2012 Research Centres - AMBER, APC, INFANT, Insight, IPIC, MaREI and SSPC

Call for Submission of Proposals for Phase 2 Funding – Point of Clarification

Phase 2 Proposal (Appendix 4) - Level of Detail required for Targeted Projects in the Research Programme (Section 6) and Budget Justification (Section 8)

Research Programme (Section 6)

It has been clearly stated throughout the call document and at Directors meetings that industry support letters outlining cash and in-kind commitments **are not** required for the Phase 2 submission. Instead, the Centres must provide a projected industry partner contribution in their Business Plan (Section 7).

Although targeted projects may not be defined in detail at the stage of proposal submission, it is still expected that the Centre would have an idea of the type and scope of targeted projects it would carry out, based on previous experience and existing industry partnerships; for example, are any of the existing industry partners planning to carry out further projects with the Centre and is their activity likely to grow or is the Centre targeting any new areas of research which would impact a new industry base.

With respect to the following statement:

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.

SFI acknowledges that the aims, objectives and milestones of each targeted projects may not be known. If they are not known, please provide a high level overview of the type and scope of the targeted projects that will form the basis of your business plan.

With respect to the following statement:

*Include an assessment of **risks** associated with the delivery of each Targeted Project and explain measures to mitigate and manage these risks.*

SFI acknowledges that this will not be possible at project level given the fact that targeted projects may not be defined. However, based on the Centre's experience to date, a high level risk management plan must be provided.

Budget Justification (Section 8)

Clarification has been requested on the level of detail required in Section 8 – SFI Budget Request and Justification, in the Phase 2 Proposal. A high-level overview of the research and operational staff required to run the Centre is required.   SFI acknowledges that, as target projects are not yet defined, it is difficult to say exactly how many research staff are required. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, a description of the types of researchers required and their salary level should be possible.

If the Centres is funded for Phase 2, a more detailed review of the budget will follow. Increases in the total amount requested will not be permitted following the funding decision, but a detailed budget allocation across years and categories will be requested.

With respect to the following text, further clarification is provided in red

- *Outline the required expertise for each requested researcher and justify the researcher's role in the research project;* *this must be provided for core research staff working on platform research projects, it does not have to be provided for researchers working on targeted projects. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, an estimate of the numbers of researchers required and their combined expertise should be possible.*
- *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;* *this must be provided for core research staff working on platform research projects, it does not have to be provided for researchers working on targeted projects. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, an estimate of the numbers of researchers required and their salary levels should be possible.*
- *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;*