

SFI Public Service Fellowship 2023

1. Name of Governmental Department or Agency
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
2. Title of the Project
SEAI2 Developing a research impact framework to support Ireland's energy research sector
3. Description of the Project
<p>Researchers, evaluators and research funding bodies are increasingly required to both describe and assess the impact of energy research related work. While specialised impact assessment studies exist, they can be difficult to replicate and may require resources and a skillset not readily available. While recognising the subjective and qualitative nature of impacts as they are perceived by different stakeholders in different times, places and cultures, a research impact framework is required to enable assessment of the significance and reach of both positive and negative effects of energy research.</p>
4. Project Scope
<p>The Fellow would be tasked with creating a Research Impact Framework for energy research, based in the Research and Technology Department of SEAI. This could be developed by identifying potential areas of energy research impact from the research impact assessment literature and based on research assessment criteria.</p> <p>A prototype of the framework would be used to guide an analysis of the impact of selected research projects funded by the SEAI National Energy Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) Funding Programme. The successful applicant could identify additional areas of impact in the process and interviewing researchers for feedback on which descriptive categories they thought were useful and valid in relation to the nature and impact of their work. This could aim to identify broad areas of impact that would be applicable across the broad range of energy research funded. It could also encompass detailed descriptions of categories of impact e.g., on policy / technological readiness / risk reduction / public understanding.</p> <p>The Research Impact Framework would provide prompts and descriptive categories that will assist researchers, evaluators and funding bodies to systematically identify a range of specific and verifiable impacts related to their work. The framework could also help researchers think through implementation strategies and identify unintended or harmful effects. The standardised structure of the framework would facilitate comparison of research impacts across projects and time, which is useful from analytical, management and assessment perspectives.</p>
5. Skills/Expertise Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PhD or equivalent in a relevant discipline • Expertise in research impact assessment and research communications

6. Expected Outputs of Project
<p>By conducting an extensive literature review, this research could aim to define, from an Irish energy research point of view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new definition of research impact and impact evaluation; • A typology of research impact evaluation designs; • A methodological framework to guide evaluations of the significance and reach of impact that can be attributed to research; • Conduct additional research activities relating to funded research in the energy sector which may be required to support SEAI in delivery of relevant activities.
7. Working Arrangements
<p>Fellows will be based in the Research and Policy Insights Directorate at SEAI, Three Park Place, Hatch St Upper, Dublin 2. A hybrid working arrangement is in place with SEAI staff in the office 2 days per week.</p>
8. Expected Timeline
<p>12 months full-time or 24 months part-time</p>
9. Contact Details