

Higher Education Authority
Technological Sector Research Initiative (TSR) Review
Request for Proposals

Awarding Authority: **The Higher Education Authority,
Floor One,
Brooklawn House,
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Tender Documentation

The purpose of this document is to assist tenderers in preparing proposals for a review to examine the goals and objectives of the Technology Sector Research Initiative (TSR).

This document remains the property of the Awarding Authority and is issued only to assist you in submitting a detailed response to the requirements specified. The information contained herein is to be treated as confidential and must not be disclosed to any third party without prior written consent from the Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority, Floor One, Brooklawn House, Crampton Avenue, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4.

All queries with respect to the Tender Documentation and requests for additional information should be made to Gemma Irvine at the above address. Telephone Number: (01) 2317100, fax number (01) 2317172, e-mail address girvine@hea.ie.

1.2 Awarding Authority.

The awarding authority is The Higher Education Authority.

1.3 Taxation obligations.

It will be a condition of the award of any contracts that the tenderer will be required to produce a valid tax clearance certificate from the Irish Revenue Commissioners. In the case of a non-resident tenderer, a statement of suitability on tax grounds from the Revenue Commissioners will be required. Professional Services Retention Tax (PSRT) will be deducted from certain payments for audit services provided by the successful tenderer. It shall be the responsibility of tenderers themselves to obtain all necessary documentation and to ensure that they comply with all relevant Irish taxation requirements.

1.4 Overview of Contents.

The Tender Documentation contains four sections and 3 appendices as outlined below. Section 4 requires specific proposal responses.

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| Section 1 | provides general instructions on the preparation of proposals and gives guidance on how they will be evaluated. |
| Section 2 | provides background information on the Higher Education Authority. |
| Section 3 | gives details of the requirements for this particular tender. |
| Section 4 | provides a template for a proposal by a tenderer. |

1.5 Instructions to Tenderers

- 1.5.1 Tenderers must provide all the information requested in Section 4.
- 1.5.2 All reasonable requests for additional information will be addressed and such information will be made available to all other tenderers in all cases.
- 1.5.3 Tenderers must submit four copies of their proposals. The proposals must be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked “TSR Review” and addressed to:

**Dr Gemma Irvine
Manager Research Programmes,
Higher Education Authority,
Brooklawn House,
Crampton Avenue,
Shelbourne Road,
Dublin 4.**

Tenders should be submitted by 4pm on Friday 22nd August 2008

- 1.5.4 The Awarding Authority will not be liable for any costs incurred by proposers in the preparation and submission of responses, including any work, effort or expenses required to complete the proposal.
- 1.5.5 The Awarding Authority reserves the right to amend or alter any information contained in these documents at any time. Proposers will be informed of any amendments or alterations.
- 1.5.6 Unwarranted or inappropriate attempts (including canvassing) to influence the decision of the Awarding Authority by a proposer, or by any party acting on behalf of a proposer, will automatically disqualify the proposer.
- 1.5.7 During the evaluation process, the proposer may be required to give formal presentations of their proposals to representatives of the Awarding Authority. Reference site visits may also be undertaken.
- 1.5.8 Information provided in proposals and in subsequent discussions and written communications, prices, availability dates and services offered by the proposers will be considered to form part of the basis of any contractual arrangements in the event of a proposal or proposals being accepted by the Awarding Authority.

The following will form part of the contract document for the proposed services:

This TENDER DOCUMENTATION and

- Responses made by proposers to the Request for Tenders
- Modifications and amendments to the above documents formally agreed between the parties to the contract
- The final terms and conditions agreed between the parties to the contract.
- The official order for the services issued by the Awarding Authority.

1.6 Qualification process and award criteria

Any contract(s) that may be awarded will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender(s) taking into account:

- Costs to include consultancy fees and any other expenses such as advertising, travel etc.
- Capability to meet proposed deadlines and schedules
- Quality
- Previous relevant experience in conducting similar reviews

However, the HEA is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any tender it may receive.

