

S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014 – 2020.

Implementation Plan: Innovation Partnerships

Operational Programme	S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020
Priority	1: Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region
Thematic Objective	1: Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation
Investment Priority	(b) promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies;
Scheme	Innovation Partnership
Categorisation Code	062
ERDF Certifying Body	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Managing Authority	Southern Regional Assembly
Intermediate Body	Enterprise Ireland
Beneficiary	Universities and Institutes of Technology (research performing organisation)
Grant Rate	from 40% to 80% of eligible costs, depending on the size of company involved and the type of research undertaken
EU Co-Financing Rate	50% of public eligible expenditure declared

Objectives of Intervention.

The objective of the Innovation Partnership Programme is to propel the use of key technologies by Irish companies by encouraging them to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction.

Description of Intervention.

Companies can access expertise and resources to develop new and improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge and know-how. The

participating company benefits in terms of its growth, the evolution of its strategic research and development and the creation of new knowledge that it can use to generate commercial advantage. The research institute benefits in terms of developing skill sets, intellectual property and publications. The Innovation Partnership programme leverages the research strengths and technical expertise in Irish HEIs to develop innovations that will have an economic impact in Ireland. The Innovation Partnership programme is aligned to 14 areas of the Research Prioritisation Exercise.

The Innovation Partnership Programme is aimed at propelling the use of key technologies by Irish companies and is a key part of the strategy for the implementation of the Research Prioritisation Exercise. The Innovation Partnership Programme helps companies to engage in collaborative research projects with Irish universities and institutes of technology to develop new products and services. The Programme will support companies which already have a history of investing in innovation and R&D activity - mostly in-house; is deepening existing links between academia and business in many cases; is serving companies whose main motivations for participation is to help their business to grow and also to access academic knowledge.

For companies, Innovation Partnership funding reduces both the cost and the risk associated with collaborative research. The programme is focused on firms, especially SMEs, that have difficulty exploiting technological developments that are outside their established capacities. It also addresses the insufficient use being made by industry of the wealth of expertise and technology available from Ireland's knowledge base.

Innovation Partnership funding may follow an Innovation Voucher as a large commitment of a company to R&D. It can also build on commercialisation funding through working with a platform technology developed through the Commercialisation Fund or through SFI funding to customise and advance the technology for a particular field of use. EI's R&D fund could also follow an Innovation Partnership to 'productise the technology developed in an Innovation Partnership. The Programme attracts clients through organised exhibitions, presentations and networking, articles and editorial, advertising and brochures.

The implementation of research prioritisation is de facto a manifestation of the overarching goal of accelerating the economic and societal return on Ireland's STI investment. The Innovation Partnership Programme remains a key part of this strategy of delivering both direct and indirect economic impacts.

The Innovation Partnership Programme contributes to the specific objective of the investment priority by supporting Irish companies to undertake increased R&D activities with the support of public research institutions

Responsibilities of Intermediary Body.

Enterprise Ireland will manage this initiative through the Programme Coordination unit (within the Research & Innovation Business Unit) which, in collaboration with the agency's Policy Department is responsible for the design of the scheme, project selection and related information and publicity. It works closely with the agency's Finance Department in the administration and financial management of payments to the beneficiary bodies. Enterprise Ireland is responsible for the selection/evaluation processes and ongoing monitoring of projects during the funding period. In so doing, Enterprise Ireland ensures that a clear audit trail exists for external independent auditing of projects. An administrative agreement will be entered into between Enterprise Ireland and

the Managing Authority setting out the respective roles and responsibilities of each.

EI will ensure that the beneficiaries are provided with a grant award document setting out the conditions of support for each operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution and the conditions for use of the Structural Funds IT System 2014-2020.

EI will be responsible for ensuring that all payment claims for European Structural and Investment Fund expenditure, submitted by the relevant beneficiary Institutions are supported by receipted invoices and audit documents, and that a clear and sufficient audit trail exists. Spot checks will be carried out by EI and/or by other bodies on their behalf on management and control systems in the HEIs. These checks will include procedures to verify the delivery of the research projects co-financed and the reality of expenditure claimed and compliance with applicable national and Community rules on, in particular, the eligibility of expenditure for support, public procurement, State aid - including the rules on the accumulations of aid, protection of the environment and the horizontal principles.

EI will also be responsible for ensuring in respect of co-financed Intervention/projects, that only eligible expenditure actually incurred is submitted to the Managing Authority. EI is responsible for the certification of all expenditure incurred by the HEIs.

Responsibilities of Beneficiary Body.

The beneficiary bodies will support companies and researchers to successfully execute their duties in respect of delivering the project output. This support will be in the form of grant administration, financial management and control, the scoping and submission of applications, the certification of eligible expenditure, compliance with issues such as public procurement and tax clearance along with providing expert advice on commercialisation through the technology transfer office. This support will be provided in conjunction with mirroring support from Enterprise Ireland's Research & Innovation Business Unit.

The beneficiaries will be responsible for ensuring in respect of co-financed Intervention/projects, that only eligible expenditure actually incurred is submitted to EI.

