North South Research Programme 2024 Strand II: Emerging Hubs of Excellence and Strand III: Partnerships of Scale

User Guide for Applicants

Activity	Date
Call Launch	14th of October 2024
Expression of Interest Process Opens	15th of October 2024
FAQ process open	24th of October 2024
Expression of Interest Deadline	05th of December 2024
Eligibility to progress to Application Stage confirmed	18th December 2024
Online Portal Opening	Mid-January 2025
FAQ process ends	20th February 2025 No further FAQs will be accepted after the 17th of February 2024.
Online Application Submission Deadline	27th of February 2025
Research Office Endorsement Process Opening	04th of March 2025
Research Office Endorsement Deadline	14th of March 2025
Assessment Process Ends	30th of April 2025
Panel Assessment Meetings	May 2025
Call Outcome	June 2025
Award Start Date	Academic Year 2025/26

All deadlines are set at 4pm on each relevant day.

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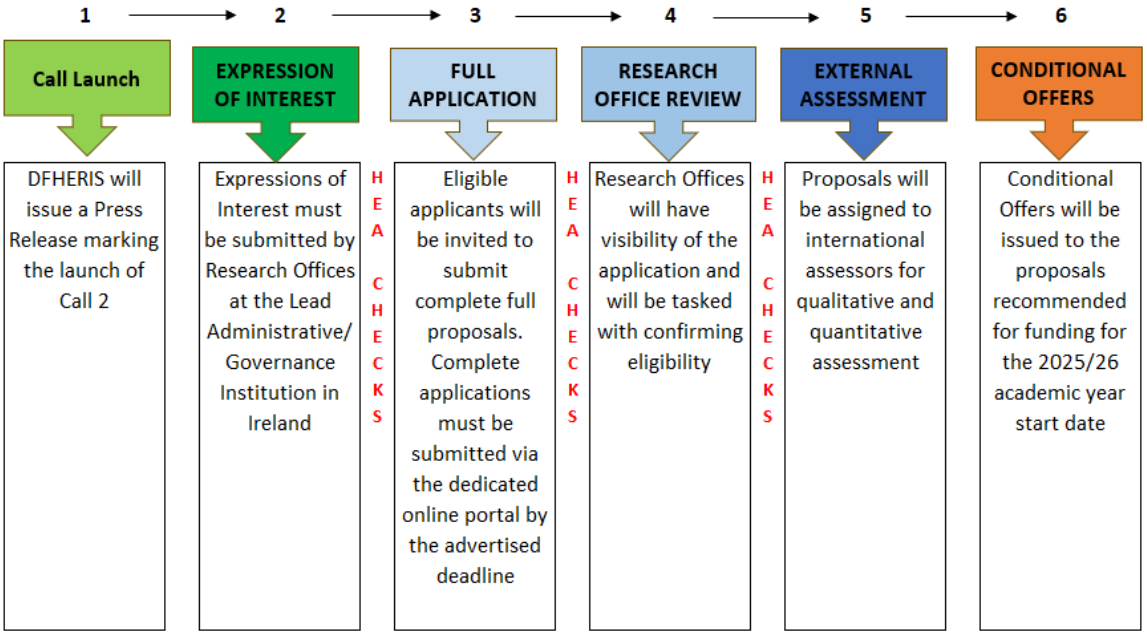
Overview of the Call Process



The progression of a proposal through phases 2-5 of the application process will be subject to the completion of eligibility checks by the HEA in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Call document 2024.

Glossary of Terms used in the User Guide for Applicants

The terms included in this glossary are to support the applicant in navigating the application process, application form and the online application portal. The Call Document includes a glossary of terms specific to the terms and conditions of the call.

Additional Partner	Additional Partners are from outside of Ireland and Northern Ireland and, subject to clear justification, may be included in a project proposal. Costs incurred by additional partners may not be included in the proposal or charged to the NSRP.
Commercial Application	The exercise, assignment, or license of any rights to make, have made, use, copy, sublicense, sell, or otherwise exploit an invention or work for short term economic or commercial gain.
Application Form	The 'Application Form' is the 'Primary' form which, along with the necessary supporting forms referred to as 'Linked Forms' on the online portal and the required endorsement form, must be completed in full and submitted through the online application system, WizeHive, before the application deadline.

