

Environmental Protection Agency  
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



# EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 Guidelines and Terms & Conditions

Version 9: Updated 27/03/2024

The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

## Document Version History

Version No.	Changes Made
Version 2	The hyperlinks linking to the EPA website have been updated due to the launch of the new EPA website on the 25th May 2021
Version 3	Clarification on the meaning of Additional Staff added.
Version 4	Link to EU webpage “Gender equality in research and innovation” updated.
Version 5	Broken hyperlink on page corrected.
Version 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Included clarification on the funding rates available to private entity organisations.</li> <li>2. Included clarification on the EPA’s position regarding budgeted pension costs with regard to Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 28/2016.</li> <li>3. Clarification on the meaning of Research Performing Organisation added.</li> </ol>
Version 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New information section added – Important Information for All Applicants.</li> <li>2. Added clarification on the types of organisations that are eligible to apply for Research Fellowships.</li> <li>3. Updated section on Research Integrity.</li> <li>4. Updated the Glossary of Terms to include clarification on organisations deemed by the EPA to be Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).</li> <li>5. Updated the Glossary of Terms to expand the clarification on organisations deemed by the EPA to be Research Performing Organisations (RPOs).</li> </ol>
Version 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permitted funding amounts updated,</li> <li>2. Updated section on Open Access of Publications and Data</li> <li>3. Updated section on Research Integrity</li> </ol>
Version 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add information note on additional funding provided for PhD and Masters stipends.</li> <li>2. Permitted funding amounts updated.</li> </ol>

# EPA Research Programme 2021-2030

This document provides general guidance for applicants and grantees under the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 and includes the Terms and Condition for Support of Grant Awards.

## **Disclaimer**

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this document, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The Environmental Protection Agency does not accept any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned or damages claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full, as a consequence of any person acting, or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this document.

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# PART 1: Guidance for Applicants

## Important Information for All Applicants

### PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- With the exception of applications for Scholarship funding, all applications must be created and submitted by the Lead Applicant – this includes applications for Research Fellowships. Applications submitted on behalf of another individual (e.g., an application for a Research Fellowship created and submitted by a supervisor with the intention of hiring a Fellow if the application is successful) will not be accepted. The EPA is not responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the project team/application details. Should it subsequently transpire that an application has been submitted by a third party who is not the Lead Applicant, the application will be withdrawn from further consideration by the EPA and any offers of funding will be rescinded.
- Applications must be submitted under the correct Call Topic (as indicated in the Technical Description Document) – mistakes will not be rectified. Proposals submitted under an incorrect Call Topic **will be considered ineligible and will not proceed to evaluation.**
- For all co-funded topics – researchers may not apply for or participate in projects that are to be co-funded by their organisation, regardless of whether their organisation would be in receipt of funding.
- Proposals that exceed the maximum duration and/or request funding in excess of the maximum specified for the Call Topic **will be considered ineligible and will not proceed to evaluation.**
- Any proposed changes following submission of the proposal **will only be considered in exceptional circumstances** and must be agreed by the EPA. It must be clearly demonstrated that the changes will not have any adverse impact on the original proposal – this applies to all changes including changes of Lead Applicant, Lead Organisation, Co-Applicants, Co-Applicant Organisations, and scope of the proposed research and associated tasks. The EPA’s decision on this matter will be final.
- The following must be completed for all applications:
  - All fields on the online application form (**including the Work Package Summary Table**)
  - All sections of the project description template. Applicants must use the template provided in the online application form – variations will not be accepted by the EPA and will render the proposal ineligible.
  - All relevant sections of the budget template. Applicants must use the template provided in the online application form – variations will not be accepted by the EPA and will render the proposal ineligible.
- It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure the proposal is submitted **before the Submission Deadline** as indicated in the Technical Description Document and the online application form.
- For a submission to be valid it must be authorised by the Research Proposal Authoriser in your organisation **before the Approval Deadline** as indicated in the Technical Description Document and the online application form.

## Section A: Overview of the Application and Evaluation Process

Applications must be made using the EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal at: <https://epa.smartsimple.ie>. Guidance materials on using the portal can be downloaded when logged into the system, or from the [Grants Management page on the EPA website](#).

In addition to this document, applicants should also refer to the following documentation when preparing an application (available to download from the EPA's Online Grant Management and Application Portal, or from the [Call Documents page on the EPA Website](#)):

- EPA Research Call Technical Description Document
- EPA Research Call Evaluation Process

Please also refer to the **Glossary of Terms** included in this document.

### Submission of Proposals

- It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure the proposal is submitted **before the Submission Deadline** (as indicated in the Technical Description Document and the online application form).
- It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to obtain explicit consent from all individual participants prior to their inclusion in the proposal, including the use of any personal information as may be required.
- The Research Proposal Authoriser(s)<sup>1</sup> in the host organisation of the Lead Applicant will be notified by automated email from [donotreply.epa@smartsimple.ie](mailto:donotreply.epa@smartsimple.ie) that the proposal is awaiting their authorisation.

### Authorisation of Proposals

1. For a submission to be valid it must be authorised by the Research Proposal Authoriser in your organisation **before the Approval Deadline** (as noted in the Technical Description Document and indicated on the online application form).
2. The authorised person within your organisation may:
  - a. **Authorise a submission:** your organisation confirms they support your application.
  - b. **Request revisions:** your organisation is requesting that you revise the proposal and re-submit it for their approval.
  - c. **Decline a submission:** your organisation does not support your application and the proposal will not be processed by the EPA.

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<sup>1</sup> Research Proposal Authoriser(s) – this is a person within your organisation who is authorised to confirm support of your application on behalf of your organisation.

**IMPORTANT:**

The Submission and Approval deadlines are absolute and are enforced by the system automatically. No consideration will be given to late submissions and/or approvals under any circumstances. **Failure to meet either of these deadlines will result in your proposal not being considered for funding.**

## EPA Proposal Eligibility Check

All proposals submitted to the Research Call will undergo an eligibility check by the EPA before proceeding to the evaluation stage. In order to be considered eligible, **your proposal must:**

1. Address the correct Call Topic.
2. Not exceed the maximum budget available for the Call Topic.
3. Not exceed the maximum duration applicable to the Call Topic.
4. Be submitted by an applicant from a host organisation located on the island of Ireland<sup>2</sup> (unless specifically stated otherwise in the Technical Description).
5. Be submitted using the correct templates provided via the online application form (Project Description Template and Budget Template).

**Failure to adhere to the eligibility criteria will result in your application being withdrawn from further consideration.**

## Evaluation Stage 1 – Scientific Review

Proposals will be evaluated using predefined evaluation criteria and ratings as set out in the [EPA Research Calls Evaluation Process document](#).

To proceed to the second stage of the evaluation process, proposals must:

- Achieve a minimum average of 60% in each evaluation criterion (i.e. average across all individual evaluation forms).
- Achieve a minimum average total score of 2,100/3,000 marks (i.e. average based on the overall total score from all individual evaluation forms).

## Evaluation Stage 2 – National Overview

Funding recommendations for project proposals will be made with the assistance of a national advisory panel (National Overview Committee) drawn from relevant government departments, agencies, and the EPA, details of which can be found in the [EPA Research Calls Evaluation Process document](#).

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<sup>2</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, an applicant organisation is considered to be located on the island of Ireland where it has an established legal presence here and is registered for all relevant employee and corporate taxes in the respective jurisdictions of either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.



Final selection of projects for funding will be made based on the recommendations of the National Overview Committee and subject to the availability of funding. The final funding decision lies with the EPA Board of Directors.

## Notification of Outcome of Evaluation

All applicants will be notified in writing via email from donotreply.epa@smartsimple.ie of the results of the evaluation process. The notification will include an Evaluation Summary Report, which contains summary comments from each member of the evaluation panel, and summary comments from the National Overview Committee. Please note that the names of evaluators will not be disclosed.

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

## Appeals

All appeals must be submitted within 30 days of the date of notification of the outcome of the evaluation process. Appeals submitted outside of the 30-day period will not be considered.

The [EPA Research Appeals Policy](#) is published on the EPA website.

## Section B: Summary of Project Types and Funding Scales

**Please note** that the information provided in the following tables is indicative. Please refer to the relevant technical description document for the maximum duration and funding available for each call topic. The projects available in each call may vary.

The different types of projects funded through the programme are:

### Project Based Awards

Project Type	Typical Funding	Typical Duration
Desk studies	up to €165,000	6 – 12 months
Medium scale studies	up to €660,000	24 – 48 months
Large scale studies	up to €1,300,000	36 – 48 months
Capability Development*	in excess of €1,300,000	48 – 60 months

\*In the case of Capability Development projects, the EPA encourages the appointment of a full-time Project Manager to oversee the research work, to integrate sub-projects and to ensure linkages with relevant policymakers. It is expected that the project manager will work solely on the research project and will not have other responsibilities. Lead applicants and Project Managers should liaise regularly with the designated EPA Research Programme contact who will be managing the project for the EPA.

## Researcher-based Awards (Scholarships and Fellowships)

Researcher-based awards are not collaborative, and the award will be made to the successful individual applicant only – co-applicants are not permitted. The following types of Researcher-based awards may be available:

Project Type	Typical Funding	Typical Duration
Doctoral scholarships	up to €136,000	48 months
Research fellowships	up to €330,000	24 – 36 months

### Scholarships

Applications for scholarship funding must be made by the person who intends to be the academic supervisor for the duration of the scholarship. The award of doctoral scholarship funding is **restricted to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the island of Ireland<sup>3</sup>**.

### Research Fellowships

The award of research fellowship funding is **restricted to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the island of Ireland<sup>4</sup> and Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)<sup>5</sup> on the island of Ireland<sup>6</sup>**. Unless otherwise stated in the Technical Description Document for the relevant call, applications for Research Fellowships must:

- Be filled at post-doctorate researcher level as defined by the [IUA Salary Guidelines](#).
- Be created and submitted by the proposed fellow (Lead Applicant) in conjunction with a host HEI/RPO.
- Be supervised by appropriate experts in the host HEI/RPO who must have the experience and skills required to supervise the researcher during their work on the project.

