



A 10X ECONOMY

AN OPEN CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

**PROVIDING AN EVIDENCE-BASE FOR ECONOMIC
POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND**



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1. Introduction

In October 2022, the Department for the Economy (DfE) published [A 10X Economy - Research Programme 2022-23 and Beyond](#).

This research programme highlights the key research areas for the 2022-23 year, and beyond, as the department seeks to deliver on its 10X Economy Vision. The overall mission of the research programme is as follows:

“To produce research and analysis that shapes policy decisions. The evidence-base should drive successful delivery, well informed Departmental economic priorities, rebuild a stronger economy and set us firmly on the journey to realise our vision for innovation led, inclusive and sustainable growth.”

The Department is now seeking proposals from the research community to address its research needs and build the evidence base to deliver the 10X Economic Vision.

2. Strategic Context

The Department for the Economy’s 10X Vision for a Decade of Innovation, Skills Strategy, Trade & Investment, and Energy Strategy Action Plan documents set out our visions and approach for longer-term economic recovery, transformation, and development.

Figure 1: Strategic Context¹

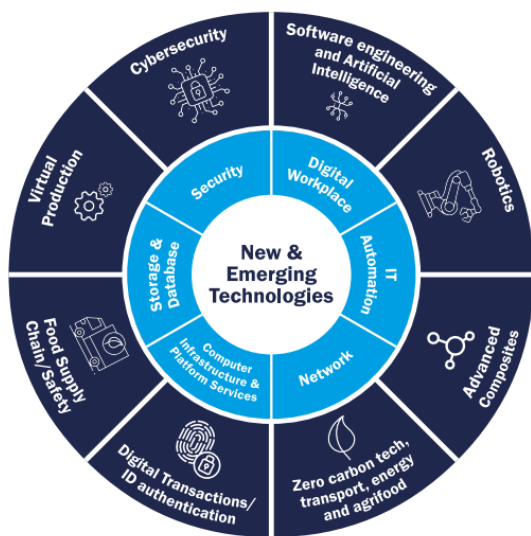


¹ Further information on the Strategic Context can be found in the 10X Economy – Research programme 2022-23 and Beyond, noted above.

In May 2021, the Department for the Economy published its 10X Economy - an Economic Vision for a Decade of Innovation Report. This provides the basis for an innovation driven recovery and provides long term plans on how to make Northern Ireland a better economy by 2030 and create a generational change.

Our ambition is centred on focusing on the core technologies and clusters where Northern Ireland can be a global leader within the next decade. We need to define our priority areas of focus and understand how these areas of speciality can be applied to support the whole economy and provide opportunities for all our people. Key technologies, sectors and clusters will shape the future for Northern Ireland.

Figure 2: Technology, Sector and Cluster Policy

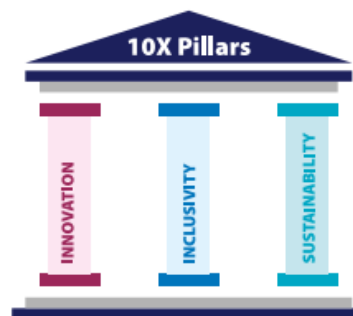


Identified Sectors:

1. Agri-Tech
2. Life and Health Sciences
3. Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
4. Fintech/Financial Services
5. Software (including cyber)
6. Screen Industries
7. Low Carbon

In October 2022, the Department for the Economy consulted on its 10X Performance Management Framework and then outlined objectives for the Department, which target the achievement of innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability.²

The Department for the Economy also set out how it will track Northern Ireland’s economic performance across a range of indicators. These include international metrics (at Tier 1), underpinning metrics (at Tier 2) and policy and programme-level metrics KPIs (at Tier 3).³



² [10X Vision - Next Steps for Implementation \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://economy-ni.gov.uk/10x-vision-next-steps-for-implementation)

³ [Measuring Success - 10X Metrics to achieve a 10X Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://economy-ni.gov.uk/measuring-success-10x-metrics-to-achieve-a-10x-economy)

3. Research Themes

The 10X Economy Research Programme provides an overview of the Research Programmes Themes and Projects for 2022 -23 and Beyond. The mission noted above will be supported by seven key themes, with each theme including aspects of innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability:

