



Taighde Éireann
Research Ireland

Programme Plan 2026

Details are provided below for programmatic calls with a launch, deadline or decision in 2026. The timelines provided are for planning purposes only, and while correct as of the date of this update, are subject to change.

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1. Introduction

In March 2026, Research Ireland published its strategy **Curiosity, Capability, Competitiveness – Charting Ireland’s Research and Innovation Future**. Delivering this strategy requires that Research Ireland:

- invests across the breadth of disciplines and continues to support discovery research;
- enables the attraction, retention, and development of research talent; supports economic growth, and delivers societal impact that improves quality of life;
- strengthens connections between academia, enterprise, public policy, and society;
- works in partnership with stakeholders to increase ambition, improve alignment, and proactively maximise benefits for Ireland; and
- supports the mobility of trained researchers across academia, the public sector, and industry; enhances Ireland’s attractiveness for foreign direct investment; enables the development and scaling of spinout companies; contributes to improved policymaking; and fosters an enriched research culture.

Research Ireland’s budget allocation for capital expenditure has increased for 2026, covering new programmes such as Global Talent Ireland and INSPIRE. As outlined in our strategy, Research Ireland is committed to close collaboration with stakeholders to deliver on our shared objectives. As a new agency, we are reviewing our programme portfolio, and this 2026 Programme Plan reflects that evolution. There will be no reduction in expenditure areas that support individual disciplines or specific groups such as PhD students, Individual Fellowships, Enterprise Partnerships, etc, however the programme mechanism to provide this support will change in certain areas as we continue to integrate programmes. Details of these changes are outlined below.

Our programmes are aligned with the commitments we have made to the research community to:

- maintain a balance between investigator led and thematic investment;
- implement minimum thresholds across the three discipline domains;
- increase predictability through annual and regular calls; and
- streamline and simplify our programme offering.

We are now in the final stages of integrating Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC). By the end of 2026, we will have consolidated and fully streamlined our programme offerings. We thank the individual researchers, HEI leadership, and wider stakeholders who continue to advise and engage with us throughout this integration. This work will continue in consultation with the research community and wider stakeholders as we develop new programmes.

This document may be updated to reflect any changes during the year.

Key programme initiatives aligned with strategy:

- **Strategic Institutional Funding Mechanism**
This will be a new consolidated annual funding programme to support HEIs in implementing their institutional research and innovation strategies. It will consolidate and replace multiple former funding streams, including: **Government of Ireland PhD and Postdoctoral schemes**, New Foundations, supplements, travel and conference supports, and other smaller schemes. Consultation on the development of this new initiative will continue throughout the first half of 2026. The Government of Ireland Programme is therefore not planned to launch in its current form for 2027 awards, with a new model to be finalised and in place in the interim, working to ensure there is no 'break in service' for PhD funding. There will be no reduction in the level of funding provided for Studentships and Fellowships or for any discipline.
- **Investigators programme** which combined the Laureate and Frontiers for the Future (Projects) will run annually and support all disciplines. Full proposals are due on the 28th May following the decision on EOI stage outcomes, with final funding decisions in Q4 2026. A new call will launch in Q4 2026, with final decisions in 2027, strengthening predictability for applicants.
- **Pathway programme** which was developed as a joint SFI-IRC programme some years ago and is currently in its fourth call. EOI deadline was in March. The programme will continue in its current format with a programme call launch every 18 months.
- **Global Talent Ireland** was launched for the first time in 2025, with applications currently under review. New funding has been provided for this programme.

- **INSPIRE programme** presents a strategic opportunity to work differently with the higher education sector to fund infrastructure. Research Ireland is working with the HEA and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to design a programme under which a strategic expression of interest will be requested from each eligible HEI.
- **Societal Challenge / Mission-Oriented Funding**
A new integrated approach to societal challenge funding will launch in Q4 2026, consolidating programmes such as Challenge and COALESCE. Consultation will take place with the sector on the new programme.
- **New Large-Scale Societal Initiative** will be developed following a consultation aimed at supporting a major new societal initiative scheduled for launch in 2027/2028.
- **Strategic Partnerships programme** is being reimagined to enable the support of new strategic partnerships of scale. Aspects for revision include remit, nature and level of co-funding, objectives and flexibility.
- **Enterprise Fellowship programme** has already adapted since the foundation of Research Ireland bringing both the IRC's EPSPD programme and the SFI IRDIF programme under one banner enabling a partnership stream where the Fellow is based in the university, and a placement stream where the Fellow is embedded in the company. The reimagining of this programme involves engaging with stakeholders to understand their needs and the value of this Fellowship as a direct support to companies large and small as well as NGOs.
- **A Spinout Activation** initiative is proposed to provide structured support for researchers to turn high-potential ideas into investor ready propositions, offering pre-seed funding, expert mentoring, commercialisation training, and access to investors. A coordinated national accelerator will speed commercialisation, build investor readiness, and create a clearer pathway from research to scalable, high-impact companies.
- **Centres for Research Training** are likely to relaunch end 2026.

