ESRC-IRC UK/Ireland Networking Grants
Call Specification

Summary

The UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Irish Research Council (IRC) are pleased to invite proposals for the ESRC-IRC UK/Ireland Networking Grants call, aimed at fostering the development of long-term relationships between British and Irish social science researchers, leading towards the potential development of future joint research proposals between the two countries.

The overall budget for this call is £200,000 co-funded between ESRC and IRC. Proposals must include a UK component of maximum £10,000 GBP and an Irish component of maximum €11,800 EUR. Costs for the UK component must be specified as normal in the Je-S form while costs for the Irish component must be specified in the mandatory Ireland Budget Form attachment. Proposals should be a maximum duration of 12 months and projects should expect to commence in summer 2020.

The deadline for proposals to be submitted through Je-S is **16:00 on Wednesday 17 June 2020.**

Please note that following the launch of this call, submissions via Je-S **will become available** on **Monday 2 March 2020**.

Background and scope

ESRC is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and is the largest funder of social science in the UK, supporting independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and civil society. UKRI is eager to support the UK research community in expanding its engagement with counterparts in other countries. With this in mind, ESRC is aware of potential untapped collaboration opportunities between the UK and Republic of Ireland (ROI) in the social sciences.

The mission of the Irish Research Council is to enable and sustain a vibrant research community in Ireland by supporting excellent researchers in all disciplines. The Council, whose mandate spans over all disciplines, is the only national funder of pure research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS). The Council invests in a range of partnerships, both nationally and internationally, to enable the transfer of knowledge to underpin social, economic and cultural progress, and to connect researchers and expertise with the wider community.

UK-ROI relations are built on a history of unique arrangements spanning the social, political and legal spheres, offering a natural habitat for social science research relevant to multiple disciplines and themes of study.

In this context, one of the most prominent subjects currently affecting both the UK and ROI is the UK's departure from the European Union. The Brexit process has so far been uncertain, raising questions which span many areas of society, politics and economics. One example, the shared border between the ROI and Northern Ireland, has proven to be a key determining factor in the progress of withdrawal negotiations. Yet, the uncertainty which surrounds this aspect alone presents a multitude of challenges and opportunities which are fertile areas for social science research. While Brexit is not the only subject relevant to UK-ROI relations, it provides a common research challenge and ideal springboard from which to launch a collaborative networking call which engages disciplines from across the breadth of social science.

This call intends to provide support for a programme of flexible activity in the area of UK-ROI relations with the broad objective of establishing sustainable collaborations in this area. Collaborations may seek to develop potential future joint research proposals between the UK and ROI.

Call details

This call seeks to improve the connectivity between British and Irish social science research communities. Funding will be provided to groups of researchers for the purpose of fostering new connections, identifying common interests, building networks and developing common research agendas, helping to lay the groundwork for future collaborative research activity while also enabling new sustainable collaborations to be formed and existing relationships to be strengthened.

Interdisciplinary proposals across the breadth of the social sciences are strongly encouraged. Applicants should also consider how their proposal makes the best use of available expertise in the UK and ROI, together with the added value of new or existing collaborations.

Specific objectives that underpin this call are:

- To establish and develop partnerships between UK and ROI social science researchers.
- To identify common research priorities and promote the sharing of research ideas (including new methodologies) between UK and ROI researchers.
- To facilitate the development of interdisciplinary collaborations between UK and ROI researchers for the purpose of submitting high-quality joint research proposals to possible future funding calls or responsive mode competitions.
- To establish networks with non-academic collaborators (such as policy makers, businesses or third sector organisations) and engage with the wider population through public engagement activities, if applicable to the research area.

Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative, creative and genuinely collaborative programmes of activity which could include (but are not limited to):

- Mobility, networking and travel for one or more investigators in either direction
- Scoping studies.
- Digital collaboration, such as webinars
- Workshops to explore future collaboration opportunities
- Researcher exchanges (e.g. research visits, short stays, staff exchanges, etc.)
- Other collaborative activities, aimed at developing/reinforcing research networks and giving way to future cooperation.

Collaborative activities should not be limited to the Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) and applicants are expected to engage a network of researchers from both the UK and the ROI. We encourage a strong commitment to supporting the development of researchers (particularly at the early-career stage) within proposals, through their inclusion in activities such as workshops and study visits.

