



## Seed Funding Applicant Guidance

This guidance will help you decide whether the Seed Funding Programme is right for you and what you need to think about before applying. Please read it carefully before completing your application.

### Background

The All-Island PPI Ignite Network Phase II commenced in March 2026. The Network is led by the Central Office and includes 11 university partners, 10 all-island partners and 82 local partnerships.

The Health Research Board has allocated €500,000 for seed funding activity, over the five years of Phase II, that will be managed by the Central Office. The purpose of the funding is to help patients, members of the public, patient and community organisations, and researchers work together on health and social care research.

### Who can apply?

You can apply for Seed Funding if you are a:

- patient or member of the public
- researcher
- patient organisation
- community organisation
- charity
- organisation involved in health and social care research on the island of Ireland

Applicants must be based on the island of Ireland.

You do not need to already have research funding to apply. The Seed Funding Programme is particularly intended to support PPI at an early stage, including before funding for a research project has been secured.

### Who cannot apply?

You cannot apply if:

- You are based outside the island of Ireland
- You are applying for, hold, or are employed through funding from the tobacco industry or the alcohol industry and related organisations. This includes relevant tobacco and e-cigarette companies and, in relation to alcohol, organisations funded by alcohol companies or trade associations in which alcohol companies are members.

### What are we looking for?

Your proposed activity must involve meaningful patient and public involvement (PPI) and the funding you request must be needed for the activity to take place.

We are particularly interested in activities that:

- start or develop PPI
- bring researchers, patients and members of the public together
- help improve or shape future research
- support people to develop PPI for grant/funding applications
- build PPI skills and experience
- try new ways of involving patients and the public in research

You do not need to meet all of these criteria. It is important that you can clearly explain what you want to do, why PPI is important to the activity and what you hope will come from it.



## What kinds of activities could be funded?

The Seed Funding Programme is designed to be flexible. For example, you might ask for funding to:

- bring patients, members of the public and researchers together to explore a research idea
- involve patients or the public in developing a research funding application
- start a new PPI group
- develop a new partnership
- try a new way of involving people in research
- organise an event or activity that will help shape future research.

These are examples rather than a complete list.

## What costs can the funding cover?

Funding can be used for reasonable costs that are directly related to your proposed activity.

For example, this could include:

- compensation for patients or members of the public time, for example, vouchers.
- travel
- venue hire
- refreshments (non-alcoholic)
- other reasonable costs needed to carry out the activity

## When submitting your project budget, costs must be itemised. For example:

5 x PPI contributors for 2h @ €30 voucher per hour (€300)

6 x lunches @ €12.50 (€75, for facilitator and PPI contributors)

If you are unsure whether a particular cost is eligible, please contact [hello@ppiignite.ie](mailto:hello@ppiignite.ie) before applying.

## The Seed Funding Programme will fund compensation for patients' or members of the public's time at the following rates:

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| One Hour  | €30  |
| Two Hours | €50  |
| Half Day  | €75  |
| Full day  | €150 |

**If your institutional PPI compensation policy differs from the rates here, please state this in the application. If your application meets the eligibility criteria, you will be required to submit a copy of the institutional policy before funds are awarded.**

## What if I need accessibility or EDI supports?

We want people to be able to take part in PPI regardless of their accessibility needs. If the additional funding is needed solely for reasonable accessibility or equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) supports, over the stream limit, please include this in your application.

This might include:

- Irish Sign Language interpretation
- accessible transport
- translation
- another reasonable adjustment that enables someone to take part

You will need to clearly identify these costs in your application and briefly explain why they are needed.

**PPI contributors should be identified in advance so requirements are known at the time of application**



## What will not be funded?

The Seed Funding Programme is intended to help make **new** PPI activity possible. It is not intended to replace funding that should already be available from another source.

We will not fund:

- activities that have already taken place
- routine or ongoing PPI activities
- ongoing running or operational costs
- salaries or salary replacement
- institutional overheads
- equipment, stationery or general design costs
- purchase of alcohol or alcoholic drinks
- costs already funded from another source
- costs that are not related to the activity we have agreed to fund
- room hire within your own/a collaborating organisation

## What if my research project already has funding?

You can still apply in limited circumstances. If your proposed activity is connected to an existing funded project, you will need to clearly show that:

- the activity is additional to what was originally funded
- it could not reasonably have been planned when the original funding was secured
- it cannot be paid for from the existing project budget

The Seed Funding Programme cannot be used to replace funding that should already be available through an existing research grant.

