

## Commercialisation Fund 2012

### Frequently Asked Questions Commercialisation Fund Support

#### Q1. What funding supports are available in the Commercialisation Fund Programme?

##### (a) Commercial Case Feasibility Support:

Enterprise Ireland recognises the need for business development expertise to complement researchers' technical expertise, to develop strong commercialisation strategies for innovative technologies. To this end, funding is provided **to Principal Investigators in partnership with their Technology Transfer (TTO) or equivalent office** to scope and develop the commercial case for their technology in advance of submission of a standard Commercialisation Fund application. **Principal Investigators who have not had funding previously from the Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund Programme are particularly encouraged to consider this support.**

Support is provided to assist the project team to:

- i. Perform primary and secondary market analysis for the technology application/s.
- ii. Engage with customers, end-users, Industries and other relevant stakeholders particularly focusing on developing the exploitation route in Ireland.
- iii. Profile emerging and existing competitor landscape for the proposed technology application.
- iv. Perform patent landscaping and develop the IP strategy for the technology
- v. Investigate potential routes to exploitation of the technology to the economic benefit of Ireland.
- vi. Understand the regulatory issues or other barriers/hurdles to commercialization.
- vii. Create a small demonstration or early prototype.

##### (b) Commercialisation Fund Support:

Enterprise Ireland is seeking to fund projects that will deliver an innovative technology to address a sizeable or niche market opportunity. The technology should be exploitable in Ireland ideally in 2-5 years either as part of a technology-based start-up company or through licensing to a company in Ireland. Enterprise Ireland does recognize that some technologies take longer to get to market than others and provided the technology addresses a good market opportunity and will have an economic impact in Ireland, it will be considered for support.

#### Q2. Who can apply for Commercialisation Fund Support?

All researchers including staff on contract in 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and non-profit research organisations and agencies in the republic of Ireland can apply. Collaborators from Northern Ireland can be included provided they have their own funding.

**Q3. Can a company apply to the Commercialisation Fund Programme?**

No. Companies are not eligible.

**Q4. 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, Enterprise Ireland will 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.

**Q5. 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). 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.

**Q6. Can Masters or PhD researchers be supported under the Commercialisation fund Programme?**

Due to the staged structure of projects this support 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.

**Q7. What is the timetable for submitting applications to the Commercialisation Fund Programme?**

The next published call closing date for submission of standard Commercialisation Fund applications is NOON on March 7<sup>th</sup> 2012.

Additionally, proposals can be invited at any time by the Director of the relevant Technology Directorate (Lifesciences and Food, ICT, Industrial Technologies) for submission to the programme. Invited proposals may include:

- Resubmissions from a previous call where the proposals have been strengthened based on the panel comments and the Director is satisfied to invite the proposal for submission.
- Proposals where the commercial case for the technology has been well developed through interaction with the Technology Transfer Office or equivalent office and Enterprise Ireland and the Director is satisfied to invite the proposal for submission.

Principal Investigators who wish to investigate the potential for their proposal to be invited for submission must actively engage with their Technology Transfer Office or equivalent office in preparing the proposal. An Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Specialist will advise the TTO and the PI on what criteria the proposal needs to meet before it can be considered by the Director for invitation for full submission. For advice on "invited proposals" the following can be contacted:

<b>Enterprise Ireland Contacts:</b>		
Life-Sciences & Food	Ruth McMahon	Tel: 01 7272671 ruth.mcmahon@enterprise-ireland.com
Information & Communication Technologies	John Fagan	Tel: 01 7272784 john.fagan@enterprise-ireland.com

Industrial Technologies	Ann Dooley	Tel: 01 7272680 ann.dooley@enterprise-ireland.com
Commercialisation Fund Manager	Majella Maher	Tel: 091 735927 majella.maher@enterprise-ireland.com

**Q8. How do I apply to the Commercialisation Fund Programme?**

You are advised to **contact your Technology Transfer Office and Enterprise Ireland** through the contacts listed above at **least 1 month** before you commence preparation of your proposal.

