



## Call for Expressions of Interest Green Gas Certification

Call Launch Date: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### Frequently Asked Questions

*List of Questions and Answers: Last updated on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016*

The following is a short list of frequently asked questions on the detail of this call. Where other issues arise that need clarification arise, this document will be updated and made available to applicants that have expressed interest in the call.

#### **Who is eligible to apply?**

This is an open call to national and international applicants in research organisations. All researchers including staff on contract in 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and non-profit research organisations may apply.

#### **When is the Closing Date?**

The closing date is 5pm on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August. Late applications will not be eligible. Applications must be received by the IERC by this deadline. A confirmation of receipt will be provided to the lead applicant.

#### **Can a researcher on contract be a Principal Investigator on a proposal?**

Yes, but the proposal must be signed off by a relevant permanent member of staff (e.g. Head of Department or Research Centre Director in the Institution). If the proposal is successful then the institute will need to agree to extend the PI's contract for the project period for which they will be funded.

#### **What if my contract is due to end before the project is completed?**

In instances where a researcher's contract terminates prior to the completion of the project, the IERC will fulfill its contractual obligations and continue to support the project subject to the renewal of the researcher's contract to at least the end of the project or relevant project stage.

#### **What will happen to research staff when work described in this call finishes?**

The management of the IERC and the industry members intend to build a centre of international scale. The IERC anticipates the development of sustainable research programmes incorporating new projects funded through the IERC or other mechanisms subject to ongoing support of relevant industry members. We expect researchers who have worked with us to have the opportunity to engage with us on future programmes.

#### **What is the expected value of the call?**

It is anticipated that the indicative budget to address individual project themes 1, 2 or 3 will be in the range of €500,000 (this represents 100% of the research cost of RPOs not including overheads of up to 30%). Following EOI review, a selection of applicants will

be invited to meet with industry partners and if successful a full scoping and costing of the project will be completed at that stage.

**Is there a source of funds to pay capital costs for potential demonstrator sites? (who has to procure the equipment and how quickly this can be executed).**

Funding required to access or support demonstration sites will need to be scoped at proposal development stage. It is anticipated that industry partner contributions will contribute the majority of capital costs associated with any demonstrator.

**Will the management of the research arising from demonstrator sites stage rest with the RPO irrespective of the selected demonstrator site?**

Yes. The IERC recognises its role in facilitating close collaboration between the industry and research partners of the centre and the owners of associated demonstration sites.

**As this is call from an industry led technology centre, do I need to have an industrial partner?**

This is an expression of interest call to Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) who are interested to work with industry partners of the IERC on a project that has been currently scoped at a high level. Following review of the EOI, successful applicants will be invited to meet with the IERC and industry partners for further discussions. The industry partners and IERC will then select the successful PI team to work on a detailed scoping and costing of the proposal which will then be sent for external review. All funding allocations are pending approval of the Centre CSC. Industry cash and in-kind contributions to all IERC projects will be managed directly by the Centre through its membership model.

**Who will manage the identification and engaging of companies in the research project expected to arise as a result of this call?**

IERC Management will work with the successful PI and industry team to fully scope and cost any resulting proposals.

**Are international contributors welcome in my proposal?**

The International Energy Research Centre seeks to leverage existing expertise and build new capacity in Ireland to establish a world-class center for integrated energy research. The IERC welcomes opportunities to collaborate with international experts to supplement current national expertise as deemed necessary.

**Are the Northern Irish RPOs considered international collaborators?**

Yes. They are also eligible to apply as Principal Investigators.

**What information do I need from my international collaborator?**

Where a PI intends to collaborate with an international person or group, a letter of support must be submitted with the application. The letter should detail the level and type of collaboration involved, the contribution by the partner, and whether (and what part of) that will be delivered inside the Republic of Ireland.

**Can Masters or PhD researchers be supported under this call?**

Given the nature of the research and the potential for change in both direction and funding of the project, this is not a suitable fund to support either Masters or PhD students. Please note that Masters and PhD fees will not be considered an eligible expense.

**When will I know the outcome of my application?**

Applications submitted to this call will be subjected to a thorough review process. The outcome of that review will be notified to all applicants by Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at the latest.

