

Impact Evaluation of the Commercialisation Fund

What our client wanted

The Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund is the main mechanism to support universities developing and delivering applied research projects. The Fund committed resources to the value of €144 million between 2003 and 2009 with the aim of producing spin outs and developing technology for license. Enterprise Ireland wanted to understand the impact and value for money of this investment to date, and what key process improvements would ensure the programme remains fit for purpose and deliver economic benefit for Ireland.

What Frontline did

Extensive engagement with participants including 69 principal investigators covering 223 funded projects, over 70 strategic and operational stakeholders and 41 companies that have either spun out or accessed a technology license through the Fund.

To understand the benefits, we developed a model that outlined the chain of benefits amongst the institutes and companies, and how realising those benefits could lead to economic impact for Ireland. A full impact assessment was completed in line with European Union best practice, including adjustments for additionality and optimism, as well as a full cost benefit analysis of the fund between 2003 and 2015.

What difference we made

Our work provided a robust evaluation of the Commercialisation Fund as well an assessment of the economic and wider benefits generated from direct investment in university research and its translation into the company base. This provided Enterprise Ireland with evidence and recommendations to reconfigure the Fund, in light of current policy priorities and reduced resources, to continue to deliver economic benefit for Ireland from a smaller funding pot.

What our client said

“Frontline’s fieldwork was comprehensive and the ensuing impact analysis was valuable and fed into recent policy developments. On the quantitative side, they used internationally reputable methods for deriving present and estimated future economic returns. At the same time, their analysis of the ‘softer’ issues was considered and perceptive.”

Jenny Melia, Manager Research & Technology Programmes Enterprise Ireland