

North South Research Programme 2024

Responses to queries on the call document

Note: This document may be updated during the call process.

Last updated: 01 November 2024

Please be aware that queries on the call document will be accepted until and including 17th February 2025. All responses will be published by 20th February 2025 prior to the call closing on 27th February 2025.

Contents

1. Allowable Expenditure	1
Stipends	1
Recruitment of research students	2
2. Programme budget	2
Number of projects to be funded	2
3. Proposal Details	2
Information on Strands II and III	2
4. Eligibility.....	4
External Partners.....	5

1. Allowable Expenditure

Stipends

Q1a. Call document Page 13, pt 4.2.24 states that €30,000 per annum for research students can be sought. Also, this point states fees may be sought, is this in addition to the €30,000 or to come from that as well? Does the recently announced increased minimum PhD stipend of €25,000 per annum affect this? If we use the €25,000 per year, by the time this is covered and fees are paid, there would be nothing left from €30,000 for consumables and travel. Even if the fees are to come from elsewhere, this would mean that the PhD student only had €5,000 per annum for consumables and travel, whereas the cap is set at €10,000 per year for other research staff members (page 12 point 4.2.12).

The total value of research student (Masters and PhD) costs being sought under Call 2 can be increased from €30,000 to €32,000 per annum for a maximum duration of four years for a PhD student and in accordance with the course duration for a Masters research student.

Costs, including stipends for research students travel and consumables, of up to €32,000 per annum per research student may be sought. Stipends must be no lower than €19,000 per annum. Fees for research students may be sought in addition to this, for up to a maximum of four years for a PhD student and in accordance with the course duration for a Masters research student. The level of stipend paid within the above limits is a matter for each institution to determine.

Recruitment of research students

Q1b. If a project is asking for €4,000,000 euros, and an external partner is entitled to received 10% of the award (€400,000), can the external partner use this money for recruitment of postgrad students?

Recruitment of postgrad students by an External Partner on a project is not an eligible cost. All Research Students on a NSRP funded project must be registered at an HEI in the consortium. Research students may spend time at an External Partner but terms of their registration are between their host institution and the research student.

2. Programme budget

Number of projects to be funded

Q2a. Call document Page 4, section 1.4: To clarify, is it expected that 4-5 projects will be offered funding across both strands, or 4-5 projects per strand?

The value of funding available under Call 2 of the NSRP is €17.01m. Subject to available funding and recommendations of the international panel of assessors, 4-5 project proposals in total across Call 2 will receive offers of funding.

3. Proposal Details

Information on Strands II and III

Q 3a. Call document Page 10, pt 4.1.3: There is very little information about Strand III other than 'Higher education institutions will be supported to collaborate with each other on the basis of their respective institutional strategic research priorities.' More information was provided in the last call, can we please get clarification on what is included under 'Institution to Institution strategic research engagement'?

Q 3b. Can you provide more information on the difference between a Strand II and Strand III project? For example, would this cover non-research-based projects, such as projects with a goal of developing training in certain strategic areas?

Response to Q3a & Q3b

Page 7, point 2.2.14 of the NSRP Call 2 document states that “...The research can be basic or strategic in nature and can include costs associated with the establishment of partnerships, which improve researcher exchanges and interactions with each other and with external stakeholders. The proposal should focus on the establishment of a critical mass of resource and expertise in a clearly identified area and, where relevant, demonstrate sustainability beyond the lifetime of funding under the NSRP...”

Strand II: Emerging Hubs of Excellence. This strand will provide funding for academic research teams to collaborate on an agreed programme of research. This might, for example, be several departments or faculties with similar (or related) disciplines working collaboratively across a range of institutions and partners (north and south).

Strand III: Partnerships of scale. This strand will support institution to institution strategic research engagement: Higher education institutions will be supported to collaborate with each other based on their respective institutional strategic research priorities, aligned with the objectives of the scheme as set out in the call document.

Proposals submitted under the programme may address basic or strategic research and/or research strategies or design policies and/or programmes/networks that will build research capacity through collaboration on an institutional, national, all-island basis.

The objectives of an agreed work programme submitted as part of a proposal must align with the programme's key principles and specific programme criteria.

