

COALESCE Research Fund 2019: Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

The **deadline** for receipt of FAQs is **1 August 2019**. 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

You may also be interested in consulting the presentation slides from the programme briefing session: <http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2018/05/COALESCE-2019-Briefing-Slideshow.pdf> and the notes which are here: http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2018/05/Notes-from-Briefing_FINAL.pdf

1. ELIGIBILITY

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

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

Is neuroimaging a STEM discipline?

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

Nepal is not an DFAT 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 for COALESCE Research Fund 2019 stipulate the requirement to have a mandatory and named Co-PI (co-applicant) employed by a research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of DFAT'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-DFAT partner countries are not eligible to apply.

I understand Nigeria is not considered a DFAT Partner country. Are Nigerian nationals eligible to apply for the programme?

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

How many co-PIs from the lead institution in the Republic of Ireland (not from the DFAT partner's research performing organisation) are allowed?
At least one applicant (lead) from the Republic of Ireland institution is necessary. While project proposals can draw on the expertise of other individuals present at these institutions, such individuals cannot be named as co-PIs.
As per call document, '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 two strands simultaneously - in this case, as a lead PI for a Strand 1C, 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 they must be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end.
Is a potential applicant, who is a STEM partner on a New Horizons grant due to end before the call close date, eligible to apply to this scheme?
PIs on projects completing before the call close date 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 COALESCE?
The lead PI on strand 2B must have had three years of experience as a Principal Investigator AND have won a grant valued at a minimum of €100k in which they are the named PI. The lead PI must also meet all other eligibility requirements to be an eligible PI on this strand.
In Strand 2B, what countries are included as "eligible partner countries"?
As stated in the terms for Strand B, eligible partner countries on strand 2B include any African country, Vietnam and Palestine.
The appendix (2) stipulates that applicants for Strand 2B have a "proven research track record in development". If a potential applicant to Strand 2B does NOT have a proven research track record in development but meets all other eligibility requirements, are they eligible to apply?
The lead PI on strand 2B must have a proven track record in development and meet all other eligibility requirements in order to be an eligible PI.
Can applicants submit more than one Strand 1 application, <u>as well as</u> a Strand 2B 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 2B. In the event that an applicant is successful in more than one strand of COALESCE, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-management strategy for simultaneously conducting the projects. Additionally, the applicant must receive approval for same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept multiple awards on this call.
The applicant is interested in Strand 2B (DFAT) and has a strong background in research in Africa. The T&Cs state that PIs must be 3 years post-PhD. The applicant submitted their PhD in November 2016, had a viva in Jan 2017 and graduated in June 2017. Hence, on paper, she is ineligible. Is there any flexibility in how the IRC/DFAT interpret the length of time post PhD for PIs?
We regret to inform you that there is no flexibility. Eligibility is calculated from the date of graduation. Three 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.

Can researchers submit two Strand 1 applications (e.g. Strand 1D and 1J)?
Eligible applicants may submit two Strand 1 applications. In the event that an applicant is successful in more than one strand of COALESCE, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-management strategy for simultaneously conducting the projects. Additionally, the applicant must receive approval for same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept multiple awards on this call.
Can applicants upload a letter of support from a collaborator?
Applicants may NOT upload a letter of support from a collaborator. Uploading material and/or documents not requested in the application form will render an application ineligible.
Can you confirm that a PI who is an academic supervisor/mentor to an IRC Postgraduate Scholar/Postdoctoral Fellow is not considered to be in receipt of IRC funding.
<p>A PI who is an academic supervisor/mentor to an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholar/Postdoctoral Fellow is NOT in receipt of funding from the IRC themselves and is, therefore, eligible to apply in their own right.</p> <p>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, Creative Connections and/or Ulysses grant award(s).</p>
Is a postdoctoral researcher eligible to apply?
Postdocs who, at the time of the call deadline, hold a contract of sufficient duration to carry out the proposed project from the project start date until the project end date are eligible to apply as long as they meet the other criteria for eligibility of the Strand to which they are applying.
Is there a minimum duration for awards?
Each strand has its own individual maximum duration that can be found in the T&Cs, which is intended as a broad guideline for each project's length.
Under Strand 1C, (or any of the projects under Strand 1E, 1F, 1J, 2B), would it be possible to have a lead PI and a Co-PI?
Applications to strands 1C, 1E, 1F, 1J, and 2B should have one lead PI only. Strand 2B requires a lead PI in a host institution in Ireland along with a co-PI in an HEI or RPO in either Vietnam or Palestine or in any African country.
Does the phrase 'no later than 1 Nov 2017' mean the grants are eligible for those who have had their PhD less than 2 years?
Where a PhD has been granted after 1 November 2017, the applicant is ineligible.
Do all co-PIs have to have a PhD?
Lead PIs and Co-PIs on COALESCE 2019 must have qualified with a PhD within the required time frame specified in the relevant strand of the Terms and Conditions.
An applicant does not hold a PhD but is a Full Professor. If the date of initial appointment to a senior academic position (e.g. full Professor) is provided, would the applicant be eligible without a PhD?
As per the Terms and Conditions, applicants to COALESCE 2019 must have a PhD qualification.

