

## SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

### SFI Research Centres Phase 2 Programme 2021 (BiOrbic, CONFIRM, FutureNeuro, I-Form and VistaMilk)

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## Call for Submission of Proposals

#### Key Dates

Call announcement	<b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2021</b>
Deadline for Abstract submission	<b>8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 13:00h Dublin Local Time</b>
Deadline for submission of proposals	<b>30<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 13:00h Dublin Local Time</b>
Site Reviews	<b>Q2-4 2022</b>
Funding Decision	<b>Q1 2023</b>

#### Terms of Reference

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

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 Acts 1997, 2003 and 2014.

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## 1 Introduction

**The 2021 call for proposals for Research Centre Phase 2 funding is only open to the 5 x 2016 Research Centres (BiOrbic, CONFIRM, FutureNeuro, I-Form and VistaMilk )**

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research. SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The Foundation also promotes and supports the study of, education in, and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and, in particular, to the growth of the economy.

SFI's 2025<sup>1</sup> strategy *Shaping Our Future* aims to position Ireland as a global innovation leader in scientific and engineering research for the advancement of Ireland's economy and society. The Shaping Our Future strategy consists of two core ambitions, Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow. The Delivering Today ambition focuses on developing talent in Ireland, building on Ireland's excellent research base, and maximising the tangible benefits for our economy and society while the Preparing for Tomorrow ambition targets developing a cohesive research ecosystem capable of taking advantage of new and emergent fields. Research Centres play an important role in the Shaping Our Future strategy by driving excellent research, attracting top international talent, and providing economic and societal impact. The SFI Research Centres Programme was launched in 2012 to achieve this objective. Innovation 2020<sup>2</sup>, Ireland's five-year strategy on research and development, science and technology, and the recently launched National Development Plan 2018-2027<sup>3</sup> (Project Ireland 2040), which is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland from 2018 to 2040, commit to further development and scaling of the network of SFI Research Centres.

SFI Research Centres help link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry. to: (1) develop internationally leading research and respond dynamically to emerging opportunities; (2) foster the development of new and existing Ireland-based companies to create innovative products leading to job creation; (3) attract industry that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy; and (4) through the integration of research, education and public engagement, expand educational and career opportunities in, and public understanding of, science and engineering research. The SFI Research Centres aim to exploit opportunities in science, engineering, and technology where the complexity of the research agenda requires the advantages of scope, scale, dynamism, synergy, duration, equipment, and facilities that a Centre can provide. The consolidation of research activities across higher education institutes in SFI Research Centres aims to create a critical mass of internationally leading researchers in strategic areas which become a key

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<sup>1</sup> [SFI Strategy 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Innovation 2020](#)

<sup>3</sup> [National Development Plan 2018-2027 \(Project Ireland 2040\)](#)

attractant to industry, laying the foundation for effective and productive academic and industrial partnerships. Additionally, SFI Research Centres are expected to be excellent, relevant, sustainable, and to serve as international beacons for attracting talent and leveraging non-Exchequer funding with particular emphasis on industry and EU Framework Programmes.

17 SFI Research Centres have been funded to date, including 5 which were established as a result of the 2016 SFI Research Centres call – these are referred to throughout the call document as the 5 x 2016 Research Centres and were each awarded funding for 6-year periods. In this call, they will have the opportunity to apply for a second phase of funding (Phase 2).

SFI Research Centres funded through the Phase 2 programme will be expected to contribute significantly towards achieving SFI's goal, in partnership with its sister agencies and departments, of developing a dynamic research centre ecosystem that can evolve to meet the changing needs of industry and society. As such, Centres funded for a second term are expected to integrate with other SFI- and non-SFI-funded Centres, where appropriate, to maximise capabilities, outputs and industry offerings.

## 2 Programme Details

### 2.1 Programme Remit

The legal remit of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State<sup>4</sup>. SFI funds in the research areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As outlined in Shaping Our Future 2025<sup>1</sup>, the Foundation is committed to continuing its focus on funding excellent science that will deliver strongly on impact, thus realising significant benefits for the Irish economy and Irish society. Innovation 2020<sup>2</sup> is Ireland's five-year strategy on research and development, science and technology. This strategy sets out the roadmap for continuing progress towards the goal of making Ireland a Global Innovation Leader, driving a strong sustainable economy and a better society, underpinned by excellent research that is defined within six designated enterprise themes (ICT; Health and Medical; Food; Energy; Manufacturing and Materials; Services and Business Processes).

Proposals must either be aligned to one of the 14 Refreshed Priority Areas 2018-2023<sup>5</sup> that are positioned within six enterprise themes (ICT, Health and Medical, Food, Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability, Manufacturing and Materials, Services and Business Processes), or to any other area under SFI's legal remit where there is convincing evidence that there will be significant potential for economic and/or societal impact.

