



Programme of Work 2025

(for consideration at the NERI AGM on 20 November 2024)

Nevin Economic Research Institute

A. NERI Mission, working methods and resources

The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) is an all-Ireland research organisation funded by all trade unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It aims, through information gathering, analysis, policy recommendations and educational activities to inform and assist others in the achievement of a just, sustainable and equitable society on the island of Ireland.

The Institute is organised as a charitable company with a remit as approved by the founding trade unions and incorporated into its articles of association to:

- advance knowledge and understanding of economics and the social sciences, with particular reference to the economic and social conditions in or affecting the island of Ireland;
- undertake, to the benefit of the public, research and analysis on the impact of economic policy development and its effects towards the attainment of a more equitable and just society;
- publish and promote research findings in order to advance awareness and comprehension of economic theory;
- undertake activities to ensure a broad dissemination of the research and analysis; and
- provide education, training and capacity building programmes to increase understanding of economic and social science policy among the general public.

The Institute, through its Co-directors, is accountable to the Chair of the Institute's Governing Council concerning organisational and financial affairs. The Council is composed of representatives of all trade unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Co-directors and staff of the Institute develop the research work programme of the Institute. This is in consultation with the Chair and the Governing Council. Work published in the name of the Institute is the sole responsibility of the Co-directors of the Institute. A group of external reviewers assesses the research quality and policy and user-interest relevance of NERI research output.

The personnel resource of the NERI in November 2024 comprises:

- 2 Co-directors
- 1 Senior Economist
- 3 Economists
- 1 Administration Official

B. Key Research Themes

The NERI's work is developed around six key research themes and this programme sets out our proposed research priorities within each of them. The list represents the areas where we intend to instigate new work or to continue to develop existing research. It also includes areas where we contribute to debate and policy development as an institute.

- 1. Economic Development** – Focusing on developing the New Economic Model with ICTU and affiliates.
 - I. Completion of 4 key pillars for NEM and ongoing work to develop and disseminate the model with ICTU structures and affiliates as appropriate;
 - II. Economic Report on the Future of the Irish economies – delivered in the Summer as an NEM special;
 - III. Developing our analysis of productivity profiles within the foreign and domestic sectors in Ireland.
- 2. Employment and Job Quality** – Focusing on the development of the Working in Ireland Survey, North and South. Additionally, focusing on the role of Skills and Qualifications in determining employment outcomes.
 - I. Input into development of questionnaire and testing for survey and fieldwork;
 - II. Data cleaning and collation and preparation of datafile for research;
 - III. First findings report for Ireland, Northern Ireland and Island of Ireland;
 - IV. Trade Union Voice, insights from across the Island of Ireland and trend analysis with South;
 - V. Extending job quality analysis to all-island level;
 - VI. The role of higher education in social mobility in Ireland;
 - VII. The expansion of the third level sector in Ireland and labour market outcomes for graduates.
- 3. Taxes and the Welfare State** – Focussing on on-going Fiscal and Budget analysis North and South.
 - I. Economic Reports throughout the year dealing with key fiscal developments and a Budget special delivered in the Autumn;
 - II. Ireland's fiscal sustainability for the longer term;
 - III. Research highlighting the taxation contribution of Northern Ireland and the fiscal capacity of the NI Executive;
 - IV. Input into the process of developing the Northern Ireland Fiscal Framework, including analysis of public spending need.
- 4. Climate and the Just Transition** – Focusing on the institutional blockages to achieving a decarbonised economy.

- I. A comparison of emissions and policy pathways for the key sectors;
 - II. A Just net zero pathway for change for Energy systems.
- 5. Wages and Incomes** – Focusing on charting pay trends, price levels and living standards North and South.
- I. Research highlighting low pay and continuing collaboration with Real Living Wage campaigns North and South;
 - II. Ongoing support on pay guidance to individual unions and to ICTU committees.
- 6. Mapping the labour market** – focusing on constructing a geographical and industrial map of the Island of Ireland.
- I. Developing and launching an interactive section of NERI website that allows users to understand more about their area or industry in terms of key economic indicators;
 - II. Working with Northern Ireland Private Sector Committee to develop in depth profiles of key industries, including Financial Services and Manufacturing sub sectors.

C. Research Outputs

These are the main outputs through which we aim to disseminate our research.

- 1. Working Paper Series** - The primary output for NERI research in our thematic areas;
- 2. NERI Report Series** – Output that give an in-depth examination and interpretation of the main trends and events that impact our economy;
- 3. NERI Long-Read Series** – Outputs that explore different theories that underpin our thinking about our economy;
- 4. NERI In-Briefs and In-Focus Series** – Short-form outputs that provide quick accessible summaries of key policy issues and also our main research reports and working papers.

While reports and papers form the bedrock of our output, much of our work is also focussed on external presentations and engagements where the NERI seeks to have its work shared and understood by key policymakers and the wider research community.

D. Continuing professional development of NERI staff

- Review of researcher skills needs and development (including statistical methods, media, writing, presentations);
- Collaboration with Maynooth University on PhD programme;
- Review of administrative skills needs and development (e.g. media communication, event organisation, office management);

E. Funding applications

- The NERI will also be pursuing externally funded research opportunities relevant to the needs of the union movement. Our number of outputs in other areas of the work programme will be adjusted as necessary to reflect the research time spent on this externally funded research.