A prospective applicant who is interested to apply for Strand 2B has been PI on 6 projects to date the cumulative value of which is well over 100K. However, individually the awards have been under 100K. Would he/she be eligible to apply for strand 2B?

In order to meet the eligibility criteria for Strand 2B, the lead PI must have won a single grant worth a minimum of €100k, have three years post PhD experience and experience in projects/consortia with an international and/or development focus. A cumulative figure of €100K derived from numerous grants does not meet the criteria required.

A prospective applicant to the COALESCE 2019 call currently holds a New Horizons grant which is due to finish at the end of December 2019, but for which a No Cost Extension has been approved, extending the project to April 2020. Can the applicant apply to COALESCE and, if successful, delay the start of the COALESCE project to coincide with the end of the New Horizons grant in April 2020?

Successful applicants to COALESCE 2019 may **not** hold a New Horizons Grant and a COALESCE award simultaneously. Successful awardees in COALESCE 2019 will be notified of the call outcome in December 2019 and projects will begin in March 2020.

In Strand 2B, if there are two co-PIs must they both previously have won a €100k grant? Or is it sufficient that one of them has previously won and been a lead on a €100k grant?

The lead PI should have won and led a grant of a minimum value of €100k. This condition is not required of the co-PI.

There should be one co-PI. The co-applicant will, at minimum:

- Be at least three years post PhD⁴ (or possess equivalent research qualifications/experience)
- Have experience of international research collaboration with an international development focus and/or international project/s
- Have a track record in research under one or more of the DFAT themes for this strand.

For Strand 2B, will the eligibility criteria for PI and co-PIs be the same as last year's call? There is some concern that the extensive eligibility criteria for co-PIs could rule out some high-quality candidates in African Universities.

As per the Terms & Conditions:

The lead Principal Investigator must hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or RPO to carry out the proposed research from the project start date until project end date.

See list of eligible institutions at http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2017/05/IRC_2019_Eligible-Higher-Education-Institutions-in-Ireland.pdf.

The application must be supported by a **named** Co-PI (co-applicant) employed by an HEI or research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's partner countries, Vietnam, Palestine or any African country, and who will be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end date. The RPO in the partner country can be a public or not-for-profit higher education institution or research institute. The RPO must have the capacity and infrastructure to support the research, should be research active and be able to demonstrate the standard of academic rigour required for a large research project.

The lead applicant will:

- Be at least three years post-PhD¹
- Have won and been the lead PI on a grant with a minimum value €100K
- Have experience of collaboration within research consortia with an international development focus and/or international project
- Have a track record in research under one or more of the DFAT themes for this strand
- Not be in receipt of any other Council funding at the proposed start date, with the exception of New Foundations and /or Creative Connections and/or Ulysses award(s).

The co-applicant will, at minimum:

- Be at least three years post PhD⁴ (or possess equivalent research qualifications/experience)
- Have experience of international research collaboration with an international development focus and/or international project/have a track record in research under one or more of the DFAT themes for this strand

Does DFAT fund action research projects? (i.e. a study that is designed to intervene and improve ways in which a community addresses problems and issues)

Proposals involving action research will be considered. Please see Appendix 3 of the Terms & Conditions for the Evaluation Criteria for Strand 2B. All proposals submitted to Strand 2B must meet the standards of excellence and academic rigour required in order to be funded.

