



# IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL

## An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

### NEW FOUNDATIONS 2020: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Updated: 18/09/2020**

The deadline for receipt of FAQs is **13<sup>th</sup> October 2020**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. CVO & Strand-related Queries
2. Eligible Expenditure
3. Eligibility Criteria
4. Applying to the Scheme

The New Foundations 2020 call Terms and Conditions and other call documents can be found at <http://research.ie/funding/new-foundations/>.

Newly submitted Queries/Answers will be highlighted in **yellow**.

#### 1. CVO & STRAND-RELATED QUERIES

One of our potential applicants plans to work with several partners on the proposed project. They wonder if IRC requires stamps from all of them or just one? If it is multiple, is the IRC happy for the applicant to duplicate the signature page for Strand 4, for example?

For Strand 1a applicants, the signature of the partner organisation must be provided and uploaded to the online system (OLS) as part of their application. For Strand 4, the signature of at least one partner institution/organisation relevant to the strand theme must be provided.

Additional endorsements may be added to the application (such that the signature page would be duplicated), but these additional endorsements are not compulsory. The pages are available for download on the New Foundations webpage [here](#).

N.B. Only **one** pdf file may be uploaded into an individual's application on the OLS; therefore, if the applicant wishes to provide more than one endorsement, all signatory pages must be combined into a single pdf file.

Applicants to Strands 1a and 4 are required to submit an endorsement form to be completed by the NGO/CVO partners or partner organisations. Could you advise if it is okay to leave the 'Organisational Stamp' section blank if the organisation does not have one?

For Strand 1a applicants, the signature of the partner organisation must be provided. For Strand 4, the signature of at least one partner institution/organisation relevant to the strand theme must be provided.

If the organisation does not have a stamp, a signature from the relevant authority at the organisation will suffice.

I am interested in applying to IRC New Foundations Strand 1: Engaging Civic Society. The civic partner is a registered charity. I would like to clarify whether the charity must be a member of Wheel or Dóchas to be eligible?

The charity does not need to be a member of The Wheel or Dóchas in order to be eligible.

What is the definition of a community/voluntary organisation (CVO) for the purposes of Strand 1? And/or is there a list of CVOs eligible for participation in Strand 1?

At the time of application, a CVO **must be a registered charity with a CHY number**. The Irish Research Council does not provide a list of eligible CVOs. However, the applicant may find the [Charities Register](#) useful.

Strand 1a – Is it possible to have more than one name listed on the application for the HEI and also to include more than one registered charity?

This strand supports applications from researchers in partnership with a CVO/NGO. The latter must be a registered charity. The proposal may include the involvement of other groups; however, only one may be named as the partner in the proposal.

No more than one applicant/HEI can be named on the application.

The civil society organisation I am looking to partner with is already committed to partnering with another academic organisation in a separate application to this scheme for another project (also under section 1). I can see from the scheme documentation that 'an applicant may make only one application to the scheme'. Does this only refer to the lead academic applicant? Or does it also apply to the civil society organisation? Basically, I am asking if a civil society organisation can be involved in multiple applications to this scheme, if they are for distinctly different projects with different academic lead applicants?

Civil society organisations can be associated with more than one application.

Civil society organisations are permitted to support more than one application to New Foundations Strand 1a if these are clearly distinct research projects and if all awards will be supported in the event of multiple successful applications.

<p>Strand 1(a): This strand references ‘societal challenges’ and ‘is intended as a “priming” measure to enable collaboration nationally between researchers and CVOs/NGO’. I was wondering if the reference to societal challenges means that it is only aimed at fostering collaborations/consortia that will ultimately be applying to the Horizon 2020 scheme? Would other non-H2020 European funding schemes be suitable future funding options?</p>
<p>Applications that are aimed at cultivating future proposals to address societal challenges from funding lines other than Horizon 2020 are eligible.</p>
<p>For Strand 4, ‘Networking &amp; Collaboration Grants for prospective North-South Research Partnerships (awards up to a maximum of €10,000)’. Does North-South mean the Global North and Global South (as opposed to the North of Ireland and South of Ireland)?</p>
<p>This strand addresses Global North and Global South as per the Department of Foreign Affairs mandate. Eligible partner countries are Vietnam, Palestine, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and any country on the African continent.</p>
<p>I note that the academic researcher must apply for the funding. Please clarify the definition of academic researcher for the purposes of the call. Can it be anyone at any level working in academia, for example, a freelance researcher who has a Masters and undergraduate degree in a field relevant to the CVO/NGO organisation but who is currently undergoing further training to qualify as a barrister?</p>
<p>As per page 6 of the Terms and Conditions, applicants must, on the call deadline 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or a recognised RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 until the project end date.</p>
<p>What partner countries are eligible for partnership under Strand 4 in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)?</p>
<p>As per the Terms and Conditions updated on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the list of eligible DFA Strand 4 partner countries are Vietnam, Palestine, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and any country on the African continent.</p>
<p>Would Strand 1a ‘Engaging Civic Society within a national context’ allow for a project aimed at developing a research proposal for a large investigator-led grant to submit in late 2021 or early 2022 (e.g. ERC Consolidator grant; Health Research Board investigator-led project)?</p>
<p>Yes. An application submitted under Strand 1a may develop a research proposal for a large investigator-led grant for submission in late 2021 or early 2022.</p> <p>The proposal submitted to Strand 1a of New Foundations 2020 should have a national focus and should adhere to the spirit of the strand. To bolster a proposal of this kind, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed New Foundations project will feed into a future proposal for a larger grant, which will benefit from the input of the identified CVO/NGO.</p>

