

SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Science Policy Research Programme 2023

Call for Submission of Proposals

Version 1.2 (Revised 1 August 2023)

Key Dates

Call Launch:	28 June 2023
Application Form Open on SESAME:	14 July 2023
Proposal Submission Deadline:	8 September 2023, 13.00 Dublin local time

Terms of Reference

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All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act, 2003, the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.



Version History

Version 1.0 Launched 28 June 2023

Version 1.1 Revised 10/7/2023:

- Amended the max page limit for an Impact Statement from 2 pages to 3 pages (Appendix II Section 8).
- Revised to clarify letter of support requirements for Industry Collaborators (if relevant).

Version 1.2 Revised 1/8/2023:

- Amended Section 19 of Appendix II to provide alternative table for Institutional letter of support for postdoctoral researcher applicants.



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1 Introduction

Nations fund scientific research to further their economic and social interests. By building and using human and knowledge capital capacity, countries can achieve competitive advantage and sustainable development. This is vital for economic growth and the advancement of society. It is the role of government and its agencies, therefore, to catalyse and build a functioning ecosystem that includes an effective mix of government, private enterprise, academia, finance, regulation and philanthropy, all working together to deliver desirable impacts.

Impact 2030¹, Ireland's seven-year strategy on research and development, science and technology, puts research and innovation (R&I) at the heart of addressing Ireland's social, economic and environmental challenges. Critical to the delivery of this vision will be effective policies: for the funding, evaluation, dissemination of scientific research; for the building of a renowned talent pool of researchers who can train and develop future researchers and enhance Ireland's international reputation for innovation; and for building a world class research system. Building Ireland's research capacity in the area of Science Policy will ensure that international best practice can be brought to bear in an Irish context.

Ireland has invested significantly in Research and Development (R&D) over a 23 year period and there are now sufficient data amassed to critically analyse the impact of national investment in R&D and the effectiveness of science policy against other nations of similar size (e.g. Small Advanced Economies) and R&D investment. This analysis should also take national smart specialisation strategy into account. System-level return on investment is a key driver for Impact 2030 so this type of analysis will prove invaluable to the Irish Government in assessing the impact and effectiveness of their investment to date and for investments in the future.

SFI is pleased to launch the **SFI Science Policy Research Programme 2023**.

The specific **objectives** of the programme are:

- To fund detailed analyses of relevant data from government departments or agencies and other sources of data;
- To allow dissemination of knowledge by various means including via peer reviewed publications and via presentations at or hosting of conferences/workshops, and presentations at government departments or agencies
- Input to continued evolution of RDI policy in Ireland;
- To enable training of policy researchers;
- To provide support to academics to conduct focused research in science funding policy in order to build capacity;
- To encourage collaborations with international experts in the field and key policy makers or research funders in government departments or agencies.

The SFI Science Policy Research programme supports the SFI Strategy 2025 – [Shaping Our Future](#) – by supporting research that will inform SFI how to best fund excellent research and talent so that they deliver tangible benefits for our society and economy.

¹ [Impact 2030, published 2022](#)



This call of the Science Policy Research Programme focusses on **practical, pragmatic recommendations** being identified in the short term (ideally twelve months) by the awardees. These recommendations should inform and be of benefit to SFI, other research funders, and to national policymakers.

2 Programme Details

2.1 Funding

The Science Policy Research Programme provides up to €175,000 total direct costs over a 12-24 month term.

Successful projects would be expected to report conclusions, or at least initial findings, within twelve months. The remaining time will be used to complete any outstanding research and to pursue secondary anticipated or opportunistic research that arises from the topic. This anticipated or opportunistic research does not need to be described as part of the application.

The budget requested should include the salary costs of the postdoctoral applicant (if relevant) or any team members who will be conducting the research and costs for materials and consumables, equipment, and travel. Salary costs of established researcher applicants or mentors are not eligible. (see Appendix II, Section 9 for more details).

2.2 Programme Remit

The legal remit of Science Foundation Ireland is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour; to develop and extend the capability for carrying out such research; to support the development of research to assess the impact of such research. In order to support all aspects of its remit, Science Foundation Ireland funds research for science policy, building a strong foundation for effective funding decision-making to deliver maximum impact for the economy and society.

2.3 State aid and SFI Grant funding

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of SFI's General Terms & Conditions², Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents³), all SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)⁴. Namely, research activities undertaken as part of a Grant awarded under the SFI Science Policy Research programme, and agreed to subject to SFI's Grant Conditions, must be "non-economic" in nature and be designed to ensure that any funding received does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid.

² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions>

³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance>

⁴ [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS \(europa.eu\)](#)

Where an application for funding involves an ‘undertaking’⁵ or industry party, recipients of Grant funding under the SFI Science Policy Research programme are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” and the conditions relating to the allocation between the parties of the results and/or intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration as per the 2022 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) (the “Framework”⁶). SFI has set out guidance to support how the programme of research or project is developed and undertaken in accordance with these conditions. See ‘Guidance on State aid for applicants to, and recipients of, SFI Grant funding’ for further information.⁷

Where a proposed programme of research activities involves a collaboration with an industry party or “undertaking”, for all or part of the term of the Grant, applicants must demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” and complete an “Industry Collaboration Form” (ICF). The ICF is to assist applicants in defining the relationship with the relevant industry partners in order to comply with the conditions of “effective collaboration”. SFI requires that the ICF is completed and returned to SFI on or before the date that the Collaborative Research (or Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement has been ‘agreed’ with, or signed by, the relevant partner(s). A copy of each CRA arising from the Grant must be held on file by the relevant Research Body. SFI may request a copy of the signed CRA to be provided (as advised in the Grant Terms & Conditions) and held on file by SFI for audit purposes. Further information on the role of the CRA and SFI’s ex-post State aid verification checks (i.e., on-going checks after the granting of funds / partial funds) can be found in ‘Guidance on State aid for applicants to, and recipients of, SFI Grant funding’ on the SFI website.⁸ The ICF and related guidance, inclusive of an FAQ document, can be found on the SFI website.⁹ Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice in advance of applying to SFI for funding where further clarification is sought.

