

ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards

Guidance Document 2023

Call 1 - 2023

KEY DATES For 2023

Call Opens	13 th April 2023
Call Closes	13 th May 2023 @ 18:00
Awardee Announced	13 th June 2023 (ICC-CTN Summer Meeting)
Awardee Reports Due	13 th June 2024, 2025, 2026 Presentation at ICC-CTN Summer Meeting June 2026

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Introduction

The ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards provides a new flexible funding source for early career clinical trialists working in intensive care research in Ireland to support research proposals with the potential to improve patient care. The focus of the call is to support applications with obvious potential for growth toward national or international funding calls with a view to developing a larger scale, sustainable research program. Our goals are to facilitate exciting new research discoveries, and to see this new knowledge applied in order to make the strongest possible impact on health and healthcare.

Why Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards?

A major strategic objective of the Irish Critical Care Clinical Trials Network is to be a centre supporting researchers (See Figure 1.). As part of our 2021-2026 phase, our programme includes a dedicated work package focused on developing Clinical Trials and Trialists of the Future. We have allocated funding to support this initiative in the form of annual seed funding awards for early career researchers – the ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards. This will help to develop a pipeline of future trials and trialists in critical care research.

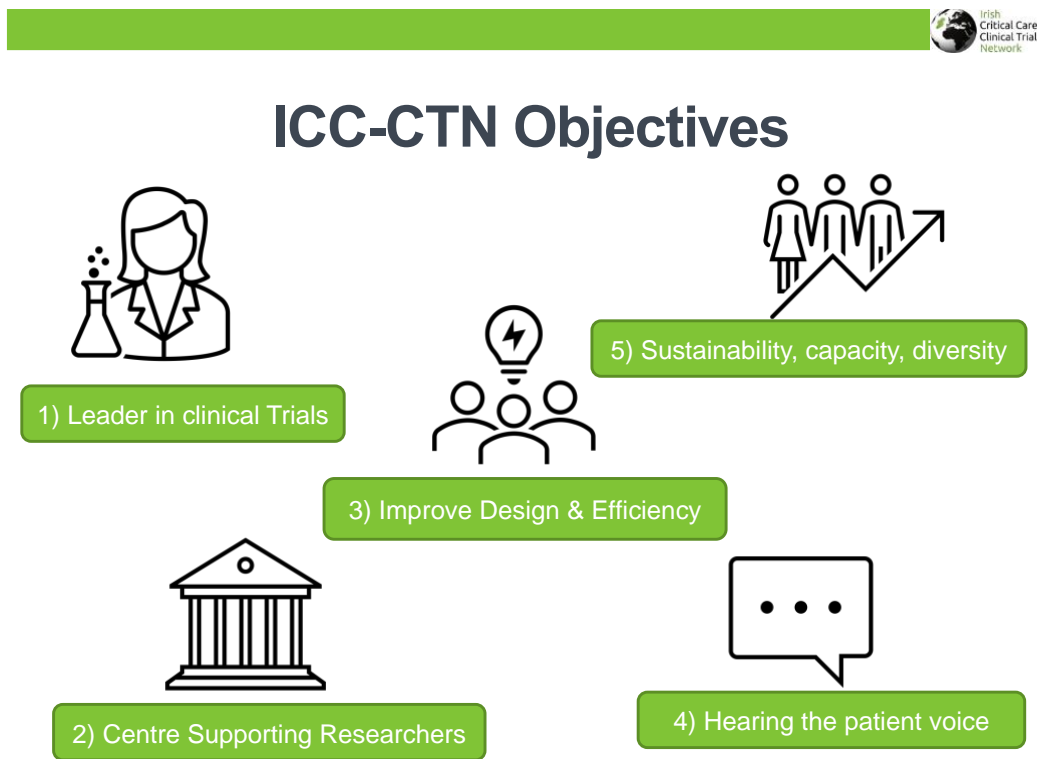


Figure 1. ICC-CTN Strategic Objectives

Each year for the next 4 years (Figure 3.), we will fund an early career researcher project in the field of critical care that is aligned with our strategic objectives (Figure 1.) and is of relevance to one of the ICC-CTN’s research priority areas through this awards process (see Figure 2.)

The maximum available is €10,000 per year (plus overheads of 25% where applicable).

Successful projects and candidates will be selected through a Review Process described below. Assessment criteria can also be found below.

