SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme 2022 FAQs

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Terms of Reference

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GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Q1a: ***I currently hold another active SFI award. Am I eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
Depending on the programme of the existing award, you may be eligible to apply – please see section 2.5.4 of the call document for details. Please note, depending on the programme, you may need to be within 12 or 24 months of the award close to be eligible.

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 currently under review for the 2021 FFP Call Award Stream. Am I eligible to apply for the Frontiers for the Future programme in 2022?***
Yes. Subject to meeting all other eligibility criteria, applicants currently under review for the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2021 Awards stream are eligible to apply for either the Project stream or the Award stream of the 2022 call. However, new applications submitted to the 2022 Projects or Awards stream **must be distinct from the application currently under review.** Should the 2021 application under review be funded, the 2022 application will be withdrawn from review.

Q1bi: ***My 2021 FFP Call Award Stream application was unsuccessful. Do I have to wait 6 months before resubmitting to the 2022 FFP Call Awards Stream?***
No. Subject to meeting all other eligibility criteria, and following the resubmission process (section 3.2 of the call document) applicants can resubmit to the 2022 Awards stream as soon as they have received their final decision.

Q1c: ***I currently hold, am under review for, or was unsuccessful in application for a SFI National Challenge Fund award. Am I eligible to apply to the 2022 Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
Yes. Subject to meeting all other eligibility criteria, NCF award holders or current applicants are eligible to apply. **The FFP application must be distinct from the NCF application.**

If a submission is from an unsuccessful NCF applicant, and the FFP application is based on this unsuccessful NCF application, a resubmission statement should be provided as indicated in section 3.2 of the call document.

Q1d: ***If I am a Post-Doctoral Fellow or a Research Fellow, am I eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
Postdoctoral researchers (or equivalent) are not eligible to apply to this call. FFP is open to independent investigators only, and applicants must be independent at time of submission.

Research Fellows, may be eligible if they meet the employment status requirements outlined in section 2.5.1 of the call document. 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 3.11 of the call document.

Q1e: ***Are Academic staff on contracts of indefinite duration eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
Yes. As stated in Section 2.5.1 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. 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 3.11 of the call document.

Q1f: ***I have a contract with an SFI eligible research body, but it does not extend to the duration of the award I am proposing. Am I eligible to apply for the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
For the **Awards stream**, you do not require a contract that covers the duration of your proposed award at submission, but in the host research body letter of support the host research body must clearly state that a contract of sufficient duration will be provided to the applicant in the event of the application's success

For the **Projects Stream,** you must have a contract which covers the duration of the award at submission, to be eligible.

Q1g: ***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?***
For the **Awards stream**, you do not require a contract at submission, but in the host research body letter of support the host research body must clearly state that a contract of sufficient duration will be provided to the applicant in the event of the application's success

For the **Projects Stream,** 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.

Q1h: ***I hold an SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG), National Challenge Fund seed award, or Technology Innovation Development Award (TIDA) – can I apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme through the Emerging Investigator category?***
Yes, provided you meet the specific requirements outlined in section 2.5.4 of the call document. All other eligibility requirements must be met for SIRG, NCF or TIDA holders.

Q1i: ***I do not hold a PhD, but do hold a different professional degree. Am I eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?***
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).

MDs applying specifically to the SFI-CHF initiative within the FFP 2022 call, should consult Appendix B of the call document for eligibility requirements. Enquiries on this can be sent to FFP@sfi.ie.

Q1j: *I qualify as an Emerging Investigator. Am I eligible to apply for the Awards stream?*
Yes. The Awards stream is not solely for advanced career investigators. Emerging Investigators and early career researchers are welcome to apply for the awards stream.

Q1k: *If I hold a joint appointment or a non-Full Time Equivalent (FTE) contract with the host research body, am I eligible to apply to the Frontiers for the Future Programme?*
Applicants who hold joint appointments are typically ineligible to apply for SFI awards (excluding Research Professorship). Applicants should consult with their host research body's research office with respects to eligibility, and must contact ffp@sfi.ie to disclose joint appointments. **SFI must be contacted ahead of submission.**
SFI may seek additional information on how joint appointments are being managed by the host Research Body/Bodies. SFI reserves the right to require specific conditions of funding, for applicants holding a joint appointment, should they be awarded.

