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Southern Regional Assembly

HEA

AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

TU Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise scheme (TU RISE)

CALL DOCUMENT 2023

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1. Context

1.1 European Regional Development Fund

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic, social, and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. The objectives of the fund are to create a competitive and smarter Europe, a greener transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe, and a Europe closer to citizens by fostering sustainable and integrated development at a regional level. The fund finances programmes with shared responsibility between the European Commission and national and regional authorities in Member States. In Ireland, two ERDF Regional Programmes have been launched for the period 2021-2027 totalling €863 million, of which €396 million is funded by the Government of Ireland. The Northern and Western Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the [Northern and Western Regional Programme](#). The Southern Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the [Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme](#). The Regional Programmes focus on three strategic outcomes:

- Strategic Priority 1: Smarter and More Competitive Regions
- Strategic Priority 2: Low Carbon, Energy Efficient Regions
- Strategic Priority 3: Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development

The objectives of Priority 1 will be delivered through six funding schemes, one of which is the HEA TU Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise scheme (TU RISE).

These six schemes focus investment on developing smarter and more competitive regions by building Research Development and Innovation capacity within the public research institutions in regions, by accelerating the translation of cutting-edge research into commercial applications at a regional level, by supporting innovation diffusion and by strengthening regional innovation ecosystems in line with



Ireland's [Smart Specialisation Strategy](#) and the [Regional Enterprise Plans](#). TU RISE shares a common goal with other schemes funded under Priority 1 to create a resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and competitive economy in the regions by bringing knowledge and expertise out of TUs and into the regions and generating opportunities for enterprises to draw on academic expertise within institutions.

1.2 Landscape reform and the Technological University sector

Recent reform of the technological sector through the creation of TUs aims to raise standards, deliver better quality outcomes for students and other stakeholders in the regions, and to enhance the overall performance of the sector by building critical mass. The TU RISE scheme contributes towards this process of reform by supporting research capacity building that will accelerate the impact of the new TUs on their regions. The TU RISE scheme will complement changes achieved as a result of the Technological University Transformation Fund (TUTF) and teaching and learning enhancement under the N-TUTORR programme, which is funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). These separate funding schemes with distinct objectives will increase the scale, critical mass, and quality of institutions ensuring that they are both regionally impactful and competitive internationally.

2. Technological University Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise (TU RISE)

2.1 Scheme overview

The Technological University Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise scheme (TU RISE) will enhance central research functions in higher education institutions in the technological university sector to further institutions' engagements with their



regions.¹ The purpose of the scheme is to establish, strengthen, and systemise research and innovation offices in Technological Universities (TUs) to enable greater and more structured engagement with local and regional enterprises and community stakeholders. The benefits of research and innovation offices will be accelerated and cascaded across disciplines and campuses of institutions through staff development, including increased researcher human capital, at faculty/school level. As such, TU RISE will result in a deepening of research-led teaching and learning excellence, including at apprenticeship and post-graduate levels, extension of research fields, and greater capacity within TUs to serve national and regional strategic objectives in line with Ireland's [Smart Specialisation Strategy \(S3\)](#).

The TU RISE scheme will make a total of €83.68 million in funding available via two regional programmes. Funding of €63.68m is available under the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme, and funding of €20m is available under the Northern and Western Regional Programme. Institutional eligibility to apply for these programmes is outlined below.²

Under TU RISE, funding is available for activities arising from eligible costs for four years (48 months). An additional 12 months is available for costs relating to research students only.³

2.2 Institutional eligibility by regional programme

Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme (€63.68M)

¹ The technological university sector is understood in this context to comprise Technological Universities and Institutes of Technology. A list of institutions eligible for funding under the scheme is provided below in Section 2.2.

² Please note that proposals from HEIs which are not listed above, or do not have a dedicated pay budget from either the HEA or the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and that are not encompassed by the Employment Control Framework, will not be considered eligible for TU RISE funding.

³ Information on eligible costs as well as funding of research students under TU RISE is available in Section 2.6: Allocation of Funding.



- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (Eastern and Midland Region)
- Dundalk Institute of Technology (Eastern and Midland Region)
- Munster Technological University (Southern Region)
- South East Technological University (Southern Region)
- Technological University Dublin (Eastern and Midland Region)
- Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (Eastern and Midland Region, Southern Region)

Northern and Western Regional Programme (€20M)

- Atlantic Technological University

[2.3 Responsibility for and management of the scheme](#)

The Southern Regional Assembly and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, as the Managing Authorities for the respective regional programmes, have overall responsibility for ERDF-funded programmes. The HEA has been identified by the Regional Assemblies as the Intermediate Body for the delivery of the TU RISE scheme. In this capacity, the HEA will manage the operations of the TU RISE scheme, including the application and selection of proposals, distribution of funding, and project monitoring and reporting over the lifetime of the scheme. The HEA will work closely with the Managing Authorities to ensure that TU RISE is delivered in compliance with all relevant national and EU regulations and guidance.