For a consolidated table of proposed programme developments and launches see Appendix A.



2. Timelines for key programmes with deadlines:

Q2	April	Call Launches	Science Week 2026
			Discover Programme
		Deadline	Public Service Fellowship 16th April
		Decision	GOI Postdoctoral and PhD Fellowships
	May	Deadlines	Pathways 7th May
			Investigators (Full proposals) 28th May
			Ulysses 28th May
	Decision	Global Talent Ireland	
June	Decision	SDG Challenge Prize Science Week	

Q3	July	Decision	Public Service Fellowship
	September	Call Launch	Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting
			INSPIRE
			NEW Strategic Institutional Funding Mechanism
		Enterprise Postdoctoral Fellowships (Revised)	

Q4		Call Launch	Investigators December 2027
			NEW Societal Challenge/Mission Funding
	Sept/Oct	Decision	Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting
	November	Decision	Discover Programme

3 2026/2027 – Programme Plan

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1 Programmes launched during 2025 or earlier with a 2026 funding decision

Deadline prior to 2026, applications currently under review.

Programme <i>(with 2025 Deadline for reference)</i>	2026 Award Decision Timeframe
Global Talent Ireland Full Proposals	May 2026
Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship	April 2026
Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship	April 2026
Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting	March 2026
SDG (Irish Aid)	June 2026
Research Infrastructure 2025	Reserve list open until end of Q1 2027

Programmes launched during 2025 with a deadline in 2026

Programme	Call Deadline 2026	2026 Award Decision Timeframe
Pathway 2026	May 7th	Q1 2027
Investigators	May 28th	Q4 2026

2 Fixed Deadline Calls to Open/already open in 2026

Programme	Call Launch 2026	Call Deadline	Award Decision Timeframe
Public Service Fellowship	Feb	16 April	July 2026
Ulysses	March	28 May	Oct 2026
Discover Programme <i>(Open to all disciplines)</i>	30 April	June	Nov 2026
Science Week Call The theme for 2026 is 'water'	31 March	Festivals: 11 May Events: 18 May	June 2026
Investigators 2027	Dec 2026	(TBD)	(TBD)
Revised Societal Challenge call to replace Challenge, COALESCE and New Foundations	Q4 2026	(TBD)	(TBD)
Strategic Institutional Funding Mechanism <i>(including funding for PhD Studentships and Postdoctoral Fellowships)</i>	Q3 2026	(TBD)	(TBD)
INSPIRE	Q3 2026	(TBD)	(TBD)
Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting Awards	Sept 2026	Oct/Nov 2026	April 2027
Revised Enterprise Postdoctoral Fellowships programme	Q3 2026	(TBD)	2027 TBD
Centres for Research Training	Dec 2026	(TBD)	2027 TBD

3 Rolling Calls Open/to Open during 2026 *

Programme
Research Ireland Strategic Partnerships is currently paused; a revised offering is planned for launch in Q3 2026
Frontiers for the Future (Awards) to be replaced with a new programme offering in 2026
Maternity/Adoptive Leave Allowance*
Research Ireland Supplemental Grant for Displaced Researchers - Ukraine*
Disability Supplement*
*Will be included in the Strategic Institutional Funding Mechanism, but will remain open until that is in place.