2.4 Topics

Science Foundation Ireland has identified a number of areas where research would greatly inform and benefit the Irish research performing and funding systems. These topics are detailed in Appendix I. Applicants may only select ONE topic for their application.

We expect to make only one award against any one topic.

2.5 Definition of Applicant / Mentor / Collaborator

2.5.1 Applicant

The **Applicant** will be responsible for the direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The Applicant has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of SFI.¹⁰ The Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the grant, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant.

⁵ The concept of an “undertaking” under EU competition law rules is an entity that is engaged in an “economic activity” regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed. An activity is economic in nature when it involves offering goods or services on a market.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C .2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG>

⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid>

⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/State-Aid-Guidance.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid>

¹⁰ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-terms-conditions.html>



The applicant will be either:

- (a) A postdoctoral researcher, with mentorship from an established researcher; or
- (b) An established researcher.

2.5.2 Mentor

A **mentor** is required where the applicant is a postdoctoral researcher. The **mentor** will be an established researcher within the research body who will give advice and provide laboratory space (where applicable) and related infrastructure to the applicant. The mentor acts as an advisor and host. The mentor will work with the applicant to ensure that all fiduciary and ethical approval aspects, where relevant, of the award are managed successfully. The mentor must co-author any publications or reports resulting from this research.

2.5.3 Collaborators

For the purpose of this Call, an **Academic Collaborator** is defined as an individual working in an academic institution or state body who is committed to providing a valuable intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research.

As appropriate, Academic Collaborator(s) based in an SFI Eligible Research Body within the Republic of Ireland may receive funding through the grant (see Appendix III, Sections 9-17), but the funding allocated should reflect the supporting role that such Collaborator(s) are expected to play in the research programme. 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 Applicant. CVs must be provided for Academic Collaborators. 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.

Collaborators in industry, public bodies, civil society / non-governmental organisations, and other entities can be included in the application where relevant. CVs should be provided and failure to do so may disadvantage an application during the review process. Each collaborator must provide a letter of support with the grant application, and this must clearly outline the role of that collaborator in the programme of research proposed. Applicants who have included an industry collaborator should consider whether they are required to complete an Industry Collaboration Form, as described in Section 2.3.

Collaborator letters of support: Each collaborator must provide a letter of support with the grant application and this must clearly outline the role of that collaborator in the programme of research proposed. The role of the Collaborator must also be *referenced* in the main body of the research proposal (for example: *Will the Collaborators be supplying data, etc.? Will the Collaborators be providing training in techniques or directly participate in specific projects? Will Collaborators be acting in a purely advisory capacity?*). Please see Appendix III, Section 19 for more details on letters of support.

2.6 Applicant profile

The SFI Science Policy Research programme is primarily targeted towards talented post-doctoral researchers. However, applications from established researchers are also welcome.

An applicant who is a postdoctoral researcher should demonstrate a proven record of internationally recognised research accomplishments **appropriate to their career stage**. Reviewers will be asked to



consider the applicant's track record in the context of an applicant's research-active years. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Publications in major international peer-reviewed journals;
- Research monograph(s) and any translations thereof;
- Other forms of peer-reviewed recognition of achievement;
- Publication of datasets, software, code;
- Innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g. patents, licenses, novel assays and reagents);
- Participation in consortia;
- Invited presentations to internationally established conferences; and/or international advanced schools.

2.7 Eligibility of Applicant

2.7.1 General

Employment Status

The Applicant must be:

A member 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 and will have an office and research space at the host Research Body for which he/she will be fully responsible for *at least* the duration of the SFI grant; **or**

An individual who will be recognised by the Research Body upon receipt of the SFI grant as a member of the academic staff or as a contract researcher as defined above. The applicant does not necessarily need to be employed by the Research Body at the time of proposal submission.

Applicants who hold joint appointments are typically ineligible to apply for SFI grants. **If an applicant holds a joint appointment they must contact sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie in advance of application submission with details of those appointments.** SFI eligibility checks assess the appropriateness of the time commitment and engagement with the research programme, and the time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested. 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. Any other queries on joint appointments and/or FTE levels must be submitted directly to SFI at sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie in advance of the call deadline.

The letter of support from the host Research Body of the Applicant must detail the employment status of the Applicant, including how the Applicant meet the eligibility criteria for this call. For further information on Research Body Letters of Support, please see Appendix II Section 19 below.



Retired or Emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments; further details are available on the SFI website.¹¹

In advance of proposal submission, eligibility queries regarding employment status may be directed to SFI at sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie; however, full eligibility checks are not conducted before proposal submission. SFI reserves the right to make any application ineligible where the employment status of an Applicant is unclear or unsatisfactory, or where commitment levels are deemed to be insufficient.

Other SFI Awards

Applicants who hold existing SFI awards or who are under review under a current SFI call are **not restricted** from applying to the SFI Science Policy Research Programme.

2.7.2 Applicant Eligibility where the applicant is a Postdoctoral Researcher

Applicants who are postdoctoral researchers must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least two years at proposal submission¹².
- Must have identified a mentor, who will give advice and provide access to laboratory space (where relevant) and related infrastructure for the duration of the award. The mentor will work with the applicant to ensure that all fiduciary and ethical approval aspects, where relevant, of the award are managed successfully. The mentor must co-author any publications resulting from this research.

2.7.3 Applicant Eligibility where the applicant is an Established Researcher

The Applicant must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification¹³ for at least **three years**¹² of the call deadline.

Applicants holding an equivalent qualification may be eligible, but should nevertheless seek approval from SFI in advance of submitting a proposal.

