



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Community and Local Government

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

**Science, Technology, Research & Innovation for the  
Environment (STRIVE) Programme 2007 – 2013**

**2013 GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS**

**The EPA STRIVE Programme is funded by the Irish Government**

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## Section A: Quick overview of the process that leads to a grant award

### Part 1: The application

To successfully complete the application form, you will need the following documentation:

1. 2013 Technical description document
2. 2013 Terms and conditions for support of grant awards
3. 2013 Quick guide to the on-line portal (making an application)

How to apply:

Applications must be made online at: <https://epa.smartsimple.ie>. If you are new to the system, or need a refresher, please refer to the 'Quick guide to the on-line portal (making an application)', which is available for download at [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie) and <https://epa.smartsimple.ie>

The two-step application process:

#### *Step 1: Submission of proposals*

**By whom?** Submission must be made by the applicant before the call deadline.

**What happens?** The proposal goes to the research offices/ managing directors for authorisation

**Deadline?** The deadline for getting your application is called the 'deadline for submission of applications' and is specified in the technical description

#### *Step 2: Authorisation of proposals –*

**By whom?** For the application to be valid, proposals must be authorised by the relevant organisation (i.e. research office, managing director).

**What happens?** The grant authoriser can:

- Decline a submission: The proposal will NOT be processed by the EPA.
- Ask for revisions: Applicant must revise the proposal, and re-submit to the research office/managing director for approval again.
- Authorise a submission: The proposal is then VALID, and will be processed by the EPA

**Deadline?** The deadline for getting your application authorised is called the 'organisation approval deadline' and is specified in the technical description

### Part 2: Evaluation

1. Only authorised proposals received prior to the organisation approval deadline will be considered for evaluation.
2. Proposals will be screened by the EPA to check that they are complete and correspond to the technical description document.
3. Proposals will be evaluated using standard evaluation criteria.
4. Evaluators will be identified from panels of experts with a record of publication and/or relevant experience in specific subject areas.

### **Part 3: Project selection**

The final selection of project proposals will be made by the EPA with the assistance of a national advisory panel (drawn from relevant government departments and agencies and the EPA) according to the following general criteria:

- Relevance to national environmental priorities, including relevance to technical description,
- Balance of support across research topics,
- Capacity development of Irish research community,
- Available level of funding, and
- Performance on previous EPA funded projects (where applicable), including on reporting requirements.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the results of the evaluation process.

Successful applicants must be ready to start work on a date to be agreed with the EPA during project negotiation. If project negotiations are unsuccessful a formal offer of funding will not be made.

## Section A: Summary of funding / who can apply

The different types of projects funded through the programme are:

### *Project-based Awards...*

Project Type	Typical Funding	Typical Duration
Desk studies	Up to €100,000	6 – 12 months
Medium scale studies	up to €350,000	24 – 36 months
Large scale studies	up to €1,000,000	36 – 48 months
Capability development projects	in excess of €1,000,000	48 – 60 months

### *Researcher-based Awards...*

Project Type	Typical Funding	Typical Duration
Masters scholarships	Up to €40,000	24 months
Doctoral scholarships	up to €73,500	36 months
Research fellowships	up to 250,000	24 - 36 months

### **Scholarships**

The award of masters and doctoral scholarship funding is restricted to Higher Education Institutions on the island of Ireland. Applications for scholarship funding must be made by the person who intends to be the academic supervisor for the duration of the scholarship.

### **Research Fellowships**

The award of research fellowship funding is also restricted to Higher Education Institutions on the island of Ireland. Unless otherwise stated in the technical description document for the relevant call, research fellowships must be filled at post-doctorate researcher level as defined by the IUA salary Guidelines - <http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/> Applications must be made by the proposed fellow in conjunction with a host third level institution. All grant awarded research fellowships must be supervised by appropriate experts in the host university/institute and where relevant by EPA personnel.

## Section C: Application form – what to include in the upload

This section of the document offers tips and hints for completing the project description upload.

- ✓ For a valid application, you must complete (a) all portal fields and (b) all sections of the upload.
- ✓ Do not exceed max page count – your application will be rendered invalid
- ✓ Font size must be size 10 at minimum – if the application upload is too hard to read, it will be rejected.
- ✓ As this document is for all project types, not every section below will be relevant to you.
- ✓ Not all the hints and tips given below will be relevant to your project – ensure you only chose elements that correspond to your policy / audience / project size
- ✓ Read the new section on knowledge transfer carefully.