4 International Partnerships Open in 2026. Deadlines as scheduled by Lead Agency

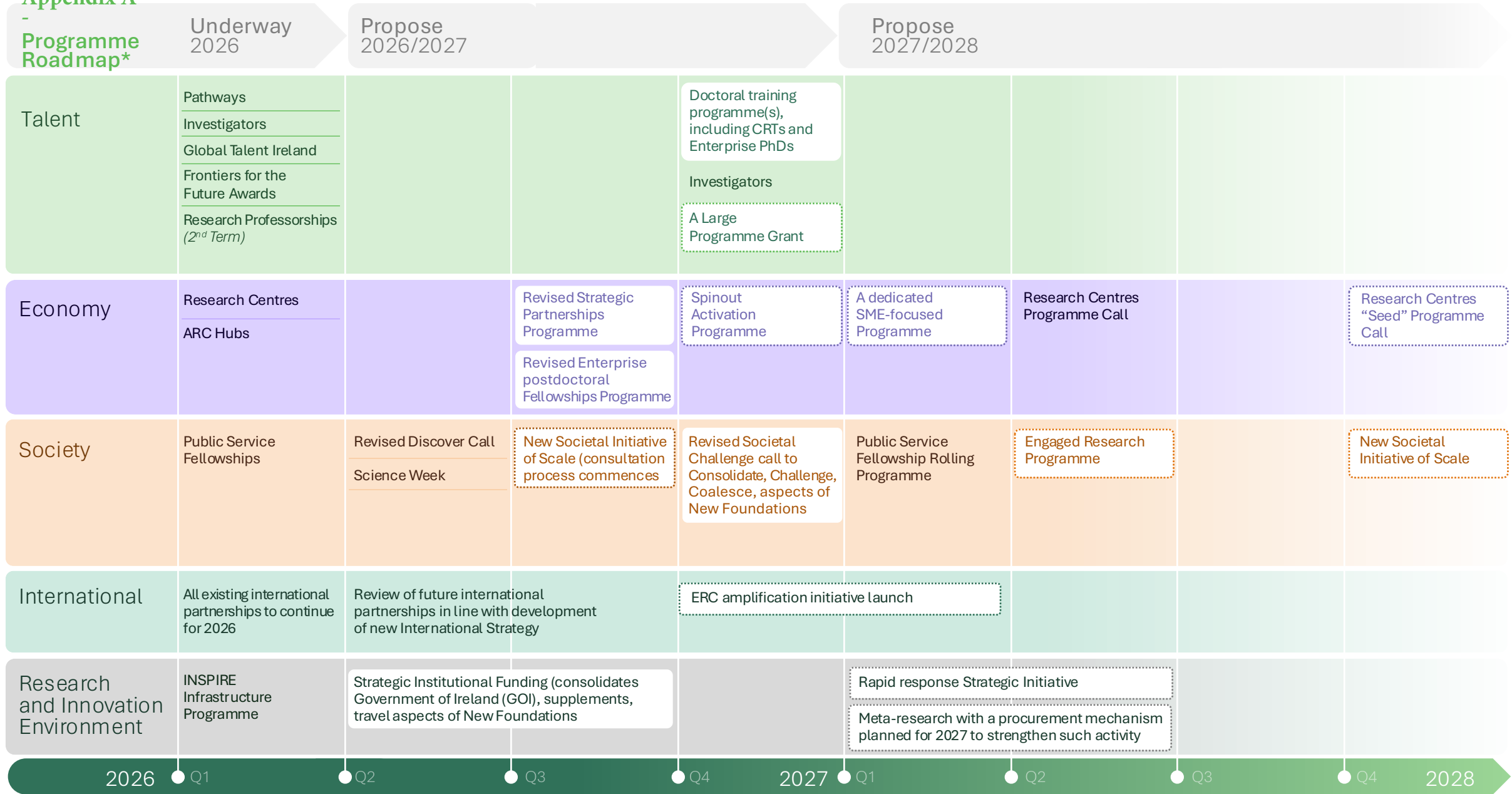
Programme
US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme
Royal Society University Research Fellowship; results expected July 2026
EPSRC-Research Ireland Standard Research Grants
International Joint Initiative for Research Harnessing Disruptive Technologies to Address Global Challenges
European co-funding initiatives (see section 5 for deadlines)
UK-Ireland collaboration in Creative Economy - Research Networking Awards

5 European co-funding initiatives

Partnership	Pre-proposal deadline	Full proposal deadline	Outcome expected	Status
QuantERA JTC 2025	(TBD)	05/12/25	May 2026	One stage call. Peer review ongoing
Clean Energy Transition JTC 2025	09/10/25	12/03/26	June 2026	Full proposal deadline upcoming
Sustainable Blue Economy JTC 2025	17/11/25	17/06/26	Oct 2026	1st stage peer review complete. Invitation to full proposal stage expected mid-March 2026
Agriculture of Data JTC 2026	21/01/26	21/07/26	Oct 2026	Eligibility checks complete and peer review underway. Invitation to full proposal stage expected May 2026
One Health AMR JTC 2026	02/02/26	17/06/26	Oct 2026	Eligibility checks complete and peer review underway. Invitation to full proposal stage expected end of April 2026
Personalised Medicine JTC 2026	10/02/26	09/06/26	Oct 2026	Eligibility checks complete and peer review underway. Invitation to full proposal stage expected early May 2026
Brain Health JTC 2026	10/03/26	30/06/26	Nov 2026	Eligibility checks to be carried out mid-March 2026 ahead of peer review
Pandemic Preparedness JTC 2026	13/04/26	20/08/26	Nov 2026	Open call
European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage scheduled to open in 2026, details TBD.				

Appendix A

Programme Roadmap*



01 Programmes are agreed | 02 White panels: Programmes are under development | 03 White panels with dotted lines: Programmes are early stage for consultation. *Subject to consultation and budget, timing subject to change