### 2.2 Research Centre Programme Objectives

The SFI Research Centres Programme aligns with SFI's overall ambition to create a dynamic research system involving researchers from academia and industry working together and in collaboration with other key stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of supporting economic and societal development in Ireland.

The specific objectives of the Research Centres programme are:

- To achieve, maintain and enhance research excellence and leadership.
- To deliver significant economic and societal impact – research excellence with impact – which will be aligned with areas of strategic opportunity for Ireland, including the 14 National Research Priority areas and including the six broad enterprise themes (ICT, manufacturing & materials, health & medical, food, energy, and services & business processes) outlined in Innovation 2020<sup>2</sup>.
- To increase the level of industrial and commercial investment in R&D activities with existing Ireland-based companies, and furthermore to attract large Foreign Direct Investments in corporate R&D laboratories.
- To spin out new, high-technology start-up companies that have the potential to raise external angel or venture funding.
- To transfer technology, through licences, to Multinational Companies (MNCs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) based in Ireland.

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<sup>4</sup> [About SFI - What-we-do](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Refreshed Priority Areas 2018-2023](#)

- To exchange knowledge, expertise, and know-how to MNCs and SMEs based in Ireland.
- To undertake joint collaborative research projects with industry.<sup>6</sup>
- To inspire the future generation of STEM students and train and educate a cohort of engineers and scientists at MSc/MEng, PhD and post-doctoral level that will take up high-value employment in MNCs and SMEs based in Ireland.
- To attract additional non-exchequer funding through industry sources and external research-funding organisations.
- To engage the general public and equip them with the tools to confidently understand and debate science, technology and engineering research in Ireland.
- To support Ireland’s ambition to be among the most entrepreneurial countries in the world.
- To improve gender balance at all levels of the SFI Research Centres.

### **2.3 Research Centre Phase 2 Programme Expectations**

As the Research Centres move into a second phase of funding (described as Phase 2 throughout the call document), the overall programme objectives will largely remain the same as for the first term of funding. However, it is expected that Phase 2 Centres will move towards a sustainable model leveraging diverse sources of funding.

Additional expectations of the Research Centres Phase 2 programme are:

- To promote engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, such as governmental, charitable and philanthropic stakeholders, to ensure that the research remains relevant and supports a wide range of economic and societal impacts.
- To develop research collaborations with other centres of excellence both nationally and internationally.
- To become more tightly integrated into the operations of the Host Research Bodies as the Centre evolves towards sustainability.
- To provide sustained funding of Centres that can address major research challenges and drive challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives to ensure that the Irish public gains substantial societal and economic benefits from high-risk, high-reward scientific research and innovation.
- To ensure that Education and Public Engagement (EPE) is strategic and embedded within the research culture of the Centre.

There are three key documents which are required as part of the submission process: Progress Report, Proposal for Phase 2 funding and Centre Cost Share Document. The review process will involve a detailed “look back” at the overall progress of the Research Centres from the start date of their award up until the time of submission (30<sup>th</sup> March 2022) against the original objectives in addition to a review of the proposal for continued funding.

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<sup>6</sup> the project must have the characteristics of an ‘effective collaboration’ as set out in paragraph 27 of the European Commission’s Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) (the “Framework”) and satisfy one of the conditions set out in paragraphs 28 and 29 (as appropriate) of the Framework. See also section 2.4 State aid and SFI Grant funding.

## 2.4 State aid and SFI Grant funding

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of SFI's General Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).<sup>7</sup>

Where a proposed programme of research involves a collaboration with an “undertaking”<sup>8</sup> or industry party, the activities **must** comply with the definition 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 Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) (the “Framework”).<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

Recipients of Grant funding under SFI's Research Centres Phase 2 programme are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” and to support this, SFI has developed 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” and the conditions relating to the allocation between the parties of the results and/or intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration.

Applicants are required to complete and return the ICF to SFI on or before the date that the Collaborative Research (or Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement (CRA) has been ‘agreed’, or signed by, the relevant partner(s). For the Research Centres Phase 2 programme, the form should be submitted by the Principal Investigator and uploaded to SESAME, as requested. A download of the ICF and related guidance, inclusive of an FAQ document, can be found on the SFI website.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup>

Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice in advance of applying to SFI for funding, where further clarification is sought.

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<sup>7</sup> [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 \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/ICF-FAQs.pdf>



