



Mol Aeráide Choláiste na Tríonóide AIB
AIB Trinity Climate Hub

Seed Funding Schemes Launch Webinar

Sprout | Seedling | Sapling

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8 October 2026

Webinar structure:

1. Introduction to AIB Trinity Climate Hub
2. Seed Funding Presentation
3. Q and A

AIB Trinity Climate Hub

- Large sponsorship from AIB
- For climate and nature research
- We are an internal
 - Funder
 - Resource
 - Support team
- Running until 2030

Office: 6 Leinster Street South

Website: climate-hub.ie

Email: info@climate-hub.ie*

LinkedIn: AIB Trinity Climate Hub

*(or email us directly)





Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Mol Aeráide Choláiste na Tríonóide AIB
AIB Trinity Climate Hub

Vision

A balanced world shaped by inclusive, innovative research and education, free of climate and nature challenges.

Mission

To strengthen and expand Trinity's world class climate and nature research and education environment, through interdisciplinary collaboration, engagement, leadership development and support.

AIB Trinity Climate Hub: Programme



AIB Trinity Climate Hub: Strategic Priorities



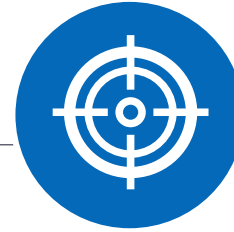
We are a college-wide resource:

supporting research or engagement work related to climate and nature that will drive meaningful impact, regardless of school or discipline.



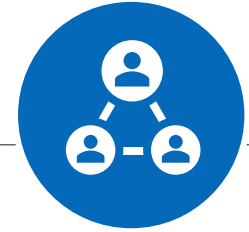
We encourage cross-college collaboration:

prioritising inter and transdisciplinary research that provides holistic solutions to complex climate and nature challenges.



We provide agile, specialised support:

identifying gaps in existing research infrastructure and providing support through flexible funding and specialised development.



We engage the public proactively:

building relationships with targeted public stakeholders to facilitate engaged climate and nature research and uptake of solutions.

Other opportunities:

