Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland

COVID-19 Rapid Response Funding Call

Version: March 25th, 2020

1 Scope of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Funding Call

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland are interested in incentivising RD&I activities that will impact positively on the current crisis. These activities might include the development of innovative solutions based on new, blended or alternative approaches and methodologies to address immediate national needs. Applications that propose the adaptation or repurposing of existing products, processes and technologies are also strongly encouraged.

**Problem areas include, but are not limited to:**

- Contact tracing and role of data analytics;
- Frontline healthcare (supply of ventilators, use and supply of personal protective equipment and infection prevention and control (IPC) methods etc);
- Monitoring the impact and effectiveness of control and mitigation measures;
- Re-purposing of existing technologies, products or processes;
- Rapid, reliable, diagnostic testing and sampling optimisation;
- Supporting essential behaviours of self-isolation and social-distancing;
- Mitigation measures relating to the disruption that the crisis is having on Irish society, including impact on essential services and supply chains;
- Epidemiological and seroepidemiological studies, including novel approaches to better understand transmission and spread of virus (relevant to humans and animals) and to evaluate the potential impact of control measures.
2 Application Overview

The application form is short and succinct and given the purpose of the Rapid Response Call, it is intended to emphasise:

(i) the nature of problem to be addressed and why it is important now
(ii) the potential impact and feasibility of the proposed solution
(iii) the appropriateness of the team, its experience and resources to deliver the proposed project in the timeframe indicated (including any partnerships and environment)
(iv) appropriateness of the milestones, deliverables and timelines

Given the strong solution focus of this call, convergence of knowledge, practice and methods from different disciplines and sectors is a key priority and where appropriate to the delivery of solutions the formation of interdisciplinary teams and partnerships is encouraged. Teams are encouraged to consider where they can build upon and adapt ongoing research activities / international consortia to rapidly respond to current needs.

SFI, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland aim to fund a portfolio of projects of differing scale that impact on different aspects of the crisis with different timelines for delivery.

3 Additional Application Details

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<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Under this call, any Research Performing Organisation (RPO); a client company of one of the following government agencies Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Údaras Na Gaeltachta or Local Enterprise Office (LEO); or any combination of the preceding may submit a proposal for support of a solution to a significant specific problem associated with the COVID-19 crisis in Ireland. Participants in an application must be capable of demonstrating the required technical skills, resources and network to develop and deploy a solution in the required timeframe. The involvement of relevant Government Departments and/or other public sector bodies in the development of applications and the delivery of solutions is strongly encouraged. Applications from other organisations, outside those referenced above, are also welcome and we would ask you to contact us at <a href="mailto:covid19@sfi.ie">covid19@sfi.ie</a> to confirm eligibility. Note: In cases where synergistic opportunities exist between applications, SFI and the agencies may contact applicants and encourage them to consolidate applications. Given the global research response to COVID-19, applications involving international collaborations are encouraged, with a view to accelerating solution deployment and avoiding duplication of effort. However, only funding for eligible organisations based in Ireland may be requested under this call.</th>
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<td>Deadline</td>
<td>This programme will remain open until further notice. Closure of the call will be based on the status of the COVID-19 crisis, the portfolio of awards made and the availability of</td>
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funding. Notification of closure of the call will be made at least one week in advance through the SFI website and SFI email alerts.

SFI will accept applications at any time while the call remains open. A fast-track review process will be employed, that will prioritise applications considered to have the greatest and most immediate impact. These applications will be reviewed immediately with awards issued as soon as possible thereafter for successful applications.

### Award Duration

Projects proposing to deliver impact as rapidly as possible will be prioritised. Solutions developed as part of projects supported under this call must be operational and fully deployed within 6 months of project start. Note that it is expected that projects will commence immediately upon funding and projects may not extend beyond the end of 2020.

Progress of projects against agreed milestones/deliverables will be assessed throughout the project lifetime, and where there is strong justification based on high impact potential, project duration and funding may be extended. Similarly, if a project is deemed not be making satisfactory progress against milestones, it may be terminated before the end of its term.

### Budget Requests

It is expected that award sizes will vary depending on justification of need provided in applications. All funding requests must be detailed and strongly justified. SFI will fund the activities of the academic partner directly and Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland will fund company participation in line with normal RD&I support terms, conditions and rates of funding.

SFI, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will take an agile, pragmatic approach in the management of this call and will liaise widely with other funders and Government Departments in the national system to enable the efficient and effective funding of academic and non-academic teams across different sectors and disciplines in a coordinated manner.

### How To Apply

To apply, applicants must download and complete an official application form available on the call website. Following completion, this file should be converted to PDF format and submitted to covid19@sfi.ie. Applications will be accepted at any time while the call is open, as detailed above. For applications being submitted by HEI applicants, please copy your local research office.

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged.

### Supply of Additional Information

For applications that progress through the review process towards funding, additional information may be requested following submission to inform the review. In addition, formal authorisation of an application by the RPO (where relevant) will be requested prior to issuing an award.
4 Review Process

Given the urgency to support feasible and impactful solutions, SFI, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will endeavour to triage and review all applications as quickly as possible. The agencies will employ an agile and adaptive approach to the review of applications which will include input from international experts and agency staff, in addition to other key national stakeholders/experts where appropriate. For the purpose of review and co-ordination, applications may be shared with relevant stakeholders.

The review process seeks to identify applications that propose feasible solutions to important and urgent problems with demonstrable significant impact for Ireland.

Based on importance of the problem to be addressed and the proposed solution feasibility and impact, some applications may be fast-tracked. In the case of applications selected for fast-tracking, applicant teams may in some instances be required to be available for interview within 3-5 days of application submission.

It is anticipated that the funding decision process for fast-tracked applications will be completed within 10-14 days of receipt of the application.

4.1 Review Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Team** - Does this team have the experience and resources to deliver the proposed project in the timeframe indicated?
- **Problem/Solution** – Is the problem significant? Can the proposed solution have a positive impact (make a difference) on the problem identified and the COVID-19 crisis overall?
- **Execution** - Is the overall proposed plan feasible and are the associated budget/deliverables/milestones appropriate/achievable?

5 Award Terms and Conditions

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Science Foundation Ireland, the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. Science Foundation Ireland Grant General Terms and Conditions shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement. Similarly Grants or funding offered by Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will apply their stated terms and conditions.

Rapid data sharing is the basis for public health action. Data produced as a result of this funding must be shared in line with the principles set out in the Joint statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak1 and with the FAIR principles to make research data FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) in order to benefit science by increasing the re-use of data and by promoting transparency and accountability.

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