach and RRI in embracing the RRI ethos that innovation should benefit society;
- Acknowledgement that a strong governance needs to be established.

The RSES adopted on the 29th November 2019 is due to be published for circulation and will come into effect on the 31st January 2020. A Monitoring Committee, which will include a representative from the SRA, will be established within 12 months of the RSES being published. This monitoring committee will be tasked with overseeing the progress of implementation and shall examine in particular but not limited to:

- Any issues that affect the underperformance of the strategy;
- Progress made in implementation of the strategy's evaluation plan and the follow-up on findings of evaluations;
- Actions to promote gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities;
- Actions to promote sustainable development.

As outlined previously the RSES embraces elements of RRI into the design however, there is a need to take this a step further and incorporate it into the governance framework. Every two years the SRA will be required to prepare a monitoring report setting out the progress made in implementing the strategy. The monitoring report will assess progress made in securing the overall objectives of the RSES.

The MARIE project provides the opportunity to influence the RSES by ensuring RRI is embedded into the management and monitoring which could be done in the following ways:

- Report on how the implementation of the RSES is meeting the objectives of the UN SDG's as aligned to the strategy;
- Report on continued engagement with civil society and demonstrate how their needs are being reflected;
- Embed RRI principles into the regional smart approach, both through the delivery and governance thus enhancing enterprise engagement with academic research;
- Report on the impact of adopting the bottom-up Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) approach as referenced in chapter 4, encouraging policy-makers to facilitate the realisation of potential opportunities identified through interaction of various key players;
- Ensure the RSES continues the constructive involvement of stakeholders;

- Roll-out of the cross boundary working groups and ensure RRI is considered to ensure agenda remains focused on safeguarding the environment for the future well-being of the citizen;
- Demonstrate transparency;
- Disseminate results and achievements to the wider public.

Initial contact has been made with the policy owner who has agreed to engage in discussion on how to incorporate RRI into the governance through monitoring and reporting.

The reporting mechanism will be in place by January 2021 with the first report due January 2023.

The timeline for establishing the monitoring will be determined over the next 12 months and the SRA will engage with the policy owner on a regular basis to ensure elements of RRI, as outlined above, are incorporated into the monitoring and reporting. SRA will play an active role in establishing this governance and determining what format the reporting will take. Introducing RRI into the reporting at this level will encourage infiltration to the Local Authorities and relevant agencies who must align themselves to the RSES.

A further aim is to educate the Regional Planning Officers who are the spokespeople for the RSES on the practical benefits of embracing RRI working practices and culture ensuring societal needs remain at the core of the RSES and lead the region to a problem oriented focus. This will facilitate the core RRI objective of ensuring research outcomes grow progressively aligned with societal values.

Specific tasks and timing

Specific tasks and timing		
Task number	Task description	Timing
1	SRA to engage with RSES policy owner throughout 2020 to collaborate on establishing the monitoring mechanism to include RRI elements	Ongoing meetings and discussions throughout 2020 & 2021

2	SRA to engage with RSES policy owner throughout 2020 to ensure reporting procedure incorporates RRI elements	Ongoing meetings and discussions throughout 2020 & 2021
3	Educate Regional Planning Officers on the practical benefits of embracing RRI working practices and culture	By Aug 2020 and continued liaison to ensure promotion of RRI agenda
4	Once Monitoring Committee for the RSES is established liaise with SRA representative on committee to promote the RRI agenda	Initial contact established before Jan 2021
5	If it is the case that RSES workshops are held SRA to collaborate on the agenda to ensure inclusion of RRI elements	Ongoing
6	SRA to ensure continued transparency of RSES process	Ongoing
7	SRA to encourage dissemination of achievements and impact to the wider public	Ongoing
8	SRA to encourage continued engagement with civil society via the policy owner and Regional Planning Officers	Ongoing

Feasibility check

Transfer and implementation team (Internal staff members and stakeholders)

