

2018 COALESCE Research Fund: Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

The deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16.00 (Ireland Time), 20th August 2018**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the Scheme
3. Budget

If you can't find your answer below, you may be interested in checking out the presentation slides from the programme briefing session:

http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2018/05/COALESCE-Programme-briefing_2018.pdf

You can also listen to a recording of the same session:

<https://youtu.be/HjiniWSpHxDM>

1. ELIGIBILITY

Can medicine, midwifery or nursing could be considered an acceptable STEM discipline under Annex B?

The list of disciplines are indicative. It is a matter for researchers to evidence their capability to undertake a proposed project as a STEM researcher.

Is neuroimaging a STEM discipline?

The list of disciplines are indicative. It is a matter for researchers to evidence their capability to undertake a proposed project as a STEM researcher.

Is Psychiatry considered an acceptable STEM discipline under Annex B, for submission under strand 2A.

The list of disciplines are indicative. It is a matter for researchers to evidence their capability to undertake a proposed project as a STEM researcher.

Nepal is not an Irish Aid focus country. Does this mean that an organisation based in Nepal is ineligible under the Terms and Conditions of Strand 2B?

The Terms and Conditions stipulate the requirement for a mandatory and named Co-PI (co-applicant) employed by a research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of Irish Aid's partner countries and who will be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end.

Applicants based in countries that are non-Irish Aid partner countries are not eligible to apply.

I understand Nigeria is not considered an Irish Aid Partner country. Are Nigerian nationals eligible to apply for the programme?

Eligible PIs in RPOs in any country on the African continent are eligible to apply as co-PIs to strand 2B.

Can the proposal be split between 2 institutions?
Yes, the AHSS PI and STEM co-PI can come from different HEIs/RPOs. However, the lead PI and their institution must take responsibility as the lead on the project with regard to financial matters and progress reporting.
How many co-PIs from the lead institution in ROI (not from the Irish Aid's partner's research performing organisation) are allowed?
There should be one applicant (lead) from the ROI institution. Project proposals can draw on other expertise, but not as a co-applicant.
Are 3 PIs possible on Strand 2A?
Strand 2A should have two PIs as applicants. The lead PI will be from an AHSS discipline as identified in Annex A. The mandatory and named co-PI will be from a STEM discipline as identified in Annex B. Project proposals can draw on other expertise to the above, but not as co-applicants.
As per call document (page 18) 'applicants may concurrently apply for a Strand 1 and Strand 2 award' provided they have a justifiable time-management strategy if they get both awards. Can a PI apply for strands 2A and 2B simultaneously - in this case, as a lead AHSS PI for a Strand 2A, and as a co-PI (based in an Irish-based RPO) for a strand 2B.
An Irish-based PI cannot be the co-PI under Strand 2B. The mandatory and named Co-PI (co-applicant) on Strand 2B must be employed by a research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of Irish Aid's partner countries and who will be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end.
Under Strand 2A, can the AHSS PI and STEM co-PI come from different HEI/RPOs?
Yes, the AHSS PI and STEM co-PI can come from different HEIs/RPOs. However, the lead PI and their institution must take responsibility as the lead on the project with regard to financial matters and progress reporting.
In relation to Strand 2A are the AHSS disciplines under Annex A of paramount importance, or should the applications also consider the disciplines under Annex B for the STEM co-applicant?
The Terms and Conditions state applicants in any AHSS discipline (see Annex A with call documentation) can apply for funding as the lead applicant along with a named applicant from any STEM discipline (see Annex B).
Is a potential applicant, who is a STEM partner on a New Horizons grant due to end in early January 2019, eligible to apply to this scheme?
PIs on projects completing in early January 2019 will be permitted to apply, however the Council reserves the right to withdraw a COALESCE award in circumstances where an outgoing grant is not completed by this date.
Is an academic with experience in the field of development aid but who doesn't have two years as a named PI eligible to lead a project on strand 2B of this call?
The lead PI on strand 2B must have had two years of experience as a Principal investigator and meet the other eligibility requirements in order to be an eligible PI on this strand.

Stand 2B - what countries are included as "eligible partner countries" - the document states "in Ireland and eligible partner countries" which includes Vietnam; Palestine; any African country - does this include South Africa.

Eligible partner countries on strand 2B include any African country, Vietnam and Palestine.