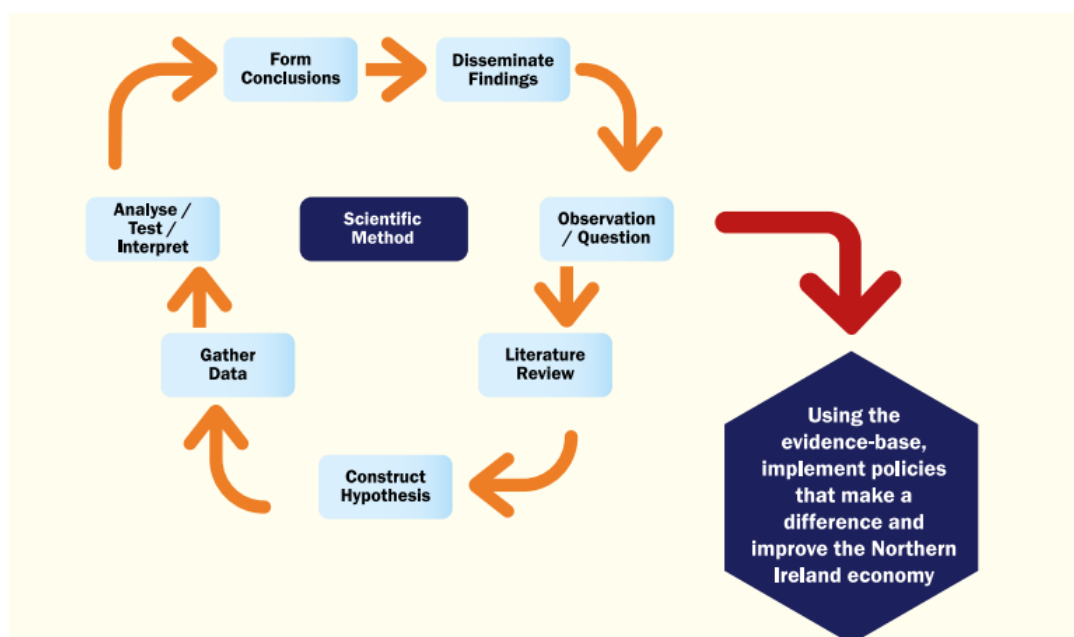
1. Focus on Key Technologies and Priority Clusters.
2. A Changing World – A Sustainable & More Inclusive Economy.
3. Skills for a Contemporary Labour Market.
4. Diffusing Innovation.
5. Funding Interventions, Understanding Enterprise & Business Growth.
6. Place-Based Growth & Investment.
7. Measuring Success.

4. Open Call for Research

The Department is now initiating an open call for Research Proposals from research organisations and research bodies. Please note, that this is a pilot exercise initially, which will be kept under review, with the intention that lessons can be learned for any future calls for research.

The purpose of this is to stimulate innovative and novel research ideas that will feed into key research themes and objectives under the new research programme and directly contribute to the evidence base in support of evidence-based policy making.

Figure 3: The Research Cycle and Policy-Making



The Department for the Economy welcomes Research Proposals from academics or firms that wish to undertake a research project related to one, or more, of the key themes identified above. Please note, the research should ideally focus on and have relevance to the Northern Ireland economy.

Proposals covering any topics relating to the key 10X research themes are welcome, but the Department is particularly keen for research proposals which:

1. Explores the relationship between exports, innovation, and productivity with a view to shaping a strategic approach to export promotion aligned with the 10X Vision.
2. Considers international best practice in relation to the strategic use of FDI to support innovation, diffusion, and commercial exploitation at scale.
3. Focuses on a competitiveness analysis of the NI tourism industry.
4. Considers how place based/focussed initiatives can unlock local economic potential.
5. Ensures the Department's review of the NI Further Education Delivery Model is well placed to learn from global best practice as it pivots to further support delivery of the 10X Economic Vision. For example, this could cover how Further Education could be more inclusive/ responsive to under-represented cohorts.
6. Focuses on research across the UK on labour and skills challenges in a manner which can drive attainment of the 10X Economic Vision and the underpinning 10X Skills Strategy. For example, this could cover: Leadership and Management; Lifelong Learning; High Performance working practices; Adult Learning; Employability Skills; or Digital Skills.
7. Provides an evidence base on the impact of parental leave policies on employment or flexible working.
8. Focuses on the impacts on disposable income as a result of an increase in minimum wage and living wage, on the lowest earners and the economic implications of this for NI and/or the achievement of the 10X Economic Vision.
9. Provides learning from areas of international best practise from small advanced economies around the world to drive 10X performance ie. policies, programmes, and approaches work well elsewhere in delivering innovation led, inclusive, sustainable growth and how applicable are they to Northern Ireland.
10. Ensures the Department learns from best practice to adopt a robust approach to 10X evaluation, including the feasibility of impact-based evaluation techniques.
11. Focuses on Skills Required for a Transition to an Advanced Zero Emission, Indigenous Diverse Energy Secure and Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.
12. Focuses on research and evidence to ensure our energy system is delivering self-sufficiency in affordable renewable energy. Research should be aligned

to one of the five Energy Strategy principles⁴ or crosscutting, where they sit across multiple priorities.