The upload is subject to a strictly enforced total page maximum, as outlined below. An application that exceeds this maximum will be excluded from evaluation process.

<b>Project type</b>	<b>Max page allowance (including charts and appendices)</b>
Large / Capacity building project	20
Medium scale project	15
Desk top project	10
Fellowship	15
Scholarship	10

Section title	Review of state of knowledge	
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
<p>Evaluated in two parts. Depending on project type and size, this section could include, but is not limited to:</p> <p>a. Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of the issues and their impacts on the Irish environment</li> <li>- Relevant bibliography/references</li> <li>- Review of current state of knowledge (including previous feasibility studies, if relevant)</li> </ul> <p>b. National and international relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevance and implication of the research to national and international policies</li> <li>- Justification for the research in relation to national and International research objectives.</li> </ul>		
Project type	Suggested page count	% of total marks
<b>Large / Capacity building project</b>	5	25% Part (a) @ 10%, Part (b) @15%
<b>Medium scale project</b>	4	25% Part (a) @ 10%, Part (b) @15%
<b>Desk top project</b>	2	25% Part (a) @ 10%, Part (b) @15%
<b>Fellowship</b>	3	20% Part (a) @ 10%, Part (b) @10%
<b>Scholarship</b>	2	20%

Section title		Objectives and targets, detailed work-packages, risk and contingencies
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
<p>Depending on project type and size, this section could include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use this section to demonstrate the scientific and technical quality, innovation and research content of the proposal</li> <li>- Project / fellowship statement</li> <li>- Objectives and targets (recommend that these are measurable e.g. SMART)</li> <li>- Risk and contingencies</li> <li>- Detailed work packages (for projects), using work package template below</li> <li>- Work description (for scholarships and fellowships)</li> <li>- Pert and Gantt Charts, sample provided at end of this document</li> </ul>		
Project type	Suggested Page count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	10	30%
Medium scale project	7	30%
Desk top project	4	30%
Fellowship	5	30%
Scholarship	3	30%

**Work Package template:** When providing work package details, applicants must use the template below:

Work Package Title			
Work Package No.		Cost (euro):	
Start Month:		End Month:	
	Name:	Organisation	Person-months
Work Package Leader			
Other participants with major involvement	(repeat this row as required)		
<b>Target</b>			
<b>Description of Work (with sub-task titles where appropriate)</b>			
Provide a detailed description of how listed targets will be met. To include, where applicable,			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology</li> <li>• quality control procedures</li> <li>• the approach to site selection, sampling locations, data analysis</li> <li>• Procedures for formatting and exchange of data should be identified within the project, especially relevant with project partners.</li> </ul>			
<b>Deliverables</b>			
<b>Milestones and expected results</b>			



Section title	Knowledge transfer
<b>Hints and tips</b>	
<p>The aim of this section is to ensure that the research outputs reach the appropriate audience. Depending on project type and size, this section could include, but is not limited to:</p>	
<p><i>Specify the policy relevance:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 5 bullet points or less, please specify the areas of environmental policy that this research will inform</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Specify the target audience:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 5 bullet points or less, specify the target audience for the research outputs</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Clearly describe the expected project outputs:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a minimum, the EPA expects the following to be confirmed as expected outputs in your application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Final report</li> <li>○ an appropriate number of peer reviewed papers (indicate target journals)</li> <li>○ A 2-page summary report, at the end of the project, for inclusion on the EPA website</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional outputs that will bring added value to the proposal include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oral or poster presentations at peer reviewed conferences</li> <li>○ Networking: planned collaboration with other research groups (international linkages / exchanges are particularly encouraged)</li> <li>○ Good practice guides, leaflets, toolkits, book chapters</li> <li>○ Non-peer reviewed publicity (articles, policy papers, radio &amp; TV interviews, newspapers, phone app, regularly updated website etc.) social media (twitter, YouTube etc.)</li> <li>○ Models, databases, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Dissemination Plan:</b></p>	
<p><b>Mandatory for all proposals: Outline a dissemination plan for outputs:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 5 bullet points or less give examples of how you expect to disseminate the outputs of the project (this is indicative only, and can be varied as the project progresses in agreement with EPA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tip: you have already specified your audience – your post-completion dissemination plan should be appropriate to this audience</li> <li>○ Examples could include: speaking at a conference, phone app, podcast, article in newspaper, short 20-minute ‘lunch and learn’ for policy makers etc.</li> <li>○ Please provide indicative numbers for each type of audience that you expect to disseminate to (e.g. policy makers, practitioners, general public etc.,) and how you plan to measure this audience (e.g. number of twitter followers, hits on project website, number of attendees at ‘lunch and learn’, newspaper circulation, radio / TV audience)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Post completion dissemination budget – what you need to know...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To help with post-completion dissemination, up to 2% of the total grant aid requested can be ring-fenced for this purpose</li> <li>○ The 2% is not in addition to the total budget – you should incorporate it into your grant request</li> <li>○ For example, if your total budget request is for €250,000, then €245k should be for project completion and €5k for post-publicity dissemination</li> <li>○ The 2% is non-transferrable, and is solely for disseminating the project findings in the 12 months after the project completion date. Please see Section D of this document for further details.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Project type	Page count / Word Count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	3	15
Medium scale project	2	15
Desk top project	2	15
Fellowship	1	10
Scholarship	1	10

