

## Research Ireland – Wales Innovation Network

### Research Alliance Award – Ireland and Wales 2024

## Call for Submission of Proposals

#### Key Dates

**Call launch:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

#### **Terms of Reference**

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## 1 Introduction

Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”) is the national research and innovation funding agency which was established on 1 August 2024. Research Ireland amalgamates the activities of the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland.

Wales Innovation Network (“WIN”) is a part of Universities Wales; it is a collaborative initiative set up to strengthen research and innovation in Wales<sup>1</sup>.

Ireland and Wales have a strong history of collaborating on research and innovation projects. The Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-25<sup>2</sup>, authored and agreed jointly with the Welsh Government, comprises a statement and action plan of our high-level political commitment for cooperation including Education and Research. Furthermore, Pillar Five of Impact 2030<sup>3</sup> states the importance of strong all-island, European and global R&I collaborations. Along with participation in Horizon Europe and similar EU Programmes, Pillar Five expresses the need to forge global strategic relations that are based on complementary priorities and values, and references the United Kingdom as a particularly strong and valued collaborator.

As such, Research Ireland and the Wales Innovation Network (WIN) have entered an agreement that aims to support the strategic aims of both governments. The Research Alliance Award is a **supplementary fund to active Research Ireland grants** that provides grant holders with seed funding with the aim of developing competitive cross-border bids for Horizon Europe grant applications through supporting collaborations between researchers in Ireland (IE) and Wales.

<sup>1</sup> [Wales Innovation Network | Universities Wales \(uniswales.ac.uk\)](https://www.uniswales.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [gov.ie - Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-25 \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)

<sup>3</sup> [gov.ie - Impact 2030: Ireland’s Research and Innovation Strategy \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)

## Objectives of the Research Alliance Award

- To identify and promote opportunities for academic and student collaboration, mobility and exchange that will lead to competitive joint grant applications to Horizon Europe.
- To facilitate and support academic collaboration events / workshops in both countries which explore options to maintain the strong links between academia and business.
- To contribute to ongoing wider discussions on supporting closer, focused engagement between Welsh and Irish Universities.

Research Ireland will act as the lead agency on the applications. A single joint proposal from applicants in both countries will be submitted to Research Ireland. If successful, Wales-based research groups will be funded by WIN and Ireland-based research groups will be funded by Research Ireland. Multiple applications may be submitted from a Research Body; however, individuals may only be the project lead on one application.

## Research Ireland Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Research Ireland is committed to building equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector. The Agency recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, Research Ireland aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

In Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028<sup>4</sup>, increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities<sup>5</sup> in Applicant Teams are key objectives. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme. Further details on Research Ireland's data on application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found on the Research Ireland website.<sup>6</sup>

Gender data fields on Research Ireland's Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, have been expanded to encompass more inclusive gender identifiers. These expanded gender identifier fields support those objectives described in Research Ireland's External EDI Strategy, which aims to be a key driver of an inclusive research culture, lead in minimising barriers to participation in the research endeavour and ensure that its investment reflects the input of researchers that are representative of society, and thus the outputs are relevant to society. Gender data gathered will inform the diversity of the applicant group. It will help to inform future iterations of this and similar programme calls. The data gathered will also inform how we can best improve the representation of other Historically Underserved Communities, including individuals from underrepresented genders, in our portfolio of grants awarded.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/SFI-External-Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2023-2028.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this Strategy, Historically Underserved Community encompasses a broad and diverse range of historically marginalised groups including but not limited to the nine protected grounds established in the [Equal Status Acts 2000-2018](#) and socioeconomic status.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

## **SAN FRANCISCO DECLARATION ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT (DORA)**

Research Ireland is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)<sup>7</sup> and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. Research Ireland has reinforced its commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member<sup>8</sup>. To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and Research Ireland is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030 and a signatory of Plan S<sup>9</sup>, Research Ireland will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. Research Ireland is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030<sup>10</sup>. To complement these activities and further reinforce Research Ireland's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, Research Ireland is a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment<sup>11</sup> and is a member of the coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)<sup>12</sup>.

## **2 Programme Details**

### **2.1 Funding**

Applicants can apply for up to €60,000 direct costs (50% funded by Research Ireland to the Ireland-based Research Body, 50% funded by Universities Wales/WIN to the Wales-based Research Body). Grants will be issued for a minimum period of three months to a maximum period of one year. Details on eligible costs can be found in Section 3.5.