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you identified what skills are necessary to design and implement this policy improvement?	YES	The policy improvement has been achieved and going forward no further skills other than the Project Officer assigned to the project and the stakeholder will be necessary.
Have you checked which staff members / stakeholders were involved in the original GP? Are these the same in your local context?	N/A	
Have you identified who is going to work on this measure from within the partner organisation?	YES	The project officer assigned to the MARIE project will be working on this measure
Have you identified the most relevant stakeholders to work on the measure from outside the partners' organisation (stakeholders)?	YES	Science Foundation Ireland as the reporting body will be the stakeholder working on this policy improvement.
Have you contacted all the necessary stakeholders (internal and external) and involved them in the measure?	YES	SFI the stakeholder responsible for the additional RRI reporting has been contacted and involved.
Have you discussed and allocated the role of each stakeholder?	YES	Yes SFI are very clear on what their role entails in implementing the policy improvement.
Have you made agreements (formal / informal) with each stakeholders, defining their responsibilities and eventual compensation?	YES	SFI have agreed in writing and, as procedure dictates, have submitted the revised reporting form to the Monitoring Committee whose approval has been granted and noted for the records. Their responsibilities have been defined

		and they have are aware there will be no eventual compensation.
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Technical feasibility check

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you checked which facilities and equipment have been used in the original GP?	N/A	
Have you identified what kind of facilities and equipment you need according to your local context?	N/A	
Have you checked if these facilities and equipment are available either within your structure or stakeholders' structures?	N/A	
Have you prepared a list of facilities and equipment you need to buy or rent?	N/A	
Are you aware of / have you checked the necessary procedures to buy or rent these facilities and equipment?	N/A	

Financial feasibility check

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you checked the provisional budget and financing plan of the GPs considered in the proposed policy improvement?	N/A	
Have you prepared a provisional budget for the policy improvement (proposed Implementation budget)?	N/A	
If needed, have you contacted an expert to assess global costs of the policy improvement (Implementation budget)?	N/A	

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you validated the implementation budget with the transfer and implementation team?	YES/ NO / N/A	
Have you identified all possible funding sources and created a financing plan?	N/A	
Have you determined cost distribution between partners and other funders?	N/A	

Legal /regulatory feasibility check

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you checked the laws and regulations (local / regional / national) that could affect implementation of the policy improvement in your policy context?	Yes	There have been no laws and regulations identified that could affect implementation of the policy improvement.
Have you checked if the policy improvement complies with these laws and regulations?	N/A	
If needed, have you identified which adjustments have to be made to the policy improvement? Are they workable?	N/A	
Have you checked if these changes lead to additional costs? What are these costs?	YES	No changes anticipated therefore no additional costs foreseen
If applicable, have you determined who will cover these additional costs?	N/A	
Have you checked if changes require the involvement of stakeholders that were not originally involved in the transfer and implementation team?	N/A	
Have these stakeholders been contacted and involved?	N/A	

Political and socio-cultural feasibility check

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you analysed the social / cultural / political context in which the policy improvement will be implemented?	YES	These have been considered and noted within the RAP
Have you identified political risks and any necessary mitigating actions?	YES	These have been considered and noted within the RAP
Have you identified social or cultural risks and any necessary mitigating actions?	YES	These have been considered and noted within the RAP
Have you met local / regional politicians to explain and validate the project, if necessary?	N/A	
Have you planned / carried out a consultation phase with interested actors (e.g. beneficiaries, companies, local politicians, civil society representatives)?	N/A	

Implementation schedule

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Are you aware of the schedule / timing of the planning and implementation of the GPs considered in the proposed policy improvement?	YES	This has been considered and noted within the RAP
Have you set deadlines for the planning of the policy improvement with the transfer and implementation team?	YES	The deadlines for the planning of the policy improvement have been outlined within the RAP
Have you built a schedule of implementation actions?	YES	The schedule of implementation actions have been outlined within the RAP.
Have you planned meetings of the transfer and implementation team?	No	There are no further meetings required as the project officer within the organisation will be implementing the change.

Feasibility check items	Response	Comments / details:
Have you checked if there are any political constraints to take into account in the schedule?	Yes	There are no political constraints to take in to account in the schedule.
Have you checked if there are any other significant events that could have an impact (positive or negative) on the implementation of the policy improvement?	Yes	To the best of our knowledge at this point there are no significant events that could have an impact on the implementation of the policy improvement.

Part 4: Regional Action Plan Endorsements

As a partner on the MARIE project the Southern Regional Assembly acknowledges the contribution and value added to the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 and the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provided through the identification of Good Practice(s), Interregional learning and the development of this Regional Action Plan.

The Southern Regional Assembly consider the potential implementation of the Good Practice(s) and Interregional learning referenced within this Regional Action Plan, with necessary adaption according to regional context, to represent a valuable path for further integration and embedding of RRI into public policy applicable to the Southern Region.

