IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

2021 COALESCE Research Fund:
Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

The deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16.00 (Ireland Time), 16th November 2021.** FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:
1. Application process
2. Eligibility - General
   2.1 Strand 2A Eligibility
   2.2 Strand 2B Eligibility
   2.3 Strand 1L Eligibility
3. Applying to the Scheme
4. Budget

If you can't find your answer below, you may refer to the Call Document: http://research.ie/funding/coalesce/

1. APPLICATION PROCESS

I am seeking to apply for the COALESCE scheme. I am a previous PhD supervisor/Mentor and when I log in using my usual credentials, I cannot see any link for the COALESCE scheme to start an application.

To apply for the COALESCE scheme applicants should use the following **applicant registration link**: https://irishresearch.smartsimple.ie/s_signup.jsp?token=XVtQC1oGYFpfRxNZXxVSSlBSZklyGHY%3D

Applicants who were previously registered on SmartSimple as mentors/supervisors, and are currently experiencing issues accessing the application form, should contact the COALESCE Team directly at projects@research.ie during office hours.

If I answer "no'' to all the questions in the Ethics Issues section, can I insert 'n/a' in the 1000-word section requesting a detailed statement of the ethics issues identified as relevant to the proposed research?

Applicants who believe that no ethical considerations apply to their research project should nevertheless explain this viewpoint in the Ethics Issues Section.

In the IRC CV template, there is no place for publications. Could you advise if applicants should add publications in the section on 'Applicant's research and expertise relevant to the project,' or in the 'research achievements' section?

Applicants can add publications under the 'research achievements' section.

2. ELIGIBILITY – General

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.

Are formally appointed Emeritus staff in a HEI, with positions that exceed the length of the "contract of sufficient duration" criteria, eligible to apply as a PI for the IRC Coalesce Research scheme?
Emeritus/'retired' academic staff members ('RAS member(s)) are strongly advised to read the [Irish Research Council Policy for Emeritus/'Retired' Academic Staff Members](#).
RAS members may apply to IRC principal investigator-led (PI-led) programme calls, provided that the host higher education institution (HEI)/research-performing organisation (RPO) in Ireland for the application is willing to commit formal support by endorsing the application. It is strongly recommended that RAS members who wish to apply to IRC PI-led programmes contact the proposed host HEI/RPO promptly to ascertain their eligibility well in advance of preparing or submitting an application. This is particularly important in light of the requirement of institutions to satisfy at all times the requirements of the Employment Control Framework (ECF) for HEIs.
Are Institutional Letters of Support mandatory for applicants?
Applicants should **NOT** upload a letter of support from their HEI/RPO. The HEI/RPO will endorse their application through the OLS.
For all strands, the duration of projects is stated but is there a minimum project duration?
The COALESCE 2021 call document states the maximum duration of the project, which has been set by the IRC or the Strategic Funding Partner. Proposals will be considered for shorter durations but must be feasible and fully justified.
Can you please also confirm if an applicant 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/School committing to the continuation of the individual's contract (should the award be successful) be sufficient to meet this requirement?
As per the COALESCE 2021 Call Document, the applicant 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.**
Are adjunct staff eligible to apply to the IRC COALESCE call?
In order to be eligible to apply for the COALESCE 2021 call, the applicant must be a Principal Investigator (PI) who holds 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. The application must be based whole time in the eligible HEI or RPO.
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, Creative Connections and/or Ulysses or similar travel award(s).
Can the lead applicant be a postdoctoral fellow?
In order to be eligible to apply for **Strand 1L**, the applicant must: • Be a Principal Investigator (PI) who holds 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.

• Have been awarded their doctoral degree no later than 31ˢᵗ May 2020. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account. The experience and expertise of the applicant is an evaluation criterion under Strand 1L, further details can be found in Appendix 2.

In order to be eligible to apply for **Strand 2A**, the applicant must be:

• From any AHSS discipline (see Annex A with call documentation); they may apply for funding along with a named applicant from any STEM discipline (see Annex B).

• An AHSS Principal Investigator (PI) who holds 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.

WITH

• A mandatory and named STEM Co-PI (co-applicant) who holds 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. Both AHSS Lead PI and STEM Co-PI must:

• Have been awarded their doctoral degrees no later than 31st May 2020. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account.*

In order to be eligible to apply for **Strand 2B**, the applicant must be:

• A lead Principal Investigator (PI) who holds 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.

