



US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme

FAQs relating to NSF applications

GENERAL

1. What is the US-Ireland Call?

This is a programme where Principal Investigators (PI) from the United States (US), Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (RoI) collaborate to submit a joint “tri-partite” proposal in response to calls for proposals in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). There must be at least one PI from each jurisdiction, with the US partner bearing responsibility for submission of the joint “tri-partite” proposal to their home agency, NIH/NSF. If approved for funding at the NSF or NIH, the partner agencies in RoI fund the RoI investigator(s), the partner agencies in NI fund the NI-based investigator(s), and the US partner agency funds the US investigator(s).

2. Who are the partner agencies?

The partner agencies in the US are the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The partner agencies in RoI are Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Health Research Board (HRB). In Northern Ireland, the Health & Social Care R&D Division (HSC R&D) supports health-related projects, while the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI), and Invest Northern Ireland (InvestNI) support projects related to Sensors & Sensor Networks, Nanoscale Science & Engineering, Telecommunications, and Energy & Sustainability. The new Agri pilot theme is managed by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in the US, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) in the RoI, and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in NI.

3. Do US-Ireland R&D Partnership proposals have a competitive advantage with the NSF/ NIH calls?

US-Ireland R&D Partnership proposals compete head-to-head with 'non-US-Ireland partnership' proposals submitted to the same call. The competitive advantage comes from the additive nature of the collaboration as well as the leveraged non-exchequer funds. It is important for applicants to spell this out in the introduction to the proposal to ensure that NSF/NIH reviewers fully understand the intricacies of the process.

4. Is the US-Ireland R&D Partnership call still open?

Yes, the call is open and is a rolling call within SFI, however, applications MUST be submitted to SFI *at least* 6 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline or, *if applicable*, the deadline at the US

University's Research Office in advance of the NSF full proposal deadline. There is an additional mandatory "intention to submit" stage where a notification MUST be submitted to SFI *at least* 10 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline.

5. When is the next NSF call deadline?

SFI has no control over the deadlines set by NSF. You are strongly advised to consult with your US partner for information on NSF call deadlines. The US partner makes the submission on behalf of the Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland applicants and should therefore be familiar with NSF programmes and submission systems. Close-to-final applications MUST be submitted to SFI *at least* 6 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline or, *if applicable*, the deadline at the US University's Research Office in advance of the NSF full proposal deadline.

In addition, there is an additional 'intention to submit' stage where a notification MUST be submitted *at least* 10 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline.

6. Why do I have to submit a draft of the proposal to SFI in advance of the NSF deadline?

A close-to-final draft of the "tri-partite" proposal for submission to the NSF must be submitted to SFI *at least* 6 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline. The purpose of this step is to ensure compliance of the research with remit, to assess the budget requested, and to confirm that the work proposed for each jurisdiction adds significant value so that the overall programme of research goes beyond what might be achieved by any one PI working alone supported only by national funding. If SFI agree to support the proposal, a funding commitment letter is provided to the applicant for inclusion in the full proposal to be submitted to NSF. This letter is also sent to the responsible person at NSF to indicate our commitment to this proposal should it be deemed fundable by the NSF peer-review process. Please ensure that all relevant appendices are included with the draft proposal.

7. I need to know SFI's decision by a certain date prior to the NSF deadline?

SFI will endeavour to inform you at the earliest possible date if your proposal is approved/declined but please bear in mind that SFI's internal review takes 6 weeks. If there is a submission deadline at the US research office, please ensure that the draft proposal is submitted to SFI at least 6 weeks in advance of this research office deadline.

8. Where can I find information on calls within the NSF? Which calls in NSF are open to the US-Ireland programme?

See link here for information from the NSF & participating directorates [NSF - Further Information on the US-Ireland R&D Programme](#)

9. I'm a PI based in the States – how do I go about finding research partners in the Republic of Ireland?

As a first step please check the SFI researcher database on the SFI webpage for further information on funded SFI PIs – just review the appropriate scientific area [SFI Researcher Database](#)

10. Can anyone apply to this programme?

No, there are a number of eligibility criteria which you must met, please consult the call document on the [SFI - US-Ireland R&D Partnership Webpage](#).

11. What is the eligibility criteria for a co-PI?

The **eligibility criteria for a co-PI is the same as for the lead PI** – see question above. Please note only one US-Ireland application per PI/co-PI may be under review at SFI at any one time.