The contribution of the Irish exchequer and the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 will be acknowledged in all promotional material, annual reports, research laboratories and websites relevant to the co-funded awards, by use of appropriate logo and text references. EI will ensure that the beneficiaries comply with publicity requirements.

Integration of Horizontal Principles.

Following the screening of the EI co-funded schemes, the following actions will be taken:

Actions:

- 1 To monitor and report the gender balance on the Board, Executive Committee, Investment Committee, Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee and R&D Committee. While Enterprise Ireland is conscious of the need to have gender representative decision

making boards and committees, the Ministerial appointment to the Enterprise Ireland board and the filling of tenders for private sector members on Committees as well as internal appointments is based merit, i.e., on the appropriate mix of skills to ensure balance and rounded decision making as well as compliance with the code of corporate governance for semi-state bodies. In summary, the person with the most appropriate skills will be appointed. This is also the view of the Institute of Directors, i.e., that board appointees must be on merit first and foremost.

- 2 Monitor and report on the gender balance of lead researchers approved for commercialization project funding.

Selection Process and Criteria.

1. Selection Process

Innovation Partnership funding is paid to the research-performing organisation. The percentage of the costs paid by Enterprise Ireland is determined by company size and by the type of research (Industrial Research or Experimental Development). There are two phases associated with an Innovation Partnership application. In Phase 1, either an Outline Proposal Document or an Innovation Partnership Feasibility Study application can be submitted. Phase 2 is a Full Application. Full Proposal Applications are accepted following the approval of an outline proposal or following the submission of a report upon completion of an Innovation Partnership Feasibility Study. The company must discuss this proposal in detail with their Development Adviser / Agency Contact before the research institute partner submits it. After Technical and Commercial Assessment, the project is brought to Enterprise Ireland's Industrial Research & Commercialisation Committee for decision.

2. Selection Criteria

- 1) Commercial opportunity
- 2) Exploitation potential (Economic Impact in Ireland)
- 3) Innovation
- 4) Project team
- 5) Project Management and Workplan
- 6) Project Costs

Appeals.

- Clients have the right to contact their DA to discuss committee decisions.
- Clients have the right to appeal to the Secretary to the Board.
- Clients can re-apply as often as they wish.

Performance Indicators.

Priority-level Output Indicators Investment Priority 1(a)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Fund	Category of Region	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting
CO04	Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (innovation partnerships)	No. of enterprises	ERDF	More Developed	143	EI	Annual

Programme-Specific Result Indicators Investment Priority 1(b)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Category of Region	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting
1b	Increase in the number of licenses as a result of research	No. Licenses	More Developed	24	2013	25	EI	Annual

Financial Management.

The gross public expenditure in respect of projects funded under this intervention will be provided annually in the estimates of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation from SubHead B4 of the Department's Vote. Enterprise Ireland draws its funding from the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation of DJEI. Grants will include the ERDF contribution, which will be reclaimed by the Certifying Authority for the benefit of the Exchequer. Claims, once approved and certified, in respect of ERDF assistance will be submitted to the Commission by the Certifying Authority.

The beneficiary institutions will be responsible for implementation of the intervention at local operation level. As the final beneficiaries in the cascade of reporting, they will be responsible for ensuring that only actual eligible expenditure incurred, and expenditure which comes under the terms of the research project(s) as approved, is certified. They will be required to ensure a clear audit trail exists in relation to EU co-funded expenditure and that all claims are supported by receipted invoices or, where this cannot be done, by accounting documents of equivalent probative value.

The beneficiary body will be required to have in place separate accounting arrangements in respect of project expenditure under the sub-measure.

Document Retention.

In accordance with Article 140 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EC) 1303/2013, EI and the HEI's will ensure that all supporting documents regarding expenditure, verification checks, certification and audits on operations for which total eligible expenditure is less than €1,000,000.00 are kept available for the EU Commission and Court of Auditors for a period of three years from 31 December following the submission of the accounts in which the expenditure of the operation is included. In the case of operations over €1,000,000.00 all supporting documentation shall be kept for a 2 year period from 31 December following the submission of accounts in which the **final** expenditure of the completed operation is included.

The Managing Authority will inform EI and the HEI's of the start date of the period referred to above.

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements.

The necessary reports will be provided in the required formats that are to be agreed with the Managing Authority. A dedicated unit within Enterprise Ireland be responsible for the compilation of data and reporting. These actions will be facilitated by the EU Structural Funds IT system

Information and Publicity.

The contribution of the Irish exchequer and the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 will be acknowledged in all brochures, promotional material, press releases, publicity activity, advertisements, signage, applications forms, annual reports, letters of offer, etc., by use of appropriate logo and text references. A dedicated unit within Enterprise Ireland will be responsible for continued promotion of the scheme. This may include advertisement campaigns, road shows, and dedicated websites.

EI will ensure that the beneficiaries will comply with section 2.2 of Annex XII of Commission Regulation 1303/2013 and with Articles 4 and 5 of Commission Implementing Regulation 821/2014.