Fellows are required to spend 100% of their time working on the project (unless otherwise stated in the Technical Description Document). Whilst co-applicants are not permitted for Research Fellowship applications, it is acknowledged that the scope of some fellowship calls may require a small team to successfully deliver the project (e.g., PhD student, junior post-doctoral researcher or research assistant). This is permitted and should be detailed in the Work Package Summary Table under the heading of Participant Type as Project Team Members, and under the heading of Role on Project as PhD Student, Junior post-doc, etc. (as applicable).

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<sup>3</sup> See Glossary of Terms

<sup>4</sup> See Glossary of Terms

<sup>5</sup> See Glossary of Terms

<sup>6</sup> For the avoidance of doubt an applicant organisation is considered to be located on the island of Ireland where it has an established legal presence here and is registered for all relevant employee and corporate taxes in the respective jurisdictions of either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

## Section C: Application Form

In the following, guidance is provided on how to complete the project description to be uploaded as part of an application.

- For an application to be valid, you must complete:
  - a) all fields of the online application form
  - b) all sections of the project description template, which is available to download from the online application form
  - c) all relevant sections of the budget template, which is available to download from the online application form

Instructions on how to complete both the budget and project description templates for each grant and organisation type are contained in the respective templates. Applicants must read the instructions in each template prior to entering any information.

### Completing the Application

Applicants are advised that they must:

- Use the templates provided
- Not exceed the maximum page count
- Use a font size of a minimum of 11 pts – if the application uploaded is too difficult to read, it may be deemed invalid.

Failure to adhere to the above will result in your application being considered invalid and not being advanced to the Evaluation Stage.

There are strict page limits for the project description as outlined in the following table:

Project Type	Max. Page Allowance (including charts and appendices)
Capability Development	30
Large Scale Project	25
Medium Scale Project	20
Desk Study	15
Research Fellowship	20
Scholarship	15

## Work Package template

The definition of a project's scope requires comprehensive specification of its work breakdown structure. An essential element of this is the appropriate division of the project into manageable work packages.

For each Work Package, details should be provided in the corresponding Work Package template, included as part of the project description template (see example below which includes instructions on how to complete on the following page). Applicants should also complete the Work Package Summary table which forms part of the online application form.

Work Package templates are included in the total maximum page count of your application.

**Please note:**

Applicants **must** include work packages for Project Management and Communications to account for the time spent on these activities.

## Gantt Chart

Applicants must also complete a Gantt Chart to illustrate the timing of the different work packages and their components (all milestones and deliverables should be included and clearly labelled). A Gantt Chart template is available as part of the technical description template.

## Sample Work Package Template

Work Package Title:	<i>Please Add the title of the Work Package (WP) here</i>			
Work Package No.:	<i>Please add the number of the Work Package here e.g. WP1</i>			
Cost:	<i>Please add the total cost of the Work Package here</i>			
Start Month:	<i>Indicate the Start Month of this WP as dd/mm/yyyy here</i>		End Month:	<i>Indicate the End Month of this WP as dd/mm/yyyy here</i>
Work Package Leader Details:	Leader Name		Leader Organisation	Leader Person Months
	<i>Please add the First Name and Surname of the Work Package Leader here</i>		<i>Please add the Organisation Name of the Work Package Leader here</i>	<i>Please calculate the Person Months of the Work Package Leader and add this calculation here (see e.g. of how to calculate person months below)</i>
Work Package Partner(s) Details:	No.	Partner Name	Partner Organisation	Partner Person Months
	1.	<i>Please add the First Name and Surname of the Work Package Partner 1 here</i>	<i>Please add the Organisation of the Work Package Partner 1 here</i>	<i>e.g. 1: Assume there are 214 working days in the year. This person works on the WP one day per month. That is 12 days total. Divide 12 by 214 = 0.056 and then multiply 0.056 by 12 = 0.67 person months (person months should be rounded to 2 decimal places)</i>
	2.	<i>Please add the First Name and Surname of the Work Package Partner 2 here</i>	<i>Please add the Organisation of the Work Package Partner 2 here</i>	<i>e.g. 2: Assume there are 214 working days in the year. This person works on the WP two days per month. That is 24 days total. Divide 24 by 214 = 0.112 and then multiply 0.112 by 12 = 1.35 person months (person months should be rounded to 2 decimal places)</i>
	3.	<i>Please repeat rows as above depending on the number of Work Package Partners</i>	<i>Please repeat rows as above depending on the number of Work Package Partners</i>	<i>Please repeat rows above depending on the number of Work Package Partners</i>
Objectives:	<i>Please clearly outline the key objectives of this Work Package</i>			
Description of Work:	<p>Description of Work (with sub-task titles where appropriate). <i>Provide a detailed description of how listed targets will be met. To include, where applicable, Methodology</i></p> <p><i>Quality control procedures</i></p> <p><i>The approach to site selection, sampling locations, data analysis</i></p> <p><i>Procedures for formatting and exchange of data should be identified within the project, especially relevant with project partners</i></p>			
Deliverables and Milestones:	<i>Please provide details of the Key deliverables and milestones for this Work Package</i>			
Expected Outcomes:	<i>Briefly outline the expected outcomes of this Work Package</i>			

### Sample GANTT CHART: Project Milestones and Timetable

<i>Task</i>	<i>Description</i> ↓	<i>PROJECT MONTH</i> ⇌	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		<i>CALENDAR MONTH/YEAR</i>																		
<b>1</b>	<b>Development of Methodology</b>																			
1.1	Workshop on requirements																			
1.2	Evaluation of methodology																			
<b>2</b>	<b>Specification of systems</b>																			
2.1	Inventory																			
2.2	Impact analysis																			
<b>3</b>	<b>Feasibility study on future scenarios</b>																			
3.1	Review subject																			
3.2	Prepare scenarios																			
<b>4</b>	<b>Project Milestones, Management and Co-ordination</b>																			
4.1	Interim milestones																			
4.2	Steering Committee meeting																			
4.3	Project Progress Report (PPR)																			
4.4	Cost Statement																			
<b>5</b>	<b>Communication</b>																			
5.1	Project website																			
5.2	Workshops																			
5.3	Any project specific communication activities																			
5.4	Project Highlight Video																			
<b>6</b>	<b>Deliverables from the project</b>																			
6.1	Final Cost statement																			
6.2	EPA Research Report																			
6.3	End of Project Questionnaire (EPQ)																			
6.4	Post Completion Knowledge Transfer Plan																			
6.5	Any project-specific deliverables																			

## Section D: Budget & Financial Eligibility Rules

### IMPORTANT:

Only one budget allocation will be permitted per organisation participating on a n application i.e., a single organisation **may not** include themselves as both lead and co-applicant organisations, or multiple co-applicants on the budget template – all costs for the organisation must be included on either the lead organisation tab or on a single co-applicant tab (as applicable).

### General Funding Principles

The EPA Research Programme provides funding to Grantees on a not-for-profit basis (i.e., on a cost reimbursement basis only) the purpose of which is to generate knowledge for public good.

The term ‘Grantee’ is defined in the Notification of Award of Research Grant and includes the lead applicant, lead organisation, and any co-applicants. It means each of them separately and all of them together or any number of them collectively.

A core principle of the funding provided under the EPA Research Programme is that it promotes the development of research capacity on the island of Ireland. Therefore, applications for funding will only be considered where the **lead applicant organisation is located on the island of Ireland**<sup>7</sup>. Whilst co-applicant organisations located in other jurisdictions may participate in projects funded by the EPA Research Programme, there are restrictions and exclusions in terms of the categories of expenditure considered eligible for funding.

### Salary Restrictions for Organisations Not Located on the Island of Ireland

The staff costs of additional staff<sup>8</sup> in organisations not located on the island of Ireland are deemed to be eligible, but cannot include stipends, student fees, pension contributions, and pay related social costs (including but not limited to maternity, paternity, parent, adoptive or other family leave).

### Ineligible Costs for Organisations Not Located on the Island of Ireland

In addition, such organisations are not eligible to apply for funding under the categories of equipment, training, external assistance, and communication costs.

The eligibility of cost categories for each grantee organisation based on location are summarised in the following table:

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<sup>7</sup> For the avoidance of doubt an applicant organisation is considered to be located on the island of Ireland where it has an established legal presence here and is registered for all relevant employee and corporate taxes in the respective jurisdictions of either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

<sup>8</sup> Additional staff are deemed to be those staff members recruited on fixed term contracts specifically and exclusively for the purpose of performing relevant work packages of the proposed project. This will have to be supported by an employment contract, awarded on or after the grant award date which specifically refers to these matters.

Cost Category	Organisations Located on the Island of Ireland	Organisations Not Located on the Island of Ireland
Staff Costs	Eligible	Restrictions apply
Travel and Subsistence	Eligible	Eligible
Consumables	Eligible	Eligible
Other Facilities	Eligible	Eligible
Overheads	Eligible	Eligible
Equipment	Eligible	Not eligible
External Assistance	Eligible	Not eligible
Communication Costs	Eligible	Not eligible

For all lead and co-applicant organisations located on the island of Ireland eligible costs are the costs defined as direct or indirect costs. In general, direct costs 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 usual 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 of the Grantee, which must be maintained for the duration of the project (and beyond) and reported to the EPA on a six-monthly basis,
- exclude any profit margin,
- not be otherwise reasonably available and accessible to the grantee,
- 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, and other pay related social costs,
- overtime,
- 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 or services,
- entertainment or hospitality expenses except such reasonable expenses accepted as wholly and exclusively necessary for carrying out the work,
- car tax and insurance,
- on-going servicing, repair and maintenance costs of equipment / motor vehicles,
- miscellaneous expenses,
- subscriptions, memberships or affiliation fees (unless it can be demonstrated that they are wholly and exclusively necessary for the work to be performed under the Research Project),
- all costs associated with the recruitment of staff, including travel to attend interviews,
- contributions to private pension schemes,
- bonus payments or other perquisites paid to staff whether in cash or in-kind.