### 3 Definitions

Lead Applicant	<p>The Lead Applicant is defined as the Scientific and Technical lead for the proposed Research Centre and must be the Research Centre Director on the Research Centre Phase 2 proposal. The Lead Applicant will have overall responsibility for delivery of the objectives of the SFI Research Centre.</p> <p>The Lead Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the award.</p> <p>The Lead Applicant will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The Lead 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.</p> <p><b>The Lead Applicant must be the existing Research Centre Director. If there will be a change in Director, SFI must be informed at least 3 months in advance of the submission deadline.</b></p>
Co-Applicant	<p>A Co-Applicant has a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed investigation. A Co-Applicant would be expected to lead one or more Targeted Projects, or projects within the Platform Research component of the Centre.</p> <p>For the purposes of eligibility, reviewing and monitoring, a Co-Applicant applying for funding under the SFI Research Centres programme will receive equal evaluation to the Lead Applicant and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives. In this documentation, the terms and conditions for ‘applicant’ and ‘Co-Applicant’ are interchangeable. Throughout the document, a Co-Applicant may be referred to as an existing Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) in a Research Centre.</p>
SFI Funded Investigator (FI)	<p>A “SFI Funded Investigator (FI)” is a SFI designated title which recognises the level of input of a researcher to a large scale SFI award such as a SFI Research Centre.</p> <p>A FI is an academic member of staff or independent researcher employed by an eligible Irish Research Body, who is undertaking a management role in a research project within the Research Centre.</p> <p>FIs have responsibility for a research project, budget and personnel within the Research Centre and will serve under the direction of one of the Research Centre Co-Applicants.</p>
Official Collaborator	<p>An official collaborator may be either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an academic member of staff of an Irish or international Research Body or</li> <li>(b) a member of a relevant non-academic institution, such as a Government Agency, who is committed to providing a focused contribution for a specific task(s).</li> </ul> <p>The collaborator will serve under the direction of the Lead Applicant or one of the Co-Applicants, and may or may not receive funding through the award. Official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the Award.</p>

Industry Partner	An industry partner is a company making a financial contribution (through cash or in-kind contribution) to the budget of the Research Centre, as well as an intellectual contribution to the research agenda of the Centre.
Industry Collaborator	An industry collaborator is the lead contact person from an industry partner who represents the Industry Partner in the Research Centre.  Industry Collaborators are not eligible to receive funding through the award.
Applicant Group	An applicant group is defined as the set of Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants that submits a proposal for funding under the Research Centres Phase 2 Programme.
Research Body	An Irish Research Body eligible to apply for funding under SFI research programmes, a list of which can be found here:  <a href="http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/">http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/</a>
Host Research Body	The Research Body of the Lead Applicant
'Research Centre' or 'Centre' or 'RC' or '2016 RCs'	In the context of this call document, 'Research Centre' or 'Centre' or '2016 RC' or 'RC' means one of the five research centres which were established as a result of the 2016 SFI Research Centres call. These are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BiOrbic - Bioeconomy SFI Research Centre</li> <li>2. CONFIRM – SFI Research Centre for Smart Manufacturing</li> <li>3. FutureNeuro - SFI Research Centre for Chronic and Rare Neurological Diseases</li> <li>4. I-FORM - SFI Research Centre for Advanced Manufacturing</li> <li>5. VistaMilk - SFI Research Centre for Agri-Tech and Agri-Food technology</li> </ol>

## 4 Eligibility

### 4.1 General Eligibility

**This call for proposals is only open to the 5 x 2016 Research Centres, namely BiOrbic, CONFIRM, FutureNeuro, I-Form and VistaMilk.**

**SFI will not accept proposals from any other Research group or Research Centre.**

The Phase 2 proposal allows for expansion or consolidation of research areas. However, the proposal must come from the original Research Centre and the proposal title will be “RC name-Phase 2”. If any of the 5 x 2016 Research Centres are considering a name change for rebranding purposes, they should contact SFI at least three months in advance of the submission deadline.

The eligibility criteria set down below must be met by the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, Funded Investigators and Host Research Bodies by the closing date for submissions of the proposal. In addition to the specific eligibility conditions outlined below, the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, Funded Investigators and Host Research Bodies must comply with SFI’s Grant General Terms and Conditions<sup>12</sup>. An overview of eligibility criteria of Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants and Funded Investigators is provided in Table 1, together with guidance on investigator involvement in other Research Centres (what is permitted) – please refer to Sections 4.2-4.4 for eligibility criteria full details and descriptions.

Summary of eligibility criteria*			
Applicant type	Senior Author Publications	PhD Duration	SFI criteria for involvement in other RCs
<b>Lead Applicant (Director)</b>	≥ 10	≥ 8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Not eligible to serve as Director or Co-PI in other RCs</li><li>- Eligible to serve as an FI in other RCs subject to assessment of current workload and commitments</li><li>- Minimum time commitment 40% to RC award</li></ul>
<b>Co-Applicant (Co-PI)</b>	≥ 10	≥ 8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Not eligible to serve as a Director in other RCs</li><li>- Eligible to serve as co-PI in 1 additional RC</li></ul>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/SFI-Board-approved-GTCs-2019.pdf>

			- Eligible to serve as an FI in other Centres subject to assessment of current workload and commitments
<b>Funded Investigator (FI)</b>	≥ 3	≥ 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eligible to serve as Director in 1 additional Centre</li> <li>- Eligible to serve as Co-PI in up to 2 additional Centres but overall time commitment will be assessed</li> </ul>

Table 1. Overview of eligibility criteria of Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants and Funded Investigators

\* See sections 4.2-4.4 for eligibility criteria full details and descriptions

## 4.2 Eligibility criteria of the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants

**It is assumed that the Lead Applicant will be the existing Research Centre Director. If this is not the case, SFI must be informed at least 3 months in advance of the full proposal submission deadline.**

Applicant groups must have one Lead Applicant and a number of Co-Applicants. The appropriate number of Co-Applicants should be defined by the Applicant group. When defining the Co-Applicant group, it should be noted that all Co-Applicants will receive equal evaluation to the Lead Applicant and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives of the proposed Phase 2 Research Centre. SFI expects that the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants (or a sub-group of Co-Applicants) will form the Executive Management Committee of the Research Centre, with administrative responsibility for the performance of the Centre.

