



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



EPA Research Programme 2021-2030

Fast-track to Policy Funding: Circular Bioeconomy
Outlook Study 2030-2050 in support of Climate Action,
Sustainable Food and Biobased Systems

September 2021

EPA Research Fast-track to Policy Funding

This document provides the Technical Description for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fast-track to Policy Funding for a Circular Bioeconomy Outlook Study 2030-2050 in support of Climate Action, Sustainable Food and Biobased Systems

Applicants should read the following carefully and consult the other documentation provided (e.g. 2021 EPA Research Fast-track to Policy Funding Guidelines and Terms & Conditions).

Contents

Introduction	3
Fast-track to Policy Funding	3
Application Process	3
Making an Application.....	3
Call Content	5
Policy Need.....	5
Scope.....	6
Expected Outputs.....	6
Indicative Timeframe	6
Further Information	7

Introduction

EPA Research 2030¹ is the ten-year high-level framework for the EPA's research programme (2021-2030), designed to be agile, responsive and flexible.

Environmental policies must be underpinned by an in-depth level of knowledge that needs to be delivered through a systematic programme of environmental research and assessment. Research can play an important role by generating evidence that will support the design and implementation of effective and robust policy, evaluate its outcomes, and demonstrate its value. EPA Research 2030 will further our understanding of our environmental and natural systems. It will enable the outcomes from research to be put in action to protect and improve our natural and built environment.

Fast-track to Policy Funding

Fast-Track to Policy funding aims to provide evidence synthesis, review of policies and best practices to answer urgent emerging policy questions (addressing emerging short-term policy needs). This funding will be provided as short-term evidence-based research studies.

Fast-track to Policy Funding	
Type of Project	Short-term evidence-based research study
Indicative Timeline	From 2 weeks to 9 months
Indicative Budget	from € 5,000 to € 50,000
Outputs	Short Summary Evidence Report, published by the EPA, and any other specific deliverables included in the topic description

Application Process

Making an Application

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

You will also need to refer to the following documentation, which is available to download from the EPA's Online Grant Management and Application Portal or from the EPA website²:

1. 2021 Fast-track to Policy Funding Guidelines and Terms & Conditions; and
2. EPA Online Grant Management and Application Portal System User Guides.

¹ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/research/epa-research-2030/>

² <http://www.epa.ie/our-services/research/>

IMPORTANT

Please refer carefully to the Technical Description Document and ensure that you choose the correct Call Topic Reference when creating your application on the EPA's Grant Management and Application Portal as **mistakes will not be rectified**.

For all co-funded topics, **researchers may not apply for or participate in projects that are to be co-funded by their organisation, even if their organisation would not be in receipt of funding.**

Deadlines

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that proposals are submitted before the call deadline, and the responsibility of the relevant Research Proposal Authoriser (i.e. Research Offices/Managing Directors for companies) to ensure that proposals are authorised before the organisational approval deadline. Deadlines are absolute and are enforced by the system automatically. Discussion WILL NOT be entered into in the case of late submissions and/or approvals, how-so ever caused. The EPA's decision in this matter will be FINAL.

FAILURE TO MEET EITHER OF THE DEADLINES OUTLINED MEANS THAT YOUR PROPOSAL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING.

Eligibility Criteria

- Proposals that exceed the maximum duration and/or request funding in excess of the maximum specified in the Technical Description for the call topic will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to the evaluation stage.
- Proposals which do not use the correct templates will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to the evaluation stage.
- Proposals which do not address the scope of the call topic under which they are submitted, will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to the evaluation stage.
- Applications for funding will only be considered where the lead applicant organisation is a Higher Education or other Research Institution located³ on the island of Ireland.
- Applicants must be available to start as per the date indicated in the Call Contents "Latest Start Date".

All research proposals must build on findings and recommendations from past and current research⁴ projects (where relevant).

Open Access and Open Data

All projects must comply with the EPA's Open Access Policy available from: <http://www.epa.ie/our-services/research/epa-research-2030/strategies-and-policies/open-access-policy/>

³ 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.

⁴ Including EPA-funded, other Irish and EU and international research projects and initiatives/activities.

