



HIHI Femtech Call 2023

Briefing Document

Background Information

Femtech, short for "female technology," refers to a category of technology and digital health solutions that specifically target women's health and well-being. These technologies are designed to address various aspects of women's health, including reproductive health, menstrual health, pregnancy and postpartum care, menopause, sexual wellness, and more. Femtech products and services can encompass a wide range of applications and devices, such as mobile apps, wearable devices, diagnostic tools, telemedicine platforms, and online communities. Femtech has gained significant attention and investment in recent years as the healthcare industry recognises the importance of addressing women's unique health needs. It has the potential to improve women's health outcomes, increase healthcare accessibility, and reduce the stigma around topics related to women's health.

In 2022, HIHI launched **Femtech @ Health Innovation Hub Ireland**¹, Ireland's first Femtech ecosystem bringing together the key enablers of innovation in women's health namely; clinicians, academic research, industry, investors and women. The aim of Femtech @ Health Innovation Hub Ireland is to create a Femtech focus in Ireland and drive the development of new products and services to address the underserved area of women's health and to stimulate more research to inform these innovations.

The Department of Health established the **Women's Health Taskforce**² to improve women's health outcomes and experiences of healthcare in September 2019. Soon afterwards, it engaged with over 2000 individuals and organisations representing women across the country, and subsequently published the **Women's Health Action Plan 2022 – 2023**³. This plan aims to impact health outcomes for women in Ireland

¹ <https://hih.ie/engage/femtech/>

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/-womens-health/>

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/232af-womens-health-action-plan-2022-2023/>



by improving women's health supports and services, and reimagining how healthcare is delivered to women by innovating in a number of key areas including contraception, fertility, endometriosis, menopause, gynaecology, cancer and diabetes screening, HPV vaccines, mental health, marginalised women, period poverty, primary care and physical activity. One of the key objectives of the initiative is to showcase the potential for new innovative approaches.

Additionally, the HSE **National Service Plan 2023**⁴ has identified women's health as a particular area of focus for HSE in 2023, with a number of key objectives proposed. In particular, the plan aims to:

1. Further implement the National Maternity Strategy
2. Ensure quality and safety in the provision of maternity care
3. Enhance access to gynaecology services
4. Support sexual and reproductive health.

Details of HIHI Femtech Call 2023

Femtech @ Health Innovation Hub Ireland is seeking project proposals from **innovators** (companies, start-ups, researchers). Applications are invited to **HIHI Femtech Call 2023** for innovations that have the potential to significantly impact women's healthcare in Ireland and / or internationally. These innovative products and services can either be market-ready or in development.

What are the Assessment Criteria?

As a guideline, all applications will be assessed against a number of criteria including:

- The validity of the identified healthcare need
- The ability of the product or service to address the identified healthcare need
- The management of the intellectual property (IP) for the product or service
- The size and understanding of the potential market for this product or service
- The quality of proposed project plan
- The caliber of the innovator / innovation team
- The ability of the innovator to provide necessary resources
- The feasibility and viability of delivering the proposed project in an Irish healthcare context.

What HIHI will offer to participating innovators?

HIHI offers two types of projects

1. Pilots are conducted in a healthcare setting in Ireland with products and services which have all the necessary regulatory approvals (e.g., CE mark) and insurance in place at the time of pilot
2. Clinical Evaluations provide critical feedback from clinicians or other end-users on a product or service that is market ready or in development.

⁴ <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/serviceplans/national-service-plan-2023.pdf>



A **pilot project** conducted with HIHI will

- facilitate access to the health system for execution of the pilot of a market-ready product or service
- provide the innovator with a "reference site" in Ireland
- provide the innovator key contextual learnings and insights
- provide support of HIHI project management team to manage the execution of the project
- provide access to research expertise from partner institutions
- provide advice on the availability of various funding streams
- link innovators (when appropriate), to other relevant supports within the Irish healthcare innovation ecosystem
- deliver an independent HIHI Final Project Report on completion of a pilot, which can be highly beneficial as evidence of solution efficacy, impact and value for key stakeholders such as potential customers or investors
- publish a case study on the HIHI website.

A **clinical evaluation project** conducted with HIHI will

- facilitate access to the health system for the purpose of getting critical feedback from clinicians or end-users on an innovation that is market-ready, pre commercial or in-development
- provide the innovators with access to key opinion leaders and contextual insights
- provide support of HIHI project management team to manage the execution of the project
- provide access to research and knowledge expertise from partner institutions
- provide advice on the availability of various funding streams
- link innovators (when appropriate), to other relevant supports within the Irish healthcare innovation ecosystem
- deliver an independent HIHI Final Project Report on completion of a clinical evaluation
- publish a case study on the HIHI website

What MUST innovators provide to support the projects?

Innovators conducting a project with HIHI must

- provide dedicated contact personnel and when relevant, the availability of personnel at the project site
- provide dedicated resources to deliver project objectives - equipment, hardware, software, etc. where necessary
- provide personnel and resources at no cost to the healthcare system for project duration
- engage proactively with Health Innovation Hub Ireland and healthcare personnel to deliver the project objectives
- acknowledge HIHI support in public presentations, publications and social media presentations



- have the relevant liability insurance in place, particularly important for pilot projects.

Notes for Applicants:

- HHI does not have a procurement role and as such, regardless of the outcome of HHI projects, the HSE is under no obligation to purchase the product or service.
- HHI does not conduct clinical trials - these are referred to our associated Clinical Research Facilities, or other members of the HRB NCTO, where appropriate.
- If a project is accepted by HHI, a Project Agreement Document containing HHI terms and conditions must be completed before the start of the project which will outline the proposed timelines.
- Depending on the detail of the proposed project, a research ethics application and a data protection impact assessment may be required before a pilot or clinical evaluation can commence..
- HHI will not provide financial support for selected projects
- HHI will not charge a fee to manage or support projects selected in the HHI Femtech Call 2023.

Submission of Applications

The HHI Femtech Call 2023 **Application Form** is available for download now from <https://hih.ie/engage/femtech-call>

Closing Date: Applications should be submitted via this [link](#) by **5pm Friday, November 17th, 2023**.

Enquiries

For general enquiries please contact HHI at info@hih.ie or your nearest HHI office:

Dr Steven Griffin	Galway	steven.griffin@nuigalway.ie
Ms Eimear Galvin	Dublin	GALVINEI@tcd.ie
Dr Michael Twomey	Cork	Michael.twomey@ucc.ie
Ms Jane O'Flynn	Cork	jane.oflynn@mtu.ie



Reference Information:

Femtech @ Health Innovation Hub Ireland
<https://hih.ie/downloads/femtech-hihi-info-sheet.pdf>

Department of Health, Women's Health Taskforce
<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/-womens-health/>

Women's Health Taskforce, Women's Health Action Plan 2022 – 2023
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/232af-womens-health-action-plan-2022-2023/>

Department of Health, Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6996b-slaintecare-implementation-strategy-and-action-plan-2021-2023/>

