ARC HUB

Accelerating Research to Commercialisation

Handbook

Summary

The aim of the SFI ARC (Accelerating Research to Commercialisation) Hub Programme is to establish a new model for regional innovation and entrepreneurial training, that will catalyse a step-change in the translation of cutting-edge publicly-funded research toward impact at a regional level. The SFI ARC Hub Programme will enhance and accelerate the commercialisation of research to create new products, processes and services. The realisation of the programme will be through the establishment of up to three regional SFI ARC Hubs focused on specific thematic areas.

The SFI ARC Hub Programme is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union under two European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regional Programmes - the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027 and the Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-2027. The ERDF aims to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion across all European regions.

The SFI ARC Hubs, as a distributed consortium of Research Bodies, will create regional ecosystems focused on optimising research translation and training future entrepreneurs through establishing new academic networks and bringing together stakeholders, while leveraging existing supports, as appropriate.

Objectives

The SFI ARC Hub Programme will support the following ERDF objectives:

> **Policy Objective 1:** A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity.

> **Specific Objective:** Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies.

Primary objectives of SFI's ARC Hub programme are:

> To drive regional development by accelerating novel, cutting-edge research, towards commercial impact readiness, in areas aligned with Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy.

> To develop a cohort of entrepreneurial scientists and engineers with the skills to realise commercial opportunities from research activities.

> To enhance and accelerate the translation of research to impact through the commercialisation process.

> To successfully transition SFI-funded research projects into existing national and international closer-to-market supports, as appropriate.

The ERDF aims to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion across all European regions.

Hub Structure

Each SFI ARC Hub will be led by a Hub Director (Lead Applicant) with support from a group of Co-PIs (Co-Applicants). Research and commercialisation activities will be supported by an Operations Team. The team will undertake activities such as agile project management, administration, scouting and business development, marketing, promotion of ARC Hub and communications. Their active and expert management of the research portfolio will ensure that projects are shaped for success from the earliest stages of the R&D pathway.

Each SFI ARC Hub award will include a translational research budget, which will be used to support researchers who have identified novel research opportunities that can be accelerated towards rapid commercial impact.
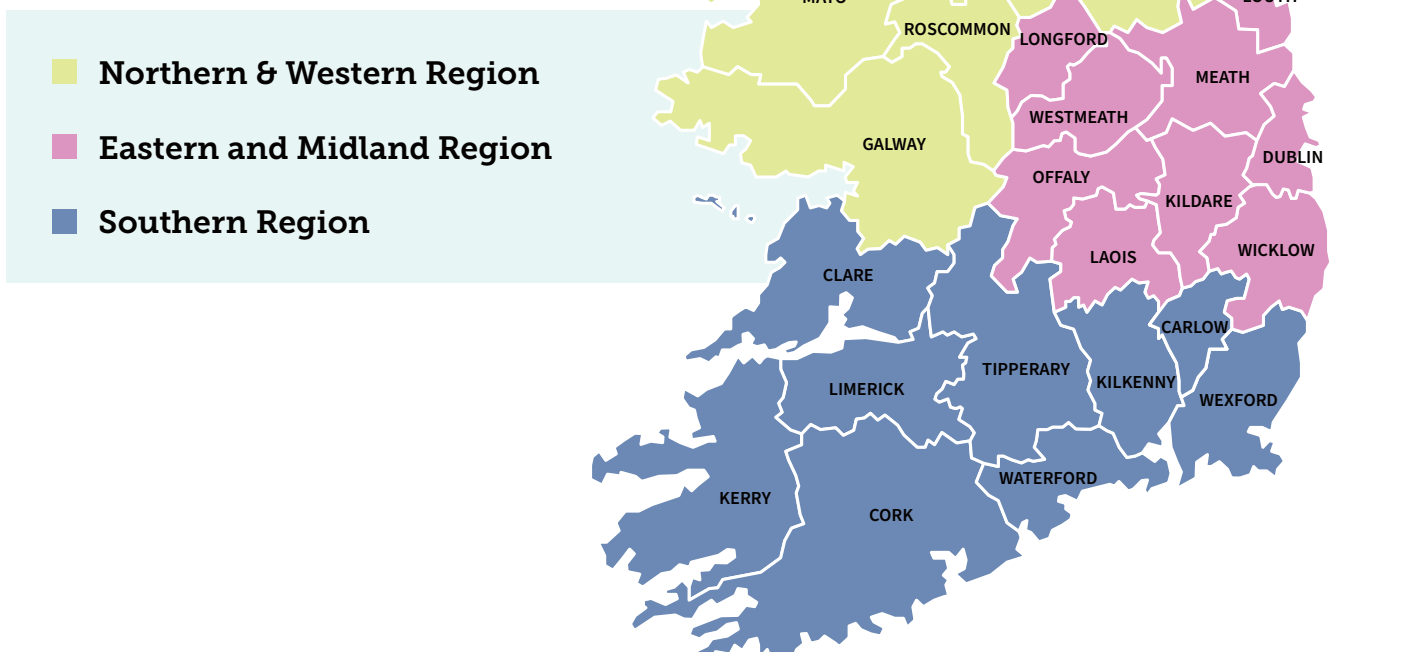
At application stage, it is expected that the SFI ARC Hub applicants will present a programme of research that has strong potential for commercialisation and provides assurance of the level of demand for a Hub in the proposed thematic area, as well as the potential for impact and achievement of the performance indicators. In addition to those projects approved as part of the application for funding, the translational research budget awarded to the Hub may support follow-on funding for successful projects, as well as being used to supporting new research projects with potential for commercialisation identified during the lifetime of the Hub.