Consortium	The lead institutions, together with any partner institutions, and any External and/or Additional partners involved in a proposal will be referred to as a Consortium. Their partnership will be governed by the Terms and Conditions of the award and a corresponding Research/Collaboration Agreement.
Consortium Co-Lead	Each Partner Institution within the consortium must have a Consortium Co-Lead who leads the research at their institution, provides oversight of the project work carried out at their institution and/or an agreed work package, and as appropriate, provides support to any members of the project research team within their institution.
Exploitation	The action of making use of and benefiting from project outputs and outcomes for economic or commercial gain in accordance with National Intellectual Property Protocol
Contingency Costs	These are the estimated costs of identified risks which are intended to mitigate against said risks and cover the costs incurred in the event of their occurrence. These are not direct costs and are, therefore, not to be budgeted with the intention of being used for essential project activities. No more than 10% of the requested funding may be set against contingency costs.
Expression of Interest (EOI) Form	Submission of an Expression of Interest form is the first step of the application process. A complete Expression of Interest & Endorsement form must be submitted to the HEA by the Research Office at the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland on behalf of the proposed applicants by the EOI deadline. Approval to proceed to submit a full proposal or otherwise will be communicated to the Research Office by the HEA.
External Partners	External Partners from further education, civic society, enterprise and innovation from Ireland and Northern Ireland. NGOs, charities, and companies should be officially registered. Research performing organisations and other government agencies may be also included as External Partners. External Partners may be allocated a maximum of 10% of the proposed overall budget.
Host Institutions	Institutions within which a Lead Investigator or Consortium Co-Lead is employed and where research students and team members are registered/employed.
Indicative Application Form	The indicative Application Form will be available on the HEA website before the online portal opens for the submission of complete proposals. The indicative Application Form is intended for information purposes only, to provide applicants with an overview of the questions included in the portal.
International Assessment Panel	An independent assessment panel comprising international experts in relevant fields and/or with experience in institutional, research and policy development at a high strategic level, tasked with assessing proposals against the

	prescribed evaluation criteria for the North South Research Programme.
Lead Administrative/ Governance Institution in Ireland	The Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland will be required to provide documentation as requested by the HEA on behalf of all partners in their consortium at all stages of the award. Responsibility for oversight and governance of the award lies with the Lead Administrative /Governance Institution in Ireland.
Lead Institution in Northern Ireland	There must be at least one Lead Institution in Northern Ireland associated with each proposal.
Lead Investigator	In the context of the North South Research Programme, there must be at least two Lead Investigators: one in Ireland employed at the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution, and one in Northern Ireland employed at the Lead Institution in Northern Ireland.
Linked Form	A 'Linked Form' is a supporting form – which is connected to the Application Form. These forms provide information relevant to the Team Composition, HEI Partner Institution in Ireland, HEI Partners Institutions in Northern Ireland and External and Additional Partners.
ORCID	ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their research work across different platforms. Please note the provision of an ORCID is not mandatory.
Overhead	Institutional overheads are indirect costs associated with running the project. These are calculated as a percentage (up to a maximum 25%) of funded staff's pay costs (salary and buy-out costs).
Partner Institution	A Partner Institution either in Ireland or Northern Ireland is part of the consortium. There is parity of esteem between a Partner Institution, the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland and the Lead Institution in Northern Ireland.
Primary Point of Contact	Each research proposal must identify a Primary Point of Contact in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland. The Primary Point of Contact may be the Lead Investigator, a project manager or another suitably appointed representative in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland.
Research Offices	Research Offices are responsible for the development and promotion of Higher Education Institutions' research efforts. Research Offices engage with the HEIs' research community to identify and secure funding as well as provide support throughout the research lifecycle.
Submission Pack	Excel worksheet provided to the Research Office (RO) in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland to

	collate a list of Expression of Interest submissions. The template will be used by the HEA to confirm approval for a proposed applicant to progress submission of a full application through the online system, or otherwise.
WizeHive (WH)	WizeHive is the online application system used by the HEA to run the North South Research Programme. It is also used for monitoring and reporting purposes during the post award phase.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide potential applicants through the application process of submitting their proposal(s) to the North South Research Programme Call 2 which is centred on **Strand II Emerging Hubs of Excellence** and **Strand III Partnerships of Scale.** The programme will support academic research teams to collaborate on agreed work programme and is supported by the Government of Ireland funding through the Shared Island Fund.