Contract researchers are eligible to apply but must adhere to the guidelines outlined in section 2.5.1, regarding employment status.

In all cases, upon submission of an application (and not before), SFI will perform eligibility checks which include assessment of commitment to an award; **The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested**. SFI reserves the right to make any application ineligible where the employment status of an Applicant/Co-Applicant is unclear or unsatisfactory, or where commitment levels are deemed insufficient.

Q1l: *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 2.5.3 of the call document for details).

Q1m: *Publications in some fields of research typically have author lists in alphabetical order. Mathematics is an example of such a field. How do applicants in these fields handle the senior authorship eligibility criterion for the Frontiers for the Future Programme?*
SFI recognises a *Senior Author* to have had significant responsibility for a research publication, in terms of an intellectual and/or practical contribution to the generation of the research and/or overall responsibility for the research team that conducted the research. This will often be the first person listed in a group of authors, and hence SFI considers First Authors (or Joint First Authors where it has clearly been stated in the publication that more than one author has contributed equally) to be Senior Authors. Senior authors may, or may not, have had financial responsibility for the research findings that are disseminated in the publication.

In cases where, for any reason, senior authorship is not evident from a contribution-based author list on a publication, applicants to SFI calls should briefly, but convincingly, detail the critical contributions of the author in the relevant CV section.

APPLICANT/CO-APPLICANTS, COLLABORATORS & MENTORS

Q2a: *Can researchers in Research Bodies outside the Republic of Ireland be Lead-Applicant, Co-Applicant, or Collaborators on SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme grant?*
For the Awards Stream only, researchers in research bodies outside the Republic of Ireland can be Lead Applicants or Co-Applicants, provided that they are in the process of moving to an SFI eligible research body inside of the Republic of Ireland. In this case, the host research body's letter of

support at proposal submission must clearly state that a contract of sufficient duration will be provided to the applicant in the event of the application's success. If a Joint Appointment is proposed, the applicant and host research body must contact ffp@sfi.ie in advance of submission to detail this appointment.

Researchers from outside of the Republic of Ireland may be listed as Collaborators on applications to either stream of Frontiers for the Future Programme.

Q2b: ***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 (see Section 6 of the Call Document for State Aid Policy).

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.

Q2c: ***Is it possible to propose hiring of team members that will be based in the research body of a collaborator?***
No. Lead or Co-Applicants must be the primary supervisor(s) of all staff hired. However, while academic collaborators may not be a primary supervisor of research staff enrolled on a grant, they may act as short-term 'local supervisors' if these team members conduct a portion of their research activities in a different institution to the Lead or Co-Applicant. Please see section 2.4 of the call document for more details.

Q2d: ***How many Co-Applicants and collaborators are permitted on a Frontiers for the Future proposal?***
There is a limit of one Co-Applicant on SFI Frontier for the Future proposals. Applicants applying under the Emerging Investigator category cannot include a Co-Applicant on their application. There is no limit on the number of collaborators (see section 2.4 of the call document for allowable collaborator categories).
Inclusion of co-applicant or collaborators on an application is not mandatory.

Q2e: ***Can an individual be a* Collaborator on multiple applications, or be a Lead/Co-Applicant on a Frontiers for the Future Programme application?***
Yes, an individual may be named as a Collaborator on more than one proposal to the Frontiers for the Future Programme. A collaborator (or mentor) on a proposal may also be the Lead/Co-applicant on another.

Q2f: ***I am interested in applying to the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2022 call under the SFI-CHF Partnership, but I cannot see how to register. What do I need to do?***
If you are seeking support under the SFI-CHF co-fund please select the relevant option in the FFP Projects application form on SESAME. Further information is available in Appendix B of the call document and in the SFI-CHF webinar.

Q2g: **Who should provide letters of support for CHI co-applicants as part of the SFI-CHF co-fund?**
All CHI applicants must provide a Letter of Support from the CHI Research and Innovation Office.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Q3a: **How many applications can an individual submit to the 2022 SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme?**
Individuals may only submit <u>one</u> single proposal as Lead Applicant *or* Co-Applicant to the 2022 call.