¹¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-policies/emeritusretired-eligibility-policy/>

¹² The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year. Therefore, only individuals with an official date of 8 September 2020 or earlier (established researcher) or 8 September 2021 or earlier (postdoctoral researcher) are eligible to apply to this call.

¹³ Please see the SFI website for further details on equivalence - <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-policies/sfi-policy-on-phd-equivalence.html>.

2.7.3.1 Senior-Author Publications (Established Researcher applicants)

An Established Researcher Applicant is required to have demonstrated that they have been a **senior author** on at least 3 **international peer-reviewed articles**. Only original research publications, and not review articles or other secondary research literature, are acceptable. Please note that 3 senior-author publications is a minimum eligibility criterion; applicants with higher numbers of publications are likely to be more competitive. For this programme, senior authors are defined as follows:

- An author that is listed as first or joint first author, reflecting the fact that he/she has provided the greatest intellectual contribution, has held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts.
- The last author will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects his/her overall responsibility for the study and suggests that a level of mentorship has been provided.
- Senior authors may, or may not, have had financial responsibility for the research findings that are disseminated in the publication.
- It will be noted that different publishers have differing rules on how the senior authorship is indicated (e.g., by using asterisks, underlining, placing the name first or last in the list of authors, etc.); in cases or specific fields where, for any reason, senior authorship is not evident from a contribution-based author list on a publication, applicants should briefly, but convincingly, detail the critical contributions of the author in the relevant CV section.

Established Researcher Applicants are required in their CV to detail up to three peer-reviewed, senior-author primary-research publications, which will confirm, that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for publications for this programme. Failure to use the template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

2.7.3.2 Research Independence (Established Researcher applicant only)

An Established Researcher Applicant is required to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as lead investigator or as co-investigator. Eligible research grants would be expected to support at least one full-time equivalent, excluding the applicant(s), and include research team costs (e.g., materials and consumables). This excludes smaller awards such as travel grants, equipment grants, postgraduate fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, and awards of short duration (12 months or less). Laboratory fit-out/start-up funding is also excluded. Applicants may be required to provide evidence to support the validity of an award upon request. If you are uncertain regarding the eligibility of funding you have received, please contact SFI at sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie.

2.7.3.3 Supervisory Experience (Established Researcher applicant only)

An Established Researcher Applicant is required to demonstrate proven prior experience, capability and authority in the mentorship and supervision of postgraduate students and team members.



2.8 Application Eligibility

Individuals may only submit one proposal to an open call of the SFI Science Policy Research Programme. If an Applicant submits more than one proposal to this call, both applications will be returned without review. All topics are part of the same call; individuals may not submit proposals to more than one topic.

The Research Body must confirm that the applicant meets the above criteria. Where an applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

3 Application Procedure

Proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result, to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

The SESAME system is accessed here: <https://grants.sfi.ie>

Applicants should carefully read the instructions in Appendix II and in the Sesame Researcher User Guide to complete the various sections of the application. In addition, a checklist of requirements is provided in 0 of this call document.

Once submitted by the host Research Body to SFI through SESAME, **an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.**

Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the Applicant's Research Body by 8 September 2023, 13:00 Dublin local time.

Applicants should contact their Research Office in sufficient time to ensure that internal deadlines, if any, may be met.

Applications not adhering to the requirements outlined, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI on, or before, the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Applications not submitted before the deadline will not be considered for review under any circumstances.

Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by SFI staff.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same call.

4 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)¹⁴ in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member.¹⁵ To this end, all types of research output are recognised by SFI and we are committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. SFI has developed a Narrative CV template to assist with compliance to DORA principles. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,¹⁶ SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030.¹⁷

Applications to the Science Policy Research 2023 Call will be evaluated by international peer reviewers on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Quality of the research plan (weight 30%)

Likely effectiveness of approach to address the topic, likelihood of delivering findings within 12 months of commencement of the award, likelihood of delivering the entirety of the project within the timeframe and budget of the award, understanding of the topic, stakeholder/beneficiary engagement proposed; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; suitability and achievability of the programme based on the experience of the applicant; appropriate use of the available budget, the sex and gender dimension etc.

2. Quality, significance and relevance of the applicant's / applicant team's key achievements, research track record, commensurate with their career stage and years of research experience, taking any periods of leave into account and considering the quality and relevance of the collaborators and/or mentor, if relevant. (weight 50%)

¹⁴ <https://sfdora.org/read/>

¹⁵ Contributor level membership

¹⁶ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

¹⁷ [National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum \(norf.ie\)](#)



The following areas will be considered in evaluating the applicant's track record: 1) Generation of Knowledge, 2) Development of Individuals and Collaboration, 3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and, 4) Supporting the Research Community and higher education.

The reviewers will also consider, if applicable, the level of support by the mentor for the postdoctoral applicant career & professional development; necessary space and equipment in place to carry out the programme of research; assurance from the support letters that the applicant will be supported appropriately,

3. Potential impact, and value to Ireland (weight 20%)

Appreciation of how the research may be applied to address the issues raised in the topic in the short-term and how it may be developed and exploited in the medium-to-long term; realistic and convincing evaluation of the benefits that will result from a successful project; areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made; etc.

Reviewers engaged by SFI are required to abide by the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.¹⁸ The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant(s) to participate in the peer-review process. **SFI reserves the right to reject applications without review where they do not meet the eligibility criteria.**

Other Review Information

The identity of international experts who conduct reviews shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the applicants. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international peer reviewers involved in the merit review process.

SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modifications to the review procedure. The final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

Final workplans will be set at award stage, in close collaboration with project advisory groups, where relevant (see section 5.2).

5 Award Management

5.1 Reporting Requirements

The progress reporting requirements for all awards made under the SFI Science Policy Research 2023 Call must be adhered to. That is, those awardees that fail to comply will risk having their grant payments suspended and/or the processing of any applications under review in other SFI Programme calls paused, until their reporting status is rectified. Reporting is inclusive of annual reporting, the annual stocktake of **SFI Research Outputs**, participation in post award site reviews, and the completion of other reporting as requested from time to time by SFI.