Engagement and Impact Fund

Mairead Holden - mholden1@tcd.ie

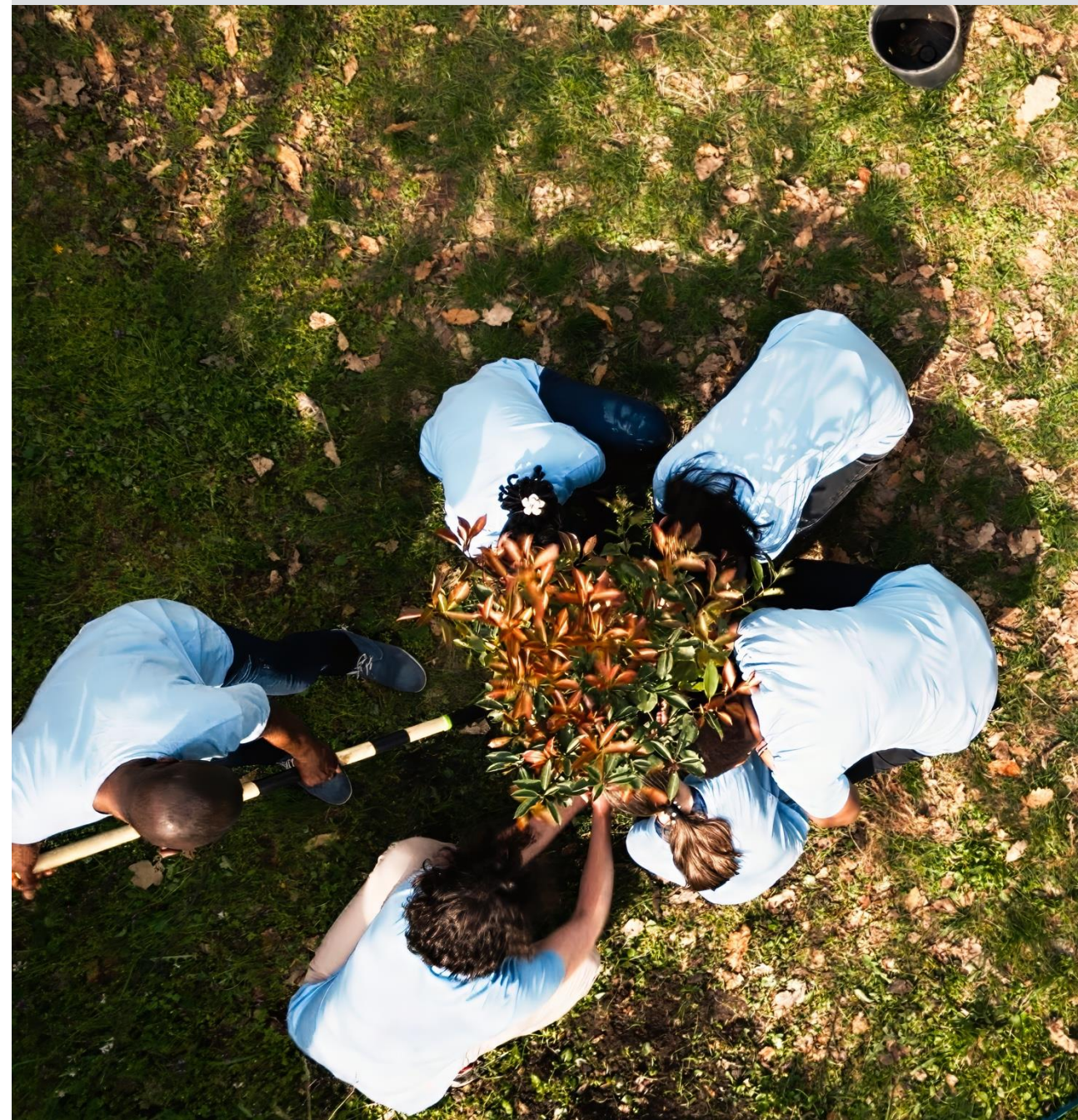
Policy Engagement Training

Mona Soroudi – soroudim@tcd.ie

Coming soon...

Commercialisation workshop

Research retreat funding



AT A GLANCE

Three funding tiers, one core framework

SPROUT

PER GRANT

< €10K

The assessment review is carried out by the Climate Hub team.

SEEDLING

PER GRANT

> €10K to ≤ €50K

The application is reviewed by a combination of reviewers beyond the Hub and within Trinity.

SAPLING

PER GRANT

> €50K to ≤ €150K

Applicants first submit an EOI*; the full application is assessed completely externally.

The application format and assessment approach are aligned; the level of detail (word counts) and review arrangement differ by tier.

**Out of scheme co-funding**

We **occasionally** offer co-funding towards applications for other schemes on a case-by-case basis. If you are interested in this, please reach out to us directly with a description of the need and justification.

Email: amanda.mathieson@tcd.ie

* EOI: Express of Interest

AT A GLANCE

Seed Funding: Structure

	Sprout	Seedling	Sapling
When can you apply?	Ongoing	Ongoing	October to December
How many applications are we accepting?	Minimum of 10	4 to 20	2 to 6
How much funding is available each year?	€100,000*	€200,000*	€300,000*
How much can each project receive?	Up to €10,000	€10,000 to €50,000	€50,000 to €150,000
How often are applications reviewed?	As they come in	As they come in	Annually
What is the timeline for the review process?	5- 10 working days	up to 15-20 working days, where possible	• 2 November: EOI submission deadline • 9 November: Applicants will be notified whether they can submit the full application • 26 November: Full application submission deadline • 11 December: Final decision announcement
What's the funding cap?	€25,000 per quarter	€100,000 twice yearly	€300,000 per year

*These amounts are committed for 2026–2027 but may differ in subsequent years.

APPLICATION STRUCTURE

What goes into the application

01

Project & applicant details

Applicant eligibility, project title, dates, funding requested, themes

02

Project summary

Lay summary and clear overview of the proposal

03

Criterion 1

Interdisciplinarity, team & capacity building

04

Criterion 2

Strategic fit with the AIB Trinity Climate Hub

05

Criterion 3

Objectives, proposal, innovation and feasibility

06

Criterion 4

Impact, outcomes, EDI*, dissemination & communication

07

Criterion 5

Future sustainability, future funding and value for money

08

Supporting information

Timeline, risks, ethics, data management, budget & justification

* EDI: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Five criteria: application sections & marks

01	Interdisciplinarity, Team & Capacity Building		15
02	Strategic Fit with the AIB Trinity Climate Hub		20
03	Quality, Innovation & Feasibility		30
04	Potential Impact & Dissemination		25
05	Future Sustainability & Value for Money		10

100

marks total

Same criteria and marks for
Small, Medium and Large

APPLICATION LENGTH BY TIER

Same themes, different word counts

Section (maximum words)	Sprout	Seedling	Sapling
Lay summary	120	150	150
1 Interdisciplinarity, team & capacity building	200	400	500
2 Strategic fit with the Hub	200	350	500
3 Quality, innovation & feasibility	650	1,350	1,950
4 Impact & dissemination	500	750	1,100
5 Sustainability, value for money & funding	550	950	1,300
Total	2,220	3,950	5,500

ONE FRAMEWORK, TAILORED TO YOUR PROPOSAL

What is assessed depends on what you are proposing, but it always falls under these five themes.