Applicants and Co-Applicants are <u>not</u> permitted to submit applications to both Award *and* Project streams within the same call (i.e. an applicant unsuccessful in the 2022 Call Project stream cannot submit an application to the 2022 Call Awards stream).

Q3b: **Can an eligible researcher re-submit an unsuccessful Frontiers for the Future Programme 2021 proposal to Frontiers for the Future Programme 2022 call?**
Yes, an Applicant who was unsuccessful in the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2021 call may resubmit their proposal to the Frontiers for the Future Programme 2021 call, providing all eligibility criteria are met.

Applicants must follow the resubmission requirements as outlined in section 3.2 of the call document. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details (https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/).

SALARIES AND BUDGETS

[SFI Grant Budget Policy](#)

[SFI Team Member Salary Scales](#)

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: **Are there any particular requirements for budgets for SFI-CHF co-fund applications?**
Please account for all costs associated with the collection, processing and storage of biological samples and clinical data in CHI within the budget. Applicants are encouraged to confirm these costs with the CHI Research and Innovation Office early in the course of budget calculation.

REMIT and ETHICS

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 2021?*
No. 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.

Please direct any queries you may have to ffp@sfi.ie.

Q5c: *Do I need to have ethical approval forms at submission?*
No. SFI will request all relevant ethical approval forms should an application be successful, ahead of the letter of offer.

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.

Applications that are based on previous submissions, but which are not indicated as resubmissions by the applicant may be made ineligible. Resubmission statements must also be submitted in the case of applications submitted to the pre-proposal stage of a previous call.

Q6b: *Are there any tips or advice on what to include in the applicant response?*
As the applicant response is limited by a word cap, should you be short on space, we would recommend that applicants not repeat the reviewer comments in full. All reviewers will receive the reviews of their fellow reviewers in the step 3 (post-applicant response) phase (see Appendix A in the Call Doc), so will have these comments already.

We would recommend that applicants use the opportunity to clearly address as many reviewer queries as possible. Reference to publications or preliminary data collected since submission is permitted, but please be aware that after the applicant response is submitted we will not be able to provide further information to reviewers (including publications, news of promotions, funding diversification etc.).

We request that applicants refrain from inflammatory language in their responses, and in general recommend a polite tone of response. Finally, **applicants applying as Emerging Investigators must not reference their Emerging Investigator status.** Reviewers are purposely blinded to this in the application process.

Q6c: ***What actions are taken if an application receives reviews that vastly differ in opinion?***
SFI reserves the right to assess applications with very high standard deviations or vastly deviating reviewer opinions using additional reviewers or review through an oversight panel. Should additional reviewers assess an application, they will review the fairness of the existing reviews and may make a funding recommendation and/or may modify scores where an application is judged to have been treated unfairly and there is sufficient justification and rationale for doing so.

Q6d: ***If an Oversight Panel is required, who will make up this panel for 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 may 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.

Q6e: ***Are Awards and Projects reviewed differently?***
Each Award application will be assessed by distinguished international peer reviewers selected on the basis of the subject areas of the individual proposal. Each reviewer reviews only a single application. Project proposals will be assessed by three distinguished international peer reviewers selected on the basis of the subject area of a group of proposals. The reviewers for the Projects stream would be considered more generalist than the reviewers selected for each Award application.

Q6f: ***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, due to the panel nature of Projects stream reviews, excluded reviewers are permitted only for the Awards stream. (See Section 3.12 of the Call Doc).

Q6g: ***If funding is based on a ranking list, how is the ranking determined?***
Applications will progress to a ranking list, and be eligible for funding, if at least 2 reviewers recommend the proposal for funding.

For those proposals weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest half point. When ranking applications, in the event of applications receiving the same final score, SFI will give priority in the review process to applications from woman lead applicants. For those applications which have the same score, SFI may use a randomisation/lottery process and/or additional tiebreakers.

SFI also reserves the right to change the level of rounding, depending on the number and quality of applications. **Applicants and Research Offices will be made aware of any changes to the review process.** SFI will fund down the ranked lists until the programme funding is exhausted.