Call Content

Topic Title	Circular Bioeconomy Outlook Study 2030-2050 in support of Climate Action, Sustainable Food and Biobased Systems		
Call Topic Reference	Facilitating a Green and Circular Economy 2021 Call Topic 17		
Project Type	Short-term Evidence-based Research Studies		
Maximum Budget	€ 50,000	Maximum Duration	6 months
Latest Start Date	8 th November 2021		
Co-funded by: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)			

Policy Need

The EU Bioeconomy Strategy⁵ seeks the development of all types of innovations and practices for sustainable food and farming systems (land and sea), forestry and bio-based production through a systemic and cross-cutting approach linking actors, territories and value chains. At a national level, the impending Climate Action Plan and the recently published Food Vision 2030⁶ have identified the need to develop a Bioeconomy Action Plan for Ireland 2022-2025. The aim of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2022-2025, which will be published in 2022, is to identify measures that could be either implemented in the short term (within one to three years) or that need to be initiated in the next one to three years to provide impact by 2030 and on to 2050⁷. In June 2021, the National Grand Challenges Programme⁸ was launched by Minister Harris, as part of the Government's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. This programme will use a challenge-based approach to coordinate national research and innovation capacity to address key bioeconomy challenges facing Ireland.

To support policymaking for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy in Ireland, an Evidence Review is required to provide a 'snapshot' of the current knowledge base available to provide the foundation for an innovation outlook up to 2050. Such review would encompass innovation opportunities, based on resources (from agriculture, forestry, marine, biowaste etc), practices, technologies, products and markets in the context of climate, environmental, social and economic impacts.

The review would highlight key policy choices that need to be considered regarding the sustainable use of biological resources. For example, considerations would relate to cultural and ecosystem services from land and sea as well as provisioning services to produce food and feed, biobased chemicals, materials and energy. The review would also include the opportunity to address circularity and cascading use in the processing of biological resources.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/environment/bioeconomy/bioeconomy-strategy_en

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c73a3-food-vision-2030-a-world-leader-in-sustainable-food-systems/#food-vision-2030>

⁷ i.e. across various trajectories low, medium and high ambition and equate these with greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and costs.

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f7c87-minister-harris-announces-225-million-investment-in-further-and-higher-education-and-research-under-national-recovery-and-resilience-plan/>

Scope

Proposals for a short-term evidence-based research study are invited to:

- Provide a ‘snapshot’/summary overview of innovation scenarios to 2030 with an outlook to 2050,
- Assess international best practice and how this could be applied within an Irish context,
- Take account of sensitivities on natural capital, fossil fuel pricing, renewable energy developments, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, carbon taxes and other relevant matters,
- Identify where potentially further data and digitalisation, improved practice, technological, value chains, business models, product or market development are required to inform the identification of future research needs and/or policy developments,
- Provide clear recommendations to inform policy development for the Bioeconomy Action Plan for Ireland 2022-2025, on the Island of Ireland, and support the National Grand Challenges Programme.

Expected Outputs

The outputs from this project include:

- An EPA Evidence Synthesis Report. This report should be written in concise (maximum 30 pages), non-technical, and accessible English and be tailored for non-academics and policy makers.

It is expected that monthly virtual update meetings will be held.

Please consult the 2021 Fast-track to Policy Funding Guidelines and Terms & Conditions for the full list of expected outputs and interim/final reporting requirements.

Indicative Timeframe

Thursday 30 th September 2021 at 11:00 GMT	Call opening
Thursday 7 th October 2021 at 17:00 GMT	Deadline for queries relating to the technical contents of this call
Thursday 14 th October 2021 at 17:00 GMT	Submission deadline
Monday 18 th October 2021 at 17:00 GMT	Approval deadline
Latest start date: 8 th November 2021	Start of successful project

Further Information

Information on current research projects being supported by the programme is available in the Research section of the EPA website: <http://www.epa.ie/our-services/research/>.

The following additional documents are available from the EPA website:
<http://www.epa.ie/publications/research/current-call-documents/>

- 2021 Fast-track to Policy Funding Guidelines and Terms & Conditions.
- EPA Research Programme 2021 – 2030 –Communicating Research.

Other relevant EPA Research Programme Strategies and Policies are also available from the EPA website: <http://www.epa.ie/our-services/research/epa-research-2030/strategies-and-policies/>.

For updates on the EPA Research Call 2021:

1. Subscribe to [EPA Research Newsletters](#)
2. Follow us on Twitter [@EPAResearchNews](#)
3. Visit the [EPA Funding web pages](#)
4. Check the [Research Call Frequently Asked Questions web page](#)

Any queries that are not covered in the call documentation or on the FAQs webpage must be submitted to research@epa.ie.