12. I'm a PI from the States, where can I find more information on the NSF?

Please see link here – [NSF - Further Information on US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme](#)

13. I'm a PI from Northern Ireland, where can I find further information from Invest Northern Ireland?

Please see links - [DfE NI - Further Information on US-Ireland programme](#), [HSC R&D - Further information on US-Ireland Programme](#)

Intention to Submit Form

1. Who needs to complete the Intention to Submit form?

If you are an RoI applicant applying to the NSF, you are required to submit a mandatory "Intention to Submit" form to USIreland@sfi.ie at least 10 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline. Please see further information at [the SFI website](#)

2. Do all lead applicants and co-applicants have to complete the Intention to Submit form if applying to the NSF?

Yes, **all lead and co-applicants** in both Republic of Ireland (ROI) & Northern Ireland (NI) have to complete an 'Intention to submit' form which must be submitted by the Research Office to the relevant funding agency on behalf of the applicant. For example, if there is more than one RoI applicant proposing to participate in a US-Ireland proposal to the NSF, the Intention to Submit form to HRB must include relevant details for all such applicants. Submission of the Intention to Submit Form is mandatory for all RoI applications under the US-Ireland programme to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

3. I'm applying to the NSF under the sensors theme – do I need to submit an Intention to Submit form?

Yes – for any application to the NSF, a mandatory intent to submit form is required from the RoI applicant at least 10 weeks prior to the NSF deadline. Draft proposals to the NSF will only be accepted from applicants who have submitted an intention to submit form no later than 10 weeks in advance of the full proposal deadline at NSF.

4. What needs to be included in the scientific abstract in the Intention to submit form?

Please refer to the guidance/call document for further information.

5. Why does an intention to submit form need to be submitted to SFI 10 weeks in advance of the NSF submission deadline?

This information will not be formally reviewed and applicants will not receive approval but the information is vital for planning purposes.

PLANNING GRANT

1. What is the US-Ireland planning grant?

The US-Ireland planning grant facilitates the RoI & NI applicants to travel to the US to meet with their US counterpart and develop a proposal for submission to the NIH or the NSF under the US-Ireland R&D partnership programme.

2. How long does it take to review a planning grant application?

Please allow a minimum of 4 weeks for a decision.

3. What do I need to include in the planning grant application?

Please see the call document on the SFI website [SFI - US-Ireland R&D Partnership Webpage](#).

4. Can a person in the RoI research team, who is not the lead applicant, be included in the planning grant application to travel to the planning meeting in addition to the lead RoI applicant?

It may be possible for a team member/collaborator to be included on the planning grant application, in addition to the lead applicant but a *very strong justification* will need to be provided in the planning grant application. If awarded, the lead applicant must travel to the planning meeting – this cannot be delegated to a collaborator/team member.

5. If I am planning a US-Ireland submission to the NSF, do I need to submit an ‘intention to submit’ form prior to submitting a planning grant application?

Yes the intention to submit form is required prior to a planning grant submission for applications to the NSF.

6. I’m the RoI partner and I’ve submitted my planning grant application – what about my NI partner?

If both the RoI and NI partners are proposing to travel to the United States to a planning meeting and are requesting travel funds under the US-Ireland planning grant call, then both the RoI & NI partners need to apply for planning grant applications to their own funding agencies. It is not possible for the RoI agency to cover the travel costs of the NI partner and vice versa. The planning grant applications should be submitted simultaneously to the RoI & NI funding agencies, and at least four weeks is required by the agencies for review of these planning grant applications.

It is not a requirement that both partners travel to the US, one partner can travel from Ireland however it may be more beneficial to the collaboration to have all partners around the table when developing the final proposal for the US-Ireland R&D Partnership programme.

- 7. Can I use the planning grant to visit partners after I've submitted the draft proposal to SFI?**
No, this is not possible. The US-Ireland planning grant has been designed *'to enable prospective Irish applicants to the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme, to travel to the US in order to develop specific projects with US collaborators for identified programmes under the NSF and NIH auspices.'* The requirement for travel funding to develop specific projects under the US-Ireland planning grant programme (with visit dates after the submitted proposal to SFI) is then no longer considered to be necessary. Such applications will be returned without review.
- 8. How does the NI partner submit their US-Ireland planning grant application?**
Please see the link here for details on how Northern Ireland partners can apply for the US-Ireland planning grant - [DfE NI Further Information for applicants from Northern Ireland](#)

FULL PROPOSAL

1. What research areas are covered under the US-Ireland programme?

The research areas listed below are covered keeping in mind SFI's legal remit

- Sensors & Sensor Networks
- Nanoscale Science and Engineering
- Telecommunications
- Energy & Sustainability
- Health (NIH remit)
- Agriculture (pilot theme – please contact [DAFM](#), the lead RoI agency for this theme)

Further details can be found in the call documents.