### **2.2 Programme Remit**

Submissions must be aligned to the remits of both Research Ireland and WIN. With respect to Research Ireland, this includes the funding of research and innovation in all fields of activity and disciplines (STEM plus AHSS). WIN facilitates collaboration across universities in Wales, harnessing the diversity of research and innovation in Wales to create economic and societal impact for this and future generations. WIN supports applications to Research Alliance Awards across all fields of activity and disciplines.

### **2.3 State Aid and Research Ireland Grant Funding**

As per Research Ireland's grant conditions (inclusive of Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland's Grant General Terms & Conditions, as specified<sup>13</sup>, Letters of Offer and Research Ireland Policy documents<sup>14</sup>), all Research Ireland funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

<sup>8</sup> Contributor level membership.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022\\_07\\_19\\_rra\\_agreement\\_final.pdf](https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://coara.eu/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/>

<sup>15</sup> [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS \(europa.eu\)](#)

Namely, research activities undertaken as part of a grant awarded under the Research Alliance Award, and agreed to subject to Research Ireland’s grant conditions, must be “non-economic” in nature and be designed to ensure that any funding received does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid.

Where recipients of grant funding engage with an ‘undertaking’<sup>16</sup> or industry party, under the Research Ireland Research Alliance Award they are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” as per the Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (2022/C 414/01). For further guidelines please see [State aid guidance](#)<sup>17</sup>.

## **2.4 Eligibility Criteria**

### **2.4.1 Eligibility of the Research Bodies**

- The Research Body of the Project Lead is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by funding from Research Ireland
- Ireland – A list of eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland can be found on the Research Ireland website.
- Wales – eligible institutions in Wales must be members of Universities Wales<sup>18</sup>.

### **2.4.2 Eligibility of Project Lead and Project Co-Lead**

- The Project Lead must be a Principal Investigator on an active Research Ireland award. The following awards are NOT eligible to apply
  - Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme
  - Research Ireland Discover Programme
  - Research Ireland Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme
  - Research Ireland Ulysses Programme
  - Research Ireland New Foundations Programme
  - Research Ireland Dorothy COFUND Programme
  - Research Ireland Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate)
  - Research Ireland Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postdoctoral)
  - Research Ireland Employment-Based Programme (Postgraduate)
  - Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme
  - Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme
- The end date on the Research Alliance proposal must not surpass the end date of the underlying, active award.
- PhD students, masters’ students, post-doctoral researchers, and research assistants/associates may not act as the Project Lead or Co-Lead on an application.

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<sup>16</sup> The concept of an “undertaking” under EU competition law rules is an entity that is engaged in an “economic activity” regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed. An activity is economic in nature when it involves offering goods or services on a market.

<sup>17</sup> [State aid](#) Guidance

<sup>18</sup> <https://uniswales.ac.uk/about>

- The Project Lead must be hosted at an eligible Research Body within Ireland<sup>19</sup>.
- The Project Lead must be eligible to apply for Horizon Europe funding.
- The Project Lead will submit the proposal to Research Ireland.
- The Co-Lead on the application must be hosted at a university that is a member of Universities Wales<sup>20</sup>.
- The Project Co-Lead must be eligible to apply for Horizon Europe (EU framework programme) funding.

### 3 Application Procedure

#### 3.1 Proposal Submission

Completed applications will be accepted by email only to the following address: [raa@researchireland.ie](mailto:raa@researchireland.ie).

A single joint proposal must be submitted to Research Ireland by the Project Lead/ holder of the Research Ireland parent award by 31st January 2025, 13:00 local Dublin time. **An application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission, regardless of the date of submission.**

##### Proposal submission requirements:

- Proposals should be submitted as one PDF document.
- All text should be provided in Calibri font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single line spacing as well as minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text and diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section. Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review.

Please note that all proposal documentation will be shared with WIN.

#### 3.2 Proposal Cover Sheet

Please complete the cover sheet as shown in Appendix A. A downloadable template can be found on the programme webpage<sup>21,22</sup>.

#### 3.3 Research Collaboration Plan

The main body of the proposal should comprise the **Research Collaboration Plan (3-5 pages)**. The Research Collaboration Plan should:

1. Describe the topic and research area to be supported and its importance for Europe's economy and/or society.
2. Outline the project team describing each partners' strengths.

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<sup>19</sup> [Policies - Research Ireland](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Universities | Universities Wales \(uniswales.ac.uk\)](#)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/research-alliance-award/>

3. Identify and describe in detail the eventual goal for this collaboration and the Horizon Europe or other European programme being targeted.

