

Gas Innovation Fund: Guide for Applicants

November 2020



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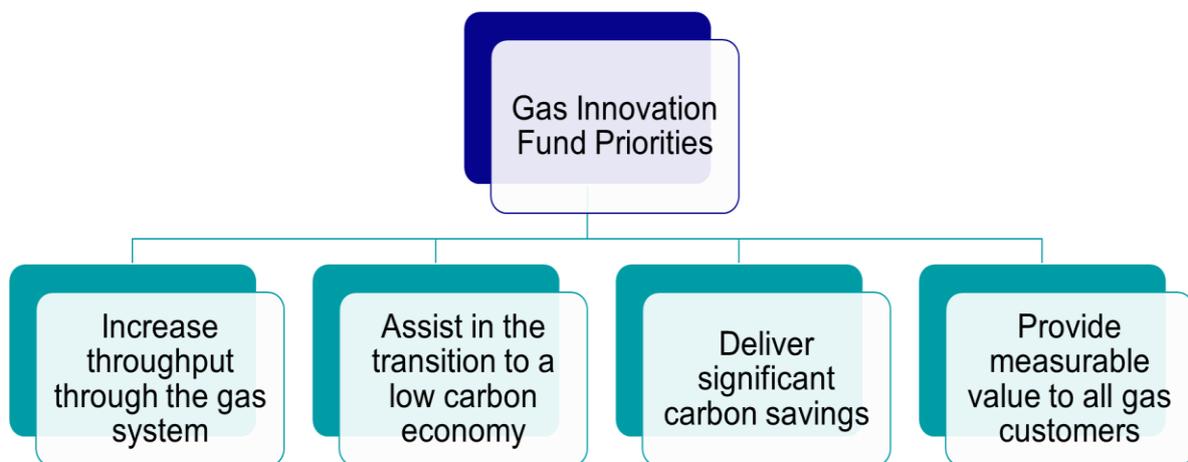
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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist applicants in completing the online application form, by explaining the different sections of the application and providing an explanation of what information is expected in each section.

The Gas Innovation Fund is intended to promote and encourage an environment of innovation in the gas industry. The four key priorities for the Gas Innovation Fund are:

Figure 1. Gas Innovation Fund Priorities



The Gas Innovation Fund receives a considerable number of applications and as such we ask that your application be as clear and concise as possible with all sections completed in full. If your application is incomplete it cannot be progressed to the appraisal committees for review/evaluation and therefore won't be considered for potential funding.

The application appraisal committees meet on a quarterly basis with four corresponding deadline dates for application submissions in advance of these meetings. The application submission deadlines can be found on the gas innovation fund page on the Gas Networks Ireland [website](#).

Applications will be assigned to an internal advisor from Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) following their submission to the Gas Innovation Fund. The internal advisers may or may not have a technical background. In addition, the appraisal committees are comprised of individuals with varying degrees of technical knowledge so please ensure that your application uses clear language and provides explanations that are understandable to a broad audience.

2 Who Can Apply for Funding

The Innovation Fund is open to public/private organisations and also entities that carry out research. Examples of research entities include third level institutions and state funded research bodies. Any funded project should be carried out in the Republic of Ireland, with the benefits of the project accruing to the Republic of Ireland.

3 Level of Project Funding Provided

There is no maximum or minimum level of funding that can be provided to an individual project. However, the fund is subject to an overall limit of €4.17m that may be spent over a 5 year period (2017 to 2022). When requesting funding, applicants should be cognisant of the overall fund limit, and the need for the fund to support a range of different projects.

3.1 Co-Funding

As the fund has limited resources it is important that each project represents value money and therefore each project is expected to have a level of co-funding. It is recommended that projects should have at least 35% co-funding made up of cash (at least 20%) and in kind contributions (e.g. 15%). There may be some circumstances when higher levels of funding could be approved but these would only occur in exceptional situations. Funding is allocated based on the merits of the application and whether it represents value for money.