[2.4 Scope and outcomes of the scheme](#)

TU RISE contributes towards higher education landscape reform by supporting research capacity building that accelerates the impact of the new TUs on their regions. The scheme will enable the establishment and development of dedicated research and innovation offices in institutions to support expanded research fields and



specialisations and drive further engagement with regional enterprises, in particular, small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The central, strategic support provided by research and innovation offices will be bolstered by increases in researcher human capital at faculty/school level, which will accelerate and ensure research capacity building across institutions' disciplines and campuses.

TU RISE responds to S3 ambitions by strengthening TUs as regional innovation leaders. It aims to build new and additional capacity to facilitate and enable knowledge transfer and S3 objectives. By supporting enhanced research, development and innovation capabilities and work placements into enterprises, TU RISE activities will bring knowledge and expertise out of TUs and into the regions and generate opportunities for enterprises to draw on academic expertise within institutions. This exchange is a critical enabling step in cultivating engagement with SMEs and building a pipeline for further collaborative projects.

Scheme outcomes are expected to be:

1. Establishment and/or development of central research functions in institutions to support research capacity building and further engagement with regions. This will include, but is not limited to:
 - a) Recruitment of research office staff to support research capacity building across the institution and facilitate stronger engagement with local and regional business, industry, and enterprise stakeholders.
 - b) The establishment and/or development of centralised research advisory and support services to promote and provide staff development and training. The provision of strategic, central staff development and training opportunities will support research capacity building across disciplines in the institution and encourage stronger engagement with local and regional business, industry, and enterprise stakeholders. Enhancement of staff



development provision will generate more applications to, and success with, national and international research funding calls, encourage structured collaborative knowledge transfer and networking, and support postgraduate and research student recruitment, supervision, and training.

2. Enhancement of institutional research capacity through increasing researcher human capital in research areas that have potential to facilitate stronger engagement with regional enterprise aligned to Ireland's [Smart Specialisation Strategy](#) and the [Regional Enterprise Plans](#).

Increased researcher human capital will extend the research fields and research specialisation of TUs and enhance institutions' research capacity to serve national and regional strategic objectives. Researcher human capital will be enhanced by:

- a) Recruitment of postdoctoral fellows at a faculty/school/discipline level in research areas of strategic importance to institutions and/or regions. Bringing relevant research expertise to institutions, fellows will enable knowledge transfer by generating opportunities for engagement with enterprise. Fellows will further enhance institutional research capacity at faculty/school/discipline level through research collaboration with academic staff, research-led teaching, and supervision of graduate research students, thus generating further institutional capability for stronger engagement with regional enterprises in the short and medium term.
- b) Recruitment of postgraduate research students (e.g., PhD; Research Masters) in research areas of strategic importance to institutions and/or regions aligned to regional priorities in Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy. Undertaking relevant research projects, students will enhance institutional capability in research areas that will stimulate engagement with enterprise. This engagement will be fostered through educational



placements in SMEs/industry relevant to their research. In the medium to long term, these research students will form a pipeline of talent for TUs – providing active researchers that will enable institutions to enhance research intensity – and regional enterprises.

- c) Design and/or development of undergraduate and postgraduate modules to integrate, enhance, and deepen research-led teaching and learning excellence and provide further opportunities for enterprise engagement. Short educational placements in industry/SMEs will enable students to develop their knowledge and skills and provide a pipeline of future talent for institutions' research programmes and industry.

2.5 Performance Indicators for the scheme

The ERDF takes a performance-based approach to the dispersal of funding, therefore, allocations and continued inclusion in the scheme is dependent on performance delivery, continued eligibility, and compliance with management and control systems. The performance framework is composed of output and result indicators linked to the specific objectives.

Projects supported by TU RISE are expected to contribute to each of the output indicators listed in the tables below (Table 1 & 2: Performance Indicators). By delivering on these output targets (RC001, RC004, RC005) the projects will contribute to the result indicators (RCR03) listed in the tables. In the application template institutions will be required to detail how the project intends to meet the output targets/result indicators. Institutions will then be required to report on progress against indicators bi-annually.

Projects will also be required to engage in equality and human rights monitoring and must collect, analyse, and report on relevant data sets. This will include reporting on



the number of engagements with female-led enterprise, which has been identified as a sub-indicator for the TU RISE scheme. Further information on equality monitoring, including this sub-indicator, is provided in Section 4.2.

Understanding Targets and Milestones under ERDF

Milestones and targets allow the European Commission and the Member State to measure progress towards the achievement of the specific objectives.

