Research for Public Policy

-Statement of Support

As Ireland moves towards a reopening of campuses and society in the coming months, it is vital that our government, political parties and policymakers have full access to the most up to date thinking and evidence on a range of policy issues as they work to create a successful and sustainable future for Irish society after an unprecedentedly difficult period.

The pandemic has demonstrated the immense resources and expertise within the Irish academic research base that can be drawn on for the public good to help understand a specific problem, anticipate future challenges and assist in the design of coping strategies appropriate for Ireland. This academic expertise has been built up in recent decades through the commitment of successive governments to investing in research and developing Ireland's research base.

Higher-education institutions are major research performers in Ireland, bringing together world-class expertise from the full range of disciplines in the natural and life sciences, engineering, computer sciences, arts, humanities, social sciences and medicine. This is a hugely significant resource for policymakers who seek to develop evidence-based policy options.

Future challenges facing Ireland arise not only from the post-COVID-19 pandemic landscape but also from shared global challenges such as climate change, food sustainability, access to increasingly scarce natural resources, demographic changes and global trade issues. Ireland's researchers are eager to respond to the information needs of policymakers and to work with them to ensure a supply of high quality, trusted, independent and verifiable evidence to help inform their thinking and decision-making.

A discussion paper launched today by the Royal Irish Academy and Irish Research Council entitled, *Research for Public Policy: an Outline Roadmap*, identifies a number of pathways by which this endeavour could be progressed. We, the endorsers of this statement, call on policymakers and government to work with us to identify the most suitable path forward and to work towards immediate progress in this area. We pledge our support and assistance, insofar as possible, to any positive steps forward in this regard.

In the interests of ensuring that Irish policy documents are based on the most up-to-date research available, we must bridge the gap that still exists between the research and policymaking communities so that people of Ireland benefit from policy decisions and directives that are derived from the very best knowledge and research available at all times. The endorsers of this statement are currently active in this area and wish to advise Government of their commitment and willingness to work together to ensure public policymakers have access to expert advice based on the most up-to-date research available at all times.

Research is a strategic national asset and a more engaged research-policy dialogue process will be of benefit to all parties. We encourage all relevant actors to come together to work on this area and to make Ireland a world leader in this regard.

Original report compiled by the Royal Irish Academy and Irish Research Council.
Endorsers of the Statement of Support are: Science Foundation Ireland, the Health Research Board, Technological Higher Education Association, Irish Humanities Alliance, Campus Engage and the Irish Universities Association.