



Marine Institute SmartBay National Infrastructure Access
Programme (NIAP)

**Grant-Aid Guidelines
For Applicants**



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Introduction

A key aspect of the SmartBay NIAP is to establish a modest fund to support researchers wishing to access the infrastructure through a contribution to additional costs associated with deployments (Infrastructure Access Fund). Our goal is to rapidly grow the user base to encompass academic research teams, SMEs, and MNCs, nationally and internationally, and 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.

Fund Available

The SmartBay NIAP fund will be made available through the Marine Institute to enable researchers to access the Galway Bay Marine and Renewable Energy Test Site. Research proposals will be invited for funding under a number of activity types that fit the thematic areas described below. This fund provides awards (up to a maximum of €25K per application) to research teams through a national competitive process, which will be open to all higher education institutions on the Island of Ireland. Funds are available to enable researchers in academia and industry to access the national test and demonstration infrastructure.

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 SmartBay's 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 will be 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.
- **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 and Marine Institute resources and the effective delivery of all funded programmes, applicants must contact the SmartBay 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, and the evaluation process is different according to the scale of the proposal. All funded researchers will be required to deliver a final report, to be completed 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) within the island of Ireland.

Applications led by Higher Education Institutions may include one or more industry participants as members of the research team. Such participation must be of a specific focused nature, with the principal benefits of the research accruing to the non-industry partners.

Collaborative applications will be considered. Only applications from full-time academic researchers will be accepted.

Research Themes

Applications will be accepted for a research activity within one or more of the following thematic areas:



- Oceanography and related bio-chemistry

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

- Fisheries and Aquaculture

Fisheries: Monitoring of fish stocks and environmental conditions. Developing methods of observing fish stocks.

Aquaculture: Monitoring fish health, environmental conditions effects of harmful algae blooms and decision support tools.

- Novel Marine 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, marine sensors and prototype Wave Energy Converters (WECs) and components for WECs.

Applications must clearly identify the themes with which the proposed work aligns and demonstrate the specific outputs and deliverables that will arise. Multi-disciplinary applications are also encouraged.

Evaluation of Proposals

All eligible proposals will be evaluated by a panel of national/international experts. The evaluation process will be managed by SmartBay and the Marine Institute. The following criteria will be used in the evaluation process:

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 proposal;
4. Scientific quality/track record of the research team and technical capability to carry out the proposal;
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

- Application forms are available on www.smartbay.ie

Please note that you must contact the SmartBay team before submitting your proposal.

Interested applicants should contact Rogério Chumbinho to discuss their proposed project:

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| Rogério Chumbinho |
| Senior Project Manager |
| SmartBay Ireland |
| Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore |
| Co. Galway H91 R673 |
| +353 (0)91 387 545 |
| rogerio.chumbinho@smartbay.ie |

Submit final application forms to:

Niamh Flavin
SmartBay Ireland
Marine Institute
Rinville, Oranmore
Co. Galway H91 R673
Ireland

 **+353 (0)91 387 544**
info@smartbay.ie
www.smartbay.ie

Terms & Conditions

Grant-Aid

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

Eligible costs

- a) Technical support, costs for personal 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 grant.
- b) Subcontracting (if necessary to deliver the project, and clearly identified in the budget)

Non-eligible costs

- a) Other goods such as computers, servers, office equipment
- b) Costs associated with existing personnel salaries



Reporting

- Successful grantees must submit a report on the research carried out, within three months of completion of the study using a template provided by SmartBay.
- SmartBay may require the Grantee to provide clarifications and/or 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.
- If deemed suitable, the report, or a synthesis report, may be published by SmartBay.
- Failure to comply with this requirement will disqualify grantees from seeking future NIAP funding and receiving the full grant.
- An advance payment of 30% will be provided on signing of the grant aid agreement. An interim payment of 40% will be made on receipt of a progress report with supporting receipts for expenditure on completion of the fieldwork or at the project mid-point.
- The final 30% payment is dependent on submission of a balancing financial statement, 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 SmartBay Ireland 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 under the aegis of the National Infrastructure Access Programme is cited or referenced. The following statement/s is proposed:

- *This research was wholly/partly supported by the SmartBay National Infrastructure Access Programme, and funded by the Marine Institute.*

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Information supplied to SmartBay may be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act, 2003. 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 will consult with applicants about this information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request. Personal information supplied to SmartBay 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.



Users will be required to sign a Grant Agreement and a copy of this agreement will be sent to the successful applicant.



APPENDIX I - Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation of proposals is managed by SmartBay Ireland in conjunction with the Marine Institute. The process aims to be fair and transparent and to provide constructive feedback to applicants. Proposals are evaluated by a panel of independent national/international experts.

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

Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated by an expert review panel using the following criteria:

| Criteria | Marks |
|--|--------------|
| <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? | 15% |
| <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 SmartBay? • Does the project make the best use of SmartBay infrastructure? • Extent to which the project aims to use SmartBay resources | 20% |
| <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 | 30% |
| <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 | 15% |



5 Multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach of the research programme:

- **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:

- **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

Proposals for funding received by the notified deadline are checked for compliance with the general Eligibility Criteria. These criteria include:

- 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?

Proposals considered to be ineligible are returned to the applicant with a note explaining why they were considered to be ineligible. Proposals 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 proposals are sent for evaluation to two/three experts chosen from the panel based on their scientific expertise. The experts examine the proposal(s) assigned to them and score and comment on each proposal under the Evaluation Criteria (above).

3) Evaluation Panel

Once all proposals have been evaluated and consensus scores have been agreed by the panel of experts, the proposals are ranked. SmartBay and the Marine Institute make a recommendation for funding based on the highest ranked proposals, taking into consideration the availability of funding and schedules.

4) Approval

Final approval for funding is provided by the Marine Institute (Office of Marine Research and Development). All applicants of eligible proposals, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive a copy of the Consensus Evaluation Report for their proposal, which will include the evaluators' comments and should provide the applicant with constructive and informative feedback.

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 proposal they are asked to declare this and may not participate in the evaluation process.



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 ruggedisation;
- 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.