Section title	Project management and project team	
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
<p>Depending on project type and size, this section could include, but is not limited to:</p> <p>Project Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation and management</li> <li>• Allocation of work between partners</li> <li>• Co-ordination between partners (internal and external)</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of personnel involved</li> <li>• Working with EPA/ external bodies</li> </ul> <p>Project Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications of key researchers</li> <li>• Suitability of expertise</li> <li>• Recent research track records of the senior researchers (include details of published papers, citations etc.)</li> <li>• Local knowledge and participation.</li> <li>• role and relevant experience of each participant</li> <li>• Where new staff will be recruited the recruitment requirements and criteria should be specified.</li> </ul>		
Project type	Page count / Word Count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	1	15%
Medium scale project	1	15%
Desk top project	1	15%
Fellowship	1	15%
Scholarship	1	10%

Section title	Academic background, work experience and training	
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
Mandatory elements of this section:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Details of primary degree (awarding body: grade: date: list of subjects)</li> <li>2. Details of post-graduate degree (degree(s), subjects, academic body awarding the post graduate degrees/qualifications, date(s) obtained and title and synopsis of thesis)</li> <li>3. Details of research /work experience - including examples of research relevant to the designated research area for the fellowship</li> <li>4. Description of communication skills – including examples of communication to a variety of audiences and use of different media e.g. presentations, newspaper articles, radio, internet</li> <li>5. Description of organisational &amp; team-working skills and other relevant work experience</li> </ol>		
Project type	Page count / Word Count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	N/A	N/A
Medium scale project	N/A	N/A
Desk top project	N/A	N/A
Fellowship	4	20%
Scholarship	2	20%

Section title	Budget justification	
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
Applicants must provide justification to support the proposed costs included in the budget template		
Project type	Page count / Word Count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	15%	1
Medium scale project	15%	1
Desk top project	15%	1
Fellowship	5%	1
Scholarship	10%	1

Section title	Policy compliance	
<b>Hints and tips</b>		
Insert a few lines stating your organisations compliance		
Project type	Page count / Word Count	Evaluation %
Large / Capacity building project	Paragraph	N/A
Medium scale project	Paragraph	N/A
Desk top project	Paragraph	N/A
Fellowship	Paragraph	N/A
Scholarship	Paragraph	N/A

## Section D: Application form - Budget & Financial eligibility rules

### Budget template completion

Details of how to complete the budget template for each grant type are contained in the template itself, under the section headed 'instructions'.

### Grant Aid Rates & Eligible Costs

#### General Funding Principles

The STRIVE programme funds *not-for-profit* research (on a reimbursement basis) intended to generate knowledge for public good purposes. For the purpose of this document the term 'Grantee' refers to all of the participants in the project team.

Eligible costs are the costs defined as direct or indirect costs as detailed below. They must fulfil the following conditions:

- be actual,
- be reasonable and wholly necessary for the project,
- be incurred and paid during the lifetime of the project,
- be incurred solely to advance the research project or if any single item shall benefit both the research project and other work then such costs shall be eligible only in the proportion that such costs bear to the proportionate benefit derived from them by the research project,
- be determined in accordance with the accounting principles, based on historic costs and the usual internal rules of the Grantee, provided that they are regarded as being acceptable by the EPA,
- be recorded in the accounts, which will be maintained throughout the duration of the project and reported on a six monthly basis,
- exclude any profit margin,
- not be otherwise reasonably available and accessible,
- be of the type normally charged as a direct cost to funded research projects.

