



EPA HSE JOINT Research Call 2015

Technical Description



1. Health and Wellbeing Theme

Context

Human health protection is a fundamental aspect of environmental protection since our health is impacted by, *inter alia*, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the noise levels we experience, the food we eat and our sense of wellbeing. Research has an important role to play in establishing how human health could be enhanced through a healthy environment. By developing expertise and establishing a knowledge base, activities and policies with environmental impacts can be managed to guard against undue negative effects on human health and wellbeing.

The EPA has a key role in the protection of human health from environmental stressors. The licensing of large and complex industrial (IPPC) and waste facilities is conducted with regard to Section 52 of the EPA Acts 1992 & 2003 which requires the EPA to ensure a high standard of environmental protection as well as the prevention of significant environmental pollution. In these Acts, environmental pollution is defined as “..the direct or indirect introduction to an environmental medium, as a result of human activity, of substances, heat or noise, which might be harmful to human health or quality of the environment...”. Other EPA responsibilities with a direct effect on human health protection include the monitoring of water quality (drinking and recreational waters), monitoring of ambient air quality and wastewater treatment licensing.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is the single national body responsible for the provision of health and personal social services to the population. It is the largest public or private sector organisation in Ireland. The HSE’s Health and Wellbeing Division was established in mid 2013 arising from new governance arrangements for the health service. The work of the Division is focused on helping people to stay healthy and well, reducing health inequalities and protecting people from threats to their health and wellbeing. The HSE has statutory and non-statutory responsibilities for the management of environmental impacts on human health. This work is led by the following sub-divisional areas of the HSE’s Health and Wellbeing Division; Environmental Health, Public Health and Emergency Management services. This work is carried out in cooperation with many other agencies such as local authorities, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and the EPA.

The EPA and the HSE are now introducing this joint research call that will support the implementation of Healthy Ireland, the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Ireland and to further its goals, namely to;

1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

The EPA and the HSE have agreed to co-fund up to two research projects examining the potential of ecosystems benefits for health. The aim of the co-funding initiative is: a) to develop national capacity in this important area; b) to generate data and make assessments of priority policy issues for Ireland; and, c) to mobilise this knowledge for use in environment and health protection, together with the promotion of health and well being

Research priorities for this call are

Ecosystem Benefits for Health

There is a growing body of evidence to show that motivating people to spend time participating in one or more of a range of outdoor activities in natural environments will help promote and maintain good health. When people are outdoors they tend to be active and so the availability of high-quality green spaces (parks, woods, countryside) and blue spaces (ponds, river banks, lakeshores and seashores) encourages activity on the road to better health. Interacting with nature also improves mental health: including reducing stress & stress-related diseases; and also enhancing psychological well-being, cognitive ability and social cohesion. To realise these benefits, our environment must of course be in good condition; however it also needs to be accessible for users; and sufficiently diverse to suit our varied needs. Evidence is needed at a national and local level to provide evidence for decisions and investment by government and others to protect and develop our green and blue spaces so they can deliver for the health and wellbeing of the population. Examples of research topics in this area include:

- Parks and open spaces as medicine for the community
- Use of blue and green spaces to promote physical activity in young people
- Health benefits of open spaces

Funding is available for up to two studies at desk scale (€50,000-€100,000) or Medium Scale (€100,000-€350,000), to build knowledge and/or develop strategies to address aspects of health-supporting environments.

Project No. 29 Ecosystem Benefits for Health

To make an application under this topic area, you must use the following **Call Topic Reference: Sustainability 2015 Call – Project 29**

Application Process

Making an application online:

Applications must ONLY be made online at <https://epa.smartsimple.ie> .

Guide to the EPA online application system:

The guide to the EPA online application system, '2015 Quick guide to the EPA online portal (making an application)', is available for download at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/call2015>

What to include in the application form:

To make the best application possible, it is recommended that you read the '2015 EPA Research guide for applicants' before drafting and submitting an application, available at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/call2015> .

To make an application under any of the topic areas:

Applicants must use the correct **Call Topic Reference**, as indicated in this document, from the drop down menu on the EPA online system e.g. *Sustainability 2015 Call Project 29*

It is the responsibility of the **Applicants** to ensure that proposals are submitted before the **call deadline**, and of the relevant **Grant Authoriser** (i.e. Research Offices / Managing Directors for companies) to ensure that the proposals are authorised before the **organisation approval deadline**.

FAILURE TO MEET EITHER OF THE ABOVE DEADLINES MEANS YOUR PROPOSAL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING Application Process

2. Expected Outputs

For all projects submitted under the 2015 Climate Call, expected outputs include, but are not limited to:

- **Final Report**, which should provide a clear and detailed account of all the steps and methodologies used during the project and ensure that the objectives, set out above, are met – including recommendations.
- **Synthesis Report** (20-30pp), which provide a clear non-technical summary of the research and of the recommendations.
- **Dissemination 2-pager**, which will be used to disseminate the findings of the research to the key stakeholders.
- **Workshop/Dissemination event(s)** to all stakeholders in the relevant arena (e.g. policy, monitoring, regulatory, NGOs, media, public, etc.).

The list provided above is indicative and relevant alternatives will be considered. Please consult the **2015 Guide for Applicants**, **2015 Guide for Grantees** and the **EPA Terms and Conditions of award** for the **full list** of interim and final reporting requirements.

A **dedicated website/webpage/Twitter account** should be created and maintained, presenting the project and work carried to-date.

If you create a Twitter account, please let us know, so we can add you to our [list of EPA funded projects](#) and promote your content to our followers.

It is also expected that a number of **dissemination outputs**, such as policy briefs, peer-reviewed publications and presentations, will arise from the projects.

3. Indicative Timeframe

12th June 2015:	Call Opening
17th July 2015 (5pm)	Deadline for submission of applications by applicants
29th July 2015 (5pm)	Organisation Approval Deadline for authorisation by Research Offices
August/September 2015	Evaluation Process
September/October 2015	Negotiation ¹
November 2015	Grant Award of Successful Projects

¹ The EPA may consider calling the shortlisted applicants for interview at this stage.

4. Further Information

Information on current research projects being supported by the programme is available in the Research Section of the EPA web site (www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/research).

Alternatively, for further information on this call, please contact research@epa.ie

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5. Additional Documentation

Additional Documents available at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/call2015>

- *2015 EPA Research Guide for Applicants*
- *2015 EPA Research Guide for Grantees*
- *2015 EPA Research Terms & Conditions for Support of Grant Awards*
- *2015 Quick guide to the EPA on-line portal (How to make an application)*