4 Types of Projects Funded

The fund finances many different types of projects. For example, to date the fund has supported energy feasibility studies, projects piloting new technologies, process optimisation projects, demonstration projects and academic research.

4.1 Regional AD Feasibility Studies

GNI has approved funding for a number of regional AD feasibility studies. While these feasibility studies are important there is a limit to the number of these studies that can be supported. In order to be eligible for funding the region that the study covers should be in line with the criteria below.

A Region would be considered to be made up of at least one of the following;

- An area of minimum size of 10,000 hectares
- A natural geographical catchment area
- An administrative district e.g. an electoral district

Innovation funding allocated for these regional AD feasibility studies will be the lower of 65% of total cost or a maximum of €25,000 innovation funding.

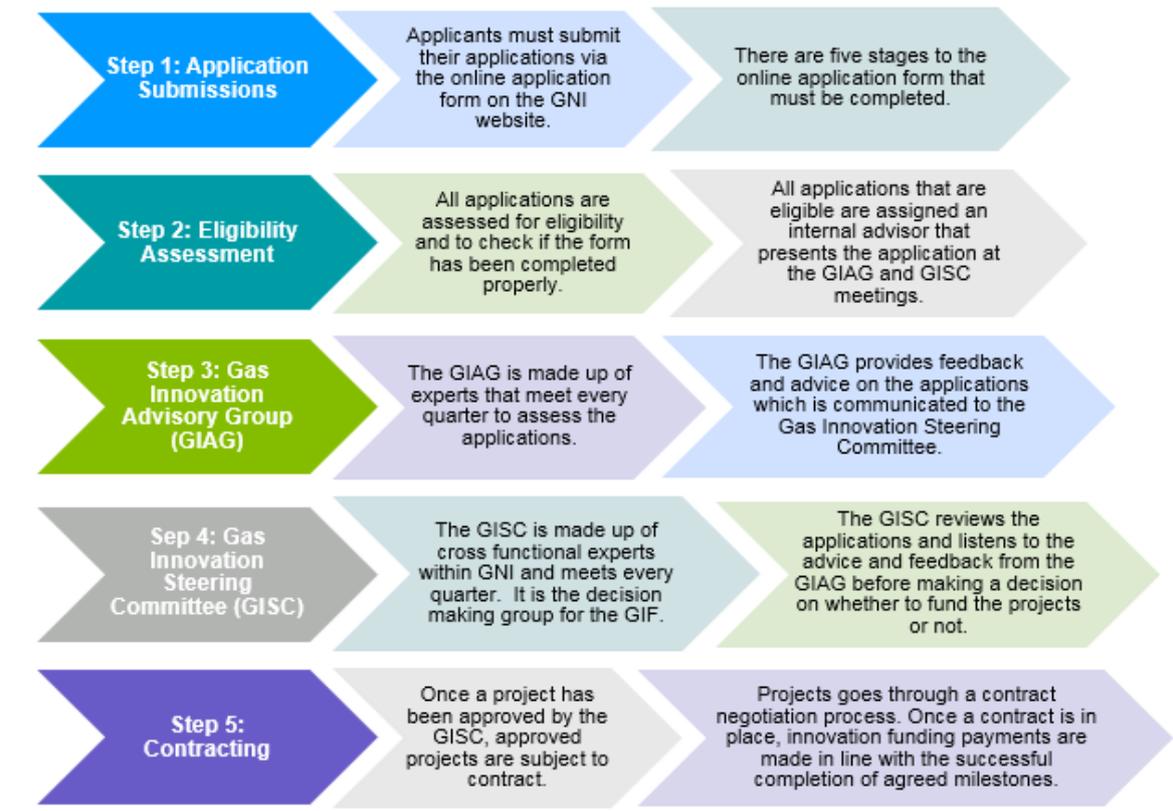
4.2 Reporting

GNI is required to publish reports on the Gas Innovation Fund detailing projects which have been approved for funding. These report are usually annual reports but the first report covers a two year period from October 2017 to September 2019. These reports are available online and the first report can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

5 Gas Innovation Fund Process

Please see below for a diagram which outlines the various steps in the gas innovation fund process.