Under ERDF, a 'Target' means a pre-agreed value to be achieved at the end of the eligibility period (end of 2029) in relation to an ERDF output indicator or ERDF result indicator. Progress towards and attainment of targets will be used to measure institutions' performance under TU RISE.

Under ERDF, a 'Milestone' means an intermediate value to be achieved by the end of 2024 in relation to an output indicator. While 2024 is early in the lifetime of projects funded under TU RISE, this reporting interval is prescribed in the Regulations and is common across all ERDF co-funded projects across all Member States.⁴

As part of the application, institutions are expected to set out attainable target metrics for project activities. In determining targets, institutions should give due consideration to the total target metrics for the relevant regional programme which are detailed in Tables 1 & 2 below. In determining milestone values to be attained by the end of 2024, institutions should give due consideration to the time required to ramp up project activity post-award as well as the definitions noted below.

⁴ ERDF milestones and targets are distinct from the understanding of milestones and targets under the NRRP-funded NTUTORR programme, where their attainment is a European Commission requirement for the release of funding.



RCO01 Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large): refers to the total number of distinct enterprises supported and not repeat engagements. Reporting of values achieved will include a breakdown by company size.⁵

RCO05 New Enterprises supported: An enterprise is considered new if it did not exist three years before the support is provided. RCO05 is a subset of RCO01 and indicates how many of the total enterprises supported are new enterprises.

RCR03 Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation: RCR03 is a result indicator that seeks to establish how many SMEs introduce product or process innovation as a result of the support provided.

RCO01F (sub indicator) No. of Female-led Enterprises supported: RCO01F is a subset of RCO01 and this sub indicator will capture how many of the total number of enterprises supported are female-led. In this context, female-led enterprise is understood as 1) female(s) own at least 25% of the shareholding in the company 2) female(s) hold at least one C-level executive position in the organisation. See Section 4.2 for further details.

⁵ Company size is defined as follows: Micro enterprise (≤ 10 employees and annual turnover \leq EUR 2 million, or balance sheet \leq EUR 2 million); Small enterprise (10-49 employees and annual turnover $>$ EUR 2 million - \leq EUR 10 million or balance sheet in $>$ EUR 2 million - \leq EUR 10 million); Medium enterprise (50-249 employees and annual turnover $>$ EUR 10 million - \leq EUR 50 million or balance sheet in EUR $>$ EUR 10 million - \leq EUR 43 million); Large enterprises ($>$ 250 employees and turnover $>$ EUR 50 million or balance sheet $>$ EUR 43 million). If either of the 2 thresholds (employees and annual turnover/balance sheet) is exceeded the enterprises shall be categorised in the size category above. (ESTAT based on EC Recommendation 2003/361/EC, Annex, Articles 2- 3). Size of the enterprise supported is measured at the time of the first engagement.



Table 1: Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme: Performance Indicators

Indicator Code	Indicator Name	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2024	Target 2029
RCO01	Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	80	937
RCO04	Enterprises with non-financial support ⁶	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	80	937
RCO05	New enterprises supported	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	16	240
RCR03	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation	Enterprises	0	2021	n/a	562
RCO01F (Sub Indicator)	No. of Female Led Enterprises supported	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 2: Northern and Western Regional Programme: Performance Indicators

Indicator Code	Indicator Name	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2024	Target 2029
RCO01	Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	20	236
RCO04	Enterprises with non-financial support ⁷	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	20	236
RCO05	New enterprises supported	Enterprises	n/a	n/a	4	60
RCR03	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation	Enterprises	0	2021	n/a	142
RCO01F (Sub Indicator)	No. of Female Led Enterprises supported	Enterprise	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

⁶ As all ERDF co-funded support to enterprises under TU RISE is non-financial, the metrics for RCO01 and RCO04 will be identical.

⁷ As all ERDF co-funded support to enterprises under TU RISE in non-financial, the metrics for RCO01 and RCO04 will be identical.



2.6 Allocation of funding

The total funding allocated to the TU RISE scheme is €83.68M, with €63.68M available under the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme and €20m available under the Northern and Western Regional Programme (see Section 2.2. for information on institutional eligibility by regional programme). Proposals for funding under TU RISE must be in respect of costs arising from the enhancement of institutional research capacity through establishing, strengthening, and systemising research and innovation offices and increasing researcher human capital, as outlined in Section 2.4 of this call document.

Applications for funding should include a project budget setting out the funding required over the timeframe of the scheme.⁸ The HEA will determine the amount of funding awarded to successful proposals (see Section 3). Please note that funding will be dispersed on a phased basis, and the release of funding after year one will be subject to demonstrated progress in the implementation of the project workplan, as captured via bi-annual reporting mechanisms.

