# Appendix 4 - Phase 2 Proposal Template

There are two key documents which are required as part of the submission process for consideration of Phase 2 funding for the 7 x 2012 Research Centres; a progress report and a Proposal for Phase 2 funding. The template for the **Phase 2 Proposal** is provided here.

The Phase 2 Proposal document must be uploaded to SESAME using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form, see Section 8 of the Call Document.

All textshould be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 12, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.

The overriding purpose of the Phase 2 Proposal is to provide sufficient information for an international review panel to make a funding recommendation (or not) for a Centre to be awarded a second phase of funding. The Phase 2 Proposal will be made available to the review panel during June 2017, at least 3 months prior to the site review. Each panel member will provide an independent written postal review, inclusive of scoring, of the proposal in advance of the site review.

The postal reviews of the Phase 2 Proposal will be circulated to the Centre Directors who will be invited to submit a written response to SFI. The applicant responses will be then sent to the review panel, who will use these responses to inform the site visit discussion and associated agenda.

The Phase 2 Proposal template is structured so as to provide information under a number of heading, all which must be addressed. The page limits of each section must not be exceeded.

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## Research Centre (RC) Executive Summary (max. 5 pages)

Provide a summary overview of the proposal, including key aspects of the team composition, the research programme and the proposed economic and societal impact; a summarised budget must also be included. This summary should capture the pertinent aspects of the proposal.

## Research Centre Leadership Team (max. 10 pages)

At the time of the original submission of the 2012 Research Centre proposals, a number of co-applicants and Funded Investigators (FIs) were approved for each Centre. Since then, a number of PIs and FIs have been removed or added to each Centre, following approval by the SFI post award team. Although a number of the Co-PIs in the Centre have been reviewed and approved before, the Phase 2 Proposal will involve a review of the entire Centre applicant team including old and new Co-PIs. Therefore, up to date CVs, and an update of research funding history for each of the existing co-PIs in the Research Centre and any additional Co-Applicants will be required as part of the submission process (refer to Section 8 of the call document).

The Progress Report, which must be submitted in parallel with the Phase 2 Proposal, includes a section in which the Centre must provide a description of the leadership team, i.e. names and responsibilities and a brief bio-sketch of the Centre’s management team including the Director, Deputy Director(s), Co-PIs, FIs, senior managers, IP managers, etc. The Phase 2 Proposal must concentrate on changes or expansion of the team required to meet the future objectives of the Centre. This section of the proposal must address the following;

* An outline of the proposed leadership plan for Phase 2 of the Research Centre;
* A description of and justification for any changes which will be made to the leadership team;
* Description of a succession plan for the Director, and for other key management positions and co-PIs;
* An outline of plans to expand the pool of PIs, for example through the SFI Research Professorship and Future Research Leaders programmes. To improve the gender balance under the SFI Research Centres programme, include specific objectives related to gender equality perspectives, especially with a view to recruitment;
* Plans to add new Co-PIs and/or FIs to the Centre plus a description of the impact that the new PI/FI will have on the operations or research activities of the Centre. Include specific objectives related to gender equality perspectives, especially with a view to recruitment;
* Describe how the gender balance of the team from students, up to senior level is being addressed.

## Governance and Management (max. 5 pages)

The progress report includes a detailed description of the existing Research Centre governance structures. The Phase 2 Proposal must provide an overview of how the governance structure will be changed or optimised during the second phase of funding, to meet and support the ambitions of the Centre.

## Support from the Host Research Bodies (max. 5 pages)

As the Centres become more sustainable, the expectation is that they will become more integrated into the operations of the host and partner research bodies. A review of the governance structures of the Research Centres is also expected following the findings of the governance review advisory committee. One recommendation from this committee has been the implementation of a Service level agreement (SLA) between the Centre, SFI and the Host Research Body. The format and implementation of an SLA would be subject to consultation with key stakeholders. For the purposes of the proposal, please provide the following:

* Describe any additional infrastructures, facilities space and / or services that will need to be provided by the Host Research Body;
* Describe any additional support services that will be provided, for example IP/technology transfer services, HR, contracts and legal supports, by the Research Body;
* Describe how the overhead income will support the operation, sustainability and impact of the Centre;
* The Host Research Body should comment on how it will continue to support the Centre Director;
* Describe the reporting structure which has been / will be put in place within the Research Body.

In addition, a letter of support must be included from the Lead Applicant’s Research Body (Host Research Body) and from the Research Body of the co-Applicants (co-PIs) and FIs, if from a different Research Body (see section 15 - Letters of support).