Up to date **CVs for all Co-Applicants** will be required as part of the submission process. An overview of the role of each of the existing PIs and any new Co-Applicants will be provided in the Team/Execution and Delivery section of the Phase 2 proposal template. The uploading of CVs will be carried out in SESAME (see Section 8- Submission).

All Lead and Co-Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

### **Employment Status**

Lead and Co-Applicants must be:

- a) Members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), or
- b) A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent 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
- c) Individuals 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.

- d) If an applicant holds a joint appointment please contact [centres@sfi.ie](mailto:centres@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. Any other queries on joint appointments and/or FTE levels must be submitted directly to SFI at [centres@sfi.ie](mailto:centres@sfi.ie) in advance of the call deadline.

### **Mentorship**

- The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants are expected to have proven prior experience, capability and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

### **PhD Duration**

- The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent for at least **8 years** by the full proposal deadline.
- 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.<sup>13</sup>

### **Publication Record**

- The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants must be senior author on at least 10 international peer reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles, are acceptable.
- *Please note that 10 senior author publications is a minimum eligibility criterion, however applicants with higher numbers of publications are likely to be more competitive.*

### **Funding History**

- The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants are required to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent, internationally peer reviewed research grant as a lead investigator or as co-investigator.
- Personal awards such as travel awards, career fellowships (which only include the salary of the PI and not research team costs (i.e., salary for team member(s) & consumables etc.) do not count as independent research grants. Consult the accompanying FAQ document for further details.

### **Other SFI awards**

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<sup>13</sup> Applicants holding an equivalent qualification may be eligible but must seek approval from SFI in advance of submitting a proposal. See [SFI Policy on PhD equivalence](#) for further details.

- A Lead Applicant is only permitted to be named on one submission. An investigator may be a named Co-Applicant on a maximum of two submissions, subject to meeting the requirements outlined Table 1. However, their level of commitment to both Centres needs to be justified.
- Co-Applicants who are currently under evaluation in other SFI programmes, are eligible to apply for funding under this programme.
- Co-PIs of currently funded Research Centres are eligible to apply as a Co-Applicant, Funded Investigator or Official Collaborator, subject to the requirements outlined in Table 1.
- Co-Applicants may be located at a different SFI-eligible Research Body than the Lead Applicant. In this case, the grant will be administered through the Research Body of the Lead Applicant. A Co-Applicant, where applicable, must comply with the same eligibility and evaluation criteria as the Lead Applicant.

**Note:**

**Investigators can serve as Co-Principal Investigator in a maximum of two Research Centres. Approval for an Investigator to engage as a Co-Principal Investigator in two Research Centres, either existing or prospective, will only be granted in exceptional cases and will be evaluated on an on-going basis during the lifetime of the Research Centre.**

**In all cases where Lead or Co-Applicants are already in receipt of significant SFI research funding (e.g. recipients of SFI Research Professorship, PI, IvP or Investigators awards, strand leaders or co-PIs on Strategic Partnerships or Research Centres), the evaluation process will examine the commitment and work load of the Lead/Co-Applicant in determining the suitability of such an arrangement. Such applicants must include strong justification for their role in the applicant group**

#### **4.3 Eligibility criteria for SFI Research Centre Funded Investigators (FIs)**

CVs are not required for FIs, but if the Phase 2 Centre is funded, more detail on new FIs will be requested at a later stage. It is expected that each Research Body will ensure that the FI eligibility criteria are met for all FIs included in the application for Phase 2 funding. FIs must satisfy the eligibility criteria by the closing date for submissions of the proposal as defined in the call document. A high level 'Proposed Funded Investigators' table should be included as part of the application (details in Appendix H of this call document).

All FIs must meet the following criteria:

- FIs must hold a PhD or equivalent for at least 3 years by the submission deadline. FIs must be senior author on 3 internationally peer reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles or other secondary research literature, are acceptable.
- FIs must be a member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body, or a contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the project, who is recognised by the

Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI Research Centre project on which they work. Postdoctoral researchers, research fellows or other non-independent researchers are not eligible to be FIs.