2. What is the maximum funding request to SFI?

The budget for full applications from applicants in the Republic of Ireland has been capped at €350K **direct costs**, therefore the budget request should be no greater than €350K, equating to an average of €110K/yr for a 3 year award.

SFI expect that the funding requested by Irish applicants will be commensurate with the work proposed, and that it will be similar in scale and duration to that requested by Northern Ireland and US-based applicants from their respective funding agencies.

3. Does SFI fund the salary of lead or co-PI?

SFI does not fund the salary of grant applicant/co-applicant (see page 4 of the SFI grant budget policy) <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-policies/grant-applications-budget-policy/>

4. Where can I find more information about eligible costs for SFI budget requests

Please see the SFI Grants Budget Policy at the link below. This policy applies to SFI budget requests for RoI applicants submitting a US-Ireland application to the NSF
<http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-policies/grant-applications-budget-policy/>

5. Are overheads included in SFI & HRB budgets?

For the **SFI budget request** – overheads are not included and **should not be included** in the requested budget to SFI – Direct Costs only (max €350k SFI budget request)

6. How do I submit to SFI?

Convert all documents to a single pdf (only the cover sheet with signatures should be scanned) and submit by email to usireland@sfi.ie

7. What happens if I don't submit all documents as required by SFI by the 6 week deadline?

Incomplete documents will be returned without review. Applications received after the 6 week deadline prior to NSF submission will be returned without review.

8. I'm a researcher who has an Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation award (CFTD) for 300k am I eligible to apply to the US-Ireland programme?

Unfortunately Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund Technology Development (CFTD) awards do not satisfy the SFI eligibility criteria for an internationally peer reviewed research award as these awards do not solely engage international peer reviewers.

9. Can the partner in Republic Of Ireland or Northern Ireland be an SME/ industry?

No the RoI and NI partners have to be and eligible research bodies.

10. If I'm successfully approved by SFI – what are the next steps?

If approved by SFI for submission to NSF,

- an approval notification email will be sent by SFI to the applicant which includes a Funding Commitment Letter stating SFI's support of the research, for inclusion in the full proposal submission to the NSF
- the Funding Commitment Letter will be sent by SFI to the NSF
- The RoI applicant may need to submit a revised budget and signed cover sheet, if modifications have been made to the budget
- SFI requires a copy of the full proposal submission to NSF with official email confirmation including NSF proposal code within 2 weeks of submission to the NSF

11. What is the Funding Commitment Letter or FCL?

This is a letter of commitment from either the RoI or NI funding agencies confirming their support of the proposed research, and is to be included in the joint application to the NSF. The letter indicates details of the applicants as well as the amount of funding committed by each jurisdiction to their applicant should the application be approved for funding post international peer review at the NSF.

12. The title of the research proposal has changed - do I need to inform SFI or Northern Ireland funding agencies?

Yes please inform SFI as soon as possible of any title change as the title is listed in the Funding Commitment Letter (see above) which needs to be accurate.

13. We have heard that the proposal has not been approved for funding by the NSF. My partners would now like to resubmit to the next NSF call.

Do I need to resubmit to SFI?

Yes, all resubmissions need to be reviewed by SFI to ensure there are no substantial changes to the research programme. Once it has been reviewed and if approved, a new Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) with details of the new call will be issued by SFI to the RoI PI. This should be included in the joint application to the NSF. Please submit the re-submission to SFI **6 weeks** in advance of the NSF/NIH or internal US university deadlines.

14. The US partners have decided to submit to a different call at the NSF. This is different to the original call/programme details sent to SFI.

This is a delayed submission and it will need to be reviewed to ensure there are no substantial changes. Once it has been reviewed and if approved, a new Funding Commitment Letter with details of the new Call will be issued by SFI to the RoI PI. This FCL should be included in the joint application to the NSF. Please submit this application to SFI **6 weeks** in advance of the NSF/NIH or internal US university deadlines.

15. When do I need to send the resubmission/delayed application to SFI?

All resubmissions and delayed applications are required to be submitted to SFI *at least 6 weeks* prior to any US partner institution/ NIH or NSF deadlines. This is the responsibility of the RoI partner and no early notifications of the outcome of the SFI review are possible.

16. How do I find out about upcoming workshops or webinars promoting the US-Ireland programme?

Subscribe to SFI e-alerts on the SFI homepage www.sfi.ie