Grantees may be eligible to transfer certain budgeted amounts between themselves or between cost headings, provided that:

- the amounts to be transferred are eligible costs and not considered excessive by the EPA,
- such transfers are subject to the maximum funding rates applicable to each of the individual applicants and the project overall.

and

- the lead applicant seeks 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 Application Form and Notification of Award of Research Grant are not fundamentally altered.

## Funding Rates

The general principle is that funding is provided for some or all of the cost of carrying out the research. In general, the level of funding may be up to a maximum of 100% of the cost depending on the status/type of organisation and where all of the costs incurred are deemed eligible. The maximum funding rates by organisation status / type are outlined in the following table:

Organisation Status/Type <sup>9</sup>	Max Funding Rate
Publicly Funded Higher Education Institution (HEI)	100%
Public / State Body	100%
Research Performing Organisation (RPO)	100%

<sup>9</sup> See Glossary of Terms

Organisation Status/Type <sup>9</sup>	Max Funding Rate
Private Small Company	80%
Private Medium Company	75%
Private Large Company	65%
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Public Benefit Entity (PBE) or Registered Charity	95%

## Staff Costs

- For publicly funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and other Public / State Body Organisations only the salary costs associated with staff recruited specifically for the purpose of the project are eligible (i.e., staff costs associated with permanent staff based in HEIs / RPOs / Public / State Body Organisations are ineligible). **For the avoidance of doubt existing permanent staff wishing to apply for any vacancy on an externally funded project are not deemed to be additional and therefore not eligible for funding. In addition, salary cost or buy-out hours for permanent staff are not 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) or the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 28/2016. This rate must be specified in the budget.
- 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 EPA Research Programme are those laid down in the prevailing IUA salary guidelines, at the time of application, for the appropriate staff grade.
- Where IUA salary guidelines are not observed the Grantee must identify the relevant equivalent grade for each staff member on the IUA pay-scale.
- The rate and grade of each eligible staff member participating in the project must be specified and verifiable i.e. supported by payslips and contracts of employment.
- 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 revised downwards to the applicable rate as per the IUA pay scale.
- Costs for remuneration of salary should be taken from the payroll records of the lead applicant organisation / co-applicant organisation and should reflect the total gross remuneration plus the employers' portion of PRSI and employers pension contributions (only where eligible and in accordance with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 28/2016). 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.
- For private entity organisations, located on the island of Ireland, only the salary costs of administrative and supervisory personnel in charge of the supervision, administration and

financial coordination of the project, not included in indirect costs, may be eligible albeit at the applicable reduced funding rate.

- For all applicant organisations, **not located on the island of Ireland**, only the costs of additional staff, recruited on fixed term contracts specifically and exclusively for the purpose of performing relevant work packages of the proposed project, are eligible for funding (subject to the restrictions mentioned on page 10). **The salary costs of permanent staff members are not eligible.**
- 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 for less than 100% of their time on a specific EPA Research project will be required to submit detailed timesheets signed by the employee and approved by their direct line manager or supervisor.
- For staff or students dedicating 100% of their working time to the project, a time declaration must be submitted, duly signed by the employee, and approved by their direct line manager or supervisor. Such personnel must:
  - Be directly hired by the lead or co-applicant organisation in accordance with prevailing national legislation
  - Work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the lead or co-applicant organisation, and
- Be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the lead or co-applicant organisation.
- The maximum amount of funding that will be made available to fund PhD and Masters student stipends is fixed at €25,000 per annum for up to four years. In addition, a further maximum amount of €5,750 will be contributed to the annual cost of PhD or Masters fees for up to four years. Where it is the policy of a University or College to charge reduced fees in the final year then only the reduced fee amount will be funded in this case. Funding awarded in respect of stipends may not be used to contribute to the cost of any fees of the University of College, in any circumstances.
- Lead and/or co-applicant organisations will be required to provide information and documentation to support all salary costs claimed in respect of a project funded under the EPA Research Programme. Such information includes but is not limited to copy employee payslips, internal payroll records/reports, staff contracts of employment, student registration forms (or equivalent) and relevant returns submitted to the Revenue Commissioners on behalf of employees or students involved in the project.
- For HEIs on the island of Ireland, the EPA will consider the provision of additional funding (in respect of the relevant statutory leave period) in circumstances over the course of the project where a member of the research team exclusively funded by the EPA Research Programme makes an application for maternity, parent's, adoptive or paternity leave – please see the information under the heading Family Leave in Part 2 of this document.

## Pensions

- 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 EPA Research Programme, supporting that these contributions are paid or provided for in accordance with the internal accounting

policies of the HEI, Public / State Body or RPO and in addition are operated in accordance with the relevant requirements of the ECF, the SPSPS and DPER Circular 28/2016.

- However, in respect of DPER Circular 28/2016 the EPA recognise the confusion in regard to pension in the Higher Education and wider Public Sector and understand there is ongoing dialogue between DPER and representative bodies of Public Service employers on the matter. In recognition of this fact the EPA will allow HEIs to budget for pension in accordance with IUA pay scales, however funding in respect of all such budgeted amounts and the associated overhead will be ringfenced and will only be eligible for inclusion on claims for reimbursement when revised and specific guidance on the matter has been issued from DPER to the EPA. Should revised guidance not be issued prior to the completion date of affected projects then the funding allocated to pension (and associated overhead) based on the budget submission for the project will be decommitted. Reallocations of such funding will not be permitted under any circumstances.
- Where staff appointments within HEIs, RPOs or other Public/State Bodies are funded from existing public finances then claims for funding in respect of such salary costs and/or pension obligations are not permitted.
- In addition, for all organisation types pension contributions paid to private pension funds, or funds other than the public service pension funds as outlined above, will not be eligible for funding under the EPA Research Programme.
- 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.

**IMPORTANT:**

Applicants must obtain the prior consent of all employees and students engaged to work on such projects to release payroll and employment contract or student registration information pertaining to their employment or studentship which may be requested, by the financial consultants contracted by the EPA, from time to time.

## **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 lead and/or co-applicant organisation.
- Are not treated as capital expenditure in accordance with the accounting conventions and policies of the lead and/or co-applicant organisation.
- Have a short life expectancy, certainly not greater than the duration of the project.

All consumables and material costs directly related to the delivery of the project are deemed to be eligible.

Consumable or material costs must be separately identifiable and necessary for the project. Where it is the usual practice of the Grantee 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 to fund such expenditure.

Off the shelf software and personal computing equipment (including laptops) cumulatively costing less than €10,000 (exclusive of VAT) are considered to be consumable items and are fully reimbursable. Please see Example 1 on page 18.

### Internal Costs and Charges

Costs which are internal to the Grantee are only eligible where it can be clearly demonstrated that the costs represent the real cost to the organisation. For such costs to be eligible a justification for and the basis of calculation to support the actual costs of these charges will be required. Where the internal costs contain any element of staff time, the relevant payroll records to support the employment status, salary costs and timesheet outlining the time spent providing the services will be required for each staff member. Where any material or consumable costs form part of the internal cost calculation then supplier invoices demonstrating that these represent the actual costs to the organisation will also be required.

### Purchase of Plant and Equipment

The EPA Research Programme **is not intended to be a source of capital funding** and Grantees should endeavour to ensure that the principal items of equipment required for the effective implementation of the project are already available.

The costs associated with new plant and equipment purchased exclusively and necessarily 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 2a on page 18.

Item(s) of equipment purchased exclusively and necessarily for the purpose of the project, with an individual or collective value of greater than €50,000 (exclusive of VAT), are deemed to be significant asset(s) of the Grantee following the completion of the project. The cost of such equipment is eligible for funding on a depreciation cost basis only, in accordance with the calculation below – please see Example 2b on page 18.

Individual items of equipment purchased individually or collectively by lead applicants and or co-applicants which when combined form part of the same item of equipment to be made available to and used by the project are also subject to an overall threshold of €50,000.

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

**Depreciation calculation:**

For the purpose of funding under the EPA Research 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 equipment costing in excess of €10,000 (exclusive of VAT).
- Off the shelf software is considered a consumable item and is fully reimbursable. Off the shelf software is considered to be standardised software applications that are widely and publicly available and fit for immediate use.
- 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 of plant and equipment to be charged to the project 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.

<b>A =</b>	The period in months during which the durable equipment is used for the project after invoicing
<b>B =</b>	The depreciation period for the durable equipment: 36 months for computer equipment or 60 months for other equipment
<b>C =</b>	The actual cost of the durable equipment
<b>D =</b>	Percentage of usage of the durable equipment for the project

The depreciation cost of equipment used for the project but bought before the start of the project is eligible under the 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 – please see Example 2c on page 19.

If value for money becomes an issue due to the limitations of suppliers, 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 to fund such expenditure.

### Examples:

Example 1	
<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.

Example 2a	
<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 2023 for €30,000. If a relevant Grant Award is signed in January 2023 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 the appropriate Financial Report related to the project.

Example 2b	
<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>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Depreciated costs in relation to significant assets should be claimed on a pro rata basis under the heading “Equipment- Significant Asset” in all relevant Financial Reports related to the project.</p>
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<b>Example 2c</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<p>Equipment treated in the Grantee’s records as an Asset:</p> <p>c) Equipment bought before the start of the project:</p>
<b>Example</b>	<p>The pro rata depreciation costs related to equipment purchased prior to the start of the project maybe claimed in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Take for example a piece of equipment with a depreciation period of 60 months purchased in January 2020. If a relevant Grant Award is signed in January 2024 (when 48 months of depreciation has already passed), and the equipment is used exclusively for this project, 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 any element of public funding.</p>

## 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 lead or co-applicant organisation’s 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 and the UK.

Where travel costs are incurred by employees involved in the project and such costs are reimbursed by the lead or co-applicant organisation 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 lead or co-applicant organisation and must not exceed current civil service per diem subsistence rates.