## 2. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Can you please advise if international travel, accommodation/subsistence are eligible costs for potential consortia members/stakeholders associated to the applications who will be visiting the applicant to partake in a symposium?

Requests for travel and accommodation costs may be included. Applicants should provide details of the number and duration of trips being proposed. Travel and accommodation, where required, will only be provided for on a vouched basis.

Per diem/subsistence rates are not eligible costs.

Every effort must be made to ensure that air travel, where used, is economical. Requests must take regard of institutional norms.

Relevant travel/accommodation costs for consortia members should be listed and clearly justified in the application and should comply with the reimbursement rules of the host institution.

Applicants should take into consideration the feasibility of their proposed activities and expenditure in the current climate. The Council recommends referencing a contingency plan in case the project objectives can no longer be achieved in the manner originally envisaged.

Would you mind advising if the following items might be categorised as either 'consumables' or 'equipment'? These are digital items, such as arduinos, raspberry pis, wiring, dmx controllers, various led lighting, cables, microphones, small portable amplifiers, etc. The total value would not exceed €1.5-2K.

These items would be classified as equipment. **Please note that equipment is not an eligible research expense under this scheme.**

Is e-conferencing software purchase or subscription (such as Zoom or MS Teams) an eligible cost?

These items are eligible costs under the 'research consumables' category, for which the maximum amount allowed is €1,000.

Is website development or hosting an eligible cost?

A website is an eligible cost under the 'research consumables' category, for which the maximum amount allowed is €1,000.

Are personnel costs allowed?

Awards have a maximum value set for each strand. All costs sought must be detailed and justified in the 'Project Budget' portion of the online application form. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that any costs sought are necessary to carry out the proposal. Demonstration of value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation and assessment process.

Where not covered by the categories outlined in the Terms and Conditions and where clearly relevant to the viability of the proposal, other costs such as staff costs can be considered. All such costs must be specified and fully justified.

Irish Research Council/institutional rates should be used for all research staff costs sought. Recruitment to these posts should be in accordance with the scheme's Terms and Conditions and institutional norms. Irish Research Council rates are as follows:

Staff Costs	Maximum cost for 1 calendar year	Maximum cost for ½ calendar year
Academic replacements	€24,817 (inclusive of PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution)	€12,409 (inclusive of PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution)
Research Assistant (can be pro-rata) Postdoctoral Researcher (can be pro-rata)	HEIs should use the institutional researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral researchers. These costs must be clearly justified in the application form. The salary requested must include provisions for PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must confirm that the requested salary is in line with the institutional researcher salary scale and provide documentary evidence.	
Other	Other personnel costs may be considered such as technicians, digital archivists. These costs must be explicitly justified, and institutional salary scales can be used for this category. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must provide documentary evidence of the salary scale used.	

Staff costs should be included in the 'Staff costs and Other' cost heading of the application.

One of our researchers is preparing an application for Strand 4 with Cambodia as a partner country. It would be of great help if you could let me know whether it is possible to recruit a research assistant outside Ireland and which rates would apply there?

Costs sought must be fully justified and, as per the Terms and Conditions (page 12), applicants should consider the evaluation criteria levels of funding support sought and value for money.

Any employment costs sought for a partner must be in line with relevant local salary scales and applicable to the career stage of the partner and should be featured in 'Staff costs and Other' category in the budget.

According to Council documentation, figures are provided for academic replacements based on one year or half a year, but you do not state that these figures may be pro-rata (while it is explicitly stated that the research assistant can be pro-rata). Given that a half year buy out (€12,000) eats

up most of the budget, can teaching be bought out for a lesser period of, for example, three months?