*Non-eligible costs* are in particular the following:

- any interest, or return on capital employed,
- provisions for possible future obligations, losses or charges
- sick pay, redundancy payments, maternity pay and other social costs
- interest owed,
- provisions for doubtful debts,
- resources made available to a Grantee free of charge,
- unnecessary, ill-considered or unsubstantiated expenditure,
- marketing, sales and distribution costs for products & services,

- entertainment or hospitality expenses except such reasonable expenses accepted as wholly and exclusively necessary for carrying out the work under the Agreement.

Grantees shall be authorised to transfer between themselves or between cost headings budgeted amounts, provided that:

- the amounts to be transferred are eligible costs and not considered excessive by the EPA,  
*and*
- the lead participant seeks the written approval from the EPA in advance of such a transfer and confirms that the scope of the project and the conditions of participation referred to in the particular Application Form and Grant Agreement are not fundamentally altered.

The general principle is that funding is provided for some or all of the cost of carrying out the research. The level of funding will vary between 50% and 100% depending on the nature of the organisation undertaking the project (see table 1 below) and all of the costs incurred being eligible. Applicants must state their organisation category and the level of grant aid sought (as shown in Table 1) in the budget details section of their application.

**Table 1:**

	Third-level <sup>1</sup> Institutions	Environmental NGO	Other Public bodies <sup>2</sup>	Private Organisations	
				SME <sup>3</sup>	Non SME
<b>Direct and Indirect Costs</b>	100%	100%	75%	75%	50%

### Personnel

- Salary costs associated with new or existing staff within an organisation working on a funded research project are eligible.
- Person-day costs are limited to the actual salary cost including employers PRSI and statutory employer pension contributions (where relevant) paid in accordance with The Employment Control Framework (ECF) for the Higher Education Sector (where relevant). This rate must be specified in the budget.
- It should be noted that employers pension contributions will only be eligible for payment when relevant documentation is provided, to the financial consultants contracted by the EPA to provide financial management expertise and support to the STRIVE programme, supporting the payment of these contributions in accordance with the ECF.

<sup>1</sup> A third-level institution must be within the meaning of Section 1 of the Higher Education Act, 1971

<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix 1 for definition of Public body

<sup>3</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for definition of SME

For relevant participants within the Higher Education Sector involved in projects awarded on or after the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the provisions of the Employment Control Framework for the Higher Education Sector 2011-2014 must be observed for all staff who are members of a public service pension scheme, to address the matter of deferred liabilities arising from their public service pension entitlements. Where staff appointments within the Higher Education Sector are funded from existing public finances then claims for funding in respect of pension obligations are not permitted.

- Staff members who are funded from non-core sources and who are not considered members of the Education Sector Superannuation Scheme (ESSS) are by definition, not public servants as they are not members of the ESSS nor are they eligible to join the relevant public service pension scheme. As a result employer pension contributions for such appointments should not be sought under Section 4 of the ECF. In such circumstances employer pension contributions will be considered eligible when relevant documentation is provided supporting the payment of these contributions to an appropriate pension scheme in the name of the individual concerned.
- Where applicants are uncertain at the time of submitting an application as to the exact identity of personnel involved in the project then rates may be used based on staff categories or grades.
- The maximum salary levels funded under the STRIVE Programme are those laid down in the IUA salary guidelines for the appropriate staff grade.
- The rate and grade of each eligible staff member participating in the project must be specified and verifiable.
- Where an application is successful, and staff are paid in excess of the relevant point on the IUA pay scale then the claim for reimbursement must be adjusted to the applicable rate as per the IUA pay scale.
- Costs for remuneration of salary should be taken from the payroll records of the participant and should reflect the total gross remuneration plus the employers portion of PRSI and employers pension contributions (where relevant). Remuneration costs must be calculated individually for each staff member and the use of average salary or pay scale levels (other than as indicated above) is not permitted.
- All participants can charge to the project the salary costs of administrative and supervisory personnel in charge of the supervision, administration and financial coordination of the project, not included in the indirect costs.
- With regard to personnel costs, only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project may be charged. All personnel who are employed on a specific STRIVE project will be required to submit timesheets. Such personnel must:
  - Be directly hired by the participant in accordance with its national legislation
  - Work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the participant, and
  - Be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant
- Salary costs are deemed to be the gross salary of eligible staff members together with the

grantee's contribution to their pension and PRSI costs.