WITH

• A mandatory and named Co-PI (co-applicant) employed by an HEI or research performing organisation (RPO) in one of the Department of Foreign Affairs' partner countries 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 must be a publicly funded or not-for-profit higher education/research institution. In exceptional circumstances, other RPOs will be considered. 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 five years post-PhD, or, if the applicant is 3 years post-PhD and has won a New Foundations grant (DFA Strand), the applicant will be eligible. The lead PI will have been awarded the doctoral degree no later than 31st of May 2017 [or 31st of May 2019 with a New Foundations award]. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account.

• Applicants who are eligible under the latter caveat will need to demonstrate that they have the skills and experience to manage a project of this scale.

• 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 DFA themes for this strand.

• Not be in receipt of any other IRC funding at the proposed start date, with the exception of New Foundations, Creative Connections and/or Ulysses or similar travel award(s).

The co-applicant will, at minimum:

• Be at least three years post PhD (or possess equivalent research qualifications/experience). The co-PI will have been awarded the doctoral degree no later than 31st of May 2019. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account.

• 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 DFA themes for this strand. The experience and expertise of the applicants is an evaluation criterion under Strand 2B, further details can be found in Appendix 4.

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 if they meet all of the criteria for eligibility of the Strand to which they are applying.

Could you clarify which are the IRC grants that are incompatible with the COALESCE or what it means not being "in receipt of any other Council funding at the proposed start date, with the exception of New Foundations, Creative Connections and/or Ulysses or similar travel award(s)"?

The Council have amended the eligibility criteria for applicants to Strand 1L and Strand 2A under the

COALESCE 2021 Call Document on page 7 and 8. If currently funded under an IRC PI-led award, their award will finish in 2022. This is without prejudice to future policy on applicants' eligibility to COALESCE. This condition does not apply to Strand 2B, eligibility criteria may be found on pages 8 and 9.

2.1 Strand 2A Eligibility

I am applying to Strand 2A as a co-PI. In addition to endorsement from the lead-PI's institution, is endorsement (via the online portal) required from the co-PI's institution?

Endorsement at application stage is required from the lead HEI. If the application is successful, the co-PI's HEI will endorse at award stage.

Under Strand 2A: 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.

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; however, proposals may include co-funding. The proposal should clearly set-out the details of and rationale for the co-funding, including the governance and other partnership arrangements which will underpin the co-funding of the award.

As part of the Consultancy (Maximum €10,000), can we include an independent research company with solid survey experience collaborating with universities to work on technical aspects of the survey data collection, such as advice on sampling strategy, support on designing online questionnaires, and keeping track of respondents' survey participation?

Yes. All costs sought must be relevant and clearly justified.

Are there any regulations in terms of offering vouchers to participants? More specifically, for a project that will work with Principals and schools which will then survey students and families, is

it possible to give some educational materials to schools (books, educational posters after the data analyses) to acknowledge the involvement of schools in the project? If so, would this cost go to consumables or somewhere else?

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.

Can costs related to statistical package licences be included in the budget? If so, should these go to equipment?

This would be an eligible cost under the 'Consumables' category, for which the maximum amount allowed under Strand 2A is €2,000.

Can you please advise if under Strand 2A Technical Officers can be hired for a duration of 18 months (which would exceed the consultancy max allowable cost of 10k). This would of course be fully justified and crucial to achieving the objectives of the project.

Technical Officers may be included under the 'Staff Costs' category. The recruitment of staff (e.g. research assistants, postdoctoral researchers) must be done openly, through public advertisement. Staff must be recruited for the specific project and awarded topic only. Recruitment of staff can commence before the start date of the project and costs for recruitment can be charged to the project (outside the official start date) with the prior approval of the Council. All costs sought must be relevant and clearly justified.

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?

Yes. The lead PI under Strand 2A should be in the AHSS with a STEM co-PI as it is an interdisciplinary strand. The Call Document states 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).

Under Strand 2A, are Co-PI's permissible 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**. 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 and include project partner but not as co-PIs.

We have a potential STEM co-PI who although they have > 4 years of research experience, do not have a PhD. Are they eligible to be a co-PI?