Yes, academic replacement costs may be pro-rata.

Can a budget include incentives for charities participating in a survey e.g. three of the charities are randomly selected to each receive a €300 donation?

As per the Terms and Conditions (page 8), all costs sought must be detailed and justified in the proposed budget. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that any costs sought are necessary to carry out the proposal.

Participants in surveys/focus groups/workshops or other such project-related activities may not be paid; however, costs incurred as a result of participation in the survey (i.e. travel costs for focus group members) may be included in the budget so long as they are detailed and fully justified.

Charitable donations are not an eligible expense.

Are project overheads eligible costs in the budget or are they considered ineligible indirect costs?

Overheads are not covered by this scheme. As per the Terms and Conditions, all costs sought must be detailed and justified in the proposed budget, and these costs must fall into one of the eligible categories:

- Travel costs
- Research Consumables
- General and/or Specialist Disciplinary Skill Training
- Dissemination
- Staff costs and Other

Costs that do not fit clearly into a category should be listed and justified under the 'Staff and Other' category. Please note that equipment is not an eligible research expense under this scheme.

Can the public service stability hourly rates be used to calculate the cost of the academic replacement or how should the €24,817 be converted into an hourly rate?

Irish Research Council/institutional rates should be used for all research staff costs sought. Recruitment to these posts should be in accordance with the scheme's Terms and Conditions and institutional norms. Irish Research Council rates are as follows:

Staff Costs	Maximum cost for 1 calendar year	Maximum cost for ½ calendar year
Academic replacements	€24,817 (inclusive of PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution)	€12,409 (inclusive of PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution)

Research Assistant (can be pro-rata)	HEIs should use the institutional researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral researchers. These costs must be clearly justified in the application form. The salary requested must include provisions for PRSI & Employer Pension Contribution. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must confirm that the requested salary is in line with the institutional researcher salary scale and provide documentary evidence.
Postdoctoral Researcher (can be pro-rata)	
Other	Other personnel costs may be considered such as technicians, digital archivists. These costs must be explicitly justified, and institutional salary scales can be used for this category. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must provide documentary evidence of the salary scale used.

Staff costs should be included in the 'Staff costs and Other' cost heading of the application. Staff costs may be pro-rata. It is a matter for the applicant, with the support of the HEI/RPO, to convert replacement costs into an hourly rate, bearing in mind the maximum costs listed above.

The Terms and Conditions state that subsistence/per diems are not eligible expenses; however, are reasonable vouched meal costs allowable while abroad?

Subsistence/per diems are not an eligible expense. Vouched meals are not an eligible expense.

Can New Foundations applicants who wish to claim 'Academic Replacement' time, claim for this during the summer as well as the teaching term (they may be correcting Masters theses and carrying out supervision and administration duties during that time)?

Requests for 'Academic Replacement Costs' may be for teaching buy out and/or for administrative duties, thesis/project supervision and other support work usually undertaken by the applicant. Irish Research Council/institutional rates must be utilised.

Is the cost of a Visa and travel insurance for the PI an eligible expense under 'Travel Costs'?

As per the Terms and Conditions (page 8), all costs sought must be detailed and justified in the proposed budget. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that any costs sought are necessary to carry out the proposal.

Visa and travel insurance are eligible costs under 'Travel Costs' if they are relevant and necessary to the project. These costs must be fully detailed and justified in the application. Subsistence/per diems, however, are not an eligible expense.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Is the applicant required to hold a competitively awarded research grant to be eligible to apply to New Foundations?

No, it is **not** necessary for applicants to hold a competitively awarded research grant to be eligible to apply for the 2020 New Foundations Call.

Applicants must meet all requirements for their Strand.

If an applicant will shortly transition to another HEI, and the new employment is starting before the grant start date, which institutional affiliation should be indicated on the online application?

As per the Terms and Conditions, the applicant must be based in an eligible research institution, with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the term of the proposed project. Considering that, the applicant should indicate the new HEI as institutional affiliation. You are advised to engage with the HEI in advance of the deadline to discuss the application. Please note that formal institutional endorsement will be required.

The Terms and Conditions state that the applicant cannot submit more than one application. Does that mean to the scheme as a whole or each individual strand? For instance, could an applicant submit one application to Strand 1 and a separate one to Strand 4?

With the exception of Strand 5 (Creative Ireland Programme Research Grants funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), for which the lead Principal Investigator may apply to undertake both funded projects, an eligible applicant may make one application only to the scheme. Applications can be made for any Strand, provided that the applicant is eligible to do so.