## **Plant, Equipment and Consumables**

The purchase and leasing of durable equipment, when acquired based on best price and in compliance with National and European Public Procurement Guidelines, may be considered an eligible cost as detailed below:

### ***Purchase of Consumables***

Where it is the usual practice of the Grantee to consider small incidental items of equipment as non-capital expenditure, those costs can be claimed in full but must be included in the consumable costs category.

Consumables usually relate to the purchase, fabrication, repair or use of any materials, goods or equipment and software which:

- Are not placed in the inventory of durable equipment of the participant
- Are not treated as capital expenditure in accordance with the accounting conventions and policies of the participant
- Have a short life expectancy, certainly not greater than the duration of the project.

All consumables and material costs related to the project are deemed to be eligible. Off the shelf software and personal computing equipment (including laptops) costing less than €10,000 are considered to be consumable items and are fully reimbursable. Please see example 1 below.

Consumable or material costs must be separately identifiable and necessary for the project. Where it is the usual practice of the contractor to consider consumable costs as indirect costs, those costs therefore cannot be charged as direct eligible costs of the project. Any exceptions to the above must be clearly documented and a case made to justify expenditure outside the general rule. Such cases must be submitted to the EPA for prior approval before any commitments can be made on such expenditure.

### ***Purchase of Plant and Equipment***

With the exception of 'Support for Instrumentation and related Infrastructure'<sup>4</sup>, the STRIVE Programme is not intended to be a source of capital funding and Grantees should endeavour to ensure that the principle items of equipment required for the effective implementation of the project are already available.

The costs associated with new plant and equipment purchased exclusively for the purpose of the project, and not previously available to the host institute, will be considered to be eligible in full if the cost involved represents no more than €50,000 (exclusive of VAT) - Please see example 2 (a) below.

For significant pieces of equipment, with a value greater than €50,000 (exclusive of VAT),

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<sup>4</sup> The "Support for Instrumentation and related Infrastructure" scheme will support the making good of deficits in equipment and related items with a value of between €50,000 and €500,000. This support could represent up to 75-80% of the costs involved with the balance to be met by the host institute.



the cost will be depreciated on a pro rata basis (see depreciation calculation below) as the purchase of such equipment is likely to represent a significant asset to the Grantee following the completion of the project (See example 2 (b))

Purchase of all equipment must be justified, whether it is deemed to be a significant asset or not, and that each proposed acquisition will be assessed by the EPA as part of our review of applications for funding. The EPA's decision on these matters will be final.

***Depreciation calculation:***

For the purpose of funding under the STRIVE Programme costs relating to the purchase or leasing of plant or equipment representing a significant asset may be charged to the project in accordance with the following conditions:

- The cost of purchased equipment may be recovered at a rate of 20% depreciation per annum for non-computer items and 33.3% per annum for computer hardware costing in excess of €10,000.
- Off the shelf software is considered a consumable item and is fully reimbursable.
- The cost of hiring plant or equipment shall not exceed the purchase cost of that equipment.
- Public procurement procedures must be observed in relation to the purchase of all equipment.

The lease or purchase costs to be charged to the standard grant agreement shall be calculated according to the following (depreciation rule) formula:

$$(A/B) \times C \times D$$

This represents the eligible costs for Durable Equipment for the duration of the project and is reimbursed on a pro rata basis upon the submission of each financial cost statement.

- A = the period in months during which the durable equipment is used for the project after invoicing
- B = the depreciation period for the durable equipment: 36 months for computer
- C = The actual cost of the durable equipment
- D = percentage of usage of the durable equipment for the project

Depreciation costs for equipment used for the project but bought before the start of the project are eligible under following conditions:

Plant or equipment which has been purchased or leased prior to the start of the project may be charged providing that the depreciation period has not been exceeded and the equipment has not yet been fully depreciated according to the usual accounting practices or principles of the Grantee. In such circumstances the remaining depreciation (according to the amount of use, in percentage and time) can be eligible under the project. In addition the equipment in question must not have been the subject of funding from any other source.

If value for money becomes an issue due to the limitations of suppliers then this should be documented and a case made to justify expenditure outside the general rule. Such cases must be submitted to the EPA for prior approval before any commitments can be made on expenditure.