- The FI is expected to have the experience, capability, and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

#### **4.4 Eligibility of Research Body**

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by research grants from SFI. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland and be eligible for SFI funding. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the [SFI website](#).<sup>14</sup> It is expected that Phase 2 funding will be administered by the current Host Research Body of the Research Centre, whereby the Host Research Body is defined as the Research Body of the Lead-Applicant/ Centre Director. If this is not the case, a strong case must be made as part of the Phase 2 proposal (Sections 3 and 4 of proposal template) as to why the Host Research Body of the Centre is going to change.

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<sup>14</sup> Please note that Research Bodies that have been approved specifically for SFI non-research programmes are not eligible to apply for funding under the Research Centres Phase 2 Programme

## 5 Economic and Societal Impact

Government Budget Allocations for Research & Development (GBARD) in 2019 was €802.2m. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research. Given the scale of the investment and the stage of their maturity, the SFI Research Centres are expected to significantly underpin SFI's success in attaining targets set against key performance indicators aligned with economic and societal impact. For the SFI Research Centres Phase 2 Programme, proposals will not only need to demonstrate scientific excellence, but must also clearly articulate the potential for economic and societal impact arising from the Centre. Applicants should be aware that proposals which do not demonstrate the potential to deliver impact, or which have not successfully articulated how this impact can be delivered, will not be funded through this programme, regardless of scientific excellence.

### 5.1 What is meant by Impact?

Impact can be described as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations. SFI classifies the impacts of scientific research according to 8 pillars which are underpinned by 3 thematic areas and these are summarised in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. SFI Impact Classification

Applicants are encouraged to consult [Shaping Our Future 2025](#), [Innovation 2020](#) and the [Project Ireland 2040](#) strategy documents before writing their impact statement. For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the [SFI website](#). A [webinar](#) is also available. Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the Impact sections of the Phase 2 proposal (progress report and proposal).

### 5.2 Measuring and Assessing Impact

Reviewers will be asked to assess the progress on the impact objectives to date (progress report) and the potential impact and the likelihood of the delivery of that impact, as described in the Impact Statement (proposal). The relevant impact review criteria are:

- *The Impact being made by the Research Centre to date.*



- *The potential for the proposed Centre to deliver direct, measurable economic and societal impact.*

### **5.3 Progress against Impact and Impact Statement for Phase 2**

For the Phase 2 proposal submission, applicants must clearly outline **progress against their impact statement submitted as part of their original proposal**. **Section 10 of the Progress Report template** should be used to provide strong examples of impact arising from the Research Centre's activities thus far. Cross reference should be made to specific metrics (outputs) attained during the first 4 years of funding, and surrounding narrative should be provided to add context and associate with different types of impact (or the journey towards).

In **Section 7 of the Phase 2 Proposal template**, a new impact statement should be prepared for the second 6-year term. It is expected that elements of this will be an extension of the original impact statement submitted as part of phase one funding, recognising that impact can be longer term, non-linear and unpredictable. Guidance can be found [here](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/)<sup>15</sup> and should be consulted with. SFI regards clear and convincing impact statements as fundamental components of competitive proposals

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

## 6 Proposal Review Process and Criteria

Applications for Phase 2 funding will be evaluated by rigorous international peer review. The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the Applicants to participate in the peer review process.

The main stages of the Phase 2 Proposal review process are:

1. Postal Review
2. Site Review
3. Oversight Panel Review

For the postal and site reviews, a separate panel of international, scientific experts will be convened for each Research Centre. The panel members will carry out both individual postal reviews of the **Progress Report, the Phase 2 proposal,** and the **Centre Cost Share Document** and will participate in an on-site review of progress and the Phase 2 proposal at the Host Research Body. Typically, each individual review panel will be comprised of 6-8 distinguished scientists, engineers and individuals, some of whom have significant commercialisation and/or translational/applied/education and public engagement (EPE) experience. Expert panel members engaged by SFI are required to abide by the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.<sup>16</sup> Selection of reviewers is at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI. Decisions resulting from the evaluation will be provided to the applicants, including relevant review comments, following the conclusion of the SFI review process. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those individuals involved in the merit review process.

**Conflict of interest rules are applied rigorously and apply to both reviewers and applicants. Reviewers engaged by SFI are required to adhere to SFI's conflict of interest policy and immediately declare to SFI where a conflict of interest exists or arises so that an alternative reviewer may be appointed. International peer reviewers will not provide comments or scores on any application on which they have a conflict of interest.**

**Reviewers must adhere to high standards of integrity during the peer review process. They must not compromise the intellectual property integrity of the application and may not appropriate and use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts or data contained in the applications they review.**

Each review panel member will complete a postal review of the **Progress Report, the proposal for Phase 2 funding** and the **Centre Cost Share Document**.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/Reviewer-Code-of-Conduct\\_March-2017.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/Reviewer-Code-of-Conduct_March-2017.pdf)

The following review criteria will be considered in relation to the **Progress Report**:

