

Invest NI / DEL
**Guidelines for Northern Ireland applicants requesting funding from
Invest NI/DEL through NIH programs under the auspices of the
US-Ireland R&D Partnership**

INTRODUCTION

The United States of America, Northern Ireland and the Ireland have come together for a unique initiative to increase the level of collaborative R&D amongst researchers 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 have been identified initially as representing a unique opportunity in terms of research interests, health care and economic development, and reflect the potential for the island of Ireland to play a meaningful role in research areas internationally recognized to be of pivotal significance for the 21st century.

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

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Invest NI/DEL have agreed to consider funding requests from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions wishing to engage in tri-jurisdictional collaborative research projects in areas identified by the Partnership.

All successful projects will be funded by DEL which is able to provide research funding, for the Northern Ireland universities only, under Article 30 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993.

A minimum of one Principal Investigator from each jurisdiction must be named on the proposal to be deemed eligible for funding under the Partnership. The scientific proposal with supporting materials will be jointly prepared by the co-investigators.

To facilitate a 'single-proposal, single-appraisal' mechanism", the National Institutes of Health (NIH) intend to accept submissions from tri-jurisdictional teams to a number of their existing funding programs. Consequently applicants should design their proposal (including the total requested budget) based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the relevant NIH program call

and associated documentation. The Principal Investigators from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland should be designated as co-investigators on the application, or as Multiple PI's, as appropriate to the project.

Invest NI/DEL (and SFI) will operate a 2-stage application process.

Stage 1 – Outline Proposals

Northern Ireland applicants should submit summary proposals (max 3 pages) and outline budget requests to Invest NI/DEL **6 weeks in advance of the formal NIH submission deadline**. Budget requests should contain details relating to each of the three jurisdictions on 3 additional separate pages.

Invest NI/DEL will consider funding requests from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions and check for eligibility before the full proposal document is formally submitted to NIH. Note that any Northern Ireland applicants who have been awarded an Invest NI Planning Grant, and have submitted their post-award report to Invest NI, need not submit a draft proposal, but should contact the Invest NI Program Manager to discuss their budget request in advance of submission of the final proposal. This draft proposal should contain:

- an outline of the research program with specific reference to the tasks to be undertaken by partners in each jurisdiction
- an update on the proposed collaborators' funding request

Summary proposals should be submitted electronically to both the Invest NI and DEL Program Managers. Invest NI/DEL will respond with a decision regarding eligibility within 2 weeks.

Important Notes:

*(i) **Upper limit on the requested budget:** The budget for full applications from applicants in Northern Ireland is capped at £320,000 per proposal, equating to an average of around £107k per annum for a 3 year award.*

*(ii) **Only one award per person:** If an applicant has been successful in securing a US-Ireland R&D Partnership award, they will not be entitled to apply for a second award until the last 18 months of their first award. The Department will not accept a second application whilst the first application is still under review by the US National Institutes of Health.*

Stage 2 – Full Proposals

Proposals should follow NIH guidelines and must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov using the SF424 Research and Related (R&R) forms and the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide, in response to one of the following program announcements:

Program Area – Nanotechnology for Biology and Medicine

Nanoscience and Nanotechnology in Biology and Medicine
(R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-07-270.html>

(PAR-07-270 has expired; replacement FOA will be posted soon)

Nanoscience and Nanotechnology in Biology and Medicine (R21)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-271.html>

(PAR-07-271 has expired; replacement FOA will be posted soon)

Program Area – Sensors for Biology and Medicine

Bioengineering Research Grants (R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-279.html>

Exploratory/Developmental Bioengineering Research Grants (R21)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-06-418.html>

Applicants should follow all instructions provided in those Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for submission of applications.

Proposals must include the full project description across all three jurisdictions, and must include details on each of the three budgets on 3 separate pages.

Invest NI/DEL will accept requests for funding under the auspices of the Partnership from Northern Ireland university researchers who should submit an electronic copy of the full proposal to both the Invest NI and DEL Program Managers. The subject line should state "US-Ireland R & D - Sensors" or "US-Ireland R & D - Nanotechnology". Co-investigators from the US and the Republic of Ireland will simultaneously submit identical copies of proposals to their respective funding organisations.

In addition to the requirements outlined in the NIH documentation, proposals sent to Invest NI/DEL from Northern Ireland university researchers and seeking funding from Invest NI/DEL should include:

(1) an Invest NI/DEL coversheet signed by the applicant and signed and stamped by both a) the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor AND b) the relevant Dean/Head of School. Invest NI/DEL require the coversheet containing **original signatures to be scanned** for electronic submission.

(2) an appendix outlining the Northern Ireland applicant's budget request to Invest NI/DEL on an Invest NI/DEL budget template, giving details of, and justification for the budget requested. The appendix should be no longer than **3 pages** in total.

Invest NI/DEL expect that the funding requested from Invest NI/DEL by Northern Ireland applicants will be commensurate with the work proposed and be similar in scale and duration to that requested by Ireland and US-based applicants from their respective funding agencies.

APPRAISAL PROCESS

NIH intend to review research proposals from tri-jurisdictional teams in their entirety. Proposals will be assessed utilising the scientific merit review process of the relevant funding program (see NIH guidance documents to identify eligible programs).

Following scientific merit review, with the consent of the PI(s)/co-investigators, NIH intends to share with Invest NI/DEL and SFI the review summary statements for any proposal that is being actively considered for funding by NIH (i.e. if the application receives a sufficiently high score in peer review).

Consideration of requests for funding of the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland elements of each proposal will be dependent upon receipt by Invest NI/DEL and SFI of a positive assessment by NIH of the technical merits of the entire project as well as confirmation by NIH of their award of the US element of the proposal.

AWARD PROCESS

Invest NI/DEL will advise Northern Ireland applicants of the NIH decision and, for successful applicants, of their provisional funding allocation within 2 weeks of receiving the NIH decision.

The issuance and administration of awards in the three jurisdictions will be carried out by the respective funding organisations. Each award will contain an acknowledgement of this joint NIH/SFI/Invest NI/DEL initiative.

For Northern Ireland applicants seeking funding from Invest NI/DEL, funding will be conditional upon the acceptance by the relevant University of a Letter of Offer issued by DEL.

POST-AWARD MONITORING

Co-investigators in all three jurisdictions should submit identical annual written progress reports to the relevant Program Managers in each of the four funding organisations.

The partnering funding agencies intend to discuss progress of the projects and will then independently decide on continued funding of the projects.

Invest NI/DEL reserve the right to assess the progress of any project, at any time of their choosing, during the lifetime of awards made under the auspices of the US-Ireland R & D Partnership.

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