<b>Example 1</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Equipment treated in the Grantee's records as a consumable:
<b>Example</b>	Costs of small incidental equipment treated in the Grantee's financial records as consumable can be claimed in full. Such qualifying equipment costs should be included under the heading "Consumables" in all Financial Reports related to the project.
<b>Example 2(a)</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Equipment treated in the Grantee's records as an Asset: a) New Equipment that does not represent a significant asset to the Grantee after the completion of the project:
<b>Example</b>	Costs related to new equipment that does not represent a significant asset to the Grantee after the completion of the project may, subject to appropriate justification, be claimed in full.  Take for example, a new piece of equipment, with a depreciation period of 60 months purchased in January 2008. If a relevant Grant Award is signed in January 2008 and the duration of the project is 48 months, then the cost of such qualifying equipment could be claimed in full, subject to appropriate justification, under the heading "Equipment- Non Significant Asset" in all Financial Reports related to the project.
<b>Example 2(b)</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Equipment treated in the Grantee's records as an Asset: b) New Equipment that represents a significant asset to the Grantee after the completion of the project:
<b>Example</b>	Costs related to new equipment that represents a significant asset to the Grantee after the completion of the project cannot be claimed in full and the depreciation calculation must be applied.  Please note however that where the duration of the project exceeds the useful life of the equipment, the cost of the equipment can be depreciated and claimed in full on a pro rata basis over the lifetime of the project.  Depreciated costs in relation to significant assets should be claimed on a pro rata basis under the heading "Equipment- Significant Asset" in all Financial Reports related to the project
<b>Example 2(c)</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Equipment treated in the Grantee's records as an Asset: c) Equipment bought before the start of the project:
<b>Example</b>	The pro rata depreciation costs related to equipment purchased prior to the start of the project maybe claimed in certain circumstances.  Take for example a piece of equipment with a depreciation period of 36 months purchased in January 2006. If a relevant Grant Award is signed in January 2008 (when 24 months of depreciation has already passed), and the equipment is used for this programme, the Grantee can claim the depreciation costs incurred under the project for the remaining 12 months, provided the equipment in question was not previously subject to public funding.

## **Travel and Subsistence**

Actual travel and related subsistence costs (including those based on approved mileage and subsistence rates) for personnel working on the project are fully reimbursable and may be charged to the project, provided that the costs comply with the participants normal practices in this regard. Where such costs are incurred they must be reasonable, separately identifiable, limited to the actual cost and should be a specific requirement for the implementation of the funded initiative. The prior approval of the EPA shall only be required for travel to any destination outside the EU.

Where travel costs are incurred by employees involved in the project and such costs are reimbursed by the participant on a per diem basis then it is the per diem payment that is considered to be the eligible cost. All lump sum or per diem payments in this regard must be in keeping with the normal practices of the participant and must not exceed current civil service subsistence rates.

Where individuals are reimbursed for use of their private vehicle for business travel by way of mileage then the relevant rate per mile, destination, number of miles travelled and purpose of journey must be clearly stated and the necessity for such travel demonstrated to the EPA. In all cases such rates must not exceed the current civil service or other Revenue Commissioners approved rates and must be in keeping with the participant's normal practices.

Where researchers outside the State are required by the project coordinator to attend project meetings in Ireland, their costs will be deemed eligible and will not require prior approval. The approval of such travel will be contingent upon adequate budget being available, based on the applicants original submission, and appropriate justification being provided by the relevant participant. Failure to do so will result in all costs relating to travel from outside of the country being disallowed.

Travel and subsistence costs should not constitute more than 10% of the total budgeted expenditure of the research project, unless a higher percentage is indicated in the relevant technical description

## **Other Facilities**

Other specific actual costs, which do not come into any of the categories of eligible costs above should be included in this category. Such costs may only be claimed subject to prior written approval of the EPA unless they are already provided for in the Grant Agreement.

## **External Assistance**

In general participants should endeavour to ensure that they have the necessary skills within the project team to carry out the work to be performed as part of their STRIVE proposal. However the EPA recognises that in all cases this may not be possible particularly where the resources required are specialist in nature and it may therefore be necessary to obtain external assistance in the form of sub-contract or consultancy arrangements for certain aspects of a project subject to the provision of a clear explanation as to why the project team could not have included these skills.

A sub-contract or consultancy arrangement is an agreement to provide services relating to tasks required for the project and which cannot be carried out by the participant itself, concluded between a participant and one or more contractors or consultants for the specific

needs of the project. As sub-contracting and consultancy arrangements invariably relate to the production of a service, it should be clear in all consulting or sub-contracting arrangements that any intellectual property arising from such work remains the property of the participant and must be at the entire disposal of the participant.

