Evidence for Policy (EfP) 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

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1 General

How do I apply for EfP 2024?

All applications must be made using the HRB online Grant E-Management System GEMS https://grants.hrb.ie/. Applicants must **select one** of the following 8 topics areas.

In this round, applications are being sought to address the following topics:

Topic #	Evidence requirement	Alignment with DOH Statement of Research Priorities
1	**A mixed methods study to examine the drivers of out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure in community healthcare settings and the impact on health outcomes in Ireland.**	**1. Population Health (Health Inequalities)** **2. Health System Reform (Health Infrastructure)**
2	**A project investigating: (1) What are the reasons or drivers for the increase in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in Ireland over the last five years? (2) What drives the use/non-use of condoms and availing/not availing of STI testing in key groups in Ireland?**	**1. Population Health (Behavioural and Cultural Insights)**
3	**A project which includes: (1) A mapping of the current diagnostic options and treatments in Ireland for conditions associated with the menstrual cycle (2) A review of the effectiveness of interventions to improve access to and quality of diagnosis, treatment, and care (in primary and secondary care settings) for menstrual cycle-related discomforts and conditions (3) A gap analysis to highlight where no current treatment and care pathways have been identified, and where there is potential for future innovative advances.**	**1. Population Health (Women's Health)**
4	**A project investigating: (1) What is the impact of reimbursed medicines on healthcare service utilisation in Ireland from the perspective of the health and social care system? (2) What reductions in healthcare service utilisation are provided by new or more intense provision of medicines to patients?**	**2. Health System Reform (Health Infrastructure)**
5	**An evidence-informed approach to developing a National Primary Care Therapy Waiting list protocol.**	**1. Population Health (Health Inequalities)** **2. Health System Reform (Health Infrastructure)**
6	**Producing a Health in Transition health system review (HiT) for Ireland as part of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies HiT series.**	**2. Health System Reform (Health Infrastructure)**
7	**An outcome evaluation to: (1) measure the impact of Advanced Practice roles for Health & Social Care Professionals (HSCP), including on access to care and the patient journey at this interface between primary**	**2. Health System Reform (Health Infrastructure)**

	and secondary care, and (2) generate evidence on the barriers and enablers for implementing and scaling further reforms.	
8	Strategies to improve Value for Money in Irish health care delivery in the primary, community, and acute settings, focusing on productivity, efficiency, and sustainability.	2. Health System Reform (Productivity Enhancing Reforms)

Table 1. EfP 2024 Topics

Applicants are strongly advised to carefully read the guidance and details of the research remit covered in each of the 8 topics (please refer to **Appendix I** of the Guidance Notes). It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to select which topic they are applying for. If in doubt, they should contact the relevant project officer at EfP@hrb.ie

Once the Lead Applicant selects 1 or the 8 topics on GEMS, they will be asked to complete a checklist of mandatory questions. In order to start the application, the Lead Applicant must satisfy the conditions of this checklist.

2 Applicant/Eligibility

Can a Lead Applicant submit more than one application?

No, only one application per Lead Applicant will be considered in this round. However, the Lead Applicants can be a Co-Applicant or Collaborator in another application provided they have the time commitment to fulfil both roles, should the applications be successful.

Does a Lead Applicant need to have last author publications?

Not necessarily, however, Lead Applicants must have at least three peer-reviewed original research publications. Where appropriate, they should also provide evidence of other outputs (e.g., published book chapters, reports to government, research data and datasets, research materials, databases, audio/video products, national and/or international reports, patents, models and protocols, software production, evidence of influence on health policy and practice, outreach and/or knowledge translation activities, media coverage or other relevant activities) and/or any other relevant outputs that have resulted in a significant impact in their field.

Does a Lead Applicant have to have previous peer-reviewed funding?

Yes, the Lead Applicant must demonstrate research independence through securing at least one peer-reviewed research grant for a research project/s as the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant. Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries <u>will not</u> be considered in this regard.

Can a Lead Applicant in a tenured academic post request a salary?

No, the salary or benefits of academic staff within research institutions (including buy out from teaching time etc.) that are already in receipt of salary or benefits will not be funded.

Can a contract researcher be a Lead Applicant and apply for their own salary?

Yes, a contract researcher acting as Lead Applicant can apply for their salary. A Host Institution Letter of Support is required for all contract researchers acting as Lead Applicants.