Please ensure to read the Call 2 Document and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 2024 closely while preparing an Expression of Interest and proposal for final submission. Supporting documents for the submission of an application to the North South Research Programme can be found on its dedicated webpage and in the appendices of this document.

Should **queries** arise they will be addressed through the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) process only. Applicants can submit their queries to the Research Office of the proposed Lead Administrative/Governance Institution, where the Research Office will collate all queries. FAQs may be submitted to *research@hea.ie* **by Research Offices only**.

The 'Frequently Asked Questions 2024' will be updated each week from the opening of the Expression of Interest (EOI) process until one week before the application deadline. The HEA will, as far as possible, address FAQs received **by 12pm each Wednesday** during the same week. The window for submitting FAQs will close at **4pm on Monday the 17th of February** and the FAQ process will end on **Thursday the 20th of February 2025**.

Call Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Institutions & Consortium Requirements

Eligible Institutions

The programme is open to all higher education and research institutions and organisations as listed in "Appendix 1 – List of eligible institutions" of the Call Document 2024. All institutions and Lead Investigators as well as Consortium Co-Leads must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Call Document 2024.

Consortium Requirements

While there is no limit on the number of Partner Institutions, there must be at **least one lead HEI from Ireland** and **one lead HEI from Northern Ireland** and. Eligible institutions are listed in the Call Document 2024 in Appendix 1.

The lead HEI in Ireland will be regarded as the **Lead Administrative/Governance Institution** for HEA communication, governance and award management purposes.

The application may include **other higher education partners (Partner Institutions).** Eligible partner institutions are listed in the Call Document 2024 in Appendix 1.

The addition of **External Partners** from Ireland and Northern Ireland is encouraged. Eligible partner institutions are listed in the Call Document 2024 in Appendix 1.

Other **Additional Partners** from outside of Ireland and Northern Ireland may be included in a project proposal provided their inclusion can be demonstrated by the proposers as bringing added value to the project and further support to the project in meeting the aims and objectives of the NSRP.

Eligible Lead Investigators & Consortium Co-Leads

Application to the NSRP is open to researchers in any discipline from early to advanced career stages. The Lead Investigators in Ireland and Northern Ireland and Consortium Co-Leads applying to the North South Research Programme must be, **at a minimum, two years post PhD**. They must have been awarded their doctoral degrees no later than 31st December 2022. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account. If a Lead Investigator/ Consortium Co-Lead has not yet graduated, all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis, must be complete within the required timeline.

Call Launch

A formal Press Release by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) will mark the launch of the North South Research Programme's second call. **NSRP Call 2024 will be focusing of Strand II – Emerging Hubs of Excellence and Strand III - Partnerships of Scale.**

Data Protection

During Expression of Interest and Application preparation

Information collected by applicants, in preparing, submitting and applying to the North South Research Programme during the application preparation process, should be done so in agreement, and with the consent of, the partners involved. Applicants should be cognisant of the data protection policies in their respective institutions regarding the sharing of draft and completed applications.

Copies of the application should be destroyed once they are no longer required by the proposers. Where a copy of the submitted application is retained for administrative purposes, it should be anonymised in line with institutional policies.

Data collection and processing

The HEA as data controller during the application process, processes personal data in line with the requirements of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information, please see the HEA Data Privacy Notice and the HEA North-South Research Programme 2024 Data Collection Notice which are available on the HEA website. Applicants should only provide the data requested and when providing proposal details (title, abstract, etc.) should avoid including data of any identifiable third-party subjects unless necessary to the project.

Expression of Interest

Submission of an Expression of Interest and Endorsement Form is the first step in the application process. Applicants should refer to the terms and conditions of the North South Research Programme Call 2024, consulting the 'Call Document 2024' in its entirety, to ascertain **whether they are eligible** to apply to the scheme.

A complete and endorsed Expression of Interest (EOI) **must be submitted** to the HEA (research@hea.ie) by **the Research Office** at the **Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland** by the EOI deadline of **4pm on Thursday the 5th of December 2024** on behalf of a proposed consortium.

The Expression of Interest & Endorsement Form, along with a **Research Office Submission Pack**, are available here on the HEA website.

