NORF
NATIONAL OPEN
RESEARCH FORUM

15 June 2022

National Open Research Forum 2022 Open Research Fund
Call for Expressions of Interest (EOIs)
Deadline: 15 July 2022

Ireland's National Open Research Forum (NORF) requests Expressions of Interest for proposals to address six priority actions in the *National Action Plan for Open Research*. The National Action Plan outlines objectives for the next chapter in Ireland's transition towards open research, including actions commencing in 2022.

The Grants Oversight Committee, a subcommittee of the NORF Steering Group, will oversee the calls process. Expressions of Interest will be peer reviewed by a panel of international experts, and the highest quality expressions will be invited to submit full proposals, which will also be reviewed by the panel. At the end of this two-stage process, it is anticipated that there will be one successful proposal per action.

The process will follow this timeline:

15 June 2022	Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) released
15 July 2022	EOIs due
5 Aug 2022	Full proposals requested from selected EOIs
15 Sept 2022	Full proposals due
15 Oct 2022	Notification to Applicants
1 Nov 2022	Start date for funded projects
1 Nov 2024	Latest end date for funded projects

Proposals will need to address one of the actions noted below, drawn from the draft National Action Plan (NAP). These actions seek to advance key areas of open research at the national level and proposals will need to demonstrate benefit to all stakeholders across the Irish research system.

1: National Open Access Monitoring

Short description:
- Develop a monitor for open access at the national level, initially through pilot reports and a national dashboard to publish, analyse and track progress towards 100% OA.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Work to arrive at a community-agreed definition for Open Access at the national level
- Building on previous NORF work, engage with national stakeholders (institutions, funders etc.) to gather and validate user requirements for Open Access monitoring.
- Work with external partners to deliver reports and a national dashboard to help Ireland publish, analyse and track OA rates at the national level.

- Document challenges that should be addressed in long-term monitoring solutions and recommend steps to be taken, including workflows for data validation and enrichment.
- Work to improve the quality and depth of data used for the national dashboard in line with international best practice through stakeholder collaboration with institutions, funders etc. and direct input or validation where possible.
- Following NORF and Science Europe recommendations, ensure that the monitor uses data and bibliographic databases that are openly accessible, is built using open infrastructure, and is publicly accessible to view and analyse.

Background information:
- National Action Plan see A6.2.1
- NORF policy brief on National Open Access monitoring
- Science Europe briefing paper on Open Access monitoring

Budget range: €150,000-200,000

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2. Open Access repository assessment and alignment

Short description:
- Conduct a national programme of open access repository assessment and alignment to deliver standardised metadata nationally while building infrastructure alignment in line with international best practices.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Conduct a national programme of Open Access repository assessment and alignment, including development of an agreed national roadmap for implementing an enhanced and coordinated OA repository infrastructure in Ireland. As part of this programme:
  - Conduct an audit of existing practices that identifies strengths and weaknesses in existing approaches, mapped against international best practice (Plan S requirements for OA repositories, OpenAIRE guidelines, COAR, etc.).
  - Document metadata standards and best practices that are driven by a set of practitioner and community guidelines and that focus on interoperability, quality, and format.
  - Develop specific best practices around leveraging metadata to consistently identify research publications.
  - Develop a national approach and method to automatically deposit from commercial publishers to local and national OA repositories.
- Identify candidates for repository alignment and pilot a scheme to implement technical upgrades and enhancements.

Background information:
- National Action Plan see A4.1.1
- NORF policy brief on Coordinated support for OA repositories
- Plan S requirements for Open Access repositories

Budget range: €150,000-220,000

3. Open Access transition programme

Short description:
- Conduct a feasibility study and pilot with a view to establishing a publicly-owned, centralised national platform for Diamond OA publication of journals and books.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Map the landscape of Irish scholarly publishing, including a comprehensive listing of Irish scholarly journals and publishers.
- Engage with Irish scholarly journals and publishers to document OA status/options, understand challenges associated with transitioning to OA, and identify possible routes to Open Access.
- Conduct a feasibility study for a publicly-owned, centralised national platform for Diamond OA publication of journals and books. The study should include delivery (and potential piloting) of a set of technical and non-technical requirements, infrastructure options, and costings for a national platform designed for Irish scholarly journals and publishers and associated national stakeholders.
- Following NORF recommendations, ensure that the platform for Diamond OA adheres to the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure.

