

## SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 FAQs

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### Terms of Reference

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Science Foundation Ireland, the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

## APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

**Q1a: *Are SFI Research Centres PIs and co-PIs eligible to apply for this call?***

Restrictions on the eligibility of the SFI Research Centre PIs and Co-PIs that were in place for the 2019 Frontiers for the Future Programme have now been lifted. SFI Research Centre PIs and Co-PIs may apply to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call at any stage of their grant and once all other eligibility criteria are met.

However, all individuals managing other/multiple SFI grants must provide justification and rationale for how they would manage two or more major SFI grants under the heading: "Management of More Than One Major SFI Award" as part of the information concerning scientific overlap (see Section 3.5 of the call document for further details).

**Q1b: *I am a Funded Investigator in a SFI Research Centre – am I eligible to apply?***

Holding the position of Funded Investigator in a SFI Research Centre does not impact eligibility to the programme. You may be eligible to apply, subject to all other eligibility criteria being met.

**Q1c: *I am a Research Fellow whose salary is funded through a grant in my name, am I eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***

As stated in Section 2.4.1 of the call document, Applicants to the programme must be members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), or a contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator at proposal submission and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI grant. Applicants must obtain their salary either from an award in their own name (excluding fellowship-type awards) or be salaried by the host institution. Research Fellows are not eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme if their fellowship only provides funding for their salary. However, where a fellowship granted in the Research Fellow's name provides funding for their own salary, consumables and the salary for an FTE team member, the Research Fellow may be eligible to apply to the programme subject to all other eligibility criteria being met. A letter of support from the Research Body of an applicant should detail the employment status of the applicant, including how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for this call as detailed in Section 2.4 of the call document.

**Q1d: *Are Academic staff on contracts of indefinite duration eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***

As stated in Section 2.4.1 of the call document, Applicants to the programme must be members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), or a contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator at proposal submission and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI grant. Applicants must obtain their salary either from an award in their own name (excluding fellowship-type awards) or be salaried by the host institution. If the staff member is an independent researcher and funded either through the host institution or a grant in their own name, that's not a fellowship-type grant, and the grant covers consumables and salary for a FTE team member, they may be eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme subject to all other eligibility criteria being met. A letter of support from the Research Body of an applicant should detail the employment status of the applicant, including how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for this call as detailed in Section 2.4 of the call document.

**Q1e: *I am in the process of moving to an SFI Eligible Research Body to take up an independent research position but have not yet signed a contract of employment. Am I eligible to apply?***

If an applicant is in the process of moving from another organisation, it is mandatory that an employment contract with the new host institution, covering the duration of the grant is in place (and signed) at proposal submission. Should the application be successful, the applicants must have taken up their independent position at their host institution before a grant can commence. All other eligibility criteria outlined in the call document must be met.

**Q1f: *Are postdoctoral researchers eligible to apply for this call?***

No. Postdoctoral researchers (or equivalent) are not eligible to apply to this call. The Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicant must be members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), or a contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator at proposal submission and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI grant. Applicants must obtain their salary either from an award in their own name (excluding fellowship-type awards) or be salaried by the host institution.

**Q1g: *I am currently a postdoctoral researcher but have been promised a lecturing post if my application to the SFI Frontiers to the Future Programme is successful. Is this ok?***

No. Applicants must have an independent position and a contract of employment to that effect at proposal submission in order to be eligible to apply to this programme. Those employed as postdoctoral researchers (or equivalent) at proposal submission are not permitted to apply to this programme.

**Q1h: *I am currently a Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG) award holder – can I apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme through the Emerging Investigator category?***

Yes, provided you are in the last 24 months of your award and subject to all other relevant eligibility criteria being met. Holding a SIRG award does not preclude you from applying under the Emerging Investigator category.

**Q1i: *Can a MD/Professor, but not a PhD, working in a hospital apply to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme if they hold an affiliate position with an eligible Research Body?***

A Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicant without a PhD must refer to SFI's PhD equivalence policy to establish if they are eligible to apply under this criterion ([http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy\\_September\\_2018.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf)).