## Strategy (max. 5 pages)

This section of the Phase 2 Proposal must clearly describe the long-term strategic direction, mission and vision of the Centre and should include the following:

* Describe how the Centre will engage with other national and international Research Centres and how it will become a leader in its research field, both nationally and internationally;
* Describe how the Centre is meeting the needs of industry (largely) through collaborative research activities;
* Describe how the Centre is building capacity and expertise in leveraging funding from national and international sources.

## Research Programme (max. 30 pages exclusive of references)

The progress report includes a detailed description of the research programme carried out to date. The Phase 2 Proposal must provide detail on the future research direction as the Centre moves into its second phase. Any change in research direction must be highlighted and justified, and explanations provided on research areas that are no longer being pursued and why.

Outline at a high-level the key research objectives of the proposed research programme, identifying the critical novel discoveries/inventions/innovations that are to be sought by the Centre and why they are important.

Provide a detailed description of the Centre’s Research Programme, with reference to the proposed Platform Research component of the Centre and each of the proposed Targeted Projects. The specific aims, objectives, milestones and deliverables of each should be described clearly and concisely. Consideration should be given to any sex/gender dimensions which may arise in the course of the research programme, where relevant.

Provide convincing evidence as to why the proposed research is relevant, timely and novel.

Provide a project plan, identifying any dependencies between the Platform Research and Targeted Projects, or the Targeted Projects with each other. Within the project plan include the following details:

* Provide a summary of the **objectives** of the proposed research;
* Describe the **milestones and deliverables** for each project along with delivery dates and key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure progress;
* Describe the role of specific **PIs** and their teams with responsibility for delivering the project plan in the proposal, including the role of PIs towards delivering each milestone;
* Include an assessment of **risks** associated with the delivery of each Targeted Project and explain measures to mitigate and manage these risks.

**Note:** The project plan should be written in a way that facilitates evaluation by the postal and panel reviewers, and with due consideration to on-going annual assessment by SFI.

**References (no page limit)**

Provide a full list of all references. The reference list should include the following details: author(s), title of article, name of publication, date of publication, and other appropriate details (such as volume, pages).

## Business Plan (max. 15 pages)

This 7 x 2012 Research Centres are currently funded under the condition that they maintain 30% industry cost share (of which 10% must be cash) assuming the SFI contribution is a maximum of 70%. The Centre budget is currently comprised of three parts: an SFI cash contribution (direct costs), an industry cash and an industry in-kind contribution The Centre budget is direct costs only and does not include the SFI or industry contribution towards the overheads of the Research Body. Although not part of the Centre budget, the Centres must leverage significant funding from non-exchequer, non-commercial sources such as Horizon 2020. A model of the Phase 1 cost share model is shown in Figure a. In this model, for a €7M investment from SFI, the Centre is currently expected to leverage at least €3M from industry, of which at least €1M must be cash. This is a condition of the Letter of Offer which is the official contract between SFI and the Host Research Body of the Centre. In the example shown below, the “non-exchequer, non-commercial sources (*ne-nc*)” KPI is typically matched with the SFI budget.



**Figure a. Phase 1 - Cost Share model**

Results to date have shown that the 7 x 2012 RCs are, on average, also exceeding their minimum 10% cash targets. The Centres are therefore expected to increase their levels of industry cash cost share and to maintain their leveraged *ne-nc* funding as they move into a second phase of funding.

The Phase 2 model shown in Figure b depicts an overall Centre budget which comprises a 33% contribution (direct costs) from SFI with the remaining 67% coming from both industry (cash plus in-kind) and *ne-nc* sources (cash only). Of the 67%, 20% must come from industry sources and 20% must come from *ne-nc* sources. The remaining 27% can come from either industry cash, industry in-kind or *ne-nc* (direct costs). Of the 20% that is required from industry, at least 16.5% must be from industry cash. The example shown in figure b shows that for a €7M investment from SFI, the Centre will be expected to leverage €4.25M cash from *ne-nc* sources and €4.25M from industry, of which at least €3.5M must be industry cash. The remaining €5.5M can be from either industry or *ne-nc* sources.



**Figure b. Phase 2 - Cost Share model**

A business plan must be provided which will describe how the Centre plans to scale towards the cost share model outlined in Figure b **by the end of the second phase of funding, i.e. 2025.** To ensure absolute clarity on this requirement, an example is shown in Figure c. If the SFI contribution is €7M per year, at the end of the Phase 2 funding period (years 7-12), the total SFI investment will be €42M. For this €42M, there must be a total amount of industry cash leveraged which is equal to €21M.