- *The performance of the Research Centre management team, investigators, governance and support structures;*
- *The scientific excellence of the research that has been undertaken by the Research Centre to date;*
- *Progress of the Research Centre in meeting or exceeding its non-cost-share related KPI targets;*
- *The impact being made by the Research Centre to date;*
- *The quality of the Education and Public Engagement (EPE) programme of the Research Centre to date.*

The following review criteria will be considered in relation to the **Phase 2 Proposal**:

- *Quality, significance and relevance of the Research Centre management team, investigators, governance and support structures which will lead the Centre into Phase 2;*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields;*
- *The potential for the proposed Centre to deliver direct, measurable economic and societal impact;*
- *The potential for the Centre to stimulate public understanding, interest and involvement in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) through its education and public engagement (EPE) programme.*

The following review criteria will be considered in relation to the **Centre Cost Share Document**:

- *Progress of the Research Centre in meeting its cost-share targets;*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the plans for execution and delivery of the Research Centre Business Plan;*
- *The likelihood of the Centre achieving the Phase 2 cost share targets.*

The postal reviews returned by each panel member will be collated and forwarded to the Lead Applicant and the site review will afford the opportunity for the Lead Applicant (and Co-Applicants) to provide a rebuttal/response to the comments made.

The site review will take place in Q2-Q4 2022 and the individual Site Review Panel will write a combined report which will provide a recommendation with one of three possible outcomes: Fund, Do Not Fund (DNF) or Proceed to an Open Competition. In addition to making a funding recommendation, the site review report provides narrative and scores on the Centre's progress to date their proposal for Phase 2 funding and the Centre's cost share performance and Business Plan, as per the review criteria set out above. The Site Review Panel arrives at their funding recommendation with reference to the following weightings: **40% on Progress, 40% on the Phase 2 proposal and 20% on the Centre Cost Share (Past and Projected future performance).**

An Oversight Panel will be convened to carry out the final stage of the review process to ensure parity of practice across the site review panels and to agree a final ranked list of fundable Research Centres. The Oversight Panel will include 5-7 individuals from large-scale Research Performing Organisations, companies, international funding agencies or similar who were not involved in individual postal/site reviews. The Oversight Panel will rank the “fundable” Research Centres and will have the authority to overturn the recommendation of the Site Review Panel, where warranted.

**Should circumstances arise, SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.**

## **7 Funding**

The Centres may request funding from SFI (direct costs) over a six year period that will commence following the end date of their current award. There is no limit to the amount of funding that can be requested for Phase 2. However, the scale of request will be considered by the review panel as part of their overall assessment, which will include consideration of value for money and with consideration to the Centre's track record to date in securing industry and non-exchequer, non-commercial (NE-NC) funding.

**The Centre Budget for Phase 2 Research Centres is defined as comprising four parts:**

- 1) SFI cash contribution (direct costs)**
- 2) Industry cash contribution**
- 3) Industry in-kind contribution**
- 4) Funding from NE-NC sources (cash only)**

SFI will contribute a maximum of 33% of the Centre Budget of the Research Centre and successful Research Centres will be required to achieve and maintain a minimum 67% of leveraged funding from industry (cash plus in-kind) and NE-NC sources (cash only). As part of the Phase 2 proposal, the Centre must provide a business plan which outlines how the Centre will secure an overall Centre Budget in accordance with the Phase 2 funding model (see Section 7.4 for further details). Failure to maintain the industry and NE-NC cost share as described above on an on-going basis may result in a reduction in or termination of SFI's contribution to the Centre Budget.

SFI expects Research Centres to collaborate with a mixture of large and small companies and Centres are given the flexibility to achieve the relative mix of cash and in-kind contributions in whatever fashion is most appropriate for the Centre, and the industrial areas and industry partners to which it will be most closely aligned.

Where a proposed programme of research involves a collaboration with an industry party, the activities must comply with the definition 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. Please see Section 2.4.

The Centre budget is structured in a number of tiers as outlined in the following sections.

### **7.1 Operations Budget**

The Operations component of the Centre Budget is expected to fund some or all of the non-economic<sup>17</sup> operational running costs of the Research Centre (i.e., and not to be used for collaboration projects). In this regard, use of this budget must be compliant with State aid law, please see section 2.4 above. Such costs may include, but are not necessarily limited to, personnel such as a Centre Manager, EU Grant Manager, Project Manager, Business Development personnel, Administrator, Communications, Education and Public Engagement Manager, IT technical support, as well as travel and related business expenses associated with these roles. Support for a senior position such as a CEO/Executive Director or COO (Chief Operating Officer) can also be requested but it is envisaged that SFI would support only one such role. The Operations component of the Centre Budget is capped at a maximum of **20%** of the SFI and projected industry cash cost share contributions to the Centre Budget.

