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Recruitment blueprint

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was established in 2000 to beef up investments in the country's sagging infrastructure for research and development. Its stated goal was to bring in new talent — but would it succeed? With a budget of €646 million (US\$698 million) to spend between 2000 and 2006, the answer seemed obvious. But the first rounds of grants attracted criticism because much of the money went to researchers who were already based in Ireland (see *Naturejobs* 4–5; 21 March 2002).

A few years on, there are signs that the scheme may be paying off. One of the more promising results is the SFI-supported nanotechnology laboratory that opened at Dublin's Trinity College in January. This lab will receive €33 million from the SFI over five years, but more important than the money is the lab's composition.

John Pethica was recruited from the materials department at the University of Oxford, Suzi Jarvis relocated from the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Japan, and John Boland moved from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Those three, along with Michael Coey and Igor Shvets, who were already at Trinity before the SFI money came through, will lead a strongly international lab. The multidisciplinary team consists of 54 people from 19 countries on four continents.

That kind of recruitment is good news for other Irish labs seeking to follow suit, as Ireland is a country that has only relatively recently begun serious investment in R&D and doesn't have much of a tradition of recruiting internationally. The news must also be encouraging for other countries that hope they can fill their sparkling new facilities with researchers from abroad.

Paul Smaglik
Naturejobs editor



Contents

POSTDOCS AND STUDENTS

Visa trouble in the United States p96

MOVERS

Shuffles at the National Institutes of Health; personnel boost at the Stowers Institute; stem-cell research heads west; and more p98

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