

# Irish PID strategy briefing: Researchers and research managers

There is ample evidence that researchers spend too much time on administrative tasks and too little on research, with some estimates suggesting that they can spend as little as 17% of their time actually doing<sup>1</sup>. Much of this administrative burden is due to a lack of automation, and a corresponding need for the same data to be manually entered multiple times. And it's not only researchers whose workload is impacted: research managers and administrators face similar challenges. As well as taking up valuable time that could otherwise be spent on research or analysis, this manual keying and rekeying of data risks the introduction (and replication) of errors, and hinders efforts to understand and support research and researchers.

To fix this problem, we need to streamline research administration – for everyone's benefit. Persistent Identifiers (often referred to as PIDs) are part of the solution. If widely adopted across research organisations and systems, they have the potential to make the entire research lifecycle more efficient and effective. PIDs are long-lasting digital references that provide both a unique label for, and a resolvable link to, an entity: a person (e.g. a researcher), place (e.g. their organisation), or thing (e.g. a grant, a research output, etc.). They are associated with descriptive information (metadata) such as author names and keywords, as well as links to other PIDs.

The Irish National Action Plan for Open Research calls for the development of “a national roadmap for the adoption of a range of Persistent Identifiers”<sup>2</sup>, and identifies four priority PIDs: DOIs for grants and research outputs (Crossref<sup>3</sup> and Datacite<sup>4</sup>); ORCID<sup>5</sup> for researchers and contributors to research; RAIDs<sup>6</sup> for research projects; and RORs<sup>7</sup> for research institutions, funders, and other organisations. Widespread adoption of these PIDs has the potential to bring significant benefits to Irish Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and researchers. Automated updates of the academic record for grants, outputs, and people are already making a demonstrable difference as shown by the Australian Research Council:

“

**“If I want to put in a grant now and include all of my research track record, it's sitting there and ready to reuse and is being continually updated. This saved me 3-4 days per grant application - the difference in workload was staggering!”<sup>8</sup>**

1 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/if-you-love-research-academia-may-not-be-you>

2 <https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/>

3 <https://www.crossref.org/>

4 <https://datacite.org/>

5 <https://orcid.org/>

6 <https://raid.org/>

7 <https://ror.org/>

8 Brown, J et al (2022). Incentives to invest in identifiers: A cost-benefit analysis of persistent identifiers in Australian research systems. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7100578>

Work to develop a national strategy for PID adoption in Ireland is being led by the National Open Research Forum (NORF)<sup>9</sup>, with support from MoreBrains Cooperative<sup>10</sup>. This includes the development of a cost benefit analysis for institutions in the Republic of Ireland, which found that “[a] conservative estimate of the potential savings from an 85% PID adoption level after five years...equates to more than 4,000 days of staff time each year”<sup>11</sup>.

Widespread adoption of PIDs through the national strategy will also support researchers and research managers in Ireland by:

- Providing trustworthy, interoperable connections between research management systems (including institutional repositories, grant management platforms, and publishing systems) which support automatic updates
- Streamlining the research evaluation process by storing and maintaining the data used for evaluation in ORCID records, from where it can be pulled directly when needed, reducing the need for manual data entry
- Embedding research activities, outputs, and outcomes into global discovery and analysis systems to make them findable and to enable recognition for contributions – at the individual, organisational, and national levels
- Supporting the transition to open research, including Ireland’s commitment to the FAIR principles, which require the use of PIDs and their metadata
- Improving the understanding and practice of reproducibility and the integrity of research

Realising these benefits will require a community effort across all Irish research stakeholder groups. Research managers and researchers can help by:

1. Encouraging and supporting the use of PIDs by researchers, in particular, registering for an ORCID and connecting it with their professional information, which can then be shared with hundreds of research systems
2. Backing up this support with training and incentives for using workflows that incorporate and reflect best PID practices wherever possible
3. Proactively engaging with user groups and other awareness-raising initiatives, with a particular focus on early career researchers

For more information see the NORF website: <https://norf.ie/pid-roadmap/>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC-BY).

<sup>9</sup> <https://norf.ie/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://morebrains.coop>

<sup>11</sup> Jones, P. et al (2024) Efficiency and insight: a cost-benefit analysis for a central service to support persistent identifier implementation in Ireland. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.nz80kt123>