

EJP Rare Diseases Joint Transnational Call (2023)

Natural History Studies addressing unmet needs in Rare Diseases

HRB Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ is specific to applicants based in Ireland and should be read in addition to the full call information: <https://www.ejprarediseases.org/jtc2023/>

Eligibility

Q: Will HRB fund all research areas under this call?

A: Yes but note that Irish Partners are also not eligible for HRB funding for:

- Proposals seeking to evaluate a pilot or feasibility study.
- Proposals seeking to evaluate a definitive intervention.
- Proposals involving basic biomedical research.
- Research intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or for the purposes of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

See the HRB Guidance Notes for full information on scope

Q: Do Lead Applicants have to be permanent staff members?

A: No, contracted researchers can apply. There are two different categories under which a contracted researcher can apply, namely as an independent researcher or as an early career researcher*. There are different eligibility criteria for the two categories with respect to the nature of their employment contract, salary supports, qualifications and track record of the applicant.

All contracted researchers must have a contract with a host institution for the duration of the grant award or assure the funders that they will be offered a contract for the period of the award if successful, and their application must be endorsed accordingly at application stage by the Host Institution.

*See **HRB Guidance Notes** for specific information for Independent and Early Career Researchers as Lead Applicant/Principal Investigator.

Q: May industrial companies participate?

A: Industrial partners can only be included as external collaborators, not being able to receive or provide any funding.

Budget preparation

Q: Does the contribution from HRB include pension costs and overheads?

A: Yes, the maximum HRB funding (as stated in the call text) must include pension costs and overheads.

Q: What does the additional €130,000 funding for coordinators cover?

A: Consortium coordinators may request this funding. It will cover activities specifically incurred due to consortium coordination activity. This will not cover research-related costs but could cover costs such as salaries, travel and administration related to coordination. These should be clearly delineated in your budget.

Q: Where there are two partners applying for HRB funds, is a separate budget required for each partner?

A: Yes, each partner must provide a budget that has been reviewed and approved by their host institution. The combined budget total must be within the maximum amount of €370,000 or €500,000 where one of the partners is the coordinator.

Q: How should salaries be calculated?

A: For salaried personnel the following should be taken into account:

Gross Annual Salary (negotiated and agreed with host institution). Applicants should use the [IUA Researcher Salary Scales](#). Please apply a salary contingency of 2% per annum from 1st October 2024. Please note this contingency should be applied cumulatively on 1st October year on year.

For employees who are not academic researchers the relevant pay scales should be used for their profession. Please state the pay scale used and the level and point on the scale. This should be justified accordingly.

The employer's PRSI contribution is calculated at 11.05% of gross salary.

Pension provision up to a maximum of 20% of gross salary will be paid to the host institution to enable compliance with the Employment Control Framework (in addition employees will have to contribute 5% of their salary towards pension). The level of employer contribution should be in accordance with the model adopted by the host institution. If applicable, state the amount of

employer contribution based on the pro rata salary and note the % of pro rata salary used to calculate this for reference. Exceptions apply where Circular letter 6/2007 applies.¹

Q: What is the overhead rate on an award successfully funded through this scheme?

A: The overhead payment for desk-based research is 25% of Total Direct Modified Costs (excludes student fees, equipment and capital building costs). Otherwise an overhead rate of 30% applies. Please see [HRB Policy Usage of Research Overheads](#). The rate (25% or 30%) should be based on the primary activity of the project.

Q: Can equipment be funded in this call?

A: Small items of equipment, not exceeding €10,000, can be included in the budget. Only equipment purchases that are directly required for the research and are deemed not to be easily accessible elsewhere in Ireland are appropriate. All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.

Q: Are there any ineligible costs?

A: The following are examples of ineligible costs: external training courses/workshops, inflationary increases, cost of electronic journals, maintenance contracts on equipment, hospitality and entertainment costs, technology transfer or patent costs, conference organisation costs, journal subscriptions, relocation expenses.

Submission

Q: Are signature pages/letters of support required by the HRB at application stage?

A: Due to the nature of this call, which involves a single submission procedure from transnational consortia, signature pages/letters of support are not required by HRB at time of submission. However, it is the responsibility of the applicants in each country to ensure that their host institution(s) have reviewed and approved all costings prior to submission. Please allow sufficient time for these additional processes.

Q: Will further information for participants from Ireland be required?

A: At full proposal submission participants from institutions in Ireland will be asked to submit supplementary budgetary information to the HRB, which will justify the HRB funds requested. In

¹ Circular Letter 6/2007 states that the pensions contribution of all Public Health Service employees who, on or after 1 June 2007, are granted secondments or periods of special leave with pay to enable them take up appointments with other organisations, including other Public Health Sector organisations, will be increased to 25% of gross pensionable pay. The rate of 25% of gross pensionable pay referred to in this context is the pension contributions to be paid by the body to which the employee is seconded – it does not include any pension contributions which employees make themselves. Where no such arrangements are in place, the HRB will not be liable for costs.

addition applicants will be requested to clarify the specific deliverables for the partner from Ireland, including their role in the development of a data management strategy.

This will expedite contract negotiations with the HRB and monitoring of the award in the case of successful consortia with applicants from Ireland.

A template requesting this further information will be provided by the HRB after invitation for submission of full proposals.

Assessment and Decision-making

Q: Since prioritisation will be assessed internationally and multiple funders are involved in each project, how are decisions made?

A: Projects will be funded if:

- The project is considered of sufficient quality to be funded by the peer review panel. There is no consideration of availability of funds in making this decision.
- All relevant funders have sufficient budget remaining to cover all consortium partners. Projects are ranked by the peer review panel and higher ranked projects are prioritised for funding first. This means that when funds are depleted, no further projects can be funded, irrespective of whether they have been deemed of sufficient quality to be funded.

Post-award

Q: Where will intellectual property generated by the project reside?

A: The management of Intellectual Property (IP) is the responsibility of the host institution in line with the National IP protocol. If more than one research body is involved, a joint IP agreement should be in place between the relevant institutions. In the absence of a joint agreement, the management of any IP remains the responsibility of the host institution.

Q: Do I have to submit a Data Management Plan to the HRB if I am not the coordinator?

A: As per the HRB policy on [Management and Sharing of Research Data](#), the HRB requests a Data Management Plan (DMP) for all HRB awards. The DMP developed by the consortium can be used, once there is sufficient detail on how the data will be shared/managed etc. for the partner based in Ireland.

Q: What reports are required?

A: In addition to consortium reporting requirements (as listed in the main call text), the HRB will request additional reports (e.g., annual reports) from Principle Investigators based in Ireland.