

Marine Institute SmartBay
National Infrastructure Access Programme (NIAP)

Grant-Aid Guidelines for Applicants
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CONTACT DETAILS

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Objectives

A key aspect of the Marine Institute SmartBay NIAP is to establish a modest fund to support researchers wishing to access the SmartBay Marine and Renewable Energy Test Site through a contribution to additional costs associated with deployments (Infrastructure Access Fund). Our goal is to rapidly grow the facility's user base to encompass academic research teams, SMEs, and MNCs, nationally and internationally, and to demonstrate significant socio-economic impact through the growth of an associated industry base that commercialises the research outputs, or uses the technologies to enhance productivity. The Marine Institute SmartBay NIAP aims to promote synergies between companies and academia in their research and development efforts within the marine sector, by facilitating access to the test site and its associated facilities and supports.

Fund Available

The SmartBay NIAP fund will be made available through the Marine Institute to enable both Academia and Industry and other relevant organisations to access the SmartBay Marine and Renewable Energy Test Site. Applications are invited for projects that require funding to access the facility, or its data feeds to carry out scientific research and/or technology development requiring the test, demonstration and validation of novel sensors, equipment, materials, coatings and data products within the marine environment. Applications must fit the thematic areas described below. The fund is expected to be **150,000 Euro in total**, and we expect to fund 5 to 8 awards to research teams through a national competitive process, which will be open to both academia and industry throughout the Island of Ireland requiring access to the test site and its data feeds.

Infrastructure Available for Access

An updated and detailed description of the facilities and support services that can be accessed through this programme can be found on the SmartBay website (www.smartbay.ie). Below is a brief outline of the facilities available at the Galway Bay Marine and Renewable Energy Test Site off Spiddal:

- Cabled observatory: The test site is equipped with a cabled underwater node that provides power and data connectivity to instruments, sensors and other equipment. The node is connected to shore via a hybrid electrical/optical cable, carrying power and high bandwidth connectivity. Approximately 10 interfaces ("science ports") are available to support the test and validation of instrumentation, sensors and prototype wave energy devices and to support data collection for research projects. These interfaces can provide several combinations of power/bandwidth to cover most user requirements. Special purpose hybrid interfaces can also be used if the available science port configurations are not sufficient. In addition, a set of permanent instrumentation will be deployed in the observatory with the purpose of characterizing the environmental conditions in the site and to provide a reference dataset.
- Databuoys: An instrumented databuoy with sufficient internal power to host several sensors and instruments and power harvesting capability to provide autonomy and redundant

wireless links to shore, for near real-time data transmission.

- Acoustic array: An array of hydrophones installed in the test site, acquiring high-resolution acoustic data in the area.
- Data Management and Marine Operations: In addition to the above facilities data acquisition and dissemination support including project management and marine operations support will be provided by SmartBay and the Marine Institute for all NIAP projects.

Appendix 2 lists other supporting facilities and services.

Calls for proposals may target one or more of the facilities available for access. When preparing a proposal, applicants should pay due regard to these guidelines and any further information contained in the call. All users of the facility must comply with the requirements of the Health, Safety, Quality and Environmental (HSEQ) management system for the facility.

Applications and SmartBay support

Proposals should be written in a manner that demonstrates familiarity with SmartBay infrastructure and resources and reference how the different elements of the available infrastructure are to be utilised as part of the research effort.

To ensure the most efficient and effective use of SmartBay Ireland and Marine Institute resources and the effective delivery of all funded programmes, applicants must contact the SmartBay Ireland team prior to submission of their proposal to discuss: technical support required; sampling strategies; equipment integration requirements; assistance in data collection; analysis and dissemination requirements. This will ensure adequate provision is made for the marinisation of proposed instruments, provision of power, data transmission and equipment calibrations.

All awards will undergo a review process with the SmartBay team to assess how the infrastructure can be improved to meet the researchers' needs for future deployments. Therefore, all funded researchers will be required to deliver a feedback form, to be submitted within three months following project completion.

Who May Apply?

Applications will be accepted from research performing organisations (Higher Education Institutions, Public Research Bodies and Industry) on the Island of Ireland. The applications may be led by any of the proponent organisations and collaborative applications are encouraged.

Industry applicants must have their registered office address based in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Grant-Aid Rates and Eligible Costs

This call for research proposals is intended to fund not-for-profit or pre-commercial research on a reimbursement basis. Funding is provided for up to **100% of eligible costs**, depending on the nature of the organisation undertaking the research. Table 1 below indicates the maximum levels of grant-aid rates applicable to each type of organisation.