A potential applicant for Strand 2B has the criteria set out in the document however in the appendix (2) it states "*Applications are invited from established researchers with a proven research track record in development in an eligible Irish research institution*". If the potential applicant has all other criteria but not a proven research track record in development are they still eligible to apply?

The lead PI on strand 2B must have a proven track record in development and meet the other eligibility requirements in order to be an eligible PI.

Can applicants submit 2 Strand 1 applications and a Strand 2a application?

Applicants may apply to more than one strand on Strand 1 and the same applicant may also submit one application as lead PI to Strand 2A. In the event of an applicant being successful in more than one strand in this call, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-management strategy and must receive approval for same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept both awards.

The applicant is interested in Strand 2b (Irish Aid) and has a strong background in research in Africa. The T&C state that PIs must be 5 years post-Phd (unlike Strand 1 and 2A). The applicant submitted her Phd in 2013, had a viva in Jan 2014 and graduated in June 2014. Hence on paper she is ineligible. Is there any flexibility in how the IRC/Irish Aid interpret the length of time post Phd for PIs?

Eligibility is calculated from the date of graduation. Five years must have passed since the date of graduation at the date of the call deadline for an applicant to be considered eligible on strand 2B.

Is an EOI obligatory for who would like to submit their proposal? In case of not completing EOI before 28 June can a proposal still be submitted?

All applicants must submit an Expression of Interest form including an abstract with a maximum of 150 words and the completed Reviewer Nomination template before 16:00 (Irish time) on 28th June. Failure to submit an EOI will render an application ineligible.

Can researchers submit 2 Strand 1 applications (eg. Strand 1a and 1c)?

Eligible applicants may submit two Strand 1 applications. In the event of an applicant being successful in more than one strand in this call, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-management strategy and must receive approval for same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept both awards.

Can applicants submit 2 Strand 1 applications and a Strand 2a application?

Applicants may apply to more than one Strand in Strand 1 and the same applicant may also submit one application as lead PI to Strand 2A. In the event of an applicant being successful in more than one Strand in this call, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-

management strategy and must receive approval for same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept both awards.

Can applicants upload a letter of support from a collaborator?

Applicants may not upload a letter of support from a collaborator. Uploading material and/documents not requested in the application form will render an application ineligible.

Can you confirm that a PI who is academic supervisor/mentor to an IRC Postgraduate Scholar/Postdoctoral Fellow is not considered to be in receipt of IRC funding.

A PI who is an academic supervisor/mentor to an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholar/Postdoctoral Fellow not in receipt of funding from the IRC themselves and is therefore eligible to apply in their own right.

In order to be eligible a PI should not be in receipt of any other Council funding at the proposed start date, with the exception of New Foundations and/or Ulysses grant award(s).

Is a postdoctoral researcher eligible to apply?

Postdocs who at the time of the call deadline holds a contract of sufficient duration to carry out the proposed project from the project start date until the project end date is eligible to apply as long as they meet the other criteria for eligibility on the Strand to which they are applying.

The call document states that the maximum duration of a Strand 1 project is 24 months. Is there a minimum duration and would a project of 12 or 18 months be eligible

There is no minimum duration for projects, this is a matter for the Principal Investigator.

The COALESCE FAQ call refers to 'nominated reviewers' as 'international experts' - are there any geographic restrictions to where reviewers are normally resident, can any location/affiliation be named or are reviewers normally resident in Ireland or a partner county in the case of Strand 2B excluded

Nominated reviewers should be international experts in the relevant field who are not affiliated with the application and /or the proposed project. Nominated reviewers cannot be based in Ireland.

For Expression of Interest forms, are electronic signatures acceptable for both Applicant and Research Officer

Electronic signatures on Expression of Interest form are acceptable for both the applicant and the research officer.

Under Strand 2A is it possible to have an AHSS Co-PI in addition to the STEM Co-PI?

Strand 2A requires one lead PI from an AHSS discipline and one co-PI from a STEM discipline only.

Can applications for Strand 2A be from AHSS and STEM PIs based in two different institutions?

The lead AHSS PI and the STEM co-PI on strand 2A may be based in two different institutions. The lead PI's host institution must take full responsibility for all tasks associated with the management of the project, including budget management, ethical approval and staff recruitment.

Under Strands 1C or 1D, (or any of the projects under Strand 1B-1I), would it be possible to have a lead PI and a Co-PI

Applications to strands 1B to 1I including strands 1C and 1D should have one lead PI only.

Should the STEM co-PI should be named on the EOI form?