**Figure c. Phase 2-Cost Share model**

The business plan should include details on the strategy for targeting significant new industry partnerships, re-engagement and upscaling of existing partnerships, the strategy for major wins in Horizon 2020 and its future equivalent (FP9) and other international sources of funding, including charity and philanthropic sources.

The following section details what can be counted towards Industry Cost Share.

**Cash (direct costs) and in-kind from partially funded collaborative research**

The majority of Targeted Projects in the Research Centres are **partially** funded collaborative research projects, where costs are shared by SFI and the industry partner. The cash (directs costs) and in-kind contributions from the industry partner can be counted towards the Industry cost share.

In the case of a partially funded Collaborative Research Project, the IP normally resides with the Research Body and the Industry party usually benefits by way of a licence.

**Cash (direct costs) and in-kind from wholly funded collaborative research**

In some cases, the industry partner stipulates full ownership of the foreground IP and is willing to pay the full cost of the project. Although the industry partner can have automatic rights to own the IP arising from such a project, a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) must still be negotiated and signed by the parties before the research project commences, and the agreement must include a clause describing how the results of the project will be disseminated. This is called a wholly funded collaborative research project. If such an agreement is in place and the Research Centre Director is satisfied that the contribution of the project towards the goals of the Research Centre is clearly justified, the cash paid (directs costs) and any in-kind contributions made by the industry partner can be counted towards the industry cost share.

In all cases, the Research Centre Director must be satisfied (or warrants) that any projected cash contributions from each industry partner are free and unencumbered and have not been used to secure a support grant from EI, IDA or any other agency.

A wholly funded Collaborative Research Project should not be confused with a contract research project. A contract research project involves a company paying a Research Performing Organisation (RPO) to deliver a product or service with a definitive outcome. For this kind of project, a profit margin is normally built into the costs, VAT is applicable and there is no requirement for the RPO to disseminate the results of the project. Cash from contract research projects cannot be counted towards the industry cost share. Although SFI recognises that these are important activities in which the Research Centre can engage with industry partners, they are not viewed as Collaborative Research Projects in which the industry partner is making an intellectual contribution, the research results can be disseminated and new IP can be generated.

**Membership Scheme**

Research Centres may, at their discretion, choose to implement a membership scheme for industry partners engaging with the Centre. It is envisaged that a membership scheme would charge companies to participate in the activities of the Research Centre and contribute towards the running costs of the Research Centre. All funds raised through the membership scheme can be counted towards the industry cost share.

**Cash Donations**

Cash donations in the form of an unrestricted research grant from a company which is used to support the research of the Research Centre can be counted towards industry cost share.

**Cash projections presented in the business plan must be provided in direct costs, i.e. must be net of any overhead paid to the Research Body.**

**In-kind contributions from both partially and wholly funded collaborative research projects can be counted towards the overall industry cost share.**

Industry in-kind contributions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following items:

* Industry scientists, engineers and technicians assigned to working on Platform Research or Targeted Projects in the Research Centre;
* Student or faculty placements with industry partners;
* Equipment;
* Software;
* Materials;
* Data.

**Non-exchequer, non-commercial funding**

Non-exchequer, non-commercial funding includes cash amounts (direct costs) received from international funding bodies such as Horizon 2020 and its future equivalent (FP9), Wellcome trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. Charitable donations and philanthropic sources which can be used to fund research activities within the Centre can also be included.

## SFI Budget Request and Justification (max. 10 pages)

A high-level budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Research Centre must be provided in the table formats shown in Appendix A. There is no cap on the budget levels which can be requested. The scale of request will be considered by the review panel as part of their overall assessment, which will include consideration of value for money. Applicants must follow SFI’s Grant Budget Policy. Budgets should be prepared on a project year basis (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 etc.) at the application stage and should cover a period of 72 months (six years). The tables provided in Appendix A must be used to provide the following:

* A budget for the requested SFI contribution (direct costs) to the Research Centre budget separated into staff, equipment, materials and travel;
* A budget for the SFI contribution (direct costs) to the Research Centre Operations, Platform Research and Targeted projects;
* Projected (high-level) industry financial contributions to the Centre, both cash (direct costs) and in-kind (e.g. staff, equipment, other);
* A high-level breakdown of the projected cash contributions (direct costs) from non-exchequer, non-commercial sources.