Table 1 Maximum level of applicable grant-aid rates

Higher Education Institute/Research Institute/ Other Public Research Body	Industry	
	SME	MNC
100%	75%	50%

Eligible costs are defined as **direct** or **indirect costs** incurred in carrying out the research project. They must fulfil the following criteria:

- They must be **actual**;
- They must be **reasonable** and **wholly necessary** for the project;
- They must be incurred **during the lifetime** of the project;
- They must be **recorded** in the accounts for the project, which must be maintained during the lifetime of the project and reported on as required by the Marine Institute;
- They must **not be funded from any other source**; and
- They must be **incurred solely to advance the research project**.

The eligible **cost categories** are shown under the Terms and Conditions below.

Research Themes

[Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland \(2012\)](#) sets out the Government’s vision, high-level goals and key enabling actions to put in place the appropriate policy, governance and business climate to enable Ireland’s marine potential to be realised.

The [National Marine Research & Innovation Strategy 2017-2021](#) identified the need to increase opportunities for researchers in Ireland to access national infrastructure and facilities to carry out marine research, and test equipment in situ, as a key implementing action for the strategy. The strategic objectives are to:

- Raise research capacity across the 15 research themes.
- Target research funding, with the overall goal of raising research maturity, to topics matching requirements articulated in state policies and sectoral plans.
- Have coherence in the approach to marine research by the various state actors involved in funding marine research.

Applicants will be required to select one of the eligible research themes when completing the application details on the Marine Institute’s online grant management system (RIMS).



Note: only one theme may be selected, which is the main research focus of the award. 14 of the 15 themes are eligible (Bioresources and its related sub-themes are not eligible under this call).

Applications should be of a specific focused nature, aiming at solving or giving further insight into a particular problem in the marine, ideally with a future potential commercial application. Some examples are as follows:

- Ocean Observation

Research focused on harmful algae blooms, optical and acoustic properties of seawater, ocean currents, waves, local or regional circulation and other basic marine research such as bio-acoustics.

- Biodiversity, Eco-systems & Food-webs

Monitoring of fish stocks and environmental conditions. Developing methods for observing fish stocks and fish behaviour. Monitoring fish health, environmental conditions, the effects of harmful algae blooms and the development of decision-support tools. *Please note that no active animal or plant manipulation can be performed in the Galway Bay Marine and Renewable Energy Test Site.*

- Advanced Technologies

Research focused on progressing novel sensors up the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale, intelligent systems and sensor platforms, marine technologies such as antifouling coating technologies and the application of information and communication technologies to the marine sector.

- Testing and Demonstrating

Test, demonstration and validation of environmental sensors, coatings, materials, connectors and components, AUV's, ROV's gliders, marine sensors and prototype Wave Energy Converters (WECs).

Applications must clearly identify the themes with which the proposed work aligns and demonstrate the specific outputs and deliverables that will arise from deployment or data collection within/from the facilities available in the test site. Multi-disciplinary applications are also encouraged.

Evaluation of Applications

A panel of national/international experts established by the Marine Institute's Research Funding Office will evaluate eligible proposals. All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure *objectivity, fairness, quality and confidentiality*.

Eligible proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Strategic context, rationale and benefits and impacts of the research;
2. Demonstration of the use of SmartBay infrastructure and support;
3. The scientific and technical quality of the research project;



4. Scientific quality/track record of the research team and technical capability to carry out the project;
5. Multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach of the research;
6. Value for money and level of other funds provided by applicants to deliver the project.

Further detail on the evaluation criteria and scoring is provided in **Appendix 1. PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY**

Application Procedure

Please note that you must contact the SmartBay team before submitting your proposal. Interested applicants should contact Rogério Chumbinho to discuss their proposed project. This initial contact will allow the SmartBay team to confirm the technical feasibility of a particular project and will assess the financial feasibility of the project and provide guidance on how to cost the project and before a proposal is submitted.

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Submit final application forms online:

Applications must be submitted using the appropriate **Application Form**. An electronic copy of this application form can be downloaded from the Marine Institute’s online **Research Information Management System (RIMS)**. The application form includes instructions for its completion.

Only applications made on the appropriate application form will be accepted for evaluation and no other materials are required. The application forms and onscreen fields are structured to capture the information required to evaluate proposals and applicants are requested to adhere strictly to the stipulated headings and word limits.

RIMS will validate that all the mandatory fields of the online application have been completed. If they have not, you will be required to complete them before the application can be submitted. Do not leave submission of your application until the last minute, as you may find errors at this stage that need to be corrected.

A detailed project budget must be provided using the **MS EXCEL budget template** provided as part of the application form. An electronic copy of this budget template can be downloaded from RIMS also.