We hereby confirm our support for the exchange and implementation of the Good Practice(s) as described in this Regional Action Plan and the subsequent implementation of the actions reported in Part 3 of this document.

Name & Organisation: **Councillor Joe Carroll**, Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly

Date: 20/03/2020

Signature:



Name & Organisation: **Mr David Kelly**, Director, Southern Regional Assembly

Date: 20/03/2020

Signature:



Name & Organisation: **Mr Declan McGrath**, Science Foundation Ireland

Date: 19/03/2020

Signature:



Appendix 1 – Monitoring Committee Report

Implementation Plan: SFI Research Centres.

Operational Programme	S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020
Priority	1: Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region
Thematic Objective	1: Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation
Investment Priority	(a) enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;
Scheme	SFI Research Centres
Categorisation Code	060
ERDF Certifying Body	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Managing Authority	Southern Regional Assembly
Intermediate Body	Science Foundation Ireland
Beneficiary	Higher Education Institutes
Grant Rate	100%
EU Co-Financing Rate	50% of public eligible expenditure declared

Objectives of Intervention.

The objective of the Research Centres Programme is to develop a set of world-leading, large-scale research centres aligned with the 14 priority areas of research identified in the Research Prioritisation Exercise that will provide major economic impact for Ireland.

Description of Intervention.

SFI Research Centres link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry to address crucial research questions; foster the development of new and existing Irish-based technology companies; attract industry that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy; attract international research talent and capital; attract, anchor and spin out related companies in Ireland; and increase the numbers of SFI-trained researchers employed in industry. All of the approved research centre proposals will be aligned with the 14 priorities identified in Ireland's Research Prioritisation Exercise.

The Research Centres are structured on a hub and spoke model consisting of a number of targeted projects undertaken in partnership with industry that connect into a central hub containing the platform research (specified research activity in the approved work programme) and core operations (payroll and other operational costs). A key feature of SFI Research Centres is the creation of a

critical mass of internationally leading researchers in strategic areas which become a key attractant to industry and lay the foundation for effective and productive academic and industrial partnerships. The Research Centres provide the foundation for sustainable research activity which can take place in conjunction with Industry Partners and other funding agencies such as EU by leveraging against the core SFI funding, with the objective to meet the changing needs of industry and society.

SFI Research Centres envisage evolving to maximise capabilities, outputs and industry offerings including the transfer of knowledge and expertise to enterprises and the spin-out of new, high-technology start-up companies that have the potential to raise external angel or venture funding.

The SFI Research Centre programme will contribute to the specific objective of the investment priority by increasing the level of strategic research taking place in the S&E region, aligned with the Research Prioritisation Exercise, with strong industrial linkages and will also promote eco-innovation, where relevant.

Industry partners are expected to contribute 30% of the cost of research activities in Strategic Research Centres. This relatively high industry cost-share component reflects the importance of the programme to industry and to ensure maximum impact on growth and jobs. The co-funded expenditure does not include infrastructure.

Responsibilities of Intermediary Body.

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) will enter into an Administrative Agreement with the Regional Assembly which will set out in detail the responsibilities of each body. This agreement will be drafted initially by the Regional Assembly in consultation with SFI and the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. SFI will be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the intervention and for full compliance with the Regulations, particularly those concerning financial management, control, publicity and public procurement. SFI commits to revising its EU Structural Funds Procedures Manual to comply with the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular on the management of EU co-funded programmes 2014- 20; and the EU regulations.

SFI will ensure that the beneficiary HEIs are provided with a grant award document (Letter of Offer) setting out the conditions of support for each operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution and the conditions for use of the Structural Funds IT System 2014-2020.

SFI will be responsible for the drawdown of funding from DJEI and for the processing and authorisation of grant awards to the HEIs

SFI will be responsible for ensuring that all payment claims for European Structural and Investment Fund expenditure, submitted by the relevant Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), are supported by receipted invoices and audit documents, and that a clear and sufficient audit trail exists. Verification checks will be carried out by SFI and/or by other bodies on their behalf on the claims submitted and on the management and control systems in the HEIs. These checks will include procedures to verify the delivery of the research projects co-financed and the reality of expenditure claimed and compliance with applicable national and Community rules on, in particular, the eligibility of expenditure for support and public procurement.