In advance of submitting an application to the Commercialisation Fund Programme, you are advised to read the Commercialisation Fund Programme 2012 Reference Document which details the Programme Objectives, Funding supports, Timetable, Administration, Evaluation and Approval Processes and Conditions of Funding and the Commercialisation Fund Programme 2012 Guidelines Document which provides guidance on how to complete the application form.

For submission of a standard Commercialisation Fund application, you must:

- 1) Complete the CF2012 standard application form. Applications will only be accepted on the Commercialisation Fund 2012 Standard Application Form ([www.enterprise-ireland.com/commercialisation](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/commercialisation)).
- 2) Post one original and one copy of the application form complete with the relevant signatures to Contracts Unit, Commercialisation Fund Programme, Enterprise Ireland, East Point Business Park, The Plaza, Dublin 3
- 3) Email a copy of the proposal as a single **MS WORD** document to [commercialisation.fund@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:commercialisation.fund@enterprise-ireland.com).

**Q9. Will the Commercialisation Fund support early stage investigations?**

The Commercialisation Fund is specifically not intended to fund basic research projects focused on very early stage investigation. However, the Fund will fund technology development at all stages in the commercial pipeline from early stage research through technology development to a point where the technology can be commercialised.

Proposals can include:

- Early development of a scientific concept submitted as a single-stage project with costing <€100K.
- Early stage development performed in stage 1 of a multi-stage project where a timeframe of up to 36 months is required for development of a technology.

**Q10. Explain what is meant by ‘a project organised in stages’?**

Proposals to the programme must structure project workplans in stages comprising 1-3 sequential stages depending on where the technology is in the commercial pipeline and the amount of commercial and technical work required to develop a licensable technology.

Each project stage will typically last 12-18 months and cost typically <€100K and it is expected that the commercialisation of the technology will run in parallel with its development.

Proposals can include:

- Early development of a scientific concept submitted as a single-stage project with costing <€100K.
- Early stage development performed in stage 1 of a multi-stage project where a timeframe of up to 36 months is required for development of a technology.
- For a technology that is close to market a project will typically consist of 1 stage only with the expectation of licensing within 2 years.

It is envisaged that staging will occur as follows:

**Example 1:** *An applicant has a research concept for a technology that has commercial potential and it requires 12 months work to perform early stage development or develop a prototype or investigate the commercial viability of the concept. The Applicant submits a project consisting of a single-stage of 12 months work. If approved, EI will issue a contract to the College for a duration of 12 months. The applicant will need to reapply for funding to develop the technology further.*

**Example 2:** *A technology under development requires 36 months work to be license ready. The Applicant submits a project consisting of 3 stages. At the end of each stage, there is go/no go deliverables. If approved, EI will issue a contract to the College for the first stage of the project. If the first stage is successful and the go/no go deliverables are achieved, EI will issue a second contract for the duration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. If the stage 2 outputs are successful then EI will issue the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final contract.*

**Example 3:** *A technology under development requires 12 months work to be license ready. The Applicant submits a project consisting of a single-stage of 12 months work. If approved, EI will issue a contract to the College for a duration of 12 months.*

**Q11. What level of funding is available for projects?**

Enterprise Ireland expects to fund projects ranging in costs from €80,000 to €350,000. Single-stage projects are envisaged to have project costs of typically <€100K for timeframe of 12-18 months while multi-stage projects will typically consist of 2 or more sequential project stages, with each stage lasting 12-18 months with costs per stage of typically <€100K.

**Q12. Are collaborative projects encouraged?**

The Fund allows for collaboration where the experience and expertise of two or more institutions will bring significant added value to the achievement of a project output that would not otherwise be possible. However, collaboration is not of itself an objective of the Fund.

**Q13. Who needs to sign the application?**

One original application with original signatures on the same form and one copy of the application must be submitted as hard copies with the following signatures;

1. **The lead Principal Investigator in the host institute:** If the project is collaborative then it needs to be signed by the collaborators in the host/ collaborating institute/institutes. If the Principal Investigator in the host institute and/or collaborators in collaborating institute/s do not have a permanent contract/s then the application must be signed by a relevant permanent member of staff—usually the head of department or research centre/institute where the PI and collaborator are based.