13. Provides a comparative assessment of Northern Ireland's entrepreneurship system and performance and identify factors which may be constraining our potential for growth in entrepreneurial activity.
14. In light of the commitments under the NI Climate Change Act and in order to secure economic opportunities of moving towards a more sustainable economy, examine whether there a need for a new government backed finance institute (such as a 'Green Investment Bank') in Northern Ireland which could help to address any market failures that lead to underinvestment in this agenda from the private sector. The expectation is that the research would:
 - a) Assess the likely investment needs across the different sectors.
 - b) Assess the likelihood within each sector of being able to raise sufficient capital from existing sources to meet these investment needs.
 - c) Therefore, consider whether there would be a role for this type of institution in NI; and
 - d) If so, what type of financial instruments would be most useful for such a body to provide.

It should be noted however, the decision to fund any Research Proposal and the timing of the commissioning of individual projects will be made on a case-by-case basis. Those decisions will take into consideration factors including the need for the project, feasibility, timing, capacity to steer the work, potential for duplication with other work, affordability, value for money and how much it will benefit and inform economic policy making in Northern Ireland including the delivery of the 10X Vision.

Due to finite budgets, the Department does not commit to commissioning any research projects as a result of this open call. Funding will be entirely at the discretion of the Department. In addition to longer-term proposals, the Department particularly welcomes proposals which will be completed within the 2022-23 Financial Year (31 March 2023).

If you would like to be kept informed of the research work of DfE or indeed any future calls for research proposals, please send your contact details to analyticalservices@economy-ni.gov.uk so you can be added to our mailing list.

⁴ [The Path to Net Zero Energy. Safe. Affordable. Clean. \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/the-path-to-net-zero-energy-safe-affordable-clean)

5. Proposals

The Research Proposals submitted by research organisations and research bodies should include, at a minimum, the following information (*please note, the Department may seek clarification on specific proposals should more information be required*):

<p>Project Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section should provide the Department with a clear understanding of the project being proposed including how it fits with DfE priorities and research needs. • Outline the broad methodology and indication of data to be used in the analysis. This section should also highlight whether the organisation is seeking to obtain data, processing personal data, or utilizing data publicly available.⁵ • It should be noted that any analytical work, or economic modelling, undertaken as part of the proposal must be provided to the Department at project completion. • It should be made clear which research theme or specific research areas highlighted, in section 4, the project aligns to. The research theme can align to more than one of the themes. <p><i>(It is important to be aware that both professional and non-professional staff will be assessing this proposal and therefore use of technical terms should be fully explained in this Section).</i></p>
<p>Project Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project plan should be provided. The project plan should identify the major packages of work within the project, with well-defined milestones, interim milestones, and deliverables.
<p>Staffing and Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section should identify the staff to be involved in the project, their position/grade, and their relevant experience. • In demonstrating their experience examples must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assignment title and client. ➤ Total value of the research. ➤ Start/end dates and duration of the assignment. ➤ Summary of the assignment. ➤ The specific role/ duties of the staff.
<p>Proposed Research Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal must include a breakdown of the proposed research costs, identifying the staff to be involved in the study, daily rates, and proposed number of days to be spend on the research project.

⁴ [Data protection: The Data Protection Act - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All costs should be shown both inclusive, and exclusive of VAT. • Payments will be made in instalments and linked to outputs and quality. Therefore, this section should note the proposed payment schedule for the total costs.
Publication of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in the 10X Research Programme, to ensure that the research has maximum impact, research findings will be published, to share the benefits with others and contribute to public knowledge. Assurances must be provided that the organisation will adhere to accessibility guidelines, as noted at the following link - https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/dfc-accessibility-statement.

Proposals must not exceed 6 double sided A4 pages with a font size that is no smaller than Arial size 10. Please note, the page limit excludes Gantt Charts and Excel spreadsheets.

6. Submission and Key Dates

Submission

If you wish to submit a Research Proposal for the Department for the Economy to consider, please send to analyticalservices@economy-ni.gov.uk.

The deadline for submissions is 3pm on 16th December 2022.

Once a proposal has been submitted no amendment can be made, nor will additional documentation or attachments be accepted. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered as part of this Open Call.

Key Dates

The table below provides an overview of the proposed evaluation timescale (*please note, this is not definite and may be subject to change*).

Deadline for submission	3pm on 16 th December 2022.
Evaluation of proposals – Internal review	Mid-December 2022 to Mid-January 2023.
Issue notifications of the outcome of evaluations including, where appropriate, success/non-success letters	Mid-January 2023.