Proposal types

Research

Equipment

Communications

Events

Engagement

Training

Other

- Sections marked **where relevant** or **if relevant** are only completed if they apply; otherwise write N/A
- Equipment, events and research proposals each address different points under Expected Outcomes

CRITERION 1 • 15 MARKS

Criterion 1: Interdisciplinarity, Team & Capacity Building

WHAT TO COVER (AS RELEVANT)

- 1 Team members and collaborators
- 2 Team expertise and composition
- 3 Why interdisciplinarity is needed
- 4 Complementary and integrated expertise
- 5 Collaboration mechanisms and capacity building

Not every point will apply to every application.

For example, a small budget for an event may not need an interdisciplinary team; showing you have engaged the right expertise, such as a communications officer, can be enough.



15
of 100 marks

WHAT REVIEWERS NEED TO SEE

Demonstrate genuine integration and transformation.

The potential for increased capacity in climate and nature research.

CRITERION 2 • 20 MARKS

Criterion 2: Strategic Fit with the Hub

WHAT TO COVER (AS RELEVANT)

- 1 How the proposal strengthens climate/nature research at Trinity
- 2 Research gap, challenge or opportunity
- 3 Contribution to knowledge, collaboration, innovation or impact
- 4 Relevant Hub strategic priorities
- 5 Specific examples of strategic value

Not every point will apply to every application.

For example, an equipment proposal may contribute mainly through agile, specialised support rather than all three Hub strategic priorities.



20
of 100 marks

WHAT REVIEWERS NEED TO SEE

Show clearly why the proposal fits the Hub.

CRITERION 3 • 30 MARKS

Criterion 3: Quality, Innovation & Feasibility

WHAT TO COVER (AS RELEVANT)

- 1 3–5 SMART research objectives
- 2 Clear rationale, justification of need, approach and/or significance
- 3 What is genuinely new or innovative
- 4 Timeline, milestones and responsible people
- 5 Risks and mitigation; ethics/data where relevant

Not every point will apply to every application.

For example, a training or event proposal may not have research objectives or need an ethics or data plan; if it is not especially novel, simply say so.



30
of 100 marks

WHAT REVIEWERS NEED TO SEE

Be specific, realistic and evidenced.

CRITERION 4 • 25 MARKS

Criterion 4: Potential Impact & Dissemination

WHAT TO COVER (AS RELEVANT)

- 1 Equity, inclusion and community engagement
- 2 Specific outcomes and benefits
- 3 Academic, societal, environmental and/or policy impact
- 4 Stakeholder engagement
- 5 Dissemination and communication plan

Not every point will apply to every application.

For example, an equipment purchase may not involve community engagement; instead, explain who will use the equipment for sustainability purposes and how it will be housed and maintained.



25
of 100 marks

WHAT REVIEWERS NEED TO SEE

Explain who benefits, how, and how results will reach them.

CRITERION 5 • 10 MARKS

Criterion 5: Future Sustainability & Value for Money

WHAT TO COVER (AS RELEVANT)

- 1 Pathway to future funding
- 2 Potential funders and next-stage opportunities
- 3 How the project could evolve
- 4 Necessity and proportionality of costs
- 5 Value for money and alternative funding
- 6 Long-term sustainability of equipment and maintenance plan

Not every point will apply to every application.

For example, an event may not lead directly to a major grant; show its value through new partnerships, follow-on ideas or long-term benefit.



10
of 100 marks

WHAT REVIEWERS NEED TO SEE

Show how seed funding can unlock future opportunity or provide long-term value.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

One assessment for every tier

Fixed for Sprout, **Seedling** and **Sapling**

Same five criteria • same 100 marks • same scoring bands • different levels of evaluation

ONGOING CALLS: **Sprout** and **Seedling** only

- Regular review of applications
- All applications over the threshold deemed fundable are funded by weighting, up to the cap
- Once the cap is reached, the call is paused until the next period
- Unassessed applications automatically roll over to the next period
- **Above the threshold but missed out because of the cap?**
 - Rolls over automatically, with its score
 - Or revise and resubmit, if you prefer

ANNUAL CALL: **Sapling** only

Multi-stage process:

1 • EOI



2 • Final review



Applications are confidential to AIB Trinity Climate Hub review panel members.