Regarding an affiliate position, the applicant must liaise with the Research Office of the Research Body with which they hold an affiliate position to determine if they can support an application and supply a Letter of Support for the candidate. It is important to note that applicants to the programme must obtain their salary either from an award in their own name (excluding fellowship-type awards) or be salaried by the host institution.

**Q1j: *I am currently a Technology Innovation Development Award (TIDA) holder – can I apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme through the Emerging Investigator category?***

Yes, subject to all other eligibility criteria being met. Holding a TIDA award does not preclude you from applying under the Emerging Investigator category.

**Q1k: *I am the corresponding author on a number of publications where I am not listed as first or last author. Is being listed as corresponding author enough to prove senior authorship for the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***

For the purposes of eligibility for the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme, being listed as corresponding is not sufficient as evidence of senior authorship (See Section 2.4.3 of the call document for details).

**Q1l: Do abstracts, patent applications, or invention disclosures count as publications for the senior author publications requirement?**

No, they do not. Only original research publications are acceptable.

**Q1m: Applicants who hold certain SFI Awards can only apply to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme within the last 24 months of their existing awards. Does this 24-month period apply to the proposal submission date or the start date of the Frontiers for the Future Programme grant?**

The relevant date here is the proposal submission date. SFI awards are scheduled to conclude at the end of a given month. Investigators currently funded by SFI as either a Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on certain grants (see Section 2.4.4 of the call document for details) may **only** apply to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call if the proposal submission date is less than 24 months before the expiry date of their current award.

**Q1n: Can I apply to both the SFI Covid-19 Fast Response Funding Call and the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme?**

Yes, Applicants under review for the COVID-19 Rapid Response Funding Call are permitted to apply to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme (subject to all eligibility criteria being met), but the applications should be distinct i.e. SFI will not re-review an application within the Frontiers for the Future Programme that has been submitted to the COVID-19 Rapid Response call. As detailed in the COVID-19 Rapid Response call document, potential applicants are advised to consider the suitability of their proposal and to consider the most appropriate mechanism

## APPLICANT/CO-APPLICANTS, COLLABORATORS & MENTORS

**Q2a: Can researchers in Research Bodies outside the Republic of Ireland be Co-Applicants and Collaborators on SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme grant?**

Researchers in Research Bodies outside the Republic of Ireland cannot be Applicants or Co-Applicants but can be listed as Collaborators on SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme proposals. However, you may have a Co-Applicant who is in a different Research Body to your own within the Republic of Ireland.

**Q2b: Can I have a Mentor from a different Research Body to my own on an Emerging Investigator application to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme?**

No, Mentors are established researchers within the host institution who will give advice and guidance to the award holder and associated team.

**Q2c: Is it possible for Collaborators on the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme to receive funding from the grant?**

Only Academic Collaborators based in an SFI Eligible Research Body are eligible to receive funding through the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme grant. The funding allocated should reflect the supporting role that such Collaborator(s) are expected to play in the research programme. Clear indication should be given where funding is apportioned to Collaborators. Please note that Collaborators outside the Republic of Ireland or those not located within eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme.

Industry Collaborators may not receive funding from the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme grants, regardless of their location.

In exceptional cases, a project may require the use of facilities or services not available in Ireland. Funding for such a request may be considered, subject to a detailed justification for the funding being provided upon application.

**Q2d: *In a SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme application, is it ok to request funds to support a postgraduate student who will be based in the lab of a named Academic Collaborator on the proposal?***

Yes, as long as the Collaborator is based in an SFI Eligible Research Body. Academic Collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the grant, but may be the local supervisor if these team members are based in a different institution to the Lead or Co-Applicant. CVs must be provided for Academic Collaborators at proposal submission. Academic Collaborators intending to act as a local supervisor to team members should be able to demonstrate a competitive track record of achievements and must have previously held a supervisory role in research programmes.