SFI will also be responsible for ensuring in respect of co-financed Intervention/projects, that only eligible expenditure actually incurred is submitted to the Managing Authority. SFI is responsible

for the certification of all expenditure incurred by the HEIs.

SFI will be responsible for submitting eligible expenditure in the format required by the Certifying Authority to the Regional Assembly (Managing Authority) in order for payments claims to be prepared for submission to the Certifying Authority. Project level data will be updated, as and when requested and specified, by the EU Structural Funds I.T. System.

SFI will compile monitoring/progress reports as requested by the Regional Assembly and cooperate with OP level evaluations as required. These reports will provide data on the integration of the Horizontal Principles following a screening exercise to be undertaken by SFI.

The contribution of the Irish exchequer and the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 will be acknowledged in all promotional material, annual reports, research laboratories and websites relevant to the co-funded awards, by use of appropriate logo and text references. SFI will ensure that the HEIs as beneficiaries comply with publicity requirements.

Responsibilities of Beneficiary Body.

The HEIs will be responsible for implementation of the intervention at local level. As the final beneficiaries in the cascade of reporting, they will be responsible for ensuring that only actual eligible expenditure incurred, and expenditure which comes under the terms of the research project(s) as approved, is certified. They will be required to ensure a clear audit trail exists in relation to EU co-funded expenditure and that all claims are supported by receipted invoices or, where this cannot be done, by accounting documents of equivalent probative value. Finally, they are responsible for ensuring that all Annex III data is recorded on an appropriate system as required by Article 125, 2, (d)

Integration of Horizontal Principles.

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers, and to redressing the gender imbalance amongst SFI award holders, of which 19% are female (Source: SFI Census 2012). One of SFI's Agenda 2020 KPI targets is to increase the proportion of female award holders to 25% by 2020. The aim in attaining this target is to facilitate the retention of excellent female researchers within academia.

To this end, SFI will focus on streamlining gender initiatives across all its programmes by providing supporting schemes and measures that can facilitate the retention, re-entry, retraining and career advancement of women in STEM research as follows:

- Advance Award/Industry Fellowships
- SFI Maternity/Adoptive Policy
- Flexible eligibility criteria for the Investigators programme under the SFI Investigator Career Advancement (ICA) criteria, whose aim is to support those researchers returning to academic research after a prolonged absence e.g. Statutory adoptive leave and Statutory parental leave
- Promotes other Non-SFI gender initiatives i.e. Athena Swan Charter.

SFI will track the participation of women in Research on an Annual basis through the Annual Census, both at an award holder level and as part of the Research team. SFI will track the level of funding in the Environmental Science and Energy space over the period 2014 – 2020 – However it must be stressed only funded proposals in these areas w h i c h demonstrate excellent science will be funded.

On review of the governance of SFI's reporting on the integration of horizontal principles SFI have agreed that going forward from 2019 (2018 as the baseline year) to enhance their reporting to the Managing Authority of the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 to include:

- Outreach Activities to now include Public Engagement Activities;
- Number of projects approved through the Discover Programme;
- Science education promotional activities and engagement at second level;
- Update on any other additional initiatives undertaken that fall within the scope of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI).

As a result of the enhanced reporting the Managing Authority will be better able to report and quantify the success of the funding administered through SFI and the benefits of work undertaken to achieve the integration of Horizontal Principles.

Research Centre Programme Call 2013 (Appendix 1)

Selection Process and Criteria.

There are open calls run for researchers in eligible Research Bodies, which generally have fixed deadlines. All submissions are subjected to competitive, international merit review processes carried out by a panel of leading experts who make recommendations to SFI Executive, or SFI Board as appropriate, who make the final decision on awards. The 2013 Research Centres Programme call will follow three stages:

Pre-Proposal stage - submit a pre-proposal application to the call which must provide a proposal title and abstract (max. 200 words).

Each pre-proposal will be reviewed by a panel of scientific and commercialisation experts who will evaluate both the scientific merit of each pre-proposal and its potential to deliver significant economic and societal impact. The proposals will be evaluated as follows,

1. Quality of the applicant team (weighting of 25%)
2. Quality of the proposed research programme (weighting of 25%)
3. Quality of the potential for economic and societal impact (weighting of 50%)

Only those pre- proposals that are deemed to be excellent both in terms of science and potential for delivering economic and societal impact to Ireland will progress to the full proposal application stage. Pre-proposals deemed not to have met the required level of scientific excellence and potential for impact will be eliminated from the evaluation process.