All evaluators sign a declaration of absence of conflict of interests before assessing the applications.

SCORING RUBRIC

How each criterion is scored

Criterion	Marks	What reviewers assess (<u>AS RELEVANT</u>)	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Borderline	Poor
Interdisciplinarity, Team & Capacity Building	15	Team expertise & composition; complementarity of expertise; interdisciplinary integration; collaboration mechanisms; capacity building; future networks	12–15	10.5–13.5	7–10	4–6	0–3
Strategic Fit with the AIB Trinity Climate Hub	20	Alignment with Hub aims; climate/nature relevance; contribution to Trinity's climate & nature research; cross-college collaboration; agile specialised support; proactive public engagement	16–20	14–17	10–13	5–9	0–4
Quality, Innovation, Feasibility	30	Clarity of objectives; rationale; approach/methods; innovation; feasibility; timeline; risks; ethics/data management where relevant	24.5–30	21–24	15–20	9–14	0–8
Impact & Dissemination	25	Equity, inclusion and community engagement (where relevant); expected outcomes; academic, societal, environmental impact; stakeholder engagement; dissemination & communication; open science where relevant	20.5–25	17.5–22	12.5–17	6–12	0–5
Future Sustainability & Value for Money	10	Necessity and proportionality of costs; value for money; budget justification; alternative funding; strategic value; future funding; longer-term benefits	8.5–10	7–8.5	5–6.5	3–4.5	0–2

Each criterion is scored within these bands, as relevant.

The five criterion scores add up to a total out of 100.

OVERALL RATING

From your total score to a funding recommendation

95–100	Fund – Outstanding	FUNDABLE
85–94	Fund – High Priority	FUNDABLE
75–84	Fund if Resources Permit	FUNDABLE
60–74	Priority for Support	NOT FUNDABLE
Below 60	Do Not Fund – Support if Capacity Available	NOT FUNDABLE

WHAT COUNTS AS FUNDABLE

- Priority for Support and Do Not Fund are not fundable
- Priority for Support will be offered 1-2-1 support for proposal development if desired
- Any minimum quality bar set for the round must also be met

WHERE SCORES ARE SIMILAR

Preference may be given to:

- proposals that address more than one Hub strategic priority
- applicants or proposals that have not previously received Hub support

REVIEWER RECORD

From two scores to one decision

Reviewer 1 score

AND

Reviewer 2 score

Compare the two scores

Within 10 marks of each other

The two scores are averaged into the final score.

10+ marks apart, or in different bands

The Hub reviews both assessments with the reviewers, or brings in a third reviewer to break the tie.

**FINAL DECISION****Made by the Climate Hub Team****FINALLY...**

- Ranks all applications by final score
- Records the basis: decided by reviewer original score, by reconciliation, or by lottery* (with a log reference)

LOTTERY

Where the lottery sits in the process

1

Formal assessment

2 independent reviewers score against the five criteria

2

Reconciliation & ranking

RPO/Manager reconciles divergent scores and ranks by final score

3

Funding line

Hub sets the line from available budget and the ranked list

4

Lottery tie-break

Only for a close-scoring group at the funding line, where trigger conditions are met

5

Decision & notification

Record notes whether each borderline case was settled by score or lottery

WHEN DOES THE LOTTERY APPLY?

- **Fundable:** scored in a fundable band and met any minimum quality bar for the round
- **Too close to call:** the group straddles the funding line, the budget cannot fund them all, and scores alone do not separate them
- **Default margin:** applications within 3 marks of one another are treated as too close to call on score alone
- Applications outside the cluster are funded or not funded on score alone

WORKED EXAMPLE: FUNDING LINE AT RANK 8, 2 AWARDS REMAINING

Rank	Score	Outcome
7	88	Funded on score alone
8	79	Lottery pool
9	78	Lottery pool
10	77	Lottery pool
11	58	Not fundable, outside the margin

Ranks 8, 9 and 10 (71, 69, 68) are within 3 marks and compete for the 2 remaining awards.

