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Department for
**Employment
and Learning**
www.delni.gov.uk

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Department for Employment and Learning

Northern Ireland



Context and Overview

- The **economy** is the number one priority for the Northern Ireland Executive.
- The Economic Strategy and recently published Innovation Strategy set out the economic vision and policies and programmes that will make this a reality.
- DEL, through its Higher Education Strategy, is supporting innovation through the pursuit of R&D excellence, overseas institutional research partnerships, knowledge transfer and university-business collaboration.

Graduating to Success - a Higher Education Strategy for NI

- Our vision is of a sector which is **vibrant and of international calibre**; which pursues **excellence in teaching and research**; which plays a pivotal role in the development of a **modern, sustainable knowledge-based economy**; which supports a confident, shared society; and which recognises and values diversity.

Key DEL Activities to Support the HE Sector

Core Funding

- Teaching and Learning
- Research (Quality related research & PhDs)
- Knowledge transfer

Programme / Directed Funding

- US/Ireland R&D Programme
- SFI/DEL Investigators Programme Partnership
- Higher Education EU Support Fund
- Targeted studentships e.g. PhDs, Masters, etc.

US-Ireland R&D Partnership

Purpose

- To increase the level of collaborative R&D among researchers across the three jurisdictions

Guiding Principles

- Significant participation from each jurisdiction in all projects
- Excellent science is fundamental - gold standard, peer review systems of the NSF (& NIH)
- Joint funding - each jurisdiction will support the research carried out by its own researchers

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Eligible Areas

- Telecommunications
- Nanoscale Science & Engineering
- Sensors & Sensor Networks
- Energy & Sustainability
- Health

Supported by:

- Northern Ireland – Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Invest NI and the Health and Social Care (HSC) R&D Office
- Republic of Ireland – Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) & Health Research Board (HRB)
- United States of America – National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH)

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NI Application Process (Overview)

- If consortium not established but partners identified, NI and ROI Partners can apply for a Planning Grant for travel to US
- Partnership established and proposal under development
- Identify appropriate NSF (or NIH) call
- Secure necessary pre-approval from DEL/Invest NI -relatively straightforward / set out in Guidance Notes and FAQs
 - <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education/higher-education/role-structure-he-division/he-research-policy/us-ireland-partnership-2/us-ireland-rd-partnership-programme.htm>
- DEL / InvestNI Deadline – 6 weeks prior to NSF deadline

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Planning Grants for Travel

- Administered by Invest NI
- Assessment process managed by SFI
- Provides planning travel support of up to £3,000 direct costs
- Principal Investigators from **all three jurisdictions** engaging in proposal development must be identified
- Only covers the cost of travel to the US
- Not a pre-requisite before submitting a formal application
- Contact: Paul Malcomson – email: p.malcomson@investni.com

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NI Application Process (Details)

1. DEL / Invest NI cover sheet signed by PVC and Head of School (*template online*)
2. Outline Proposal (max 3 pages)
3. Cost Table – completed in consultation with University's Research Support Office (*template online*)
4. If a Planning Grant has been used – include a copy of Invest NI Planning Grant Application and post-travel report approved by Invest NI

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Outline Proposal (3 pages)

- Don't focus on the scientific details
- Focus on the economic / environmental / social / health aspect of the proposal and the envisaged long-term route to market
- Briefly reflect how the proposal fits with the overall aim of the Partnership, identify the eligible theme etc.
- Include:
 - relevant NSF call
 - the approximate size of the US and RoI partner budgets
 - the partners' distinctive roles in the project (in layman's terms)

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NI Budget & Allowable Costs

- Funding rate - 100%
- Capped at £320k (equates to c. £107k pa for a 3 yr award)
- All additional direct costs (i.e. new staff, equipment, materials, travel, other)
- Other costs include PhD stipend / fees, recruitment costs etc., and overheads at 40% of staff costs
- Equipment costs - limited to individual items up to £20k

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Submission of Outline Proposals in NI

- Discuss any queries with Aideen McChesney in DEL
- Email outline proposal to: Aideen.McChesney@delni.gov.uk
- Recommendation to senior management in DEL and Invest NI
- If approved, formal DEL / Invest NI Funding Commitment Letter issued
- Commits DEL to supporting the NI element of the proposal if the NSF (or NIH) approve the overall tri-national proposal
- Include letter of support with your submission to the NSF (or NIH)
- RoI partners will secure a similar letter from SFI

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Some Key Information

- 68 proposals pre approved by DEL/InvestNI (in parallel with SFI)
- DEL funding 17 projects (16 approved by NSF and 1 by NIH)
- 2 further NIH projects supported by HSC R&D Office
- 9 of the 19 projects were awarded in last 18 months
- Total investment across 3 jurisdictions of c.£23m, with just over £8.1m being awarded to NI partners

Key Contacts in Northern Ireland

DELNI - Aideen McChesney
USIreland@delni.gov.uk

InvestNI - Paul Malcolmson
P.Malcolmson@investni.com

HSC R&D - Clive Wolsley
Clive.Wolsley@hscni.net