1.7 Main Selection Criteria

The following matters will be among the selection criteria for the award of any contract:

- 1.7.1 The capability of the proposer to satisfy the requirements specified in this document.
- 1.7.2 The proven capability of the proposer to develop and deliver the services specified in this document. Proposers may be required to provide evidence of competence and experience of providing similar services by providing details of reference sites and contacts, and by demonstrating the presence of a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced personnel to provide such services. Details of the personnel who will be undertaking this assignment and their experiences to date will be required.
- 1.7.3 Costs as outlined above (inclusive of Value Added Tax, as appropriate).
- 1.7.4 Agreement of appropriate contractual arrangements between the proposer and the Awarding Authority.
- 1.7.5 Evidence that the proposer has a good understanding of the public sector.

2. Background to Higher Education Authority (HEA)

HEA Description & Duties

The HEA has statutory responsibility for advising the Minister for Education and Science on matters relating to the provision of higher education services in Ireland. It was established by the Higher Education Authority Act 1971.

The principal functions of the HEA are:

- Allocating funding
- Furthering the development of higher education
- Assisting in the co-ordination of State investment in higher education and preparing proposals for such investment

- Promoting an appreciation of the value of higher education and research
- Promoting the attainment of equality of opportunity in higher education
- Promoting the democratisation of structure in higher education.

The Universities Act (1997) assigns functions and responsibilities to the HEA in relation to reviewing the quality assurance and strategic planning activities of the universities. The HEA is the funding agency for the 7 universities, 14 institutes of technology, a number of colleges of education, and a number of other designated institutions of education. The HEA administers the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) and the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. The HEA is also the administrative agency for the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and the Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology (IRCSET).

The National Access Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education is established within the HEA.

3. Requirements for this tender

3.1 Background

With the significant investment to come through for research and development from the National Development Plan (NDP), it will be necessary to have clarity on the contribution and performance of the Technological Sector Research Initiative (TSR) in the delivery of the goals and objectives of the NDP. The Department of Education and Science (DES) has requested that the Higher Education Authority (HEA) conduct a review of the TSR.

The Government's Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (SSTI) states that the institutes of technology represent an important resource in regional economic development and regional innovation. Over the last ten years, the institutes have built a strong reputation in engaging in applied and basic research and technology transfer programmes with industry and have participated fully in the development of a national code for management of intellectual property. The institutes, which have only been a feature of Irish higher education since the 1970's, have demonstrated an ability and agility in responding to economic changes in a regional, national and international context. The Technological Sector now accounts for almost 50% of those pursuing third level educational qualifications in Ireland.

The TSR was established by the DES with a total fund of £30 million (€38 million) to be made available from 2000 – 2006 specifically targeted at the development of capacity for research and development in the IoT sector. The DES devolved management of the TSR to the Institutes of Technology Ireland/Dublin Institute of Technology (IoTI/DIT). The IoTI/DIT commissioned a mid term review of the TSR in 2004 which described the TSR as 'a key enabler' and made particular recommendations. In 2007, the TSR was allocated circa €6 million across the three strands. Submissions were made in the Autumn of 2007 to DES by IoTI/DIT to enhance the amount of funding allocated in the scheme. However, before

consideration of this request, the DES stated that an independent review of the scheme should be conducted.

In late December 2007, the DES wrote to the IoTI/DIT notifying them that ‘this Department has transferred responsibility for overseeing the operation of the TSR to the Higher Education Authority from 2008 onwards. However, the administration of the three strands of the TSR will remain with the Institutes of Technology Ireland/Dublin Institute of Technology.’ Under this arrangement, the HEA will advise the DES on year-on-year funding for the programme, policy for the programme and its performance. The day to day administration of the TSR will remain with the IoT/DIT until such time as the outcome from the review is available.

3.2 Scope of Review and Methodology

The HEA wishes to conduct a review that examines the goals and objectives of the TSR in light of SSTI requirements and in view of the fact that the TSR model was developed in 2000 and the current needs of the Technological Sector may have progressed. The review will be conducted with reference to the whole period of TSR funding 2000 - to date with due regard to the mid term review previously completed (2005). The proposed review will not deal with the role of the IoT sector in research *per se* but rather the focus is to look at TSR expenditure, outputs, impact, value-for-money and for the future, advise the DES on how funding in the programme can best be utilised. The review will take cognisance of other funding streams available to the IoTs. The HEA is seeking proposals from consultants to conduct this review.

