Science Foundation Ireland: A Brief History

- Technology Foresight Report - April 1999
- Focus on ICT and Biotechnology
- SFI launched - July 2000
  funding from Dept of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
- SFI becomes statutory body, summer 2003
- Director General-Frank Gannon-summer 2007
- SSTI
Vision & Strategic Focus

Strategic investments in people, ideas & partnerships
- build outstanding research in Ireland

SFI will help build in Ireland research of globally recognised excellence & nationally significant economic importance
Funding Criteria

• Competitive research proposals
• Quality/Excellence – International Peer review
• Strategically important to Ireland
• BioSciences Directorate
• ICT Directorate
• Frontiers in Engineering and Science Directorate
SFI Funded Researchers

By 2005 SFI had received >800 applications for funding under ICT & BIO

Only ~80 were from female researchers or ~11%

Approx. 9% of SFI awards to date in ICT & BIO have been to female researchers

In SFI Research Frontiers Programme (2005) 698 applications were received

Only 136 were from female researchers or ~19.5%

Approx. 16% of the grants awarded were to female researchers
SFI and Women in Science

• The under-representation of women in science, engineering and technology threatens our global competitiveness.

• SFI’s mandate is to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of outstanding researchers in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) to support a knowledge-based economy (SSTI).

• Women represent the greatest untapped source of potential talent
SFI Programmes to Address the Under-Representation of Women in Irish Science
SFI Programmes to Address the Under-Representation of Women in Irish Science

SFI’s objective is to encourage & participate in the development of sustainable mechanisms & practices which will ensure that women have an equal opportunity to compete on the basis of their scientific expertise, knowledge and potential.

- PI Career Advancement Awards
- SFI Scholarship – Young Women in Engineering
- Institute Planning Grants & Development Awards
This programme supports women in research careers at every level and takes into account the different needs of women, and indeed any individual, who have interrupted their careers for maternity, adoptive, carers or parental leave.

10 Awards were made in Summer 2006. Awards were up to €200K per year direct costs for up to 3 years full-time or up to 4 years part-time.
PI Career Advancement Awards

5A. Full CV for Applicant to include a chronological description of the applicant’s career to date including periods of leave & 10 ten most significant publications

5B. Category of Application to include a description of current position & responsibilities or description of most recently held position & responsibilities (2 pages)

5C. Career Advancement of Applicant to include a description of how this award will advance the applicant’s career, how the host institution will support this application & career milestones that can be achieved post-award (2 pages)

5D. Complete Publication List for Applicant
PI Career Advancement Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Host</th>
<th>PhD Year</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. A Maguire</td>
<td>UCC</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Pharma-chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr MF Heaney</td>
<td>NUIM</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>RNA Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. S Draper</td>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr T Fair</td>
<td>UCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Animal Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr C Gardiner</td>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Autoimmune disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr L Bradley</td>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Nano-crystals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr O Belton</td>
<td>UCD</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Atherosclerosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr C Jefferyes</td>
<td>RCSI</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr D Laefer</td>
<td>UCD</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr G Boylan</td>
<td>UCC</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institute Planning Grants

The opportunity to conduct a self-assessment of women’s participation in science and engineering research activities and research management.

- To increase the number of women conducting successful, internationally competitive research.
- To improve the working environment and adapt to the needs of individuals conducting successful, internationally competitive research.
- To offer funding opportunities that help third level institutions attract and retain female researchers.
Institute Planning Grants

1. Cork Institute of Technology
2. Dublin Institute of Technology
3. Dundalk Institute of Technology
4. Institute of Technology Tallaght
5. Limerick Institute of Technology

1. Dublin City University
2. NUI Galway
3. Trinity College Dublin
4. University College Dublin
5. University College Cork
6. University of Limerick

10,000K, 11 awards in 2005
Institute Development Awards

The 12-month period of funding - provide the opportunity to establish **long-term sustainable initiatives** in this area.

Completion of a self-assessment as funded under the SFI Institute Planning Grant award was a prerequisite for application to the SFI Institute Development Award.

Awards up to €250,000 direct costs.
a new foundation for science
• **Targeted Research Fellowship and Scholarship Schemes**
• **Career Structures and Training**
• **Networks, Infrastructure and Resources**
• **Awareness and Recognition of Women in SET**
• **Institutional Change**
• **Monitoring of Progress**
• **Dissemination of Results**
• **Seed research funding scheme**
• Postgraduate scholarship scheme
• Professional development courses
• **Establishment of a mentoring scheme in UCC**
• Special Carer’s Research Leadership Allowance
• Establishment of WiSET webpages & UCC WiSET talent bank
• Improved awareness and recognition of women researchers in UCC
• **More balanced participation of women on UCC committees**
• Review of crèche operating policies
• Promotion of WiSET agenda within UCC
• Increased monitoring and evaluation of women’s participation in UCC activities
• Publication of WiSET report
• **Springboard Career Advancement Programme**
• Workshops on topics of interest to women in SE
• **Networking Opportunities**
• Local & International Speakers
• Baseline Gender Statistics
• **Policy & Procedure Review** – gender mainstreaming
• Gender Awareness Training
• Conference Summer 2007
Purpose:

To carry out a gender audit within University of Limerick
Comparing female SET researchers to their male counterparts:
- Starting salaries?
- Teaching & administrative loads?
- Research resources?
- Research activities (such as publication records, internal/external examination, participation in grants, membership of conference committees, nomination for research awards)?
- Recruitment and promotion, including gender balance on committees?
- In policies (such as promotions, grant applications) are career breaks such as carers’ leave, recognised?
This scheme aims to identify & encourage more high achieving second level female students into third level education in engineering and to support them during their undergraduate career.

The inaugural year of this Programme was launched in October 2005 at the start of the school year for the incoming class of 2006.

10 Awards in 2006

2007 awards will be announced in the next few weeks.
SFI Scholarship 2006 – Young Women in Engineering

SFI Scholars will receive:

• An annual award of €2,000
• A gift of a Dell Precision M20 notebook computer
• The assistance & support of an active researcher as a mentor for their undergraduate career
• At least one summer research-internship in an academic research laboratory or an industry R&D laboratory funded by SFI or industry

scholarship@sfi.ie