**Travel and subsistence costs relating to personnel not included in the staff costs category or not named in the Budget proposal will require approval of the EPA.**

Where individuals are reimbursed for use of their private vehicle for business travel by way of mileage then the vehicle details, relevant rate per kilometre, destination, number of kilometres travelled, and purpose of the 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 recorded and claimed in accordance with the organisation's normal practices.

Where researchers outside the State are required to attend project meetings in Ireland, their costs will be deemed eligible and will not require prior approval. The eligibility of such travel will be contingent upon adequate budget being available, based on the Grantee's original submission, and appropriate justification being provided by the relevant individual. Failure to do so may 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 justified in the relevant technical description and accepted by the EPA.

### **Other Facilities**

Other specific actual costs, which do not fall 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.

### **External Assistance**

In general Grantees 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 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 services for certain aspects of a project subject to the provision of a clear explanation as to why the project team could not have provided these skills.

A sub-contract or consultancy arrangement is an agreement to provide services relating to tasks required for the project, which cannot be carried out by the project team themselves, concluded between a lead or co-applicant organisation and one or more contractors or consultants for the specific needs of the project. As sub-contracting and consultancy arrangements invariably relate to the provision 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 Grantee and must be at the entire disposal of the Grantee.

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. In addition, any sub-contract or consultancy arrangement must be offered to the most economically advantageous tender 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. Daily rates must be inclusive of travel and subsistence and all out-of-pocket expenses. 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 of each individual lead or co-applicant

organisation and the project overall. **Sub-contract arrangements between lead and co-applicant organisation individually or collectively are not permitted.**

Core elements of any project funded under the EPA Research Programme **may not be sub-contracted.**

## Communication

The dissemination and communication of research findings to stakeholders including policy makers, the research community and the public is a key objective for EPA-funded research projects, therefore personnel, time and budget should be made available for these tasks over the lifetime of the project.

It is expected that each lead and co-applicant organisation, as part of their submission, should include provision for communication costs to be incurred over the life of the project (including costs associated with open access publishing following approval by EPA). Such costs should collectively represent no more than 3% of the total grant aid approved for each individual organisation and the project overall. All budget templates include a separate category for these costs for which overheads are not payable. The budget for these costs is only transferable in exceptional circumstances with the prior agreement of the EPA.

For the avoidance of doubt, the costs associated with presenting at workshops/conferences (e.g. conference fees) during the lifetime of the project are deemed to be communication costs. The costs associated with travelling to and from the conference should be included in the travel and subsistence budget category.

## VAT (Value Added Tax)

Where a lead or co-applicant organisation is registered for Value Added Tax (VAT) and is 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 VAT the amounts included in their application for funding and subsequent claims for reimbursement should be the VAT inclusive amount. Organisations will be required to specify their VAT status in their application for funding.

## Indirect costs / Overheads

In general, a contribution to overheads of up to a maximum of 30% of modified costs is allowed for research projects funded under the EPA Research Programme.

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

For Research fellowship awards modified overhead rates are applied as outlined in the following table, overheads will not be funded by the EPA as part of Scholarship awards:

Project Type	Research Fellowships		
Average Days per working week at Host Organisation	0 to 1	2 to 3	4 to 5
Applicable overhead rate	10%	20%	30%

## Section E: Grant Award

Awards of research grants will be made subject to satisfactory negotiation. An initial advance payment of up to 50% will be made within two months of the Notification of Award of Research Grant being issued. All subsequent payments will be made on a reimbursement basis following the submission and certification of financial cost statements and approval of project progress reports.

## PART 2: Guidance for Grantees

### Section A: Payment of the Research Grant

Funding is provided on a discretionary basis by the EPA to the Grantee. The term 'Grantee' is defined in the Notification of Award of Research Grant and includes the lead organisation, the lead applicant and any co-applicants. It means each of them separately and all of them together or any number of them collectively.

Lead applicant organisations will be responsible for all aspects of the management and implementation of the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 funded project. All lead and co-applicants will be required to ensure that accurate accounts of expenditure are maintained in respect of the project. They should maintain appropriate documentation to support and justify the costs and time reported in their Cost Statements. This documentation must be complete (e.g. include reference material such as purchase order numbers, payment reference numbers, invoices etc.) and accurate. This documentation should be held separately from other project records and be retained for a minimum of three years after completion of the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 or seven years after the year in which the expenditure is incurred (whichever is the greater).

Grant aid will be made in the form of reimbursement of eligible costs. Eligible costs shall be reimbursed where they are adequately justified. This reimbursement will be made based on the submission and certification of Cost Statements, together with supporting documentation in respect of expenditure already incurred and paid for. The only exception to this is an initial advance payment of up to 50% of the grant funding. This will normally be payable within two months of the issue of the notification of grant award.

Reimbursements will normally be made twice a year (in spring and autumn) subject to the submission of satisfactory six-monthly financial and project progress reports, together with the required supporting documentation. Please note, payment will not be released unless the financial and project progress reports are deemed satisfactory and approved by the EPA and or its appointed representatives (see the relevant Terms and Conditions for details).

An amount equal to 30% of the total grant aid approved for the project will be retained in all cases pending satisfactory completion of the project. A project will be deemed to be completed satisfactorily when all required project outputs and compulsory deliverables have been submitted, approved and are ready for publication (where applicable) e.g. the proof-reading stage has been completed.

The last Cost Statement due for the project and the End of Project Questionnaire must be submitted within 28 days of the agreed project completion date. Grantees who do not comply with these requirements may have the final 30% of grant aid withheld and/or may be deemed ineligible to apply for future EPA Research Programme funding.

Following the satisfactory completion of the project the EPA will issue an End of Project Financial Summary via the EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal (<https://epa.smartsimple.ie/>) summarising the certified expenditure, the final payment due, any financial adjustments made by the EPA's appointed financial agents and the potential de-commitment amount represented by the uncertified amount of the grant award (excluding post completion dissemination costs<sup>10</sup>). Where the remaining available grant aid has not been claimed or where responses to any outstanding financial queries have not been fully resolved within 28 days of the date of the End of Project Financial Summary having been issued, the EPA will proceed to de-commit the uncertified portion of the grant award for the project.

**Please note:** for all projects awarded prior to 1 January 2024 which have a PhD or Masters student engaged across the research team (all lead and co-applicant organisations) or where, per their project approved budget they, or their co-applicant organisations have planned to engage as part of the research team, a PhD or Masters student over the remaining life of the project, the EPA has implemented changes to the level of stipend applicable to such awards and provided additional funding to facilitate an increase from €18,500 to €25,000. Any such funding agreed is ring-fenced solely for student stipends and may not be transferred to any other cost category including non-student pay costs. Consequently, any such funding awarded, and subsequently unspent will be decommitted as part of the End of Project Financial Summary process.

## Post-Completion Dissemination

**Please note** post-completion dissemination is only applicable to grant awards made under the EPA Research Programme 2014-2020

Funding agreed and ring-fenced for the purpose of post-completion dissemination will be reimbursed subject to:

1. The submission and certification of a dissemination cost statement at the end of the 12-month period during which this funding may be utilised (i.e. within 12 months of satisfactory completion of the project).
2. The submission and approval by the EPA of a post-completion dissemination progress report at the end of the 12-month period during which time this funding may be utilised (i.e. within 12 months of satisfactory completion of the project).

Following certification of post-completion dissemination costs the EPA will issue a further de-commitment letter.

## Financial Management Systems

All accounts and financial management systems will be subject to verification and audit by the EPA and/or their appointed representative. These financial management systems must also be open to inspection by the Funding Department(s) and/or the Department of Finance or their nominees for the purpose of their financial control and audit procedures.

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<sup>10</sup> Post-completion dissemination is only applicable to grant awards made under the EPA Research Programme 2014-2020.

## Tax Clearance

Grantees will be required to present a valid tax clearance certificate or Revenue Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) prior to grant award in accordance with Department of Finance regulations. Details of how to obtain a tax clearance certificate or TCAN can be found on the Revenue website at the following link: <https://www.revenue.ie/en/online-services/services/manage-your-record/apply-for-tax-clearance-online-using-etc.aspx>.

Valid tax clearance certificates or TCANs will be required before grant payments can be remitted.

## Insurance

Grantees may be requested to provide valid copies of Public and Employer's Liability insurance and Professional Indemnity insurance (where relevant) which must be updated annually. Evidence of compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation may also be requested.

## Section B: Project Management

Each project should have a single lead organisation with a nominated lead applicant who will coordinate the research and drive the overall objectives. The lead applicant has the following specific responsibilities:

- oversee the coordination of the various sub-projects to ensure that all deliverables are met,
- ensure compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements,
- organise and ensure attendance of all relevant parties at all meetings required during the lifetime of the project,
- where a project steering committee has been established, ensure that any recommendations made by it are addressed,
- establish and maintain a project website/web page (for Medium Scale, Large Scale and Capability Development projects),
- ensure effective dissemination/networking activities are undertaken. The dissemination and communication of research findings to stakeholders including policy makers, the research community and the public is a key objective for these projects, therefore personnel, time and budget should be made available for these tasks over the life of the project,
- organise and host communication/dissemination seminars throughout the project as appropriate,
- provide photos, logos etc. as required for communication and dissemination purposes,
- act as a focus for information exchange between researchers and policy makers to ensure well-founded scientific knowledge informs environmental policy.
- ensure that relevance to policy is included in EPA Research Reports,
- ensure that data from the sub-projects is provided to participants where required and uploaded to an open access repository as agreed with the EPA.

## Interim Reporting Requirements

Financial Reports (Cost Statements) and Project Progress Reports should be submitted to the EPA throughout the lifetime of the project via the EPA Grant Application & Project Management Portal (<https://epa.smartsimple.ie>), as per the schedule outlined in the table below.