The co-PI on strand 2A may be identified on the EOI but this is not mandatory.

The phrase 'no later than 1 Nov 2016', does that mean the grants are eligible for those who have had their PhD less than 2 years?

Where a PhD has been granted since 1 November 2016 the applicant is ineligible.

Should there be just one Primary Area specified for the Strand 2A Eols, or should both AHSS and STEM areas be specified and if only one AHSS Primary Area can be included, presumably the list of Disciplines can include disciplines from outside that Primary Area category since these are interdisciplinary projects?

Strand 2A EOIs should identify the AHSS primary area and disciplines. Disciplines outside of the primary area may be noted in order of relevance to the proposed project.

Applicants may also identify the STEM primary area and disciplines.

If an applicant doesn't have a list of 5 potential reviewers to include and 3 to exclude at this point can they still send in an EOI?

The EOI must be submitted along with the Reviewer Nomination Template. Where an applicant identifies fewer than 5 potential reviewers and/or fewer than 3 reviewers to be excluded an EOI must still be submitted.

An AHSS PI is hoping to apply to COALESCE strand 2A with a STEM co-PI.

The AHSS PI in question is currently the PI on an ongoing ERC project which will end in December 2020.

The AHSS PI is, according to the criteria that define eligibility as set out in section 3.2 on page 16 -17 of the COALESCE T&C's, currently eligible to apply.

The proposed project for COALESCE is completely different to the ERC project that is underway and the PI has time to dedicate to this proposed COALESCE project. Is the AHSS PI eligible to apply for strand 2A ?

PIs in receipt of funding from the Irish Research Council at the project start date are not eligible to apply with the exception of New Foundations grants or a Ulysses award. PIs in receipt of ERC grants, grants or award from funders other than the Irish Research Council at the project start date are eligible to apply.

2. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

Is there any criteria for the selection of the five potential peer reviewers (pertaining to the field) and three reviewers the applicant would prefer the Council would exclude from the review process of their proposal?

Nominated reviewers should be international experts in the relevant field.

Under the NSO "Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health services" - should an application to Strand 1A address all elements that is quality childcare, education and health services or can the application address one or two of these as in just health services?

Applications to Strand 1A must address one or more of the National Strategic Outcomes. Where an NSO has constituent elements, the application may address one or more or all of those elements. The project description should clearly specify which elements are being addressed in the proposal.

Under Strand 2A is co-funding a mandatory requirement? If so is a cash contribution required or are in-kind contributions allowable?

Co-funding is not mandatory. It may add value to a project where matched with activities which support evidence based outcomes. In-kind contributions are acceptable where they support the evidence based impact of the project.

Is there any guidance on how much match funding needs to be provided (e.g. a percentage of the total amount requested from IRC)?

Funding provided by partners on open call Strands 1A and 2A is not obligatory. It may add value to a project where matched with activities which support evidence based outcomes.

Can an applicant submit two similar projects to Strand 1A, or a proposal to Strand 1A and another to Strand B?

Applicants may apply to more than one strand. Duplicate project submission and/or the submission of similar projects is not allowed. Projects will only be assessed once.

For their project the collaborator would be working with a PhD student on a particular method which neither the PI or Co-PI are trained in. Therefore, for the purposes of the IRC's FAQs the

collaborator would be someone who would provide training or additional expertise for the project team. Is this collaboration eligible in this context?
Strong justification that this PhD student is the only person with the requisite skills and without them the project couldn't happen. Would have to be provided in order for this collaboration to be considered eligible
Can you please also confirm if an AHSS PI or STEM Co-PI is not a permanent staff member or does not have a contract of sufficient duration, would a letter of commitment from the Head of Department committing to the continuation of the individual's contract (should the award be successful) be sufficient to meet this requirement?
As per the Terms and Conditions of Coalesce 2018 both the lead AHSS PI and the named STEM co-PI must hold contracts of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date until project end.
The application form seems to only allow for one partner/collaborator country for Strand 2B. Can you please advise if applicants are permitted to collaborate with multiple partner countries? If so, how should this be presented in the application form?
The lead applicant on strand 2B must work with a mandatory and named Co-PI (co-applicant) employed by a research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of Irish Aid's partner countries and who will be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end.
Can you please confirm for the project description which must be uploaded by applicants, what the font size, margins and spacing should be?
The following should be used for documents being uploaded to COALESCE applications: Font colour: Black Font type: Calibri Font size: 11 Side margins: 2.0cm Top and Bottom margins: 1.5cm Line spacing: single
The COALESCE application form asks applicants to 'Demonstrate the potential of the proposed research to inform policy and/or practice within the chosen National Strategic Outcome(NSO) or partner theme.' Under strand 1A, is it possible for a proposal to address more than one NSO (e.g. NSO 3, 6 and 10) or should the proposal address only one NSO. The wording of the application seems to suggest that it should focus on one only. Could you please clarify this point?
An application to strand 1A may address more than one NSO.
Is it acceptable to name an Irish state agency as a partner in an application?

