



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



**The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas**



**Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020**

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Farm Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Competitive Call for Proposals

December 2020

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST STAGE APPLICANTS





1. Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is inviting applications for funding in a competitive call for proposals under the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) Initiative. The theme for this call for EIP proposals is farm health, safety and wellbeing. The Department is thus seeking to receive proposals for innovative approaches which address the farm health, safety and wellbeing challenges on Irish farms. This guidance notes sets out

- the background to EIPs
- what is required in submitting a proposal for EIP
- information in relation to the funding available and the duration and number of possible projects
- an outline of the selection process in moving from this call for initial proposals, through to the funding of successful projects for full implementation and roll out.

The European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP) under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP) comes under the remit of Commission Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Specifically, Article 35(1) of that regulation sets out that EIPs are funded as 'co-operation measures.' A fundamental rule of this measure is that a supported project shall be granted to promote forms of co-operation involving at least two entities, who come together to form an 'Operational Group'.

EIPs involve the establishment of such Operational Groups to develop ideas, or take existing ideas/research and put them into practice. The ultimate aim of these innovation partnerships is to road-test new ideas and practices which can then be used more widely by farmers and others. Operational Groups that receive rural development funding are **not research projects** – all EIPs must incorporate a practical element where ideas are tested on the ground. Within this context, this call for EIP proposals is **specifically targeted at proposals related to Farm Health, Safety and Wellbeing.**

2. Overview

This is an open call for proposals structured around a competitive fund. The funding available is for proposals which address farm health, safety and wellbeing challenges on Irish farms. This is linked to Priority 3(b) as set out in EU Regulation 1305/2013 and in Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP), 2014-2020. All proposals must be consistent with this priority and with Ireland's RDP. This call for proposal is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

To succeed, the Operational Groups will rely on fostering communication through stakeholder networking, developing partnerships and dissemination of knowledge and ideas across a wide range of stakeholders. They will support innovative concepts and ideas from among

farmers, advisors, researchers, NGOs and Agri-businesses. Innovation is a key element of EIPs, and all proposals must clearly demonstrate the innovative element around which the proposal is built, as well as explaining how it will be tested on the ground.

An innovative idea can be a brand new approach or it can draw on an approach trialled elsewhere and seek to adapt it to Irish circumstances. An EIP must have a clear link to such **innovation** and the initial application must show this.

Please note:

- the bringing together of actors in an Operational Group to address an issue is not in itself sufficient to qualify a proposal as being innovative;
- all proposals must be located in Ireland (Territory of the Member State).

A total of €1m is available for successful proposals under this call. As set out below, this funding is available to fund the development of detailed project plans at Stage 2 of the application process, as well as to support the full implementation and roll out of those projects which are successful in being chosen for full implementation





It is expected that up to four projects will be selected for full implementation. However, this may be subject to change depending on the number and quality of proposals received. Successful projects should be based on a **maximum implementation period of 1 year**.

The call for proposals is based on the broad theme of farm health, safety and wellbeing. Within this theme, it is expected that the proposals received would cover a range of possible approaches to addressing challenges in this area. A key element of EIPs is that it is the Operational Group itself which will identify the specific farm, health, safety and wellbeing challenge that they wish to address. The Group will then build its proposal around the specific innovative way in which they propose to address this challenge.

The structure of this call for proposals has thus deliberately been kept broad to facilitate the widest range of ideas and proposals. Again, **innovation and partnership is the key** here, trying something new on the ground and involving a range of actors in the process.



3. Operational Groups

The **Operational Group** is the collection of people who are in the best position to help realise the project goals. All EIPs must be delivered by an Operational Group, and there must be more than one member of the Operational Group. The application should set out clearly all the actors who will be members of the Operational Group. It must also set out what the role and contribution of each Operational Group member will be in relation to achieving the goals of the project including which member(s) will be lead partner. At Stage 1 of the process, we are seeking an outline of the members for the Operational Group. Proposals which successfully move to Stage 2 of the selection will be required at that stage to finalise the membership and roles of all actors in the Operational Group.



Operational Groups are expected to be hands on in terms of working towards the implementation of their proposal. Operational Groups shall be set up by interested actors such as farmers, researchers, advisors,



NGOs, foresters and businesses involved in the agriculture and food sector etc. who are relevant for achieving the objectives of the farm health, safety and wellbeing EIP.

An Operational Group can also bring together any advisors/multipliers who have the expertise and knowledge needed by the project at various times, or who can disseminate/promote aspects of the project, but who do not need to be a permanent part of the Operational Group. Successfully selected Operational Groups must establish internal procedures that ensure that their operation and decision making is transparent and that situations of conflict of interest are avoided. Please note, only Operational Groups based in Ireland will be eligible for this funding.