Lead PIs and Co-PIs on COALESCE 2021 must have qualified with a PhD within the required time frame specified in the relevant strand of the Call Document.

Strand 2A - Would it be possible to add a third researcher in the project? If yes, should this person be a co-PI, project partner or collaborator? If not, is there any section or place where this can be acknowledged or indicated?

For a Strand 2A application, only the AHSS lead PI and STEM Co-PI are required to be named specifically. Project partners should be featured in the section '**Identify any project partners'** and in the **Project Description.**

Strand 2A applications may include provision for team membership of researchers from institutions and organisations that fall outside the eligible institutions, including both national and international participation. However, only collaboration costs (not personnel costs) may be

allocated to such institutions/organisations and the added value of such costs must be strongly demonstrated.

Can you please advise if collaborators on any of the strands are permissible, particularly Strand 2A?

Collaborators are permissible and should be included under 'Identify any project partners'. As above, Strand 2A requires **one** lead PI from an AHSS discipline and **one** co-PI from a STEM discipline only. Collaborators are permissible.

Strand 2A - In the section "Identify any project partners": are we expected to add non-academic organisations only, researchers only or both non-academic organisations "and" researchers?

Apart from the AHSS PI and STEM co-PI, all partners may be listed under '**Project Partners'**.

Could we confirm if "Speech & Hearing Sciences" would be classed as a STEM for the purposes of the COALESCE call? At our HEI, this Department is housed under the College of Medicine & Health. However, it is not included in the IRC's list of STEM subjects, whereas the AHSS list includes a linguistics section – this suggests that the IRC might consider it to fall under the umbrella of AHSS.

From the information provided, the IRC would accept this as falling under the STEM disciplines. The applicant and STEM co-PI are required to choose from the list of primary and secondary, most relevant discipline from the list provided. Applicants can also use the keywords to provide additional information.

Can medicine be considered an acceptable STEM discipline under Annex B?

Yes. Medicine can be considered a STEM discipline. The applicant and STEM co-PI are required to choose from the list of primary and secondary, most relevant discipline from the list provided. Applicants can also use the keywords to provide additional information.

Can I clarify whether the following STEM discipline would be eligible to act as a CO-PI on Strand 2a: public health / health systems?

Yes. Public health/health systems can be considered a STEM discipline. The applicant and STEM co-PI are required to choose from the list of primary and secondary, most relevant discipline from the list provided. Applicants can also use the keywords to provide additional information.

Can I be PI in AHSS (Strand 2A) as my research field is education even though I'm in a STEM school (Mathematics education research in the School of Mathematics & Statistics)?

Yes. From the information provided, the IRC would accept this as falling under the AHSS disciplines.

My Co-PI's areas of research are Operations Research, Equilibrium Modelling and Optimisation. These are listed under Applied Mathematics in Annex B. I wanted to confirm, given that they are eligible as a STEM co-PI?

Yes. From the information provided, the IRC would accept this as falling under the STEM disciplines.

Can applicants make a Strand 2A application, _as well as_ a Strand 2B application?

Applicants may apply to more than one strand. 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 of the same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept both awards.

2.2 Strand 2B Eligibility
According to the listed Irish Aid partners, Liberia is not one of the 9 supported partners, but it is mentioned as a country affected by conflict and fragility that Irish aid "concentrate support on". Could you please confirm if Liberia is considered a partner country?
Given that Liberia meets the criteria of being an ODA eligible African country, once the partner HEI/RPO and co-PI meet the strand requirements, we would consider Liberia as an eligible partner country for Strand 2B awards.
Could you please confirm if French Polynesia is considered an eligible small island developing state for the purpose of Strand 2B, given that it is not on the list provided by the IRC, but it is on the UN list?
French Polynesia is not an ODA eligible small island developing state and therefore does not meet the criteria under 2B.
For Strand 2B 14-page PDF, the applicant wishes to identify all the participants and include their logos. Is this acceptable or should they go in the participants' section?
Project partners should be featured in section (Identify any project partners) and in the detailed project description.
Where can an applicant find a list of ODA-eligible countries in Africa and ODA-eligible Small Island Developing State?
The definitive list can be found at https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf
Please advise if Strand 2B is confined to the ODA countries listed as current Irish Aid partners or if an applicant may work with other ODA countries in Africa?
The definitive list can be found at https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf
There is a request for a 2-page CV. Is this for each member of the team to complete? Or just the Lead PI?
The CV should relate to the lead applicant and should include the standard academic and research record including current funding awards. Applicants should comment on any actual or apparent overlaps with current funding awards to demonstrate that, if successful, there will be no double funding in respect of the same activities. Relevant expertise of the co-PI can be included in the project description.
One of the proposed partners are an education charity based in Cambodia, but they are neither HEI nor is research their main purpose. If the applicant can demonstrate that the partner has the capacity and infrastructure to support the research, be research active and be able to demonstrate the standard of academic rigour required, could they be included in the project?
As per the Call Document, 'The RPO in the partner country must be a publicly funded or not-for-profit higher education/research institution. In exceptional circumstances, other RPOs will be considered. 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.' From the information provided, the proposed partner does not meet the requirements of an RPO/HEI or research institution as outlined in the call.

