

INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

FAQ's



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ELIGIBILITY

1. What are the basic requirements to qualify for an Innovation Partnership?

- The research fund must be spent within Ireland and the economic impact in Ireland must justify the research investment.
- The 3rd level institution(s) and at least one industrial partner should be based in Ireland.
- The research team and the industrial partner should be independent.
- The research team should contain strong research skills of a quality equivalent to post graduate / post doctorate level. It should be noted however that this programme does not have a remit to fund students completing a higher-level research degree.
- It must be of commercial benefit to at least one company in Ireland.
- The industrial partner must have resources to fund and commercialise the research.
- The research should show a good match to the established strengths of the research team.
- A project should not duplicate work already known to be in progress in Ireland, or already performed in other countries when the results can be obtained effectively in other ways.
- IPP supports industrial research and technology development. The project should not be used to build a market-ready product or include any market-related activities.

2. Does my company qualify?

- All manufacturing, processing and research companies dealing with science, engineering and technology are eligible to participate.
- All internationally tradable goods and services companies (financial, tourism etc.) are also eligible to participate.
- The company must be a client of a National Development Agency (i.e. Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Office (LEO) or Údarás na Gaeltachta,) or can prove they are in the process of becoming a client of one of the above.
- The company must not be an Undertaking-in-Difficulty under the EU State Aid definition.

3. Can High Potential Start Up (HPSU) companies join an Innovation Partnership?

- Yes. However, grant funding is normally capped at €100K for HPSUs and Start Up companies. (Exceptions may be made but only in very specific circumstances).
- Each case is evaluated on its technical and commercial merit.
- Established companies may request more if it is clear that the project impact is likely to lead to a substantial increase in employment and sales and exports and this must be supported by the Commercial Assessor.
- It helps if the company is already an EI HPSU as they will have an assigned Client Advisor. The Client Advisor must support the proposal and the company needs to show a good business case to fund and commercialise the research in Ireland.
- If you are a HPSU company or working with a HPSU company, then Enterprise Ireland will require that the college own foreground IP produced in the project and that IP be licensed to the HPSU partner.

4. How many times can projects for any one company be supported?

- All new applications are considered on their holistic technical and commercial merit.
- The commercial partner must have the resources to fund and commercialise the research once complete.
- All proposed projects should align with the R&D strategy of the industrial partner.
- Follow up projects will only be considered if EI has compelling evidence that the company maximised the outputs of previous EI funded projects meeting the success criteria then specified.
- If the company has completed two Innovation Partnerships already and is seeking further support, please contact the team before proceeding. There are rules for support of multiple applications. – This is also covered in a direct question on P.7
- A maximum of 2 IPP projects can be underway at the same time.

RESEARCH

5. What type of research does this fund Support?

- Industrial Research and
- Experimental Development

6. What is the difference between 'Industrial Research' and 'Experimental Development'?

- **Industrial Research** is planned research and investigation aimed at discovering **brand new knowledge**. This new knowledge may be useful in developing new products, processes or services, or in bringing about a *significant improvement* to existing products, processes or services.
- **Experimental Development** is systematic work, drawing on **existing knowledge** gained from research and/or practical experience directed towards producing plans & arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products. This work leads to a product which could be commercialised *without significant additional development*.

7. Is research limited to a 24-month timeframe under an Innovation Partnership?

- Yes. Projects normally run for 12-18 months.
- Projects longer than 24 months are only considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Applicants should justify and clearly align the work packages with the timeframe outlined for the proposed work.

8. Does the Innovation Partnership Programme fund MSC and PhD studentships?

- The funding of Masters and/or PhD students is not a reasonable justification for a proposal submission as other sources of funding are available for this purpose.
- Enterprise Ireland wants to see the project outputs transferred to the company in the shortest time possible so prefers to fund the hiring of experienced resources with the appropriate qualifications and experience to rapidly assimilate the technical and business needs driving the project and drive the research forward from the get-go.

NOTE: Applicant colleges and institutions are required to consider equality issues in line with the Equality Authority's guidelines when applying for funding.

9. Can a company undertake Contract Research under the Innovation Partnership Programme?

- Contract Research is not supported in this programme.

PARTNER PROFILE

10. Can companies collaborate with third level institutions outside of Ireland?

- The funding for the programme must be spent in Ireland. Therefore the 3rd level institution must be based in Ireland to receive funding.

11. Can I use the Innovation Partnership Programme to fund researchers outside of Ireland?

- Not directly, other than necessary travel costs of Irish based researchers to use essential facilities. These must be discussed with the programme team before submission.

12. Can I participate as an academic Principal Investigator in more than one Innovation Partnership?

- Yes, cognizance is taken of the PI's track record in commercialising research.
- This is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

13. Can more than one academic or industrial partner be involved?

- Yes, collaboration with other departments, institutions and companies where synergy exists are all encouraged.

14. Can a company outside of Ireland join an innovation partnership cluster?

- Yes, once the main industrial partner is based in Ireland and an economic benefit to Ireland is clearly defined and confirmed by the relevant agency resources.

COSTS & PAYMENT

15. What is the normal breakdown of project costs?

- Typically, salaries should be at least 60% of the project cost.
- Materials and equipment should normally be no more than 20-25% of the total cost.
- The travel budget must never exceed 10% and necessity is often questioned.
- A small amount towards consultancy is sometimes considered if justified and generally not above 10% of the total project cost.