Annual reporting

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for annual reporting. Awardees will be requested to submit their annual report by 31 January every year to reflect the activity of the previous calendar year (January – December) or part thereof. The annual report

¹⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>



template, which will be available on SESAME, must be used. An additional final report, prepared with a template that will also be available on SESAME, must be submitted within three months of the expiration date of the award.

In addition to the annual report, awardees are also obliged to keep their SESAME Research Profile updated since the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs is drawn directly from the data entered into the Research Profile; this must also be updated and completed by the specified deadline each year (currently mid to late January). In the annual completion of their **SFI Research Outputs**, awardees are asked to report on a variety of outputs, including funding opportunities they have pursued and won, allowing SFI to track progress related to these awards on an annual basis. Some or all of the objectives described for awards made under the Science Policy Research call will be relevant in the context of reporting. Successful awardees of the SFI Science Policy Research Programme 2023 will be required to complete **SFI Research Outputs** for five years. SFI reserves the right to request reporting beyond five years.

SFI reporting procedures are detailed on the SFI website and user guides describing the entry of data into the Research Profile are also available on the [SFI website](#).

The applicant has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for the management of the award, including reporting. Where the applicant is unable to continue in this role, an alternative investigator must be nominated by the research body and approval must be sought from SFI, in advance of this change.

To date, SFI funding has produced high-quality, high-impact publications that have resulted in Ireland rising to the top 20 in international bibliometric rankings of repute. Awardees are asked to acknowledge this support in all publications in accordance with [SFI's Open Access Publishing Guide](#).

5.2 Award Implementation

Project Advisory Groups may, at the discretion of SFI, be formed comprising the successful researcher(s), SFI and other relevant public bodies.

5.3 Progress Reviews

Given the duration of the awards, we do not expect to carry out formal progress reviews involving international peer reviewers.

6 SFI Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the GT&Cs, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme. All members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time.

Clinical Trials

Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will **not** be permitted through the SFI Science Policy Research Programme. Funding requests for early-stage research involving human volunteers and/or human samples

that do not require regulatory approval are permitted. Where there is any doubt, applicants are advised to contact the HRA prior to submission to ensure eligibility and are required to indicate in their application that the proposed study does not require HRA approval. **SFI's Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,¹⁹ is available on the SFI webpage.

Animal Usage

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**²⁰ and should also ensure that their studies align with the HRA's position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity

SFI places paramount importance on ensuring that the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, SFI endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**;²¹ that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**,²² in addition to their respective institutional policies and procedures for handling research misconduct allegations.

Doctoral Education

For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education as described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)**,²³ which SFI has endorsed.

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019** and must comply with State aid Regulations.²⁴ The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project and the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the Industry Partner. IP arrangements should be explicitly described in collaborative research agreements (CRAs).

Gender Strategy

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the **SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**,²⁵ applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

¹⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

²⁰ http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

²¹ <https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

²² https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf

²³ http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

²⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Gender-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf>



In the SFI Strategy 2025 Shaping Our Future,²⁶ targets are set for 35% of SFI's funded leadership positions (PIs & Co-PIs) to be women and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of the underrepresented genders by 2025. As such, applicants should consider and describe how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI-funded award when either an SFI Awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded by an SFI award, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.²⁷

Appeals Process

The Appeals Process policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.²⁸

State aid

All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must comply with, State aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid. Applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2022 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01)**²⁹ and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.³⁰ If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,³¹ and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.³² It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation³³ is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.³⁴ Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the

²⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

²⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

²⁸ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

²⁹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG

³⁰ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

³² http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

³³ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

³⁴ <https://www.eugdpr.org/>



performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement**.³⁵

During peer-review procedures, information may be sent to external experts in countries outside of the European Economic Area, including countries that are not recognised by the European Commission as having adequate data protection laws. By submitting an application to SFI, the Research Body and members of the Research Team are agreeing that they consent to the processing and transfer of personal information in this way.

During the application process or at any time thereafter, SFI may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator, or any member of the Research Team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by SFI or other relevant bodies, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application process). SFI may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**.³⁶

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S³⁷ and as a signatory of the **National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030**,³⁸ SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI funded research (i.e. where one or other of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), **SFI's Open Access policy** should be adhered to. SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and data gathered through Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.³⁹ Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a

³⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

³⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

³⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

³⁸ <https://norf.ie>

³⁹ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>



data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI.⁴⁰ Applicants should review individual programme funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

Current SFI policies and positions will be reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

7 Further Information

All information related to the Science Policy Research Programme is available on the programme webpage:

<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/policy-research-programme/>

For all additional queries please contact: sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie.

⁴⁰ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

Appendix I Topics

The topics specified below are key areas of interest to Science Foundation Ireland and other research funding system stakeholders. They identify areas that present challenges for the Irish research funding system that we believe could be addressed through academic research. We expect applicants to address the specific questions raised as well as pursue secondary anticipated or opportunistic research that arises from these topics.

Research projects funded under this call must specifically address the constraints and opportunities that are particular to Ireland. Projects should focus on practicalities of implementation, and should deliver learnings that are relevant to research funders and policymakers.

As noted above (section 5.2), there may be project advisory groups created for the awards to support achieving relevant outputs. The timeframe for conclusions or initial findings is outlined in section 2.1.

1. The system level **value and benefits arising from publicly funded research** by way of estimating either or both of the below:
 - the economic, societal, and other impacts expected to arise from a typical project-based/ individual-led research grant or
 - the total benefit arising from PhD training, both to the student and to society and the economy, including non-economic aspects of benefit.

