

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

<b>Marine Research Programme</b>	
<b>Research Programme:</b>	<b>Infrastructure Supporting Programme</b>
<b>Award Type:</b>	<b>Specialist Marine Research Equipment and Small Infrastructure Call May 2017</b>
<b>Funding Instrument:</b>	<b>Marine Science and Technology Infrastructure</b>

### BACKGROUND:

#### **Investment in Marine Research Equipment and Small Infrastructure**

Ireland's marine research and innovation community have developed capacity under *Sea Change, A Marine Knowledge, Research and Innovation Strategy for Ireland 2007-2013*. In the years since 2007, the Irish science, research and innovation landscape has changed significantly. Through the work of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Ireland has risen rapidly in international science impact rankings. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has overseen unprecedented levels of investment in research infrastructure. The Irish Research Council (IRC) is investing in researcher excellence in a broad range of disciplines. Most significantly, through the national research prioritisation process and culminating in the publication of *Innovation 2020*, there is a high degree of coordination in the State's approach to research funding. As a consequence of this, and Ireland's increasing marine research capacity, research funding for marine topics now comes from a variety of sources.

The marine policy landscape has also evolved significantly over the last decade, mirrored at both EU and national level. Key milestones include the development of Integrated Maritime Policy by the EU (and related initiatives such as its *Blue Growth Strategy*) and nationally the publication in 2012 of Ireland's first integrated marine plan – *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*. Spearheaded by the Government Interdepartmental Marine Coordination Group, Ireland is putting in place a range of integrated enabling actions to achieve the goals and ambitions set out in *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*. A number of these actions are focussed on research, knowledge, technology and innovation.

Of crucial importance in the ongoing evolution of Ireland's marine research capacity, is the integration of expertise from areas previously unconnected to the marine sector. This reflects the concept of "marinising" introduced by the report of Development Task Force. By encouraging interaction between disciplines, the marine sector can benefit from Ireland's wider research talent pool and research infrastructure.

## **RATIONALE:**

Following the period of the investment under *Sea Change* Ireland's marine research and innovation capacity has now matured to a point where the marine research and innovation community are leveraging EU research and INTERREG funding through the utilisation of pre-existing, equipment and infrastructure. As part of the preparation of the draft National Marine Research & Innovation Strategy 2021, the Marine Institute has carried out a detailed analysis of national marine research capability and the range of supports that are available to the marine research and innovation community. While the strategy is currently being finalised following public consultation, the results of this analysis clearly reveal a deficit in relation to capital supports for specialist marine research equipment. This deficit is compounded by a lack of national funding to acquire specialist marine equipment that has existed since the effective conclusion of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) previously funded by the HEA. SFI periodically operates an infrastructure call, the most recent of which was opened in 2015. These calls are open to all SFI mandated research fields, and have a minimum threshold that is higher than a range of equipment necessary for capacity development for a number of marine research areas. Consequently there has in effect been a funding gap created in the marine area.

This equipment and small infrastructure call is thus designed to target a gap in marine research equipment and small infrastructure funding that exists between supports available to Higher Education Institutes via HEA capital grants and large scale infrastructure from SFI and Enterprise Ireland, targeted explicitly to the marine research community.

## **AIMS:**

The funding is intended to enable the marine research and innovation community to purchase specialist equipment which is required to support current and future activities. Such equipment should enable those researchers and innovators to leverage future development funding at a national and international level. Thus it should be clearly demonstrated how the acquisition of the specialist equipment will support activities which are aligned to national policy priorities, and the potential contribution of the equipment to future activity. The equipment should also contribute to the national pool such that it becomes a resource which can be leveraged by existing and future research and innovation networks. The acquisition of the equipment should not create a requirement for additional technical expertise, as it is intended to support the existing research and innovation capacity.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

The Marine Institute wishes to invite proposals which should address the following:

- Provide a full description of the proposed specialist equipment acquisition, including costings, timescale and proposed level of use.
- Convincingly demonstrate how the acquisition of the specialist marine equipment meets the activities of applicants which are relevant to national marine policy objectives.
- Show value for money in the purchase of the equipment.
- Clearly describe the benefit of the acquired equipment to the current and potential future activities of the applicant, and potential benefit to the Irish research and innovation community. This should include a description of how the proposed equipment will develop one or more of the following:
  - Human capacity, i.e. skills development
  - Infrastructural capability i.e. the enhancement of an existing or new facility or research capacity

- Networks and Relationships, i.e. participation in national or international research consortia.
- Demonstrate the capacity of the applicant to operate and maintain the equipment once the grant aid ceases.