The Research Office Submission Pack will be used by Research Offices when submitting EOIs from their institution to the HEA. When an RO submits an endorsed EOI to the HEA, high level details of the EOI are to be included in the Submission pack. The Submission Pack is to be updated each time the HEI submits an EOI to the HEA. Where possible EOIs should be submitted in bundles. Receipt of submission packs will be acknowledged.

Applicants must communicate with their Research Office in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland regarding the completion of the Expression of Interest process and the submission of an EOI.

Prior to the submission of an Expression of Interest by the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland, each Partner Institution **must** provide the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution with confirmation that they agree to be included in the submission and to support the proposal.

EOIs submitted directly by applicants to the HEA **will not be accepted.**

Approval to progress to the submission of a full proposal, **or otherwise**, will be communicated to the Research Office **by the HEA** through the return of the Submission Pack, inclusive of the HEA decision. Confirmation will be provided to the Research Office on a rolling basis. All approvals will be communicated to the Research Office on a rolling basis and no later than the 18th of December 2024.

It is the obligation of the Research Office at the **Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland** to communicate approval to progress to the full application, or otherwise, to the proposed applicants. The Research Office will do this in a timely fashion.

The link to the online application portal will be provided to the Research Office in the **Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland** by the HEA.

Application Overview and Requirements

Proposals will be accepted through the online portal WizeHive only.

Applications must be submitted on WizeHive by **4pm on Thursday 27th of February 2025**. Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

Once submitted through WizeHive, an application cannot be reverted back to draft and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.
Applications received that are not documented on the Research Office Submission Pack will not be accepted.

A full user guide to support applicants navigating the online system will be made available on the HEA website in January 2025.

Applying in Irish

Where the online application form requires applicants to complete templates to be uploaded to the system these uploads may be provided through Irish. Since assessors involved with the call will be international, assigning Irish language speakers to the assessment of the application may be difficult. Applicants may upload an English language translation of their application to the online portal. If the HEA cannot identify suitable assessors to review the application through Irish, the English language translation will be made available to assessors in the area. If the applicant does not upload an English language translation, and no suitable assessors are available to assess the application through the Irish language, the HEA will seek a translation of the proposal from external services to assign assessors. This translation will then be made available to assessors.

Submission Requirements

Type	Duration	Maximum Value of Award
Strand II: Emerging hubs of excellence.	42 – 48 months	€4,000,000

Strand III: Partnerships of Scale	42 – 48 months	€4,000,000

- Projects may run to a maximum of 48 months. Where the project duration is 42 months or less, reasons for the shorter duration and justification of the project's feasibility in that timeframe should be provided in the project proposal. Similarly, where the budget requested in a proposal is significantly lower than the maximum allowable amount, clear justification for the request should be included in the proposal.
- Projects are expected to begin in the academic year 2025/26. Further clarification will be provided at the award acceptance stage.
- All text in uploaded supporting documentation 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.
- 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.
- Where relevant insert tiny URLs into documents rather than long hyperlinks before they are converted into a PDF.
- The number of pages/words 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 with the exception of Irish language materials and an English language translation as outlined above. Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review and may render an application ineligible.
- Applicants must complete all required fields before submitting an application. The portal will not allow you to submit an application if required fields/forms are not addressed.
- All linked forms (supporting forms) necessary to support a proposal must be completed before an application is submitted.
- Applicants must ensure that Wi-Fi connectivity is strong and reliable when logging into the online application portal, especially when submitting the completed application on deadline day.
- It is advised that EOIs and proposals are submitted early to avoid any technical issues that may arise from increased server traffic on the day of the submission deadline.

To support applicants in the identification of the information required to facilitate the completion of their application on the portal, applicants and Research Offices may refer to the Indicative Application Form.

Note: Should it become apparent that any of the information provided in an application is inaccurate or is not verifiable with appropriate documentation, it will result in the application automatically being deemed ineligible.

Research Stream(s), Primary & Secondary Research Area(s)

In ***Section 3: Proposal Details*** of the Application Form, applicants will have to classify the primary research area, (i) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) or (ii) Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM).

Proposals may fall under one or both primary research areas and must therefore declare a primary research area for each stream selected.

