Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme 2025

Call for Submission of Proposals

Terms of Reference

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During the application process or at any time following the termination of the application process and decision, Research Ireland may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team concerning funding opportunities, Research Ireland activities or any events, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation including but not limited to collecting scientific data and data related to the applications process. Research Ireland may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

1   Introduction

Research Ireland, established in August 2024 through the amalgamation of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC), funds excellent and impactful research and talent across all disciplines. The Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme seeks to fund equipment, facilities, and resources that will enable Ireland to address major societal challenges, advance knowledge creation, and maintain competitiveness in a global research environment.

The Infrastructure Programme supports the research community in building and sustaining essential resources to conduct high-quality, innovative research across all disciplines. This programme recognises that robust research infrastructure is fundamental to advancing knowledge that contributes to Ireland's cultural, social, environmental and economic development. Research Ireland encourages the efficient use, renewal and development of existing infrastructure while also advocating for continued investment in state-of-the-art facilities and resources across diverse research areas of importance. The Infrastructure Programme aims to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and ensure all researchers have access to the resources necessary for excellence in their respective fields.

Applications to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme 2025 call will support significant infrastructure investments across all disciplines within Research Ireland's remit. The programme welcomes proposals for substantial resources that enhance research capabilities in diverse fields, recognising the different infrastructure requirements of various research traditions. This inclusive approach ensures that researchers based in Ireland have equal opportunity to access appropriate infrastructure for conducting excellent research that contributes to the national knowledge base and addresses contemporary challenges.

Objectives of the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme

Primary Objectives

- To provide Ireland's researchers with access to cutting-edge infrastructure that enhances high-quality research activities and innovation across all disciplines
- To facilitate broad usage across Ireland and to foster partnerships and collaboration between diverse research communities; for example, between Universities, Technological Universities, Institutes of Technology, other Eligible Research Bodies, researchers in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and between and among STEM and AHSS researchers in Ireland
- To optimise utilisation and promote long-term sustainability of infrastructure through the development of robust management and access charge plans

Supporting Objectives

- To establish Ireland as an attractive destination for the recruitment of world-leading academics
- To deliver outstanding infrastructure that enables Ireland's researchers to compete successfully in funding calls coordinated through Horizon Europe and future European Framework Programmes
- To encourage research partnerships with industry through collaborative initiatives that facilitate industry access to infrastructure
- To support the strategic development and growth of the Research Ireland Centres

- To fund infrastructure that supports green transition initiatives and prioritises environmental sustainability
- To advance national and European Open Science policies and principles and ensure access to an effective digital infrastructure ecosystem

In line with the objectives of the programme, the following important aspects should be considered and included in the proposal where relevant:

Partnerships

The demonstration of effective partnerships, sustainable planning and intra- and inter-institutional collaborations to ensure maximal usage of infrastructure is a key element of the 2025 Infrastructure Programme call. The following applications are strongly encouraged:

- Applications where the Lead Applicant is a Principal Investigator (PI) at an Institute of Technology (IoT) or Technological University (TU)
- Applications that include collaborations with IoTs/TUs
- Applications containing "All-Ireland" collaborations that drive partnerships with Research Bodies in Northern Ireland
- Applications that foster interdisciplinary collaboration, including those between and among STEM and AHSS researchers

Industry Participation

Research Ireland-funded Infrastructure grants may involve usage by, or partnership with, industry leading to innovative ideas or products with scientific and/or commercial impact. While Research Ireland encourages these activities, they are required to comply with access charge plan guidance and [State aid rules](#).

International Programmes

Investments arising from this programme call may enable researchers in Ireland to participate in other national and international infrastructural or research programmes, including future schemes supported through Horizon Europe and subsequent European Framework Programmes. Membership or links with other relevant Infrastructure consortia are encouraged, including European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs).

Driving Recruitment

Investments arising from this programme call may act as a key driver in the recruitment of world-leading academics across all disciplines. Applicants should consider and include in the proposal how the requested infrastructure may facilitate such recruitment and retention of talented researchers.

Open Research Infrastructure

Requested infrastructure may address the increasing challenges of data-driven research and advance the vision of European Open Research to align with emerging European policies, principles and funding agency requirements. Innovative approaches for the promotion of open data and open access of datasets, libraries, publications and other outputs are encouraged.

Access Charge Plans

The development of appropriate and auditable access charge plans is an important element of applications to this call. Effective access charge plans will strengthen the future sustainability of funded infrastructure and will maximise utility and impact within the academic and industrial research community.

Environmental Sustainability

For the 2025 call, there is an increased focus on environmental sustainability. Applicants must provide a detailed account of the environmental impact of managing the infrastructure throughout its lifecycle, from installation to end-of-life. Applications should outline steps to ensure environmentally sustainable procurement practices and operational strategies that minimise environmental footprint.

Co-Funding Partnerships

The 2025 Infrastructure Programme call involves the participation of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) as a co-funding partner, with a focus on research topics that align with SEAI's research objectives, including wind energy, smart buildings, decarbonising heat, smart grids, transport, offshore/ocean, energy efficiency, and emerging technologies.

Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) Principles

Research Ireland is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)[1] 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.[2] 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 indicators/metrics and research performance-based indicators/metrics such as impact factors and the H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030[3] and a signatory of Plan S,[4] Research Ireland will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. 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[5] and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).[6]

Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028

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

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[1] https://sfdora.org/read/
[2] Contributor level membership
[3] National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum (norf.ie)
[4] https://www.coalition-s.org/
[5] https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf
[6] https://coara.eu/

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,[7] increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities[8] 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 application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found for historic programmes on the Research Ireland website.[9]

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.

Furthermore, as part of its EDI Strategy, Research Ireland also aims to increase awareness of the sex and gender dimension in research, by requesting that researchers demonstrate that they have considered any potential biological sex and/or socio-cultural gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

1.1   Expression of Interest (EOI) and Proposal Checklist

This EOI and proposal checklist is provided as a summary guide for applicants. However, please read this entire call document carefully as full details on completing applications to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme are provided in Sections 2 to 7 below.

EOI Checklist		
Section	Description	Requirements
Proposal Title	Indicate name of infrastructure item requested	30 words
Lead Research Body	Include name of Research Body	Mandatory
Collaborating Research Bodies	Include name of collaborating Research Bodies and the associated PI/ research groups	
Item Requested	Name of item requested	Mandatory

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[7] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[8] 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.
[9] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/

Lead Applicant	Name of one key investigator who will be responsible for the item requested and their email address	Mandatory
Details of grants held by the Lead Applicant	Title and code of grant (Research Ireland or non-Research Ireland)	Mandatory
Research Keywords	List keywords that describe the requested research infrastructure	15 keywords
Estimated total cost	€ (incl. VAT, delivery and associated costs)	Mandatory
Total request to Research Ireland	€	Mandatory
% cost share (cash)		Mandatory
Total cash cost share amount	€	Mandatory
Infrastructure Bids Currently Under Review	Include grant code and expected decision date or state n/a	
Distributed Infrastructure	Yes or No	Mandatory
Infrastructure Location and Implementation Plan	e.g., Department, Institute, etc. In the event of distributed infrastructure, please indicate the locations of all items and provide a brief infrastructure installation implementation plan	Mandatory 300 words
Lay Abstract	Summary of requested infrastructure in non-technical language	150 words
Scientific Abstract	Technical details on infrastructure	250 words
Statement on Strategic National Importance of Proposed Research Infrastructure	Describe proposed research infrastructure alignment with your institution's strategic research priorities and enhances its research capabilities and the potential impact of the infrastructure	250 words

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST		
SECTION	**DESCRIPTION**	**REQUIREMENTS**
Proposal Summary	Proposal Title	Up to 30 words
	Duration	Max. 12 months
	Total Infrastructure Cost including cost share (it should not be less than €550,000)	

	Total Funding Request Amount (€)	
Resubmission	Resubmission statement (if relevant)	Max. 1000 words
Research Alignment	Justification of alignment with Research Ireland's Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
Lead Applicant Details	Complete Mandatory SESAME Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Research Funding History	Enter details
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific Abstract	Max. 250 words
	Lay Abstract	Max. 150 words
Programme Documents (SESAME uploads)	Detailed Description of Infrastructure Request	Max. 2 pages
	Detailed Description of Key Users	Max. 3 pages
	Detailed Description of Strategic Impact	Max. 2 pages
	Management and Sustainability Plan	Max. 2 page
	Environmental Impact Statement	Max. 1 page
	Infrastructure Implementation Plan	Max. 2 page
	Data Management Plan	Max. 2 page
	Access Charge Plan	Max. 1 page per infrastructure item where multiple items constitute infrastructure Template optional
Letters of Support	Lead Research Body (where applicant is based)	Mandatory; max. 2 pages
	Collaborators from other Research Bodies	Max. 9 Collaborators in total per application; max. 2 pages each
	Other collaborators such as industry, researchers in Northern Ireland, European Consortia	Optional; max. 2 pages each
Vendor Quotes	Include quote numbers and full costs for all individual items requested	Minimum 2 vendor quotes and 20 pages in total; Upload as single PDF
Budget	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table in SESAME
	Upload Proposed Budget (template provided)	Max. 2 page
	Upload Budget Justification	Max. 1 page
	Green Procurement Plan	Max. 1 page

2   Programme Details

2.1   Programme Remit

Research Ireland has a statutory duty to support research excellence and talent across all disciplines spanning the AHSS and STEM fields. This expanded remit represents a significant evolution, establishing Research Ireland as a unified agency that can fund across the full spectrum of research endeavour—from curiosity-driven research that generates new knowledge to applied research that seeks to develop solutions and innovations.