If an applicant has a joint contract with the HSE and an academic institution, can they apply?

Yes, applicants with a joint contract with the HSE and an academic institution are eligible to apply.

Can I be the Lead Applicant on one application and Co-Applicant on another?

Yes, it is worth bearing in mind however that should both applications reach the review Panel stage, the amount of time you are spending on both will be scrutinised so this should be realistic.

How do I document a career break(s)?

Lead Applicants have the opportunity to describe any breaks from research that might have affected or influenced their progression as a researcher. This may include statutory leave, secondments, flexible work arrangements or other relevant changes (e.g., sector or discipline).

3   Co-Applicants and Collaborators

Can a Knowledge User be involved in more than one application?

Co-applicants or collaborators, including knowledge user co-applicants, can be partners on more than one application assuming they have the resources to do so. For example, if they are proposing to dedicate a percentage of time to each project, it would be important to ensure that it is feasible should more than one project be funded (while we plan the fund a single project per topic, we are not ruling out the possibility of funding more than one per topic).

May someone be named as a co-applicant on two different applications?

Co-applicants can be named on more than one application assuming they have the capacity and/or resources to carry out the activities they have committed to in both applications.

Can a Co-Applicant receive payment for their role in the project?

Co-Applicants can request their own salary, depending on their role and percentage of time dedicated to the research for the duration of the award if they are contract/independent investigators, knowledge user and PPI contributor Co-Applicants. A Host Institution Letter of Support is required for co-applicants in contract positions who are seeking their own salary. Please note the HRB does not fund the salary or benefits of academic staff within research institutions (including buyouts from teaching time etc.). A Co-Applicant may also receive funding for items such as running costs and personnel.

Can a post-doctorate researcher be a Co-Applicant?

Yes, a post-doctorate researcher may be a Co-Applicant.

Does a Co-Applicant's contract have to cover the duration of the award?

There are no requirements for the duration of a Co-Applicant's contract. However, where a Co-Applicant is applying for salary, their contract must cover the duration of their role on the award, or the Host Institution must be willing to issue/extend a contract should the award be successful; this should be contained in the Co-Applicants letter of support.

How many Co-Applicants can I have?

The maximum number of co-applicants allowed is 6. It is not mandatory to have 6 Co-Applicants, but this is to allow for flexibility should this seem appropriate.

Do Co-Applicants need to have support letters?

Co-Applicant letters of support are only required where Co-Applicants are contract researchers applying for their own salary.

Can a Co-applicant/Collaborator be from outside Ireland?

Yes, Co-applicants/Collaborators from outside the Republic of Ireland are welcome where the nature of the research renders this necessary and is appropriately justified in terms of added value for the project. This is not intended to displace researchers based in Ireland, but to recognise that the Lead Applicant should assemble the best team to tackle the research question.

Will the HRB pay for visits from or to Co-applicants/Collaborators?

Yes, visits to or from Co-Applicants/Collaborators where justified may be included under running costs.

Is a Collaborator agreement form needed?

Yes, a Collaborator Agreement Form must be signed by each Collaborator and uploaded with your application. You can download the form on GEMS.

Can a Collaborator be from private enterprise?

Yes, a Collaborator may be from private enterprise. Applications including a private enterprise are encouraged where they add value to the project for example in terms of access to expertise, technologies, or reagents. The HRB does not have the capacity to broker these arrangements. The terms of the collaboration should be determined early, and relevant agreements must be in place by the onset of the project. Consideration should be given to issues such as relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, ownership and copyright, access and sharing of data/materials/samples etc when working up Partnership proposals.

Can a Collaborator receive payment for their role in the project?

Yes, collaborators are eligible to receive funding from the award when properly detailed and justified in the application.

Can you include the knowledge users other than the Department of Health (DOH) as co-applicants/collaborators?

While there will be close engagement with DOH policy units during project delivery as the key knowledge user, the involvement of other relevant knowledge users (national or international) as co-applicants is welcome **where this adds value** to the research proposed.

Where the research specification outlines multiple data sources that could/should be used, is it a requirement to include a data controller as a collaborator for all data sources proposed to be used?