4. Process for Open Call for Farm Health, Safety and Wellbeing EIPs



STAGE 1 – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- The initial call for the submission of ideas/ proposals has now been advertised.
- Proposals are to be returned to DAFM **by midnight on Friday 29th January**
- An Expert Evaluation Committee will examine all proposals with reference to the selection criteria listed at Table 1 below, and prepares a shortlist of applicants to go forward to Stage 2. The Expert Evaluation Committee includes members from DAFM and external experts in the field of farm health, safety and wellbeing
- It is envisaged that all applicants will be informed of results within 5 weeks of the submission of applications.

STAGE 2 – DETAILED PROJECT PLANS

- Successful first stage applicants will be asked to compile and submit a complete and detailed project plan at Stage 2. The costs for preparing this project plan are funded via DAFM/the RDP;
- In advance of Stage 2, DAFM will deliver a support workshop for those projects which have been successful at Stage 1. This will provide support and information for the projects in relation to what is required at Stage 2 of the process – content of project plans, level of detail required etc;
- Completed operational plans to be submitted to DAFM.
- The Expert Evaluation committee will examine all the project plans and assessment will be based on the plans, projected outcomes, projected costs and timeframes based on established principles. The Committee presents a shortlist of projects to be accepted.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS – FULL IMPLEMENTATION

- Projects that are successful at Stage 1 and Stage 2 move to full implementation. Implementation is funded via DAFM / the RDP
- In total €1m is available to fund the development of project plans at Stage 2 **and** the implementation of successful project proposals. It is expected that there will be up to 4 successful projects moving to full implementation. However, this may be subject to change depending on the number and quality of proposals received. Successful projects should be based on a maximum implementation period of 1 year.



- DAFM will again deliver a workshop for the successful teams moving to full implementation to clarify what is required at this stage of the process – reporting requirements, payment mechanisms etc.
- DAFM will liaise on an ongoing basis with successful projects as they progress through the implementation phase.

As with all RDP Schemes, each stage of the process will be subject to a control regime based on inspection and administrative checks to be implemented by the Department.

5. Assessment of Stage1 proposals

Only completed applications received on or before the closing date specified in the public call for proposals will be assessed. The proposals will be assessed according to the following two-phase process:

i. Initial Assessment

Each EIP application will be initially assessed by DAFM staff to ensure that it is complete, eligible and contains adequate information to properly assess the project proposal.

ii. Review by Expert Evaluation Committee

DAFM will convene an Expert Evaluation Committee with members drawn from DAFM and relevant external experts. All applications will be reviewed in accordance with the criteria set out in **Table 1**. A pass mark of 600 marks will be required to progress and the selection committee will then choose the proposals with the highest marks to be invited to submit a full project plan for assessment at Stage 2 of the process.

At the end of the Stage 1 evaluation process both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome.

Table 1

Proposed Selection Criteria for the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups – Farm Health, Safety and Wellbeing Projects:		
Criterion	Components	Marks
Quality of the Proposal	Technical, managerial, and scientific aspects as well as value for money.	350
Relevance and Impact	Clear relevance to the identified RDP priorities, clear presence of innovation, and benefits and wider applicability in addressing challenges of farm health, safety and wellbeing.	350
Quality of the Operational Group	Relevant qualifications and experience, contribution proposed, and representative nature.	300



6. Assessment of Stage 2 Detailed Project Plans

The Stage 2 evaluation will incorporate a greater focus on the detail of the project proposals, feasibility, innovation and applicability going forward. A separate application form, guidelines and other associated documents for the Stage 2 evaluation will be provided after the Stage 1 evaluations have concluded. There will also be a workshop for the successful groups, delivered by DAFM, to clarify what is required at this stage of the process. This may be in the form of an online workshop.

7. Contract Discussions and Procedure for Award of Funding

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process at each Stage. After Stage 2, the Operational Groups selected for funding for implementation will be informed of the indicative level of funding and will be invited to address any issues raised by the Expert Evaluation Committee and/or the DAFM administrative team within a given timeframe.

As part of the contract discussions, DAFM may also:

- Seek additional information it considers necessary on the details of the proposal.
- Negotiate adjustments to proposal details to achieve compliance with the regulation or to improve the efficiency of the proposal.

For projects which are successful at Stage 2, once the project detail has been agreed 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.

Applications must be made on the Project Application Form – Initial Submission and emailed to EIP@agriculture.gov.ie by the closing date.

Deadline for completed Stage 1 application submissions

Midnight Friday, 29th January 2021

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.