Award Type	Project Type	Project Progress Report	Cost Statement
Project-based	Capability Development (CD)	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July
Project-based	Large-Scale (LS)	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July
Project-based	Medium-Scale (MS)	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July
Project-based	Desk-Study (DS)	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July
Researcher-based	Post-Doctoral Fellowship	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July
Researcher-based (awarded prior to 2021)	Doctoral Scholarship	1st October	1st October
Researcher-based (awarded from 2021)	Doctoral Scholarship	28th January & 28th July	28th January & 28th July

It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that reports are completed correctly and submitted on time. Any difficulties arising should also be reported together with the actions planned to overcome these difficulties.

## Project Meetings (Project-based Awards)

Progress meetings will be required for all project-based awards, including an initial project kick-off meeting and regular interim meetings as outlined below.

### Kick-off Meeting

A kick-off meeting will be held within one month of the project start-up and should be attended by the EPA Research Project Manager, Steering Committee members and the project team. The purpose is to formally initiate the project, to review the project plan (including any agreed revisions) and to discuss project management. The kick-off meeting is separate and additional to any project launch event held by the project team.

## Steering Committee Meetings

The EPA, in consultation with the Grantee and (where applicable) Co-funding organisations, will establish a Steering Committee to provide advice to the project team and the EPA on the overall direction and approach of the project, and to provide an external view of the research. The Steering Committee will also advise on the contents and structure of the final deliverables.

Recommendations provided by the Steering Committee must be considered and implemented by the project team where possible.

The Steering Committee will typically comprise individuals with appropriate expertise and experience, including international/national experts and representatives from national organisations, relevant Government Departments, Local Authorities and Public/State Bodies. The Steering Committee may also include one or more of the evaluators who reviewed the proposal during the evaluation process.

The lead applicant and co-applicants will be required to attend regular Steering Committee meetings, and present results from their research. These meetings will be organised by the EPA and the lead applicant.

## Project Team Meetings

During the lifetime of the project, where appropriate the Lead Applicant will ensure that members from all sub-projects meet regularly to discuss the various aspects and progress of their sub-projects to ensure integration and sharing of information within the project team. Additionally, Grantees should meet regularly with the designated EPA Research Programme contact to discuss progress and highlight any potential issues. This may occur as part of a Steering Committee meeting.

## Project Meetings (Researcher-based Awards)

In the case of Doctoral and Masters Scholarships, progress meetings will be held at the discretion of the EPA and/or the Grantee to discuss any issues arising.

In the case of Research Fellowships, the Grantee should meet regularly (at least annually) with the relevant EPA Research Project Manager to discuss progress and highlight any potential issues.

## Section C: Deviation from the Original Proposal

The Grantee should ensure that the project is not altered or adjusted without prior written consent from the EPA.

## Project Time Extension

In the event of a project encountering delays, it is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to request a Project Time Extension from the EPA. The Project Time Extension request should only be submitted within 6 months of the agreed completion date of the project but no later than 2 months before the agreed completion date. Unless agreed as an exception by the EPA (e.g. Family Leave), no more than one Project Time Extension request should be submitted, and it should not extend beyond 20% of the original project duration. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted



via the [EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal](#). Approval will be at the discretion of the EPA. Salary Increments will not be considered eligible for funding during the project time extension period.

## Family Leave

The EPA will consider the provision of supplementary funding (in respect of the relevant statutory leave period) in circumstances where, a member of the research team who are dedicated 100% of their time on a project and exclusively funded by the EPA Research Programme, makes an application for maternity, paternity, parents, or adoptive leave. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis and is subject to additional funding being available to the EPA Research Programme. Requests must be submitted at least 2 months prior to the commencement of the leave via the [EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal](#) for review by the EPA's financial consultants.

For further details please refer to the [EPA Research Policy on Maternity, Paternity, Parent's and Adoptive Leave](#).

## Budget Reallocation

The Grantee may request a partial reallocation of funds across the different cost categories of the budget which may include salary (subject to certain restrictions), consumables, equipment, travel and subsistence and external assistance. Normally, the total reallocation between budget categories should not exceed 15% of the total project budget for each individual applicant or co-applicant. The Grantee should ensure that any proposed reallocation is within the agreed budget. Reallocations between lead and co-applicants may be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to the agreement of the EPA, and on the basis that any such transfer does not result in any change to the overall funding awarded to the project. The budget allocated for communications costs is only transferable in exceptional circumstances with the prior agreement of the EPA.

The individual applicant funding rates and limits must also be respected.

### IMPORTANT:

The reallocation (to or from another cost category) of the following costs **is not permitted under any circumstances**:

- Funding ringfenced for Employer Pension Contributions
- Funding ringfenced for the 2024 PhD and MSc Stipend increases

Requests to reallocate funds will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted via the [EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal](#) - approval will be at the discretion of the EPA following review by the EPA's financial consultants.

## Travel Outside the EU or UK

The **prior** approval of the EPA is required for travel to any destination outside the EU or UK. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, will be limited to active participation in an international event (e.g., must be presenting a paper/poster, participating in agreed relevant training activities etc.). Requests must be submitted via the [EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal](#). Approval will be at the discretion of the EPA.

## Project Extension with Supplementary Funding

Supplementary funding to further or more closely investigate results from the project may be granted in exceptional circumstances. The work may take place prior to or after the original project completion date. Requests for supplementary funding must be suggested to the project Steering Committee at least 3 months prior to the completion date of the project. The Steering Committee will then make a recommendation to the EPA as to whether the lead applicant should be invited to submit a written proposal for an additional cost extension.

Where an invitation is extended by the EPA, proposals must be submitted using the appropriate application form (which will be made available as part of the invitation to submit a proposal). The work must be clearly additional to the work outlined in the original project proposal and must demonstrate significant added value to the project. Requests for supplementary work will only be considered in circumstances where the original reporting requirements for the project are completed in full to the satisfaction of the EPA. Supplementary funding will be strictly limited to a maximum value equal to 50% of the original project budget and will be subject to additional funding being available to the EPA Research Programme.

Approval will be at the discretion of the EPA following review and evaluation.

## Section D: Project Outputs and Deliverables

The following table lists the outputs and deliverables that may be required from your project (all deliverables marked as Compulsory must be submitted for all projects).

Deliverable Type	EPA Requirement
EPA Research Report	Compulsory for all projects except Scholarship Awards.
Project Highlights Video	Compulsory for all projects except Scholarship Awards.
End of Project Questionnaire (EPQ)	Compulsory for all projects
PhD or Master's Thesis	Compulsory for Scholarship Awards only.
Technical Report	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Policy Brief	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
3-Year Post Completion Survey	Voluntary

Deliverable Type	EPA Requirement
Literature Review (for publication as an EPA Research Report)	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Literature Review (not for publication as an EPA Research Report)	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Interim Report (e.g. feasibility/scoping study)	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Best Practice Guide	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Models	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Maps	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>
Data and Technical Solutions*	Not compulsory unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Technical Description</li> <li>• It is listed as a deliverable for your project</li> </ul>

\* Please note some data and/or technical solutions (websites, developed software, database solutions etc.) may become of strategic importance to the EPA or its stakeholders. This can be identified at either the start of, or during a research project. Through agreement with the EPA, such projects will be required to engage in an advisory or knowledge transfer capacity with EPA technical teams to support the delivery of enduring solutions, knowledge retention and better environmental outcomes.

Databases and significant datasets produced during the research project should be made available to the EPA at the end of the project via the EPQ.

Deliverables will not be considered to have been submitted to the EPA if they have not been submitted via the [EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal](#)

## EPA Research Report

**Requirement:** Compulsory for Project-based Awards and Fellowships

The EPA requires the lead applicant to submit a draft EPA Research Report (20-30 pages) to describe the objectives, methodologies, outcomes, etc. of the research. It is important that all lead and co-applicants agree and sign-off on the content of the reports prior to submission to the EPA.

All reports should be submitted before the end date of the project, in accordance with the [Guidelines on the preparation of Final Reports](#) and the [EPA Research Project Communication](#) document, available from the EPA website.

### Review & Publication of EPA Research Reports

EPA Research Reports will be peer-reviewed and should be revised by the project team in order to address any comments/recommendations .

If suitable for publication, the EPA Research Report will be sent for proofing, formatting and publishing by the EPA. All comments/queries from the proof-readers must be responded to by the report author(s) within 28 days.

The authors are responsible for the proofing and formatting of any Technical Reports as these will not be published by the EPA. Where the Grantee has a website they should publish the Technical Report on their website.

## Project Highlights Video

**Requirement:** Compulsory for Project-based Awards and Fellowships

Grantees are required to produce a short 60 to 90 second video of the researchers talking about the research, key findings and key messages in terms of their relevance to policy. This will be used to promote/introduce the EPA Research Report being published at the end of the project.

## End of Project Questionnaire (EPQ)

**Requirement:** Compulsory for all project types

On completion of a project the lead applicant must complete and submit an End of Project Questionnaire within 28 days of the agreed project completion date. The information provided will be used to demonstrate impact, value for money for environmental research and inform the future direction of the EPA Research Programme.

## PhD or Masters Thesis

**Requirement:** Compulsory for Scholarship Awards only.

An electronic copy of the accepted PhD or Masters Thesis should be submitted once available.

## Technical Report

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

A Technical Report should detail the research undertaken and include a review of the current state of knowledge, data collection methods deployed, findings, analysis, conclusions and recommendations. Technical Reports will undergo the same peer-review process as EPA Research Reports and will be made available on request. They may, in some cases, be published by the EPA.

Where relevant, applicants may include Technical Reports in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Technical Reports may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## Policy Brief

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

A policy brief is a key tool to present research and recommendations to a non-specialised audience e.g. government policy makers. An effective policy brief should be concise, include an executive summary, an introduction, an overview of the research or issue, an examination of the findings, and a concluding section that explains the policy recommendations and implications of the research.

Policy Briefs may undergo the same peer-review process as EPA Research Reports (e.g. if listed as a requirement in the Call Topic, or if recommended by the Steering Committee and agreed by the EPA) and will be made available on request.