Cambodia is a member of SEAMEO CECCEP (South East Asian Ministries of Education Organisation / Centre for Early Childhood Care, Education and Parenting). SEAMEO CECCEP is an RPO but the organisation is based in Indonesia. It represents 28 countries in the South East Asian region. Would they be acceptable to IRC as a partner?

As per the Call document, the eligible partner countries under strand 2B are any ODA-eligible country on the African continent; any ODA-eligible Small Island Developing State (SIDS); Vietnam; Palestine; Laos; Cambodia; Myanmar. From the information provided, as this organisation is based in Indonesia, it would be ineligible under the COALESCE 2021 scheme.

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.

As per call document 'applicants may concurrently apply for a Strand 1L 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.

Can you please advise if applicants should contact the DFA and discuss their application with them now, or this step not required until award stage?

In the event of a successful application, a representative from DFA should be invited to participate in, or provide a nominee to, any steering group or advisory structure being convened to support the research project.

Can the proposal include a **second co-applicant** from RPO in Africa?

No. Strand 2B requires **one** lead PI based in an eligible Irish HEI or RPO and **one** co-PI employed by a HEI or research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of the Department of Foreign Affairs' eligible partner countries **only**. Project proposals can draw on additional expertise through the inclusion of project partners.

Does the Co-PI have to be an **African nationality**?

No, this is not a requirement.

Related to the postdoc being hired for the project in RPO in Africa, does the postdoc have to be an **African nationality?**

No, this is not a requirement.

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.

Any ODA-eligible country on the African continent; any ODA-eligible Small Island Developing State (SIDS); Vietnam; Palestine; Laos; Cambodia; Myanmar.

"*The lead applicant will… Have a track record in research under one or more of the DFA themes for this strand*". 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.

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

As per the Call Document, a representative from DFA 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 DFA will be available to participate on the project steering group, if requested. At least one meeting with the awardee will be required per year. DFA 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 the Call Document for further information on this strand.

Could you please expand on how "research consortia" and "international project" are defined for the purposes of this call? For example, would a project which involved a collaboration with an international NGO count? Would a collaboration with a foreign RPO count? Or, does it have to be a large-scale EU-style consortia to be considered? Can a collaboration with one other institution count, or must the consortium have consisted of multiple institutions?

Applicants should refer to the strand descriptors, eligibility criteria for the lead applicant and mandatory co-PI in one of the Department of Foreign Affairs' partner countries and the evaluation criteria in the Call Document. It is a matter for applicants to evidence their experience and capability to undertake a proposed project. It is not expected that applications would-be large-scale consortia. Yes, a collaboration with a foreign RPO may count.

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?

From the COALESCE 2021 Call Document: 'The mandatory Co-PI (co-applicant) must be employed by an HEI or research-performing organisation (RPO) in one of the Department of Foreign Affairs partner countries…'. While the principal partner country is an anchor for the Co-PI and project activities, collaborators from multiple partner countries are welcomed and may be included in the Project Description and under 'Identify any Project Partners'.

2.3 Strand 1L Eligibility

Can applicants make one Strand 1L application, _as well as_ a Strand 2B application?

Applicants may apply to more than one strand, 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 the same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept multiple awards on this call.

Is noted that collaborative applications are expected, that is, to form research consortia. No eligibility criteria are noted for consortia participants. Is there any criteria or guidance on this aspect available?