Figure 2. Gas Innovation Fund Process



6 Starting an Application

To begin an application navigate to the following page and click the **“Start Application”** button:
<https://www.gasnetworks.ie/business/renewable-gas/innovation-fund/online-application-form/>.

If you experience any technical issues while filling out, or submitting, your application please contact innovation@gasnetworks.ie.

The application form is a staged form. This means the sections are split across different webpages allowing you to enter information in smaller chunks. You can also navigate backwards and forwards through the different sections before you submit your application. There are five sections as follows:

- Contact Details
- Project Summary
- Project Relevance
- Project Budget
- Project Timeline

The following sections show screenshots of the staged online application form and provide some guidance with regard to what is required in each section.

7 Contact Details



We recommend you keep a separate record of your application in the event of a technical issue with the online form. If you run into technical difficulties with your online application, please contact innovation@gasnetworks.ie.

Contact Details

Title:	First Name	Last Name
Mr <input type="button" value="v"/>	Your first name	Your last name
Role/Position	Organisation	
Your job title	Your company	
Phone number	Email address	
Your phone number	youremail@domain.com	

- By submitting this online application form, I certify that the information entered into this application is true, accurate and complete in all respects.
- I consent to Gas Networks Ireland using this information to process my application and to contact me if required. [Learn more](#)

I'm not a robot 

SAVE AND CONTINUE →

Please complete all fields in this section. By ticking the first checkbox above you confirm that what you enter in your application form is truthful, accurate and complete. When ticking the second checkbox you consent to GNI using your personal data and sharing it with third parties for the purposes of processing your application. More information on this is available at the following link:

<https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/legal/data-consent/>

The reCAPTCHA at the bottom left of this webpage must be completed. The purpose of this is to protect the GNI website from spam bots by only allowing human users and blocking bots.

On completion of the fields in this section click **“Save and Continue”** and you will move to the next stage of the application.

On the top of the next page you will see a reference key and you should also receive an email with your reference key. Please take note of your reference key as this will allow you to return to your application at a later date if required.



We recommend you keep a separate record of your application in the event of a technical issue with the online form. If you run into technical difficulties with your online application, please contact innovation@gasnetworks.ie.

Your reference key

You can use the reference key below to return to your application later.

Reference key:

EXAMPLEKEY1

8 Project Summary

Project Summary

Project Title ✓

Estimated Start Date of the Project ✓

Estimated End Date of the Project ✓

Project Description ⓘ ✓

1975 characters left.

Innovation ⓘ ✓

975 characters left.

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SAVE AND CONTINUE →

The **“Project title”** should ideally be made up of 3 – 8 words and it should be clear and unambiguous. A good title should paint a quick picture of the key ideas of your project for the reader and should clearly reflect the focus of your proposal.

The **“Estimated start date of the project”** and the **“Estimated end date of the project”** should be realistic and take into account the maturity of the project. Gas Innovation Fund applications are only reviewed on a quarterly basis and if you are dependent on co-funding from other sources please factor this into your timeline.

In the **“Project description”** text box you should provide a high level overview of your project, what is involved in it and what it is expected to achieve. When describing the project the applicant should include details of its **design, aims and objectives** (include the **quantitative metrics** the project hopes to achieve where available, e.g. 1% increase in throughput). This description should allow the reviewer to quickly grasp what the project is about.

In the **“Innovation”** text box please state what is innovative about your project and the technology readiness level (TRL). Explain the aspects of the project that are innovative and provide a brief overview of the **current state of the knowledge** in the project area. Please see below for definitions of the different TRL levels¹:

TRL 1 - basic principles observed

TRL 2 - technology concept formulated

TRL 3 - experimental proof of concept

TRL 4 - technology validated in lab

TRL 5 - technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 6 - technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 7 - system prototype demonstration in operational environment

TRL 8 - system complete and qualified

TRL 9 - actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

Please note: If a technology is established internationally but not currently operating in Ireland it may still be considered innovative.