Full Proposal stage - Full proposals will be sent for postal review. For each proposal under evaluation, SFI will solicit between five and seven written reviews (i.e., postal review) from

international topic experts who will appraise the quality of the applicant team and proposed research programme. Proposals were evaluated for scientific excellence based on the following criteria:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the lead and co-applicants and the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, including likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.*
- *Quality of plans for execution and delivery of the research programme and Centre goals, including the appropriateness of the proposed milestones and deliverables.*

Each of the sections above was scored on a scale of 1-5 according to the standard score descriptions used within Sesame for assessing the quality of the applicant and research programme. New descriptions were added for rating the quality of the plans for execution and delivery whereby a score of 1 signified that the plans suffered from serious deficiencies and the Centre goals could not be delivered. A score of 5 was assigned for outstanding plans.

Applicants will be provided with the anonymised postal reviews and will be invited to provide a brief written response to these reviews (i.e. applicant response). Based on the evaluations submitted by the postal reviewers and the applicant responses, SFI will select the proposals that have demonstrated a high-level of scientific excellence to progress to the Impact Panel assessment stage. Proposals not selected for the final Impact Panel meeting will be eliminated from the evaluation process.

Impact Panel Presentation - The Impact Panel will comprise high-level members, such as Vice Presidents of Research from universities, corporate R&D Directors, partners from the investment and venture capital communities and entrepreneurs. . The Impact Panel will be tasked with identifying fundable proposals and will provide SFI with a list of such proposals ranked in order of priority for funding. Scores (1-5) were assigned to each proposal based on the following evaluation criteria:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the lead and co-applicants and the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, including likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland*
- *Quality of plans for execution and delivery of the research programme and Centre goals, including the appropriateness of the proposed milestones and deliverables*

The ranked list of fundable proposals will inform the final decision as to which Research Centre proposals are to be funded by SFI Executive Committee and SFI Board.

The Research Centres eligible for ERDF funding in the 2014 – 2020 Operational Programme were awarded following the 2013 Research Centres Call (Appendix 1). This Call operated on a themed

basis and focused on a number of areas which could generate significant economic and societal benefit for Ireland. The themes that were selected were aligned to National Research Prioritisation (NRP) areas identified by the National Research Prioritisation Exercise which was implemented as government policy in 2012. The themes for the 2013 SFI Research Centres Call were:

- Future Networks and Communications (Priority Area A)
- Digital Platforms, Content and Applications (Priority Area C)
- Medical Devices (Priority Area E)
- Diagnostics (Priority Area F)
- Sustainable Food Production and Processing (Priority Area I)
- Smart Grids and Smart Cities (Priority Area K)
- Manufacturing Competitiveness (Priority Area L)
- Software (Platform science & technology)
- Geosciences Underpinning Sustainable Economic Development
- Earth and Ocean Observation

In addition to the requirement for scientific excellence, applications considered under the 2013 SFI Research Centres Call needed to clearly demonstrate potential for economic and societal impact to Ireland, and this was required at both pre-proposal and full proposal stages.

The following is extracted from the 2013 Call document and sets out the selection and evaluation criteria as follows:

Eligibility Criteria of the Applicant and Co-applicants

Applicant groups must have one lead applicant and between two and nine co-applicants. SFI expects that the group of lead and co-applicants will form the executive management committee of the Research Centre, with administrative responsibility for the performance of the centre.

The lead applicant (and co-applicants) must be members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant). Funded investigators must hold a PhD or equivalent for at least 3 years by the pre-proposal deadline. Funded Research Centres for any future calls will also be included in the Operational Programme.

Appeals.

SFI has a formal Appeals Process which is published on the SFI Website.

1. Introduction

This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the decline of a proposal by SFI. In making its decision regarding funding, SFI takes into account the peer review assessments of the scientific and technical merits of a proposal, but also the value to Ireland of the research programme, the budget availability and programmatic priorities of the Foundation. Proposals are evaluated in open competitions via a combination of international peer review and strategic fit with SFI's mission. In addition to the principles espoused by SFI's core values, SFI uses the following

principles in reaching its funding decisions: value for money, strategic impact, efficient use of the peer review system, internationalisation, critical mass, cohesion with other funding streams, and availability of funding.