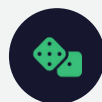
LOTTERY

Who can enter, and how the draw is run



WHO CAN ENTER

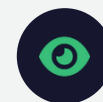
- **Only fundable applications**
- Clearly higher-scoring applications are funded on merit and do not enter
- Divergent reviewer recommendations are reconciled first
- Same rule for Small, Medium and Large



HOW THE DRAW IS RUN

- Administered by the Hub and witnessed by an external witness (or vice versa)
- **Never run by a reviewer** who scored the applications concerned
- Applications identified by application number only
- Documented, repeatable random method, e.g. a random number generator

The lottery only fills the places left after score-based decisions.



RECORD AND COMMUNICATION

- Logged: pool and reconciled scores, method, date, time, staff present, outcome
- Final Decision records score or lottery, with a log reference
- Applicants are told plainly when a lottery decided the outcome
- The notice confirms the application passed the quality threshold
- Not being drawn is not a judgement on proposal quality



The trigger margin and draw method are confirmed by the Hub Manager before first use and reviewed after the first round in which they apply.

Any change needs the Manager's approval and is never applied to a round already decided.

FOR APPLICANTS

Not funded this round? Here's what happens next



Improve and reapply

If your application isn't successful, you'll **receive feedback from the reviewers.**

You're welcome to revise your proposal in light of that feedback and submit again in a future round.

You are also welcome to seek advice from the Climate Hub team on how to improve, though higher-scoring applications will be given priority.

There's no limit on how many times you can apply, and a previous unsuccessful application has no bearing on how a new one is scored.



Back in the queue

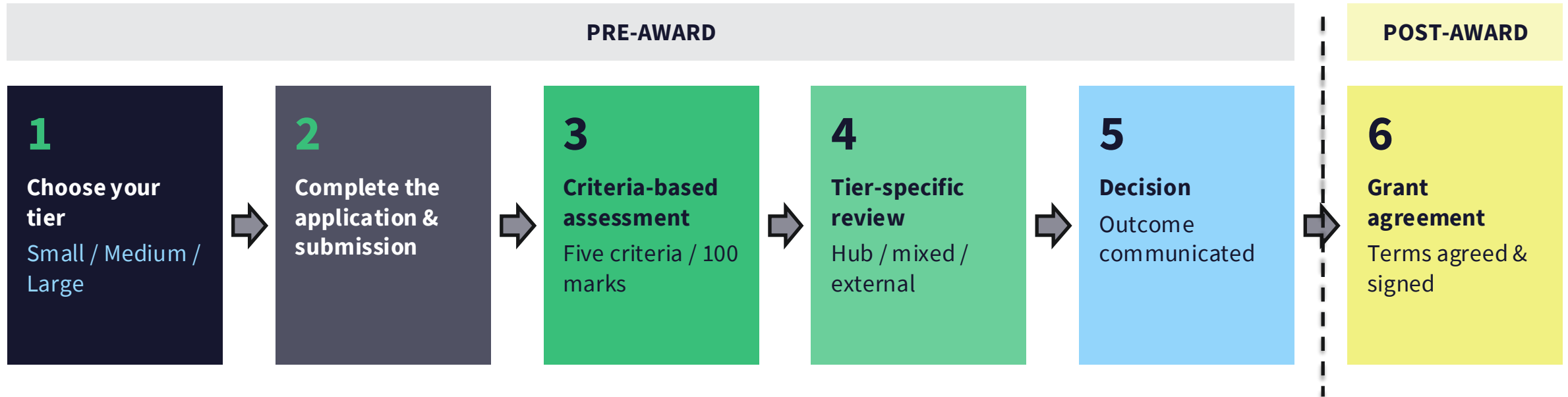
A resubmitted application is **treated as new.**

It re-enters the standard review process and is assessed on its own merits, alongside all other applications in that round; it does not skip ahead.

- If your application is fundable (above the threshold), you can resubmit it as is, or refine it and resubmit.
- **Been in multiple lotteries?** You may be considered for priority on a case-by-case basis (no guarantee).

THE JOURNEY

Let's review the process: from application to grant agreement



Every application follows the same five pre-award stages; only the review arrangement (step 4) changes by tier. Successful applicants then move to the grant agreement.

At any stage of the journey, applicants are welcome to reach out to the Hub for support, and guidance.

SUBMISSION

How to submit the application?



Application submission

soroudim@tcd.ie



Informal enquiries

Amanda.Mathieson@tcd.ie
soroudim@tcd.ie

Thank you for your attention!