The Operations component of the Centre budget is expected to fund some or all of the operational running costs of the Research Centre. Such costs may include, but are not necessarily limited to, personnel such as a Centre Manager, EU Grant Manager, Project Manager, Business Development personnel, Administrator, Communications, Education and Public Engagement Manager, IT technical support, as well as travel and related business expenses associated with these roles. Support for a senior position such as a CEO/Executive Director or COO (Chief Operating Officer) can also be requested but it is envisaged that SFI would support one such role. The Operations component of the Centre budget is capped at a maximum of **20%** of the SFI component of the centre Research Centre budget plus the projected industry cash cost share component.

A review of the governance structures of the Research Centres is expected following the findings of the Governance Review Advisory Committee. In anticipation of these changes, the Lead-Applicant can request a contribution towards the operation of a governance committee (fees plus travel costs). The Lead-Applicant can also request budget for a Director’s discretionary fund. As part of the budget justification, a description of what the discretionary fund would be used for and how it would be allocated, is required.

Eligible costs include:

* Contributions to salaries/stipends of research staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme;
* Contributions towards salaries of operations staff (e.g. Executive Director or CEO, Centre Manager, EU Grants Manager, Administration staff);
* Materials and consumables, equipment, travel;
* Access to facilities and services not available to the applicant, including test-bed facilities for technology demonstration;
* SFI-approved access charges;
* Travel fellowships and travel costs associated with hosting senior international researchers in the proposed Research Centre;
* Directly related education and public engagement costs, including a contribution towards an EPE resource;
* Costs associated with the Research Centre Governance Committee (fees plus travel costs);
* A Director’s discretionary fund.

Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not necessarily limited to:

* Contingency or miscellaneous costs;
* Entertainment costs;
* Technology transfer or patent costs;
* Legal Fees;
* Conference & workshop organisation costs;
* Journal subscriptions;
* Relocation expenses.

In addition to the direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect, or overhead, contribution to the Host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage (currently 30%) of the “modified” total direct costs (i.e., total direct costs less the cost of equipment) of SFI’s contribution. Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services, including contributions towards the costs of technology transfer and filing and maintenance of patents.

**Note: In the original Research Centre proposal submission, letters of support from each industry partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Research Centre and their cash and in-kind contributions, were required. These are not required for the Phase 2 proposal. Instead ‘projected’ industry cost share must be provided. In section 11 of the proposal, case studies of the existing industry partners and their rationale for working with the Research Centres must be provided. The case studies must convince the review panel that the Centre has strength in its existing partnerships and has developed a strong enough track record to meet the increased targets proposed.**

The following budget justification must be provided:

* Outline the required expertise for each requested researcher and justify the researcher’s role in the research project;
* Include the salary scale (as per SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale) for each team member. Clear and explicit justification is required for any request for an experienced post-doctoral researcher, i.e. one who will be appointed higher than Level 2A, Point 1 of the SFI team member budgeting scales;
* Justification should also be provided for requested equipment, consumables and travel;
* Where contributions to salary for administrative support roles are requested, clear rationale and justification must be provided and reference must be made to the relevant role description, HR recruitment procedure and local Research Body salary scale. This information must be detailed in the budget justification. SFI will not contribute to the funding of any permanent core staff (e.g., funded by the HEA block grant). The following details also apply in cases where SFI contributions to Administrative Support salary are being considered:
	+ A description of the qualifications required for an individual to be hired, together with the expected roles and responsibilities of the post must be provided;
	+ Requests for non-research posts must be aligned to the relevant point on the Research Body scale;
	+ Appropriately detailed justification must be provided for senior administrative posts attracting substantial salaries;
	+ The Research Body must make provision for an open and transparent recruitment process.
* Access charges may be sought for use of infrastructure where SFI pre-approved access charge plans are in place or for use of other shared facilities or national test-beds, which are required as part of the proposed research. The requested access charges should be specified in the budget and justified in the budget justification section. The scientific rationale for undertaking such experiments should be outlined in the research description. Note: SFI funding may not be used to fund access to facilities, where access by the research community has already been provided for by alternate Exchequer funding;
* If funding is sought for use of overseas equipment/services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for not carrying out this activity in Ireland must be provided.

## Commercialisation Plan (max. 10 pages)

Provide a description of the Research Centre’s plans and processes to transfer its existing technology into measurable IP (licenses, spin-outs).

## Impact Statement (max. 15 pages)

In this section of the proposal, a new Impact statement should be prepared for the second 6-year term which clearly articulates the potential impact of the Centre over the longer term. It is expected that elements of this new statement will be an extension of the original impact statement and associated roadmap submitted as part of the original application for Research Centre funding, recognising that impact can be longer term, non-linear and unpredictable. Guidance can be found [here](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-research-impact/) and should be consulted with whilst preparing this statement. SFI regards clear and convincing impact statements as being fundamental components of competitive proposals.

