

Pre-Call Briefing

9th February 2026



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority



Table of Contents

- Welcome
- Introduction from DFHERIS
- Phase 1 Overview – Higher Education Authority
- Eol and Phase 2 Overview – Research Ireland
- Next steps
- Question Session





Systemic Importance of Research Infrastructure

- **Research** performance
- **Talent** development
 - undergrads
 - PhD students
- Commercialisation and **innovation**
- **International** reputation and engagement



Strategic Context





An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science

Report of the Working Group on Research Infrastructure 2025



**Infreastruchtúr don Nuálaíocht, Staidéir, Páirtíocht,
Imscrúdú, Rath Eacnamaíochta agus Eolaíocht**

INSPIRE



Critical Success Factors

- 1. Step-change** in public investment in R&I → and in performance
2. Delivering for Ireland's **talent** and **innovation** agendas
- 3. All institutions, all disciplines**
4. Inter-institutional **partnerships pivotal**
5. National resource: **central access portal**

Phase 1 - HEA

- Phase 1 Objectives & Funding
- Eligible Institutions
- Call for Proposals
- Assessment
- Programme Expenditure



Phase 1: Objectives

- Address research infrastructure needs across HEIs, ensuring alignment with national research and innovation priorities.
- To drive a strategic and systematic approach to research infrastructure – within and between higher education institutions
- HEIs will respond to a call for proposals – rooted in **strategy** and **prioritised**.
- Assess initial Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for Shared Advanced Infrastructure needs, gaps and identify collaboration opportunities across the system (RI will cover).
- Ensure funding delivers maximum impact and effectiveness in addressing critical infrastructure deficits.
- Funding circa €300m over 2026-2028 for phase 1 and 2 (multi-annual proposals). €99m for phase 1 in 2026. Review after three years.
- **Phase 1:** Objective is to address research infrastructure needs across the higher education sector. HEIs will be advised to submit a proposal for 2026 - 2028 within a funding bracket consistent with their size and discipline mix – encourages strategic and realistic proposals.



Phase 1: Eligible Institutions (18)

- Atlantic Technological University, (ATU)
- Dublin City University, (DCU)
- Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, (DIAS)
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology, (IADT)
- Dundalk Institute of Technology, (DkIT)
- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, (MIC)
- Maynooth University, (MU)
- Munster Technological University, (MTU)
- National College of Art and Design, (NCAD)
- RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, (RCSI)
- South East Technological University (SETU)
- Technological University Dublin, (TU Dublin)
- Technological University of the Shannon, (TUS)
- University College Cork, (UCC)
- University College Dublin, (UCD)
- University of Dublin, Trinity College, (TCD)
- University of Galway, (UoG)
- University of Limerick, (UL)



Phase 1: Call for Proposals

- Each HEI submits a plan according to the requirements of the Governing Framework and including the following:
 1. Research Strategy
 2. Prioritised articulation of Local Infrastructure needs
 3. Expressions of Interest for Shared Advanced Infrastructures
- Proposals will be shared across the system.



Areas to address in Phase 1 Call

- What is your institution's research strategy? How does it fit within your HEI's overall institutional strategy?
- How will this investment accelerate delivery of your institution's research strategy - across talent development, research performance, industry collaboration and commercialisation, and international connectivity?
- How will this investment enable your institution to enable the next phase of development of Ireland's higher education and research and innovation ecosystem?
- How will the investment from phase 1 inform your delivery of plans for subsequent phases of INSPIRE?
- How will this investment enable you to:
 - deliver/accelerate your institutional strategy
 - develop talent (highly skilled graduates, world class researchers)
 - achieve research excellence across global and societal challenges
 - enhance Ireland's international reputation
 - contribute meaningfully to national productivity, resilience and long-term economic competitiveness
 - Increase industry collaboration, including with SMEs
 - Strengthen your research commercialisation performance
 - create new research capabilities, cross disciplinary platforms, transformative national capacity
- What is your capacity to manage this infrastructure?



Areas to address in Phase 1 Call

- Details of the investment that HEI is seeking.
- What local institutional equipment will it be spent on?
- Demonstration of how the ask is evidence-based and clearly prioritised. How the investment would support applications for funding under INSPIRE pillars two and three?
- How will it be spent? – full budgets
- How will it advance national priorities, having particular regard to Ireland’s competitiveness and prosperity?
- What parts of the research strategy will it be contributing towards?
- Who will use the equipment? How will utilisation be maximised? Is collaboration built-in?
- Expected outputs (for the HEI and for the R&I system and potential economic impact)
- Impact on teaching and learning and student experience
- Issues relating to sustainability, e.g. environmental, technical maintenance, cyber security, longevity etc.



Programme Expenditure

- Funding is for the purchase of equipment.
- Non-allowable expenditure generally includes:
 - Costs associate with the retro fit buildings (unless unique to local infrastructure).
 - Administrative staff costs.
 - Overheads.



Assessment

Key Criteria	Details
Research Strategy	Quality, coherence, institutional and national priorities
Quality of outcomes	Research excellence, teaching and learning, student experience, evaluation
Innovation and Impact	Economic and societal impact, national and international partnerships, knowledge transfer, industry collaboration, research commercialisation
Sustainability	Futureproof
Value for Money	Budget, transformational
Capacity	Demonstrated ability to deliver infrastructure projects



EoI & Phase 2 Overview – Research Ireland

- Phase 1 submission will also inform Phase 2 review – many of the same key issues will need to be addressed
- HEIs to submit concise Expressions of Interest for high value shared national infrastructures as part of the Phase 1 submission
- Large scale shared advanced infrastructures designed for collaboration across multiples institutions and sectors, to strengthen Ireland’s competitiveness, drive national innovation and deliver broader public good impact.
- Minimum value of €500K
- Capacity to manage infrastructure as SHARED facility will be key
- Full submission likely to take place towards the end of 2026



Next Steps & Provisional Timelines

- Opportunity for HEIs to submit questions to research@hea.ie after today's briefing – deadline **Friday 27th February**
- Development of call and call launch (March/April)
- Submission of proposals (June)
- Assessment Process (July/August)
- Announcement of Outcomes (September)