Where relevant, applicants may include Policy Briefs in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Policy Briefs may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## 3-Year Post Completion Survey

**Requirement:** Voluntary

Three years after the completion of a project the lead applicant will be asked to complete and submit a post-completion survey. The information provided will be used to demonstrate impact, value for money for environmental research and inform the future direction of the EPA Research Programme.

## Literature Review (for publication as an EPA Research Report)

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

Literature Reviews should comprise a documentary review of available knowledge for a topic/subject area and provide a narrative that identifies knowledge gaps and informs research study goals or purpose.

This type of literature review will undergo the same peer-review process as EPA Research Reports.

Where relevant, applicants may include Literature Reviews in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Literature Reviews (for publication as an EPA Research publication) may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## Literature Review (not for publication as an EPA Research Report)

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

Literature Reviews should comprise a documentary review of available knowledge for a topic/subject area and provide a narrative that identifies knowledge gaps and informs research study goals or purpose.

This type of Literature Review will not be published by the EPA, however it can be published in a peer-reviewed journal. In such case, the published version should be submitted as part of the Project Progress Report or End of Project Questionnaire.

Where relevant, applicants may include Literature Reviews in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Literature Reviews may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## Interim Report (e.g. feasibility/scoping study)

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

An Interim Report provides information at a specified point in the research project (usually at the mid-term stage) to ensure optimum return on investment in the research. The report should outline what has been achieved to date and the steps needed to complete the entire project.

Interim Reports will undergo the same peer-review process as EPA Research Reports. and will be made available on request. They may, in some cases, be published by the EPA.

Where relevant, applicants may include Interim Reports in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Interim Reports may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## Best Practice Guide

**Requirement:** Not compulsory unless specified as a requirement in the Call Topic Description or listed as a deliverable for the project

A Best Practice Guide should comprise a set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action in a given situation.

Best Practice Guides will undergo the same peer-review process as EPA Research Reports and will be made available on request. They may, in some cases, be published by the EPA.

Where relevant, applicants may include Best Practice Guides in their proposed outputs, and in certain cases, Best Practice Guides may be a specific requirement for a call topic - in such cases this will be clearly identified in the call topic description.

## Knowledge Transfer, Communication, Dissemination and Publicity

Effective knowledge transfer, dissemination and communication of research findings to targeted stakeholders in support of timely and evidence-based environmental policy in Ireland is a key objective for projects funded under the EPA Research Programme.

The project team is required to engage in knowledge transfer activities, including (where relevant) knowledge collection, analysis and/or transfer meetings with key stakeholders. For projects awarded prior to 2022 while participation is not mandatory it is strongly encouraged. Training on the key principles of Knowledge Transfer may be offered, and project teams are encouraged to attend. The project team is also encouraged to submit papers relating to the project to peer-reviewed journals and to present findings at national and international conferences. Electronic copies of accepted papers, posters, etc. should be provided to the EPA as part of interim and final reporting requirements.

Dissemination seminars should be held throughout the project as appropriate and at conclusion of the project. Grantees will be required to produce a short video (<2 minutes) to summarise the key findings arising from their project and to highlight their relevance to policy. This will be used to promote and introduce the EPA Research Report published at the end of the project and may be used in support of targeted Knowledge Transfer activities.

The lead applicant should establish and maintain a webpage/website specific to the project. This must be populated by an overview of the project, contact details of the project team and regular updates on the status of the project.

**The requirements set out in the EPA Research Project Communication document must be adhered to,** including the requirements for submission and prior review of media releases, the use of disclaimers, logos, acknowledgements and Notes to the Editor. The [EPA Research Project Communication document](#) is available to download from the EPA website.

# PART 3: Terms and Conditions for Support of Grant Awards

## Section A: Funding

Funding is provided on a discretionary basis by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the Grantee. The term 'Grantee' is defined in the Notification of Award of Research Grant and includes the lead applicant, lead organisation, and co-applicants. It means each of them separately and all of them together or any number of them collectively.

The EPA shall not be under any obligation to provide any funding to the Grantee. Where the EPA commences funding a project, it undertakes to continue to provide funding in accordance with the proposed schedule of funding, subject to the following exceptions:

- a. If the EPA is dissatisfied with the performance of the project by the Grantee, it may at its absolute discretion decline to continue funding the project.
- b. If the funding that the EPA receives from the State to enable it to provide funding to projects (including this project) is discontinued or reduced, the EPA may cease funding to certain projects; and in particular, if it is so reduced, the EPA may elect not to continue funding some projects, even if it continues to fund other projects.
- c. For co-funded projects, the EPA may elect not to continue funding a project in the event that the co-funding body is not in a position to meet its funding obligations.
- d. For co-funded projects the EPA shall not be responsible for making any payments due by the co-funder but not made by them.
- e. The EPA reserves the right not to continue funding a project, or award new funding, in circumstances where grantees have been successfully prosecuted by the EPA.
- f. If the EPA ceases to fund the project for any reason, the Grantee shall not be entitled to recover from the EPA or from the State any funding which would have been due had the EPA continued to fund the project. Nor shall the Grantee be entitled to any indemnity or damages of any kind from the EPA or the State.
- g. If the Grantee does not comply/has not complied with the EPA's requirements for Grantees to ensure satisfactory completion of a project, the EPA may discontinue funding and decline to provide further funding for future projects. The EPA's requirements for Grantees are set out in Part 2 of this document. Where funding is payable in arrears, the EPA shall not be obliged to provide funding where its requirements have not been complied with. The EPA undertakes that it will not discontinue funding or decline further funding simply because it disagrees with the results of the project.
- h. It shall be the responsibility of the Grantee to satisfy the EPA that the project is proceeding satisfactorily and that the Grant is being used in the most effective manner. If the EPA is not satisfied, it may discontinue funding and decline to provide further funding for future projects until such time as the Grantee satisfies all outstanding issues. If the EPA is not satisfied, it shall notify the Grantee of the reasons why funding has been discontinued and shall give the Grantee an opportunity to address the issues identified.
- i. It is a condition of all Fellowship Awards that the relevant host Institution must provide the EPA, within 3 months of the commencement of the project, a copy of the signed contract of employment in place between the host Institution and the Fellow(s). Failure to provide the



requisite documentation will result in further payments associated with the grant award being delayed.

- j. All funding provided is inclusive of VAT, if it is applicable.

In addition to the provisions above, the EPA may discontinue funding if any of the following events occur:

- i. There is a material change in the legal status of the Grantee, such material change to include but not to be confined to the Grantee entering into liquidation whether compulsory or voluntary, the appointment of a receiver over all or any part of the assets or undertakings of the Grantee and (where appropriate) the Grantee becoming subject to the Bankruptcy Laws;
- ii. A distress or execution is levied or served upon any of the property of the Grantee and is not discharged within 30 days;
- iii. The EPA is satisfied that the project has encountered fundamental and undue delay or that the project has ceased.
- iv. Where the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant is convicted of a criminal offence

## Section B: EPA Requirements for Grantees

1. The Grantee shall comply with the following requirements:
  - a. Carry out the project in accordance with the financial rules of the programme (specified in the Parts 1 and 2 of this document) and in accordance with the agreed budget and research proposal for the project;
  - b. Designate a lead organisation and lead applicant for the project. The lead applicant shall be responsible for the management of the project and reporting of technical and financial progress (see Part 3, section D);
  - c. Supply any information requested by the EPA for the purposes of ensuring that these requirements are complied with and comply with any written request or direction received from the EPA concerning the proper management of the project;
  - d. Ensure that the effective control of the project is not changed without obtaining prior written consent from the EPA;
  - e. Ensure that the project is not altered or adjusted without obtaining prior written consent from the EPA;
  - f. Submit to the EPA, if requested, prior to commencement of the project, an up-to-date tax clearance certificate or valid Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners;
  - g. Submit to the EPA, if requested, prior to the commencement of the project up-to-date copies of Public and Employers Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance policies, to enable the EPA to verify that there is no risk that the funding provided will have to be used to meet any claim against the Grantee or any person involved in the project;
  - h. Ensure that there is no other funding provided to the project other than that provided by the EPA directly or through a mutually agreed co-funding arrangement;

- i. Ensure that the placement of contracts necessitated by the project complies with Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services.
- j. Ensure in relation to the placement of contracts for capital equipment with any Irish legal or natural person that, at the date of such placement, that person possesses a valid tax clearance certificate or TCAN and obtain a copy of such certificate or number, prior to making any payments on foot of such contract. In the case of residents outside the State they should obtain a tax clearance certificate.
- k. Keep all capital equipment acquired pursuant to the project, properly maintained and insured to the full value of its replacement cost and re-value such equipment when necessary;
- l. Notify the EPA immediately of any damage or loss in respect of capital equipment acquired for the purposes of the project and, where any such damage or loss is insured against, apply the proceeds of any insurance claim so as to ensure to the satisfaction of the EPA that such capital equipment is replaced or restored, as appropriate, and pay from its own funds any deficiency of cost arising from any under-insurance, non-insurance or under evaluation in respect of the capital equipment;
- m. Allow the EPA or its appointed representative access to the Grantees premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of inspection or monitoring of the project;
- n. Permit the EPA or its appointed representative to inspect the project including the financial and payroll records of the project at any reasonable time;
- o. Make reference to the support received from the EPA and the Irish Government, in any publicity or promotional activities relating to the project and respect copyright laws in any publication;
- p. Please note some data and/or technical solutions (websites, developed software, database solutions etc.) may become of strategic importance to the EPA or its stakeholders. This can be identified at either the start of, or during a research project. Through agreement with the EPA , such projects will be required to engage in an advisory or knowledge transfer capacity with EPA technical teams to support the delivery of enduring solutions, knowledge retention and better environmental outcomes.
- q. Ensure that the dissemination and communication requirements as outlined in this document and the [EPA Research Project Communication document](#) are fully observed .
- r. Ensure that the EPA policy on Open Data and Open Access is fully observed.

