

EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Competitive call for Proposals – December 2016

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST ROUND (EXPRESSION OF INTEREST) APPLICANTS

Deadline for completed Round 1 application
submissions

5pm on Friday 27th January 2017

Applications will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the evaluation of the proposal.

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1. Introduction:

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is inviting applications for funding in a competitive call for proposals under the European Innovation Partnerships Initiative.

The European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP) under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP) comes under the remit of Commission Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. This co-operation measure is under Article 35(1) of the regulation and a fundamental rule of this measure is that a supported project shall be granted to promote forms of co-operation involving at least two entities.

EIPs will involve the establishment of Operational Groups to develop ideas, or take existing ideas/research and put them into practice. Operational Groups are expected to be hands on in terms of working towards the resolution of a practical problem or opportunity which may lead to an innovative solution. Ideas may not necessarily be technical in nature but could be social or based on new or traditional practices. Operational Groups shall be set up by interested actors such as farmers, researchers, advisors, NGOs, foresters and businesses involved in the agriculture and food sector etc. who are relevant for achieving the objectives of the RDP. The Operational Groups shall establish internal procedures that ensure that their operation and decision making is transparent and that situations of conflict of interest are avoided.

2. Overview

Support for these Open Call applications is structured around a competitive fund. In effect there are two streaming funds within this call which will be administered via the same process throughout.

Stream A

The first stream aims to facilitate joint innovative approaches to projects and practices focusing particular on activities related to Rural Development Priorities 2 and 3 as set out in the Rural Development Regulation and Ireland's RDP (see below for details) These Priorities include themes such as

- Farm viability, economic performance, and competitiveness
- Innovative technologies and sustainable forest management
- Food chain organisation and risk management

€4m of the total budget available over the lifetime of the measure will be focused on this stream

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Stream B

This stream also aims to facilitate joint innovative approaches to projects and practices focusing particular on activities related to Rural Development Priorities 4 and 5 as set out in the Rural Development Regulation and Ireland's RDP. These priorities include themes such as

- the preservation of agricultural landscapes
- water quality
- climate mitigation/adaptation
- resource efficiency
- biodiversity

€20m of the total budget available over the lifetime of the measure will be focused on this stream.

To succeed the operation groups will rely on fostering communication through stakeholder networking, developing partnerships and dissemination of knowledge and ideas across a wide range of stakeholders. It will support innovative concepts and ideas from among farmers, advisors, researchers, NGOs and Agri businesses.

Applications must be made on the Project Application Form – Initial Submission and emailed to locallyled@agriculture.gov.ie by the closing date.

3. Process for Open Call of EIPs

FIRST ROUND – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- Initial call for the submission of ideas/ proposals in December 2016;
- Proposals to be returned to DAFM by 5pm on Friday 27 January 2017;
- Evaluation committee examines all proposals with reference to the selection criteria listed at Table 1 below, and prepares a shortlist of applicants to go forward to the next round;
- It is envisaged that all applicants informed of results by end February 2017.

SECOND ROUND – FULLY INVITED PROPOSALS

- Successful first stage applicants will be asked to compile and submit a complete detailed operational plan. Preparation costs for this detailed stage 2 submission will be covered;
- DAFM will deliver a workshop for the successful teams to clarify what is required at this stage of the process;
- Completed operation plans to be submitted to DAFM by end August 2017;

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- Evaluation committee examines all proposals and assessment will be based on the plans, projected outcomes, projected costs and timeframes based on established principles. The Committee presents a shortlist of projects to be accepted.

FULLY FUNDED SCHEMES FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- All these projects could last for up to five years and be fully funded by the RDP;
- DAFM will deliver a workshop for the successful teams to clarify what is required at this stage of the process;
- A steering group will be formed to oversee the development and operation of all projects.

As with all rural Development schemes, each stage of the process will be subject to a control regime based on inspection and administrative checks to be implemented by the Department.

4. Rural Development Priorities

All EIPs must demonstrate links to Rural Development priorities as set down in EU Regulation 1305/2013, Articles 5(2), 5(3), 5(4) and 5(5).

Article 5(2) Rural Development Priority No 2

Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification;
- (b) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal.

Article 5(3) Rural Development Priority No 3

Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and organisations and inter-branch organisations;
- (b) Supporting farm risk prevention and management.

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Article 5(4) Rural Development Priority No 4

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints, and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes;
- (b) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management;
- (c) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management.

Article 5(5) Rural Development Priority No 5

Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture;
- (b) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing;
- (c) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non-food raw material, for the purposes of the bio economy.
- (d) Reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture;
- (e) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry.

5. Assessment of Round 1 proposals

Only completed applications received on or before the closing date specified in the public call for proposals will be assessed for funding. The proposals will be assessed according to the following two-phase process:

ROUND 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Round 1 applications will be evaluated using a two-stage approach:

i. Initial Assessment

Each EIP application will be initially assessed by DAFM staff to ensure that it is complete and contains adequate information to properly assess the project proposal.

ii. Review by Selection Committee

DAFM will convene a selection committee representative of DAFM, NPWS, the enterprise sector and other relevant sectors. All applications will be reviewed in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 1. The round 1 application will be marked against the three criteria. A pass mark of 60 marks will be required and the selection committee will then choose about twenty proposals

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to be invited to submit a full application for the second round of the assessment process.

At the end of the Round 1 evaluation process both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome.

Table 1

Proposed Selection Criteria for the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups – Locally Led Environmental and Climate Projects:		
Criterion	Components	Marks
Quality of the Proposal	Scientific, technical, managerial aspects as well as value for money	40
Relevance and Impact	Clear relevance to the identified RDP priorities and focus areas, innovation, benefits and wider applicability.	30
Quality of the Operational Group	Relevant qualifications and experience, contribution proposed, and representative nature.	30

6. Assessment of Round 2 Fully Invited Proposals

The Round 2 evaluation will incorporate a greater focus on the detail of the project proposals, feasibility, innovation and applicability going forward. A separate application form, guidelines and other associated documents for the Round 2 evaluation will be provided after the Round 1 evaluations have concluded.

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7. Contract Discussions and Procedure for Award of Funding

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process. The Operational Groups selected for funding will be informed of the indicative level of funding and will be invited to address any issues raised by the Selection Committee and/or the DAFM administrative team within a given timeframe. As part of the contract discussions, DAFM may also:

- Seek additional information it considers necessary on the details of the proposal.
- Negotiate adjustments to proposal details to achieve compliance with the regulation or to improve the efficiency of the proposal.

Once the project detail has been agreed an award letter will be issued to successful applicants. This letter will outline the contractual obligations and conditions that will apply to the award. Successful applicants must acknowledge receipt of the award letter and acceptance of the contract conditions.