

Marine Institute of Ireland



Reducing paper, centralizing granting processes and sharing knowledge all key for the Marine Institute of Ireland.

At a Glance

The Marine Institute was an entirely paper-based operation. Microsoft Access was okay for doing basic reporting, but not much else. Reams of paper were routinely shipped for both the application and review process, making it difficult to adhere to due dates. Because they also track all marine-based activities in Ireland, they needed a solution that offered better reporting and tracking capabilities, and a less cumbersome application process. With SmartSimple Cloud, they were not only able to automate all their processes, they were empowered to do much of the configuration work themselves. Permissioned user portals and high level security meant they could provide the access every member of their community required for their work.

SmartSimple client since: 2009

Type of giving: Research Grants

Dollars managed: €6 million (approx. \$7.7 million USD)

Old system: Microsoft Access database management tool

SmartSimple product/services:

- [SmartSimple Cloud for Research Grants Management](#)

Key pain points:

- No external reporting capabilities
- Applications were difficult to navigate
- No online application or review process
- Too much paper

New system must-haves

- Extensive reporting functionality
- Including the ability to create ad-hoc reports
- Online application and review process
- Easy to access system from any computer

"We've noticed a massive reduction in the amount of paper we produce since we so rarely need to print anything anymore. Everything is stored right in the system; reports that we would have had to create manually are now quickly created right in our SmartSimple Cloud platform. Plus, all our reports can be easily exported to other programs or posted to our website."

Martina Maloney
Research Office



Marine Institute of Ireland is a SmartSimple Cloud user

Request a demo and learn more about SmartSimple Cloud for Research Grants Management at www.smartsimple.com

About The Marine Institute of Ireland

The Marine Institute was set up under the Marine Institute Act of 1991. Their mandate is to undertake, coordinate, promote, and assist in marine research and development. They provide services that encourage economic development, create employment, and protect the marine environment. The Marine Institute is the state agency responsible for marine research, technology development and innovation in Ireland. They carry out environmental, fisheries, and aquaculture surveys and monitoring programs to meet Ireland's national and international legal requirements, while safeguarding Ireland's unique marine heritage.

The inefficiencies of a paper-based process

The Marine Institute was entirely reliant on paper files for their application, review, and awarding processes. "It was an incredibly cumbersome process," says Martina Maloney, who works in the Research Office of the Marine Institute. "We did a massive amount of printing, especially for our evaluators. In reality, we only used our database for internal reporting. We desperately needed an automated solution.

"The other downside of using an entirely paper-based process for applications and reviews was that we were at the mercy of couriers and the postal services of different countries because our reviewers come from all over the world. It was hard for us to stick to firm due dates when we were dealing with packages that could have been picked up later than expected or took longer to deliver than anticipated."

The search for a centralized solution

In 2007, The Marine Institute decided to take a deep dive into finding a research grants management system that could meet all their needs. "We didn't just keep track of our own funding initiatives. Due to the nature of our mandate, we needed to be able to monitor and report on all marine research conducted by other agencies participating in marine-based activities, such as aquaculture, maritime shipping, seafood safety, fisheries, and ecosystems."

"We wanted a system that would manage every research grant submission we received from application to final reporting. Our goal was to find a solution that would address a range of functionality, while being easily accessible to all internal and external stakeholders."

With the help of an outside consultant, Martina's team did a detailed requirements review to figure out exactly what the Institute needed. "This was an important and valuable exercise for us, providing the opportunity to explore what exactly our processes were, what templates we were using, and what was required for both internal and external users. We wanted to be sure we knew exactly what we wanted a new system to accomplish."

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Martina Maloney
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A solution with something for everyone

"It was immediately clear after seeing SmartSimple demonstrate their system capabilities for us that this was the only platform that could meet our needs. We loved the fact we'd have the ability to do a lot of the configuration ourselves, and that SmartSimple Cloud could meet all our technical and functional requirements."

Martina, her team, and their consultant worked with the SmartSimple Implementation Team. "We got into a productive routine, using the time between meetings to our advantage by getting our notes and questions together. This ensured that when we had our weekly meetings with SmartSimple, we were making the most of our time together."

Once the Marine Institute's system was up and running, they also found SmartSimple's Community Support Team was a valuable resource whenever they needed help. "The ticketing system for Community Support Services is fantastic, and having the SmartSimple staff at the Dublin office available as an additional resource has been a huge asset."

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Sharing knowledge and promoting transparency

"As the central repository of marine knowledge for Ireland, SmartSimple Cloud has significantly reduced the amount of time we spend responding to information requests from the public. Thanks to SmartSimple Cloud, people can simply access what they need right from our website using permissions and security access we control."

"The SmartSimple Dublin team even helped us develop an engaging, interactive mapping feature for our website. This map offers visitors access to a tool that displays marine research being conducted in real time. It provides an additional level of transparency by identifying where our research grants are being used and what other marine research activities are going on all over Ireland, regardless of the funding program or agency. You can even follow the vessel and track grant-aided research surveys that have taken place on our research vessels, the R.V Celtic Explorer and R.V Celtic Voyager, and view a summary of the survey details."



"SmartSimple is constantly evolving. Their regular platform upgrades ensure that new features and functionality are continually being added. The adaptability of SmartSimple Cloud for Research Grants Management is definitely a major advantage for us. We now have immediate access to a massive amount of data at the click of a button. I would absolutely recommend SmartSimple Cloud to other research granting organizations." ●