2. **Informal collaborators** (those not being paid on the project) in 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and research performing organizations should sign the application.
3. **Informal collaborators** (those not being paid on the project) not based in 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and research performing organizations do not need to sign the application but should include a letter (embedded in the application after the signature page) stating their role in and support for the project.
4. **The authorised officer in the host and collaborating institutes:** This is the VP of Research or equivalent in the institute. Signatures are required for the host and collaborating institutes.
5. **The authorised technology transfer officer in the host and collaborating institute:**  
This is the Director of Technology Transfer, the Industrial liaison Officer or equivalent in the institute. Signatures are required for the host and collaborating institutes.

**Q14. What font size and type should I use in my application?**

10pt font is the smallest font size that is acceptable. Please choose a font “type” or “style” that can be easily read at 10pt size. You are recommended to use “Verdana” or “Times New Roman” at 10pt. Evaluators are not obliged to read beyond the set word or page limits.

**Q15. What are quantifiable milestones and deliverables?**

**A milestone** is used as a project checkpoint to validate how the project is progressing and can signify some other work that has to be completed.

**A deliverable** is any measurable, tangible, verifiable outcome, result, or item that must be produced to complete a project or part of a project.

In the project workplan, milestones and deliverables should be realistic quantifiable, stating specifically what will be achieved within the timeframe indicated.

**For Multi-Stage projects:** In the application you are asked to set **Go/No Go deliverables** to be delivered **2-3 months** before the end of the Project Stage.

**Go/No Go Deliverable** defines a critical point in the project which determines the technical and/or commercial feasibility of the project.

**Example:** For a project developing a rapid test based on real-time PCR the following are examples of typical quantifiable milestones and deliverables:

**Technical milestones and deliverables:**

<b>Milestones</b>	Milestone at Month 12: DNA sequencing of the target gene in 5 strains of each of 3 target species and 3 strains of 10 non-target species will be completed.
<b>Deliverables</b>	Deliverable at Month 18: Real-time PCR test developed for one target species.
<b>Go/No Go Technical Deliverable</b>	Deliverable at Month 18: Real-time PCR test for one target species, developed with 100% specificity and a limit of detection for the test of 1-10 cells of target species per ml of biological sample.

### Commercial milestones and deliverables:

<b>Milestones</b>	Milestone at Month 18: Ten companies contacted and meetings to discuss the technology of the project completed with 5 companies. Agreed follow-up actions.
<b>Deliverables</b>	Deliverable at Month 12: Market Offering flyer prepared for circulation to companies.
<b>Go/No Go Commercial Deliverables</b>	Deliverable at Month 12: IP Strategy for the technology defined. Deliverable at Month 24: Report on clinical testing of real-time PCR test.

### Examples of commercialisation deliverables include:

- A brief **statement** of what benefit your product/technology will bring to the user. Example: The XXX product will provide an x% faster, x% lower cost product option for XXX users.
- A **list of contacts** that will be followed up over the course of the commercialisation process – mentors, potential licensees, investors.
- A **statement** of what the commercial intent is from the group – start-up company, license.
- A **description** of the process to be used to identify and protect IP.
- **Focused market leads** - At this stage the team need to consider who best to interact with to allow them pursue the commercial target.
- **Market Offering**-A one page description of the technology, the benefits, the market & the commercial plans.
- A **presentation pack**, where the technology can be presented to interested parties.
- A **demonstration** of the technology.

### Q.16 How are projects evaluated?

Proposals are evaluated in two Phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2. The Phase 1 evaluation is performed internally in Enterprise Ireland and evaluates **the commercial case** the applicants make for the technology.

The PI may be contacted during the Phase 1 assessment if clarification on their application is required.

Proposals with a poor commercial evaluation do **not progress** further to a full technical evaluation in Phase 2. To see the detailed questions the evaluators are asked to consider see appendix 1 of the CF Programme 2012 Reference document.

