

# Learnings from Creating Our Future, Ireland

Presented by  
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- **Research Ireland** is the largest competitive research and innovation funding agency in Ireland (annual budget c. €300M).
- Established in 2024, following the Research and Innovation Act, amalgamating two former agencies (SFI and IRC).
- It sits under the Government of Ireland's Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science.
- 130 staff across 18 teams.



## Overview

**A 2021 government-led national brainstorm that brought the people of Ireland into a conversation on the role all areas of research can and should play in addressing opportunities, challenges and hopes for the future.**

Online platform: [creatingourfuture.ie](https://creatingourfuture.ie)

40 roadshows, 36 info and support sessions, 1.5k brainstorming events: 18,000 responses.

Planning and Implementation: *June to November 2021*

Sorting, synthesis and report publication: *December 2021 to April 2022*



**A National Conversation  
on Research in Ireland**

***“Tell us your idea for what researchers in Ireland should explore to create a better future”***

## Factors for Success

- Easy idea submission process (limited data capture)
- Campaign was Minister led
- Advisory Forum (balancing research, society, government)
- Expert Panels (5 working groups, 70+ experts)
- Campaign Ambassadors and Gen Z Group
- Using the pulling power of our national Science Week
- Using every communication channel available
- Number of entries ≠ priority
- Integration into government priorities: Impact 2030



# The campaign's public engagement activities

Between July and the end of November 2021, the campaign reached out to engage people, businesses and communities across Ireland

Join Ireland's Biggest Brainstorm!

## Advertising and PR



TV, radio, press and social & digital advertising campaign supported by PR

## National Roadshow



National Roadshow travelling to all 26 counties

## Thematic Events



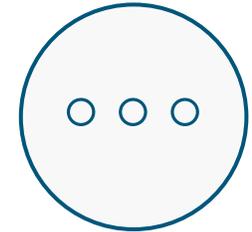
Thematic events with our campaign Ambassadors that engage the public

## Stakeholder Events



Stakeholder run events linked to and supported by the campaign that generate ideas

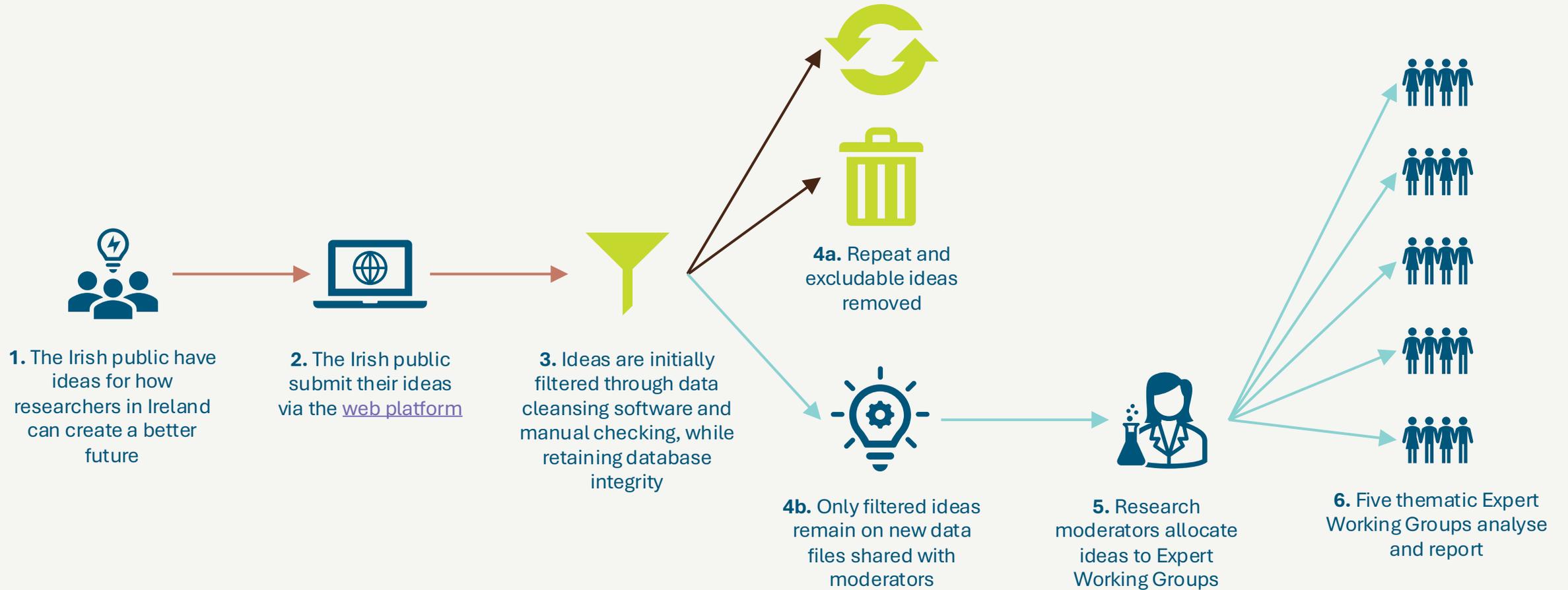
## Other Activities



Variety of other activities including outreach programme to schools



# Submission Moderation Process



## Challenges Encountered

- Expectation of public understanding of ‘research’
- Many areas of research not widely known
- Mediation can introduce bias
- Fewer events hosted by stakeholders than expected
- Challenge to engage the research community in the campaign
- Ideas vs concerns – one and the same?



# Maximising Participation & Inclusion

- Easy idea submission process (limited data capture)
- Roadshows to reach often underserved locations
- Connecting with communities through societal advisors
- Investment in communication channels
- Full reporting and sharing through [creatingourfuture.ie](http://creatingourfuture.ie)
- Campaign mindset: process, programme management, people



## Lasting Outcomes

- National Challenge Fund used the campaign results to inform teams' journeys
- Dissemination of collated areas of interest and overall campaign to key stakeholders
- 'Little Book of Irish Research'
- Touchpoints with new Evidence for Policy Unit within department
- Included in Impact 2030: Irish government's research and innovation strategy
- Continues to serve as a multi-purpose 'Book of Inspiration'



# Thank You

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**9 in 10 people in Ireland think that science and technology has a positive influence on society**

- EU Science & Technology Eurobarometer, 2025

- 85% believe scientists have a professional responsibility to talk about research findings with the public - *Science in Ireland Barometer, 2020*.
- Research Ireland invested €6.5M in STEM initiatives to engage the public in 2024.

## Maximising Participation & Inclusion