Infrastructure applications are invited from all disciplines within Research Ireland's remit. The 2025 Infrastructure Programme will consider proposals that demonstrate excellence in any research area that falls within Research Ireland's legal remit, where applicants can provide compelling evidence for significant potential economic and/or societal impact.

Applications should aim to address the wider infrastructural needs of Ireland's research community and demonstrate how the proposed infrastructure would foster research excellence, talent development, and innovation for transformative impact.

When developing proposals, applicants should consider the interdisciplinary potential of their infrastructure and how it might support diverse research communities. Research Ireland particularly welcomes infrastructure proposals that demonstrate the potential to bridge traditional disciplinary boundaries and that will serve as national assets for the benefit of the wider research ecosystem.

2.2   Co-Funding Partnerships

The Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme includes a co-funding partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).[10] This partnership is based on alignments to research topics that are of particular significance to SEAI's research objectives (see table below). Following the submission of proposals, Research Ireland will reach agreement with SEAI on which proposals may be supported through the partnership. All applications that potentially align to the research topics outlined by SEAI in the table below will be considered for support under the partnership. There is no requirement for applicants to indicate specifically that funding through the partnership is sought; all applications will be assessed under the same peer-review criteria, regardless of any alignment to SEAI's research objectives.

	SEAI is Ireland's national sustainable energy authority. SEAI will be central to bringing about a low-carbon economy through measures and activities focused on the transition to a smarter and more sustainable energy future. The partnership between SEAI and Research Ireland aims to support excellent scientific research that will contribute to Ireland's transition to a clean and secure energy future, aligning with research topics that are of particular relevance to SEAI: • Wind energy

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[10] https://www.seai.ie/

	• Smart buildings
seai SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND	• Decarbonising heat
	• Smart grids
	• Transport
	• Offshore/Ocean
	• Energy efficiency
	• Emerging technologies

By submitting an application to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme, the applicant and Research Body is accepting that Research Ireland has the right to share information (including the application and any post-award reports submitted to Research Ireland) with existing and potential co-funding partners, on a confidential basis, without the need to obtain any further consents from such applicants.

2.3   State Aid and Research Ireland Grant Funding

As per Research Ireland's Grant Conditions (inclusive of Research Ireland's General Terms & Conditions,[11] Letters of Offer and Research Ireland policy documents),[12] 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).[13]

Namely, activities undertaken as part of a grant awarded under the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme, and agreed to subject to Research Ireland's Grant Conditions, must be primarily "non-economic" in nature in accordance with Section 2 of the **2022 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01)** (the "**Framework**"). [14]

In particular, and by way of example, when Research Ireland awards a grant under this call, it is on the understanding that:

a) Where the Research Body and any other entity in receipt of grant funding carries out activities of both an economic and non-economic nature, it must have in place appropriate accounting separation processes (including in relation to the operation of "research infrastructures"), in accordance with paragraph 19 of the Framework, such that the two kinds of activities and their costs, funding and revenues can be clearly separated to avoid cross-subsidisation of the economic activity.

b) Where industry provides a contribution (cost share) to the costs associated with the purchase of the infrastructure, the applicants will be required to outline how this arrangement including any subsequent access rights of the industry party will be compliant with State aid law.[15]

c) Where industry collaborates with an academic group and this collaboration involves the use of the infrastructure, these partnerships must be structured as an "effective collaboration" in accordance

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[11] http://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/Research Ireland-policies-and-guidance/Research Ireland-general-terms-and-conditions/

[12] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/Research Ireland-policies-and-guidance/

[13] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0719(05)&from=EN

[14] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2022:414:FULL

[15] Applicants must satisfy themselves that the arrangement proposed is compliant with State aid law; by awarding a Grant, Research Ireland will not be 'approving' such arrangements, but these may be subject to ex-post audit as described.

with the Framework and ensure that the allocation of intellectual property rights arising out of the effective collaboration comply with one of the conditions set out in paragraphs 29 and 30 (as appropriate) of the Framework; Research Ireland will require that compliance is supported through the completion of the Industry Collaboration Form. The costs of Research Ireland-funded infrastructure used in an effective collaboration projects should be calculated on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles.[16]

d) Where industry accesses the infrastructure, market rates should apply, and these should be reflected in the access charge plan submitted as part of an application to this call (see Section 3.5.5 for more details).

e) Further to point (d), where industry accesses the Research Ireland-funded infrastructure under a contract or rental agreement, these types of commercial activity may only comprise a maximum of 20% of the annual capacity for the Research Ireland-funded infrastructure and must also be charged at the full market rate (referred to as "**the 80:20 rule**"). For Research Ireland-funded infrastructures involving a mix of non-economic (academic usage/projects or projects complying with "effective collaboration") and economic or commercial activities, the economic activities must remain purely ancillary and directly related to and necessary for the operation of the infrastructure/the research Body or linked to the main non-economic activities and otherwise should not exceed 20% of the overall annual capacity.

Research Ireland's advisors will monitor compliance with State aid law (including the 80:20 rule) on an ongoing basis. Upon request, the Research Body will provide Research Ireland with all documentation reasonably required to satisfy Research Ireland that the Research Body complies with State aid law. The Research Body is responsible for retaining such documentary records as are required to demonstrate compliance with State aid law, and ensure, where relevant, that all necessary third-party consents are procured to allow for such documentation to be disclosed to Research Ireland.

For additional information, please see 'Guidance on State aid for applicants to, and recipients of, Research Ireland Grant funding'.[16] Potential applicants are also referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of the Framework and are advised to actively engage with their Technology Transfer Offices and/or seek independent legal advice (where required) in advance of applying for funding.

2.4 Definition of Lead Applicant, Lead Research Body and Collaborating Research Body

The **Lead Applicant** is responsible for the submission of the application on behalf of the Lead Research Body associated with the infrastructure request and will have primary responsibility and accountability for the management of the infrastructure grant and all associated reporting (see Section 5 for more details on Grant Management). **The Lead Applicant must be based at the Lead Research Body**. If the infrastructure is distributed between more than one Research Body, a Lead Applicant and Lead Research Body should be agreed upon and selected. The Lead Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for Research Ireland on the grant, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant. Co-applicants are not permitted on infrastructure grants. Researchers may only

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act as a Lead Applicant on one proposal; however, it is permissible to be named as a key user on more than one proposal.

The **Lead Research Body** is the body in charge of the financial and administrative coordination of the grant received from Research Ireland. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the Research Ireland website. In the event of multiple collaborating Research Bodies, the grant will be administered by the Lead Research Body. For all applications, the Lead Research Body is responsible for the oversight and management of the research infrastructure. Research Bodies in Northern Ireland may **not** serve as the Lead Research Body on an application.

A **Collaborating Research Body** is a proposed major user of the infrastructure requested, where the sharing of resources by the collaborating Research Body can be clearly measured. In the case of a **distributed infrastructure** (such as a testbed) the collaborating Research Body may host part of the infrastructure. **The collaborating Research Body may either be an eligible Research Body** in the Republic of Ireland or a Research Body in Northern Ireland.

It is recognised that collaborating Research Bodies will play a role in the shared oversight and management of the research infrastructure in certain cases. In order to ensure there are no duplication of bids to the call, **Research Ireland recommends Research Bodies to engage in discussions related to proposed bids in advance of submission**.

2.5 Eligibility Criteria of Lead Applicant

The **Lead Applicant** must be an independent researcher and must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least three years at proposal submission. The Research Ireland policy on PhD equivalence should be consulted before submitting an application where relevant.[17] The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year; therefore, only individuals with an official date of 2022 or earlier are eligible to act as Lead Applicants on proposals submitted to this 2025 call.

The applicant must hold, or have held, a **significant peer-reviewed, independent research grant or award**. This is typically a multi-annual (≥ 3 years in duration) grant or fellowship that provides support for research costs and may support the salaries and/or stipends of staff/team member(s) in addition to the Applicant. **Please note**: Postdoctoral researchers are not eligible to apply as Lead Applicants for the Infrastructure Programme.

Research Ireland has stringent requirements for the reporting by awardees on the grants that it makes. Failure to satisfactorily complete Research Ireland's reporting requirements on a current or historic Research Ireland-funded grant may result in an applicant being deemed ineligible for the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme.

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[17] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf

Applications to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme 2025 call may be associated with host institutions seeking to support Technology Centres and Technology Gateways funded by Enterprise Ireland. Research Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will ensure that Exchequer-based funding is appropriately distributed to Technology Centres and Technology Gateways for the acquisition of new equipment and/or other infrastructure. Research Ireland and Enterprise Ireland do not expect applications for the same infrastructure to be submitted to this call and to any future equipment calls coordinated by Enterprise Ireland in 2025; both agencies will work together to ensure that no applicant institution may seek, or be provided funding for, the same item(s) through these calls.