**Will I get feedback on my application?**

Yes, feedback will be provided to applicants of both successful and unsuccessful projects. This feedback will be based on the comments provided by the evaluators from their evaluation of the EOI.

**Am I free to publish the outcomes of my research if successful with this call?**

Publications from the research will be encouraged, subject to prior agreement of the IERC Management. This is to ensure that any confidential information provided by the companies to the researchers or generated during the course of the research project is not released into the public domain. It will be the researcher's obligation to inform the IERC of their intention to publish in advance of the submission of any papers; this includes any internal or external seminars, workshops or conferences. The full set of terms and conditions around confidentiality will be defined in the IERC's Collaboration and Intellectual Property Agreement which will need to be reviewed and signed by the successful applicant(s) and corresponding institutions.

**Is there a guide to the scoring of the application for external reviewers available to applicants?**

The evaluation criteria for external and internal reviewers are as outlined in the EOI document.

**Is it possible to apply for other funding opportunities leading out of this technology developed (such as Enterprise Commercialisation funding) while being funded by this IERC call?**

The IERC Collaboration and Intellectual Property Agreement (CIPA) has conditions relating to the use and exploitation of foreground IP arising from IERC funded projects. The further leverage of IERC research outcomes through applications to additional funding streams is encouraged with due consideration of terms and conditions agreed during contract negotiations.

**As an applicant, may I get a copy of the CIPA to ensure that it will be acceptable to my institution?**

If requested, and for applicants that have confirmed their interest in the call, the IERC Collaboration and Intellectual Property Agreement (CIPA) will be provided.

**What are the considerations for size/scale of industry partners involved?**

The industry cash and IK contributions (minimum of 10% cash and 25% IK) can be shared across the partners to the project. While this does not necessarily need to be an even split, the balance of contributions will depend on the partners involved. Agreement will need to be reached by all partners and the IERC on that balance which will be outlined in a project specific cooperation agreement (heads of agreement) in line with the the IERC Centre Level Collaboration and Intellectual Property Agreement (CIPA).

### **Do industry partners need to pay all costs upfront?**

Industry partners engage with IERC projects through the Centres Industry membership model. An industry membership fee is payable upfront – this fee depends on the nature of the membership requested ie Full or Associate membership. Associate members pay less for upfront membership but will be invoiced separately for project participation fees which will depend on the scale and scope of the project. For more details on the industry membership model please contact [info@ierc.ie](mailto:info@ierc.ie)

### **Who owns the equipment and data when the project ends?**

This will need to be addressed by the partners on a case by case basis. All actual and anticipated IK donations of equipment and data to the project will be detailed in the Project Cooperation Agreement before the project starts. Proposed equipment purchases for project delivery will be detailed in the proposal document and is subject to external peer review and approval of the IERC CSC.

### **Questions Raised During the Information Webinar 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

**The EOI document appears to contemplate much more than a green/renewable gas certification project. For example, Section 1.2, at page 4, calls for a system of carbon credits, a credit/certificate trading scheme, and a very broad requirement to determine an "appropriate support scheme for renewable gas to grid." These seem to be unrelated or perhaps tangentially related to the design of a certification system. Their design will probably require a different skill set and timeline than that required to design a certification scheme. On the other hand, the requirements of the Trade Marks Act, 1996 (second schedule) will be directly applicable to a certification scheme (e.g. with respect to certification mark ownership), but appear not to be within the contemplation of the EOI document. Can you provide guidance?**

A goal of the project is to enable installations participating in the EU emissions trading scheme to use the certificates to offset their purchase of carbon credits. How this could be achieved will be addressed as part of the project. The project also encompasses the proposal of a suitable support scheme for renewable gas. If the applicant identifies the need for multiple skill sets that are not all within the applicant's core competence the applicant should supplement his/her proposed team with the necessary competencies. Applicants are reminded that consortia of PIs are also eligible to apply.

The certification process must comply with all relevant legislation. If there is additional legislation that will need to be addressed when designing the scheme, this will need to be identified and taken into account as part of the project.