Teams supported through this award may use the funding to organise activities that help stimulate the formation of Ireland-Wales teams and formulate the ideas and research plans to be presented in a potential Horizon Europe Funding proposal. Examples of activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Organising exchange visits, meetings and joint activities to strengthen and expand collaborative partnerships.
- Developing collaboration models and ways-of-working, including with non-academic partners, to support future funding bids. Market assessments or similar types of activities to strengthen their case for future funding bids.
- Preparing outputs, such as joint research papers, to demonstrate existing collaborative activity.
- Materials and consumable costs to gather preliminary data to strengthen future bids.

**Reference to indicators/metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these indicators/metrics are included, the applicant's proposal will redacted prior to review. For further information and guidance, please see the Narrative CVs and DORA webpage<sup>23</sup>.**

### 3.4 Budget

Applicants can request up to maximum total budget of €60,000 direct costs (50% funded by Research Ireland to the Ireland-based research programme, 50% funded by Universities Wales to the Wales-based research programme). Welsh applicants should align their requested amount (£) as close as possible to **50% of the total budget** using the exchange rate at date of submission.

#### 3.4.1 Proposed Budget (1 page budget table each for Ireland and Wales)

Please complete budget as per templates shown in Appendix B and Appendix C.

#### 3.4.2 Budget Justification (2 pages each for Ireland and Wales)

All information required to complete the Budget Justification can be found in Section 7 of the **Grant Budget Policy (GBP)**<sup>24</sup>.

Applicants should demonstrate in detail how their proposed budget will be allocated. Eligible costs include:

- Materials & consumables expenses where justified.
- Access charges for the use of large items of infrastructure or test-bed facilities may be requested in certain situations; see the Research Ireland GBP for details. These costs should be included in the materials/consumables section of the budget.
- Justifiable travel costs.
- Organisation of relevant networking events/workshops.
- The Welsh co-Lead may claim allocated staff time where buyout is required for the delivery of the grant.

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<sup>23</sup> [Narrative CVs and DORA](#)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

### 3.4.3 Budget Details for Irish partner

In addition to direct costs, Research Ireland also makes an indirect or overhead contribution to the host Irish Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Irish Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting Research Ireland-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. General overheads should not be included in the requested budget and are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting Research Ireland -funded research programmes.

Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, equipment, materials and travel. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs requested from Research Ireland. All grants are made directly to the Lead Applicant's Research Body. Please also refer to the Research Ireland Grant Terms and Conditions<sup>25</sup> and also the latest Grant Budget Policy.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.4.4 Budget Details for Welsh partner

Applicants must include the total direct costs for the WIN component of the research programme in the project-partner contributions section of the application. A corresponding description must be included in the resources and budget justification section as part of the joint application. In addition, WIN co-applicants are requested to submit a detailed budget using the WIN consolidated budget spreadsheet (available on the WIN website) as well as a detailed budget justification (up to two sides of A4) which clearly explains the request for each item listed in the budget in terms of the planned research programme. A maximum request of €30,000 in direct costs for durations of 12 months will apply to the Wales budget. Please adhere to the relevant sections of WIN Grant Budget Policy in the preparation of the budget and budget justification. The lead Welsh institution can claim overhead costs equal to 25% of direct costs e.g. if the Welsh element of the application is for €30,000, then an additional €7,500 can be claimed for overheads.

## 4 Review Process

All eligible proposals will be evaluated by an internal committee comprising members from Research Ireland and WIN. Proposals will be evaluated using the following questions:

1. Does the application adequately articulate the research topic to be addressed through this partnership?
2. Has the application clearly identified the aim of this collaborative support? For example:
  - a. what Horizon Europe programme has been identified?
  - b. what issue of European importance will be identified and ultimately tackled?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organised, and based on a sound rationale?
4. Is the requested budget clear and well justified?

A Yes/No answer will be provided and if all answers are Yes and there is a consensus agreement between both Research Ireland and WIN, the proposal will be deemed fundable.

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<sup>25</sup> [Research-Ireland-Grant-GTCs.pdf](#)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>



Where more eligible applications are received than funding available, a lottery/randomised number process will be implemented to provide a ranked list. The independent chair will oversee the randomisation process

## 5 Award Management

### 5.1 Reporting requirements

All Research Ireland grant holders are required to report on outputs and impacts arising from their research programme for the duration of their award and for up to five years after the award end (close) date.

The progress reporting requirements for grants made under the Research Alliance Award include the completion of an Annual Report and Research Ireland Research Outputs (formerly referred to as the SFI Census). The annual report is used to monitor the progress of individual grants against the overall objectives. Activities carried out in line with the objectives of this award (as detailed above) should be captured in the annual report, along with any other significant activities, including those that are aligned to a Horizon Europe funding bid.