2.6 Funding

Applications to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme 2025 will have a minimum budget request of **€500,000 direct costs**. **An additional 10% cash minimum cost share is mandatory in all applications**; therefore, the total direct costs of the infrastructure **must be at least €550,000**. There is no maximum budget request. Please refer to Section 2.7 for further details on the cost share.

Multiple items of equipment can be grouped together to reach the €550,000 cost threshold, so long as they contribute to a single, shared infrastructure request (e.g., a testbed or distributed cluster).

2.7 Cost Share

Cash Cost Share

For all infrastructure requests, a **minimum** cost share of 10% cash (at least **€50,000**) from the Research Body and/or other sources (e.g., philanthropic donations, collaborating Research Bodies, industry, etc.) is mandatory. The percentage of cash cost share is calculated as a percentage of the **total direct costs** (including VAT) of the infrastructure request to Research Ireland (i.e., 10% of ≥ €500,000 direct costs request to Research Ireland). This means that for a request of €500,000 from Research Ireland, a minimum cash cost share of €50,000 must be contributed, resulting in a total infrastructure cost of at least €550,000. The cash cost share is calculated as a percentage of the funding requested from Research Ireland, rather than as a percentage of the total infrastructure cost.

> **The 10% cash cost share cannot come from buildings or personnel - these costs are classified as in-kind contributions. Cash cost share may come from multiple sources, including collaborating Research Bodies, industry, philanthropic donations, etc.**

As described in Section 2.3, where an industry party provides a contribution to the costs associated with the purchase of the infrastructure, the applicants will be required to outline how this arrangement will be compliant with State aid law (e.g., in terms of any preferential access arrangements being offered to that industry party as part of the access charge plan). If industry has financed **at least 10% of the investment costs of the infrastructure**, they may have preferential access to the infrastructure access under more favourable conditions. In order to avoid overcompensation, such access shall be proportional to the industry party's contribution to the investment costs and these conditions shall be made publicly available. However, it must be clear that this usage strictly adheres to the "80:20 rule" (refer to Point (e) in Section 2.3).

Cash cost share may be obtained from any collaborating Research Body, including those based in Northern Ireland. However, it should be noted that Research Ireland Centres cannot contribute cost share for infrastructure if the funds originate from other forms of Research Ireland funding. Such arrangements would constitute double counting of Research Ireland funds, which is not permitted within the cost share framework.

In-Kind Cost Share

Contributions through in-kind cost sharing are also highly encouraged and will be looked upon favourably. In-kind cost share must not originate from other forms of Research Ireland funding; appropriate sources are detailed below. The percentage of in-kind cost share is a percentage of **total costs** of the infrastructure (including VAT). It is recognised that in-kind contributions (e.g., vendor discounts, free maintenance contracts, etc.) will be indicative at the submission stage and should be included where relevant in the quotes provided. Following the tendering process, awardees will be required to provide updated final costs and cost-share contributions received.

At least one dedicated technical staff member is required to manage the proposed infrastructure.

Examples of in-kind cost share include:

- Salary costs of dedicated personnel to operate infrastructure
- Supplier discounts
- Maintenance/service contracts
- Technical support
- Materials and Consumables essential to the operation of the equipment
- Software costs
- Training for key personnel required to operate instruments
- Installation costs
- Industry scientists, engineers or technicians assigned to work on instrument development or to provide on-going technical support

2.8 Eligible Costs

The following costs are eligible for funding under the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme:

- Items of new or refurbished equipment including VAT, transportation and installation (where necessary)
- Equipment upgrades or refurbishment, where appropriate and cost effective
- Maintenance or service contracts (**for up to two years from purchase date**)
- Materials and consumables required to set up or operate the equipment for up to two years from purchase date (**not for specific research projects**)
- Installation costs for large pieces of equipment
- Software costs
- Training for key personnel required to operate equipment

All eligible costs must directly support the establishment and initial operation of the research infrastructure. Consumables and maintenance contracts are strictly limited to a maximum of two years from the purchase date.

2.9   Ineligible Costs

The following costs cannot be funded under the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme:

- Indirect or overhead costs
- Institutional overhead-related costs
- Building(s) or construction costs
- Equipment depreciation
- Human resources (including salary of key personnel required to operate instruments). These costs may be included as in-kind cost share as detailed elsewhere in the guidelines.
- Contingency or miscellaneous costs
- Costs for conducting research programmes
- Access charges related to the use of the requested infrastructure
- Hospitality and entertainment costs
- Office equipment and supplies
- Technology transfer or patent costs
- Conference and workshop organisation costs
- Materials, software, maintenance charges if funded from another source (to avoid double-counting)
- Predicted cost increases due to inflation

Important note regarding budgeting: Only the current market cost of equipment can be requested in the budget. Predicted increases in costs due to potential future inflation cannot be considered or included in budget requests. Applicants must base their requests on current market prices at the time of submission.

Applicants should ensure that all requested costs fall within the eligible categories and do not include any of these ineligible items. Please note that while human resources costs are ineligible for direct funding, they may be considered as in-kind contributions to the project.

3   Application Procedure

For the 2025 Research Ireland Infrastructure call, **each eligible Research Body in the Republic of Ireland may submit a maximum of six applications, one application per Lead Applicant employed at that Research Body**. Researchers based in Northern Ireland may **not** act as Lead Applicants in proposals submitted to this call, although they may participate as collaborators.

Prospective Lead Applicants must initiate contact with the Research Office of their intended Lead Research Body to notify them of their intention to submit a proposal. The Research Body is responsible for conducting appropriate selection processes to determine which proposals will be put forward for submission. Should a Lead Applicant withdraw from the process prior to the full proposal deadline, the Research Body may nominate a replacement candidate to maintain their allocation of submissions.

Research Bodies applying for funding must demonstrate that they have allocated **a dedicated space to host the requested infrastructure**. This space must be appropriate for the requirements of the equipment and suitable for its intended usage patterns. Additionally, each application must include **a robust infrastructure installation implementation plan** that clearly outlines the timeline and procedures for setting up the infrastructure, including any planning permission requirements, building modifications, installation works, and anticipated timeframes for such activities.

Applications should only be submitted to Research Ireland where it is clearly demonstrated that appropriate funding and resources are in place to ensure maximum usage of the requested infrastructure. This includes evidence of technical support, maintenance capabilities, and accessibility arrangements that will ensure the infrastructure is fully utilised throughout its lifespan.

It is crucial to note that **if more than six applications are included in the Expression of Interest document submitted to Research Ireland, all applications from that institution will be deemed ineligible**. This policy is strictly enforced to ensure fair access to funding across all eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland.

3.1 Expression of Interest (Email Submission)

Prior to the submission of Full Proposals, Research Bodies are required to submit an Expression of Interest document to Research Ireland by email. The template for the Expression of Interest is provided on the [Research Ireland website](#). For each Research Body, a member of the Research Office staff must provide Research Ireland with a cover sheet and the infrastructure summary tables for all applications (as a Word file) by email (infrastructure@researchireland.ie). After receiving cover sheet, Research Ireland will invite applicants to submit EoI via Microsoft Forms. The EoI should be submitted no later than **23rd June 2025, 13:00 local Dublin time**.

Please complete the Expression of Interest document using the guidance below.

Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title**
  The proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the infrastructure request. The titles of funded proposals are published by Research Ireland and therefore should not contain personal information.

- **Lead Research Body and Collaborating Research Bodies**
  Indicate the Lead Research Body and collaborating Research Bodies as described in Section 2.3.

- **Items Requested**
  Provide a detailed breakdown of the requested infrastructure, including specific equipment components, models, and specifications. Each individual piece of equipment that forms part of the overall infrastructure request must be clearly listed.

- **Lead Applicant**
  Include details for the Lead Applicant, including details of their eligible funding criteria, and contact email address. Please refer to Section 2.5 to ensure the proposed Lead Applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

- **Distributed Infrastructure**
  Choose Yes/No regarding whether the proposed location of the infrastructure (e.g., Department, Institute, etc.) is distributed.

- **Infrastructure Location and Implementation Plan**
  Indicate the proposed location of the infrastructure (e.g., Department, Institute, etc.). In the event of distributed infrastructure, please indicate the locations of all items. Additionally,

provide a brief infrastructure installation implementation plan that outlines the timeline for setup, any planning permission requirements, building modifications, installation works, and anticipated timeframes for completion.

• **Research Keywords**
Indicate the most appropriate Research Keywords (max. 15) for each infrastructure request.

• **Infrastructure Costs**
Indicate the total cost of the infrastructure and the requested amount to Research Ireland. Indicate the percentage and monetary amount of the cash cost share.

• **Infrastructure Bids Currently Under Review**
Indicate where items of requested infrastructure are also currently under review elsewhere, giving details of the application and expected decision date. This includes bids made to Research Ireland.

• **Lay Abstract (max. 150 words)**
Please provide a succinct and accurate summary of the requested infrastructure in lay, non-technical language.

• **Scientific Abstract (max. 250 words)**
Provide technical details on the infrastructure (e.g., components, function, etc.) and an overview of alignment of the infrastructure with the objectives of this call, where relevant.

• **Statement on Strategic National Importance of Proposed Infrastructure (max. 250 words)**
Describe how the proposed infrastructure supports your institution's strategic research priorities and enhances its research capabilities. Explain how the infrastructure aligns with Ireland's national strategic goals, with reference to relevant national strategies (e.g., Impact 2030, National Development Plan). Outline the anticipated impact of the infrastructure in terms of research outputs, partnerships, economic benefits, and talent development. Applications will be evaluated on the strength of these strategic alignments and the credibility of the potential impacts.