**Q2e: *Is it mandatory to include a Co-Applicant on Frontiers for the Future proposal?***

No, inclusion of a Co-Applicant is optional. Applicants applying under the Emerging Investigator category cannot include a Co-Applicant on their application.

**Q2f: *How many Co-Applicants are permitted on a Frontiers for the Future proposal?***

There is a limit of one Co-Applicant on SFI Frontier for the Future proposals. As outlined above, inclusion of a Co-Applicant is optional. Applicants applying under the Emerging Investigator category cannot include a Co-Applicant on their application.

**Q2g: *How many Collaborators are permitted on a Frontiers for the Future proposal?***

There is no limit on the number of Collaborators, however, Applicants must make sure that the role of any listed Collaborator fits the description available in the call document.

**Q2h: *Is it mandatory to include a Collaborator, either industry or academic, on Frontiers for the Future proposal?***

No, inclusion of a Collaborator is optional.

**Q2i: *Can an individual be a Collaborator on multiple applications to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme?***

Yes, an individual may be named as a Collaborator on more than one proposal to the Frontiers for the Future Programme.

**Q2j: *Can a named Collaborator (or Mentor) on one proposal, be a Lead or Co-Applicant on another proposal?***

Yes, a Collaborator (or Mentor) can be an Applicant (Lead or Co-Applicant) on another proposal.

**Q2k: *Can an Applicant (Lead or Co-Applicant) be a Collaborator on another proposal?***

Yes, an Applicant (*Lead or Co-Applicant*) on one proposal may be a Collaborator on another proposal.

**Q2l: *If two Academic Collaborators are in the same unit and will offer the same support to the project, is one letter with two signatures OK?***

A separate letter of support should be provided for each Collaborator.

**Q2m:** *In the "Research funding history" section, it states that only grants where you are PI or Co-PI should be listed - can "funded investigator" status be included here, as this involves direct receipt of funding?*

Holding the position of "funded investigator" is not currently an option for inputting the position held on an award. Only grants where the applicant is listed as a PI or Co-PI should be listed in the application form.

## SUBMISSION

**Q3a:** *How many applications can an individual submit to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme?*

Individuals may only submit one single proposal, as Applicant or Co-Applicant, to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call. Applicants and Co-Applicants are not permitted to have an Award and a Project application under review at the same time.

**Q3b:** *Can a Lead Applicant of one Frontiers for the Future Programme application also be a Co-Applicant on a second one?*

No. Individuals may only submit, as Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant, one proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme. If a Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant submits more than one proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme, both applications will be made ineligible and will be returned without review. It is permissible, however, to be a Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant on one proposal and a Collaborator on other proposals to the same call.

**Q3c:** *Can I submit two proposals, one under the Award and another under the Project component of the Frontiers for the Future Programme?*

No - individuals may only submit one single proposal (either a Project or an Award), as Applicant or Co-Applicant, to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme.

**Q3d:** *Can I submit a proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Awards stream if my Project proposal is declined?*

Applicants whose proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Projects stream has been declined cannot apply to the Awards stream of the programme until at least six months after the notification of the outcome of their application.

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>).

**Q3e:** *Can I submit a proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Projects stream if my Award proposal is declined?*

Applicants whose proposal to the SFI Frontiers for the Future Awards stream has been declined cannot apply to the Projects stream of the programme until at least six months after the notification of the outcome of their application.

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a

revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>).

**Q3f: Can an eligible researcher re-submit an unsuccessful Frontiers for the Future Programme 2019 proposal to Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call?**

Yes, an Applicant who was unsuccessful in the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2019 call may resubmit their proposal to the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call, providing all eligibility criteria are met.

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>).

## SALARIES AND BUDGETS

**Q4a: Are requests for funding to allow personnel to train at a Collaborator's lab acceptable?**

Reasonable requests for travel costs including accommodation, subsistence and transport to allow personnel to participate in necessary training at a collaborator's lab are acceptable. A detailed justification must be provided in the budget justification.

