

CALL TEXT

Support for higher education landscape reforms

Call for submissions March 2018

Context

The National Strategy for Higher Education provides for substantial changes to the landscape of Irish higher education.

The HEA, with the support of the Department of Education and Skills, recognises that such reforms carry additional costs and has provided for a fund to support consortia engaged in implementing reforms of the higher education landscape, including those seeking designation as Technological Universities. The fund is not expected to be able to cover all costs arising, but to make a contribution to those costs.

The HEA is now inviting submissions for funding support in respect of the costs arising from landscape reform. The total funding available under this call will be c. € 12M (including c. € 10M funding from the Department of Education and Skills in support of Technological University development).

This call follows the allocation of similar landscape reform funding by the HEA in 2017.

Policy Environment

The report on the *Reconfiguration of the Irish System of Higher Education, 2012*¹, set an outline structure for the higher education system, including numbers, types and locations of institutions and their agreed missions. Aligned to this, the HEA evaluates the performance of institutions, based on their missions, through a process of strategic dialogue and performance funding.

In recent years, the HEA agreed to provide funding to support the sorts of changes recommended in the above report, given that such mergers and reconfigurations have costs attached. The HEA provided such funding to assist the institutions concerned in proceeding with the actions required.

In 2017, the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton T.D., together with the Minister of State for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. announced² their intention to prioritise the passing of the Technological Universities Bill following Government approval to

¹ See: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/International-Panel-Report-on-Reconfiguration.pdf>

² <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2017-Press-Releases/PR2017-17-07.html>

the drafting of insertions and amendments to the 2015 Bill. The legislation resumed its passage through the Oireachtas and has now been enacted.

The HEA has developed this call, mindful of clear Government policy to support the development of landscape reform projects, including the development of Technological Universities. At the same time, there is a need to ensure appropriate accountability and value for money in respect of funding to be allocated.

The 2018 call will also consider applications for national shared initiatives in support of landscape reform and technological university developments.

The call requires that those making a submission should set out progress to date, expected costs and milestones for each phase of the proposed project, along with an overall cost and expected completion date in order to demonstrate a long term strategic approach to landscape reform.

Criteria

As in previous calls, in allocating funding, the HEA will have regard to the following criteria:

- Scale of the project – e.g. numbers of students, staff, affected by the reform;
- Level of co-funding provided by institutions;
- Track record of success in the development of the project to date. This might include:
 - Previous institutional funding allocated;
 - Significant milestones achieved;
 - Progress on project plans as provided under the 2017 landscape reconfiguration funding round;
 - Evidence of quality improvements and/or capacity improvements and/or of cost efficiencies achieved in the process to date; and,
 - Costs and expenditure to date.

Process

Following receipt of applications, the Executive will review the submissions and make a recommendation to a HEA Board Sub-Committee for consideration. The Sub-Committee may meet with the consortia with a view to better understanding the detail of the application and providing a level of oversight and accountability for the landscape reform underway. It is expected that such meetings, as required, will be scheduled before Summer 2018.

Format of submissions

Institutions/Consortia are asked to complete the attached template having regard to the following format in making submissions.

Strategy and objectives

Institutions should set out:

- Alignment with national strategy;
- Specific objectives and indicators of success for the funding sought.

Funding sought

Institutions should set out the funding being sought in the application and the purposes for which it is proposed.

Institutions should also provide an annualised estimate of the total cost of the overall plan.

Insofar as the institution envisages that further costs, which are not being sought as part of this plan, will arise, the institution should provide details of same along with an indication of how these future costs might be met.

Co-funding being provided

Institutions should set out the funding they propose to provide for the project in question.

Closing date

Submissions should be received by the HEA in electronic format before **5pm, Thursday April 26th 2018** (sfitzgerald@hea.ie). A signed / hard copy is not required.

External assistance

The HEA may seek external assistance in assessing any submissions made.

Eligible institutions

Landscape reform or Technological University consortia and associated national shared initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- a) NUIG/ St. Angela's College, Sligo
- b) UL/MIC
- c) DIT/ IT Blanchardstown/ IT Tallaght
- d) Cork IT/ IT Tralee
- e) Waterford IT/ IT Carlow
- f) IT Sligo/ Letterkenny IT/ Galway-Mayo IT

Applications under this call will also be accepted from any of the above landscape reform or technological university consortia which have been, or propose to be, expanded to include new partners.

ENDS