In both cases, appropriate impact evaluation frameworks should be identified and applied.
[One of the intended use cases is for subsequent extrapolation of the findings to overall system impact].
2. Best practice for **translating research into policy**, both
 - Mapping key evidence and policy support activity across the national HE and public service research systems.
 - Mapping research activity and structures that support translating research into policy that may be ongoing in civil society organisations.
3. Assessing the **research talent pipeline and researcher career progression in Ireland**, in light of good practice from small advanced economies:
 - Quantifying and qualifying the pipeline;
 - Identifying constraints and blockages;
 - Optimal attainable national research talent pipeline with reference to good practice elsewhere.
4. Multifaceted **benchmarking of national research and innovation systems**
 - Good practice in benchmarking research and innovation systems;
 - Comparison of practical implementations of national benchmarking systems;
 - How research and innovation system benchmarking should best inform national policy making;
 - Identifying advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.
5. Practical **assessment and measurement of impact, using evaluation frameworks, at system level and at funder level:**
 - Innovation in impact assessment and measurement;
 - International good practice in impact assessment and measurement.

Appendix II Full Proposal Format

Proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result, to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

The SESAME system is accessed here: <https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide⁴¹ for more detailed information.

Once submitted by the host Research Body to SFI through SESAME, **an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.**

Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the Applicant's Research Body by 8 September 2023, 13:00 Dublin local time.

Proposal submission requirements:

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Calibri font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**. 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.
- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB**.
- Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted in call documents or SESAME guidance/instructions. The use of hyperlinks is typically limited to citing information already in the public domain which is non-critical to the evaluation of the proposal. Hyperlinks and URLs may not be used to provide additional information, which would be necessary for application review, and as a means of circumventing page limits. Reviewers are not obligated to view linked sites and are cautioned that they should not directly access a website (unless the link to the site was specifically requested in application instructions). When allowed, you must reference the actual URL text so it appears on the page, for example in brackets or in a footnote, rather than embedding the URL in a specific word or phrase.
- Applicants must complete all mandatory SESAME profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without this information.

⁴¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>



Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI before the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Please communicate with your research office as early as possible, regarding submission timelines. Applications not submitted before the deadline will not be considered for review under any circumstances.

Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by SFI staff.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same call.

II.1 ORCID ID

ORCID⁴² provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms. In December 2015, SESAME integrated with ORCID to make it possible for researchers with a SESAME Research Profile to connect directly to an ORCID iD from their profile. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms, creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier, which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
- Using the ORCID iD helps to make your research works more visible to funders and publishers. You are able to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Research Profile. For the Science Policy Research Call 2023, Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**.

II.2 Eligibility Form

Applicants are required to confirm that they comply with eligibility requirements upon commencing an application to the Science Policy Research call (see Section 2.7 for eligibility details).

II.3 Proposal Summary

Please populate the following required proposal sections on SESAME, as outlined below.

⁴² <http://orcid.org/>



- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**
The Research Proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken and should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded proposals are published by SFI.
- **Topic**
Applicants are required to select which topic their research proposal will address.
- **Duration of Award Requested**
SFI Science Policy Research Programme awards are funded for a period of up to 24 months.
- **Total Funding Request (in €)**
This figure will be populated from the requested budget submitted.
- **Ethical Issues**
Applicants are required to answer the questions related to Ethical Issues.

II.4 Applicant Details

- **Time Commitment to Project**
Indicate the Applicant's time commitment to the proposed research project as a percentage of his/her total working time. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested.
- **Applicant Narrative CV (Upload)**
A CV of the Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the [SFI Science Policy Research Programme](#) website, must be completed and uploaded (**upload: max. 5 pages**). **Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on the SFI Narrative CV for resources to help you prepare your Narrative CV.⁴³ **Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**
- Does the **Applicant** hold a Joint Appointment
Yes or No. If Yes, the applicant will be requested to provide details of the appointment including breakdown of time commitments. **If an applicant holds a joint appointment they must contact sciencepolicyresearch@sfi.ie in advance of application submission with details of those appointments.** Please see section 2.7 for more details on applicant eligibility.
- **History of Mentoring and Supervision (Established researcher applicant only)**
The Applicant must report the number of students he or she has graduated or is currently supervising.

⁴³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/narrative-cv-dora>

II.5 Research Funding History

The Applicant must provide a report on expired, current and pending funding. Funding details may be added from the applicant's existing SESAME profile or can be created in this section.

- The applicant should include details of any financial support pending, or received over the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry, etc.
- The applicant must include details of any financial support currently provided, or currently being sought. Applicants must detail the total funding allocated to the grant and **the amount of this funding that is allocated to the Applicant. SFI will not support research currently being funded through another source.**
- For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant should provide a brief description of the research. Applicants must also indicate their time commitment to these other projects, as a percentage of their total working time.
- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.
- Please complete the requested details for each expired, current, or pending financial support. **Fields coloured red are mandatory.** Certain field labels are underlined and contain further information concerning the details that are required; hover the mouse pointer over these labels to view this information.
- If the applicant is a Collaborator on a research project, the grant should not be included here; only awards where the applicant is either the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator should be listed.
- The portion of research funding claimed in an applicant's name must be an accurate and fair reflection of their responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. **SFI may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.**
- This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with a number of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. Grants that are most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide).⁴⁴ If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has NO expired, current or pending funding.

Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Applicant has been included in the application via SESAME.

⁴⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>



The applicant **must** complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed above, the applicant **must clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, based on the methodologies being employed and the stated objectives of the funded project(s). Failure to do so will make the proposal ineligible.** Also, within this textbox, under the sub-heading “Management of More Than One Major SFI Award” applicants must provide justification and rationale for how they would manage two or more concurrent major SFI grants, where applicable.

II.6 Collaborator(s) Details

Include the name, contact information and other requested details of Collaborator(s), if any. Please see Section 2.5 for further information on the role of Collaborators.