## Section C: Adjustment to Costings

Funding is based on the amounts set out in Schedule 3 of the Notification of Award of Research Grant and in the final agreed budget. Re-allocation of expenditures between categories of expenditure may not be made by the Grantee without the prior written consent of the EPA as set out in Part 2 of this document.

## Section D: Reporting, Monitoring and Accounting

1. The Grantee shall maintain proper books of accounts and records in relation to all aspects of the project. The books of accounts and records shall be:
  - a. distinct from those concerning other activities of the Grantee, and
  - b. retained for a minimum period of three years after the conclusion of the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 or seven years after the year in which the expenditure is incurred whichever is the greater.

The Grantee shall keep such books of accounts and records available on demand, together with such other documents as may be required by the EPA, for the purposes of any financial or physical verification or evaluation of progress or performance. The Grantee shall ensure that an adequate financial management system is in place for the purposes of vouching expenditure recorded on the Cost Statements submitted to the EPA. It should also be noted that normal accounting rules and procedures require that all financial records and information should be retained for seven years after the financial period to which they relate.

2. The Grantee shall comply with interim and final reporting requirements (technical and financial) as set out in Part 2 of this document. It shall be the responsibility of the Grantee to satisfy the EPA that the Grant is being employed in the most effective manner. If the EPA is not satisfied, it may decline to continue funding the project in accordance with Section A of these Terms and Conditions

The EPA may, alter or amend any reporting or monitoring provision where the EPA believes the proper management of the research (including the proper supervision of the project) so requires. The EPA will notify the Grantee in such circumstances.

## Section E: Payment of the Grant

1. Advance and subsequent payments shall be made to the Grantees, as described in the Part 2 of this document. Payments will only be made in respect of eligible costs as described in Part 1 of this document.
2. All payments shall be made to the lead organisation as agent for the other Grantees.
3. Where tax clearance certificates are required, no payment will be made unless an up-to-date certificate from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (or other relevant authority) has been lodged by the Grantee with the EPA.
4. No liability shall attach to the relevant Minister(s), the Funding Department(s), the State or the EPA or its appointed representatives, in respect of any delay, howsoever caused, in any payment to the Grantee pursuant to this Agreement.

## Section F: Project Completion/Termination

1. Subject to Section G of these Terms and Conditions, the project shall finish on the date specified in the Notification of Award of Research Grant, unless extended beyond that date by agreement between the Grantee and the EPA. There shall be no extension without the prior written consent of the EPA.
2. Normally, action by the EPA to suspend or terminate a research grant will be taken only after the Grantee has been informed by the EPA of any deficiency on the part of the Grantee or the lead applicant and given an opportunity to correct it. However, the EPA may immediately suspend or terminate the research grant without notice when it reasonably believes that such action is required to protect the interests of the EPA, the research programme or the research grant. Suspension or termination of a research grant shall be notified in writing to the Grantee with a copy also issued to the organisation's research office and co-applicants and will take effect on the date indicated in the notification.
3. The Grantee is required to submit within 42 days after the effective date of termination, all required reports and deliverables relating to the work carried out up to that date. In the absence of receipt of such documents within the above time-limits, the EPA may determine not to make any further payments in relation to the research grant. Where a project is terminated the retention payment (i.e. 30% of the total grant aid related to the project) will not be made.
4. In the event of termination any financial contribution from the EPA is limited to those eligible costs incurred and accepted up to the effective date of such termination (the maximum payment in such circumstances shall not exceed 70% of the total grant aid related to the project). If these accepted costs are less than payments already advanced the Grantee shall refund the EPA the unspent/uncertified portion of the payments advanced.
5. In the event of a project being terminated, the EPA reserves the right to consider the Grantee to be ineligible to apply for future funding for a 2-year period starting from the termination date of the project. However, the individual may assist as an unpaid advisor on specific projects under the EPA Research Programme.
6. Should the lead applicant be unwilling or unable, for any reason whatsoever to continue their involvement in the project (including but not limited to retirement, ill-health, resignation, dismissal or termination of contract), the lead organisation shall notify the EPA which shall have the option to terminate the project and grant. Alternatively, the EPA may agree to the appointment of a new lead applicant.
7. Should the lead applicant cease to be employed by the lead organisation, the EPA and the lead organisation may agree the appointment of a new lead applicant or, in default of agreement, terminate the project and grant. Alternatively, the EPA may instead, with the agreement of the lead organisation, agree that the project may be completed by the lead applicant and / or their new employer under the terms set out in this Agreement.
8. If work does not begin on the project within two months of the agreed start date, as stated in the Notification of Award of Research Grant, the project may be terminated by the EPA and the advance payment must be reimbursed in full to the EPA.
9. In all matters pertaining to the termination of an EPA grant award the EPA's decision will be final.

## Section G: Notices

Any Notices required to be given to or served on the Grantee, shall be deemed to be duly given to or served upon the Grantee if provided in writing (including electronic correspondence).

## Section H: Transfer and Assignment

The Grantee shall not transfer or assign directly or indirectly any portion of the terms and conditions without the prior written consent of the EPA.

## Section I: Indemnity

The EPA is merely providing funding for the project and is not assuming any liability for its execution.

Nothing in the Terms and Conditions of funding for the EPA Research Programme shall constitute a partnership or joint venture or establish a relationship of agency between the Parties hereto, nor shall the Research Grant Award, or the operation thereof or the provision of any services by the EPA, the Lead Applicant, the Research Team or the Research Body be construed as evidence of any contract of employment between the EPA and any member of the Research Team or any servant or agent of the Research Body, which is expressly denied.

Neither the Lead Applicant nor any member of the Research Team, nor any servant or agent of the Research Body shall be, nor in any way represent himself to be an agent of the EPA, and none of them shall have any authority to enter into any obligation on behalf of the EPA or to bind the EPA in any way, which is expressly denied.

## Section J: Data Protection

It is acknowledged that Personal Data may be submitted to the EPA by the Grantee as part of a research programme project. Each of the EPA and the Lead Organisation shall be a separate Data Controller with respect to such Personal Data. This means that each party determines the purposes and means of its respective processing of the Shared Personal Data.

Each party shall ensure that it processes Shared Personal Data on the basis of one or more of the legal grounds set out in Article 6 and Article 9 of GDPR, for the purposes of carrying out, administering and/or publicising the research programme and its results as described in this document and/or the EPA Privacy Policy. The Lead Organisation shall, in particular, not upload or provide Personal Data to the EPA (including via relevant websites or portals) unless it has a proper legal basis to do so. Where the Lead Organisation is uploading or sharing Personal Data on behalf of a third party, such as a third party co-applicant organisation or funding beneficiary, it shall ensure that such third party has a proper legal basis for the sharing of such Personal Data with the third party and the EPA.

The Lead Organisation shall ensure that the EPA Privacy Policy has been shared with, and accepted by, each third party project participant and applicable individuals with respect to Personal Data that may be shared with the EPA.

Each party shall be individually responsible, as a sole Data Controller, for its own processing of the Shared Personal Data pursuant to and in connection with an EPA funded project. This means each party determines the purposes and means of its respective processing of the Shared Personal Data.

The Grantees must fully comply with their respective obligations under Data Protection Legislation. The Lead Organisation shall be responsible for ensuring that relevant Data Subjects have been provided with the information referred to in Article 13 of GDPR.

Each party will inform the other of any requests from Data Subjects regarding rectification or erasure of Shared Personal Data, or restriction of or objection to the processing of Shared Personal Data that are relevant to the other parties. Each party shall, to the extent that such a request affects another party's processing of Shared Personal Data, provide reasonable assistance to such other party to enable compliance with Data Protection Legislation.

Each party shall notify the other immediately if it becomes aware or suspects a Personal Data Breach which is likely to affect or invoke another party's obligations under Data Protection Legislation. The notifying party shall document all Personal Data Breaches in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and fully cooperate with the other party to ensure compliance with Data Protection Legislation. All parties shall use reasonable endeavours to mitigate any damage suffered by a Data Subject.

For the purposes of this Section J of these Terms and Conditions, the below terms shall be defined as set out below:

**Data Controller** has the meaning set out in Data Protection Legislation;

**Data Protection Legislation** the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and Directive 95/46/EC, any other applicable law or regulation relating to the processing of personal data and to privacy, including the E-Privacy Directive and the EC (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011, as such legislation shall be amended, revised or replaced from time to time, including by operation of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) (and laws implementing or supplementing the GDPR and/or the E-Privacy Regulations);

**Data Subject** has the meaning set out in the Data Protection Legislation;

**Personal Data** has the meaning set out in the Data Protection Legislation;

**Shared Personal Data** means the Personal Data shared between the parties as part of a research grant programme.

## Section K: Other

All references herein to the EPA shall mean the Environmental Protection Agency, its employees, servants and agents. Where the EPA wishes to inspect the premises of any Grantee but does not undertake this task itself, it shall provide a letter of appointment to any person acting on its behalf, and such person shall present that letter of appointment to the grantee as proof that he or she is acting on behalf of the EPA.

## PART 4: Other Information

### Section A: Intellectual Property

The EPA Research Programme funds not-for-profit research intended to generate knowledge for public good purposes and to support timely and evidence-based environmental policy in Ireland. As such the EPA expects that outputs / findings should be widely disseminated and made publicly available. A data repository as agreed by the EPA should be used for this purpose.

On completion of a research project, Lead Applicants are granted an embargo of 6 months (or 12 months in the case of the social sciences or humanities) of exclusive access to the datasets needed to validate the results presented in their scientific publications before they are required to upload them to a data repository as agreed by the EPA. This embargo does not apply in the case of datasets requested specifically for the purpose of EPA approved knowledge transfer activities that are intended to support evidence-based policy decisions in Government departments. In such cases the datasets may be shared with key policy stakeholders on a confidential basis during the embargo period. Lead Applicants will in these instances have the opportunity to directly present the data to ensure proper use and interpretation.