There is no definitive list of eligible partners under Strand 1L, except that a minimum of three sectors must be represented in the application from the below:

Research consortia must be formed (i.e. three or more) from the following groups:
- the archaeological consultancy sector,
- academic institutions on the island of Ireland,
- international academic and research bodies,
- State bodies
- local community groups.

It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to demonstrate the value-added contribution of each partner listed on the project.

I cannot find any guidance on the number of applications that an organisation may submit Can you confirm the number of applications that an individual can make?

As per the amended call document, page 10:

Individuals are not limited to submitting one application to Strand 1L. In the event of an applicant being successful in more than one award under Strand 1L, the applicant must clearly indicate a time-management strategy and must receive approval of the same from the Irish Research Council in order to be permitted to accept both awards.

Can research institutions be part of the consortium (i.e. Partners) that also provide a service to the project, i.e. analyse samples?

Research consortia must be formed (i.e. three or more) from the following groups:
• the archaeological consultancy sector,
• academic institutions on the island of Ireland,
• international academic and research bodies,
• State bodies
• local community groups.

All costings must be clearly justified. The lead applicant should refer to the 'Eligible Research Expenses' section of the Call Document to infer the most appropriate category for the proposed expenditure. Only research infrastructure outside the host institution is valid for costs.

Will I contact the National Monuments Service/Heritage Council to appoint a representative to sit on the project's advisory board?

Applicants are advised not to contact the National Monuments Service/Heritage Council in advance of the applicant submission deadline.

The cost for consultancy is capped at €10,000, is there any flexibility to ensure involvement from all partners?

As per the amended call document, page 12 and 13 under 'Eligible expenditure'

• Collaboration Costs to support the integration of policy-makers and other partners (national or international) in the proposed research project are now up to a maximum of 20% of total project costs, inclusive of overheads (25%)
• Consultancy costs are now up to a maximum of €20,000, inclusive of overheads (25%)

All costings must be clearly justified. The lead applicant should refer to the 'Eligible Research Expenses' section of the Call Document to infer the most appropriate category for the proposed expenditure.

Under Strands 1L, would it be possible to have a lead PI and a Co-PI?

Co-PIs are not permitted on applications to strand 1L.

If someone is named as a collaborator on an application, does this exclude that person from applying for a position on the project should it be successful?

The recruitment of staff (e.g. research assistants, postdoctoral researchers) must be done openly, through public advertisement. Staff must be recruited for the specific project and awarded topic only. Recruitment of staff can commence before the start date of the project and costs for

recruitment can be charged to the project (outside the official start date) with the prior approval of the Council.

The documentation states that the 'main objective' of INSTAR+ is to analyse the results of pre-development excavations. Does that mean applications on other aspects of the archaeological record (monuments, buildings etc) are excluded or at least not being encouraged? It seems to be implied that not all projects will necessarily be focused on the results of pre-development excavations: 'In the case of project proposals involving results from pre-development archaeological excavation...'.

It does not mean applications on other aspects of the archaeological record (monuments, buildings etc) are excluded or not encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the strand description in the call documentation -

'elicit proposals from researchers with a proven research track record in Irish research institutions working with at least one archaeological consultancy/SME. Partnerships with community groups, other state bodies and/or international partners will also be welcomed.

And

Research consortia must be formed (i.e. three or more) from the following groups:

• the archaeological consultancy sector,

• academic institutions on the island of Ireland,

• international academic and research bodies,

• State bodies,

• local community groups'

3. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

'Has a Steering Group or Advisory Committee for this project been identified?' is a question in the application form. Do you have any advice on the expectation of this scheme for such a group or committee including its composition?

The Strands composing COALESCE Research Fund 2021 provide guidance on steering groups and advisory structures for proposed projects:

Strand 1L: A representative from NMS/Heritage Council should be invited to participate in or provide a nominee to any steering group or advisory structure being convened to support the research project.

Strand 2B specifies that a representative from DFA should be invited to participate in or provide a nominee to any steering group or advisory structure being convened to support the research project.

Is the emphasis on showing engagement with sectoral interests, or is it on securing scientific advisers?