Funding may be paused, removed, or redistributed by the HEA and Managing Authority if:

- (a) Progress is unsatisfactory.
- (b) Funds have not been used for the approved activities.
- (c) Reporting and monitoring requirements are not adhered to.
- (d) The project contravenes the standards and terms and conditions of the TU RISE scheme, ERDF, or the European Commission.
- (e) The terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and/or the TU RISE call document are not fulfilled.

⁸ Under TU RISE, funding is available for activities arising from eligible costs for four years (48 months). An additional 12 months is available for costs relating to research students only. See Section 2.6 below for further information.



Funding allocations to Institutions

- There is no maximum award value for TU RISE within the context of the overall total funding available; however, institutions are encouraged to consider the total funds available in the relevant regional programme when determining the amount of funding requested.
- Project budgets should present the total funding required over the timeframe of the scheme: 48 months with an additional 12 months available for costs relating to research students only. Any costs incurred outside the timeframes stipulated will be ineligible and the responsibility of the institution.
- The HEA will determine the amount of funding awarded to successful applicants, which may be less than the funding requested in the project budget.
- Funding will be released on a phased basis subject to satisfactory project progress.
- The information provided on the project budget may be subject to verification.
- Double funding is not permitted and institutions applying for funding under TU RISE should take the necessary steps to ensure there will be no double funding in respect of proposed activities.
- Funding under TU RISE is to support research capacity building in the institution and, as such, costs relating to retrospective or core activities are not permitted.
- All funding made available to institutions under TU RISE will be subject to compliance with EU State Aid rules.

TU RISE funding and State Aid

Each institution must ensure compliance with State Aid regulations and ensure that project activities do not give rise to unlawful State Aid. Funding allocated in



accordance with this notice falls outside the scope of the State Aid rules by virtue of, and in reliance on, Section 2.5, Commission Notice 2016/C 262/01.

Eligible expenditure

All fund activities must be directly related to the objectives and outcomes of the TU RISE scheme and must comply with the ERDF National Eligibility Rules for Expenditure 2021-2027. In particular, institutions are reminded that proof of expenditure is always required, and institutions should ensure that proposed expenditure can be supported by appropriate documentation to ensure an adequate and proper audit trail. This supporting documentation must be readily available to the HEA as well as ERDF programme authorities and their agents including the Managing Authorities, Accounting Function, Audit Authority, and European Commission. Applications for funding from TU RISE may be submitted under the cost categories set out below:

1. Direct staff costs
2. Research student stipends
3. Research student fees⁹
4. Other research student costs
5. Travel and subsistence
6. Collaboration and stakeholder engagement
7. Communication
8. Small equipment (<€10,000)
9. Digitisation / systems
10. Training and development
11. Other research capacity building costs
12. Overheads

⁹ Institutions should be aware that the Regional Assemblies, as the Managing Authorities for the ERDF Regional Programmes, are progressing a Simplified Cost Option for postgraduate fees with the Audit Authority. Use of ERDF funding to cover postgraduate fees is subject to a positive outcome.



Eligible direct costs

Direct staff costs¹⁰

- Staff employment, pension matters, and/or buy-out costs should be in accordance with institutional and national norms.
- Academic and research salary cost rates in accordance with national pay scales.
- Postdoctoral salary costs must begin no lower than at the first point on the Irish Universities Association salary scale, or an equivalent, and are expected to be a maximum of 24 months duration.

Research students: stipends and fees

- Research students funded from the TU RISE scheme should be working full time on a Masters (by research) or PhD project that reflects the scope and outcomes of this ERDF-co-funded scheme and includes engagement with enterprise.
- Research students (Masters and PhD) are expected to spend at least 12 weeks on placement with enterprise with a view to increasing engagement at an early career stage.
- Costs relating to research student fees and research stipends should be presented separately, as per the application template.
- Research student stipends must be no lower than €19,000 per annum for up to 4 years. Stipends are to support research activities pertaining to the TU RISE scheme and are ringfenced (i.e., it must not be used for any other purpose, it

¹⁰ Direct staff costs are defined by national rules and normally include the total remuneration, including in-kind benefits in line with collective agreements, paid to people in return for work related to the operation. They also include taxes and employees' social security contributions (first and second pillar, third pillar only if set out in a collective agreement or in the employment agreement) as well as the employer's compulsory and voluntary social contributions in line with Commission Notice Guidelines on the use of Simplified Cost Options within the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) – Revised Version (2021/C 200/01).



must be awarded (paid) in full to the student and must not be used to contribute to the institution's fees). Stipends may be periodically adjusted to reflect economic conditions and national policy.