Where there is reasonable potential for commercial exploitation of research outputs, the EPA applies the principles of the document entitled [Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019 - A Framework For Successful Research Commercialisation](#) to ensure that knowledge arising from its funded research is translated for public benefit.

### Section B: Research Integrity

The EPA places great importance on ensuring that all aspects of the research which it funds is conducted to the highest standards of research integrity.

The EPA has endorsed the revised [2019 National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#), and is a member of the National Research Integrity Forum (NRIF) via its participation in the NRIF Community of Practice. Applicants must adhere to the commitments of the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland and abide by the guidelines included in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, including, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other research misconduct.

The EPA expressly encourages that EPA grantees, and associated project teams, undertake relevant research integrity training on a regular basis. Submitted deliverables due for publication as EPA Research or Evidence Reports may be subjected to electronic review and analysed electronically for plagiarised passages, etc.

A guidance document to help researchers reinforce responsible research conduct in their research collaborations has been published by the Research Integrity National Forum and is available to download from the [National Research Integrity Forum webpage on the Irish Universities Association website](#) (see section entitled Key Outputs of the Forum).

## Section C: Freedom of Information Act

The EPA may be obliged to disclose information relating to the project under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and / or the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014. Where the researcher submits any information to the EPA which they consider to be confidential, they must identify this information at the time it is submitted and explain why they consider 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.

## Section D: Personal Information

Personal information supplied to the EPA Research 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 and the administration of the EPA Research Programme and publication of results. The provisions of Data Protection Legislation shall be complied with by the EPA and the Grantees with respect to the processing of personal data.

Data Protection Legislation shall mean the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and Directive 95/46/EC, any other applicable law or regulation relating to the processing of personal data and privacy (including the E-Privacy Directive and the European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011, as such legislation shall be amended, revised or replaced from time to time, including by operation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679) (GDPR) (and laws implementing or supplementing the GDPR and/or the E-Privacy Regulations).

The provisions of the applicable Terms and Conditions with respect to data protection, and the terms of the EPA Privacy Policy, shall apply to the processing of personal data in connection with the EPA Research Programme.

## Section E: Open Access of Publications and Data

The EPA is a participant in the National Open Research Forum (NORF), and, in 2022, the EPA endorsed the [National Action Plan for the Transition to an Open Research Environment in Ireland](#).

The EPA's policy on Open Access and Open Data is as follows:

### Open Access

All projects funded by the EPA Research Programme are required to ensure open access to all peer-reviewed publications resulting from EPA funding. This must be done by depositing your peer reviewed manuscript in an open access repository as agreed with the EPA. You are also encouraged to publish in reputable open access journals. Please note however, the communications budget may only be used for Gold Open Access in exceptional circumstances, subject to prior approval by the EPA. Expenditure on Gold Open Access that has not had the prior approval of the EPA will be deemed ineligible.



## Open Data

It is also a requirement for all funded projects that the research data needed to validate the results presented in their scientific publications is deposited via a data repository as agreed with the EPA.

Data and information resources generated by projects are part of a very wide spectrum of outputs which includes, but is not limited to: quantitative and qualitative datasets, databases, GIS layers, geographical data, geographic imagery, project presentations, posters, abstracts, surveys and questionnaires, photographs, audio or visual recordings, software code and software libraries, mobile and smartphone applications, computer models and simulations, pre-prints of PhD and M.Sc. theses, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), etc.

Each project funded by the EPA is expected to deposit data and information resources on a data repository as agreed with the EPA. This will vary from project to project. Every project should engage in discussions with the EPA from an early stage in their funding to agree what data and information resources will be archived and subsequently disseminated as open data. Data and information resources must be generated by the project itself. Consequently, this requirement does not include the deposition of data and information resources such as Ordnance Survey mapping and imagery or other commercially obtained resources.

## Bibliographic Metadata

Additionally, Grantees must ensure open access through a data repository as agreed with the EPA to the bibliographic metadata that identify the deposited publication, and that must include:

- The terms "Environmental Protection Agency" and "EPA Research Programme";
- The name of the pillar or hub and EPA Research project number;
- The publication date, and length of embargo period (an embargo of 6 months is acceptable or 12 months for the social sciences or humanities), and
- A persistent identifier (e.g. the grant number, Digital Object Identifier (DOI), ISBN etc)

We recommend that authors retain their copyright and grant adequate licenses to publishers.

All final versions of publications and data should also be submitted via the EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal as part of the reporting requirements of the Programme.

## Section F: Ethical and Gender Issues

### Gender Issues

The principles of the EU gender mainstreaming policy apply to the programme. To this end, lead applicant organisations / co-applicant organisations shall be required to report the ratio of genders working on projects.

Applicants are asked to take action to encourage women to take a lead role in research projects and to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to any potential gender dimension in their

proposed research. Applicants may be asked to give evidence of action taken to promote and increase the numbers of women working in EPA Research projects.

The EPA is committed to ensuring there is appropriate gender balance at all levels of personnel engaged in the research it funds. As part of progress reporting requirements applicants will be asked to outline how gender equity has been taken into account in the research project team. To this end, applicants are encouraged to have balanced membership of the genders in the project team and to ensure there is balanced participation across the proposed research activities. As stated in the [EPA Research Programme Gender Strategy](#), to fulfil the necessary funding eligibility requirements, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must have complied with the timelines set out in the [Higher Education Authority Statement on Athena Swan Charter in Ireland](#).

Applicants are also requested to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to any potential gender dimension<sup>11</sup> in the proposed research content.

## Ethical Issues

Where ethical approval is required for research to be undertaken as part of an EPA-funded award, written evidence of ethical approval from the relevant national or local ethics committee must be provided to the EPA in advance of that aspect of the research commencing. Funding for the project will be withheld until written confirmation of ethical approval is received and acknowledged by the EPA. Where ethical approval is required from the beginning of the award, evidence of ethical approval will need to be provided to the EPA before funding can be awarded.

## Section G: Further Information

Any queries relating to the contents of this document should be addressed to [research@epa.ie](mailto:research@epa.ie).

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<sup>11</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/integration-gender-dimension-research-and-teaching-content>

## Appendix I – Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Approval Deadline</b>	Means the deadline by which Research Proposal Authorisers must confirm organisational support of the proposal and agreement with the Lead Applicant Declarations.
<b>Co-applicant (IE/NI Organisation)</b>	Means an individual from a host organisation located on the island or Ireland <sup>12</sup> who is providing an essential intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research and who may or may not receive funding through the Grant.
<b>Co-applicant (Non-IE/NI Organisation)</b>	Means an individual from a host organisation not located on the island of Ireland <sup>13</sup> who is providing an essential intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research and who may or may not receive funding through the Grant.
<b>Finance Office Contact</b>	Means the person (or persons) within the Lead Organisation authorised to assist with the financial reporting requirements of your project, and other financial-related requests.
<b>Grantees</b>	Means the Lead Applicant, Lead Organisation, and any Co-applicants. It means each of them separately and all of them together or any number of them collectively.
<b>Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the island of Ireland</b>	For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, a HEI on the island of Ireland is an organisation listed on the following webpage: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">HEA - Higher Education Institutions</a></li> </ol> <p>Or (for Northern Ireland):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen’s University Belfast</li> <li>Ulster University</li> </ol>
<b>Lead Applicant</b>	Means the person who creates the application and is responsible for ensuring all reporting and deliverable requirements are met.
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Means the organisation that is host to the Lead Applicant.
<b>Private Small Company</b>	For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, a Private Small Company is one where: <p>Number of employees = 1 to 49 <b>and either</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual turnover is less than €10m <b>or</b></li> <li>Annual balance sheet is less than €10m</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> For the avoidance of doubt an applicant organisation is considered to be located on the island of Ireland where it has an established legal presence here and is registered for all relevant employee and corporate taxes in the respective jurisdictions of either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

<sup>13</sup> For the avoidance of doubt an applicant organisation is considered to be located on the island of Ireland where it has an established legal presence here and is registered for all relevant employee and corporate taxes in the respective jurisdictions of either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

Term	Definition
<b>Private Medium Company</b>	<p>For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, a Private Medium Company is one where:</p> <p>Number of employees = 50 to 249 <b>and either</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual turnover is less than €50m <b>or</b></li> <li>• Annual balance sheet is less than €43m</li> </ul>
<b>Private Large Company</b>	<p>For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, a Private Large Company is one where:</p> <p>Number of employees = 250 or above <b>and either</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual turnover is greater than or equal to €50m <b>or</b></li> <li>• Annual balance sheet is greater than or equal to €43m</li> </ul>
<b>Project Team Member</b>	<p>Means any person working on the research project, including Lead and Co-applicants.</p>
<b>Research Performing Organisation (RPO)</b>	<p>For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, a Research Performing Organisation (RPO) means a legal entity engaged in publicly funded research which represents at least 50% of their annual operational capacity. The organisation must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that extends and enhances the Irish research base in the environmental sectors and be able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes, as demonstrated by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sufficient high-quality current research capacity,</li> <li>b. A track record of staff that have led or co-led innovative research projects, including directing postdoctoral researchers over the previous five years;</li> <li>c. Sufficient financial support for research at the organisational level to ensure the availability of essential infrastructure.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Ensure that the results of any research funded by the EPA are made publicly available at no cost, subject to the provisions of the National IP Protocol.</li> </ol> <p>If the status of the eligible organisation changes then the eligibility to apply to the EPA 's programmes would require re-consideration by the EPA.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt any other RPO not meeting this definition will be assessed against the Private Company criteria as either small, medium or large and the prevailing funding rates available will apply.</p> <p>The EPA's determination of the status of any applicant organisation will be final.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> For the purpose of the EPA Research Programme, HEIs and Public/State Bodies are excluded from the definition of RPOs and are referred to separately in this document.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Research Proposal Authoriser</b>	Means the person (or persons) authorised on behalf of the Lead Organisation to confirm support of the application and agreement with the Lead Applicant's declarations.
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	Means the deadline by which Lead Applicants must submit proposals for review and approval by their Research Proposal Authorisers.