Is it possible to have two Co-PIs on Strand 5 from different institutions as opposed to a Lead PI and research team?

The New Foundations call does not allow for the inclusion of Co-PIs. As per the Terms and Conditions (page 22), applicants may include a maximum of two individuals (including postgraduates) as part of their research team.

Can an applicant on a fixed-term contract with an HEI apply for Strand 4? If so, is there a requirement in terms of the end date of their current contract?

As per the Terms and Conditions, this scheme will offer research opportunities for academic researchers affiliated with, or supported by, a recognised higher-education institution (HEI) or research-performing organisation (RPO) in Ireland to pursue research and dissemination activities. All awards are up to a maximum of 9 months' duration. **The applicant's affiliation with the HEI/RPO must be of sufficient duration to carry out the proposed project from the project start date until the project end date.**

Is a postdoctoral researcher eligible for Strand 5?

Yes. As per the [Terms and Conditions](#), applicants must, on the call deadline of 20th October 2020, hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or a recognised RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date of 1st March 2021 until the project end date.



Reflecting the larger award size for Strand 5, the applicant should demonstrate satisfactory track record and experience.

Are postdoctoral researchers eligible to apply to the 2020 call?

Yes. Please be advised that, as per the [Terms and Conditions](#), applicants must, on the call deadline of 20th October 2020, hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or a recognised RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date of 1st March 2021 until the project end date.

Would a postdoctoral independent scholar be eligible to apply to the New Foundations scheme?

Researchers without a host institution are not eligible to apply.

I note that an applicant cannot submit more than one application. However, is it acceptable for someone to be named Lead Applicant on one application, and as a team member (not the main named applicant) on another application?

The scheme is aimed at individual applicants rather than joint proposals (even if the applicant is seeking to form a consortium). No more than one applicant can be named on an application.

If an applicant, who is a permanent member of staff in an HEI, is not usually in receipt of salary outside of term time, can they budget for their own salary outside of term time? What rate should apply in this instance?

Academic replacements are eligible costs, but the applicant cannot apply to cover his/her salary where he/she is not ordinarily employed by the host institution.

Do applicants have to be affiliated with an eligible HEI? -i.e. Do they have to be a current staff member when applying?

Researchers without a host institution are not eligible to apply. The applicant must meet all other eligibility criteria.

Can a contract career researcher with a contract of sufficient duration at an eligible HEI/RPO apply to Strand 4 of New Foundations as part of a consortium that will submit to a future COALESCE call?

As per the Terms and Conditions, all applicants must, on the call deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or a recognised RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 until the project end date.

Strand 4, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), is a pipeline mechanism for COALESCE Strand 2B. It is anticipated that successful 2020 awardees of New Foundations Strand 4 would apply to COALESCE Strand 2B in 2021 as the **lead PI**. Applicants to COALESCE Strand 2B must, at the time of application to the scheme, satisfy the eligibility conditions of the COALESCE scheme.

If making a request for staff costs within the 'Staff costs and Other' category on the budget—can those personnel costs be associated with the NGO/charity or do they have to be within the academic institution?

To be eligible to be claimed as staff costs, personnel should be employed by, or their services arranged/procured through, the HEI/RPO. Funds can be transferred from the IRC to HEI/RPOs in the Republic of Ireland only.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate that any costs sought are necessary to carry out the proposal. Demonstration of value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation and assessment process.

#### 4. Applying to the Scheme

Will the application be run on the Irish Research Council portal of the SmartSimple website like COALESCE and other Council programmes?

No. Similarly to last year, all 2020 New Foundations applications must be made on the Irish Research Council's WizeHive portal, available [here](#).

All applications and Research Office endorsements must be submitted through the WizeHive portal.

For details on using the online system (OLS), see the applicant and Research Officer guides available on the [New Foundations webpage](#).

If someone wishes to include a bibliography/references, can they attach a separate document via the PDF upload, or do they need to include the references in the text?

Applicants should only upload requested endorsement documents if relevant to their strand and requested on the OLS. As per the Terms and Conditions, an application to this scheme will not be assessed if 'the incorrect or additional materials are uploaded to the application form.'

If they would like to include a list of references/bibliography, they should include it within the text of their application.

Once the application is submitted to WizeHive, is there a possibility to amend an error made?

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by the Irish Research Council on, or before, the deadline indicated. To safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission.

The Irish Research Council will not accept any responsibility for omissions or errors in an application. Applicants are advised to read all the documentation in full in order to provide a comprehensive submission.

No alterations can be made to an application once it has been submitted. It is therefore important that you check and re-check the application form until you are fully satisfied with all sections before submitting.