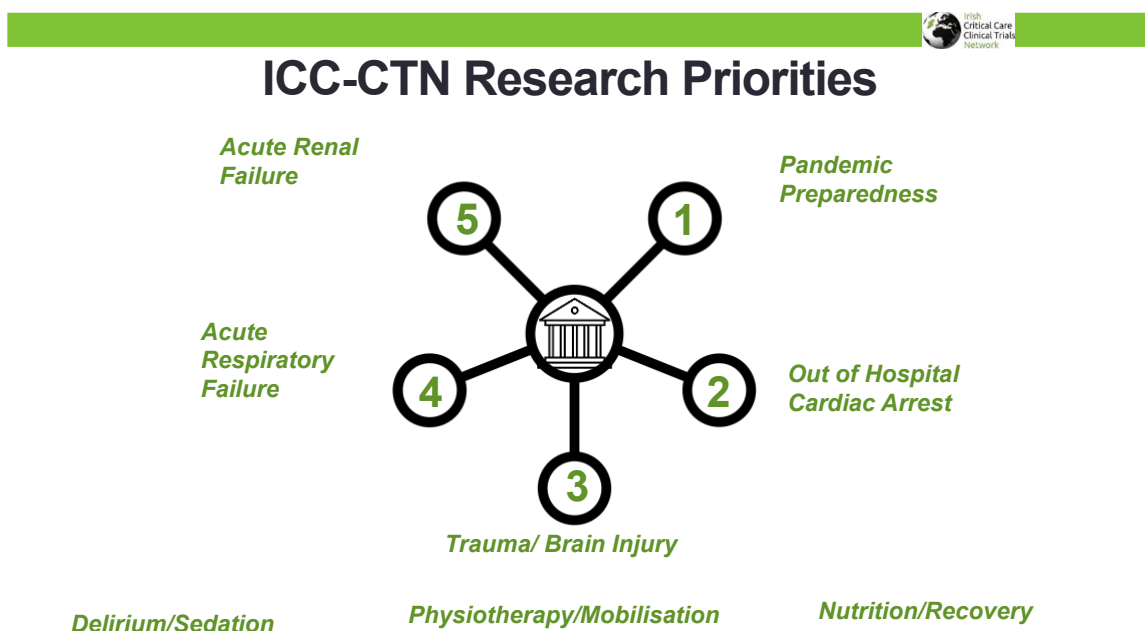


Figure 2. ICC-CTN’s research priority areas

Call number	Call Announcement
Call 1	Q2 2023
Call 2	Q2 2024
Call 3	Q2 2025
Call 4	Q2 2026

Figure 3. ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards – Annual call schedule overview

Governance, Review and Application Process

1. **Parent ICC-CTN Work Package:** this programme forms part of ICC-CTN Work Package 4: Clinical Trials and Trialists of the Future
2. **Review Panel:** an independent review panel consisting of 3 intensivists who are based outside the island of Ireland will be appointed. This panel will review and assess all submissions according to a set of criteria and weightings (see below). The applicant with the highest average total score will be awarded.
3. **Documents for submission:** applications will consist of a completed application form (in accordance with the instructions contained in the ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Application Form template), applicant CV (including confirmation that this is an early career researcher), and a signed supervisor statement which details supervisor's key research outputs and supervisory experience.
4. **Open call for submissions:** the call for submissions will open in Q2 (mid-April) of each year and close in mid-May (specific dates will be confirmed in annual guidance documents). Timeframe is one month to apply and one month for independent panel review and announcement of awardee.
5. **Submission Process:** this is a single stage written submission process. Submissions will be made via email to the ICC-CTN via icctn@ucd.ie. Late submissions will not be accepted.
6. **Awardee announced:** successful candidates will be announced at the ICC-CTN Summer Meeting each year (mid-June).
7. **Post Award Reporting requirements:** awardees must submit a brief 2-page annual report to the ICC-CTN for the next 3 years (or earlier if the project is completed) and will present the results on year 3 at the ICC-CTN summer meeting. The project must be deliverable within this timeframe.

Award Assessment Criteria

Excellence in the proposed research and project methodology will be the key metric in the ranking of submissions. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal has the potential to achieve significant clinical impact and can lead to the submission of a competitive grant application within 12 months of the project end. A well formulated plan on how the research has the potential to improve outcomes in health and/or healthcare is also key.

The independent 3 person reviewer panel will each assess each applicant’s submission based on the following criteria. Weightings apply. The applicant with the highest average total score will be awarded.

Application Relevance to ICC-CTN Portfolio Does the proposed project align with the objectives of the ICC-CTN and the research priorities of the ICC-CTN?	20%
Importance and Design of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) proposed a study that aims to address an important health problem among critically ill patients? A well-articulated explanation of the expected translational/clinical impact of the research is essential. Do they plan to employ appropriate methodology, including novel methods? Have they considered all stakeholders in the design?	30%
Expertise in Critical Care Research and track record Do the applicant(s) have experience and expertise and a suitable research track record including access to adequate support?	10%
Scalability of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) demonstrated how this study can be scaled up for a future large-scale trial and secure further funding?	20%
Feasibility and Impact of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) demonstrated the feasibility of the study including appropriate resources needed and sufficient budget to carry out the study? What is the impact of the proposed study and how do the applicant(s) intend to measure that?	20%

Who is Eligible to Apply?

1. Applicants must be an Early Career Researcher based on the island of Ireland.
2. Applicants must be working in the field of critical care research (i.e., conducting clinical based research in this area) such as medical professional in the first five years of a permanent appointment, or a non-consultant hospital doctor employed at registrar level, research scientists (with a clinical focus), physiotherapists, nurses, dietitians.
3. Applicants must list a supervisor. Supervisor must have sufficient expertise and experience to contribute to the proposed study.
4. Supervisor must be investigator on an ICC-CTN study (e.g., SPRINT SARI).
5. Applicants and supervisor must be employed within a recognised clinical site (hospital) and/or academic host institution.
6. Applicants do not have to be actively engaged in a research degree.

Budget Guidance

We will fund a project to a maximum of €10,000 (plus institutional overheads at 25% where applicable) each year.

Allowable costs include running costs, equipment costs, travel/dissemination costs and fees (maximum 50% of award can go towards fees).

Salary costs are not permitted.

Applicants will need to provide a budget breakdown according to these headings and a brief justification of each for review.