- If you are already registered on RIMS please visit <https://marine.smartsimple.ie/>.
- To register as a new user please email rims.support@marine.ie with a request for a password and provide details of your organisation and your role.

The closing date for receipt of proposals is:

NOT LATER THAN 16:00 HOURS ON THURSDAY, 7th FEBRUARY 2019

All applicants will be issued with an acknowledgement of receipt via email shortly after submission.

Applicants should complete all sections of the application form. The applicant must sign the declaration form and upload the application on the online grant management system (RIMS).

Late applications will not be accepted.

Terms & Conditions

Grant-Aid

- Grant-aid can only be used to cover eligible costs. The associated grant-aid costs should be detailed in the appropriate sections of the application form.

Eligible costs

- Technical support, costs for personnel specifically hired to work on the project, buoy access, communication costs, vessel hire, dive support, equipment rental, materials, connectors, cables, sensors, transport, consumables. A modest travel and subsistence budget may be included in accordance with Civil Service mileage rates or equivalent. The travel and subsistence budget may not exceed 10% of the overall budget.
- Subcontracting (if necessary to deliver the project, and clearly identified in the budget).

Non-eligible costs

- Other costs such as computers, servers, office equipment.
- Personnel costs not directly related to the project.
- Overheads.

Reporting and other conditions

- Successful applicants (grantees) must submit a report on the research carried out, within three months of completion of the study using a template provided by SmartBay Ireland. Failure to comply with this requirement will disqualify grantees from seeking future NIAP funding and receiving the full grant.
- During the course of the project grantees will be required to provide the SmartBay Ireland team with a summary of the project in Powerpoint and photos of equipment and at sea deployments,



where applicable, for Public Relations purposes.

- The Marine Institute and SmartBay Ireland may require the grantee to provide clarifications or to make changes to the report. The grantee shall co-operate in revising or amending the final report prior to its completion and before signing off by SmartBay Ireland.
- If deemed suitable, the report, or a synthesis report, may be published by SmartBay Ireland or the Marine Institute.
- The grantee will comply with Open Data and data sharing policies in effect at the Marine Institute; this applies to any environmental (meteo or ocean – physical, biological, chemical, ...) data collected using equipment owned by the grantee while using the infrastructure. However, of such collected data, that which the grantee deems to be of a commercially sensitive nature, or whose publication could jeopardize the protection of IP, may be kept strictly for the use of the grantee.
- Background IP used by the grantee and SmartBay/Marine Institute in the project shall remain with their owners. IP developed while accessing the infrastructure will be the property of their developers; if any foreground IP developed while accessing the infrastructure utilizes IP owned by SmartBay or the Marine Institute, the grantee will seek a foreground IP arrangement with SmartBay or the Marine Institute, or both, within three months of projection completion. In case of failure to do this, SmartBay and the Marine Institute reserve any rights they may have to the foreground IP.

Payments

- An advance payment of 25% will be provided on signing of the Grant-Aid Agreement.
- An interim payment of up to 50% will be made on receipt of a progress report and financial report for expenditure on completion of the fieldwork or at the project mid-point.
- The final 25% payment is dependent on submission of a balancing final financial report, supported by vouched receipts for all expenditure incurred.
- Eligible costs are as stated in the Grant-Aid Guidelines for Applicants under Terms and Conditions.
- In the event a project does not reach completion, only vouched expenditure will be paid.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement of the funding received through the Marine Institute SmartBay National Infrastructure Access Programme is required. Please adhere to the guidelines and suggested text below.

Acknowledgement must be made in published papers, presentations, posters and all other material where the research enabled through the support received from SmartBay Ireland and the Marine Institute under the aegis of the National Infrastructure Access Programme is cited or referenced. The following statement is proposed:



This research was wholly/partly supported by the SmartBay National Infrastructure Access Programme, with the support of the Marine Institute under the Marine Research Programme funded by the Irish Government.

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Information supplied to SmartBay Ireland and the Marine Institute may be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. It is the responsibility of the applicant to indicate at the time of making an application which information should not be disclosed and the reasons for non-disclosure. SmartBay Ireland and the Marine Institute will consult with applicants about this information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request.

Personal information supplied to SmartBay Ireland and the Marine Institute will be stored by electronic means (e.g. database) for use only in connection with applications for grant-aid. The provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003 will be fully complied with. All parties will comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679) from the regulation enforcement date of 25th May 2018.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant-Aid Agreement.

APPENDIX I - Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation of proposals is managed by the Marine Institute's Research Funding Office. The process aims to be fair and transparent and to provide constructive feedback to applicants. Applications are evaluated by a panel of independent national/international experts.

In accepting and evaluating applications, the Marine Institute does not commit funding to any application or guarantee that funds will be made available to applicants.

