Food Institutional Research Measure (FIRM)

2013 Stage 1 Call for Expression of Interest

Network of Excellence in Sensory Food Science

Guidelines for Applicants

DEADLINE FOR COMPLETE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
IN PDF VIA EMAIL TO research@agriculture.gov.ie

1 PM TUESDAY 30th April 2013

All 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.

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013
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1. INTRODUCTION

In late 2011, following work completed by the Food Research Expert Advisory (FREA) Group, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) published *Food Research Ireland*¹ (FRI) - *Meeting the needs of Ireland’s food sector to 2020 through research and innovation*. This Strategic Research Agenda for the Food Sector identified a significant gap in the area of sensory food science to support new product development in Ireland. It is recognized that a number of sensory science facilities exist within Ireland, some of which have been funded by FIRM and others funded through PRTLI and by other funding agencies. However to be effective these need to be integrated and so this Initiative seeks to bring together all of these facilities within a single Network of Excellence in Sensory Food Science which can be easily accessed by the food industry and other research groups. DAFM are willing to consider funding such a Network providing it encompasses all existing capabilities in the sensory food science area, is responsive to the needs of Industry, and is sustainable into the future.

2. OBJECTIVES

Applications are invited for the development of a Network of Excellence in Sensory Food Science in accordance with the following objective: “To bring together the available national expertise in Flavour analysis and evaluation to support product development in the Food Sector”.

In fulfilling this objective, the Network should:

- Include all existing research facilities which have capability in Sensory Food Science on the Island of Ireland;
- Be managed in such a way that is supportive of the needs of all sectors of the Irish Food Industry;
- Be accessible to other research teams on the island of Ireland; please also provide details of related access charges for non-DAFM funded research teams.
- Develop a web portal that will enable industry to access details about the capability within the Network of Excellence in Sensory Food Science that specifically interests them; and
- Develop a business model to ensure that the Network will be sustainable beyond the initial 2 years seed funding available.

¹ [http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/research/FoodResearchIreland.pdf](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/research/FoodResearchIreland.pdf)
3. ELIGIBILITY

- Applications are invited from Principal Investigators who currently have significant capability in this area. The Principal Investigator (PI) is the person who takes direct responsibility for completion of the Network, directing the research and reporting directly to the funding agency. She/he must be a permanent member of staff.

- The applicant should be based in a public research performing organisation within the Republic of Ireland; however collaborators from Northern Ireland are encouraged.

4. FUNDING

FIRM will provide funding of up to €750,000 of which a maximum of 30% can be allocated as seed funding for Networking Activities for a maximum of two years. This allocation must be used to support staff, travel & subsistence, limited consumables, web development costs and other costs deemed necessary to develop the Network. This Network will also support actual new experimental research up to a 4 year duration where it can be demonstrated that it is required to enhance some of the existing capability. This research should aim to address the sensory science research needs identified by industry while being cognisant of the research objectives as detailed in Food Research Ireland and/or any other related knowledge deficits.

It is expected the Network should be set up initially with a view to bringing together existing capability and with a view to being self sustaining by the end of two years through attracting funds from industry and other sources. A review by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will be carried out after two years to assess progress and long-term viability of the Network following which a decision will be taken regarding whether or not to continue funding the final two years research within the Network.

Overheads should be set at a maximum of 25% for the desk-based elements of the Network. For research elements, the overheads are set at a maximum of 30% of the direct costs less equipment. The staff costs should be in line with those on IUA/equivalent scale. Major items of equipment are not eligible for funding; however, a computer and small items of equipment may be included in the budget.

5. OVERALL APPLICATION PROCESS

The application procedure will involve two stages:

Stage 1 (this stage) - an initial expression of interest from Principal Investigator(s) who wish to co-ordinate the Network of Excellence in Sensory Science. The applicant must be a Principal Investigator / permanent member of staff of the lead organization. The Principal Investigator (PI) is the person who takes direct responsibility for completion of the Network, directing the research and reporting directly to the funding agency.
Stage 1 of the application procedure will concentrate on the integration of all existing capabilities in sensory science and devising solid sustainability plans beyond year two through, for example, securing and providing evidence of industry’s commitment to support the facility. Please note that DAFM reserves the right to seek and agree modifications to the network emerging from Stage 1.

Stage 2 will involve the development of full scientific proposal(s) identifying the priority research that the network co-ordinator wishes to pursue over the lifetime of network. An application form and guidelines for a full scientific proposal will be sent electronically to the successful applicant emerging from stage 1. Completed Stage 2 application forms will be required to be returned within four weeks of receipt.