**Q4b: Are requests for funding to allow Collaborator travel to the lab of the Frontiers applicant an acceptable expense?**

Funding requests to bring high-calibre international collaborators to Ireland to work with researchers in the Frontiers applicant's lab to carry out research for a fixed period of time are acceptable. These collaborators must be prominent high-profile international researchers from academia or industry. The visit must encourage further collaborations with world-class centres of research excellence and help raise international awareness and recognition of high-quality research taking place in the Investigator's lab.

**Q4c: Is teaching buyout only available to Emerging Investigator Applicants who have taken eligible periods of leave?**

No, teaching buyout of up to 50% of teaching load for a period of up to 12 months (Projects) or up to 24 months (Awards) is available to any successful applicant who has taken consecutive documented eligible leave (minimum 12 weeks) since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and has since returned to work. Please see Section 3.9.2 of the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme Call Document for further details. Requests for teaching buyout must be included in the requested budget - requests made after receipt of the proposal application will not be considered by SFI.

**Q4d: My Research Body does not pay employer's pension at a rate of 20% as detailed in the SFI Grant Application Budget Policy. How do I calculate the Cost to Grant figure for team member salaries?**

Please refer to the SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale (version January 2019: <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/FINAL-SFI-Team-Member-Salary-Scales.pdf>) and note that the 'Cost to Grant' figures in these scales include employer's pension at a rate of 20%. This figure should be adjusted to reflect the employer's pension contribution rate of your Research Body and the resulting 'Cost to Grant' figure should be updated accordingly.

**Q4e: Can budget be requested to send reagents and consumables to a Collaborator based outside Ireland?**

If there is appropriate justification that a specific experiment can only be conducted outside Ireland and is needed to advance the project, then requests for an Irish team member to go to that lab to do the work and to provide the necessary consumables will be considered by SFI.

**Q4f: What is the latest possible start date for a funded FFP Project?**

The latest possible start date for a funded Project is 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021. For the purposes of assessing eligibility, applicants should assume an earliest possible start date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 for Projects. Actual start dates will depend on the volume of applications received and the time taken to review applications. As Awards are reviewed on a rolling basis, Award start dates will vary, depending on when a proposal is submitted.

**Q4g: Is it possible to include costs to recruit one or more PhD students recruited to work on a Project or an Award as part of this funding?**

Yes, there is no limit to the number of PhD students which can be added to the requested budget as long as it is justified in the Budget Justification.

**Q4h: What salary scale should I use?**

All information required to complete the Staff section of the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme budget can be found in Section 4.1 of the SFI Grant Budget Policy (version November 2019: [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy\\_2019\\_urlupdates.pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2019_urlupdates.pdf)) and the associated SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale (version January 2019: <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/FINAL-SFI-Team-Member-Salary-Scales.pdf>).

**REMIT**

**Q5a: I'm not sure if my research topic aligns with SFI's legal remit?**

Additional guidance on SFI's Legal Remit is available at this link: <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>.

**Q5b: Can SFI fund clinical trials through Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020?**

No. SFI only permits early-stage regulated clinical trials (Phase I or combined Phase I/II) and investigations to be undertaken under the scope of the following SFI programmes: SFI Research Centres, Spokes, and Strategic Partnerships in addition to SFI Research Professorship where the successful candidate will become a Co-Principal Investigator within an SFI Research Centre. Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through other SFI funding programmes, including the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme.

Funding requests for early-stage research involving human volunteers and/or human samples that do not require regulatory approval are permitted under SFI Frontiers for the Future 2020. Where there is any doubt, applicants are advised to contact the HPRA prior to submission to ensure eligibility and are required to indicate in their application that the proposed study does not require HPRA approval.

SFI's Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy can be found at the following link: <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

Please direct any queries you may have to [ffp@sfi.ie](mailto:ffp@sfi.ie).

