

## Question

## Enterprise Ireland Answer

Do Programme Participants need to have a minimum qualification level?

Enterprise Ireland is not mandating a minimum qualification level for Participants to apply to the programme. Enterprise Ireland anticipates the programmes will recruit high-calibre participants who are experts in their field and will have already demonstrated career progression.

Is the RPO running the call responsible for the recruitment of the Programme Participant?

The Research Performing Organisation is responsible for developing a marketing and recruitment strategy for running an open recruitment call. Enterprise Ireland expects ED&I best practice principles are included in the recruitment strategy.

Are Programme Participants expected to receive a qualification at the end of the programme?

A post-graduate qualification is part of the requirements; however, the RPO can partner with existing institutions to confer a qualification if there is not one available within their own institution.

For the current model of BioInnovate, how many teams come together per programme?

In the current BioInnovate model, 3 teams come together per programme with each team having four members.

From the BioInnovate programme alumni - what % have gone onto commercialisation fund / company creation pathway versus taking up roles in industry.

50% of BioInnovate alumni form Commercialisation Fund projects/spin-outs or start-ups.

Does the Innovators' Initiative incur overhead?

As the Initiative is based on training, no University Research Overhead will apply. All programme costings provided by applicants need to be itemised and justified. Programme value for money will be one of the selection criteria in assessing proposals. Only publicly funded RPOs can apply for this funding; individual companies, clusters of companies, or sectoral representative bodies cannot apply directly for funding nor are they eligible for direct funding via the programme budget.

What are the planned eligible and ineligible costs?

Please consult the call document for eligible and non-eligible costs

Is stipend tax-free?

It is the responsibility of the Host RPO to set the stipend up correctly so that the Programme Participants can receive it tax free and it's the Programme Participants responsibility to comply with the stipulations of the scheme.

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/education/scholarship-exemption/index.aspx>

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| Is there flexibility for Programme Participants have income from other sources to support the stipend?                | The programme is to be offered on a full time basis in order to comply with the scholarship exemption as per <a href="https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/education/scholarship-exemption/index.aspx">https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/education/scholarship-exemption/index.aspx</a> .  |
| Is there a limit on the overall budget per proposal/project?  | The Guidance sets out the overall Innovators' initiative budget agreed to date. The cost per project is estimated within that envelope, for 5 projects but is not limited per project. It is recommended that costs are detailed granularly and with justifications to allow for full assessment.   |
| Is IT equipment for the Programme staff an eligible cost?   | If justified these costs can be allowed for the programme delivery team personnel indicated in the Guidance   |
| What is the expected staffing levels for a programme?   | The programme management personnel costings assume each Programme will require an Academic Director, a Programme Director, Programme Operations Manager, and part-time programme administration support. The Salary levels used are based on published University Senior Administrative Pay Scales with Programme Director at Senior Admin II, Programme Operations Manager at Senior Admin IV, and administration support at Executive Assistant. These are inclusive of PRSI and Pension allowance. Above costings assume that the nominated programme Academic Director will already be on payroll, if that is not the case, or if hours need to be bought out, then those additional Academic Director programme-related costs should be included. The Academic Director is expected to dedicate a minimum of 50% of their time to the programme. |
| is there an expectation that the immersion site will receive a designated budget?                                     | The expectation is that the immersion site will be provided to the programme at no additional cost.   |
| Are redundancy costs eligible?  | Enterprise Ireland do not pay redundancy costs  |
| Will student registration fees be paid?   | We are in the process of clarification with ERDF on the eligibility of fees. The intention is to cover student registration fees if possible and in applying it is recommended to show these as a separate granular line item to the stipend proposed. This will allow for subsequent correct treatment in the budget approval process  |
| Can RPOs apply as a consortium? If so, what are the details, such as the number and complementarity of the consortia? | Applicant RPOs can apply as a single RPO or as part of a consortium. However, if applying as part of a consortium, the practical implications of this approach must be outlined in the proposal. This includes considerations such as economic benefits, duplication of overhead, the complementarity of the RPOs involved, the need for focused RPO leadership of the programme, and the effect of multiple locations on the programme participants. If applying as part of a consortium, a lead applicant is still required.  |
| Is there a limit to the number of applications that an RPO can participate in as a member of a consortium?            | An RPO is permitted to submit a second proposal, either independently or as part of a consortium, as long as the proposal pertains to a different sector or industry domain than the RPO's other submission. A maximum of two applications per RPO is permitted.  |

If multiple EOIs cover the same sector, will Enterprise Ireland tell the RPOs to merge into a single application? If a merge occurs, how can we handle the potential need to split participants across multiple RPOs?

Enterprise Ireland will not direct competing proposals to merge. However, if applicants wish to be put in contact with potential collaborators, Enterprise Ireland will facilitate these introductions and connections, if possible. Applicants and consortia have complete discretion over all practical considerations related to inter-RPO collaboration and merging.

Which sectors are of interest to the program?

Enterprise Ireland aims to fund innovation training programs in publicly funded RPOs that address needs of important industry sectors and regions for the national economy. Winning proposals must demonstrate relevance and importance to Ireland.

Can Enterprise Ireland connect us with companies or stakeholders to gain access to immersive environments?

Yes, we can connect you with companies interested in your sector if we know which sector you are supporting. Please note that we cannot guarantee any matches.

Is it possible for industry partners to pay their employees to participate in the programme?