Where applicants have included an industry collaborator they should please refer to Section 2.3.

CVs (max. 2 pages) for all Academic Collaborators must be uploaded. CVs may also be provided for other collaborators; where a non-academic collaborator has been included, failure to provide a supporting CV may disadvantage an application during the review process. The use of a template is not mandatory for Collaborator CVs; however, we recommend that the Collaborator Narrative CV template available on the [programme webpage](#) is used. **Also, reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

Collaborator letters of support must be provided – further details are provided in Appendix II section 19 of this document.

II.7 Mentor Details (If Applicable) – Postdoctoral applicant only

Applicants who are postdoctoral researchers **MUST** include a Mentor on their application.

The Narrative CV template (max. 5 pages) for Mentors, is provided in the Downloads section of the [SFI Science Policy Research Programme](#) website, must be completed and uploaded (**upload: max. 5 pages**). Please click on “Save Draft” after upload. The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Please consult the [Guidance for Applicants on the SFI Narrative CV](#) for resources to help you prepare your Narrative CV. **Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

Mentor letters of support must be provided at proposal stage – further details are provided in Appendix II Section 19.

II.8 Main Body of Proposal

- **Keywords (max. 15)**
These should be descriptors that best characterise the proposed research.
- **Technical Abstract (max. 250 words)**
This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application.

- **Lay Summary (max. 150 words)**

This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application. It should not contain confidential details, given that the lay abstracts of funded proposals may be published by SFI.

- **Ethical Issues**

- Use of Animals**

- Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned. Further details can be found on the SFI Ethical Policies webpage.⁴⁵

- Research Involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data**

- Applicants must complete the questionnaire indicating whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Further details can be found on the SFI Ethical Policies webpage.⁴⁶ Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through SFI's Science Policy Research Programme.

- **Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement (max. 1000 words)**

In accordance with the SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation),⁴⁷ all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues⁴⁶ for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

Do not include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in Section 1B of your CV, should you choose to highlight.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

1. Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
2. Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

If the answer is yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal. If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.

- **Research Description (upload; max. 5 pages)**

Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for peer reviewers to comment on the proposed implementation.

The following points should be considered when describing the proposed research:

⁴⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

- o Describe clearly and concisely the specific aims and objectives of the proposal. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables.
- o Explain the background and significance of the problem – your understanding of the issue; the current state of the art in the area; describe and explain how the proposed work, if successful, will address the issue as outlined.
- o The methodology of the proposed programme should be well developed, and how this proposed methodology addresses the topic should be described in detail. Is the proposed approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

The application should also include:

- o Appropriate timelines, milestones and expected outputs for the proposed research (e.g., a Gantt chart), and the roles of the Applicant / Collaborators / Team Members in the work programme need to be clearly described.
- **References (upload; max. 2 pages)**
Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided in a separate PDF document. A two-page limit is allowed for uploaded references.
- **Data Management Plan (upload; max 2 Pages)**
Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Science Policy Research programme are required to provide a short (2 page) Data Management Plan (DMP) as part of their full proposal application. In preparing this plan, consideration should be given to SFI's Guidance on Data Management Plans.⁴⁸ A DMP is a living document which 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.

Data Management Plan Requirements

DMPs will be evaluated by reviewers to ensure that they contain sufficient information on practices and standards as guided below; this assessment will be incorporated into the overall scoring criteria for the Research Programme section of the application. Although practices and standards vary across disciplines, SFI recommends the use of Science Europe DMP templates and guidelines.⁴⁹

Each DMP should include the following as appropriate to the research programme:

1. Data description and collection or re-use of existing data
2. Documentation and data quality
3. Storage and backup during the research process
4. Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct

⁴⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFI-DMP-Guidance-FINAL-140322.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://www.scienceurope.org/our-priorities/research-data/research-data-management/>

5. Data sharing and long-term preservation
6. Data management responsibilities and resources including institutional or project-specific resources dedicated to managing data and ensuring adherence with the FAIR⁵⁰ principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable).

The completed DMP should be saved as a separate [word/PDF] file and uploaded to SESAME.

- **Impact Statement (upload; max. 3 pages)**

The Impact Statement (max. 3 pages) should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated. Detailed Guidance in relation to impact, including information on how to prepare an impact statement, how metrics and narrative in support of impact are reported on and reviewed by SFI, as well as other useful links are found on the SFI website.⁵¹

For the SPR programme will address how the applicant will engage with Science Foundation Ireland, other national funders, government departments and other relevant stakeholders

II.9 Proposed Budget

The budget requested should be appropriate to the proposed work.

Applications failing to demonstrate reasonable value for money will not be supported through this programme, or may be subject to budget reductions.

The budget requested must be within the Programme limits (see Section 2.1 of the Programme call document). Applications with budget requests outside of these limits will be deemed ineligible.

SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the applicant. SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the applicant and, if relevant, their research team. Eligible costs include:

- Contributions to salaries/stipends for staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme. This includes the applicants salary, if they are applying as a postdoctoral researcher. Applicant salary (where the applicant is an established researcher)/ Mentor/ Collaborator salaries are not eligible costs. Please consult the SFI website for more information on the SFI Grant Budget Policy (GBP).⁵²
- Teaching Replacement for TU/IoT sector applicants
- Teaching Replacement after eligible leave
- Relevant research expenses, including equipment, consumables and travel
- Access charges for use of large items of infrastructure or test-bed facilities may be requested in certain situations; see the SFI GBP for details

⁵⁰<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7769a148-f1f6-11e8-9982-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁵¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

⁵² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>



In addition to direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect or overhead **contribution** to the host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution *to the Research Body* for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services.

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under this call are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs requested from SFI. Costs which will be covered by industry partners should not be included. All grants are made directly to the Applicant's Research Body. Please also refer to the SFI Grant Terms and Conditions⁵³ and also the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#).