**Q5c: Does my research require ethical approval?**

SFI will require evidence that relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been granted for studies involving human or animal subjects prior to an award commencing. In exceptional cases where such research may not commence until a late stage of an award, SFI may permit submission of ethical and regulatory approvals following the award start date but prior to commencement of the research involving animal and/or human subjects.

**Q5d: I am interested in applying to the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call under the SFI-GSI Partnership, but I cannot see how to register this in SESAME. What do I need to do?**

It is not necessary for applicants to indicate in SESAME that they are specifically seeking support under the SFI-GSI Partnership. All applications that demonstrate a clear alignment to the themes of interest the co-funding partner (as stated in Section 2.2 of the call document) will have the potential to be funded under the relevant Partnership agreement. SFI and the GSI will agree upon which proposals can be supported through these agreements. Any proposal deemed to fall outside of the agreement between SFI and its Partner can still be supported through the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call; if successful, such a proposal would be funded by SFI in its entirety.

Applicants who believe that their proposal may be supported under partnerships with the GSI are not required to state this in their proposal.

**Q5e: If my proposal is suitable to be co-funded by the programme co-funding partner, is this taken into account in the review process?**

No, proposals falling within the remit of the programme co-funding partner will be reviewed equally to those that fall outside the co-funding remit.

## REVIEW PROCESS

**Q6a: If an application to the Frontiers for the Future Programme is based on a previous submission to SFI, to what extent must the 'subsequent' proposal be different?**

Full details on SFI's Resubmission Policy are available on the SFI website: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

Applications to any call that are based primarily on unsuccessful submissions (following peer review) to any SFI programme must demonstrate that the review comments resulting from the initial application have been taken into account in the preparation of the new submission. SFI will not review resubmissions that have failed to take into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior review; such proposals will be withdrawn from the review process. Applicants to an SFI call for proposals must declare whether a new submission relates to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This information can be provided within the relevant section of the SESAME application. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers.

**Q6b: Will science and impact be reviewed by the same reviewers?**

All eligible proposals will be forwarded to distinguished international peer reviewers for evaluation of scientific excellence and potential economic and societal impact. Each reviewer will evaluate both scientific excellence and impact.

**Q6c: Who will make up the " Oversight Panel Review(s)" of the Evaluation Process?**

Reviewers on the oversight panel will be distinguished international reviewers with generalist expertise who will oversee the fairness of the written reviews and the applicant response. Panel reviewers will receive the written reviews, the applicant’s response to those reviews and the scores before and after the applicant response was submitted. Panel reviewers will make a funding recommendation and may modify scores where an application is judged to have been treated unfairly and there is sufficient justification and rationale for doing so.

**Q6d: Are the review criteria weighted?**

Yes. The review criteria are weighted as follows:

**AWARDS**

<i>Review Criteria</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>Emerging Investigator Applicants</i>
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	30%	10%
<b>Research Proposal</b>	40%	60%
<b>Impact</b>	30%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**PROJECTS**

<i>Review Criteria</i>	<i>Applicants</i>	<i>Emerging Investigator Applicants</i>
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	30%	10%
<b>Research Proposal</b>	55%	75%
<b>Impact</b>	15%	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

For the Emerging Investigator category, weighting of the review scores will mean that there is increased emphasis on the quality of the research over the track record. Furthermore, due to the high-risk, high reward nature of the Projects, the weighting of the review scores will mean that there is decreased emphasis on the impact criterion for SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme Projects, compared to Awards.

**Q6e: Are Awards and Projects reviewed differently?**

At Stage 1 of the review process, Award proposals will be assessed by postal reviewers who are distinguished international peer reviewers selected on the basis of the subject area of individual proposals. Each reviewer reviews only a single application. Project proposals will be assessed by a virtual panel who are distinguished international peer reviewers selected on the basis of the subject area of a group of proposals. These reviewers would be considered more generalist than the postal reviewers.

**Q6f: At the evaluation stage, what is the difference in weighting between the Lead and Co-Applicant track records?**

As outlined in the Call Document for the purposes of eligibility, reviewing and monitoring, a Co-Applicant applying for funding under the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme will receive equal evaluation to the Lead Applicant and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives.

