DAFM's Call for Research Proposals 2021 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the timeframe for awarding funds under the Call?	Following submission of the on line applications forms (deadline for submission for all applications 09 March 2021 @ 12:00**)** acknowledgements will issue automatically through the DAFM Research Online Portal. The evaluation of proposals is scheduled for Q2 –Q3 2021, contract negotiations in Q3 2021, with a view to awarding funding in Q4 2021. Note post-submission timescales are indicative.
I have some queries about your new grant management software.	FlexiGrant queries are addressed in Annex 1 of this document.
Has DAFM set aside a certain amount of money for each Thematic Area or type of Funding Instruments I-IV categorised in the 2021 Call Specification?	Monies have not been ring-fenced/distributed for each thematic area or type of project categorised in the 2021 Call Specification document. The distribution of monies between thematic areas and types of projects will depend on the project proposals received by DAFM and the outcome of the evaluation of these project proposals.
Where Institutions have multiple sites throughout Ireland, does each individual site qualify as a public RPO is its own right?	No. In this situation it is the overarching RPO body that is the designated RPO. The individual sites do not qualify as RPOs in their own right.
Is it acceptable for a project to have more than one Project Coordinator?	No. Only one Project Coordinator per project is allowed. Under no circumstances will more than one Coordinator be permitted.
Can the Coordinator be a Contract Researcher?	Yes, however they must have a contract that extends to the full duration of the project. The employment status of staff working on a project in collaborating institutions is not a matter for DAFM. It is the responsibility of the project PI/Coordinator to ensure that staff involved in collaborating institutions have contracts of sufficient duration to cover the tasks.
Can the PI be a Contract Researcher	No, the PI must be a permanent member of Staff in the Lead RPO.

Can a current Post-Doc be named as a collaborator on the application	Yes, they can be added but they will need to be identified as a task leader and have their details provided in page 6 "Summary of Key participants-RPO".
Can research partners in Northern Ireland participate?	Yes, provided you are applying in respect of topics listed in the Call Specification document under Funding Instruments I – IV only. DAFM has an agreement with Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland (DAERA NI), who will provide funding subject to budget availability and strategic alignment with their policy interests . NI research partners may not lead a project. Please note that the NI grant request must be included in a 'RPO Table' figure in '€' which will in turn update the total grant amounts set out in Table 1 of the Application Form. Eligible organisations approved by DAERA are: Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University. Further information is available from, Chief Scientific Adviser's Office, email _collaborative.research@daera-ni.gov.uk_ telephone +44(0)28 77442211.
Are there additional reporting requirements for projects that are co-funded with either DAERA or other co-funding partners?	Yes. The NI Research Performing Organisations will be required to submit quarterly returns as outlined in their Guidance Note. Further information on this is available from Chief Scientific Adviser's Office, email _collaborative.research@daera-ni.gov.uk_ telephone +44 (0)28 77442211. NI partners are required to complete contracts for both DAFM and DAERA. DAFM may enter into other co-funding arrangements in this Call if deemed appropriate. DAFM may approach other potential funders, who may be interested in co-funding particular themes/topics/proposals, during the Call process up to and including during the contract negotiation stage. Until such time as these other possible co-funding arrangements are finalised it will not be possible to outline if there will be additional reporting requirements.
Can Industry participate in this Research Call?	Yes, Industry involvement is encouraged subject to upholding the 'public good' nature of the research and compliance with the national IP Protocol. If an industry party wish to participate in a DAFM supported research project, it must be via collaboration with an approved RPO and can involve providing either a financial and/or an in-kind contribution and/or partipication in an advisory or steering group capacity.
Where the funding instrument is not specified for the research areas in the Call Specification, are the applicants free to submit a proposal under any of the Funding	Yes, unless otherwise specified. The applicants can choose what funding instrument is best suited to the proposal they are submitting subject to the minimum criteria for the specific funding instrument being met.

Instruments I-IV?	
When addressing more than one theme/topic in a single application, do the limits specified under certain individual topics apply?	In this situation the sum of the specified limits applies and the requirement of the number of RPOs is dictated by the total grant request. Where limits are not specified in all topics being addressed in a single application then applicants are free to opt for whatever total grant they consider appropriate but need to be cognisant that: (a) one of the elements that evaluators must consider is value for money (b) they may be competing against other applications dealing with some of the topics combined or all of the topics on an individual basis.
Will more than one project in a specific area be funded?	In principle DAFM does not intend to fund more than one project dealing with any single specific research issue. However, limited topic overlap may arise and in such circumstances any unnecessary duplication will be avoided and may result in merging parts of projects or full projects at contract negotiation stage.
Can you clarify the point regarding salary scales and justification for higher points on these scales?	Please see Section 6: Summary of Staffing in Guidelines for Applicants Document.
What salary costs should be included?	The annual salary costs to the relevant RPO's budget should provide for an amount for core salary along with relevant Employers' PRSI and Pension Contributions chargeable for each individual hired. It is the responsibility of the relevant RPO to determine which amounts need to be included in their budget proposals to cover these outlays. The annual salary costs should allow for Annual Salary Scale point increases, and should also make provisions to allow for possible pay increases which may fall due arising from pay agreements which may be concluded during the duration of the project. In this regard it should be noted that only where such increases are budgeted for will RPO's be able to claim these amounts.
Would DAFM favour more PhDs on a project or more Masters Students?	For a small project (II) the preference is for Masters Students. For IV projects DAFM are not looking specifically for Masters Students.
Will it be permitted to employ PhDs as well for the larger projects?	Yes. Please refer to Section 6, Summary of Staffing – Staff Costs in the Guidelines for Applicants document.
Do DAFM fund programme managers?	DAFM will only consider funding a programme manager under Funding Instrument IV