State agencies may be named as partners in an application.

3. BUDGET

Looking at the eligible research expenses for Strand 1 (1A – Open call addressing the NSOs) in the Coalesce call the terms and conditions state that the maximum allowable consumables costs are €1k (for a 24-month project). Is this intended to rule out any lab based (scientific) research under this strand? The costs associated with any lab based project will incur much higher consumables costs than this. There are many potential projects addressing the NSOs which would involve lab research. Can you please consider removing this limit?

I am asking this in my capacity as research officer as part of the Trinity Research Development Office.

COALESCE Strand 1A is designed to encourage policy-orientated research addressing one or more of the National Strategic Outcomes. This particular scheme is not intended to support scientific research that would be more appropriate to other funding streams either of the Council or other research funders. For that reason, the consumable cost must be minimal and this limit cannot be changed.

One of our researchers is interested in applying to 2B but is concerned that the limit of €5000 is too low for any required lab work. Is there any flexibility on this?

Consumables of up to €5000 only may be requested on Strand 2B.

Can you please confirm whether a PhD Student may be costed into the budget for any of Strands, as it is not clear from the guidance whether this is an eligible cost?

Research Assistants and Post Docs are listed as eligible costs in the Terms and Conditions of Coalesce. PhD students are not listed as eligible costings and therefore cannot be included in budget requests.

With regard to recruitment for Postdocs is it necessary that recruitment must be made at point 1, level 2A of the IUA Postdoc salary scales, or can recruitment be made at any point on level 2A or 2B etc. if it can be strongly justified as necessary for the project?

It is permitted for recruitment to be made at higher points on the scale but a strong justification must be made for this.

The call document states that academic staff-replacement costs may be included, at a rate of €24,353 per annum, and the indicative application form states that 'staff replacements ('buy-out' costs) must be accounted for according to approved Irish Research Council staff rates.' Is it sufficient to just include the rate listed, stating that it is for PI replacement costs, or is it expected that FTEs and specific salary scales are referenced in the justification?

A full justification for the costs proposed must be provided using the rates outlined in the call documentation.

Can you please confirm if there is any minimum or maximum time commitment (percentage of FTE) required of the AHSS PI and STEM Co-PI? If so, does this differ for the AHSS PI and STEM Co-PI?

As per the Terms and Conditions PI must be in the position to devote adequate time to ensure the project's realisation over the course of the project's duration. Subcontracting parts of the contract that cannot be overseen by the PI/s is prohibited. The breakdown of time to be committed by the lead AHSS PI and STEM co-PI is not specified in the Terms and Conditions. The AHSS PI must be aware that as lead PI they are committing to overseeing the realisation of the project from the project start date until the project end date.

Are PhD student costs (fees/stipend...etc.) eligible costs under strand 2B?

Costings for PhD students may not be included in an application under Strand 2B.

Are the budget amounts pro-rated? (ie) strand 1B budget €100k, 18 months, if the PI was applying for 12 months would the budget be reduced to €66,666?

Successful applications on Strands 1B-1I and Strand 2B will run over the period of months specified in the terms and conditions and the full award amount will be awarded over the course of that specification. Applications to Strand 1A must run over a period of 24 months. The amount requested in the submitted budget will be awarded up to a maximum of €120,000 to successful projects. Applications to strand 2A may run for a minimum of 15 months and a maximum of 24 months. Award amounts are not delivered at a pro rata rate. Successful applications to strand 2A will be awarded the full amount requested in the submitted budget.

For collaboration costs is the max 10% of the total project inclusive of overhead and equipment?

Collaboration include all project costs less equipment and overheads. Overheads applies to all direct costs except equipment and cannot exceed 25% of direct costs.

For Strand 2A can the AHSS and STEM have replacement costs up to €24,353 each or is this the total per project?

The maximum costs that can be requested on Strand 2A for academic replacement is €24,353 per project per annum.