The Expression of Interest requested is mandatory and is required by Research Ireland for planning purposes.

The detail in the Expression of Interest may be modified when completing the full proposal to this call. However, Research Ireland expects the full proposal to be generally consistent with the information submitted under the Expression of Interest. Research Ireland reserves the right to withdraw applications where the Expression of Interest differs significantly from the full proposal.

Only Lead Applicants that have submitted the requested Expression of Interest through their host institution's Research Office will be permitted to submit a proposal to the call. Any information submitted directly to Research Ireland, and not through the host institution Research Office, will not be accepted, and submission of a proposal will not be permitted.

3.2 Full Proposal Submission

Full proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, Research Ireland's grants management system, and only upon invitation following the successful assessment of an Expression of Interest (EoI). Applicants whose EoIs have been approved by Research Ireland will receive formal notification inviting them to submit a full proposal through the SESAME system.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of the host Research Body. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and, as a result, to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

> **The SESAME system is accessed here: https://grants.researchireland.ie/s_Login.jsp**

Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide for more detailed information.[18]

Once submitted by the host Research Body to Research Ireland through SESAME, **an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission**.

Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to Research Ireland by the Research Office of the Lead Applicant's Research Body **no later than 31st July 2025, 13:00 local Dublin time**.

Please note that this deadline includes the necessary time for review and formal endorsement from the Research Office at the Research Body. The submission is not considered complete until it has received this endorsement, and the Research Office has officially submitted the application through SESAME to Research Ireland.

No extensions to this deadline will be permitted under any circumstances. It is therefore strongly advised that Lead Applicants submit their proposals to their respective Research Offices well in advance of this deadline to allow sufficient time for institutional review and endorsement.

Research Ireland recommends that applicants consult with their Research Office regarding internal submission deadlines, which may be earlier than the Research Ireland deadline to accommodate the internal review process.

Proposal submission requirements:

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Calibri font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.

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[18] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/award-management-system/

- Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**. Please ensure to use unencrypted, non-password-protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft Word PDF convertor software only.
- 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.**
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review.
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB.**

Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by Research Ireland before the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by Research Ireland staff.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call.

3.3   ORCID ID

ORCID provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.[19] There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms, creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier, which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
- Using the ORCID iD helps to make your research works more visible to funders and publishers. You are able to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Research Profile. **Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted.**

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[19] http://orcid.org/

3.4   Full Proposal Summary

> **All templates for the Full Proposal can be found on the [Research Infrastructure programme webpage](#)**

Please populate the following required proposal sections on SESAME, as outlined below:

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**
  The proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the infrastructure request. The titles of funded proposals are published by Research Ireland and therefore should not contain personal information.

- **Duration of Grant**
  The maximum duration of grants is **12 months**.

- **Resubmission Statement (max. 1000 words)**
  Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any Research Ireland scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist Research Ireland in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See the Research Ireland Resubmission Policy for further details.[20]

- **Distributed Infrastructure**
  Choose Yes/No regarding whether the proposed location of the infrastructure (e.g., Department, Institute, etc.) is distributed.

- **Infrastructure Location**
  Indicate the proposed location of the infrastructure (e.g., Department, Institute, etc.). In the event of distributed infrastructure, please indicate the locations of all items.

- **Total Infrastructure Cost (€)**
  Indicate the total cost of the infrastructure (it must not be less than €550,000), as described in the budget justification, and including all proposed cost share.

- **Total Funding Request (€)**
  This field will be automatically filled when the total cost of the infrastructure request to Research Ireland is entered in SESAME's budget template.

- **Alignment to Research Ireland Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**
  This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to Research Ireland's Infrastructure programme remit, as defined in Section 2.1. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

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[20] [Research Ireland policy on Resubmission of Grant Proposals](#)

- **Proposal Keywords (max. 15)**
  Applicants should add their own (specific) research keywords that describe the research area(s) aligned to the requested infrastructure.

- **Lay Abstract (max. 150 words)**
  Please provide a succinct and accurate summary of the requested infrastructure in lay, non-technical language.

- **Scientific Abstract (max. 250 words)**
  Provide technical details on the infrastructure (e.g., components, function, etc.) and an overview of alignment of the infrastructure with the objectives of this call, where relevant. This should not contain confidential information.

3.5   Research Infrastructure Requests (SESAME Uploads)

3.5.1   Detailed Description of Infrastructure Request (max. 2 pages)

The detailed description of the infrastructure request should provide comprehensive information that enables reviewers to thoroughly evaluate the **justification of need** for the proposed infrastructure.

Applicants must provide a detailed rationale for all items of infrastructure included in the proposal, describing the technical specifications and capabilities of each requested item whilst articulating the specific research requirements that necessitate this infrastructure. The proposal should demonstrate why existing alternatives are insufficient for the proposed research objectives, supported by a comprehensive overview of existing centralised or national research facilities that includes a thorough examination of currently available infrastructure within the institution and nationally. Applicants must clearly articulate why these existing facilities cannot adequately support the proposed research, providing evidence that collaborative use of existing infrastructure has been explored and found inadequate. The proposal should present compelling evidence of demand for the requested infrastructure, including identification of potential users across multiple research groups or institutions, documentation of current research limitations due to infrastructure constraints, and quantifiable metrics demonstrating the projected utilisation rates. Furthermore, the description should detail how the acquisition of the infrastructure will enhance and advance current research activities, enable new research directions that are currently unattainable, and support interdisciplinary collaborations within and between institutions.

3.5.2   Detailed Description of Key Users (max. 3 pages)

The detailed description of key users must demonstrate the **potential for broad usage and access across Ireland**. This section requires comprehensive coverage of **all groups of key users** who will utilise the infrastructure, ensuring representation from diverse research communities and geographical locations across Ireland. The following information should be presented in bullet-point format to illustrate how the infrastructure will enable, develop and enhance research activities:

- Enhanced capabilities for the Lead Applicant's research group, including specific research objectives that will be advanced through the new infrastructure
- Development opportunities for collaborating departments, detailing how the infrastructure will facilitate interdisciplinary research approaches

- Benefits to partner Research Bodies, articulating how the infrastructure will strengthen existing collaborations and foster new partnerships
- Opportunities for industry engagement, identifying specific sectoral partners and describing how the infrastructure will support translation of research into practical applications

This description must emphasise the potential for broad usage across Ireland by showcasing accessibility arrangements, regional reach of user communities, and mechanisms for ensuring equitable access. Applications should provide evidence of demand from multiple institutions and regions, detail plans for training users from diverse backgrounds, and outline strategies for accommodating both established and emerging research groups. This comprehensive approach demonstrates the infrastructure's capacity to serve as a national research asset that advances the collective capabilities of Ireland's research community.

3.5.3   Strategic Impact of Research Infrastructure Request (max. 2 pages)

The strategic impact statement should provide comprehensive evidence to demonstrate the **potential impact of the requested infrastructure**. This section requires specific detail across multiple impact domains to substantiate the strategic value of the investment.

- For emergent areas of research across all disciplines, the proposal should describe how the proposed investment would enable development and provide new opportunities in key strategic areas. This includes demonstrating how the infrastructure will bridge existing gaps in research capabilities, support the exploration of novel methodologies, and foster innovative approaches across all academic disciplines.
- The alignment with institutional strategy must be clearly articulated, showing how the infrastructure investment supports broader research objectives, enhances the institution's position within the national research landscape, and contributes to long-term strategic goals. This alignment should demonstrate consideration of the institution's research strengths and developmental priorities across all disciplines.
- Where relevant, describe mechanisms for industrial collaboration and partnership, ranging from traditional industry–academic partnerships to engagement with cultural organisations, policy bodies, and creative industries. The relevance to both SMEs and MNCs should be outlined, encompassing technological transfer, knowledge exchange, and collaborative research initiatives across all sectors. All arrangements must comply with State aid guidelines as detailed in the relevant sections.
- The statement should detail how the infrastructure could leverage non-Exchequer funding, particularly through Horizon Europe calls and other international funding opportunities. This includes identifying existing connections with European consortia across all research domains and explaining how the infrastructure would strengthen Ireland's competitive position in international funding applications.
- Recruitment potential for world-leading researchers must be addressed, encompassing how the infrastructure would attract pre-eminent scholars through enhanced research capabilities and collaborative opportunities. This includes consideration of how the infrastructure might establish Ireland as a destination for leading academic talent across all disciplines.
- The proposal should explain how the infrastructure would contribute to broader research ecosystem development, including partnerships with IoTs/TUs, Universities, eligible Research Bodies, Research Centres, and institutions in Northern Ireland. This should demonstrate how the infrastructure will foster cross-institutional collaboration and strengthen research networks across geographical boundaries and disciplinary areas.
- Finally, applications should detail how the infrastructure aligns with Open Science policies, principles and activities, including data sharing, open access, and public engagement

strategies appropriate to all research disciplines. This encompasses considerations for both traditional and digital dissemination of research outputs, community engagement, and transparent research practices.

