



RESEARCH & INNOVATION SCOTLAND Full Mission Statement

The Challenge

Scotland is a powerhouse for research and innovation¹ and this plays a key role in driving Scotland's economy and society while also providing the world class education needed to compete on a world stage and tackle global issues. Innovative research will underpin the thinking and technologies which promote and protect our health, wellbeing and environment, and which drive increasing productivity and sustainable economic growth.

However, the international competition is increasing, and the UK research environment and associated funding has been going through major changes; there is now wide recognition that larger, more ambitious, multi-institutional, cross-disciplinary, and well-integrated strategies with broad engagement are required²⁻⁵.

The Scottish Research Pools have pioneered new ways of creating critical mass by bridging institutional divides and sharing expert knowledge, facilities and advanced training across partners. Pools have continued to evolve this strategic cooperative approach over the past decade in order to respond to the changing research environment, and are now intensifying this by uniting under a shared vision, in response to the climate challenge and the colossal and far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our goal is to drive innovative and interdisciplinary research with a focus on economic recovery and societal benefit.

As societies become ever more complex and interconnected, they become increasingly vulnerable to pressures and shocks. Examples are evident in a diverse range of sectors and challenges, including our increasing dependence on information infrastructures, exposure to climate change, brittle food sources and chains, financial market crashes and, of course, pandemics. Research and Innovation is at the foundations of how we tackle these challenges and come out the other side more resilient, robust and adaptive.

Why pooling?

Research Pooling has proven to be an effective way of stimulating successful collaborations with strategic vision, shared facilities and resources, responding to current trends in research funding and allowing Scotland as a small, ambitious and well-connected country to match the best in the world in research and innovation.

'The Research Pooling Initiative (RPI) has built critical mass and research excellence in a number of disciplines important to Scotland's research base and continued global science leadership' (*Haithwaite Review 2019*⁵).

Whilst each Pooling organization varies in its specific objectives and strengths, Pooling has nurtured an unrivalled ethos of research excellence, advanced training and cooperation with



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increasing sophistication and effect over the last 15 years. This provides the structure, a platform and flexible combinations of research networks to match the current need for combining expertise and knowledge across disciplines and sharing expertise. Industry and policy require different approaches in different sectors; individual pools can share and extend best practise from different areas to allow coordinated multi-institutional responses to today's global challenges in support of government.

Pools have wide international reach via the large networks of researchers that they represent across their university partners which offers a conduit for promotion of Scottish research and innovation interests across the UK and internationally.

What we are doing?

The Research Pools continue their work across disciplines and sectors, but collectively we are coming together with a shared purpose, to intensify our efforts around research and innovation to support economic recovery and societal change. We will be working closely with our SFC-funded partners, the Scottish Innovation Centres, Interface and other industry facing organisations, over the next 12 months to facilitate interdisciplinary, transformative and ambitious research and development, which aims to directly tackle our most profound challenges. Aligned with the UN Sustainability goals and inspired by the UK's Roadmap for Research & Development and Benny Higgin's "Towards a Robust, Resilient wellbeing economy for Scotland".

How to get involved.

In our mission to stimulate synergy across the R&I ecosystem we are looking to promote and share multidisciplinary and cross-cutting activities by our affiliated partner organisations. Furthermore, into the future we will be developing an RIS programme of workshops, which deliver on our mission objectives and accumulate funding and resources from the RIS network to stimulate innovative and interdisciplinary research projects and activities. We will support these activities through the identification of relevant disciplines, scoping of challenges, provision of cross-pool contacts and access to networks, as well as resources for seeding activities as required.



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¹ SSAC: A Metrics-Based Assessment of Scotland's Science Landscape (2007-2016)

<https://www.scottishscience.org.uk/sites/default/files/article-attachments/Scotland%27s%20Science%20Landscape%20Main%20Report.pdf>

² UKRI Research and Innovation Roadmap 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-research-and-development-roadmap/uk-research-and-development-roadmap>

³ The Muscatelli Report: Driving Innovation in Scotland – A National Mission

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_700300_smx.pdf

⁴ Universities Scotland and SCDI shared mission to promote Scotland's inclusive economic growth.

<https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Business-and-Universities-common-cause-statement-2019.pdf>

⁵ Enabling Technologies in Scotland's Central Belt

<http://glasgoweconomicleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/GEL-SIA-summary-FINAL-201708.pdf>

⁵ Heathwaite Review of Scotland's Research Pooling Initiative

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/research/research-pooling/research-pooling-review.aspx>