The Lead-Applicant can request a contribution towards the operation of a governance committee (fees plus travel costs). The Lead-Applicant can also request budget for a Director's discretionary fund. As part of the budget justification, a description of what the discretionary fund will be used for and how it will be allocated, is required. The proposed use of this fund must be in compliance with State aid law; please see section 2.3 above. Such requests must be strongly justified and within the allowable limits of the Operations component of the Centre Budget (total operations component of the budget is capped at a maximum of 20% of the SFI and projected industry cash cost share contributions).

## **7.2 Platform Research**

The Platform Research component of the Centre Budget is expected to fund non-economic core research activities or technologies that are necessary or valuable to the mission of the Research Centre. Use of this budget must be compliant with State aid law. For further guidance see section 2.3 above.. It is anticipated that the results of platform research may be of value to and accessible by some or all industry partners to the Research Centre, on a non-exclusive basis.

The Platform Research budget may fund core equipment or infrastructure that is common across a number of Targeted Projects (Spokes), as well as a core team of research staff, including Postdoctoral Researchers/Fellows and students (Ph.D. and Masters), as are required to develop science and technology in the key areas of the Research Centre.

Please note that the requirement from the Phase 1 2016 Call that '*Centres must cap the Platform Research component of the Centre Budget at a maximum of 30% of the Centre Budget*' is not a requirement for the 2021 Research Centres Phase 2 Call. Applicants may define an appropriate split between Platform Research and Targeted Projects.

## **7.3 Targeted Projects (Spokes)**

Each Research Centre Spoke will contain one or more thematically related Targeted Projects. Each Targeted Project will have at least one, and perhaps a number of industry partners. Industry partners

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<sup>17</sup> See Section 2.1.1 of the Framework.

are expected to make both a material contribution to the Targeted Project (in terms of cash and in-kind contributions described above), as well as an intellectual contribution to the goals, objectives, deliverables and execution of the Targeted Project. Applicants and industry partners are encouraged to review the '*IP Protocol Resource Guide*' document<sup>18</sup> (available on the [SFI website](#)) when considering industry cost share levels. Targeted Projects in Research Centre proposals may be new projects with industry partners with whom the Centre already collaborates, or may be new projects with new industry partners. Targeted projects must comply with the definition of "effective collaboration" as per the Framework and with the conditions in paragraphs 28 and 29 of the Framework (as appropriate) with respect to the use and/or allocation of IPR; see section 2.4 above.

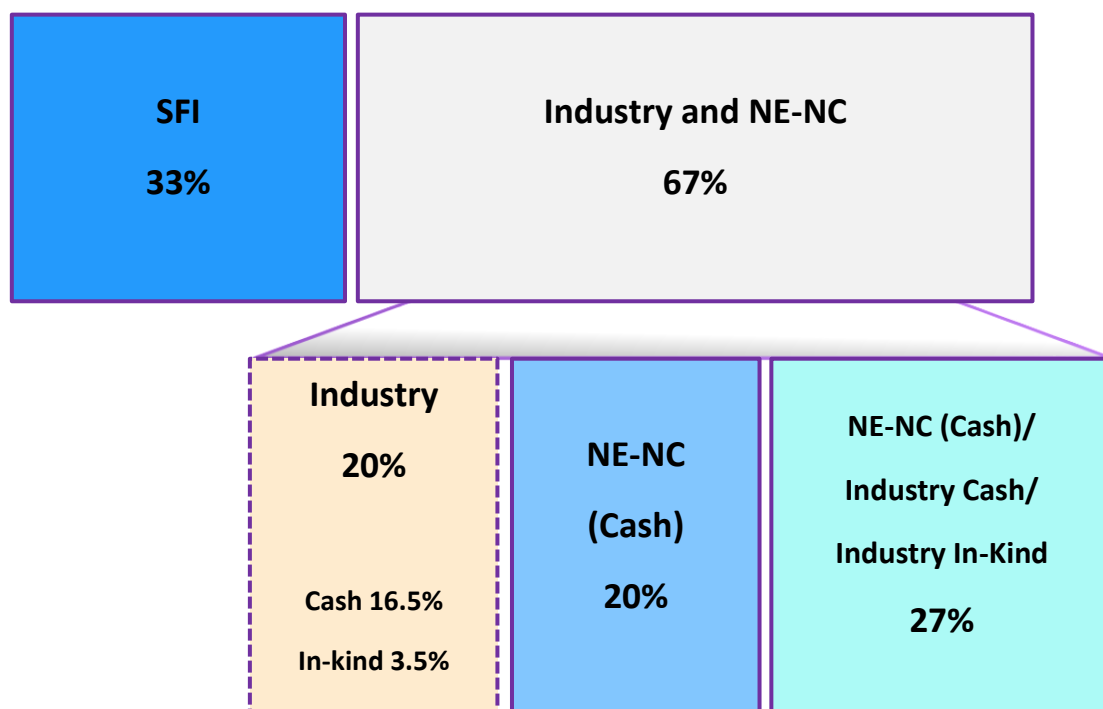
The total budget allocation to the Centre Spokes is flexible and will depend on the funds allocated to other aspects of the Centre Budget, as discussed above. For each Targeted Project, a collaborative research agreement (or Intellectual Property Rights agreement) must be 'agreed' with, or signed, by the relevant partner(s) (Research body, or Bodies and the Industry Partner (s) SFI requires that an Industry Collaboration Form or ICF is completed and returned to SFI for each CRA recorded against the cost share targets for the Research Centre.