3.5.4   Management and Sustainability Plan (max. 2 pages)

The detailed description of the management and sustainability plan must provide comprehensive information to demonstrate how the requested infrastructure will be managed in a sustainable manner. Sustainability planning and maximum usage of infrastructure is a key component of the Infrastructure Programme 2025 call. Research Bodies must demonstrate the ability and resources to maintain acquired infrastructure across all disciplines; this must be clearly detailed in the application. The sustainability plan should address both tangible infrastructure and digital/data management resources essential for all research disciplines.

Applicants should include the following elements where relevant:

- **Financial Sustainability Plan**: Present a realistic and manageable financial plan for long-term operation and maintenance of the infrastructure, encompassing all ongoing costs including specialist support, maintenance, consumables, software licensing, and data management requirements
- **Specialist Expertise or Technical Support**: Describe who will provide the specialist expertise and/or technical support required to maximise effective use of the requested infrastructure. Research Ireland requires at least one dedicated staff member to manage the research infrastructure, with details of their qualifications and experience provided. Where relevant, this may include curatorial, archival, or analytical support. Indicate whether such expertise is currently in place
- **User Competency Assessment**: Detail the qualifications of key users or assigned personnel to operate and maintain the infrastructure, conduct associated research projects, and evaluate research outputs across all disciplines
- **Training Programme**: Include comprehensive plans for training new users, encompassing both technical operation and methodological approaches appropriate to all research areas
- **Resource Sharing Impact**: Outline the expected impact of sharing resources and how the infrastructure will maximise utilisation. Include approximate numbers of researchers who will benefit from the infrastructure and describe how sharing will enhance research capacity across disciplines

This comprehensive approach ensures the infrastructure's long-term viability and maximum benefit to the research community across all disciplines.

3.5.5   Environmental Impact Statement (maximum 1 page)

Applications to the Infrastructure Programme must include a one-page environmental impact statement addressing the environmental impact of operating and managing the infrastructure throughout its entire lifecycle. Researchers across all academic disciplines are encouraged to thoroughly consider the environmental implications of their requested infrastructure from initial development through ongoing operations and eventual decommissioning. When preparing your application, a comprehensive assessment of environmental considerations serves the dual purpose of demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources and ensuring alignment with national sustainability objectives. This thoughtful evaluation should examine both the immediate and long-term environmental footprint of your proposed facilities, allowing your infrastructure to contribute positively to research advancement while maintaining environmental responsibility and sustainable practice across all academic fields.

- Researchers should evaluate both direct and indirect environmental impacts associated with the ongoing operation of proposed infrastructure. This includes quantifying expected energy consumption, waste generation, and resource utilisation during normal operations. Equipment energy efficiency ratings, annual power consumption estimates, water usage rates, and waste production volumes provide valuable context for understanding the infrastructure's environmental footprint. Digital infrastructure considerations encompass server energy requirements, cooling system demands, and data-storage implications. Laboratory facilities benefit from addressing chemical waste-management protocols, sustainable consumables selection and ventilation system environmental impacts.

- When developing infrastructure management strategies, researchers should identify opportunities to minimise environmental impact. This might include selecting energy-efficient equipment, implementing waste-reduction protocols and adopting sustainable operating practices. Integration of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or district heating systems, can significantly reduce carbon footprints. Optimising equipment utilisation through scheduled operations, power management systems, and collaborative-usage agreements enhances overall efficiency and sustainability.

- Facilities planning offers additional environmental considerations. Net-zero buildings, renewable energy systems, efficient HVAC systems, and other green building features can substantially reduce operational environmental impact. Researchers should explore how their infrastructure might benefit from these efficient facilities and consider quantitative improvements, such as projected reductions in energy consumption or carbon emissions compared to standard facilities.

- Forward-thinking researchers consider end-of-life implications, including decommissioning plans, equipment recycling protocols, and disposal methods for consumable materials. Incorporating circular economy principles demonstrates comprehensive environmental stewardship. Establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms enables tracking of environmental performance metrics throughout the infrastructure's operational lifetime, supporting continuous improvement efforts.

- Environmental considerations align with broader national policy objectives, including the Climate Action Plan[21] and UN Sustainable Development Goals[22]. Researchers may reference international standards such as ISO 14001[23] and draw upon best practices from peer institutions to strengthen their environmental approach. Considering the cumulative environmental impact across all user groups and research activities provides a holistic perspective on infrastructure sustainability.

3.5.6 Data Management Plan (upload; max 2 pages)

Good governance and stewardship of research outputs are key components of good research practice. All applicants to the Infrastructure Programme are required to submit a brief data management plan (DMP) as part of their full proposal application. In preparing this plan, applicants should refer to Research Ireland's Guidance on Data Management Plans.[24]

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[21] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Climate_Action_Plan_2025_updated_cover.pdf
[22] https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[23] https://www.nsai.ie/certification/management-systems/iso-14001-environmental-management/
[24] https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/research-ireland-policies-and-guidance/open-research/research-ireland-DMP-Guidance-FINAL-140322.pdf

A DMP is a living document that details the procedures for careful handling of research outputs and materials. It follows these outputs through the lifecycle of the research programme,[25] from collection through to analysis and interpretation, sharing and dissemination, and long-term storage.

Data Management Plan Requirements

DMPs will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information on practices and standards as guided below; this assessment will be incorporated into the overall scoring criteria for the infrastructure application. Although practices and standards vary across disciplines, Research Ireland recommends the use of Science Europe DMP templates and guidelines. Each DMP should include the following as appropriate to the programme or project:[26]

1. **Description and collection or re-use of existing materials** (type and size of research outputs, including datasets, samples, software, digital content, physical artefacts, and other materials; methods for collecting, producing, or re-using such materials)
2. **Documentation and quality** (standards to be used for documentation of outputs and metadata format and content, quality control measures)
3. **Storage and backup during the research process** (procedures and timelines for protecting and storing research outputs, including provisions for security and appropriate protection of confidential or sensitive materials)
4. **Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct** (compliance with legislation on personal data and security including GDPR, handling of intellectual property rights and ownership, management of any ethical issues and adherence to applicable codes)
5. **Sharing and long-term preservation** (timing and methods for sharing outputs, relevant terms-of-use and restrictions, method for determining which materials will be preserved and where (e.g., archive, repository), tools or methods for accessing and using outputs, application of unique identifiers for research products (e.g., Digital Object Identifier) to ensure a stable access link to materials stored in a repository, measures to mitigate sharing risks)
6. **Management responsibilities and resources** (individual(s) responsible for general or specific aspects of output management and institutional or project-specific resources dedicated to managing materials and ensuring adherence with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable))

The completed DMP should be saved as a separate PDF file and uploaded to SESAME.

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[25] Research Ireland-funded research programmes, as described in call documents, can range from a single research project to a collection of research projects encompassed in several work packages. The data management plan should reflect the relevant standards for individual research projects while describing a cohesive approach to managing outputs across the overall programme of research as appropriate.

[26] Based primarily on guidance provided by Science Europe: https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/ and supplemented by guidance from the European Research Council of the European Commission:
https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_info_document-Open_Research_Data_and_Data_Management_Plans.pdf

3.5.7   Access Charge Plan (Optional Template provided,[27] max. 1 page)

Research Ireland recognises the critical importance of sustainability planning to enable research bodies to maintain research infrastructure across all disciplines. Therefore, it is essential that maximum utilisation of infrastructure is planned, and appropriate access charge schemes are implemented.

To support widespread infrastructural sustainability within Ireland's diverse research community, Research Ireland permits grant applications under its various programmes to include requests for infrastructure access charges that support research objectives. However, the agency will only fund infrastructure charges managed by Research Bodies once a comprehensive and pre-approved access charge plan is established.

Investigators are also advised to consult the HEA National Guidelines on Access to Research Infrastructure.[28]

Applicants are required to submit an access charge plan for each item of infrastructure requested. An access charge plan should include realistic, specific and quantitative details on the anticipated usage, taking into account downtime of instruments and maintenance costs.

The access charge plan must also outline the expected rate per hour to be charged to any industry users who wish to access the infrastructure, which should correspond to market prices or be based on full economic costs plus a reasonable margin established by reference to those typically applied in the sector. Research Body contribution to the operational costs should also be factored into the access model, where applicable, in order to reduce the access charge.

The access charge plan should clearly demonstrate that the resultant revenue stream from both academic and industry users will cover the operational costs of running the infrastructure and ensure its future sustainability.

Please refer to the sample access charge template, and consider the following points (where applicable):

- The purpose of this plan is to provide details on how the access charge rates (academic, industry) are calculated, and to demonstrate that the resultant revenue stream covers the operational costs of running the infrastructure (minus any exchequer-funded costs).

- The plan should list all costs contributing to the *Total Gross Operating Costs* of the infrastructure in the **Category** **section of the table** under the sample line items *staff, materials & consumables, maintenance/service costs, and other costs*.