Are there guidelines on the costing of the programme manager?	The costing of the programme manager should be commensurate with their role and contribution to the proposal. The costing should be clearly justified and will be robustly evaluated as part of the overall process.
Does DAFM fund employer pension contributions?	DAFM funds employer pension contributions (where applicable) under these competitive programmes and should be included in your budget.
Will equipment be funded under the Research Call?	Yes, provided all proposed equipment is demonstrated to be wholly necessary for the project and that all other options (e.g. sharing existing facilities) have been fully explored. All Equipment must be acquired, in compliance with all National and EU procurement guidelines. Also the need for the proposed equipment and the associated cost will be assessed as part of the evaluation and contract negotiation processes and must be commensurate to the nature, size and scale of the project.
Will the Department fund any servicing of equipment or maintenance contracts?	No. The DAFM contribution towards Overheads should cover such costs.
Can costs be included for Open Access publications?	No. Please refer to the Section 6 'Ineligible costs' in the Guidelines for Applicants.
When is external assistance/sub-contracting permitted and on what terms?	Where such expertise/service/facility does not exist in a RPO it may be included (and funded) on a contract basis. The contractor will have no entitlement whatsoever to any knowledge, intellectual property, and authorship of Journal peer review papers, etc. emerging from the project.
What Overhead rates are applicable?	DAFM will fund up to 30% of direct costs of scientific type research not including equipment and subcontracting costs
Do the funding limits set out in the Call Specification include overheads?	Yes.
Are the academics on the expert evaluation panel (steps 2 of the assessment of proposals) based in Irish research institutions?	No. Evaluation panels comprise a mix of national and international experts including internationally recognised academics from overseas. All members of the expert evaluation panels sign Confidentiality Agreements and indicate if any conflict of interest exists.

Annex 1: FlexiGrant

Topic	Question	Response
Security	Is the FlexiGrant website secure?	Yes. When logging on to FlexiGrant you should enter HTTPS:// (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure). This is an internet communication protocol that protects the integrity and confidentiality of data between the user's computer and the website.
Registration	How do I register with FlexiGrant?	Please visit https://dafm.flexigrant.com/policy.aspx to register with FlexiGrant. In order to register you must accept DAFM's Privacy Statement and proceed as outlined. Upon registration you will receive two emails, one confirming that your email address is valid and the other validating your registration. Please register early to avoid any technical issues.
	I have a 2015/2017 Project, do I have to register with FlexiGrant, can I submit paper records as previously done?	No, Research Division has migrated all projects from 2013 onwards to a single electronic Grant Management System where all stakeholders can manage their portion of the Grant Management Process online.
Deletion	I no longer wish for my details to remain on FlexiGrant?	In order to be eligible for current/future funding under DAFM's Competitive Research Programmes all applicants must be registered on FlexiGrant. If you are leaving your role and your replacement has been set up on FlexiGrant you may then delete your profile.
GDPR	Why do I have to provide my DOB?	The DOB field is not a mandatory field and there is no requirement to complete this field.
	Why do I have to provide my Gender?	DAFM is committed to ensuring research funded under its Competitive Research Programmes is conducted in full respect of gender equality. Anonymised gender statistics will be produced in order to show research funded by DAFM is inclusive.
Coordinator / Finance Officer	I am a project coordinator, who can I invite to assist me in the completion of the application / progress report?	As the Coordinator you must invite the Principal Investigator, VP of Research and TTO to complete the declaration pages. You may also invite the Finance Officer within your RPO to complete Finances. However we would remind you that the Project Coordinator is responsible for: • All reporting, requests and communication with this Department must be

		collated by the Coordinator and submitted through FlexiGrant • Maintaining good communication with collaborating institutions • All aspects of the project management, including financial management and the timely submission through FlexiGrant of reports and financial tables. • Personal information collected as part of the processing and payment of Research Calls should be obtained and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
	I am the project coordinator / Finance Officer for a project but I am going on long term sick leave, what should I do?	You should notify DAFM immediately and arrange for another officer to take over the project. This replacement can then be assigned to FlexiGrant.
	I am the Finance Officer but I cannot access our projects FlexiGrant	In order to be able to have access to the various projects you must be added to the Project (DAFM must do this).
	I am the Finance Officer but my RPO also has an external company that assists with the completion of finances, can we all register?	DAFM have written to all Finance Officers to request RPOs set up generic email addresses such as "Finance@RPONAME.ie". This would allow the Company to enter the finance details but allow oversight by the RPOs on projects assigned to that Finance Office.
	Our Research Office has not been registered to the new research online portal, nor can we find any means of registering ourselves	There is a requirement for the lead coordinator to invite the Research Office to review and sign the application prior to submitting the application. The Research Office will be notified when the request is sent by the coordinator. The Research Office will then need to register.
	I note that the TTO Office, the project co-ordinator, and the PI, are all required to endorse each application. Can you please advise if there is a particular order to these endorsements? In particular, will the Research Office be able to endorse the application before the TTO Office, or are we obliged to wait until the TTO Office have endorsed each application?	The coordinator will invite the TTO office, PI, and VP to endorse the application. All invitees will have read only access to the application and write access to the page relevant to their role. Invitees should not sign the application until they are satisfied that the information is correct.
	The 2021 Call will close at 13:00 on 28 February must the Research Office and TTO endorse the applications before	Yes, all the pages must be completed and signed prior to the deadline. Applications cannot be submitted until all required fields are complete, this includes

	this deadline?	declarations.
	Is there a Guide for Research Offices and TTO Offices to navigate the portal?	Yes, they are available at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ce553-research/ If you have queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at Research@agriculture.gov.ie .

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