



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



EPA Research Programme 2021-2030

Fast-track to Policy Funding: Well-being Framework for Ireland

October 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 towards supporting policy for a Well-being Framework for Ireland.

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).

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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 | Well-being Framework for Ireland | | |
| Call Topic Reference | Delivering a healthy environment 2021 Call Topic 12 | | |
| Project Type | Short-term Evidence-based Research Studies | | |
| Maximum Budget | € 15,000 | Maximum Duration | 1 month |
| Latest Start Date | 29 th November 2021 | | |

Policy Need

The Well-being Framework for Ireland is the result of a Programme for Government commitment to develop a set of well-being indices to create a well-rounded, holistic view of how Irish society is faring. This cross-Government Framework will provide a coherent approach to measuring progress that goes beyond the standard economic indicators generally used (e.g. GDP, etc.). Well-being has the advantage of encapsulating both economic and social progress, as well as environmental and health outcomes, and overall quality of life both now and into the future. The Well-being Framework for Ireland is a new approach for Ireland. It is the first attempt to develop a broad framework and suite of indicators, which can be embedded into the policy system.

The Well-being Framework provides an overarching structure for robust policy making and measuring progress. Its development is a key action in the Interim Climate Actions 2021⁵, and it complements the progression of the UN SDGs in Ireland.

The Framework will be developed on an iterative basis over a number of years, and the First Report⁶ on the development of the Framework was approved by Government in June 2021. This First Report outlines the conceptual framework for current well-being and integrates some elements of sustainable well-being into the future. It recognises, however, that certain complex policy issues which are inter-generational in nature (e.g. climate change, ageing population and public debt) need to be adequately accounted for in the Well-being Framework to allow appropriate measurement of the sustainability of Ireland's well-being into the future.

For the upcoming Second Report, due to be published in Spring 2022, there is a commitment for further research and development to identify an approach to fully incorporate and accurately analyse the sustainability of well-being for future generations. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁷ uses the 'Future Capitals' approach, theoretically based on Arrow *et al* 'Sustainability and the Measurement of Wealth'⁸. The Irish framework as set out in the First Report is based on the OECD approach, which has been moulded to suit the Irish context. Research is needed to evaluate this approach, which may artificially segregate future and current wellbeing, alongside other approaches to measuring and assessing long-term sustainable well-being.

⁵ Action 231, p. 134, Interim Climate Actions 2021, <https://assets.gov.ie/127955/298d5c71-05d7-4ff9-b3f4-9da61bd17941.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/fb19a-first-report-on-well-being-framework-for-ireland-july-2021/>

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, Chapters 13-16, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9870c393-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9870c393-en>

⁸ Arrow, K., Dasgupta, P., Goulder, L., Mumford, K., Oleson, K., (2010), 'Sustainability and the measurement of Wealth', *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16599>

Scope

Proposals are invited to:

- Identify approaches (theoretical and practical) including international best practices that have been used to measure and assess long-term sustainable well-being (environmental, social, economic).
- Evaluate the compatibility of these approaches within the Irish policy context, including the current approach as set out in the First Report for a Well-being Framework for Ireland.
- Assess the simplicity of the approaches⁹ identified to measure and assess long-term sustainable well-being to aid communication to the policy system, civil society, key stakeholders and the wider public.
- Investigate whether the international approaches, being reviewed, have the ability to evaluate sustainability trade-offs between current and future well-being.
- Based on the findings, provide clear recommendations towards the approach which would be best for inclusion in the Well-being Framework for Ireland, promote sustainability and highlight trade-offs between current and future well-being, without making the existing dashboard and conceptual framework overly complex.

By providing a broadly-based theoretical approach which also includes social and economic considerations alongside environmental, this research will support a coherent and cross-sectoral approach to sustainability that can be used to support decision making, behaviour change and policy development.

The research should encompass broad sustainability considerations, including economic and social, as well as environmental elements and should complement the Irish approach as agreed in the First Report on a Well-being Framework for Ireland 2021 and the OECD approach (OECD How's Life?)¹⁰. The approach must also complement the existing conceptual framework and dashboard.

Important:

The research is NOT intended to:

- Provide a review of well-being approaches taken overall but is limited to those elements that review how long-term sustainability of well-being is assessed.
- Provide an evaluation of Ireland's approach (as it is still in development) but is limited to analysing approaches taken by other countries and institutions.

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 weekly 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.

⁹ Approaches for long-term sustainable well-being (not the current approach as set out in First report but in line with principles of non-complexity and ease of use)

¹⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/how-s-life-23089679.htm>

Indicative Timeframe

| | |
|---|--|
| Thursday 21 st October 2021 at 11:00 GMT | Call opening |
| Thursday 28 th October 2021 at 17:00 GMT | Deadline for queries relating to the technical contents of this call |
| Thursday 4 th November 2021 at 17:00 GMT | Submission deadline |
| Monday 8 th November 2021 at 17:00 GMT | Approval deadline |
| 9 th - 15 th November 2021 | Eligibility check and Evaluation process |
| 16 th - 23 rd November 2021 | Notification, Negotiation, Offer and Grant award |
| Latest start date: 29 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.