- Please ensure that all listed costs are eligible. The following are examples of ineligible costs:

  o   Equipment Depreciation

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[27] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/funding-calls/Research Ireland-research-infrastructure-programme/
[28] Research Infrastructure: Guidelines for Access | Funding, Governance and Performance | Higher Education Authority (hea.ie)

- o Institutional overhead-related costs
- o Indirect costs / overheads
- o Buildings and construction
- o Contingency or miscellaneous costs
- o Costs for conducting programmes of research
- o Access charges related to the use of the requested infrastructure
- o Costs to industry partners
- o Hospitality and entertainment costs
- o Office equipment and supplies
- o Technology transfer or patent costs
- o Conference and workshop organisation costs
- o Materials, software, maintenance charges if funded from another source (i.e., to avoid double counting).
- The plan should also list all staff required to run/maintain the infrastructure under the category line item **'Staff'** in the access charge template. All staff costs, including staff funded from institutional core funding, such as the HEA core grant, should be included in **the 'Total Gross Operating Cost'** calculation.

- Exchequer-funded operational costs (e.g., core-funded staff, etc.) initially included as part of the **'Total Gross Operating Costs'** should be deducted when arriving at the **'Total Net Operating Costs'** of the infrastructure in the access charge table.

- The plan should clearly state expected **'Total Usage Hours'** taking into account breakdowns and maintenance. Equipment downtime should not be charged to the access charge plan, but rather downtime should be factored into the calculation for usable hours.

- The **'Cost per Hour'** (or per day if appropriate) for academic users must be a direct calculation based on the '**Total Net Operating Costs'** divided by the **'Total Usage Hours'**. Note that industry access charge income cannot be used to subsidise the academic rate. However, it may be used to demonstrate the overall sustainability of the infrastructure.

- Access charges based on a membership fee must also provide a justification of this fee with respect to the academic user access charge rate.

- The academic charge should be the same for all academic users regardless of their host Research Body or whether they are funded by Research Ireland or not.

- The **'Net Deficit/Surplus'** per annum is calculated by subtracting the 'Total Annual Charges' from the 'Total Net Operating Costs'.

Please note that, although details are not required as part of this plan, industry access charges should correspond to market prices or ensure full economic cost recovery (e.g., depreciation costs) plus a reasonable margin.

If you require additional blank pages to explain certain aspects of the access charge plan, please add these to the end of the template provided.

Additional Queries
If you have any queries regarding the access charge plan process, please send them to infrastructure@researchireland.ie.

Access charge plans should be made publicly available (openly available access charge plans are critical not only to ensure fair and accurate charges for infrastructure, but also to ensure that the infrastructure is widely accessible and fosters collaboration both intra- and inter-institutionally).

Applicants should also consult with guidance on compliance with State aid rules; see Section 2.3.

Revised access charge plans may be submitted to Research Ireland upon notification of a grant. Final approval of access charge plans by Research Ireland will take place following a funding decision and prior to the issue of a Letter of Offer.

3.5.8 Proposed Budget and Justification (Budget Template provided, max. 2 pages; Justification max. 1 page)

A sample budget is provided for reference on the Research Ireland website.[29] Include details of all relevant costs, including VAT, delivery, installation, where relevant. Please provide a budget justification, including a detailed description of proposed cash and in-kind cost share (see Section 2.7 for details). Include how the proposed infrastructure provides value for money. See Sections 2.8 and 2.9 for details of eligible and ineligible costs, respectively.

Please also refer to the Research Ireland Grant Terms and Conditions,[30] and the Research Ireland Interim Grant Budget Policy (GBP; version May2025).[31]

3.5.9 Infrastructure Implementation Plan (max. 2 pages)

The Infrastructure Implementation Plan serves as an essential component of a funding application, requiring careful attention to all the steps required to set up the requested infrastructure. . This document must demonstrate the host institution's capacity to successfully acquire, install, and operationalise the requested infrastructure through a comprehensive yet concise presentation of the implementation strategy.

The plan must begin with a **detailed timeline** that incorporates all critical milestones, including procurement phases, delivery scheduling, installation periods, testing protocols, and full operationalisation dates. This timeline must reflect realistic expectations and account for potential delays that might arise during the implementation process. Each milestone should be clearly defined with specific dates and measurable outcomes to facilitate tracking and accountability.

Site preparation and installation requirements constitute a critical section of the plan, necessitating explicit details regarding technical specifications for the installation environment, **planning permission** or regulatory approvals that must be secured, and any **building modifications** or specialist facilities needed to accommodate the infrastructure. The plan should address spatial requirements, environmental conditions, utilities provision, and any structural adaptations necessary for the infrastructure to function effectively.

Resource allocation forms the backbone of a credible implementation strategy, requiring identification of designated project management personnel, **technical staff** assigned to oversee

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[29] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/funding-calls/Research Ireland-research-infrastructure-programme/
[30] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/Research Ireland-policies-and-guidance/Research Ireland-general-terms-and-conditions/
[31] https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/

installation, budget allocation for implementation-related expenses, and time commitments from key personnel. This section should demonstrate that the host institution has committed adequate human and financial resources to ensure successful implementation, including provisions for training and ongoing technical support.

The plan must incorporate a robust **risk mitigation strategy** that identifies potential challenges to implementation and outlines specific countermeasures. This includes addressing technical or logistical complexities, dependencies on third-party contractors, potential delays in approvals or permits, and contingency planning for unexpected issues. Each identified risk should be accompanied by practical mitigation steps and alternative approaches.

The **go-live strategy** represents the transition plan from implementation to operational use, encompassing user training programmes, initial testing protocols, phased rollout plans where applicable, and comprehensive documentation arrangements. This section should demonstrate how smooth adoption and immediate productivity from the infrastructure investment will be ensured.

The Infrastructure Implementation Plan must adhere to a strict **two A4 page limit**, utilise minimum 11-point font with appropriate margins, be submitted as a PDF document, contain clear headings for each required section, and include specific dates and measurable milestones. These constraints require comprehensive planning in a concise format while maintaining clarity and detail.

The implementation plan will be assessed based on the feasibility and realism of proposed timelines, completeness of planning considerations, adequacy of risk mitigation strategies, clarity and specificity of implementation steps, and demonstrated evidence of institutional commitment and capacity. The evaluation process emphasises practical execution capability over theoretical planning, requiring tangible evidence of preparedness and resource availability.

The submission process requires uploading the Infrastructure Implementation Plan to SESAME as an integral part of the full proposal, ensuring alignment with and support for the broader objectives articulated throughout the application. This integration demonstrates coherence in the overall funding request and strengthens the case for the host institution's readiness to undertake the proposed infrastructure investment.

3.5.10   Green Procurement Plan (max 1 page)

All infrastructure acquisitions must demonstrate exceptional environmental stewardship through strategic integration of green procurement principles within a **mandatory one-page plan**. This document must clearly articulate how procurement decisions align with Ireland's **Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027**[32] while advancing world-class research capabilities without compromising technical specifications or research functionality.

The procurement plan shall commence with an explicit statement of **compliance with the GPP Implementation Mandate**[32], as defined in Ireland's national strategy. This includes demonstrating how procurement decisions incorporate all relevant green criteria, as outlined in the Environmental Protection Agency guidance[33] and how your approach aligns with the **Government's commitment to**

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[32] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/buying-greener-green-public-procurement-strategy-and-action-plan-2024-2027.pdf

[33] https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/EPA_GPP_Guidance_2024-revised.pdf

sustainable public procurement[33]. Every procurement decision must explicitly reference how environmental considerations are balanced against research requirements.

The plan must detail specific methodologies for implementing sustainable procurement practices throughout the acquisition process. This encompasses **prioritising certified green products**, applying recognised ecolabels where applicable, and systematically evaluating supplier environmental credentials and practices. The document must explicitly reference the **GPP Criteria Search tool** and describe how it has been utilised to identify appropriate environmental standards for your infrastructure. This methodology should encompass the identification of environmentally preferable products and services while maintaining competitive procurement principles.

The document must outline concrete measures for minimising environmental impact through strategic procurement choices. This includes **specifying energy efficiency requirements** in equipment selection, **prioritising low-carbon construction methods** in infrastructure development, and selecting materials with reduced environmental impact throughout their lifecycle. The plan must detail how waste reduction will be achieved through thoughtful supplier selection and procurement specifications. These decisions must support Ireland's **Climate Action Plan targets**[34] while maintaining technical excellence.

The plan must demonstrate how procurement decisions advance **circular economy principles** through the selection of equipment designed for longevity, repairability, and eventual recycling. This aligns with Ireland's Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy[35] and includes establishing procurement criteria that favour suppliers offering sustainable end-of-life solutions, take-back schemes, and products manufactured from **recycled or renewable materials** where technically feasible.

Market engagement strategies should be detailed to ensure comprehensive identification of suppliers offering environmentally sustainable solutions. This includes **documentation of early market engagement**, supplier consultations regarding environmental capabilities, and development of procurement specifications that encourage innovation in sustainable delivery while maintaining **competitive market conditions**. The strategy must detail how sustainability criteria will be communicated to potential suppliers through procurement documents, ensuring transparency in evaluation processes.

The procurement plan must articulate clear procedures for incorporating environmental specifications into **tender documents** while ensuring **full compliance with EU procurement laws**[36] regarding fair competition and non-discrimination. This demonstrates alignment with the **"Comply or Explain" principle** outlined in the national strategy[32]. The document must specify how environmental criteria will be integrated into technical specifications without creating unreasonable barriers to competition or favouring particular suppliers. Where deviation from green procurement requirements occurs, it must be transparently justified.