Steering groups and advisory structures are vehicles to enable relevant engagement with key stakeholders and scientific advisers. The complexity of the project may give rise to a need for scientific advice in areas outside of the applicant's expertise. Where necessary, the composition of

any steering group or advisory structure should include a scientific adviser/s whose areas of expertise enable the provision of support and guidance to the project.

In the online form there is no mention of "Research Strategy". Can you advise how we can complete a section on research strategy if it's not mentioned in the online form?

Research strategy forms part of the Detailed Project Description section, which takes the form of a single PDF upload. The precise contents of this section are not prescribed and will vary depending on the project being proposed. Recommended contents are outlined in the online form and Indicative Application Form.

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

Does the 16 page limit for the Detailed Project Description include references?

The 16 pages is the maximum length for the 'Detailed Project Description' including references.

Can you please advise if there any word count requirements for the 16 page Detailed Project Description section to be uploaded.

In addition can you please advise if images are permitted in the Detailed Project Description section?

There is no word count limit for the Detailed Project Description, however there is a 16-page limit. Images may be included but must be within the 16 pages. 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

In addition to the Research Office online endorsement from the PI's institution for applications to Strand 2B, is endorsement required from the HEI/RPO in the partner country?
Endorsement by the Research Office at the lead host institution is required for the completion of the application process. The online endorsement process does not require the participation of a partner HEI/RPO. If the applicant is successful, endorsement from the HEI/RPO in the partner country will be required post-award.

Are projects previously submitted to COALESCE 2020 but which were unsuccessful eligible for resubmission?
Projects previously assessed under the COALESCE scheme which were unsuccessful may be resubmitted to COALESCE 2021. Details of changes made to the proposal should be included in the 'Is this the resubmission of an unsuccessful application to COALESCE?' section of the form.

Q: Strand 2A - Can you confirm that the Detailed Project Description (maximum 16 pages) refers only to the AHSS PI?
The detailed project description should be formulated jointly by the AHSS and STEM PI.

Can I confirm that the IRC will not require transcripts or copies of parchments at the application stage? These will be required upon conditional offer of the award?
Transcripts of academic results will be requested from successful awardees only upon conditional offer of an award.

4. BUDGET

The indicative Coalesce Application Template suggests a budget justification is included within the 16-page limit. However, the Guidelines for applicants indicate budget information is to be provided at 6.13. Can you please clarify if the 16-pages should include budget information?
Budget justification can be described under 'Project Budget' where applicants are requested to provide itemised breakdown of costs and reason needed.

Can you please expand on the definition of 'access to research infrastructure' costs? Does this literally just mean cost for accessing the infrastructure (i.e. bench fees etc) or can this cover analytical cost, too? And can an institution that provides the same be named as a partner on the application at the same time?
Research infrastructures are facilities, resources and services that are used by research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields. They include: major scientific equipment (or sets of instruments), knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives and scientific data, e-infrastructures such as data and computing systems and communication networks and any other tools that are essential to achieve excellence in research and innovation. They may be 'single-sited', 'virtual' or 'distributed'. Charges for access to facilities and services not directly available to the applicant, such as the costs associated with commissioning specific experiments in research facilities and National Testbeds (e.g. ICHEC, Tyndall, CRANN, etc.) and access to necessary facilities, services, archives which are not available in the host institution, (i.e. consultancy fees, methodological support, bio banking, Clinical Research Facility support, MRI facilities) may be requested. Requests may also be included for accessing international databases and facilities or for the commissioning of experiments in international facilities/research labs where appropriately detailed. Justification should be provided where the required infrastructure is not available in Ireland.

Supports can include training for the awardee and team members where it advances the project or the career development of the team members and is not provided by the host institution.

Can you please confirm if transcription costs are an eligible cost on this call?

Only vouched expenses incurred in carrying out the research project during the agreed funding term are permissible, this can include transcription costs.

In relation to the 30/70 personnel min and max, can you confirm that this is based on the total overall personnel costs (inclusive of PI replacement costs) on the project plus overhead and based on those costs you need to apply 30/70 rule?

Personnel costs refer to all staff costs in the lead HEI and partner HEI/RPO.

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.

Could a member of staff from a civic society collaborator claim money (time sheets) for time worked, or would this be considered personnel costs and, therefore, ineligible?

