

## **National Contact Point for European Research Council (ERC) (SSH panels) and Horizon Europe Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity and inclusive society, including related missions and partnerships)**

### **Funded by the Irish Research Council in partnership with the Irish Universities Association**

The Irish Research Council (IRC) is the national support agency for Horizon Europe Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity and inclusive society, including related missions and partnerships) and joint National Contact Point (NCP) for ERC with a focus on Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) panels.

The Irish Universities Association (IUA) works in partnership with the IRC in the delivery of the dual NCP roles for Cluster 2 and ERC (SSH panels). The IUA is now recruiting for a full-time post within to carry out the dual roles (ERC NCP/Cluster 2 NCP), on behalf of the IRC, until the end of 2024.

#### **Background and Overview of Roles**

Horizon Europe, the EU's current funding programme for research and innovation, runs from 2021 to 2027 promoting collaborative and cutting-edge research across Europe. Excellent Science, including the ERC, remains a core element within the framework which retains the challenge-orientated approach in the form of six clusters, of which Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society is one (Cluster 2). Work Programmes for the ERC and each Cluster are developed by the Commission in cooperation with member states (including via Programme Committees comprising National Delegates/National Experts).

The launch of Horizon Europe (2021-27) provides great opportunities for Ireland to continue to build on our success to date in European funding. The ERC (SSH) and Cluster 2 NCP role will be integral to Ireland's future success in Europe's flagship Framework Programme for research and innovation.

#### **Dual National Contact Point (NCP) for ERC (SSH Panel) and Cluster 2**

Ireland's engagement in Horizon Europe is coordinated by Enterprise Ireland (EI) via a national network comprising the NCPs and National Delegates for the various elements of the framework programme. NCPs lead on their respective areas within the network whilst also representing their host organisation. The IRC is responsible for the provision of the NCP for ERC (SSH panels) and for the NCP for Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity, and inclusive society), including related missions and partnerships. The IRC also holds the National Expert role for ERC and the National Delegate role for Cluster 2. The IRC has entered into an agreement with the IUA to host the ERC / Cluster 2 NCP officer

to the end of 2024 to support the provision of service on behalf of the IRC across the national research system.

Given alignment between ERC and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions under Pillar 1 and the cross-cutting issues that feature in Horizon Europe, the NCP will report to the Head of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office (IMSCO) in the IUA while working closely with and under the guidance of the National Delegate/National Expert for Cluster 2/ERC in the IRC. The IUA wishes to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person to take up the position of NCP for ERC (SSH Panel) and Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity and inclusive society, including related missions and partnerships).

### **Job Specification and Key Responsibilities & Deliverables**

The NCP will promote awareness of ERC and Cluster 2 work programmes amongst researchers in Ireland and will support host institutions in their promotion of opportunities available. Networking at national and EU level will be part of the NCP's role. The role also includes responsibility for working with the national NCP network to promote and support SSH integration across Horizon Europe work programmes. In undertaking this role, the NCP will support researchers across the entire higher education sector in Ireland, including the technological higher education sector.

The ERC (SSH) and Cluster 2 NCP will adhere to the minimum standards and guiding principles for that role as set down by the European Commission.<sup>1</sup> Key functions will include:

#### ***A. To support Ireland's current, potential & future applicants to ERC (SSH) & Cluster 2***

##### To achieve this, the NCP will...

- Promote the ERC (SSH) and Cluster 2 work programmes amongst researchers in Ireland and support host institutions in their promotion of opportunities available, raising awareness and participation levels in each.
- Engage regularly with the Research Offices within research performing organisations to encourage participation in ERC (SSH) and Cluster 2, responding to queries and requests for information.
- Provide support to research performing organisations and to applicants, communicating information and advice and assisting them as they develop and implement their own plans/strategies around increasing ERC and Cluster 2 engagement.
- Provide support to potential applicants on how to develop competitive ERC proposals and Cluster 2 proposals.
- Provide timely, specific training and workshops to applicants on ERC and Cluster 2, including organising 'mock' interviews for Irish-based ERC (SSH) applicants, delivering webinars, etc.
- Provide timely advice and analysis to applicants on the outcome of the evaluation process.
- Advise applicants with rejected proposals on their evaluation results and how to proceed with redress or resubmission.
- Advise successful applicants during the implementation phase of their projects.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/ncp/h2020-standards-principles\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/ncp/h2020-standards-principles_en.pdf)

- Respond to general and detailed queries relating to ERC and Cluster 2 in consultation with the National Delegate/National Expert for Cluster 2/ERC.
- Review applications for Enterprise Ireland support funding.
- Promote opportunities for SSH integration across Horizon Europe work programmes, working with other NCPs in Ireland and internationally.

***B. To support the attainment of national objectives for ERC and Cluster 2***

To achieve this, the NCP will...