**Q6g: *Where applications receive the same final score, will SFI prioritise applications from female Co-Applicants in addition to female Lead Applicants?***

No, when ranking applications, in the event of proposals receiving the same final score, SFI will give priority in the review process to applications from female Lead Applicants only.

**Q6h: *Can an Applicant request the exclusion of a reviewer from a previously declined proposal?***

No, Applicants cannot request the exclusion of a previous reviewer of their declined proposal.

**Q6i: *I am submitting a proposal to the Frontiers for the Future Programme Projects stream; may I request to exclude an individual as a reviewer?***

No, excluded reviewers are permitted only for the Awards stream. Awards applicants can select up to three individuals who will be excluded from acting as reviewers of proposals for reasons of competition. This section is not made available to reviewers. Due to the panel nature of the Projects review, selection of excluded reviewers is not possible.

**Q6j: *How does SFI instruct reviewers to ensure the principles of DORA (San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment) are realised?***

SFI has introduced a DORA-compliant curriculum vitae (CV) for the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020 call. This CV provides applicants with an opportunity to describe their wider contributions to, and outputs from, research. Reviewers are instructed to review all of the information provided in this new CV template when assessing, and arriving at a score for, the applicant. Furthermore, in line with DORA principles, the use of journal metrics such as impact factor and the h-index are not permitted, and reviewers are instructed to disregard this information, should they encounter it, in their overall assessment of the applicant. More detail on the DORA-compliant CV is provided in Q10e.

## SESAME

**Q7a: *I am requesting funding for 40 months, but the options in the drop-down menu do not allow me to do this. How should I proceed?***

The funding period for a Frontiers for the Future Project is 24, 36 or 48 months, and for a Frontiers for the Future Award is either 48 or 60 months. 40 months is not a valid funding period for this programme.

**Q7b: *Will SESAME alert me if the required documents have not been uploaded or if fields have not been completed, as part of my submission to Frontiers for the Future Programme 2020?***

To check that required fields have been completed prior to submission, click "Validate". Validation will also automatically occur when "Submit" is selected. However, it is important to note that there is no system validation on multiple upload file fields, including for example, letters of support, where required. The number of documents required may vary depending on each application. You must view the PDF of your application prior to submission to allow you to verify content, print or save your application. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded. Please refer to the checklist in Section 3.17 of the Frontiers for the Future Programme call document.

**Q7c: *Can you list the most common issues that researchers have identified when submitting proposals using the SESAME system?***

**Failure to submit before the call deadline:** In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems or omissions with your application. Research Officers will need ample time to review submissions. Please note that SFI will

not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. Additionally, applications cannot be submitted after the deadline.

**Issues with PDF generation:** (created with open source software, page count issue, etc.)

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Do NOT use commas or special characters in the title of your uploaded PDF document.

**Password issues/resets:**

If you forget your password, click on the '*Forgot password?*' link on the SESAME homepage.

**Pop-ups enabled in browser:**

Please ensure that popups ARE ENABLED in your browser configuration.

**SESAME checks word counts and pages queries?**

Yes, SESAME does perform system validation around word/page counts, but it is the responsibility of the researcher/research body to check that the correct documents are uploaded and reviewed within the full PDF prior to submission.

**Single/multiple upload field:**

If you wish to use the multiple upload field, please ensure that you have the Java plugin installed. If you click the "multiple files" button and it does not work, you will see a link to the Java website where you can download the latest plugin.

**Browser "Back" button:**

Please do NOT use the browser "back" button when navigating SESAME.

**Documentation uploads:**

Please ENSURE all documents are uploaded into the correct fields in the application.

**Co-Applicant access issues:**

It is only possibly for one person to work on the proposal at any one time. To allow your Co-Applicant to access the proposal, please save the proposal and close the browser window. Your Co-Applicant will then be able to access the proposal.