- PhD students funded under TU RISE must be registered **no later than 1st November 2024** to facilitate the payment of stipends within the timeframe of the scheme. Under TU RISE, funding is available for four years (48 months). An additional 12 months is available for costs relating to research students only. Any costs incurred outside the timeframes stipulated will be ineligible and the responsibility of the institution.
- Postgraduate Fees of €5,500 per annum for up to 2 years for Masters (by research) students and up to four years for PhD students on a full-time basis. Postgraduate fees may be periodically adjusted to reflect economic conditions and national policy.¹¹

Other research student costs

- Research student equipment costs, consumables, and costs relating to engagements with enterprise.
- Equipment costs that directly relate to research students, such as laptops, should be included under this cost category. Please note that costs for laptops are capped at €2,000.
- Other research student costs should be specifically identified in Appendix 1 of the application form (Breakdown of Budget Costs) and any claims should be in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, national policy and the Circular Letters and other guidance issued from the Department of Finance, Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education,

¹¹ In cases where prior to the submission of the application for funding under the TU RISE scheme the institution has identified a highly competitive, named non-EU candidate for a Masters / PhD position, they may request up to an additional €4,000 per annum over-and above the standard (EU) fee contribution. Details of the recruitment process and the student's credentials must be included in the application (budget justification) and the additional funding for non-EU fees will be granted on a case-by-case basis.



Research, Innovation and Science, and the Revenue Commission in respect of expenses and allowances.

Travel and subsistence

- Travel and subsistence costs for staff engaging directly in project activities are allowable. Any costs claimed should be in accordance with the institution's travel and subsistence policies and procedures and the Circular Letters and other guidance issued from the Department of Finance, Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and the Revenue Commission in respect of travel expenses and allowances.

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

- Costs for collaborative activities and stakeholder engagement must directly relate to the scheme.

Communication

- Costs must relate to marketing, branding, and promotional activities that directly relate to project initiatives.

Small equipment (<€10,000)

- The cost of low-value equipment (i.e., single items with a value under €10k including VAT) required to deliver project activities may be included in the application with any such items specifically identified in Appendix 1: Breakdown of Budget Costs.
- Clear justification must be provided in the budget illustrating that the equipment is necessary to carry out the project deliverables and that such a facility is not available through other means to the institution.



- Costs for equipment that are not fundamental to an approved project will not be permitted.
- All equipment purchases must conform to normal procurement procedures.

Digitisation / systems

- Digitisation / system costs must directly relate to the purpose of the project (e.g., research management software).

Other research capacity building costs

- Any other costs required to support research capacity building in the institution must be specifically identified and justified with details provided in Appendix 1 of the application form (Breakdown of Budget Costs).

Eligible indirect costs¹²

Overheads

- The costs of institutional overheads may be included at 15% of eligible direct staff costs (full time personnel or full-time equivalency basis).¹³ Where a staff

¹² Indirect Costs are defined as costs which are not or cannot be connected directly to the implementation of the operation in question. Such costs could include administrative expenses, for which it is difficult to determine precisely the amount attributable to a specific operation or project (typical administrative/staff expenditure, such as: management costs, recruitment expenses, operation costs (e.g. accountancy; cleaning; telephone; water or electricity expenses) in line with Commission Notice Guidelines on the use of Simplified Cost Options within the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) – Revised Version (2021/C 200/01).

¹³ ERDF eligible overheads will be based on a flat rate of 15% of eligible direct staff costs as per Article 54(b) of Reg (EU) 2021/1060. The total value of the remuneration as defined by national rules can be considered as staff costs as they represent the actual remuneration for the work of that person in the operation and therefore should be taken into account for determining other types of costs of the operation (which are calculated by applying a flat rate to the direct staff costs). This applies also to cases where the salary is (partly) reimbursed or funded by third parties (e.g., direct staff was recruited with a recruitment subsidy; the flat rate is applied to the total value of the remuneration even if a part of it is paid by a third party). See Commission Notice Guidelines on the use of Simplified Cost Options within the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) – Revised Version (2021/C 200/01).



member is not working full time on the project, overheads may be calculated on a pro rata basis.

- Research student stipends should not be included as pay for the purpose of overhead calculation.

Ineligible expenditure

The following activities are ineligible for TU RISE funding:

- Core funding¹⁴
- Infrastructure costs
- Capital costs, including high-value equipment, (i.e., single items over €10k including VAT)
- Retrospective expenditure (i.e., costs incurred prior to the grant start date agreed with the HEA)
- Collaborators' salaries
- International collaborator research costs
- Technology transfer or patent costs
- Legal fees
- Relocation expenses

3. Application and Assessment Procedures

3.1 Application process

The application template consists of seven sections and one appendix.

- 1) Project Summary
- 2) Project Relevance
- 3) Project Design

¹⁴ TU RISE is designed to provide project funding for new activities not institutional core support.



