

## Country Profile - Ireland

Ireland is taking steps to increase the use of R&D within its industrial base and to attract research teams from overseas to boost its economy.

"We've all become convinced of the value of R&D," said Dick Kavanagh, managing director of the Irish Industrial Research and Development Group (IIRDG). "In 1992 industrial R&D was drawing €5m from the government. In 2004 it was drawing €55m as part of a national development plan to spend this much a year for the seven years between 2000 and 2006."

Kavanagh says Ireland's industrial R&D has grown 12 to 13% per year over the past 12 years. The number of companies involved in R&D has increased from 900 to 1400, though most are small. The IIRDG is backing a proposed R&D Action Plan that sets out to increase business investment in R&D from €916m, or 0.9% of GNP in 2004, to €2.5bn, or 1.7% of GNP, by 2010.

The Irish government wants to increase the number of companies doing R&D and to increase industrial R&D spending. It has a number of ways of doing this.

Development agency Enterprise Ireland has an R&D Awareness Initiative, which has introduced 150 local companies to R&D in the past two years. Enterprise Ireland also has a Research Technology and Innovation Scheme, which offers grant support. Expertise Ireland offers sources of academic expertise, engineers, consultant and suppliers to help.

The government introduced an R&D tax credit in 2004. But as it sets out to attract inward investment it needs to decide how much commitment multinationals should make to its economy, and who owns intellectual property generated by public-private

partnerships. Ireland has led the development of codes of conduct on these issues.

Tom McCarthy, chief executive of the Irish Management Institute, says there's been increasing investment in basic science and research in Ireland since 1998. This has been done through two routes: the Program for Research in Third Level Institutes (PRTLTI) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

PRTLTI has allocated €605m over three funding cycles to improve higher-education strategies, programmes and infrastructure. Institutions have competed for money, with 10% of their assessments being based on their ability to collaborate.

SFI helps Ireland recruit and retain research groups. It is investing €646m between 2000 and 2006 in the research teams most likely to generate new knowledge, technologies and competitive enterprises in biotechnology and information and communications technology.

"We've paid the entry price and have now gone into serious investment in research," said McCarthy. The government has now appointed a chief scientific advisor to guide the commercialisation of R&D. McCarthy says the government is well aware of the importance of R&D: "The minister for enterprise, trade and employment has two key issues: research and links to China."

### Further reading

Enterprise Ireland

[www.enterprise-ireland.com/ResearchInnovate](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/ResearchInnovate)

Expertise Ireland

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

Program for Research in Third Level Institutes

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

Science Foundation Ireland

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

Population	4m
GDP	\$116.2bn (2003 est)
GDP growth	1.4% (2003 est)
Labour force	1.871m (2003 est)
Number of companies in the EU500 #	4
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D *	\$1 304.3m (2001)
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D as %age of GDP *	1.13 (2001)
Total researchers *	8949 (2001)
Government budget appropriations or outlays for R&D *	\$387.5m (2001)

(Source: CIA World Factbook, \* OECD Science and Technology Indicators, # 2004 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard)

### IQ briefs

#### France looks to national champions

France should set up an Industrial Innovation Agency, funded with €1bn per year, to back up to 12 major industrial innovation programmes, according to a report produced for the French government by Jean-Louis Beffa, chairman and CEO of materials company Saint-Gobain.

Each programme should be backed with between €30m and €50m of public money for around five years, in a 50:50 joint venture with the private sector. These 'Mobilising Programmes for Industrial Innovation' could run for up to ten years.

The report recommends the approach to other European countries and reiterates the idea of a similarly structured European approach.

[www.rapport-jeanlouisbeffa.com](http://www.rapport-jeanlouisbeffa.com)

#### IBM opens up patent access

IBM has decided to allow the innovations covered by 500 of its software patents to be used by anyone working on open-source software, a major shift in the way it manages and deploys its intellectual property (IP) portfolio.

"We will increasingly use patents to encourage and protect global innovation and interoperability through open standards and we urge others to do so as well," said Dr John Kelly, IBM senior vice president, technology and IP.

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