**This project is particularly relevant to commercial participants in the GREENGAS sector - is there any prohibition against including paid commercial contributors as part of the project budget (e.g. subcontracted parties, for example)?**

This call is designed for eligible research performing organisations. There is currently no requirement for paid commercial contributors (e.g. subcontractors). In the event specialist requirements were required, they would be identified and fully scoped by the research team with the IERC and industry partners. Any call for such services would be advertised through a different mechanism in accordance with legal requirements and tender guidelines.

**Would you consider a phased approach? That is, breaking the project up into (1) the design of a certification scheme and (2) the carbon trading and grid support components.**

The project will be addressed in a number of logical work packages. These final work packages will be agreed by all partners on the project namely the industry partners, the selected RPO together with the IERC.

## **Questions Raised via Email**

### **Eligibility as Limited Liability Company**

**In the documents we found the following statement regarding possible applicants: "This is an open call to national and international applicants in research organisations. All researchers including staff on contract in 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and non-profit research organisations may apply." Could you please provide a definition of an RPO?**

The definition provided by Enterprise Ireland (EI) states that an RPO is a Publicly Funded Research Performing Organisation – i.e. whose primary legal function is research and whose funding is primarily State, not private. For Ireland, this covers the Universities and IOTs and a small number of other organisations who can provide written legal confirmation as to how they qualify. There are EU definitions for this and they must qualify under those definitions (see State Aids legislation: [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/legislation/legislation.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/legislation.html)).

### **Eligibility as a Company**

**The call asks for application of persons, is application as an organisation also possible?**

We typically expect that a RPO will be represented by a lead principal investigator (PI), hence that PI makes the application. We are requesting that the PI submit their academic credentials as part of their submission.

### **Number of Industry Partners**

**In the call paper it says that submissions should include "one or more collaborating institutions". The document "Working with us" requires at least two industry partners. Is application also possible with only one industry partner?**

For this type of project, what we call a 'type 2' or 'collaborative' project, we require 2 or more industry partners. We do have a mechanism by which industry can have a bi-lateral agreement with the IERC for research. However, that is a different funding model and would not apply in this case.

### **What Level of Information is expected for the RPO Track Record?**

In the RPO track record we are looking for relevant experience of the institution rather than the specific principle investigator (PI). For instance, are there specialist facilities onsite, larger initiatives of relevance or perhaps research centres of excellence that the RPO is involved in that might support the proposed research? This could be addressed primarily in section 2.7 of the application.

**In Section 3, the top table asks for the signature of the industrial collaborator (if applicable). Do we need to enter anything in that box at this stage?**

No. These fields are part of the original boilerplate. As this is a submission from an RPO without industry partners, no signature in these fields is required. Signatures are required from all principle investigators named in the application.

**In the table in Section 2.4, there is a heading for 'PI leading activity'. We've taken this to mean which member of the team is leading each particular activity area or work package. Is this correct?**

Yes that's correct. The first column could be, for example, a given work stream or activity name (associated with the specified activities in section 1.2), the second column is the PI name and the third column is the relevant expertise of that PI.

**We are planning to have an international collaborator on the project. In the FAQ document it states that the international collaborator must submit a letter of support with the application detailing the level and type of collaboration, their contribution and whether (and what part of) the work will be delivered in the ROI.**

The term 'international collaborator' means for us that the researcher you are referring to will be submitted as a co-PI on the project (section 2.3). As an international collaborator the requirement is that their institution will need to submit a letter of support from their technology transfer office (or the equivalent contracts office in that institution).

**Will international partners be eligible for part of the funding and, if so, is there a cut-off point?**

Yes, international partners be eligible for part of the funding. The level or otherwise of funding available will dictate the type of collaboration possible. Each PI in the application will have a separate contract with the IERC and is expected to be an active party in the project consortium. The level of funding for each PI will be determined by the PI's contribution to the overall scope of the project.

**In Section 3, the bottom table asks for the signature for the authorised officer of the designated institution. Is this required for the international collaborator at this stage, or is the letter of support sufficient? Our proposed international collaborator is an individual researcher within an institution.**

In the bottom table, signatures are required from the tech transfer office (or equivalent contracts office) for each collaborating institution, including the institution of the lead PI and the institutions of all co-PIs (e.g. international collaborators). In addition, a letter of support will be required from each international collaborator.

**For any further questions please contact:**

[info@ierc.ie](mailto:info@ierc.ie)

Tel: +353-21-234 6949