- Work closely with the ERC National Expert (in the IRC), and in collaboration with the ERC National Delegate and other ERC NCP (in Science Foundation Ireland), to develop a national strategy to increase the quantity and quality of ERC submissions from Ireland.
- Assist the National Delegate for Cluster 2 in consulting with the research and stakeholder community in respect of work programmes.
- Work with the national NCP network coordinated by Enterprise Ireland, including attending NCP networking meetings.
- Undertake systematic analysis of data on Ireland's engagement in ERC and Cluster 2 and reporting on same to the IRC and to other stakeholders as necessary (e.g. Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science).
- Provide regular reports to the IRC Executive and Board on ERC and Cluster 2 activities, performance, and developments.
- Collaborate with the ERC NCP for the physical and life sciences, based at Science Foundation Ireland.
- Work with colleagues in the IRC on training and development measures for its awardees to enhance engagement with ERC and Cluster 2 funding opportunities.
- Work with colleagues in the IRC on a unified communication strategy that maintains information resources and promotes engagement.

***C. To develop role-specific expertise and strategic relationships***

To achieve this, the NCP will...

- Engage with EU-wide NCP support and capacity-building measures and building relationships with NCP equivalents in other member states.
- Undertake relevant NCP training.
- Work with the national NCP network to promote and support SSH integration across Horizon Europe work programmes.
- Advise government on developments in ERC and Cluster 2 or assist the IRC in doing so.
- Keep up to date with national and EU policy developments in areas that pertain to success in ERC and Cluster 2, such as the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Agenda, including research integrity, open science, and gender & diversity integration in research.

## **Candidate Skills and Attributes**

This is a role which requires a hands-on approach to the achievement of results based on the skillset below:

### Essential:

- A primary degree in an arts, humanities, or social sciences discipline, and at minimum three years' experience in a research funder, research support or research administration role.
- Exceptional communication skills, particularly the ability to confidently present to large audiences and engage with senior academics.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, judgement, and ability to work calmly under pressure, particularly when engaging with external stakeholders.
- Demonstrable networking and relationship-building skills.
- Strongly orientated to collaboration and team-working with demonstrable capacity to work independently.
- Ability to analyse data and prepare detailed reports.
- Understanding of research eco-system, European framework programmes and research policy.

### Desirable:

- A track record in EU funding opportunity identification, proposal definition and review.
- PhD and/or research experience in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Knowledge of the contractual requirements and implementation of Horizon 2020/Europe awards.
- Previous experience of working within and/or liaising with EU networks.
- An awareness of using social media for business.
- Experience of liaising with a broad range of stakeholders and the research community.

*The EU Commission requires that any conflicts of interest arising for NCPs are managed appropriately and further information is provided in the Commission guidance on Horizon Europe NCPs.*

## **Contract Details**

The position of NCP for ERC/Cluster 2 will ordinarily be based at the IUA with some capacity for remote working. The position of NCP for ERC/Cluster 2 is offered on a fixed term contract up to 31 December 2024. The role is subject to a period of probation and meeting on-going performance requirements. The role will require domestic travel within Ireland on a regular basis. European travel will also be required as appropriate.

The IUA operates a flexible working model, and this role can be partially fulfilled through remote working. However, the role will require some in-office working at our office on Merrion Square, Dublin 2, especially in the early stages, with routine face-to-face engagement with key stakeholders as required.

A salary of approximately €65,000, commensurate with experience will be offered. Annual leave entitlement is 25 days per year (not including bank holidays).

A secondment arrangement for existing public-sector employees may be possible, subject to concluding an appropriate agreement between the IUA and the candidate's current employer.

### **Application Details**

Please forward a detailed but concise CV and cover letter (max 500 words), demonstrating the competencies and experience listed above, by email by noon, Thursday 29th June to:

[marguerita.lardner@iua.ie](mailto:marguerita.lardner@iua.ie)

**Interviews will take place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July .**

The IUA is an equal opportunities employer.

### **About the IUA and IRC**

The Irish Universities Association (IUA) is the representative organisation for Ireland's eight research intensive universities including DCU, MU, Trinity, TU Dublin, University of Galway, UCD, UCC and UL. IUA acts as the sectoral 'voice' of its university members and is committed to:

- clearly and publicly articulating the importance and value of university education
- acting as an advocate for the university system
- providing effective liaison and dialogue with the State and its agencies
- ensuring the system is resourced and prepared for the challenges of the future
- developing sectoral policies and strategies
- maximising the contribution of higher education in all its dimensions to society and the economy.

The IRC supports excellence in research talent, knowledge and engagement. It operates multi-million-euro research funding initiatives, which support talented researchers across all disciplines and career stages. The IRC mandate covers all disciplines and career stages and is the key source of funding for researchers in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The IRC also proactively supports the development of interdisciplinary research in Ireland, boosting our capacity to address complex and multi-faceted societal challenges. The IRC plays a key role in the research landscape in developing researchers who will be successful in European research funding framework programmes, in particular within the Excellent Science and Challenge-orientated pillars. The NCP role funded by the IRC are thus intertwined with the national mandate of the IRC and inform the development of the IRC's activities and overall mission.