**Stage 1 Application Procedure**

All completed application forms must be signed by the VP of Research/Head of Research and Technology Transfer Office or equivalent within the lead research organization. Applications should be submitted electronically from the lead research organization to research@agriculture.gov.ie with the following in the Subject box of the email: FIRM Centre of Excellence – Applicants Name – Lead Research Organization (For example: FIRM Network of Excellence Joe Bloggs - University College Cork). Applications will be acknowledged. All applications should comply with the Guidelines below. Applications which do not adhere to the guidelines will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant. The deadline for submission of completed Application Forms is **Tuesday 30th April 2013 @ 1 pm**. Late or faxed applications will not be accepted. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by DAFM.

- Applications will only be accepted on the FIRM Network of Excellence in Sensory Food Science Application Form which is available to download from www.agriculture.gov.ie/research. All sections of the application form must be completed. Incomplete applications will be returned without review to the applicant.
- The number of words/pages in any given section must not exceed the specifications.
- The currency to be used is the euro (€).
- Applications arriving after the deadline will not be accepted

**The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Tuesday, 30th April 2013 @ 1pm**

### 6. GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETION OF STAGE 1 APPLICATION FORMS

Applicants are requested to complete Sections 1 to 8 of the Form. Failure to complete all sections will result in the application being rejected on the grounds of insufficient information.

**SECTION 1: DETAILS OF THE NETWORK CO-ORDINATOR**

- Please provide details of the Network Co-ordinator.
- Please provide a suitable acronym for the project, preferably one that is easy to pronounce.
- Please include details of all Principal researchers who will be involved in the Network.
- Please provide an indicative budget for the Network.
SECTION 2: RESEARCH TEAM TRACK RECORD
- Provide a brief summary of each Principal Researcher’s past and current research areas including details on their research team.
- State how that team will contribute to the development of a high calibre Sensory Network.
- A list of relevant publications/patents/licences should be included in Annex 1.
- Add further Principal Researcher’s details as required.
- Indicate the level of expertise and experience of the team in relation to sensory science.

SECTION 3: EXISTING CAPACITY
- Please provide details on the existing capability & capacity in sensory science on the Island of Ireland
- Include details of the location, equipment, infrastructure and the resources currently in place in each facility.
- Please provide details in this section of any services that are currently supplied to industry and any costs associated with such services.

SECTION 4: SCIENTIFIC PROPOSAL
- This research should address the sensory science research needs identified by industry while being cognisant of the research objectives as detailed in Food Research Ireland and/or any other related knowledge deficits.
- Outline briefly the key research topics that will be prioritised by the network.

SECTION 5: NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN
- Outline in detail the management of the day-to-day activities of the network over the duration of the programme.
- Indicate how the scientific knowledge, both existing and new, will be managed and shared among the team members/institutions and within the network.
- Describe the Website and how it will operate.

SECTION 6: EXPECTED OUTCOME
- Briefly outline the potential outcomes/expected benefits to the Irish Food Sector.
- Briefly describe how the network team will be developed to enable its participation in International Collaborative Research Programmes.
- Describe and substantiate how the sustainability of the network beyond the end date of the programme will be ensured and provide evidence of industry commitment to this venture.
- Any other expected outcomes should also be described.

SECTION 7: OUTLINE INDICATIVE BUDGET
- Provide an indicative budget, please specify what portion of the budget will be allocated to networking activities.

Due to the fact that this Network is to be evaluated in two stages, at this point there is no requirement for detailed budgets. Please complete the simple budget table detailed in section 7. Section 7.1 includes the budget tables and instructions for the completion of this are detailed below.
Guidelines when Completing Budget Details (Section 7.1)

**Proposed budget**

Each institute’s budgets must be completed in the table provided, there are six columns provided allowing for six institutions, if there are more institutions involved please add columns as required.

**Staff costs**

Costs will be allowed for additional staff specifically hired to carry out work on the network, Students must be registered as MSc with a view to possibly transferring to PhD following successful outcome at the two year review. The staff costs should be in line with those on IUA/equivalent scale. It excludes permanent staff employed by the institutions concerned. DAFM will fund contributions to salaries of staff contracted to work on the project, commencing at the minimum point of the ‘New Entrant’ pay scale. All working time charged to the project must be recorded throughout the duration of the project. All staff working on the project must be recorded even if their costs are not being charged to the project.