When describing the potential economic Impact arising during the entire funding period, cross reference should be made to the business and commercialisation plans. The Centre should also consider and describe how a culture of entrepreneurship will be developed and supported within the Centre and how researchers will be encouraged, incentivised and rewarded for entrepreneurial activities, and how these activities in turn can underpin a variety of different impact indicators. Consideration should be given to sex / gender aspects as they relate to any potential economic and societal impact described and where relevant.

The Impact statement should describe the training and education activities proposed for the Centre. This should include both training of directly funded students (e.g., taught MSc and PhD courses) as well as wider training and education activities in the HEI sector and the industry/commercial sector. Consideration should be given to sex/gender aspects as related to education and training activities, where relevant.

## Industry Partner Overview

The progress report will have already described the ‘benefits’ to the industry partners because of engagement with the Research Centre. The proposal should focus on the needs of the industry partner as the Centre moves into its second phase. The Centre must provide a one-page case study for each industry partner involved with the Centre to date and likely to be involved going forward, describing what ‘benefits’ they will gain from the Centre both in the near and long term.

## KPIs (max. 5 pages)

Projections of the KPI targets should be provided for the years 2019 – 2025 using the table provided in Appendix B. Narrative should be provided on how the KPI targets will scale as the Centre moves into Phase 2. Note: A new KPI for EPE activities, “% of team participating in EPE” is included.

## Education and Public Engagement (max. 5 pages)

Articulate how the existing EPE strategy and plan will be expanded to support a greater engagement of non-specialist audiences with the work within the Centre. It might include:

* + - The vision for EPE in the centre including aims, target audiences and impacts;
		- Reference to the growth in public engagement experience of staff;
		- How EPE will be monitored and evaluated, including success indicators;
		- The Host Research Body support for the EPE programme.

Consideration should be given to sex/gender aspects as related to education and public engagement activities, where relevant.

## Communications (max. 5 pages)

A description of how the existing Communications plan will be expanded to build the profile of the Research Centre as a world leader.

## Letters of Support

A letter of support from the **Research Body** of the Lead Applicant, each Co-Applicant and each Funded Investigator must be provided. These letters should comment on the infrastructure, services and support available to the proposed Research Centre. They should also name the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s), and/or Funded Investigator(s) from their Research Body who are listed on the application and include an endorsement of their eligibility. The letter of support from the Lead Applicant’s Research Body should also describe what services and supports will be made available to the proposed Research Centre Director.

### Appendix A: Budget Tables

Provide a summary breakdown of the requested contribution to the Centre budget from SFI.

|  |
| --- |
| **REQUESTED SFI CONTRIBUTION: RESEARCH CENTRE BUDGET** |
|  | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** | **Year 6** | **Total** |
| Staff |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Equipment |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Materials |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Travel |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| **Total Direct Costs** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

Provide a budget summary for the Centre Operations, Platform Research and each Targeted Project in the Research Centre.

|  |
| --- |
| **REQUESTED SFI CONTRIBUTION: OPERATIONS, PLATFORM, SPOKES BUDGET** |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | **Total** |
| Operations |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Platform |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 7 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 8 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| Targeted Project 9 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| \*Targeted Project 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| **Total Direct Costs** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

Total Centre Budget + Non-Industry Non-Exchequer Contributions:

|  |
| --- |
| **TOTAL RESEARCH CENTRE BUDGET** |
|  | **Year 1****€** | **Year 2****€** | **Year 3****€** | **Year 4****€** | **Year 5****€** | **Year 6****€** | **Total****€** |
| Industry Cash Contribution |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Industry In-KindContribution |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Requested SFIContribution |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| Contribution from non-exchequer, non-commercial sources |  |  |  |  |  |  | - |
| **Total Centre Budget** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

### Appendix B: KPI Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| KPI | Yr 1 | Yr 2 | Yr 3 | Yr 4 | Yr 5 | Yr 6 |
| Journal Publications |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Conference Publications |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # MSc/MEng Graduates |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # PhD Graduates |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Number of Trainee departures with industry as first destination |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Trainee departures with industry as first destination |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # participations in major EU initiatives |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # coordinations in major EU initiatives |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # ERC awards granted |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Funding from non-exchequer, non commercial sources |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Cash in Bank |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| % Industry Cost Share (cash) |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| % Industry Cost Share (total) |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # spin out companies formed |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # EI commercialisation awards |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| # licence agreements |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| % of team participating in EPE activities |   |   |   |   |   |   |