Unfortunately, it is not possible for industry partners to pay their employees to participate in the programme. This is because the programme is being funded through the ERDF, and therefore we cannot include an industry fellowship component where companies pay to send their staff to participate.

What are the objectives of the programme?

To create high calibre founding teams and people, equipped with a skillset which enables them to identify and create new solutions and opportunities to address unmet needs in their sector.

Does the Programme Management team need to be employed by the Host RPO?

Enterprise Ireland are not mandating the employment locations of the programme staff but given the Host RPO will have a contract with Enterprise Ireland and that some others may only have inter-institutional agreements, whatever is proposed needs to work for the RPO and the programme participants.

How many years will the Innovators' Initiative run for?

The funding cycle runs until the 31st of December 2029

Will you specify what outputs and achievements the programme should achieve?

- Create new, needs-led innovation training programmes in sectors that are of economic importance to Ireland
- Leverage the research talent, programme management expertise and teaching & training capabilities of Research Performing Organisations in Ireland
- Drive a sustainable increase in entrepreneurial activity at a national and regional level by providing Programme Participants with access to structured, sector-specific innovation training programmes.
- Increase the number and quality of HPSUs via its alumni who graduate from the programmes.

When will the RPOs be awarded? What is the timeline? When do you expect the first intake of participants?

It is estimated that that successful RPOs will be notified by October 2023. The first intake of recruits is intended in 2024

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| When does year one of the programme begin and is time allowable for the accreditation process?  | It is up to the application RPOs to outline their timeline for how this will be achieved.   |
| Do the participants need to be 100% based in a single RPO? Can their time be split across RPOs?   | If it benefits the programme participants, their training and the immersive environment, participants can be split across RPOs  |
| What is the expected duration of each project?  | Enterprise Ireland is not mandating the expected duration for a programme but it should be sufficient to enable the Programme Participants to achieve an appropriate qualification.   |
| Given the need to increase the number of Commercialisation Fund awards and HPSU nationally, has additional funding been awarded to the Comm Fund bucket to enable this? | As part of Enterprise Ireland's High Potential Start Up Strategy from research, the number of Commercialisation Fund projects will increase if the Innovators' Initiative is successful.  |
| How much time a Programme Participant would be expected to contribute during the length of training?  | Given the demands on the programme, Enterprise Ireland expect Programme Participants to be engaged full time for the duration of the programme. The stipend amount reflects the expectation that the participants undertake the programme as a full time role.  |
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| Will these programmes be regionally distributed?  | Where there is a consortium of institutions from different regions, a lead RPO should be selected. The lead RPO will be responsible for the achievement of KPI, reporting requirements and other responsibilities under the contract and ERDF but roles and responsibilities of each consortium member should be outlined in the proposal. The consortium should be chosen to reflect the programme need and respond to the Smart Specialisation Strategy objectives.                               |
| How are regions defined?  | The Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) "aims to boost regional innovation, contributing to growth and prosperity by helping and enabling regions to focus on their strengths". The S3 will be an important part of the evaluation process and should be taken into account when planning the Programme activities and its focus.  |
| Is there a limit to the number of programmes per region?  | There is no set limit on the number of programmes per region, however it is Enterprise Ireland's intent to have a strong regional dimension to this initiative. Consideration will be given to the evidence provided of strong, collaborative & geographic links with the appropriate sector which will be necessary to provide the correct level of immersive access. The Immersive environment must be sufficient to achieve the Programme aims and objectives.<br>Please see the eligible costs. |
| How are the regions defined and how will awards be distributed.   | There are two regional Programmes under ERDF: the Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-27 managed by the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) and the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021–2027 managed by the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA). Maps can be found on the Regional Assemblies websites.   |
|   | The EDRF will distribute funding across two regions "Northern & Western Regional Assembly" and the "Southern Regional Assembly". These bodies responsible for the ERDF funding in Ireland.  |
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What features does the immersive environment need to have?

Critical components of immersion include: the commitment and willingness of the host(s) to enable access and engage with the Programme Participants, designated enablers in the environment with ability to drive:

- Access to all actors, workflows, data, locations, incentives, challenges etc, ensuring legal, ethical, regulatory, and intellectual property challenges are addressed.
- Knowledge sharing, and facilitating access to network to broaden immersive reach,
- Continuous engagement of actors after the defined immersive period. Ideally immersion is observation based, and the length of the immersive period is set to allow comprehensive and in- depth investigation.

How long does it take to secure a follow on Commercialisation Fund after the programme?

It will depend on the ambition of the project team, but Enterprise Ireland expect that projects teams be allowed and encouraged to commence working on Commercialisation Fund applications whilst still on the programme. The timeline for the application submission will be supported by the Research Performing Organisation's Technical Transfer Office and the relevant Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Specialist.

Is there a set methodology to be used for the innovation training?

Enterprise Ireland is not mandating a particular methodology. If a licence for a specific methodology is required, the cost associated with licensing the methodology is eligible inclusion in a budget claim to Enterprise Ireland.

How do you see the initiative linking to the existing ecosystem e.g. Tech Gateways/Centres/SFI Centres/REDF projects

The Innovators' Initiative is complementary to existing programmes and research centres in Ireland. However, unlike a Technology Centre, Gateway or SFI Research Centre, it's focused on training individuals and is not a research programme. Existing infrastructure, clusters and networks may be beneficial when considering the immersive environment.

How will IP arising from the programmes be managed?

EI is reviewing this currently this but we would expect idea ownership is treated the same as if it was any other student programme as Enterprise Ireland is providing 100% funding.