Please note that a secondary research area may be selected for either AHSS or STEM research areas, independent of the primary research area(s) noted prior.
Relevant disciples are also to be selected.

Applicants may also provide their category code under the new Research Classification Ireland system.

Supporting Documentation

1. Design, Methodology, and Implementation

To be submitted in PDF format.

To be uploaded to the Application Form on the portal under Section 4.2 Design, Methodology, and Implementation.

Outputs are to be clearly identified as the planned activities based on the allocation of resources. Expected project outcomes and impact are to be included.

2. Gantt Chart

A Gantt Chart setting out a representation of the proposal's expected outputs and deliverables must be submitted along with the Design, Methodology, and Implementation template in Section 4.2 of the Application Form.

Please note that the HEA does not provide a Gantt Chart Template. Applicants may use one of their own choosing. Submitted in Excel *(.xlsx, .xls)* or PDF form.

The complete Gantt Chart is to be uploaded to the Application Form on the portal under Section 4.2 Design, Methodology, and Implementation.

3. Budget Template

To be submitted in Excel format (.xlsx, .xls).

Maximum award value is €4,000,000.00:

- ➔ Up to 10% of overall funding being sought may go to eligible External Partners.
- ➔ Up to 25% of pay costs may be sought in institutional overheads.
- ➔ Up to 10% of overall funding in being sought may be included as contingency costs, which are to be justified and budgeted to cover risk-related costs should they occur.

➔ Up to 50% of overall funding being sought may go to eligible partners (HEI and External) in Northern Ireland (including contingency costs). ➔ Additional partners (outside Ireland and Northern Ireland) may not be allocated funding.
Project Duration ➔ Minimum 42 months ➔ Maximum 48 months
One consolidated budget in Euros will be accepted per application (InforEuro to be used for FX rate calculation). The consolidated budget which must be submitted in .xlsx or .xls format.
Compliance with State Aid regulations and taxation matters must be ensured by host institutions.
Funding cannot be used for estates, room rental (excluding room conference, meeting room rental, focus group meetings), or office space.
Funding cannot be used as seed funding for other projects.

Please refer to the Sample Budget in the Budget Template to see an example of how the Budget Template is to be used.

Applicants should only provide the data requested and when providing proposal details avoid including data of any identifiable third-party subjects unless absolutely necessary to the project.
i.e., Staff members should not be named in the budget, this ensures confidentiality on sensitive information such as salary.

4. Application Endorsement Form

Application Endorsement Form - To be submitted in PDF.

All proposals submitted through the online system must be endorsed with the signature of the President (or Provost)/VP/Director of Research or the appropriate office holder in this regard within the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland and the Lead Institution in Northern Ireland. Both Lead Investigators within the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland and the Lead Partner Institution in Northern Ireland must also endorse the form.

The Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland must ensure completion of the Application Endorsement Form and the applicant must upload the completed Application Endorsement Form to the online portal before the call deadline.

Prior to the completion of the Application Endorsement Form by the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland and Lead Institution in Northern Ireland, each Consortium Co-Lead identified on the application must provide the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution with confirmation that their host institution agrees to the submission of the project proposal and to the collaborative management of the project if successful. Lead Institutions must ensure each application meets all eligibility requirements before endorsing an application.

Where a VP for Research is involved in a proposal the application must be endorsed by the institution's President/Provost.

HEA Eligibility Check

Following the closing of the call, the HEA executive will carry out eligibility checks and move only applications deemed eligible forward to the external assessment phase. The awarding of funding is subject to meeting all eligibility requirements and conditions of contract.

External Assessment: International Panel of Assessors

Applications will be assigned to a panel of international assessors, comprising international experts in relevant fields and/or with experience in engagement with institutional, research and policy development at a high strategic level.

Process auditors are in place to provide oversight for the panel meeting.

The assessment process concludes with a ranked list of applications recommended for funding. All proposals will be assessed and ranked according to their merit and in line with the specific criteria of the NSRP set out in the Call Document, and in line with a balanced breakdown of awards between STEM and AHSS.

The list of proposals recommended for funding will be shared with the Board of the HEA, DFHERIS and the Department of the Taoiseach for their acknowledgement. Depending on budget, demand and the calibre of applications received, a reserve ranking list may be put in place.
Outcomes on individual applications should be provided to the Research Offices by the applicants.