On completing all fields in this section click save and continue.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2016-2017/annexes/h2020-wp1617-annex-ga_en.pdf

9 Project Relevance

Project Relevance

Which of the following priorities will the project address? Please tick more than one box if applicable. A description of the priorities for the Gas Innovation Fund can be found [here](#).

- Increase throughput through the gas system
- Assist in the transition to a low carbon economy e.g. increase production of renewable gas
- Deliver significant carbon savings e.g. reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions
- Provide measurable value to all gas customers

Addressing Priorities [?](#)

Character limit of 1,200.

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Project Impact [?](#)

Character limit of 1,200.

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Project Maturity [?](#)

Character limit of 1,000.

1000 characters left.

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[SAVE AND CONTINUE →](#)

Select which priority/priorities your project addresses and provide an explanation of how it addresses each priority that has been selected in the **“Addressing Priorities”** text box. All applications to the Gas Innovation Fund must be able to demonstrate how the project meets at least one of the above key priorities.

In the **“Project Impact”** text box please explain what value the project is going to deliver for the gas network, gas customers and the environment. Please explain in what way the project will achieve these benefits and if possible quantify the benefits (including logic behind the calculations).

With regard to **“Project Maturity”**, this should describe what stage the project is currently at. For example, has the project started and if it has not started what work needs to be completed before it starts.

10 Project Budget

Project Budget

Please provide a clear budget for the lifetime of the project. Each activity or budget item should be on a separate line with the associated cost in the year that it is expected to be incurred.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Please enter activity description	€	€	€	€
Please enter activity description	€	€	€	€
Please enter activity description	€	€	€	€
Please enter activity description	€	€	€	€
Total	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0

[Add row to table +](#)

Budget Justification 

Character limit of 1,500.

1500 characters left.

Please enter the total project cost and of that total cost how much funding is being requested:

Total estimated project cost	€
Funding request	€

Please enter the co-funding source and co-funding amount:

Co-funding source	Please enter
Co-funding amount	€

Co-funding Explanation 

Character limit of 1,500.

1500 characters left.

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[SAVE AND CONTINUE →](#)

The **“Project budget”** is an essential part of your application and should be clear and carefully considered. Please include all project activities and associated costs in the table in this section. Please note, activities and costs here should refer to the entire project and not just the portion for which funding from the Gas Innovation Fund is being sought. The following table shows an example of a fully completed budget table with an array of activities and numeric values entered in each cell.

Please note: Academic overheads are not eligible for funding.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Equipment	€ 67,500	€ 15,000	€ 0	€ 0
Equipment Installation	€ 5,000	€ 1,500	€ 0	€ 0
Training and Materials	€ 2,500	€ 1,000	€ 0	€ 0
Dissemination	€ 0	€ 900	€ 900	€ 0
Total	€ 75,000	€ 18,400	€ 900	€ 0

The **“Budget Justification”** text box should include an explanation of each line item in the budget table, providing information on what exactly each activity includes.

The **“Total estimated project cost”** refers to the total cost of the project and not just the portion being requested from the Gas Innovation Fund.

The **“Funding request”** is the amount being requested from the Gas Innovation Fund to complete the project. Please see section 3 of this document for more information on this topic.

The **“Co-funding source”** is the entity providing co-funding and the **“Co-funding amount”** is the amount that the co-funding entity is providing. Please see section 3.1 of this document for more information on this topic.

It is very important that the budget section is filled out correctly. The total estimated project cost must be made up of the funding request and the co-funding amount.