The primary aim of the SFI appeals procedure is to ensure that SFI's review process itself has been fair and reasonable and that SFI's stated review procedures were followed. Although the appeal procedure is not a peer review process itself and will not re-open such a peer review process, it may address procedural errors in the peer review process, or other aspects of proposal review including: unaccounted-for conflicts of interest, inappropriate consideration of rumour / hearsay, or incomplete / inconsistent documentation being made available to the reviewers. SFI would like to emphasise that in all such cases a robust argument must be articulated and that the appeal will subsequently follow the specific procedures outlined in section 2.

It is appreciated that applicants may, from time to time, disagree with the detailed technical perspective of the expert referee, or their position on the overall quality or impact of the proposed research. However, SFI has full confidence in the high quality of experts that it engages in the peer review process and takes the position that this source of expert input allows SFI to make the best and most informed decisions. The judgment, interpretation, or level of understanding of these experts is, therefore, not grounds for appeal.

SFI now has in place a formal process integrated into some of its programmes, whereby applicants are invited to provide a scientific response. In programmes where this response stage does not form part of the SFI review process, an appeal may be accepted where specific factual inaccuracies can be clearly identified. Otherwise, appeals must be limited to clearly identifiable issues of procedure. The process required for invoking the formal process of appeal is outlined in detail in section 2.

Regarding appeals made prior to full technical peer review of a proposal; SFI remains confident that the procedures for submission of Eols, pre-proposals and full proposals are clearly delineated in the call documentation and that it remains the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that these are followed correctly. For this reason, appeals based on applications that have been deemed administratively ineligible, including, but not restricted to, late applications, applications exceeding page limits or missing documentation, will not be considered unless it can be explicitly demonstrated that this resulted from an oversight by SFI.

Appeals based on funding levels, or award conditions on applications that have been approved for funding, will not be considered. Award of SFI funding is discretionary and the appeal process is not an adversarial one. A formal hearing, therefore, is not provided. Factors such as programme budgets and priorities will have to be taken into account when making a decision on an appeal.

2. Procedures

The appeal process at SFI has three stages:

(A) EXPLANATION BY THE SFI PROGRAMME MANAGER OR SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR. An applicant whose proposal has been declined is encouraged to request more information from the cognizant SFI Programme Manager, over and above the explanatory materials received with the declination notice. The Programme Manager will afford the applicant an opportunity to present his/her point of view, will provide additional information if any exists, and will take any further action that seems appropriate in consultation with the relevant SFI Scientific Director.

(B) REVIEW OF THE APPEAL BY AN SFI DIRECTOR NOT INVOLVED IN THE ORIGINAL REVIEW.

If dissatisfied with the explanation or action provided under Section (a), the applicant may submit a written request to the Secretary to the SFI Board that SFI reconsider its decision. SFI will consider such a request only if the applicant has first sought and obtained an explanation under the procedures described in Section (a), only if the request is received by SFI within 30 days after the date of the declination notice, and provided that the applicant's request for an appeal has been sent through the research office of the applicant's host Research Body and is endorsed by the host Research Body (VP for research or equivalent). In the letter requesting the appeal, the applicant should state whether the appeal is based on a) factual inaccuracy (only applicable to awards that do not already include a rebuttal process) or b) procedural error. The applicant should also provide a concise written statement (no more than 300 words) clearly explaining the grounds for the appeal. The Secretary to the Board will forward the request to a Director at SFI who was not involved in the original review of the proposal. This Director will reconsider the record to determine whether SFI's review of the declined proposal was fair and reasonable. The Director may personally conduct the review or may designate a Programme Manager in his/her Programme area, who had no part in the initial review, to do so.

Within 30 days after the date of the request, the Director will provide the results of the appeal, in writing, to the research office of the host Research Body with a copy to the applicant. If the results cannot be furnished within 30 days, the allocated Director will give the host Research Body and the applicant a written explanation of the need for more time, indicating the date when results can be expected.

(C)) FURTHER REVIEW BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL AT THE REQUEST OF THE HOST RESEARCH BODY.

Within 30 days after the Director has notified the applicant of the results of the appeal, the host Research Body may request further review by the Director General of SFI.

The request need not be in any particular format, but it must be in writing and must be signed by the President/Provost/Chief Executive Officer of the host Research Body and by the PI. The request should explain why the host Research Body still believes that an error may have occurred in the initial evaluation and why it is not satisfied with the review of the original appeal conducted by the Director under the procedures described in Section (b), above.