If access to data, databases, or a link to an existing national or international study (e.g., an existing cohort or longitudinal study) is an integral part of the proposed project, evidence of commitment and access must be demonstrated by having the Data Controller or key Gatekeeper of a study included as a Collaborator.

What is Public and Patient Involvement (PPI)?

PPI represents an active partnership between members of the public, patients, and researchers in the research process. This can include, for example, involvement in the choice of research topics, assisting in the design, advising throughout or at particular decision points of the research project or in carrying out the research.

Will Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) play a large role in this grant call?

In the application, you are asked to describe any public involvement in your research throughout the various stages of identifying and prioritising the research question, the research design, conduct, analysis, and dissemination. Depending on the role in delivering the research activities, PPI contributors can be included as Co-Applicants or Collaborators.

We strongly advise that you consult with your Host Institution which may be able to provide guidance and support on PPI in research.

4   Personnel

Can I hire a PhD student to carry out the project?

No, unlike the HRB's research career schemes, this scheme is not framed as a training initiative and is not suitable for students in pursuit of a higher degree. Furthermore, it is anticipated that given the emphasis on the timely deliverable of outputs, funded roles may be more suited to experienced researchers.

Can I hire more than one person to carry out this project?

Yes, please note the type and number of research personnel hired should be the most appropriate within the budget to successfully carry out the proposed project.

Note: The EfP award will not fund the salary and related costs of tenured academic staff within research institutions (including buy-out from teaching time etc.).

5   Funding

How much can I apply for?

The maximum amount that can be requested from the HRB per application is **€300,000 direct costs** (exclusive of overheads) per award. The maximum total award including overhead contribution will be **€390,000**. Awards will have a duration of between 1**2 and 24 months**. Please refer to Section 5 - Project Budget of the Guidance Notes for further details on allowable costs.

How do I determine what gross salary to pay?

Applicants should use the IUA website scales for the most up-to-date recommended salary scales for academic researchers (http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/). Pay scales used and the level and point on the scale must be stated and justified. For the appointment of Research Fellows or Senior Research Fellows, evidence of position must be provided at the point of

award. Applicants should include annual pay increments for staff and related costs (pension contribution, employer's PRSI contribution, and overhead contribution) in the budget. Please note employee pension contribution of 5% has already been incorporated into the IUA gross salary figure.

For employees who are not academic researchers the relevant pay scales for their profession should be used and referenced in the justification.

Does the HRB pay pension contributions?

Yes, pension provisions up to a maximum of 20% of gross salary will be paid to the Host Institution to enable compliance with the Employment Control Framework (an additional 5% employee contribution is part of the salary).

How is the overhead contribution calculated?

Overhead Contribution will be added by HRB staff during contract negotiations for successful applications. It is not requested as part of the application budget. Under the HRB Policy on Overhead Usage, the HRB will contribute to the indirect costs of the research through an overhead payment of 30% of Total Direct Modified Costs (TDMC excludes student fees, equipment, and capital building costs) for laboratory or clinically based research and 25% of Total Direct Modified Costs for desk-based research.

What costs are included in the overhead contribution?

The following costs are included in the overhead contribution: recruitment costs, bench fees, office space, software, contribution to gases, bacteriological media preparation fees, waste fees, and bioinformatics access. A copy of the HRB overhead policy can be found at the following link: Health Research Board: Use of Research Overheads.

I would like to hire a salaried researcher to carry out this project and they would like to register for a PhD; will the HRB pay their fees?

No, unlike the HRB's research career schemes, this scheme is not framed as a training initiative and is not suitable for students in pursuit of a higher degree. Furthermore, it is anticipated that given the emphasis on the timely deliverable of outputs, funded roles may be more suited to experienced researchers.

Can the EfP call be used to fund a research PhD?

Our Guidance Notes explicitly state that this scheme is not framed as a training initiative and is not suitable for students in pursuit of a higher degree.

Can I hire a consultant to carry out part of the project?

Yes, this cost should be included under running costs.

Can Co-Applicants who are based in another institute/organisation receive part of the budget/overheads?

The HRB will pay the award directly to the Host Institution. The Host Institution may provide running costs/overheads to a Co-Applicant's institute and the arrangements for this should be agreed between the two institutes.

Can an international co-applicant receive funding?

Yes, they can receive funding where appropriately justified.

Does HRB support costs related to FAIR Data Management?