Total estimated project cost = Funding request + Co-funding amount

The **“Co-funding explanation”** should detail the form of the co-funding and whether there are restrictions associated with it. For example, how much of the co-funding is made up of cash or cash equivalents and is the money guaranteed. Also, when will the co-funding be provided, and is the release of co-funding dependent on something being achieved. Any additional information about the co-funding entity could also be provided here.

11 Project Timeline

Project Timeline

Project Milestones and Timeline

Character limit of 1,200.

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Expected Outputs and Outcomes

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Potential Challenges

Character limit of 1,000.

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If you wish to submit supplementary information about your project you may do so by uploading an additional document here. However, please note that your application will be evaluated on the basis of your responses to the above questions not on any supplementary information that you may provide. Please ensure that your supplementary information is as concise as possible and no more than five pages long.

Upload supplementary information 

File

You can upload the following filetypes: pdf up to 2MB.

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[SUBMIT FORM →](#)

Details inputted here should provide the reviewer with a timeline of how the project is expected to progress and what will be delivered at different points during the lifetime of the project.

The **“Project Milestones and Timeline”** should include all project milestones in chronological order. Project milestones are key events, signifying forward movement in the project and it should be possible for the applicant to verify when those milestones have been completed. Milestones should incrementally build up until your project is complete.

The **“Expected Outputs and Outcomes”** detail the beneficial results of the project. This is an extremely important part of the application and is carefully assessed by both appraisal groups. An output is what is created at the end of a process (e.g. a product) and the applicant should outline what tangible outputs will be delivered at the end of the project. An outcome is an achievement that occurred because of the project (e.g. the product produced led to a reduction in CO₂ emissions and a benefit to society).

This section should also outline how the applicant is going to disseminate the results/learnings from the project. This is important as it will enable new projects to benefit from the learnings your project uncovered. When thinking about dissemination you should give consideration to the target audience and the most appropriate method(s) of delivering information to this group.

At a minimum, GNI would like each applicant to produce an easy to read four page summary of their project findings that can be published on GNI’s website. In some cases applicants may wish to use multiple methods to disseminate their findings to reach as wide an audience as possible. Examples of how this could be done include:

- Publishing and publicising results on a website/newspaper.
- Presenting to conferences/colleges/schools/community groups.
- Publishing results to a scientific or other journal.
- Publishing on social media channels.
- Presenting on a podcast or radio show.

Please ensure that you highlight your expected outputs, outcomes and dissemination activities when completing this section of the form.

The **“Potential Challenges”** should include the particularly challenging aspects of the project and how these are going to be mitigated against. It is important for the applicant to include how the challenges will be mitigated against to give confidence to those reviewing and evaluating the application that the project can be completed in a timely manner.

The end of this page also provides an opportunity to upload supplementary information. Please note that while you can attach additional documentation to your submission, your application is primarily assessed based on the online application form and additional documentation may or may not be reviewed.

Once you have carefully reviewed the different sections of your application click the **“Submit Form”** button. A confirmation email will be sent to the applicant to confirm that the application has been received.

12 Responsibilities of the Applicant

The contact person listed on the application is responsible for managing the project. This person will be required to communicate any updates to all stakeholders including providing written progress reports to Gas Networks Ireland. The applicant needs to reach the agreed milestones and complete the project in a timely manner. If the applicant is having difficulties in reaching milestones or completing the project this needs to be communicated to GNI as soon as possible so that it can be addressed and solutions can be reached.

13 GNI's Internal Process and Timeline

On receipt of your application, it is reviewed and you will be contacted to provide additional information if any part of the form is incomplete. An internal advisor is then assigned to each application. This person may contact you directly if they want additional information about your project.

Your application is reviewed by a number of appraisal committees and typically you will be informed if your application was successful or not circa 3-4 months after the deadline date for applications.

Good luck with your application!

14 Next Steps for Successful Applicants

If an application is successful and approved for funding, that funding is subject to a contract being put in place. A contract is generally put in place with the applicant to ensure delivery of the project in a timely manner and to allow for the payment of the funding to be made in line with agreed milestones.