Applications may include provision for team membership of researchers from institutions and organisations that fall outside the eligible institutions, including both national and international participation. However, only collaboration costs (not personnel costs) may be allocated to such institutions/organisations and the added value of such costs must be strongly demonstrated.

Costs to support the integration of policy-makers, civil society, and other partners in the proposed research project, particularly in the partner country or countries. Under Strand 1L, this can up costed at up to a maximum of 20% of total project costs and under Strand 2A and 2B, up to a maximum of 20% of total project costs – inclusive of overheads (25%).

Can both the PI and Co-PI seek teaching buy out or is teaching buy out restricted to one party only (i.e. the PI only to the exclusion of the Co-PI)?

Under Strand 2A, the PI and co-PI can cost academic replacement to the budget.

We are considering using immersive software as part of our COALESCE Strand 2A proposal. The licence would enable mobilisation of our data through stakeholder co-creation with real-time visualisation of the potential impact of their actions. The license for this software costs €5000 per year (ex. VAT). Would such a licence (1 year at €5000) be eligible under this funding scheme, and if so, what is the most appropriate way to include it in the budget template provided?

Equipment/Dissemination and Knowledge Exchange

Would it be possible, in order to recruit a suitably qualified applicant, to recruit and remunerate at level 3 'research fellow' point on the IUA scale for this individual?

All costs sought must be detailed and justified in the application form. HEIs should use the institutional researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral researchers. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must confirm that the requested salary is line with the institutional researcher salary scale and provide documentary evidence.

We envisage that the bulk of any funding we acquire would be spent hiring a postdoctoral researcher. In order to fulfil the 70/30 split required between institutions, would the postdoc need to be employed by both institutions at some point during the duration of the project?

There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the lead HEI, budgeted to the COALESCE award. There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the co-PI HEI, budgeted to the COALESCE award. The min-max personnel costs for the lead HEI and STEM co-PI under Strand 2A are inclusive of overheads 25%.

Can you please clarify what is meant by the min-max personnel costs for the lead HEI and partner HEI/RPO under Strand 2A and Strand 2B requirement? Does this mean the first 30% of each personnel budgeted for in the application has to be provided by the HEI?

Strand 2A

There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the lead HEI, budgeted to the COALESCE award. There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the co-PI HEI, budgeted to the COALESCE award. The min-max personnel costs for the lead HEI and STEM co-PI under Strand 2A are inclusive of overheads 25%.

Strand 2B

There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the lead HEI, budgeted to the COALESCE award. There must be a minimum of 30% personnel costs, up to a maximum of 70%, in the partner RPO, budgeted to the COALESCE award. The min-max personnel costs for the lead HEI and partner RPO co-PI under Strand 2B are inclusive of overheads 25%.

The maintenance of the minimum 30% personnel costs will be the responsibility of the lead HEI.

Are the budget amounts pro-rated?

Successful applications on Strands 1L, 2A and Strand 2B **may** run up to the maximum period of months and funding limits specified in the Call Document. Salary costs can be pro rata, as indicated by the Call Document. Only costs requested in the budget submitted with the original application will be awarded to successful projects.

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 Call Document, the lead PI and co-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 Call Document. 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 COALESCE?

Costings for PhD students may not be included in an application under COALESCE.

An applicant wants to develop a training programme for early career research. This would require short stays (3-6mths) for PhD students already funded and working at a host institution. The question is, are the costs of hosting multiple students at the host institution an eligible cost?
Applications may include provision for team membership of researchers from institutions and organisations that fall outside the institutions of the PI and co-PI. However, only collaboration costs (not personnel costs) may be allocated to such institutions/organisations and the added value of such costs must be strongly demonstrated.
Can you clarify if the collaboration costs are paid under direct costs and, as such, incur overhead?
Collaboration costs are paid under direct costs and incur an overhead. Only equipment is excluded from incurring overheads.
The COALESCE 2021 Call Document state that 'The recruitment of staff (e.g. research assistants, postdoctoral researchers) must be done openly, through public advertisement.' Does this public advertisement condition apply to specific expertise research assistant contracts that are part-time and less than six months in duration?
The recruitment of staff (e.g. research assistants, postdoctoral researchers) must be done openly, through public advertisement and must be consistent with the HEI's institutional policies. This applies to all staff to be recruited as part of the project's team and staff must be recruited for the specific project and awarded topic only.