### 5.2 Research Ireland's Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with Research Ireland's grant conditions, which are inclusive of those outlined in the Letter of Offer and Research Ireland's Grant General Terms & Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with Research Ireland policies/positions<sup>27</sup> and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any Research Ireland programme and in conducting their programme of research. All team members should be appraised of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time.

## 6 Proposal Checklist

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
Proposal Cover Sheet	1 page
Confirmation of Eligibility to apply for Horizon Europe funding (PIC if applicable)	Answer on cover sheet
Research Collaboration Plan	3-5 pages max
Budget Table IE	1 page max, see template <sup>28</sup>
Budget Justification IE	2 pages max (refer to Section 3.1)
Budget Table WIN	1 page max, see template <sup>29</sup>
Budget Justification WIN	2 pages max (refer to Section 3.1)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/research-alliance-award/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://uniswales.ac.uk/new-research-alliance-award-fosters-collaboration-between-wales-and-ireland>

## APPENDIX A – PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

PROGRAMME NAME: <b>Research Ireland – Wales Innovation Network   Research Alliance Award</b>	
PARENT AWARD PROPOSAL ID AND END DATE (RESEARCH IRELAND):	
TITLE OF COLLABORATION PROPOSAL (max. 150 characters):	
FULL NAME OF RESEARCH IRELAND PROJECT LEAD:	HOST INSTITUTION:
FULL NAME OF WIN CO-LEAD:	HOST INSTITUTION:
% RESEARCH IRELAND LEAD COMMITMENT:	% WIN CO-LEAD COMMITMENT:
TOTAL REQUESTED RESEARCH IRELAND BUDGET (€):	TOTAL REQUESTED WIN BUDGET (€):*
TOTAL JOINT BUDGET (€):	
REQUESTED STARTING DATE:	PROPOSED DURATION (3-12 MONTHS):
PROJECT LEAD ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR HORIZON EUROPE FUNDING? (Y/N) INCLUDE PIC NUMBER IF APPLICABLE	

<p><b>Signatures below confirm acceptance and agreement with the Research Ireland grants and awards Terms and Conditions, and that the institution ensures the applicant meets eligibility requirements, and that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland, and no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and all details provided are correct.</b></p>
<p><b>INSTITUTIONAL SIGNATORY AUTHORITY (IRISH LEAD INSTITUTION ONLY)</b></p> <p><b>Name:</b></p> <p><b>Position:</b></p> <p><b>Email:</b></p> <p><b>Signed:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>

\*Please use the amount in € using the exchange rate at date of submission.

## APPENDIX B – IRELAND BUDGET TABLE (Project Lead)



### Research Alliance Award Budget template (ROI)

**Research Ireland Project Lead**   
**WIN Project Co-Lead**   
**Anticipated start date** 
**Duration**  (3-12 months)

Please refer to the programme call documentation guidance and the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy in the preparation of this budget.

Cost items	Amount (€)	Total (€)
Materials and Consumables	0	0
Travel	0	0
<b>Total (Direct)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

#### MATERIALS AND CONSUMABLES

Description	Amount (€)	Total (€)
		0
		0
		0
		0
		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

#### TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE

Description	Amount (€)	Total (€)
		0
		0
		0
		0
		0
		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## APPENDIX C – Wales BUDGET (Project Co-Lead)



### Research Ireland / WIN - Research Alliance Award 2024

<b>Breakdown of Expenditure - WIN Funding</b>
<p>Research Ireland - WIN <b>Research Alliance Awards</b> are provided to Irish and Welsh universities to support opportunities for collaboration, mobility and exchange that will lead to a competitive joint grant applications to Horizon Europe. The maximum grant request is €80k. 50% of any grant awarded will be provided by WIN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh university partner(s) will receive 50% of the total grant awarded to any project via WIN. A breakdown of expenditure must be submitted and approved by WIN for the use of this funding using the table below.</li> <li>• Please refer to the guidance document for conditions of grant and eligible costs.</li> </ul>

Item /Activity	Details	Cost £
<i>Outline the items/ activity that will be funded through the WIN element of funding e.g. T&amp;S, consumables, staff buy-out, other resource costs etc; provide justification for the costs and how they support the partnership building and future Horizon bid development; total predicted costs for each element.</i>		
Item /Activity 1		£500
Item /Activity 2		£2,000
Item Activity 3		
etc.....		
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,500</b>