- 4) Project Efficiency and Effectiveness
- 5) Project Governance and Financial Oversight
- 6) Project Standards
- 7) Authorised Signatures

Appendix 1: Breakdown of Budget Costs

Institutions should familiarise themselves with the information and guidance provided in this call document, including relevant hyperlinked documents, before attempting to complete the application form. Information provided in this document and in the application template should be read carefully to ensure that the institution's proposal is eligible and within scope of the scheme. Please note that information provided in the application form may be subject to verification. All proposals must be endorsed by the Institution's President. Electronic signatures (DocuSign/Adobe sign) may be used for this purpose.

Prior to signing a Grant Agreement and the dispersal of funding, successful institutions may be required to meet a number of conditions, including, but not limited to, the receipt of satisfactory reports on previous projects, submission of all documents referenced in the application form, and/or a revised budget and project plan. As such, any grant offer should be considered provisional until the HEA confirms that the relevant conditions have been met.

In submitting a proposal, institutions will be deemed to have accepted the conditions outlined in this call and to have agreed to be bound by them. Acceptance of an award by an institution will be in accordance with this call and any conditions as set out in a letter of offer and/or grant agreement.

Questions regarding the application process will be managed through an FAQ process (open until 7 September 2023 at 17:00) and should be sent to systemperformance@hea.ie.



Closing date and indicative timeline

Submissions must be received by the HEA in electronic format (**Word and pdf**) to systemperformance@hea.ie by **14 September 2023 at 17:00**. Applications will not be assessed if late or ineligible.

Applicants are expected to be informed of the outcome of the selection process in writing within 12 weeks of submission, with projects expected to commence in Q1 2024.

Data Protection

Institutions shall process personal data as required under this scheme in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Freedom of Information

Information held by the HEA on TU RISE will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act). Policies and procedures on access to information is set out in the following link: <https://hea.ie/freedom-of-information/>.

Institutions should be aware that applicant documentation will be made available to other ERDF programme authorities and their agents, including Managing Authorities, Accounting Function, Audit Authority, and European Commission, in order to meet their obligations under the Common Provisions Regulation.

3.2 Assessment of proposals

The HEA will independently review each application using the criteria outlined in Table 3: Assessment Criteria, which includes due consideration of project relevance, quality of the proposal and project design, efficiency and effectiveness, and governance, financial and risk management. Each criterion will be assessed using the



scoring scale set out in Table 4: Scoring Matrix. In order to be considered for funding, proposals must attain a minimum score of ‘3’ in each criterion. Proposals that do not achieve the minimum scoring threshold will be provided with feedback and the institution will have 14 days to revise and resubmit their proposal. Upon resubmission after 14 days, proposals will be re-reviewed independently by the HEA according to the process outlined above. Proposals that fail to achieve the minimum scoring threshold after revising and resubmitting will not be considered for funding.

3.3 Determination of funding allocations

The HEA will determine funding allocations for all proposals that have reached the minimum scoring threshold. In determining the allocation, the HEA will have due consideration of assessment scores and the HEA’s knowledge of institutional and sectoral capacity as the funder and regulator of the higher education sector in Ireland. This knowledge is drawn from formal national processes with institutions, including annual governance and financial reporting, and strategy and performance dialogue, and reporting on institutional progress with national strategic initiatives relating to skills, equity of access, gender equality, capital projects, and research, and with other funding streams managed by the HEA. The HEA will draw upon this knowledge to identify institutions that will maximise the potential of the funding and to make informed decisions regarding institutions’ absorptive capacity for further funding.

Table 3: Assessment Criteria

Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on regional needs and priorities, and alignment with Ireland’s Smart Specialisation Strategy. • Coherence with the policy objectives of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). • Proposed contribution to the national and institutional policy objectives, specific objectives and the use of appropriate outputs and results indicators and measures (i.e., performance indicators), as well as to the strategic priorities of Horizon Europe.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of, and ability to build on, existing national and international best practice, connecting research and innovation with enterprise. • Ability to contribute to interregional and international cooperation that will enable the institution to realise its potential in the region and beyond. • Activities/costs align with 'Eligible Expenditure'.
Quality of Proposal and Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and pertinent project objectives. • Credibility of the proposed approach. • Project plan is sound, and deliverable (in a 4-year timeframe) based on the work packages described. • Deliverables are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) and clearly identified for each work package (with appropriate reference to ERDF outputs and results indicators).
Efficiency & Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? • Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the action? • Appropriateness of allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role. • Clarity of roles and relationships with project stakeholders (enterprise, local authorities, state agencies, civic society).
Governance and financial oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness and effectiveness of governance structures and procedures, including financial and risk management and alignment with Horizontal Principles.¹⁵ • Strong project management structures and in the case of a consortia, a strong lead institution(s).

Table 4: Scoring Matrix

Score	Descriptor	
1	Poor	The proposal inadequately addresses the criterion or serious inherent weaknesses are present.
2	Fair	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but significant weaknesses are present.

