

Report for 2017 – Ireland and Northern Ireland

IUGS and IGCP Committee for Ireland and Northern Ireland

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There was expansion of activities at Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), which included recruitment of a cohort of new permanent professional staff for the first time in many years.

GSI completed airborne geophysical mapping of 50% of the country under the Tellus programme, with over 46,000 line kilometres flown in 2017.

GSI commissioned two new inshore survey vessels to work on the national marine mapping programme INFOMAR.

GSI also published a new study on The Economic Value of the Geoscience Sector in Ireland. Prepared by Indecon International Economic Consultants for the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) and GSI, the Economic Review puts a **value of €3.28 billion** on the overall economic impact of the sectoral outputs for 2016, across the areas of geotourism and geoheritage, groundwater, extractive industries, geoscience research and Geohazards. Indecon's analysis on these areas indicates that, in terms of gross value added (GVA) for 2016, Ireland's geoscience sector contributes to approximately over **€1,473 million** (overall economic impact). Employment (i.e. full-time equivalents – FTEs) figures calculated for the same year, across the same subsectors, comes to 15,110 directly employed, with a further 9,628 indirect and induced, giving a total of **24,739**.

On the Research front 2017 saw further development of the Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geoscience (iCRAG), which is supported by Science Foundation Ireland, the European Regional Development Fund and industry. The centre now comprises over 150 researchers across seven research institutions and collaborating with more than sixty partners from private sector and five state policy partners. In other research highlights the first ever incoming Geoscience Fulbright Scholarships were awarded, with US based geoscientists, backed by GSI, coming to Ireland for collaborative research linked to TCD and NUIG respectively. At year end two Irish geoscientists also participated in the International Ocean Discovery Programme (IODP), one of the world's largest and longest running geoscience endeavours, joining a research expedition off New Zealand on the US drill ship Joides Resolution, investigating submarine landslides.

In economic terms the Geoscience sector appears to be recovering with the general Irish economy, and the government backed business cluster Geoscience Ireland, published figures at year end showing creation of more than 350 jobs among its members in 2017, 276 of which were created by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the largest yearly growth since its inception in 2012.

In 2017 the [Geological Survey of Northern Ireland](#) (GSNI) celebrated its 70th anniversary. Over the year GSNI staff led, or took part in, a series of events and publications to highlight what we do and the benefits that this work brings to a number of sectors including the economy, infrastructure, environment, public and animal health, education and tourism.



GSNI 70th Anniversary Symposium. L–R: Dr Marie Cowan, Director of the GSNI, Professor John Ludden CBE, Executive Director of the BGS, Professor Sir Keith O'Nions, Chair of the BGS Board, Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary of the DfE, Koen Verbruggen, Director of the Geological Survey Ireland.

The organised events included:

1. Family fun day at the Ulster Museum as part of the NI Science Festival
2. Primary school workshops at Stormont as part of British Science Week
3. An exhibition stand and talk session at [NICS Live](#) which was fully booked with 1/3 of audience ranging Principal Officers to Senior Civil Servants from nine government depts.
4. the launch of our new walking guide '[Rambling on the Rocks](#)'
5. the opening of the GSNI Core Store to the public for the first time as part of European Heritage Open Days
6. Launching NI's first [Geodiversity Charter](#)
7. 70th Anniversary Symposium held at W5 Belfast; see abstract volume online [here](#)
8. Launched a '[Landscapes from Stone](#)' art, photography and map exhibition in W5 Belfast
9. Published a blog outlining [the potted history of GSNI](#)

GSNI produced a series of videos to illustrate the breadth, depth and impact of our work in the national interest which can be seen on [GSNI playlist](#) of the BGS YouTube channel. GSNI received a great deal of media coverage throughout the year including appearances on national evening news and in copious newspapers both in print and online. One of the highlights however was the broadcast of a 30-minute show covering the work of GSNI that was only aired last week so in case you missed it, you can watch it on [Focal Point Extra](#) on Northern Visions TV.

Over the course of the year, GSNI events were attended by thousands of people in total giving us the opportunity to reach a huge audience across all sectors. Each event was only made possible by working in partnership with all of our stakeholders, without whom GSNI would not be able to operate. We would like to thank everyone that either attended or took part in of our events and we're now looking forward to an even better 2018!