## Which funding stream should I choose?

Choose **Stream 1 Project Seed Funding** if you need up to €400 for a smaller PPI activity. You can apply throughout the year.

Choose **Stream 2 Development Seed Funding** if your activity needs more than €400 and involves a larger piece of developmental work. Stream 2 opens at specific times during the year.

Please note: If you need more than €400 only because of accessibility or EDI costs, you may still be able to apply through Stream 1.

## Do I need to think about environmental sustainability?

Yes. We ask applicants to think about the environmental impact of their proposed activity and to use more sustainable options where practical. This could include thinking about travel, choosing an accessible and convenient location, using online meetings where appropriate, or avoiding printing unnecessary materials.



## What happens after I submit my application?

We may contact you if we need more information before we can assess your application. Being asked for more information does not mean that your application has been approved. Funding is limited, so meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee that your application will receive funding. The assessment process depends on which stream you apply to. Your application will be treated confidentially and no details will be shared with anyone else during the review process.

If your application is not approved, you will be given brief feedback explaining why. If your application is approved, the PPI Ignite Network Central Office will contact you with details on next steps. **You will be required to use your funding within four months of approval or you will need to reapply.**

**Stream 1 Project Seed Funding:** Two members of the All-Island PPI Ignite Network Central Office will review your application. Applications are normally reviewed each week. If the two reviewers cannot agree, a third reviewer will consider the application.

**Stream 2 Development Seed Funding:** Two members of the Central Office will first check that your application is eligible. Eligible applications will then be considered by a Review Panel against the published assessment criteria. We will contact you when the assessment process is complete.

If your application is approved, the following information will be displayed on the Seed Funding page of the All-Island PPI Ignite Network Website:

- name of applicant
- activity title
- funding awarded
- date of award
- date activity complete

Displaying this information publicly is in keeping with the Network's commitment to transparency and inclusion.

## How will I receive the funding?

How the funding is provided will depend on what you are using it for. For example, if vouchers for patients or members of the public are the only cost, the Central Office will normally purchase and distribute the vouchers directly.

For other approved costs, payment will be arranged through the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences Accounts Payable process. You may need to provide some additional information or complete documentation before payment can be processed.

We will explain the payment arrangements and expected timeline if your application is successful.

## What will I need to do when my activity is complete?

At the end of your activity, we will ask you to complete a short Completion Statement. You will need to confirm that the activity took place and briefly tell us what was achieved. Where possible we ask for a photograph of the event. You are required to send us copies of any receipts and other documents showing how the funding was used as we may need them as part of an audit.



### **What happens if my plans change?**

We understand that plans can sometimes change after funding has been approved.

If you need to make a significant change to the activity or to how you plan to use the funding, please contact the Central Office before making the change, or spending funds.

We may approve reasonable changes where they are still consistent with the purpose of the original award.

### **What records do I need to keep?**

Keep any receipts, invoices and other documents relating to how you used the funding for five years.

The Central Office will audit funded activities to check that funding has been used for the approved purpose. If your activity is selected for audit, you will be asked to provide the relevant original supporting documents.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can I apply if I am not a researcher?**

Yes. Patients and members of the public, patient organisations, community organisations, charities and other organisations involved in health and social care research are very welcome to apply, as well as researchers.

### **Can I apply for something that has already happened?**

No. Activities that have already taken place and costs that have already been incurred will not be funded.

### **Can I apply if my research project already has funding?**

Only in specific circumstances. You will need to clearly show that the proposed activity is additional to the existing project, could not reasonably have been planned when the original funding was secured, and cannot be paid for from the existing project budget.

### **Can I apply for more than €400 through Stream 1?**

Normally, no, you should use Stream 2. However, your application can exceed €400 where the additional amount is solely for pre-specified reasonable accessibility or EDI supports.

### **Do I need to keep receipts?**

Yes. Keep receipts, invoices and any other supporting documents relating to your funded activity, as they are required for audit.

### **Who can I contact if I am not sure whether my idea is eligible?**

Please contact [hello@ppiignite.ie](mailto:hello@ppiignite.ie) and we will be happy to help.

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