¹⁵ Horizontal Principles include ensuring an effective monitoring mechanism for public procurement that meets National and EU regulation, capacity for effective application of State Aid rules, effective application and implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the United National Convention on the rights of persons with disability and the promotion of sustainable development including the 6 principles of DNSH.



3	Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4	Very good	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5	Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Appeals

The TU RISE scheme is a managed, non-competitive process and, as such, the HEA will engage with institutions across the process. In line with comparable funding schemes managed by the HEA, the HEA's decision on eligibility and funding allocations are final.

3.4 Agreements and payments

All institutions receiving funding under the TU RISE scheme will be required to return a Grant Agreement signed by the President, accepting the funds awarded and terms and conditions set out in that agreement, as well as the call document and the project proposal.

Funding will be disbursed on a phased basis. The HEA's primary engagement will be with a nominated staff member (Project Manager/Lead). The Grant Agreement may include reference to agreed benchmarks to be achieved by the institutions over the period of the project, together with obligations regarding the management, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of the project. It will also include requirements regarding communication and reporting.

3.5 Post award monitoring and reporting

Robust, evidence-based monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be established to ensure that the investment is achieving its intended strategic objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible. Reporting will occur on a bi-annual basis and



involve analysis of approved project workplans and budgets against interim and annual reports that detail progress. These reports will be comprised of narrative, work packages, and budget reports on progress.

Reports will include overviews of project progress, analysis of results, lessons learned, and governance and organisational updates. Additionally, progress meetings will be held with institutions on a quarterly basis. Institutions may also be subject to field monitoring visits by representatives of the HEA or external consultants contracted to assist with monitoring and verifying financial expenditure, progress, and results.

Monitoring and Reporting guidelines will make clear that funded institutions are expected to ensure that specific project expenditure is clearly identifiable and verifiable in accounting systems. This will include obligations to systematically record and monitor all project-related transactions against the approved project budget.

The HEA is committed to ensuring value for money and accountability in all its investments. Funding may be paused, removed or redistributed at the discretion of the HEA and the Managing Authority, if the terms of the Grant Agreement are not fulfilled or where there is insufficient progress on the project in accordance with monitoring and reporting guidelines and requirements.

4. Standards

4.1 Grant funding principles

Institutions should be aware of the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular (13/2014) relating to the Management of and Accountability of Grants as well as the ERDF National Eligibility Rules for Expenditure 2021-2027. Institutions will be asked to confirm that the funds provided by the HEA as outlined in the Grant Agreement will be used for the purposes intended and that



institutions will comply with the Statement of Principles for Grantees (Appendix 2 of Circular 13/2014) relating to: Clarity; Governance; Value for money; and Fairness. Institutions must also ensure that all public procurement is consistent with National and EU procurement legislation.

4.2 Enabling Conditions and Horizontal Principles of ERDF Funding

The TU RISE scheme is co-funded by ERDF (Regulation (EU) 2021/1060), which requires that all supported activities must be consistent with a number of 'Horizontal Enabling Conditions', Thematic Enabling Conditions (as cited in Article 15 of the CPR). These are a prerequisite for ERDF funding and must be fulfilled throughout the life of ERDF co-funded projects. In the case of non-compliance, ERDF funding may be revoked. These conditions include compliance with Public Procurement & State Aid rules, Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, as well as alignment of projects with Smart Specialisation (S3). These are detailed below. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to confirm compliance with the enabling conditions of ERDF to determine eligibility for funding.

Equality and Human Rights Principle

To ensure that the proposed project is non-discriminatory and transparent and integrates the Horizontal Principles the application must demonstrate the following:

- An outline of how the proposed project aligns with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNDRPD).



- How gender equality and equal opportunities have been considered in the development of the project proposal, and an outline of the specific actions that will be taken to ensure the provision of gender and equality, including the use of sex/gender disaggregated data to understand the beneficiaries of the TU RISE scheme.
- In regard to equality monitoring on project activities, institutions are required to collect, analyse and report on relevant data sets. This will include reporting on the number of engagements with female-led enterprise, which has been identified as a sub indicator for the TU RISE scheme (see Section 2.5). For this purpose, and in line with other ERDF schemes, female-led enterprise is understood as 1) female(s) own at least 25% of the shareholding in the company 2) female(s) hold at least one C-level executive position in the organisation.¹⁶ Equality monitoring may also include, but is not limited to:
 - Staff recruitment and retention rates.
 - Research student recruitment and retention rates.
 - Uptake and experience of training and development.
- Institutions are also expected to hold a valid Athena Swan Ireland award at the time of application and to be implementing an evidence-based gender/or EDI action plan for the duration of their projects. Institutions should be able to identify specific actions that support gender equality and equal opportunities that are particularly relevant to their projects.
- All project activities should adhere to institutional policies and procedures relating to equality and equal opportunities. In regard to recruitment, institutional policies should be applied to researcher as well as staff recruitment, with due consideration given to advertising, composition of shortlists and interview selection panels, and provision of appropriate training for panel members.