Please note that associated studentships or fellowships are not eligible under this call.

Project team composition

Project teams should be comprised of both UK and Irish researchers. Researchers in each country will be led by a **Co-Principal Investigator** for that country, who will co-ordinate networking activities and share ownership of the project and its direction. The project team may also include a number of additional Co-Investigators from eligible UK and ROI research organisations.

For the purpose of the submission process and distribution of funds, the UK Co-PI must be named as the 'Principal Investigator' in the application submission form and take responsibility for submission of the proposal in accordance with their research organisation's usual procedure. All other investigators must therefore be listed as Co-Investigators. Please note that this distinction is only for technical purposes. This categorisation **will not** affect the Irish researchers' autonomy and leadership of proposed activities.

Proposals must be submitted through the UKRI Joint Electronic Submissions System (Je-S) by the UK Principal Investigator's research organisation: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx

Funding

The overall budget for this call is £200,000 co-funded between ESRC and IRC. Applicants may request up to £10,000 GBP per proposal for the UK component, and up to €11,800 EUR per proposal for the Irish component. Proposals must be a maximum duration of 12 months. We expect to fund in the region of ten grants from this call, with some variance depending on the amount of funding requested and the quality of proposals received.

Allocation of funding for successful projects will be made separately by each funder (i.e. ESRC will allocate UK costs, and the IRC will allocate ROI costs).

Proposals will be exempt from ESRC's regular full economic cost (fEC) funding model with successful grants receiving 100% of the costs applied for. As this is a non-fEC call these grants are not intended to support substantive research projects and only Directly Incurred costs will be eligible – please refer to the section on 'Eligible Costs' below for further information.

Division of funds

In the interests of genuine collaboration, it is expected that the funds attributable to UK and Irish researchers should be equally weighted. It is therefore expected that the total costs requested for UK researchers should not exceed £10,000 GBP. Similarly, the total costs requested for Irish researchers should not exceed €11,800 EUR. For the purposes of funding, the costs attributable to Irish researchers must be clearly specified in the Ireland Budget Form attachment as outlined below. UK costs should be entered into the Je-S form as normal up to the maximum of £10,000 GBP.

Ireland Budget Form

All proposals to this call must include an additional attachment titled 'Ireland Budget Form' for the purposes of co-funding between ESRC and IRC. This document should follow the template provided (see: 'ESRC-IRC Networking Grants- Irish Budget form) and should clearly specify costs which are attributable to the Irish Investigator(s). Please see the Je-S Guidance document for this call for further information https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-irc-uk-ireland-networkinggrants-je-s-guidance-for-applicants/ .

The total costs included in the Ireland Budget Form should not exceed €11,800 EUR.

Failure to include this mandatory attachment may result in your application being rejected.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs for this call will be funded at 100% Full Economic Cost.

Only costs resulting directly from the conduct of the project (Directly Incurred costs) will be eligible. As a result, costs usually claimable by UK researchers towards research organisation infrastructure, such as Estates Costs and Indirect Costs, are on this occasion ineligible and **should not be requested**.

Travel and subsistence costs are expected to constitute the majority of the requested funds. Some consumables, costs for communication, knowledge exchange, public engagement or other impact activities planned throughout the project may also be included.

Proposals should be made at current costs in accordance with subsistence and travel regulations at the applicant's institution. For each main activity, indicative costs should be shown. Any award made will be cash-limited, and while funds should be used for the activities requested, the use of funds to allow activities that were not originally envisaged will be permitted as long as they are in pursuit of the overall objectives of the call and within

funding guidelines. Applicants should therefore apply for 100% of the cost of the activities which they wish to undertake.

As this is a non-standard fEC call the grants are not intended to support substantive research projects. The following costs are therefore ineligible:

- Salary costs
- Investigator costs
- Grant-associated studentships
- Items of equipment
- Other research costs, such as fieldwork, surveys and data collection, transcription costs or research assistance

This call is aimed at supporting a programme of activity to build long-term sustainable collaborations. It is not intended to provide funding for individual travel grants and/or one-off visits. Such proposals will be rejected by the office.

Proposals must clearly show how this funding will add value to British and Irish social sciences, and facilitate longer-term collaborations between the UK and ROI.