**Consumables**

Items of consumables acquired for and used on the network may be allowed. All consumables should be necessary and directly related to the carrying out the work of the network and must be separately identifiable. A consumable is defined as an item which is used up / expires / is exhausted over the duration of the network. It does not include items such as laboratory coats, general safety equipment, detergents, etc. – these should be met through the overheads. Subscriptions to scientific journals or membership of institutes are not eligible for funding.

**Travel & subsistence**

Travel and related subsistence costs for personnel may be claimed. These costs must be specifically related to a project. Rates paid cannot exceed those for the Public Sector and airfares should be economy class. Travel and subsistence costs may also be claimed for Advisory Group members should such a group be deemed necessary/appropriate for a project.

**Other agreed costs**

DAFM may agree to fund costs, which are relevant and are not covered by the categories cited above.

Subject to obtaining good value for money, every possible effort must be made, in the first instance, to build an Irish institutional project consortium capable of completing all tasks proposed in the network. However, where this is not feasible, an overseas institute or a consultant / industry may be brought on board by way of providing external assistance. Where such external assistance is proposed, full justification should be provided. The external assistance is eligible for 100% of costs for services rendered. However, as a subcontractor it has no claim to any of the results or Intellectual Property generated by the project.
Overheads

DAFM will fund up to 30% of the direct costs of scientific-type research not including equipment and subcontracting costs. (25% for desk-based socio-economic/policy type analysis).

Funds from other sources

Financial contribution from industry and any other sources to each individual institute for the purpose of this particular project should be included. This does not include DAFM contributions.

SECTION 8: DECLARATION

Please complete as requested.

ANNEX 1

List of publications, patents & licences for each of the Principal researchers involved in the Network within the last 5 years (dating back to 26 March 2008). References should be listed in alphabetical order in the form:


7. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

STAGE 1

Each Stage 1 application will be initially assessed by DAFM staff to ensure that it is complete, contains adequate information to properly assess the project proposal, and that the proposal qualifies for assistance under the terms of the measure as set out above.

Following this preliminary assessment, the project proposal will be assigned to an expert evaluation panel for assessment under the following criteria (weightings in brackets):

- Track record and scientific capability of the network, including interdisciplinary linkages (20%)
- Outline of scientific programme (10%)
- The Management/Integration Plan of the network programme (20%)
- Expected benefits to Irish Food sectors (25%)
- Credibility of long term sustainability plan for the network (25%)

STAGE 2

The co-ordinator of the Network application deemed most suitable, if any, following Stage 1 evaluation will be informed and sent a stage 2 application form and guidelines inviting him/her to (a) address any issues raised in the Evaluation Summary Report and (b) provide the usual scientific, management, budget, etc. details of the proposed actual experimental research which was provided in outline in the stage 1 application. This will be required to be completed and returned with a deadline set at that time.

Following the Expert Evaluation of the Stage 2 project proposal, the proposal will be forwarded to the DAFM Competitive Research Committee comprising of high level representatives from the public sector
and industry for advice on the merit of providing financial support. DAFM will then decide on whether to fund the proposal and, if doing so, will enter into contract negotiations with the proposer during which DAFM may also:

- Seek additional information it considers necessary on the details of the Network
- Seek and agree adjustments or modifications to proposals. If changes are of a major nature, DAFM may consult the DAFM Competitive Research Committee.
- Negotiate adjustments to proposal details to achieve consistency in approach across projects in the programme.

8. CONTRACT NEGOTIATION & PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF GRANT

Following successful contract negotiations, 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.

In accepting the award, the applicant agrees to carry out the project according to the work programme as laid out in the project proposal and the agreed budget.

9. FUNDING PAYMENT PROCEDURE

The grant rate may be up to 100% funding for eligible costs. Where there is Industry involvement in the project, the relevant industry sector would be expected to make contributions towards costs where research is likely to benefit that particular sector. Eligible costs are the costs necessarily incurred in carrying out the research project as described in the project document. They must fulfil the following conditions:

- Be wholly necessary for the project
- Be incurred during the timeframe of the project
- Be recorded in the accounts that will be maintained throughout the duration of the project and reported on as required.

Eligible costs will be allowed in the categories of:

(a) Staff costs.
(b) Equipment.
(c) Travel and subsistence.
(d) Consumables.
(e) Overheads.
(f) Other agreed costs.
10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Any enquiry with regard to the above should be addressed to:

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