Background information:
- National Action Plan see A4.3.1
- NORF policy brief on Supporting bibliodiversity in Ireland
- Action Plan for Diamond Open Access
- Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure

Budget range: €150,000-210,000

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4. Open Research training programme

Short description:
- Develop a national open research training programme (online, in-person or blended) to enable researchers at all stages of their career, from early to late, as well as postgraduate students, to upskill in open research practices.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Develop a national open research training programme aimed at Irish researchers at all stages of their career by defining and developing a core curriculum that builds on and adapts leading national and international examples of pedagogy, teaching and learning materials, and skills frameworks for open research.
- As part of outreach, engagement and testing, establish a network of Irish Open Research Trainers to exchange best practice and teaching and learning materials.
- Implement the national open research training programme in a pilot phase.
- Following NORF recommendations, ensure that training materials are developed and disseminated as Open Educational Resources and employ Open Educational Practices.

Background information:
- National Action Plan see A3.1.1
- NORF policy brief on National open research training programme

Budget range: €100,000-120,000

5. National data stewardship network

Short description:
- Establish a national data stewardship network across research performing organisations, funders, and related research support services and infrastructures to build national capacity and develop a collective voice and pool of expertise.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Establish and manage a national data stewardship network across RPOs, RFOs and related research support services and infrastructures. Use the network to:
  - Build national capacity in data stewardship and develop a national approach to training in this area informed by best practices internationally.
  - Support the professionalisation of the data steward role within the Irish research landscape and outline pay scales, competencies and career paths and trajectories for data stewards to enable the sustainable development and retention of core data expertise.
  - Socialise/educate senior leaders across the research and innovation sector on the importance of good data infrastructure, inhouse expertise in multiple units, coordinated thinking, and risk management.
  - Liaise with industry and public sector representatives to identify common competencies and data skills required to ensure sustainable and alternative career pathways and outlets for professional data stewards.

Background information:
- [National Action Plan see A5.1.1](#)
- [NORF policy brief on Coordinated support for data stewardship](#)

Budget range: €70,000-100,000

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6. Shared data storage service pilot

Short description:
- Develop a national shared data storage service for active data, starting with a pilot for diverse research groups. Note that NORF seeks to fund this initial contribution to the broader national data ecosystem, but it is outside of its remit to fund the expansion of this pilot, so applications should seek to address how the pilot can be grown into a national service.

Key objectives and expected outcomes:
- Develop and pilot a national shared data storage service for the active data phase of the research data lifecycle (associated with creating, sharing and storing, and processing/analysing data). The pilot should meet the needs of diverse research groups that are representative of varying disciplinary and institutional/organisational needs.
- As part of design and delivery, report on the overall requirements analysis, stakeholder consultation, technical architecture, alternative options considered, and justification for solutions chosen.
- Evaluate the pilot phase and document steps to grow the service into a national service that can be availed of through the lowest barriers to entry possible. Note key requirements around issues such as management of sensitive data, authentication, GDPR compliance, scalability, and financial sustainability and governance for a scaled-up national solution.

- Map and test how the national service could link, contribute to and/or federate with further services for research data management and open research at the national and international levels.

Background information:
- [National Action Plan see A5.2.1](#)
- [NORF policy brief on National shared data storage infrastructure](#)

Budget range: €150,000-200,000

Grant Funding Principles

Institutions should be aware of the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular (13/2014) relating to the Management of and Accountability of Grants. Institutions will be asked to confirm that the funds provided by the HEA as outlined in the grant allocation letter will be used for the purposes intended and that the institution will comply with the Statement of Principles for Grantees (Appendix 2 of Circular 13/2014) relating to: Clarity; Governance; Value for money; and Fairness.

Assessment Criteria

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by the International Peer Review panel based on excellence of approach and outcomes, how well they propose to forward the identified target action, their benefit to the Irish research and higher education community as a whole, and budget justification. In dialogue with the reviewers, the Grants Oversight Committee will also seek to ensure the widest possible coverage of all actions, and may request further information from applicants, or suggest potential partnerships should similar expressions be received.

Additional guidance is included in the EOI application form and budget template (see https://norf.ie/index.php/funding/).