Eligibility

Investigators involved in proposals to this call are strictly limited to UK and ROI researchers based at eligible UK and ROI research organisations:

- UK investigators must be of postdoctoral level or higher, based at a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding (https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/eligible-independent-research-organisations-pdf/). If you are in doubt of your UK institution's eligibility, please check the UKRI website (https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/).

- ROI investigators must be of postdoctoral level or higher. They also have to be based in an eligible research institution in the ROI, with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the term of the proposed project under this call.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Both ESRC and IRC are committed to a policy of equal opportunities and therefore encourage applicants to give meaningful consideration to the equality, diversity and inclusivity of project teams. In particular applicants are encouraged to consider the importance of gender balance as well as the unique opportunities this call may present to early career researchers.

How to apply

Proposals **must** be submitted through the UKRI Joint Electronic Submissions System (Je-S) by the UK Principal Investigator's research organisation: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx

Please note that following the launch of this call, submissions via Je-S **will become available** on **Monday 2 March 2020**.

The deadline for proposals to be submitted through Je-S is **16:00 on Wednesday 17 June 2020.**

As stated above, the **Ireland Budget Form** is a mandatory attachment for the purposes of co-funding between ESRC and IRC. Failure to include this attachment may result in your proposal being rejected.

Please refer to the Je-S Guidance for further information on preparing your proposal: https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-irc-uk-ireland-networkinggrants-je-s-guidance-for-applicants/

PLEASE NOTE: that proposals and associated documentation submitted to this call will be shared between ESRC and IRC for the purposes of funding and joint oversight of the commissioning process. A data sharing agreement will be agreed by ESRC and IRC, which will also cover project reporting records (see below).

Assessment process

Proposals will be subject to a single-stage assessment where they will be considered through an open, competitive process, using quality as the primary assessment criterion. A panel comprised of social science experts will evaluate all proposals against the following three point criteria:

- **Networking Activities and Feasibility (45%)**
  - The quality and coherence of the project teams' networking ideas.
  - The uniqueness of the opportunity and the expertise of the applicants.
  - The capacity of the project team to deliver on the ideas proposed.
  - Interdisciplinary aspects, within the breadth of Social Science.

- **Benefit and Impact (35%)**
  - The added value to the British, Irish and broader social science community.
  - Sustainability of the consortium, including the potential to establish sustainable and productive relationships beyond the duration of the grant, including the possibility of generating future joint research projects.
  - If applicable, sustainability of activities (e.g. websites, social network accounts etc.) beyond the lifetime of the project.
  - Potential of activities to reach out and engage with the wider population (e.g. through public dissemination activities, research co-design practices, etc.), and engagement with non-academic networks.
  - Consideration of equality, diversity and inclusivity within the project team.

- **Value for Money (20%)**
- Value for money and appropriate costing of activities.

Please note the assessment panel will attach more weight to certain aspects of the individual scoring criteria, as indicated by the percentages above.

Reporting requirements

Principal Investigators must ensure that all outcomes arising from their grant are recorded in Researchfish as soon as practicably possible after their creation. The UK and Irish Co-PIs will be required to collaborate on their Researchfish submissions. They may also wish to delegate to other Co-Investigators on the project to prepare and submit records to Researchfish. Once a year (whilst the grant is live and for up to five years after its end date) grant holders are required to confirm that outcome information on Researchfish is accurate and up-to-date. This needs to be done during an annual submission period.

It is the responsibility of the grant holder to ensure that all outcomes submitted do not breach the ownership of intellectual property rights held by persons or bodies other than the ESRC. ESRC will share Researchfish records with IRC as co-funder of this scheme.

For further information please see the page on reporting for individual grants on the ESRC website: https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/reporting/

At the end of the grant period, the project team may be required to submit a formal impact report to the funders. Further information concerning this requirement will be conveyed to successful applicants at the decision stage if applicable.

Commissioning timetable

- Opening date for submission of proposals on Je-S portal – Monday 2 March 2020
- Closing date for submission of proposals – 16:00 on Wednesday 17 June 2020
- Assessment period – July 2020
- Applicants informed – August 2020
- Projects commence from – October 2020
- Projects conclude – October 2021

Contacts

For further details please contact:

ESRC:
Chris Butcher / Sam Reilly
Email: ukirelandnetworking@esrc.ukri.org
Telephone: 01793 867839

IRC:
Chiara Loda / Thaina M da Costa
Email: socialscience.network@research.ie