

INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

US-IRELAND R&D PARTNERSHIP PLANNING GRANT

GUIDANCE NOTES

In 2006, the United States of America, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland came together for a unique initiative to increase the level of collaborative R&D amongst researchers and industry across the three jurisdictions that will generate innovations to the marketplace and lead to improvements in healthcare, disease prevention and other technologies.

A number of thematic areas were identified, which form a novel opportunity for US and all-Ireland research, health care and economic development synergies to be fostered in international research fields deemed to be of pivotal significance for the 21st century.

Invest NI's objective is to encourage and participate in the development of three-way, trans-national and collaborative peer-reviewed research projects that address the exciting research challenges in the prioritised thematic areas of **nanotechnology, sensors telecommunications and energy/sustainability.**

The aim of the **Invest NI US-Ireland R & D Partnership Planning Grant** is to provide planning travel support to university researchers in Northern Ireland to travel to the United States in order to develop specific projects with US collaborators for identified programmes under the NSF/NIH auspices. Planning grants are not a pre-requisite for all Northern Ireland researchers who subsequently intend to submit a formal application, under the auspices of the US-Ireland R & D Partnership, to Invest NI/DEL for matching funding for any NSF/NIH competitions. They are intended as a vehicle to facilitate development of the tri-jurisdictional application. Should this tripartite application be successful, funding will be provided by the applicable agency in the US (i.e. NSF or NIH) to the US researchers, by SFI to the researchers in the Republic of Ireland, and by Invest NI/DEL to researchers in Northern Ireland. SFI has agreed to manage the assessment process of these planning grants on behalf of Invest NI.

OBJECTIVES

- To enable Northern Ireland-based researchers to travel to the US to meet with pre-identified collaborators for a period of no more than 10 days. (Note: only funding for the Northern Ireland partner can be supported under this Invest NI Planning Grant).
- To allow potential collaborators in the tri-partite meeting to write a single, comprehensive and inclusive proposal for subsequent submission to the relevant funding agencies engaged in the Partnership.

It is hoped that the output from the Planning Grant award will include the development of world-class research proposals in the prioritised thematic areas of Sensors, Nanotechnology, Telecommunications and Energy/Sustainability.

FUNDING

The budget available, on a competitive basis, is up to **£3,000** direct costs per grant to cover travel and accommodation costs during grant preparation with US and Republic of Ireland

collaborators. The Invest NI US-Ireland R&D Partnership Planning Grants are not subject to an overhead contribution.

SUBMISSION OF PLANNING GRANT PROPOSALS

Applications must be submitted as *a single document in electronic copy only* to paul.malcomson@investni.com. Incomplete applications will be returned without review. The subject line should include the programme area described above i.e. nanotechnology or sensors.

Required application materials:

1. Signed and stamped cover sheet
2. Application Form MS Word/PDF/Rich Text format to include:
 - Outline of proposed joint research programme
 - CVs for investigators (max. 2 per jurisdiction) in each jurisdiction (max. 3 pages)
 - Identification of the NSF/NIH programme to which the proposal will be submitted with specific call deadline
 - A detailed planning grant budget
 - An indicative budget for the full tripartite proposal.
3. Letters of support from the US and Republic of Ireland investigators

PLANNING GRANT PROPOSAL CONTENT

For consideration under Partnership auspices, the planning grants must have identified Principal Investigators from **all three jurisdictions** to engage in proposal development.

Please consult the associated Planning Grant Application Form and support notes for a description of the proposal content.

REVIEW PROCESS FOR PLANNING GRANT PROPOSALS

SFI Technical Staff will review the applications on behalf of Invest NI and may seek additional expert advice if appropriate.

Submissions will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigators.
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to the economic, industrial, commercial, scientific, and educational development of Northern Ireland.
- The relative scientific and strategic merits of other proposals.
- The relevance of the proposed research to the priority areas identified by the US-Ireland Partnership steering committee
- The potential for enhancing the applicants' existing research program through the proposed collaboration.
- The quality of the collaborators' plans for interaction.
- The value-add provided by the partnership over and above what could be achieved by a single applicant.

The final decision on grants rests with Invest NI.

GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For all Invest NI US-Ireland R & D Partnership Planning Grants, the lead Northern Ireland contact will be required to submit a brief report to Invest NI within 45 days of completion of the travel for which this award has been granted, but not later than 6 weeks in advance of the full proposal submission deadline. This report should detail:

- The activities undertaken with the US and Republic of Ireland collaborators
- An outline of the research programme with specific reference to the tasks to be undertaken by partners in each jurisdiction
- An update on the current status of the proposed collaborators funding request.