The broad objectives of the proposed evaluation to be considered overall and for each TSR strand where appropriate are:

- Assess outputs, performance, achievements and impact of each strand of the TSR to date following on from the ‘Mid-Term Review of the Technological Sector Research Initiatives, 2005’.
- Assess extent to which aims and objectives of TSR are being met by each strand and whether activities are leading to desired outcomes.
- Assess management and operational efficiency of the current management of the TSR including assessment, monitoring, budgeting etc for each strand.
- Address impact of the TSR on building capacity in the Institutes of Technology.
- Assess the value for money of the TSR.
- Assess how the TSR is positioned in regards the other funding streams available to the IoTs.
- Make recommendations for the future development and direction of the three strands of the TSR.

The consultant will be working with a Steering Committee of international experts all with expertise in the research and education arena. A report on the findings will be completed working with these international experts.

While the Steering Committee will advise on assessment methods and procedures, it is likely that there may be a separate approach used for each of the three strands as follows:

Strand 1 – Desk review

Example questions may include:

- Number of postgraduate students
- Destination of students upon completion of degree
- Analysis of successful applicants, added value of funding and subsequent development of their supervisory experience

This may also include applicants who were unsuccessful in obtaining funding.

Strand 2 – Quantative Analysis and Interviews with participants

Example questions may include:

- Generation of commercial potentialities
- Impact on Regional development as a result of the programme

Strand 3 – Desk review

Example questions may include:

- Composition of Research Teams – destination of researchers post funding
- Research Progress, Performance and Impact
- Analysis of successful applicants, development of research capability and ability to leverage further funding and develop new collaborations.

This may also include applicants who were unsuccessful in obtaining funding.

Inputs will also be sought from particular stakeholders who, from their mission, would have a particular interest in the IoT sector. This could include, for example, Enterprise Ireland, IRCHSS, IRCSET, HEA – SIF and PRTL, IDA, SFI, EU funding – Marie Curie.

The independent consultants and the HEA Executive will provide support to the Steering Committee as required. The Committee will consider all inputs and will prepare a final report for the HEA.

Institutions will be informed of the process and the terms of reference will be circulated to the institutions concerned by the HEA Executive shortly.

A list of institutions to be interviewed is attached in Appendix 1.

3.3 Timeframe

Preliminary work should commence in August 2008 with an overall report by December 2008.

4. Instructions to Tenderers

4.1 Proposed format

The tenderer's submission should be structured as follows;

- (1) Management summary
 - 1.1 Proposed overview
 - 1.2 Service summary costs
 - 1.3 Delivery approach and timescale

- (2) Tenderer profile
- (3) Reference sites
- (4) Contractual arrangements (if applicable)
- (5) Additional information and appendices

4.2 Management Summary

4.2.1 Proposal Overview

Provide an overview of the structure of the proposal, and a statement that it conforms to the specified format. Outline the key features of the proposal as well as any other relevant information.

4.2.2 Service Summary costs

The costs should be broken down as follows;

Once-off

- i. Consultancy – design and migration from existing site
- ii. Training
- iii. Other – please specify

Ongoing Costs

- i. Support
- ii. Other – please specify

4.2.3 Delivery approach and timescale

A description of the delivery approach and the likely timescale must be provided.

4.3 Tenderer staff

Tenderers must identify by name those people who will be assigned to this project and include a copy of their curriculum vitae.

4.4 References

List three references which, as far as possible, have a profile similar to the Authority and indicate the extent of your involvement in the provision of services to these referees.

Tenderers who have obtained quality assurance certification should provide details of such certification.

4.5 Contractual Arrangements

The Tenderer must enclose a copy of the proposed terms and conditions for the contract with their tenders. This should include the provision that appropriate working papers and files will be made available to the Authority, if requested.

Appendix 1

- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Cork Institute of Technology
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology
- Galway–Mayo Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
- Institute of Technology, Carlow
- Institute of Technology, Sligo
- Institute of Technology, Tallaght
- Institute of Technology, Tralee
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Waterford Institute of Technology