See notes for completion of the budget in the Sesame Researcher User Guide⁵⁴ and within SESAME.

II.10 Staff: Salaries and Benefits

SFI Science Policy Research Programme grants will fund the core salary / benefits of the applicant ONLY where the applicant is a postdoctoral researcher. Where the applicant is an established researcher salary / benefits will NOT be funded.

Contributions to team-member salaries, and fees and stipends for postgraduate students (PhD and MSc by research) may be requested. Salaries for Collaborators or mentors are not permitted. All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in Section 4.1 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#) and the associated [SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale \(version October 2022\)](#). Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved by the relevant Research Office(s).

II.11 Teaching Replacement (TU/IoT sector applicants only)

In order to support enhanced focus on research activities within the TU/IoT sector, Applicants from this sector can apply for teaching replacement of up to 50% of their teaching load for the full duration of the grant. Salary scales for replacement lecturers based in TUs/IoT must be reasonable and justified appropriately within the budget justification.

Requests for teaching replacement costs **must be made at the proposal stage** and must be included in the requested budget and detailed in the budget justification. Requests for teaching replacement post receipt of the application will not be considered by SFI. Teaching replacement requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

II.12 Teaching Replacement after eligible leave

In order to support enhanced focus on research activities following periods of leave (see eligibility criteria below), successful applicants will be entitled to request funding for teaching replacement of up to 50% of their teaching load for a period of up to 12 months from the start date of their grant. **Such requests must be made at the proposal stage** and should be included in the requested budget

⁵³ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-terms-conditions/>

⁵⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/ams-user-guides/>



and detailed in the budget justification. Requests for teaching buyout post receipt of the application will not be considered by SFI.

Any applicant who has taken consecutive documented eligible leave (minimum 12 weeks) since 1st January 2012 and has since returned to work is eligible to request funding for teaching buyout. This can include, but is not limited to, the examples below:

- Statutory adoptive leave
- Statutory parental leave
- Statutory maternity leave
- Statutory paternity leave
- Carer's leave
- Long-term medical illness leave
- Conscription

Or

- Academic staff who have returned to an academic position having worked for a minimum of two years in a science- or engineering-related industry.

If an application is successful, applicants applying for eligible leave must provide SFI with a short statement detailing their eligibility for teaching buyout, and the start and end dates of their eligible leave, if applicable. In addition, applicants must also produce documentary evidence of their eligibility from their host institution's Human Resources (HR) Department or, where applicable, the HR Department of their employer at the time of their eligible leave period(s). This documentary evidence must be submitted before a letter of offer can be issued.

Teaching buyout costs should be calculated on the basis of hiring a temporary lecturer (e.g. at point 1 on the Assistant Lecturer salary scale, or equivalent point on the institutional scale) regardless of the seniority of the prospective applicant. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

Applicants who have previously received funding for teaching buyout after eligible leave from SFI (SFI Industry Fellowship, SFI Investigators Programme PICA, ICA, Frontiers for the Future Programme awards) are not eligible to apply for teaching buyout a second time.

II.13 Equipment

All information required to complete the Equipment section of the budget can be found in Section 4.2 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#). SFI will also consider requests for any accessibility equipment needed. This should be included in the Budget Justification statement (See Appendix II, section 17).

II.14 Materials and Consumables

All information required to complete the Materials and Consumables section of the budget can be found in Section 4.3 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#).

Costs relating to organisation of conferences/workshops, and hosting of visiting researchers and fellowships should be included in this budget category as outlined in the GBP (version March



2023). Error! Bookmark not defined. These costs must be directly related to the research programme and must not be in excess of €20,000.

II.15 Travel

All information required to complete the Travel section of the budget can be found in Section 4.4 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#).

II.16 Ineligible Costs

Information regarding ineligible costs can be found in Section 5 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#).

II.17 Budget Justification (upload, max. 2 pages)

All information required to complete the Budget Justification can be found in Section 7 of the [GBP \(version March 2023\)](#).

If cash and/or in-kind industry contributions have been agreed, provide details and describe how they complement the requested budget from SFI. Similarly, provide details of cash and/or in-kind contributions from International Academic Collaborators. Costs that will be covered through leveraging of funds from Industry or Academic Collaborators should not be included in the proposed budget.

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 Science Policy Research Programme.

II.18 Infrastructure and Services Provided by Research Body (upload; max. 1 page)

The Applicant must describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the Research Body/Bodies, directly or via the Mentor. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be carried out, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. A separate letter of support must be included from the Applicant's Research Body (see Appendix II section 19).

II.19 Letters of Support (uploads; max. 2 pages for each letter)

The following letters of support **must** be included:

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Applicant**. The Letter of Support should detail the employment status of the applicant, including how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for this call as detailed in Section 2.7. In order to provide the details of the required eligibility criteria, please use the relevant table provided below. **This table must be present in the letter of support from the host Research body of Applicant.** The letter should also comment on the infrastructure and services available and should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest (see Section 6 for details). **If the letter of support is for an applicant who does not currently have a contract of sufficient duration in place, 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.** This is a formal letter on headed notepaper and is signed by an authorised institutional representative.

Table to be included in Research Body Letter of Support for Established Researcher applicant

Applicant Eligibility Criteria	Response (to be filled out by research body)
What is the Applicant's job title?	
Does the Applicant have a permanent contract? (Yes/No)	
If ' No ', please provide the Applicant's current contract start and end dates.	
Will the Applicant be provided with an independent office and research space at the host research body, for which the Applicant will be fully responsible throughout the duration of the proposed grant? (Yes/No)	
What year did the Applicant obtain their PhD?	
Is the Applicant a first or senior author on at least three peer-reviewed original research publications? (Yes/No)	
Does the Applicant hold a joint appointment with any other research-performing organisation, or have a non-full time contract position with the host research body? (Yes/No)	
If ' Yes ', please describe the Applicant's contract details and/or joint appointments (including FTE where relevant).	