All such sub-contracts or consultancy arrangements, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded to the bid offering the best value for money (when comparing best price to quality ratio), under conditions of transparency and equality. Any sub-contract or consultancy arrangement must be offered to the best bid in compliance with applicable National and European Public Procurement Guidelines. Copies of relevant invoices, certified by the grantees concerned, should be attached to the corresponding cost statements.

Sub-contract and consultancy arrangements may relate only to a limited part of the project and should only be carried out by third parties not connected with the project. Where the services of a sub-contractor or consultant are required, as part of an application for funding, these should not constitute more than 20% of the total budgeted expenditure except in exceptional circumstances. Sub-contract arrangements between participants are not permitted.

Core elements of any project funded under the STRIVE programme may not be sub-contracted.

#### **Post project completion dissemination costs**

Post project completion dissemination costs should represent no more than 2% of the total grant aid approved for the project. All budget templates include a separate category for these costs which do not attract overheads. The budget for these costs is not transferable. This funding is not guaranteed until the final post project dissemination plan has been agreed with the EPA in the 3 month period prior to the project completion date.

#### **VAT**

Where a participant organisation is registered for Value Added Tax (VAT) and able to reclaim any VAT they incur on their costs then all expenditure items included in their application for funding and subsequent claims for reimbursement should be shown at the VAT exclusive amount. Where an organisation is not entitled to reclaim the VAT that they incur in relation to their costs then the amounts included in their application for funding and subsequent claims for reimbursement should be the VAT inclusive amount. Applicants will be required to specify their VAT status in Application Form for funding.

## Indirect costs / Overheads

In general a contribution to overheads of 30% of modified costs is allowed for research projects funded under the STRIVE Programme.

Modified costs are defined as all eligible costs excluding durable equipment and external assistance.

In regard to Research fellowship awards modified overhead rates are applied as outlined in the table below:

Project type:	Research Fellowships		
Days per working week at Host Institution	0-1	2-3	4-5
Applicable overhead rate	10%	20%	30%

Overheads will not be funded by EPA as part of Scholarship awards.

## **Section E: What else do I need to know?**

### **Grant Award**

Subject to satisfactory negotiation, lead organisations and participants will be awarded a research grant in respect of the agreed project. An initial advance payment of up to 50% will be made within two months of the notification of grant award being issued. All subsequent payments will be made on a reimbursement basis following the submission and certification of financial cost statements and approval of technical progress reports.

### **Intellectual Property**

The STRIVE programme funds not-for-profit research intended to generate knowledge for public good purposes and as such EPA expects that outputs / findings should be widely disseminated and made publicly available. The EPA's SAFER-data archive (<http://erc.epa.ie/safer>) should be used for this purpose.

On completion of a research project, Principal Investigators & Research Groups are granted 12 months of exclusive access to the datasets which they have collected to prepare material for publication in scientific journals.

Where there is a reasonable potential for commercial exploitation of research outputs, the EPA applies the principles of the document "Intellectual Property Protocol – Putting Public Research to Work for Ireland" to ensure that knowledge arising from its funded research is translated for public benefit. This document is available at:

[http://www.djei.ie/publications/science/2012/Intellectual\\_Property\\_Protocol\\_Putting\\_Public\\_Research\\_to\\_Work\\_for\\_Ireland.pdf](http://www.djei.ie/publications/science/2012/Intellectual_Property_Protocol_Putting_Public_Research_to_Work_for_Ireland.pdf)

### **Freedom of Information Act**

The EPA may be obliged to disclose information relating to the project under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2011. Where the researcher submits any information to the EPA which it considers to be confidential, it must identify this information at the time it is submitted and explain why it considers the information to be confidential. The EPA will take account of the researcher's request, and will endeavour to give effect to it if it considers it to be reasonable; but it cannot guarantee that it will not be obliged to disclose any such information; and the researcher acknowledges this.

### **Data Protection Act**

Personal information supplied to the STRIVE Programme will be stored in electronic and structured manual data formats e.g., hard copy folder or database, for use only in connection with this application. The provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003 will be fully complied with.

## **Ethical & Gender Issues**

If there are ethical or gender issues associated with the subject of a proposal, the applicant must demonstrate that they have been adequately taken into account and indicate which national and international regulations are applicable and explain how they will be respected.