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Geographic Regions Covered

One SFI ARC Hub will be funded under the Northern & Western Regional Programme and two SFI ARC Hubs will be funded under the Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme covering the Southern Region and Eastern and Midland Region.

Each SFI ARC Hub will be hosted by a lead Research Body located in the Regional Programme area, but it will be multi-site and can involve collaboration with other Research Bodies both in the Regional Programme area and in other Regional Programme areas in the Republic of Ireland.

Northern & Western Region

Eastern and Midland Region

Southern Region

Regional Priorities / Thematic Areas

As an ERDF co-funded operation, each SFI ARC Hub must operate in a specific thematic area aligned with the existing and emerging sectoral areas of strength (outlined in the table below) as identified in Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy. Applicants will be expected to articulate how the proposed Hub aligns with a priority sector for the host region, as well as the potential to benefit the region through economic development and innovation diffusion.

Northern and Western Region	Eastern and Midland Region	Southern Region
Sectoral Strengths and Emerging Areas of Opportunity		
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing	Advanced Manufacturing
AgriFood and AgriTech	Audiovisual	Automotive / Aerospace
Audiovisual / Creative	Biopharma / Life Sciences	Design
ICT and ICT services	Engineering	Financial Services
Life Sciences, MedTech and Medical Devices	Financial Services / FinTech	Food / AgriTech
Marine and Blue Economy	Food / AgriTech	ICT
Renewable Energy, Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainability	ICT	Marine / Maritime
		Pharma / MedTech
		Renewable Energy

...each SFI ARC Hub must operate in a specific thematic area aligned with the existing and emerging sectoral areas of strength...

Who can apply?

The SFI ARC Hub will be led by a Hub Director (Lead Applicant) located in the host Research Body of the Hub, with support from a group of Co-PIs (Co-Applicants). The Hub Director and Co-PIs are expected to be experienced researchers with strong track records in research, particularly in the proposed thematic area, in leadership (including large-scale initiatives), and in entrepreneurship and commercialisation. Each Hub will be hosted by a lead Research Body located in the regional programme area, but it will be multi-site and can involve collaboration with other Research Bodies both in the programme area and in other programme areas in Ireland.
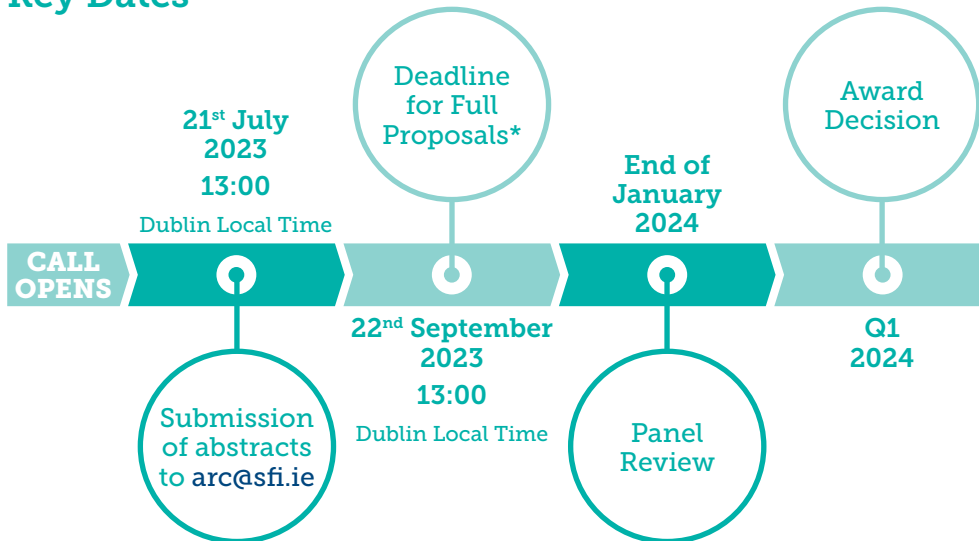
Funding

The total budget for this initiative is €99.33 million, which has been provided by the Government of Ireland (€52.67 million) and the European Union (€46.67 million). This funding is available through the ERDF Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-2027 (€34.66 million) and the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-27 (€64.66 million).

The initiative will enable up to three Hubs to be funded over a period of 5 years.

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Key Dates

21st July 2023 13:00 Dublin Local Time

Deadline for Full Proposals*

Award Decision

End of January 2024

CALL OPENS

Submission of abstracts to arc@sfi.ie

22nd September 2023 13:00 Dublin Local Time

Panel Review

Q1 2024

*Any full proposals submitted where an abstract has not been provided will be rejected without review.

For more information on the ARC Hub programme, please visit www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-arc-hub-programme/

Applicants are advised that they should consult the call documents for all details and eligibility criteria in advance of preparing an application.

All applicants must comply with the relevant EU and ERDF regulations as outlined in the Call Document and with the national law. Failure to do so will render the application ineligible for funding.

For any further queries, please contact the Enterprise Partnership Team at **arc@sfi.ie**

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the European Union

Northern & Western Regional Assembly

Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann
Dá bhfuil romhainn
Science Foundation Ireland
For what's next