### The criteria for the Phase 1 evaluation include:

#### Commercial Opportunity:

- **Size of the opportunity**
- **Validation of the market**

#### Economic Impact of the Technology in Ireland:

- **Opportunity for Ireland**
- **Route to exploitation**

## **Technology Development:**

- **Innovation**
- **Feasibility**

An applicant must obtain an acceptable rating for each criteria in the Phase 1 evaluation to progress to a Phase 2 evaluation. An internal panel chaired by the head of the relevant Enterprise Ireland Technology Directorate decides which projects make a convincing commercial case and move to a Phase 2 evaluation.

In Phase 2, the technical details of the project including the workplan, project management and costings detailed in the proposal are reviewed in the context of the commercial case for the technology by internal and in some cases external experts. The evaluations are used by internal and external review panels chaired by the head of the relevant Enterprise Ireland Technology Directorate to make funding recommendations and to rank proposals. Principal Investigators may be contacted by pre-arrangement during the Phase 2 evaluation or panel meetings to clarify questions the panel have on their application.

The funding recommendations for Proposals will be presented for funding decision to the Industrial Research and Commercialisation committee (IRCC) following completion of the evaluation processes as outlined above.

The IRCC will make the final decision on the proposals and the conditions to be attached to any given approval, for example the implementation of a change in the project arising from the evaluations.

### **Q17. When will I know the outcome of my application?**

For applications submitted to the March 7<sup>th</sup> published call, it is expected that single-stage projects will be presented for decision at the April (26<sup>th</sup>) IRCC meeting and the multi-stage projects will be presented for decision at the May (24<sup>th</sup>) IRCC meeting.

For invited applications, these will be presented on a case by case basis after evaluations are completed to the next relevant IRCC meeting.

### **Q18. 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 proposal. Applicants will receive feedback after their project has been presented to the Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee and they have made a decision on the project. The TTO case Manager or equivalent is also provided with a copy of the feedback.

### **Q19. For successful Commercialisation Fund Support projects how will project performance be reviewed?**

For approved projects, when the contract/grant agreement is being prepared, Enterprise Ireland will agree with the Principal Investigator and host institute, the milestones and deliverables for each project stage and the timeframe for these. For multi-stage projects, go/no go technical and/or commercial deliverables that are quantifiable and can be achieved 2-3 months before the end of the project stage will be agreed between Enterprise Ireland and the host institute. The lead PI will be asked to submit a report to Enterprise Ireland on a report template provided by Enterprise Ireland 3 months before the end of the project stage. Enterprise Ireland staff from the relevant technology directorate will review the

performance of the project stage based on the report and meeting with the project team to discuss progress in the context of the agreed go/no go technical and/or commercial deliverables. They will decide if the project stage is on target to deliver the agreed outputs and on that basis whether funding for the next stage should be provided.

**Q20. How will the issue of contract staff be managed in the context of a “staged project”?**

It is envisaged that the host and collaborating institutes will employ researchers for the relevant number of man-months for each project stage. Continuation of the researcher’s contract for the next project stage will be dependent on achieving the agreed go/no go deliverables for the previous stage. Enterprise Ireland will review the project performance a minimum of 2-3 months before the end of the contract for the relevant project stage and indicate whether funding for the next project stage is approved. This will provide the college with a two month timeframe approximately to deal with the HR requirements pertaining to the researchers working on the projects.

**Q21. Can I publish my research?**

The primary purpose of the Commercialisation Fund is to produce technologies with the potential for exploitation in Ireland. Therefore, the protection of intellectual property and the exploitation of results must never be prejudiced by publication or disclosure. Applicants must discuss with their TTO any intention to publish the work and the TTO will have the final decision on whether publication is possible or needs to be deferred in the interests of protecting the IP or enabling exploitation of the project outputs.

**Q22. What action will be taken by Enterprise Ireland if a proposal is received after the submission deadline specified?**

Proposals received by Enterprise Ireland after the deadline of the published call will not be accepted for review.

**Q23. If, after submitting my application I realise that it is incomplete, can I withdraw the application and submit a revised version?**

No. Following submission, an application cannot be withdrawn and modified for resubmission in the same published call.