Any application submitted without contacting SmartBay (see page 7 above) will be ineligible.

Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Marks</i>
<p>1 Strategic context, rationale, benefits & impacts of the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the proposed research to SmartBay objectives & themes • Are the thematic objectives of the proposal clearly stated? • Will the benefits outlined deliver any particular advantages to the marine sector? • Will the proposal lead to the development of new research capacity and capabilities and/or new technologies, products and solutions? 	20%
<p>2 Demonstrate the use of SmartBay infrastructure and resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the project aim to engage with the SmartBay team? • Does the project make the best use of the SmartBay facilities? • Extent to which the project aims to use SmartBay resources, facilities and data feeds • Extent to which the deployment will help progress a particular technology towards commercialisation. 	25%
<p>3 The scientific and technical quality of the research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific/technical excellence of the proposal • Understanding of current state of knowledge in the research area • Extent to which the research builds on current knowledge • Does the proposal demonstrate clear evidence of expected deliverables/outputs and are these achievable? • Relevant bibliography/references 	25%
<p>4 Scientific quality/track record of the individual/research team and technical capability to carry out the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background/track record of the individual researcher • Background/track record of the research team • Are the roles and responsibilities of the individual/research team clearly stated? • Suitability of the expertise towards achieving the research objectives 	10%



5 Multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach of the research programme:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a multi-disciplinary research proposal that maximises the use of the funding? Could additional expertise be added to the research team? • Is there a collaborative/partnership approach with other research groups/institutions/private sector? Is it an appropriate approach? • Does the proposed research offer suitable training opportunities to students/junior researchers? 	10%
6 Value for money and leveraged funding:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value, if any, of leveraged funding from other sources? • Has the proposal identified or assessed any likely risks? 	10%

Evaluation Procedure

Evaluation is conducted as follows:

1) Eligibility Check

Applications for funding received by the notified deadline are checked for compliance with the following Eligibility Criteria:

- Has contact been made with a member of the SmartBay Ireland team?
- Has the project been deemed to be technically feasible by a member of the SmartBay team?
- Has the project been deemed to be financially feasible by a member of the SmartBay team?
- Was a completed application received on time?
- Is the proposal from an eligible institution?
- Are all sections of the application form completed correctly and is the declaration signed and stamped?
- Does the proposed research address one or more of the defined research themes?
- Does the proposed research utilise the specific facility targeted for access, if so stated in the call?

Applications considered to be ineligible are returned to the applicant with a note explaining why they were considered to be ineligible. Applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be allocated a unique reference number and a notification of receipt will be sent to the applicant.

2) Individual Expert Evaluation

Eligible applications are evaluated based on their individual merit by individual experts chosen from a Panel of Experts. The experts examine the application(s) assigned to them and score and comment on each application under the Evaluation Criteria (above).

3) Evaluation Panel

Once the individual experts to whom applications have been assigned have completed their individual evaluations, a draft Consensus Evaluation Report is circulated to the evaluation panel for their approval. Consensus agreement by electronic correspondence between evaluators is the preferred route. However, in some instances a Consensus Meeting or teleconference may be required to enable joint consideration of applications by the individual experts. An officer from the Research Funding Office and a member of the SmartBay team may attend and act as moderator/rapporteur for each consensus meeting. Their role is to support the process and ensure that the panel evaluation is carried out in a fair and proper fashion.

During the consensus meeting the experts consider each application and agree on a final mark for each of the evaluation, criteria and an overall mark (score) for the application. They justify their marks with constructive and informative comments suitable for feedback to the applicant and agree on an overall Consensus Evaluation Report. All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, receive a copy of the Consensus Evaluation Report for their proposal.

4) Approval

The recommendations for funding are sent to the Marine Institute Board for approval.

Successful applicants may be asked to make changes to their proposals during the grant-aid negotiation phase to accommodate the comments of the evaluators.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Evaluators are required to read and sign a Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Form. If an expert considers that they may have a vested interest in a proposal or that potential conflict of interest may arise as a result of their participation in the evaluation of any application they are asked to declare this and may not participate in the evaluation process. In line with EU General Data Protection Regulation evaluators are requested to delete all personal information included in the application documentation once the evaluation process is complete.



APPENDIX 2 – Facilities & Support Services

In addition to the main facilities referenced in the text, SmartBay and the Marine Institute also provides the following broad reaching support:

- Access to vessel hire, diving and transport services;
- Access to fabrication workshops for design and/or marination;
- IT infrastructure and data storage;
- Pre-deployment preparation;
- Deployment;
- Sensor integration;
- Provision of project management and technical support for marine deployments;
- Provision of marine communications and backhaul services;
- Data acquisition and management.