The proposals must be relevant to one of the themes identified in Annex 1, and justified according to the policy drivers indicated in this annex.

#### **DELIVERABLES & INTENDED IMPACT:**

The specialist marine equipment and small infrastructures call is intended to address a need in the Irish marine research and innovation community. The acquisition of the specialist equipment and small infrastructure should raise the level of performance of the community across all marine research and innovation areas.

It is intended that the purchase of specialist equipment should benefit both the applicant and the Irish marine research and innovation community as a whole. The utilisation of this equipment should make a measurable impact on the success of the applicant's activities as measured through research output, the development of new networks, the capacity to increase innovation and the leveraging of future funding.

The acquisition and commissioning of the equipment should be completed within 12 months of award. A report detailing a specific intended usage plan on the level of use and impact of the acquisition should also be produced within 12 months of the award.

#### **FUNDING:**

The amount of funding available will be a minimum award amount of €20,000 and a maximum award amount of €200,000. The total funding available in this call is €2,000,000.

Applications for equipment for less than €20,000 may not be submitted, however a number of items may be combined to meet this threshold where the application can demonstrate that the combined items constitute a coherent equipment suite.

Installation, training on the use of equipment, technical support (for 12 months) and other specified costs are eligible for funding. However, these costs cannot exceed 25% of the equipment/infrastructure purchase value.

All figures are inclusive of VAT.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS AND KEY DATES:**

Initial application must be made through the Marine Institute's online research grant management system [RIMS](#) (please refer to the Guidelines for Applicants).

The application closing date will be **Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017**. Applications will be reviewed by international/national experts and scored on the criteria as stated in the Guidelines for Applicants, particularly use of equipment to advance research, impact and economic growth of organisation.

**Important Dates:**

Call opening:	Thursday, 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Closing date for applications:	Thursday, 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
Expected Announcement of Results:	Early September 2017

Any queries or clarifications should be submitted by email to: [funding@marine.ie](mailto:funding@marine.ie)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/REFERENCE MATERIAL:****Reports:**

Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (2012), Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group. [www.ouroceanwealth.ie](http://www.ouroceanwealth.ie)

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the committee of the Regions, Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth /COM/2012/0494 final/. [Blue Growth](#)

Innovation 2020, Irish Strategy for Science and Technology (2015), Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation. [Innovation 2020](#)

Our Ocean Wealth Development Task Force Report to the Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group (2015). [Report the of Development Task Force](#).

Enterprise 2025: Innovative, Agile, Connected (2015), Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. [Enterprise 2025](#)

National Marine Research & Innovation Strategy 2021 (in prep).

## APPENDIX 1

The Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth* identifies three goals: 1) A thriving maritime economy, 2) Healthy marine ecosystems and 3) Engagement with the sea.

The diagram below (excerpted and modified) from the draft of the National Marine Research and Innovation strategy 2021 identifies the marine research themes relevant to this call and the national policy drivers significant to the development of research and innovation across these themes. Applications under this call must be relevant to one of these themes.

Furthermore applicants must identify which theme is applicable for their proposal and justify the impact of their proposal in relation to these policy drivers.

	Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth	Our Ocean Wealth Development Task Force	Innovation 2020	National Research Prioritisation	Enterprise 2025
<b>A THRIVING MARITIME ECONOMY</b>					
<b>Bioresources</b> - Aquaculture & Biomass Production - Wild Resources - Processing for Food & Other Use - High Value Products	√	√	√	√	√
<b>Advanced Technologies</b>	√	√	√	√	√
<b>Subsea Resources</b>	√	√			√
<b>Renewable Energy</b>	√	√	√	√	√
<b>Transport &amp; Logistics</b>	√	√			√
<b>HEALTHY MARINE ECOSYSTEMS</b>					
<b>Biodiversity, Ecosystems &amp; Food Webs</b>	√		√		
<b>Pollution &amp; Litter</b>	√				
<b>Climate Change</b>	√		√		
<b>Ocean Observation &amp; Seabed Mapping</b>	√	√	√		
<b>ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SEA</b>					
<b>Integrated Policy &amp; Governance</b> - Socio Economics - Law - Planning & Governance - Business Development	√	√			√
<b>Information &amp; Spatial Technologies, Analytics and Modelling</b>	√	√	√		√
<b>Engineering</b>	√	√	√	√	√