Table to be included in Research Body Letter of Support for Postdoctoral Researcher applicant

Applicant Eligibility Criteria	Response (to be filled out by research body)
What is the Applicant's job title?	
Does the Applicant have a permanent contract? (Yes/No)	
If ' No ', please provide the Applicant's current contract start and end dates.	
Are you satisfied that the mentor will provide suitable workspace for the applicant? (Yes/No)	
What year did the Applicant obtain their PhD?	
Does the Applicant hold a joint appointment with any other research-performing organisation, or have a non-full time contract position with the host research body? (Yes/No)	
If ' Yes ', please describe the Applicant's contract details and/or joint appointments (including FTE where relevant).	

- A letter of support from the **mentor** outlining the support offered to the applicant and the availability of laboratory space (where relevant) and infrastructure available to the applicant is required.
- A letter of support from **each Collaborator**. Letters from Academic Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. In addition, Academic Collaborators seeking funds through the award must describe how these funds will be utilised. Letters from non-academic collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. Similarly, letters of support from International Academic Collaborators should provide details of any cash and/or in-kind contributions. Letters of support that do not originate from officially listed Collaborators will be removed from the proposal, as will letters from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal.

Letters of support may be **a maximum of two pages**; extraneous pages will be removed from the letter and the proposal. Letters of support may not be included from other bodies and individuals who are not Collaborators. Such letters of support will be removed from the proposal.

Submission of an application through SESAME serves as the Research Body's endorsement of the eligibility of the Applicant as well as approval of the budget requested, the infrastructure to be provided by the Research Body, and furthermore, confirms the validity and accuracy of the details provided in relation to the current, pending and expired grants as detailed in the application.

II.20 Research Body Approval

Submissions may only be made by an authorised representative of the Research Body of the Applicant. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

- The eligibility of the applicants
- That the applicants are, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as employees of their Research Body for the duration of the grant
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables are in line with accepted institutional guidelines
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution, as outlined by the applicant in the research proposal
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources
- That relevant ethical approval has been or will be sought and must be granted prior to the award commencing
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of award
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history (i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application) are valid and accurate



II.21 Applicant Agreement to Terms and Conditions

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants.⁵⁵

II.22 View Proposal Prior to Submission

Before submission, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the proposal and to ensure that the specified word and page limits have been adhered to, and that any required supporting information (e.g., letters of support) are included. The responsibility for verifying that the proposal is ready for submission lies with the Applicant(s) in this regard.

II.23 Proposal Submission

A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Research Office to SFI.

Proposals must be received by SFI no later than **13:00 (Dublin time) on 8 September 2023**.

Please contact the Research Office well in advance in order to obtain registration details for SESAME and to become familiar with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

After the submission deadline, applications will not be accepted by SESAME. Therefore, they will not be reviewed by SFI.

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, the status of a proposal (e.g., where a proposal is pending Research Office approval or is under review at SFI) is displayed in SESAME.

⁵⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/grant-terms-conditions/>

Appendix III Science Policy Research Programme Proposal Checklist

This proposal checklist is provided as a summary guide for applicants. However, please read this entire call document carefully for full details on the SFI Science Policy Research.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST		
SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
Proposal Summary	Title	Up to 30 words
	Duration of Award Requested	12/18/24 months
Applicant details	Complete mandatory SESAME Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Percentage Time Commitment	Insert time commitment
	Narrative CV	Max. 5 pages (use template provided)
	Are you applying as a postdoctoral researcher or established researcher?	Select Postdoctoral Researcher or Established Researcher
	Supervisory Experience (Established researchers only)	Enter details
Collaborator(s) details	Research Funding History (established researchers only)	Enter details
	Name/Contact details etc.	Add contact name, details etc.
	CV for each collaborator (SFI recommends using the 2-page Narrative CV template provided) Letters of support also required (see Appendix II.19)	Upload CVs - max. 2 pages.
Mentor Details (for postdoctoral applicant only)	Name/Contact details etc.	Add contact name, details etc.
	Narrative CV Letter of support also required (see Appendix II.19)	Upload Mentor CV (max. 5 pages) – use template provided on programme webpage
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Technical Abstract	Max. 250 words
	Lay Summary	Max. 150 words
Ethical Issues	Answer questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data)	Select relevant answers
Sex & Gender Dimension in Research	Sex & Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Max. 1000 words
Programme Documents	Research Programme	Max. 5 pages
	References	Max. 2 pages
	Data Management Plan	Max. 2 pages
	Impact Statement	Max. 3 pages
Budget	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table in SESAME



	Upload the budget justification	Max. 2 pages
Infrastructure and Services Provided by Research Body	Description of the infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by Research Body	Max. 1 page
Letter(s) of Support	Collaborators (Academic and industry)	Max. 2 pages
	Host Research Body of the Applicant	Max. 2 pages
	Mentor, if applicable	Max. 2 pages

Viewing the PDF of your application prior to submission allows you to verify content.

There is no system validation on multiple upload file fields as the number of documents required may vary for each application.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.



Appendix IV SFI Science Policy Research Programme Review Process

The review criteria detailed in Section 4 will be applied in the review process. In addition, a weighting and scoring system will be applied.

Score Weighting System:

Review Criteria	Weight
Applicant / Applicant Team	50%
Research Proposal	30%
Impact	20%
Total	100%

Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest half point. SFI reserves the right to reduce the rounding levels, depending on number and quality of applications.

All proposals submitted to the SFI Science Policy Research Programme will be assessed for eligibility, including alignment of the proposal with the topic chosen and proposals meeting the eligibility requirements will be reviewed as outlined below.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by international peer review using the criteria outlined above. The panel of reviewers will exhibit a **broad range of expertise** relevant to the proposals under review. All proposals will be forwarded to a minimum of three distinguished international peer reviewers for written evaluation and rating under the review criteria outlined below.