Yes, you should include costs related to data management activities in line with best practice of data management and stewardship and the FAIR principles incurred during the lifetime of the project.

What type of FAIR Data Management costs can be included?

The HRB will support costs with:

- People – staff time per hour for data collection, anonymisation, management/ stewardship support, training, etc.

- Storage and computation – cloud storage, domain hosting charge,

- Preparing data for sharing (e.g. anonymisation),

- Deposition and reuse – costs for depositing research data and metadata in an open-access data repository, defining semantic models, making data linkable, choosing the licence, defining metadata for a dataset, and deploying/publishing.

- Others – when properly justified.

Note that the HRB is currently not covering the cost of long-term preservation of data and that this list is not exhaustive and aims to provide examples only of eligible costs.

Costs for secondary data access should be included under running costs.

The Guidance notes are silent on a maximum for Dissemination costs. Can you clarify if there is a maximum?

There is no maximum, but the budget for dissemination does need to be proportionate and justified.

If in-person meetings are required as part of the ongoing communication with the policy owners, should travel expenses (e.g. train fares) be included as grant costs?

This cost should be included in the application budget where applicable. Face to face meetings can be supplemented by online meetings as appropriate, and to ensure best use of available funding.

6   Supporting Documents

What documents should be uploaded with my application form?

You must upload the following documents:

- Host Institution Letters of Support, if applicable (see next question),

- Collaborator agreement forms, if applicable (required for all collaborators),

- Gantt chart,

- Project Description Figures: A maximum of 5 figures which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments, or surveys (optional),

- Copy of Research Ethics Committee Approval (if available).

Who needs to provide Host Institution Letters of Support?

Host Institution Letters of Support need to be provided for (1) all Lead Applicants in a contract position, (2) Researcher Co-Applicants in a contract position who are seeking their own salary.

Do Co-Applicants have to sign off on the application?

Each Co-Applicant is invited to view the application form online and approve content prior to submission.

Do I need to contact the Dean of Research to sign off on my application?

As part of the online application process, you will be asked to select the **Dean of Research or equivalent person** authorised to endorse research grant applications for your Host Institution. Their approval is necessary to allow the application to be submitted to the HRB. **Please note that as part of the online system the Host Institutions will approve and submit each application on behalf of the applicant.**

When the application is submitted for approval online, emails are sent to the selected signatory informing them that their approval is requested. If a signatory rejects the application the Lead Applicant will be notified, along with any feedback the signatory has supplied. The application can then be amended and re-submitted; it will be returned to the signatory who made the rejection and continue through the approval process as before.

When signatories approve the application, it will be sent automatically to the HRB to be considered for funding, a grant application number will be assigned to the application and a confirmation email will be sent to the Lead Applicant.

7   Submission

Submission process using GEMS

Prior to final submission to the HRB, all applications must first be reviewed and approved within GEMS by the signatory approver at the research office (or equivalent) at the Host Institution. It is critical therefore that Lead Applicants leave sufficient time in the process for the Research Office (or equivalent) in their nominated Host Institution to review, seek clarifications and approve applications prior to the final submission date. This may involve being aware of and complying with any internal Host Institution deadlines for review and approval, distinct from the HRB deadline.

What is the closing date for submission of applications?

All applications must be submitted to the HRB by using HRB GEMS by **15th March at 13:00**.

How will I know that my application has been successfully submitted?

Once the HI endorses your application it will be sent automatically to the HRB to be considered for funding, a grant application number will be assigned to the application, and you will receive a confirmation email.

I have submitted my application but have just realised I have amendments to make; can I amend the application?

No. Once you have submitted your application, you cannot edit or retract a submission.

8   Review Process

How will the applications be reviewed?

Applications will be reviewed by independent international reviewers with the relevant topic and methodological expertise (review panel). PPI aspects will also be reviewed by reviewers from HRB public reviewer panel. All eligible applications will be discussed by the review panel at a review panel meeting to determine whether they are to be recommended for funding.

Will public review be part of the review process?

Yes, public reviewers will be included to assess the quality of PPI in the proposal. They will provide comments and a rating but not a score. For short-listed applications, the public review comments and ratings will be shared with the review panel for discussion. PPI will not be a standalone assessment criterion, but the review panel will be asked to consider PPI as it relates to any of the assessment criteria.