The document should conclude with a **concise monitoring framework** for tracking environmental performance and recording procurement outcomes for future improvements. This includes outlining

[34] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Climate_Action_Plan_2025_updated_cover.pdf
[35] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023.pdf
[36] https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/selling-in-eu/public-contracts/public-tendering-rules/index_en.htm

how procurement decisions will be monitored for environmental performance and how this information will be recorded for future procurement enhancements. This demonstrates commitment to continuous enhancement of green procurement practices while maintaining the highest standards of public accountability and transparency as required by the Government's strategy.

3.5.11 Letters of Support (max. 2 pages for each letter)

All applications to the Infrastructure Programme are subject to a **strict maximum of 10 letters of support**, with each letter limited to **two pages**. These requirements apply without exception and applications exceeding these limits will be deemed ineligible.

Mandatory Letters of Support

The following letters must be uploaded to SESAME:

Lead Research Body Letter:

A letter of support from the Lead Research Body is mandatory and must detail the employment status of the Lead Applicant, explicitly addressing how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria as outlined in Section 2.5. The letter must address the facilities and services available to support the management of the research infrastructure request. It should provide detailed information on the resources and capabilities that will be utilised to ensure the effective administration and operation of the proposed research infrastructure. It should specify the level of financial contribution (cash, in-kind, or both) to the infrastructure request. Where relevant, the letter should include details of how this investment would support the recruitment of world-leading researchers. The letter must incorporate the eligibility criteria table provided below, which must be completed in full.

This table must be present in the letter of support from the host Research body of Lead Applicant.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria	Response (*to be filled out by research body*)
What is the Applicant's job title?	
Does the Applicant have a permanent contract? (Yes/No)	
If 'No', please provide the Applicant's current contract start and end dates.	
Is the Applicant recognised as an independent researcher? (Yes/No)	
Does the applicant hold, or have held, a significant peer-reviewed, independent research grant or award? (Yes/No)	
What year was the Applicant's PhD conferred?	
Does the Applicant hold a secondary appointment with another Eligible Research Body (ERB)[37]or a Research Performing Organisation that is not an	

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[37] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/Research Ireland-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/

existing approved ERB and which may be non-Irish? (Yes/No)	
If 'Yes', please provide written details of the applicant's employment relationship (including the type of secondary appointment held) with the other entity or entities.	

Collaborating Research Bodies Letters:

One letter per collaborating Research Body is required, listing key users and their specific roles within the collaboration. These letters must detail how the infrastructure will enable, develop and enhance research activities, and outline how collaborations will be maintained. The letters should demonstrate the potential for broad collaboration across the Irish research community. These letters may be provided by institutional representatives and must encompass all key users from that collaborating institution within a single submission.

Optional Letters of Support:

The following letters should be included where relevant and uploaded to SESAME:

Current EU Consortia

Letters from the lead project coordinator of existing and relevant consortia should describe how receipt of a Research Ireland Infrastructure grant may strengthen future Horizon Europe (or equivalent) bids.

Industry Collaborators

Letters outlining financial and non-financial contributions should detail intended intellectual input for instrumentation development or technical support. These letters are not required when industry contributions involve only vendor discounts or materials and consumables supplied as in-kind contributions; such details should be included in quotations and referenced in the budget justification. Letters from potential industry users accessing the infrastructure through the access charge plan should be provided. Applicants must ensure compliance with State aid rules as detailed in Section 2.3.

Northern Ireland Partnerships

Letters from academic partners based in Northern Ireland should describe how the infrastructure will facilitate the establishment and development of all-Ireland research infrastructure and/or enhance all-Ireland research collaborations.

Research Ireland Centres

Where applicable, letters from Research Ireland Centre Directors should outline the strategic importance of the infrastructure investment to the Centre.

Philanthropic Organisations

Letters from philanthropic organisations providing cash contributions should outline the reasons for their contribution.

Submission Requirements

All letters must be submitted in PDF format, not exceed two pages in length, and be uploaded directly to SESAME. Applications must strategically select the most impactful letters to remain within the 10-letter maximum, ensuring each letter provides substantive value to the application's assessment.

3.5.12 Vendor Quotes (max. 20 pages)

For all individual requests included in an application, the quote numbers and full costs must be uploaded to SESAME. Quotations from at least **two vendors** must be supplied and uploaded as a single PDF document (maximum 20 pages). This requirement ensures competitive procurement and value for money assessment across all infrastructure requests.

In circumstances where securing quotations from two vendors proves impossible, a comprehensive justification must be provided to demonstrate why this requirement could not be met. Such justifications typically arise when infrastructure availability is limited to a single manufacturer, when specialised equipment lacks multiple suppliers, or when procurement regulations constrain vendor selection. The justification must provide detailed evidence of the exceptional circumstances preventing dual vendor quotes and must explain the steps taken to attempt to secure multiple quotations.

Where only a single quote can be obtained, the justification should include documentation of market research efforts, supplier inquiries, and any technical specifications that limit vendor options. This ensures transparency in procurement decisions and maintains accountability in the use of public funds. Applications failing to provide either the required dual vendor quotes or an acceptable justification for their absence will be considered incomplete and potentially ineligible for funding consideration.

3.6 Research Body Approval

Submissions must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Lead Research Body is approving:

- The proposals to be put forward for submission
- The eligibility of the Lead Applicant
- That the Lead Applicant is recognised as an employee of the Research Body for the duration of the grant
- That the requested budget items are in line with accepted institutional guidelines
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution, as outlined by the applicant in the research proposal
- That the proposed research infrastructure has not been funded by other sources
- That relevant ethical approval (where required) has been or will be sought and must be granted prior to the grant commencing
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of grant
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history (i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application) are valid and accurate
- That permission from all collaborators has been obtained
- That there is an appropriate accounting structure in place to ensure that usage of the infrastructure complies with State aid rules

3.7   Applicant Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions

Submission of an application confirms that Research Ireland's Grant General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs)[38] have been read and understood; that the applicant meets eligibility requirements; that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland; that no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and that all details provided are correct; that the information supplied in the application is correct and the research proposal is their own work. Failure to do so, or to comply with requirements outlined in this call document, will deem an application ineligible resulting in its withdrawal prior to expert review. Research Ireland's Grant Conditions shall govern the administration of Research Ireland grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

3.8   Proposal Submission

A PDF of the proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. The responsibility for verifying that the proposal is ready for submission lies with the **Lead Applicant** in this regard. A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Lead Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Research Office to Research Ireland.

Please contact the Research Office well in advance in order to become familiar with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

After the Full Proposal submission deadline, applications will not be accepted by SESAME. Therefore, they will not be reviewed by Research Ireland.

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, the status of a proposal (e.g., where a proposal is pending Research Office approval or is under review at Research Ireland) is displayed in SESAME.

4   Review Process

4.1   Expression of Interest

The Expressions of Interest documents submitted to Research Ireland are for information purposes only and will not be peer reviewed.

4.2   Full Proposal Review

All eligible proposals will be assessed by international peer reviewers under the review criteria described below. These criteria will be applied at each stage of the review process, with all four criteria

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[38] https://www.Research Ireland.ie/funding/Research Ireland-policies-and-guidance/Research Ireland-general-terms-and-conditions/

equally weighted to ensure comprehensive evaluation of all essential elements while benchmarking against international best practices in infrastructure funding programmes.

Justification of Need

- The strength of the justification of need of the infrastructure
- Demonstration that the infrastructure is not readily available and accessible
- Demonstration that the infrastructure is cutting-edge and innovative in comparison to global standards
- The value for money of the potential investment in the requested infrastructure
- The technical validity of the infrastructure to achieve the stated research activities

Potential for Broad Usage and Access across Ireland

- Quality of the plans for broad usage of the infrastructure
- Potential for meaningful partnerships and collaborations across Ireland that involve some or all of the following: IoTs/TUs, Universities, eligible Research Ireland Research Bodies, Research Ireland Centres, institutions in Northern Ireland
- Evidence of broad engagement with the research community to ensure maximum utilisation

Strategic Impact

- Potential long-term benefits and impacts of the proposed infrastructure to enhance the current research activities of Research Ireland-funded researchers in Ireland
- Contribution to the research strategy of the Lead Research Body and any collaborating Research Bodies
- Potential for leveraging non-Exchequer funding (e.g., future Horizon Europe or "FP10" calls)
- Proposed industry usage of infrastructure (both SMEs and MNCs)
- Potential for supporting the recruitment of world-leading researchers and international competitiveness

Management and Sustainability

- Quality of sustainability and management plans
- Quality of access charge plans
- Negotiation with suppliers for discounts
- Maintenance and technical support
- Inclusion of industry cost share
- Quality and comprehensiveness of the Green Procurement plan
- Quality and completeness of the Environmental Impact Statement
- Quality and feasibility of the Infrastructure Implementation Plan
- Quality of Data Management Plan

Reviewers engaged by Research Ireland are required to abide by the Research Ireland Reviewer Code of Conduct.[39] The submission of an application to Research Ireland shall be construed as consent by the applicant(s) to participate in the peer-review process. Research Ireland reserves the right to return

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[39] https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/

applications **without review where they do not meet the eligibility criteria**. A schematic of the review process is provided below. Full details on the review process are provided in Appendix A.

Other Review Information

The identity of international experts who conduct reviews shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the applicants. Research Ireland shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international peer reviewers involved in the merit review process.

Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure. The final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of Research Ireland. Applications deemed to be sufficiently excellent, but which cannot be supported due to the lack of available budget, may be placed on a reserve list and may eventually be supported should additional funds be secured at a later date.

5   Grant Management

Through Research Ireland's funding programmes, the State has made a significant investment in research across all disciplines. As such, it is the responsibility of Research Ireland to monitor the progress and outcomes of all the funding it administers.

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 grant and for up to five years after the grant end (close) date. Research Ireland reserves the right to request reporting beyond five years, if deemed appropriate.

The progress reporting requirements for grants made under the Infrastructure Programme include the completion of Research Ireland Research Outputs and annual/final reports. Specific guidance for reporting on Infrastructure grants can be found on the Research Ireland website.

5.1   Site Visits

Pre-Award Site Visit

Prior to the issuing of a Letter of Offer, Research Ireland will conduct a site visit to assess the proposed location for the infrastructure. This pre-award site visit will evaluate the implementation plan, ensuring that the Research Body is adequately prepared for the installation and operation of the infrastructure. The assessment may include verification of technical specifications, space requirements, environmental considerations, and any necessary building works or modifications.

Post-Award Site Visit

Research Ireland will also conduct post-award site visits to monitor the progress of the infrastructure implementation. These visits will verify that the infrastructure is being deployed according to the

approved plan and that appropriate measures are in place to ensure sustainability, accessibility, and optimal usage by the research community.

Responsibility and Accountability

The Lead Applicant named against each Infrastructure grant has primary responsibility and accountability for the management of the grant, including all associated reporting, in accordance with Research Ireland General Terms and Conditions. Where the Lead Applicant is unable to continue in this role, an alternative investigator must be nominated by the Research Body and approval must be sought from Research Ireland in advance of this change.

While the Lead Applicant has primary responsibility for reporting, the Lead Research Body is required to ensure that the Lead Applicant complies with all necessary reporting requirements within the timeframes specified by Research Ireland.

Auditing and Review

Infrastructure grants may also be subject to a financial audit and/or operational review as part of the post-award management and oversight procedures, as per Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions. These reviews may encompass environmental impact assessments, usage statistics, and adherence to access policies to ensure that the infrastructure continues to serve the broader research community effectively.

6   Research Ireland Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the Grant Terms and Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with Research Ireland policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any Research Ireland programme. All members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies. Please note that some policies are being updated to reflect the expanded remit of Research Ireland and in the interim, the existing polices of the legacy agencies should be followed.

- Animal Usage
- Research Integrity
- Maternity Supplement
- Appeals Process
- Child Protection
- Data Protection Policy
- Open Research
- Data Management

As noted, Research Ireland's policies are under development and will be added to the Research Ireland website once finalised. For information on other policies:

- Visit https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ if grant was formerly with Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)
- Visit https://research.ie/about-us/policies/ if grant was formerly with the Irish Research Council (IRC)

For any questions concerning Research Ireland, SFI or IRC policies, please email researchpolicy@researchireland.ie.

7   Further Information

All information related to the Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme is available on the programme webpage:

https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/infrastructure/

For all additional queries please contact: infrastructure@researchireland.ie

Appendix A: Research Ireland Infrastructure Programme Review Process

The review criteria in Section 4 will be applied at all stages of the review process. The four review criteria used in this programme (see below) are **equally weighted**. Final scores obtained for each application will be rounded to the nearest half point.[40]

All proposals submitted to the Research Ireland Infrastructure programme will be assessed for eligibility; proposals meeting the eligibility requirements will be reviewed as outlined below.

Both stages of the review process will be carried out by the same international expert panel.

Stage 1 Review

The assessment will be carried out remotely by a number of international reviewers. All proposals will receive a minimum of three reviews.

Review Type	Research Ireland Infrastructure Stage 1 Review Research Ireland Infrastructure Stage 2 Review
Review Questions	**1. Question pertaining to Justification of Need** Please review the detailed description of infrastructure request and comment on the justification of need of the requested infrastructure. In your assessment, please consider: whether the requested infrastructure is cutting-edge and innovative; the technical validity of the infrastructure to achieve the stated research activity/activities; whether the requested infrastructure will provide value for money; and whether the applicant has demonstrated that similar infrastructure is not readily available and accessible locally and/or nationally. Half scores are permitted. • 1 = Very poor justification of the need for the requested infrastructure • 2 = Poor justification of the need for the requested infrastructure • 3 = Good justification of the need for the requested infrastructure • 4 = Strong justification of the need for the requested infrastructure • 5 = Very strong justification of the need for the requested infrastructure

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[40] Research Ireland reserves the right to adjust this rounding based on the number of applications received. Applicants will be made aware of any changes to the review process.

2. Question pertaining to Potential for Broad Collaboration across the Irish Research Community

Please review the list of key users and letters of support from collaborating Research Bodies and comment on the potential for broad collaboration across the Irish Research Community.

In your assessment, please consider: whether the applicant has convincingly described that the infrastructure has the potential for broad usage across Ireland; and whether the applicant has demonstrated the potential for meaningful collaborations with Universities, IoTs/TUs, institutions in Northern Ireland, other eligible Research Bodies and Research Ireland Research Centres.

Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Very poor potential for broad collaboration
- 2 = Poor potential for broad collaboration
- 3 = Good potential for broad collaboration
- 4 = Strong potential for broad collaboration
- 5 = Very strong potential for broad collaboration

3. Question pertaining to Strategic Impact

Please review the Impact Statement prepared by the lead applicant and comment on the potential strategic impact of the infrastructure.

In your assessment, please consider: whether the proposed infrastructure has the potential for long-term benefits and impacts in enhancing the current research activities of Research Ireland-funded researchers in Ireland; how the infrastructure investment could be used to leverage non-Exchequer funding (e.g. future Horizon Europe funding); potential for supporting the recruitment of world-leading researchers; the proposed industry usage of infrastructure (both SMEs and MNCs); and how the requested infrastructure has the potential to build on institutional or national strategy.

Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Very low strategic impact potential
- 2 = Low strategic impact potential
- 3 = Good strategic impact potential
- 4 = High strategic impact potential
- 5 = Very high strategic impact potential

4. Question pertaining to Management, Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

Please review the management and sustainability plan, infrastructure implementation plan, green procurement plan, environmental impact statement, and access charge plan(s) and comment on their quality.

In your assessment, please consider:

- The overall quality of the management and sustainability plans
- The quality of the infrastructure implementation plan, detailing how the infrastructure will be set up, operated and managed
- The thoroughness of the green procurement plan and adherence to Green Procurement Guidelines
- The quality of the environmental impact statement, including considerations for the lifecycle environmental footprint of the infrastructure
- The quality of the access charge plans
- Whether the application demonstrates effective negotiation with suppliers for discounts
- Whether appropriate maintenance and technical support provisions are included
- Whether industry cost share arrangements are included and clearly explained

Data Management Plan

Drawing upon your subject matter expertise, please indicate whether the data management plan (DMP) is sufficient or insufficient (lack of information or deemed incorrect).

- Is the data management plan sufficient? Yes / No
- If the data management plan is not sufficient, please explain.

Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Very poor quality management, sustainability and environmental plans
- 2 = Poor quality management, sustainability and environmental plans
- 3 = Good quality management, sustainability and environmental plans
- 4 = Very good quality management, sustainability and environmental plans
- 5 = Outstanding management, sustainability and environmental plans

Applicant Response

Following Stage 1 review, all applicants will receive anonymised reviewer comments. Applicants will have the opportunity to submit a formal response addressing these comments. A defined period will be allocated for this response phase and applicants will receive advance notice of the specific dates and guidelines.

Stage 2 Review

The international reviewers who conducted the Stage 1 assessments will convene as a remote sitting panel for Stage 2. Prior to this panel meeting, reviewers will receive:

- All written reviews and scores from the Stage 1 assessment

- The applicant's response to these reviews

During the panel meeting, each proposal will be discussed comprehensively. The panel will agree on final scores and make funding recommendations based on these deliberations.

Ranking and Funding Decisions

Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest half point. When ranking applications, Research Ireland will apply the following process:

1. Applications will be ranked in descending order based on their final scores.
2. In cases where applications receive identical final scores, priority will be given to those with the highest score for "Potential for Broad Collaboration across the Irish Research Community".
3. If applications remain tied after applying the first tiebreaker, Research Ireland will use the score for "Strategic Impact" as a second tiebreaker.
4. If applications still remain tied after applying both tiebreakers, Research Ireland may employ a randomisation/lottery process and/or additional tiebreakers.

Research Ireland will fund proposals in ranked order until the programme budget is exhausted. Applications of sufficient quality that cannot be funded due to budget constraints may be placed on a reserve list.

Reserve List Management

If additional funding becomes available after the initial grants are made, Research Ireland will normally allocate this funding to proposals on the reserve list in ranked order. However, if the available funding is insufficient to support the next ranked proposal in its entirety, Research Ireland reserves the right to skip this proposal and proceed to fund the next proposal(s) on the reserve list that can be fully supported with the available budget.

Applicants will receive the panel's detailed report as feedback, regardless of the funding outcome.

Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the review process, including the level of score rounding, depending on the number and quality of applications received. Any such modifications will be communicated to applicants and Research Offices.