16. What level of detail is required in respect of costs requested under the headings of travel, materials, staff?

- Applicants should justify and clearly explain all costs requested on the application form. Provide quotations for individual items over €1500.

17. Are travel costs incurred in relation to the company visits and attendance at conferences eligible?

Yes, the associated cost should be justified and reasonable, normally no more than 10% per project.

- Conference travel must be directly relevant to the work being undertaken in the project and costs must be justified in detail. EI will request company confirmation that they support the allocation of funding towards academic attendance at conferences.

18. How are Company Payments scheduled?

A payment schedule must be agreed between the company and the third level institution.

- A minimum of 20% must be paid upon acceptance and receipt of the project contract.
- A maximum of 10% should be outstanding once the final report and results are issued.

19. What if the company does not provide agreed in-kind contributions?

Please contact the programme managers immediately.

20. How are payments made to the 3rd level institution?

Enterprise Ireland pays 30% of the total grant value to the third level institution upon acceptance and receipt of the project contract.

- 20% + of the reported eligible grant expenditure is paid upon receipt and approval of the mid-term report.
- Final payment will cover the outstanding balance of the total project cost due to the academic institution.

21. How are overheads paid?

Enterprise Ireland will pay an overhead of **30%** on the grant total (*except capital equipment*) that it has paid to a project.

- This overhead is part of Enterprise Ireland's annual overheads payment to the third level institution.
- This is not included in the Innovation Partnership project payments.

22. Are costs associated with filing patents eligible under innovation partnerships?

No.

APPLICATION PROCESS

23. Is it mandatory to submit an Outline application?

- Yes. Unless you've progressed straight from the successful conclusion of an Innovation Partnership Feasibility study.

24. Is it necessary to first undertake a Feasibility study?

- No. If you can progress directly to a Full Innovation Partnership proposal please do so.

25. I've submitted my Outline proposal. When can I submit a Full Proposal?

- Full Proposal documents can only be submitted when the Innovation Partnership team has indicated in writing that it has approved the contents of the Outline proposal **or** the outputs of the completed Feasibility Study (whichever applies).
- Express Application Process: A new Innovation Partnership Express pilot process was launched in 2023 for projects where funding will not exceed €150,000. Refer to the website for more details or contact the IPP team directly for more information.

26. After submission when can I expect a result?

- The turnaround time is normally 6-8 weeks but can go on longer depending on the work that has to be completed to ensure a proposal is ready for submission.

27. Can I publish work funded under the Innovation Partnership?

- The company has the right to review intended publications within a reasonable time limit and request the removal of confidential, proprietary or commercially sensitive information.
- The college has the right to publish research results after removal of confidential, proprietary or commercially sensitive information.

28. I am a clinical researcher based in a teaching hospital, can I make an application?

- Yes, the initiative is open to all academics and researchers in the third level sector, teaching hospitals and non-profit research agencies including Teagasc. Industrial linkage is critical.

29. What documentation is required?

- With submission;
 - i. Soft Copy of proposal in Microsoft Word (email)
- To follow;
 - ii. Signed summary sheet
 - iii. Signed company agreement
 - iv. Signed Heads of Agreement IPR terms agreed between all partners (at least 2 weeks before target Industrial Research Commercialisation Committee (IRCC) meeting))
- Once approved by IRCC;
 - v. Signed Contract issued by the Contracts Unit.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

30. How are Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) handled?

Management of Intellectual Property

- As part of its contract with the company, the research institute should have a prior agreement concerning the exploitation of Intellectual Property.
- A signed agreement covering Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is required for all approved Innovation Partnership projects.
- This can be supplied after the approval date but must be in place before the project start date.
- In all cases, the Intellectual Property Rights Heads of Agreement with the industrial partner should be made available to the programme manager **2 weeks** prior to the target IRCC meeting.
- Please refer to 'Guidelines of Intellectual Property in the Innovation Partnership Programme' (available to download at www.enterprise-ireland.com/ipp)
- Consideration should be given to making the results of the research accessible to other researchers either through patenting or publishing as appropriate.
- Publishing or other dissemination of valuable IPR should not take place before adequate patent protection is in place.
- IP matters are best referred to the IP/Tech Transfer/ILO office within your respective institution.

REPEAT APPLICANTS

31. What support is available to repeat applicants to the programme?

A company will normally be permitted a maximum of two Innovation Partnerships. For a third and subsequent application, the company partner must secure the support of the Client Advisor or the equivalent from their Development Agency in advance.

Considerations for permitting a company to engage in more than two innovation partnerships include:

- Can the company only access this technology through collaboration with the college partner?
- Is the work higher risk and more ambitious than that undertaken in the earlier Partnership projects?
- Is the scale of the project and the company investment increasing?
- Is it likely that the proposed technology will give the company or the Irish base in the case of an overseas company a significant competitive advantage in the medium term?
- What was the significance of the knowledge imparted to the company in previous projects?

Large /Multi-National Companies

- For large/ multi-national companies, a third Innovation Partnership proposal or any thereafter within a 7-year period, the company **must agree to pay a minimum of 35% of the total project cost as cash**. The company will be invited to present to the IRCC on the impacts of the previously funded projects.
- The increase in cash contribution reflects a strong commitment from non-SME clients to the project.

ASSISTANCE REGARDING APPLICATIONS

32. Who can I talk to?

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