The Director General is responsible for reviewing the request for a further appeal and the record of earlier SFI actions (including the original review of the proposal and the review conducted under Section (b)). The Director General may personally conduct the further review or may designate another SFI official, who had no part in the original review or the review conducted under Section (b), to do so. Additionally, an external third party expert(s) may be asked to examine the case and to present a recommendation. Within 30 days after a request for further appeal is received at SFI, the Director General will furnish the results of the further appeal, in writing, to the host Research Body.

If results cannot be furnished within 30 days, the Director General will provide the host Research Body with a written explanation of the need for more time, indicating the date when the results can be expected. *THE DECISION MADE BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL IS FINAL*

Performance Indicators.

Priority-level Output Indicators Investment Priority 1(a)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Fund	Category of Region	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting
CO 24	Number of new researchers in supported entities	Full-Time Equivalents	ERDF	More Developed	689	SFI	Annual

1.1 Programme-Specific Result Indicators Investment Priority 1(a)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Category of Region	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting
1(a)	Increased number of industry partners engaged with funded strategic research centres in the S&E region	No. of enterprises	More Developed	529	2014	713	SFI	Annual

Financial Management.

Funding for SFI is provided by Central Government, and will be maintained under a separate Sub-head to be provided by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), on an annual basis to SFI.

The “Finance and Operations” Unit of SFI will allocate funding on an instalment basis to the HEIs over the duration of the award. Such allocations will be made in line with the SFI awards selection criteria relevant to the specific programme and as detailed in the formal SFI “Letter of Offer” relating to the specific research award.

SFI will enter into an Administrative Agreement with the Regional Assembly which will set out in detail the responsibilities at each level in respect of financial management and control. SFI will supply the Beneficiary with a document setting out the conditions for support for each operation, including procedures to ensure Beneficiaries maintain a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation.

The HEIs will submit to SFI details of their research project(s) and, as the project(s) progress, request their funding requirements in instalments for the duration of the research project. SFI will examine, validate and process such requests and will authorise the SFI Finance and Operations Unit to make the necessary payments, by electronic transfer, to the relevant HEI bank account.

The HEIs will provide, as requested, detailed certification reports (B1’s) to SFI outlining eligible expenditure claimed. SFI will examine such reports and will from time to time carry out spot checks to verify actuality of expenditure claimed.

The books and accounts of the HEIs will be available on request for examination by SFI, the

Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the ERDF Financial Control Unit, the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

Document Retention.

In accordance with Article 140 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 all supporting documents regarding expenditure, verification checks, certification and audits on operations for which total eligible expenditure is less than €1,000,000.00 will be kept available for the EU Commission and Court of Auditors for a period of three years from 31 December following the submission of the accounts in which the expenditure of the operation is included. In the case of operations over €1,000,000.00 all supporting documentation shall be kept for a 2 year period from 31 December following the submission of accounts in which the **final** expenditure of the completed operation is included.

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements.

The reporting arrangements require that a progress report be submitted annually to the Monitoring Committee by the Intermediary Body in a format to be specified by the Committee. In addition, Intermediary Bodies will be required to provide data on the IT system which will be used to transfer information to the Commission. This system is currently being developed.

SFI will monitor the performance of the measure at Regional and National level and will report to the Regional Assembly in the matter. The HEIs will confirm in relation to each project that the agreed proposals have been implemented though it is recognised that the nature of the research awards means that some of the benefits to the region and nationally will be in the longer term.

On an annual basis SFI will compile reports on research project/Programme performance at intervention level, setting out progress against agreed intervention objectives and targets and performance on the horizontal principles as laid out in the reporting template. Progress reports will cover financial management details, performance indicators and qualitative information where appropriate. Given the nature of the SFI funding mechanism to HEIs, an annual report on expenditure incurred to date at research project level under the intervention will also be provided. SFI will agree the composition and format of these reports with the Managing Authority. The IT System will be used to report on the intervention and to transfer information on to the Commission, including information on operations as appropriate.

Information and Publicity.

SFI will ensure that the HEIs as Beneficiaries will comply section 2.2 of Annex XII of Commission Regulation 1303/2013 and with Articles 4 and 5 of Commission Implementing Regulation 821/2014.

The contribution of the Irish exchequer and European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 will be acknowledged in all promotional material, annual reports, research laboratories, websites, letters of offer etc., by use of appropriate logo and text references. The relevant Structural Funds regulations on Information and Publicity will be complied with in this regard.