¹⁶ A C-level position includes Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO).



Do No Significant Harm (DNSH)

Neither the overarching TU RISE scheme nor individual supported projects therein will harm (1) climate change mitigation, (2) climate change adaptation, (3) sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, (4) the circular economy, (5) pollution prevention, and (6) control or the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Each application under this funding scheme will be required to clearly demonstrate their proposed contribution to Ireland's Climate Action Plan by promoting innovation and development of new technologies, greener campuses, and ensuring provision of a workforce skilled in sustainable techniques and technologies. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how they will promote sustainable development under the 6 principles of Do No Significant Harm (DNSH).

The “Do No Significant Harm” principle applies to all submissions from institutions seeking funding under this initiative and all projects must explicitly exclude:

- Activities related to fossil fuels (including downstream use), except for natural gas-based heat/power compliant with the conditions set out in annex III of the DNSH guidance.
- Activities under the ETS with projected CO₂ equivalent emissions that are not substantially lower than the relevant benchmarks established for free allocation.
- Activities linked to the disposal of waste in landfill, in mechanical biological treatment (MBT) plants, and incinerators for the treatment of waste.
- Activities where the long-term disposal of waste may cause long-term harm to the environment (e.g., nuclear waste).

Smart Specialisation



[Smart Specialisation](#) is an innovation policy concept that aims to boost regional enterprise innovation, contributing to growth and prosperity by helping and enabling regions to focus on their strengths. The European Commission has stipulated that S3 should determine RD&I funding. TU RISE is ERDF co-funded and, as such, applicants will be required to demonstrate via their proposals and ongoing reporting to the HEA over the duration of the scheme how they are working to support the regional priorities as set out in Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

State Aid

Each institution must ensure compliance with State Aid regulations and ensure that project activities do not give rise to unlawful state aid. Funding allocated in accordance with this notice falls outside the scope of the State Aid rules by virtue of, and in reliance on, Section 2.5, Commission Notice 2016/C 262/01.

Public Procurement

Institutions must comply with the Statement of Principles for Grantees ([Appendix 2 of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014](#)) relating to Clarity; Governance; Value for money; and Fairness, and ensure that all public procurement is consistent with National and EU procurement legislation.

4.3 Communication and visibility

As the TU RISE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Programme 2021-2027, all recipients of TU RISE funding must adhere to the communications requirements for their relevant region in line with Articles 22 (3) and 50 (1) (e) of the Common Provisions Regulations 2021/1060.

Successful applicants will be supplied with a guidance document outlining these requirements. Some of the key requirements for TU RISE include:



- Recipients of TU RISE funding must use the programme logo and funding statement on all physical and online communications elements.
- A permanent plaque highlighting ERDF support must be erected by the HEI on commencement of the project implementation.
- A dedicated webpage must be created on the HEI's main website to highlight the ERDF co-funded project.
- Social media posts of any HEI TU RISE activities must include the hashtag #euinmyregion.
- Recipients of TU RISE funding must ensure ERDF support and the Managing Authority is acknowledged in all advertisements, press releases and other promotional materials related to the TU RISE activities.

During the funding period, recipients of TU RISE funding may be asked to participate in events and site visits, as well as the publication of case studies or beneficiary stories to highlight the successes and benefits of ERDF co-funding. Additionally, a list of project recipients and associated Research Bodies under the ERDF Programme 2021-2027 will be published on the relevant Managing Authority's website and on the European Commission's Europe-wide EU funds beneficiary search platform, Kohesio. Non-compliance with Communications Requirements can result in a loss of up to 3% of ERDF financial support.

4.4 Data sources and funding oversight

The HEA will maintain data on the HEIs approved for grant awards and any associated contracts entered into by the HEIs will be reported to the HEA. HEIs shall retain and be open for inspection of all relevant data in relation to approved projects under the scheme. DFHERIS, the HEA and the HEIs are accountable both to the Oireachtas and to the Comptroller & Auditor General for their expenditure. Each have anti-fraud policies, procedures for dealing with protected disclosures and fraud reporting procedures. All procurement and project selection procedures are designed to



address any potential conflict of interest. Reliance will be placed on the normal budgetary processes for HEA funding, and the grant agreements with the HEIs will require adherence to the regulatory requirements.

Document Retention

All material related to the grant award should be retained for audit purposes, including financial, administrative, scientific and communications activities records to enable future audits related to the Reg (EU) 2021/1060, which requires that documents are retained for a 5-year period from 31 December of the year in which the last instalment of the grant payment is made by the HEA.