## IMPACT

**Q8a: *What is impact?***

Please see the Impact page on the SFI website (<http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>). Applicants are advised to view the [SFI Impact webinar](#) available on the SFI website in advance of preparing their Impact Statements.

## NATIONAL FACILITIES

**Q9a: *How do I apply for access costs to national facilities costs through the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***

Full details on how to apply for access costs are available on the SFI website: <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

## POLICY

**Q10a: Do open access publications refer only to research outputs published in open-access scientific journals, or will deposition in access repositories be permissible as well?**

SFI is a member of cOAlition S and is committed to the principles outlined in Plan S ([https://www.coalition-s.org/plan\\_s\\_principles/](https://www.coalition-s.org/plan_s_principles/)) – that is to make full and immediate Open Access a reality. As such, all outputs arising from SFI funded research must be compliant with SFI’s Open Access Policy (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFIs-Open-Access-Policy-2019.pdf>) which is aligned with Plan S principles. Depositing in Plan S compliant repositories is permitted and the recent publication of Plan S’ ‘Rights Retention Strategy’ provides detailed information on self-archiving and copyright licensing (<https://www.coalition-s.org/rights-retention-strategy/>). SFI’s Open Access Policy will be updated regularly to reflect guidance arising from cOAlition S on implementing Plan S principles. Research outputs arising in whole or in part from SFI funded Grants will be monitored for compliance with its policy from 1 January 2021.

**Q10b: Is the sex and/or gender statement only in relation to gender issues in your proposed research i.e. using animals of both gender if relevant etc., or, does it also refer to the gender balance of the research team etc.**

The sex and gender dimension question directly relates to the proposed research programme and **not** the team conducting it.

All applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their proposed research programme. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>) for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

An opportunity to describe how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment is provided in Section 1B of your CV, should you choose to highlight it.

**Q10c: How should an Applicant prepare a “Sex and/or Gender in Research” Statement for an Engineering Project?**

The gender dimension of a particular research project is one that you, as the Applicant, should consider, perhaps by consulting relevant literature and guidance for the subject matter of your proposed research project. There are a number of excellent papers such as Cara Tannenbaum’s ‘Sex and Gender Analysis Improves Science and Engineering (DOI: [10.1038/s41586-019-1657-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1657-6))’ which describe areas of scientific and engineering endeavour that failed to address the gender dimension, and hence are considered flawed – most notably ‘crash test dummies’ which were developed for an ‘average male size’ - this is an excellent engineering example. You may also wish to consult the ‘Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine and Engineering’ website (<http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/index.html>) which contains a range of useful resources regarding best practice for sex and/or gender considerations in research.

**Q10d: There are some projects that we find difficult to find a sex and/or gender aspect in the proposal programme. Will a “no” influence the overall scoring and progression within this competitive programme?**

The Sex and/or Gender Dimension Question is a mandatory field and is scored as part of the “Quality, significance, novelty, and strategic relevance of the research plan”. A statement must be provided regardless of whether a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response is provided. What will influence the overall scoring of this statement is how effectively the applicant justifies a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response to this question. Please see Q10c on additional information for preparing a response to this question.

**Q10e: *How will non-academic publications/career impact be considered?***

The DORA-compliant CV provides an opportunity for applicants to discuss their wider contribution to research under four specific categories: 1. Generation of Knowledge; 2. Development of Individuals and Collaborations; 3. Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and; 4. Supporting the Research Community. Reviewers are asked to assess the applicant based on the detail provided in all of these categories – please see Appendix A ‘Questions Pertaining to Applicant(s)’ in the Frontiers for the Future Programme call document for additional information on how research outputs other than publications are considered.

**Q10f: *In terms of the DORA guidelines for the CV is it possible to mention citation numbers of selected publications?***

Citations of publications in the DORA-Compliant CV are permitted as per the instructions provided in the CV template. They should be used to describe the impact and / or reach of your research. CV templates for Applicant(s) and Collaborators can be found under the Downloads Section of the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme webpage (<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/frontiers-for-the-future/index.xml>).