Would you provide more information on the DCYA strand? How many awards in this strand? Is there a specific topic for this strand?

As per the Terms and Conditions, the Council envisages making one award per strand. Please see Appendix 1 of the Terms and Conditions for information on this strand.

Will the Council maintain the interdisciplinary strand (last year's 2A) (i.e. requiring a lead AHSS (arts, humanities and social sciences) principal investigator (PI) working with a PI with a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) background addressing global challenges focusing on Strategic Development Goals identified by the UN)? – Our understanding is that the Council will not this year, are there plans for the following call yet?

It is planned that the open-call strands, Strands 1A and 2A, will run again in 2020.

If a lead PI is a partner on a project worth €170K, is the PI eligible for Strand 2B?

The applicant on Strand 2B should be the lead PI on a grant worth at a minimum €100k in order to be eligible as the lead PI on Strand 2B.

Are proposal submissions to Strand 1J (Met Éireann) to address part A and part B or address a single part individually?

As per the Terms & Conditions, proposals to Strand 1J should address Part A and Part B.

What role do DFAT play throughout the duration of a successful awarded project?

As per the Terms and Conditions, a representative from DFAT should be invited to participate in or provide a nominee to any steering group or advisory structure being convened to support the research project. A specified member of DFAT will be available to participate on the project steering

¹ The lead and co-applicants will have been awarded their doctoral degrees no later than 1 November 2016. For this condition, the date of graduation should be taken into account.

group, if requested. At least one meeting with the awardee will be required per year. DFAT will receive progress reports submitted by awardees and must be acknowledged as co-funder (along with the Irish Research Council) on all publications, reports and outreach activities. Please see Appendix 2 of the Terms and Conditions for further information on this strand.

2. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

Can an applicant submit two similar projects to Strand 1? Additionally, can an applicant submit similar proposals to Strand 1 and Strand 2?

Applicants may apply to more than one strand. Duplicate project submissions and/or the submission of similar projects is not allowed.

For their project, the collaborator would be working with a PhD student on a particular method in which neither the PI nor Co-PI are trained. 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 such a collaboration eligible in this context?

Strong justification that this PhD student is the only person with the requisite skills such that the project couldn't proceed without their expertise would have to be provided to qualify this as an eligible collaboration.

If a 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 eligibility requirements?

As per the Terms and Conditions of COALESCE 2019, the PI must hold a contract of sufficient duration with an eligible HEI or RPO to conduct 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. Are applicants 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 DFAT's partner countries. The named co-PI must be in a position to carry out the proposed research from the project start-date until the project end.

Can you please confirm what the font size, margins and spacing should be for the project description?

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

Does the 14-page limit for the Detailed Project Description include references?

14 pages is the maximum length for the 'Detailed Project Description' including references. The system will not allow an applicant to upload a document longer than 14 pages.

Could you please clarify what kind of information is expected to be included in the section on 'research strategy'?

Applicants should outline the step-by-step plan of action for their project, demonstrating how the stated research questions will be answered. This includes details of the project's placement relative to existing literature, the methodology(ies) to be used, detailed implementation and dissemination plans, major project milestones and how intended project outputs and impact will be achieved.

Are slides from the Briefing presentation still available?

Yes, they are available on the COALESCE page on <http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2018/05/COALESCE-2019-Briefing-Slideshow.pdf> and the notes are available at http://research.ie/assets/uploads/2018/05/Notes-from-Briefing_FINAL.pdf

3. BUDGET

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 €5,000 only may be requested on Strand 2B.

Can you please confirm whether a PhD Student may be costed into the budget for any of the Strands as an eligible cost?

Research Assistants and Postdocs 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, 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 salary scale, but justification must be made for this.

The call document states that academic staff-replacement costs may be included. 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. It is expected that applicants would provide as much justification as possible.

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?

Successful applications on Strands 1C, 1E, 1F, 1J and Strand 2B **may** run up to the maximum period of months and funding limits specified in the Terms and Conditions. Salary costs can be pro rata, as indicated by the Terms and Conditions. All costs sought must be detailed and justified. Only costs requested in the budget submitted with the original application will be awarded to successful projects.

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

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