Training programmes may not seek funding under the Call. Research activities that support the building of research capacity and expertise across the island including the training of research students over the course of a specific programme of work leading to a Masters by Research or a PhD may seek funding under the Call.

Costs required for the development of specific modules around transferable skills and academic context for research students and/or training necessary to the project for researchers may be sought under this Call. Costs for further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation partners may include training costs but justification must be provided illustrating that the costs are absolutely necessary to carry out the project.

Q3c. A colleague who is interested in applying to the North South Research Programme 2024 – Call 2 has been reviewing the EOI document and has queried where the list of disciplines are to complete the “Discipline” section of the EOI.

The form states that “The list of disciplines is available in the User Guide for Applicants available on the HEA website” – however these do not appear to have been included in the user guide.

The list of disciplines is referenced in the Indicative [Application Form, Appendix Two](#).

4. Eligibility

Q4a. I am reaching out regarding a query from some of our prospective applicants. They are asking whether it is possible for two researchers to apply as Lead Investigators, both of whom would be employed at the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland, in addition to having a co-lead in Northern Ireland.

Page 5, point 2.1.5 of the NSRP Call document states that “Each application must have a Lead Investigator who will be employed at the **Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland** and one **Lead Investigator** employed at the **Lead Institution in Northern Ireland** at the time of award start”.

One Lead Investigator per partnering Lead Institution must be identified with the exception of proposals involving separate interdisciplinary teams from within a single institution, where more than one lead investigator may be identified.

Q4b. Can you please clarify if previous NSRP awardees are eligible to submit a new application?

Yes, previous NSRP awardees/Lead Investigators who were awarded funding under NSRP Call 1 may submit a new application for Call 2.

Q4c. Can Lead applicants from currently funded Strand II projects from the HEA N/S 2021 call apply to this 2024 call?

See the response to Q4b.

Q4d. Can you please clarify the North South Research Programme (NSRP) Call 2 is only open to researchers who were successful in Call 1 of the NSRP?

See the response to Q4b.

Q4e. If so would it be expected that they apply for Strand III in this 2024 call rather than seeking additional funding from Strand II?

Applicants may apply to either Strand II or Strand III provided they meet all eligibility requirements and new research activities are being proposed.

Q4f. Is it possible for an ongoing Strand II project can be scaled up and evolved into a Strand III project, or does it have to be a bespoke, independent application?

Double funding is not allowed under the programme. Initiatives and research activities already funded through the programme or through another source may not apply to Call 2 for repeat funding.

However, proposals that demonstrate that impact and/or outcomes from a project funded under Call 1 of the NSRP or under another funding stream suitability for further development into new research activities that meet the programmes key criteria and objective may be submitted.

Q4g. The Call Document (p.4) states that Call 2 is “to build on the research partnerships supported through Call 1 of the NSRP and develop the ecosystem for research collaboration by higher education institutions across the island” but the eligibility criteria doesn’t state that applicants must have been successful in Call 1.

Applications will be open to all eligible researchers in any discipline, at early, mid or advanced stages of their careers. Applicants do not need to have been awarded NSRP funding under Call 1 to be eligible to apply to Call 2.

Q4h. The Call document (p 6) states that at the time of the initiation of an award, the Lead Investigator in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland must be employed by that higher education institution with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the complete timescale of a funded project. Contractual matters are an issue for resolution between prospective team members and their proposed host higher education institutions.

We have a perspective applicant who is a funded Research Professor and as such has an appointment to for 5 years, would this be considered as an eligible contract?

As per the Call Document, at the time of the initiation of an award the Lead Investigator in the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution in Ireland must be employed by the Lead Administrative/Governance Institution with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the complete time scale of a funded project. These contractual matters are an issue for resolution between the prospective individual Lead Investigator and their proposed host institution, should an offer of funding be made. Projects funded under Call 2 of the NSRP will begin during the academic year 2025/26.

External Partners

Q5. I am looking through the call document), page 22 (Eligible institutions).

If an organisation is in the list as “External Eligible Partners”, does this mean that that organisation is not eligible to lead a project under this call?



External partners are not eligible to lead on a NSRP project. An External Partner may partner with eligible education institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland as set out under List 1 of Appendix 1 in the call document to collaborate on a project.

END

01 November 2024.