

# Proof of Concept Programme

## Application Guidelines

*Please complete the electronic version of the application form and submit 3 hard copies of this form.*

### APPLICANT DETAILS

- 1) **University name**
- 2) **Department/School:** State the name of the Department/School within the University which will be responsible for the project.
- 3) **Address:** State a full address with postcode.
- 4) **Website:** Give details of the website (if available) of the Department/School/Research Group within your University.
- 5) **Principal Investigator:** State the name, position and contact details of the Principal Investigator who will be the contact person for Invest NI regarding the project.
- 6) **Technology Transfer Office Representative:** Give the name of the Technology Transfer Office representative who will attend the assessment panel interview and sit on the Project Management Panel.
- 7) **Accounts Manager:** Give the name and contact details of your University's Accounts Manager or Finance Office representative who will be responsible for collating the required quarterly reports on expenditure.
- 8) **Name of any Collaborating Institution:** Give the name of any other Institution with which you will be collaborating on the project.

### PROJECT DETAILS

- 9) **Title of Project:** Give a short title by which the Proof of Concept project will be identified.
- 10) **Project Summary:** Include a disclosable summary of the project which should contain general, non-confidential information outlining the background and objectives. The text should not prejudice or divulge any of your Intellectual Property Rights. The disclosable summary should be a self-contained description of the technical aspects of the project to be undertaken. It should be clear and concise for the scientific/technical reader and understandable to a scientifically literate lay reader.
- 11) **Project Description:** State –
  - a) the technical objective/s of the project
  - b) the proposed methodology
  - c) project milestones & deliverables

Further technical details can be appended at the end of the Application Form if required.
- 12) **IP strategy:** state your intention regarding filing of patents or other forms of IP protection.
- 13) **Existing IPR:** State any background patents relevant to the project (Give details: title, patent number). Indicate whether you or the University own these patents or whether you have the rights to use them in this project. Copies of any relevant current patent applications should be appended to your Proof of Concept application.

14) **Competitive Advantage through Innovation:** Explain how the technology/product seeks to achieve competitive advantage through invention or innovation. Compare the technology/product strength and weaknesses with existing technologies/products.

15) **Market Potential:**

The Technology Transfer Office of your University will assist you with this section.

Define the target market, customers, competitors, and the likely route/s to this market and any barriers to entry. Give details of any market assessment undertaken prior to the submission of this application. This section will provide critical input to the independent validation of market potential.

Further market details can be appended to the Application Form if desired.

16) **Regulatory/Ethical Issues:** Give details of any regulatory/ethical issues to be addressed prior to commencing the project. Also indicate if you have obtained, or will need approvals for use of animal or human tissues.

17) **Collaboration:**

**a) General:** Give details of any likely contractual arrangements with any other University or organisation (type, level, and timing). If there are no contractual arrangements, give details of any collaboration between departments, other Universities or organisations that are necessary to achieve the project's objectives.

**b) IPR:** State if you need a licence for any patents, or need to obtain a licence or if you need permission to use materials, software etc in order to carry out the project. Give as much detail as possible.

## PROJECT COSTS

18) *Enter proposed project costs to the nearest £. Note that these costs must reconcile with the cash flows presented in the "Profile of Expenditure" section (No. 21).*

*Costs may be deemed ineligible for funding where a lack of detail or sufficient justification is provided. Project costs must not exceed £80,000.*

**Staff Costs:** For each individual, state the position/grade (e.g. Research Fellow, PDRA, Technician etc), percentage of time to be spent on the project, salary and total costs. Only the costs of those individuals to be specifically employed in connection with the project and detailed in this section will be eligible for grant payment. Note that, unless the posts are being back-filled, Invest NI will not support named/existing members of staff already funded via other government departments e.g. Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) or the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). All cost categories must represent a truly additional cost to the University. Costs associated with the University's Technology Transfer Office are not eligible for support.

**Overheads:** An overhead contribution of 40% of staff costs will be paid.

**Consumables Costs:** Details of consumables/materials that are exclusively required for the successful completion of the project should be listed. For each type, state the amount to be used and the associated cost.

**Patent Costs:** Indicate what patent costs you are likely to incur and whether these are an extension of existing IP or for new IP.

**Subcontracting Costs:** If it is necessary to contract out some of the project work to individuals/organisations outside the University, state the nature of this work, to whom it is likely to be subcontracted and the associated cost. University employees may not be used as subcontractors.

**Additional Essential Equipment Costs:** Proof of Concept does not normally support equipment costs. However, Invest NI recognises that in some cases the purchase of essential equipment may be necessary where leasing or subcontracting is not appropriate. If the equipment falls within this category, give a description and the associated costs.

**Other Costs:** e.g. small initial trials and/or testing.

- 19) **Audit costs:** These will be covered by Invest NI over and above the grant awarded. *Audit fees per quarterly claim of over £10,000 must not exceed £500.*

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 20) **Overview of Project Management:** Provide an outline of the project management team to include the following:
- (i) The background and experience of the individual/s who will manage the project and the percentage of time they will spend on the project.
  - (ii) The background, experience and roles of any other staff working on the project.
- 21) **Profile of Expenditure:** Please complete the Table to indicate the predicted quarterly expenditure. Note that these must reconcile with the Project Costs provided at section 18.
- 22) **Estimated Project Start and End Dates:** State the estimated start and end dates for the project. Note that there will be approximately two months between a deadline for receipt of proposals and the issue of a Letter of Offer. The project cannot commence until an Invest NI Letter of Offer is accepted by the University. As a general rule, projects will be of 6 – 12 months duration, although this may be extended to up to 18 months, by agreement between the University and Invest NI.

## PREVIOUS FUNDING

- 23) Have you applied before for Proof of Concept funding?  
If “yes”, provide the title and reference number of the project and the date of submission to Invest NI. Also detail any relationship between this application and previous applications.
- 24) Have you applied or will you be applying for other public funding for this or a similar project? If “yes”, provide the project title, the past or proposed date of application, the decision outcome (if available) and the funding body.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- 25) Give details of previous research that is particularly relevant to this proposal. Give a maximum of three examples to include the title of the project/area of research, the source of funding and a short summary (100 words maximum for each example). Also include the most recent RAE rating(s) for the School(s)/Department(s)/Research Area(s) from which your Proof of Concept Project Team is drawn. This information is required to provide some background on the research expertise and track record of the research group(s) which will be involved in the proposed Proof of Concept project.

## DISCLOSURE TO OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- 26) This application may be passed to government departments for comment. Are there any government departments you do not wish your application to be forwarded to? If so, please give reasons.

## DECLARATIONS

- 27) & 28) It is vital that both declarations are completed as requested in the application form and, in each case, by representatives authorised by the University to make such commitments.

## SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED APPLICATIONS

- 29) Please provide 3 signed hard copies of the application and one scanned electronic copy to be forwarded to [POC@investni.com](mailto:POC@investni.com)

Invest NI will not accept applications from Principal Investigators involved in current Proof of Concept projects; however, new applications are welcomed from Principal Investigators who have completed previous Proof of Concept projects. Invest NI will accept only one application per Principal Investigator.