The principles of the EU gender mainstreaming policy apply to the programme. To this end participants shall be required to report the ratio of males to females working on projects. Applicants are asked to take action to encourage females to take a lead role in research projects. Applicants may be asked to give evidence of action taken to promote and increase the numbers of females working in STRIVE projects.

## **Further Information**

Any enquiry with regard to the above should be addressed to [research@epa.ie](mailto:research@epa.ie)

## **APPENDIX 1: Definition of public body**

The European Commission defines a public body as “a public sector body or a legal entity governed by private law with a public service mission providing adequate financial guarantees”.

Therefore, there are two clear cases of entities that are considered public bodies:

- Public sector bodies: Any public authority or entity set up under public law by a state or one of its authorities (e.g. government). Even if such an entity has a legal personality, it acts on behalf of the State with regard to and within the limits of its specific areas or competencies. Activities carried out by such authorities or entities may be of a commercial nature.
- Legal entities established under private law with a public service mission and providing adequate financial guarantees

With respect to the “public service mission”:

- a. where an entity established under private law is owned by a public sector body or the state, it can be deemed to have a public service mission.
- b. for an entity established under private law that is not owned by a public sector body, the entity must be explicitly granted such a mission through a decision by a public sector body. Secondary and higher education establishments that deliver diplomas recognised by a public authority according to criteria established by the state or perform research with public funding and in accordance with objectives agreed by the state would meet this criterion. In cases of doubt proof of the public service mission can be required from the potential contractor showing that it falls into one of the two categories above.

With respect to the “adequate financial guarantees”:

- a. if the entity is owned by the state then it can be presumed to provide adequate financial guarantees as the state will honour its obligations
- b. if the entity is not owned by the state or a public sector body then it must prove that it will
- c. provide adequate financial guarantees (except for the secondary and higher education establishments that are presumed to provide such guarantees). In cases of doubt proof of the existence and adequacy of a financial guarantee can be required from the potential contractor showing that it falls into one of the two categories above.



## **APPENDIX 2: Definition of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**

Small and medium-sized enterprises, hereinafter referred to as 'SMEs', are defined as enterprises which:

- have fewer than 250 employees, and
- have either,
  - an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million, or
  - an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding €43 million, and
- conform to the criterion of independence as defined in paragraph 3.

Where it is necessary to distinguish between small and medium-sized enterprises, the 'small enterprise' is defined as an enterprise which:

- has fewer than 50 employees and
- has either,
  - an annual turnover not exceeding €10 million, or
  - an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding €10 million,
- conforms to the criterion of independence as defined in paragraph 3.

Independent enterprises are those which are not owned as to 25 % or more of the capital or the voting rights by one enterprise, or jointly by several enterprises, falling outside the definitions of an SME or a small enterprise, whichever may apply. This threshold may be exceeded in the following two cases:

- if the enterprise is held by public investment corporations, venture capital companies or institutional investors, provided no control is exercised either individually or jointly,
- if the capital is spread in such a way that it is not possible to determine by whom it is held and if the enterprise declares that it can legitimately presume that it is not owned as to 25 % or more by one enterprise, or jointly by several enterprises, falling outside the definitions of an SME or a small enterprise, whichever may apply.

In calculating the thresholds referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, it is therefore necessary to cumulate the relevant figures for the beneficiary enterprise and for all the enterprises that it directly or indirectly controls through possession of 25 % or more of the capital or of the voting rights.

Where it is necessary to distinguish micro-enterprises from other SMEs, these are defined as enterprises having fewer than 10 employees, annual turnover not exceeding €2 million and or annual balance sheet total not exceeding €2 million

Where, at the final balance-sheet date, an enterprise exceeds or falls below the employee thresholds or financial ceilings, this is to result in its acquiring or losing the status of 'SME', 'medium-sized enterprise', 'small enterprise' or 'micro-enterprise' only if the phenomenon is repeated over two consecutive financial years.

The number of persons employed corresponds to the number of annual working units (AWU), that is to say, the number of full-time workers employed during one year with part-time and seasonal workers being fractions of AWU. The reference year to be considered is that of the last approved accounting period.

The turnover and balance-sheet total thresholds are those of the last approved 12-month accounting period. In the case of newly established enterprises whose accounts have not yet been approved, the thresholds to apply shall be derived from a reliable estimate made in the course of the financial year."