CV and DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN (DMP)

Applicant/Co-Applicant CV Template

Collaborator CV Template

Q7a: ***Is there any guidance for how to write a Narrative CV?***
Guidance for applicants on how to use the narrative CV when preparing an application, and FAQs, are HERE. Questions on this guidance can be submitted to researchpolicy@sfi.ie, and any other questions can be submitted to ffp@sfi.ie.

Q7b: **What is <u>not</u> allowed in the Narrative CV?**
The following are not allowed in the narrative CV, and will be redacted prior to review, if included: - *H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index, Altmetrics, total number of publications, Impact Factors of journals published in,* and *hyperlinks*.

Q7c: **Is it possible to include figures/tables in the CV template?**
No – please conform to the template requirement of the DORA CV – provided in the Downloads section on the [Programme webpage](#).

Q7d: **How will the components of the Narrative CV be assessed by reviewers?**
See Appendix A in the call document for the table containing *Review Questions*, and *Questions pertaining to Applicant(s)*.

Q7e: **How does SFI instruct reviewers to ensure the principles of DORA (San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment) are realised?**
SFI introduced a narrative 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 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.

Q7f: **What is a Data Management Plan (DMP), how do you write one, and how will it be assessed by reviewers?**
A DMP is a living document that details the procedures for careful handling of data and other research outputs. A DMP follows the data through the lifecycle of the programme of research*, from collection to analysis and interpretation, sharing and dissemination, and long-term storage. More details on DMPs can be found [HERE](#).

Your Research Office should be able to provide details on how to complete a DMP, as your institution may have specific requirements and/or a template document. SFI guidance on creating a DMP can be found [HERE](#).

The DMP will be reviewed as part of the Research Programme. See Appendix A of the call document to see the *Review Questions* pertaining to the DMP.

IMPACT

Q8a: **What is impact?**
Please see the [Impact page](#) on the SFI website. Applicants are advised to view the [SFI Impact webinar](#) available on the SFI website in advance of preparing their Impact Statements.

POLICY

Q9a: **Why do publications from my award need to be open access? Is there any guidance on how this can be managed?**
Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is committed to ensuring that all outputs arising from SFI-funded research are openly available. To this end, SFI is a signatory of [Plan S](#) and [cOAlition S](#) member, an

initiative to make full and immediate Open Access to research publications a reality. In line with the principles espoused by Plan S and those of the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment arising, SFI's Open Access policy has been updated. This update will support Ireland in achieving its goal of ensuring that the outputs of all publicly-funded research are openly available.

An Open Access publishing guide can be found HERE.

SFI encourages publication in high-quality, peer-reviewed journals and platforms. As such, it is expected that such journals, publication platforms and repositories comply with international standards and, in particular, those guidelines developed by cOAlition S.

Please submit questions on Open Access to researchpolicy@sfi.ie

Q9b: *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.

An opportunity to describe how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment is provided in Section 1B (*Key Achievements in the Development of Individuals and Collaborations*) of your CV, should you choose to highlight it.

Q9c: *How should an Applicant prepare a "Sex and/or Gender in Research" Statement, particularly if they are in a field that does not explicitly consider gender in its research?*
If you are uncertain how to construct your *Sex/Gender in Research* statement for your field of study, you should consult your departmental colleagues and research office for advice.

To understand the role of the *Sex/Gender in Research* statement in research please see HERE.

SFI also provides guidance on considerations for this statement HERE.

You can submit questions to diversity@sfi.ie and ffp@sfi.ie

SESAME

Q10a: *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 2021?*
To check that required fields have been completed prior to submission, click "Validate" (ensure you "Save Draft" first to save all changes). 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**. To view your complete application (including uploads) before RO validation you must 'Save Draft' and then open the Proposal Document and 'Export as PDF'. 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 3.16 of the Frontiers for the Future Programme call document.

Common Issues with Application Submission on SESAME:

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.)
Please ensure to use unencrypted, non-password protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft Word PDF convertor software ONLY. Also do NOT use commas or special characters in the title of your uploaded PDF document.

Issues with PDF document titles:
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.