#### **7.4 Phase 2 Cost Share Model - Industry funding and funding from NE-NC sources**

Centres funded for a second term will become more sustainable, transitioning from a funding model whereby SFI funds up a maximum of 70% of the total Centre Budget in Phase 1 to a maximum SFI budget of 33% in Phase 2. The Phase 2 model shown in Figure 2 depicts an overall Centre Budget which comprises a 33% contribution (direct costs) from SFI with the remaining 67% coming from both industry (cash plus in-kind) and NE-NC sources (cash only). 20% of the total Centre Budget must come from industry sources and 20% must come from NE-NC sources. The remaining 27% can come from either industry cash, industry in-kind or NE-NC sources (direct costs only). Of the 20% that is required from industry, at least 16.5% of the total Centre Budget must be from industry cash.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/index.xml>



**Figure 2.** Phase 2 - Cost Share model

#### **7.4.1 Industry Cost Share**

The following section details what can be counted towards **industry cost share**.

##### Cash (direct costs) and in-kind from partially funded collaborative research

The majority of Targeted Projects in the Research Centres are partially funded collaborative research projects, where costs are shared by SFI and the industry partner. The cash (direct costs) and in-kind contributions from the industry partner can be counted towards the industry cost share.

In the case of a partially funded Collaborative Research Project, the IP normally resides with the Research Body and the industry partner usually benefits by way of a licence.

##### Cash (direct costs) and in-kind from wholly funded collaborative research

In accordance with the definition of effective collaboration, under the Framework, one or several parties may bear the full costs of the project and thus relieve other parties of its financial risks. If such an agreement is in place and the Research Centre Director is satisfied that the contribution of the project towards the goals of the Research Centre is clearly justified and in accordance with State aid rules, the cash paid (direct costs) and any in-kind contributions made by the industry partner can be counted towards the industry cost share.



As per Section 2.4, the Research Centre is required to demonstrate compliance with the definition of “effective collaboration” and the conditions relating to the allocation/use of research results/IPR, as per the Framework, by completing an ICF for both partially funded collaborative research and wholly funded collaborative research projects.

Further, a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) must still be negotiated and signed by the parties before the research project commences, and the agreement must include a clause describing how the results of the project will be disseminated.

In all cases, the Research Centre Director must be satisfied (or warrants) that any projected cash contributions from each industry partner are free and unencumbered and have not been used to secure a support grant from EI, IDA or any other agency.

A wholly funded Collaborative Research Project should not be confused with a contract research project. A contract research project involves a company paying a Research Performing Organisation (RPO) to deliver a product or service with a definitive outcome. For this kind of project, a profit margin is normally built into the costs, VAT is applicable and there is no requirement for the RPO to disseminate the results of the project. Cash from contract research projects cannot be counted towards the industry cost share. Although SFI recognises that these are important activities in which the Research Centre can engage with industry partners, they are not viewed as Collaborative Research Projects in which the industry partner is making an intellectual contribution, the research results can be disseminated, and new IP can be generated.

#### Membership Scheme

Research Centres may, at their discretion, choose to implement a membership scheme for industry partners engaging with the Centre. It is envisaged that a membership scheme would charge companies to participate in the activities of the Research Centre and contribute towards the running costs of the Research Centre. All funds raised through the membership scheme can be counted towards the industry cost share. The membership scheme must be compliant with State aid law, please see section 2.4 above.

#### Cash Donations

Cash gifts/donations in the form of an unencumbered research grant from a company which are used to support the research activities of the Research Centre can be counted toward the industry cash cost share target.

<p><b>Cash projections presented in the business plan must be provided in direct costs, i.e., must be net of any overhead paid to the Research Body.</b></p>
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#### In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions from both partially and wholly funded Collaborative Research Projects can be counted towards the overall industry cost share.

Industry in-kind contributions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following items:

- The cost of Industry scientists, engineers and technicians' time while assigned to working on Platform Research or Targeted Projects in the Research Centre;
- Student or faculty placements with industry partners;
- Equipment;
- Software;
- Materials;
- Data.

Further details on SFI's policy with respect to industry in-kind contributions may be found on the [SFI website](#).

Industry funding that has already been earmarked against an Irish Exchequer enterprise support (such as supports provided by IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland or the Irish Research Council) or International support programmes may not be counted as a qualifying contribution to the Centre Budget.

Contributions, whether in cash or in kind from Irish Exchequer sources such as other funding agencies, Government Departments or other Agencies of the State cannot be counted as an industry contribution. Likewise, funding from charities, not-for-profit organisations or philanthropic donations, while welcomed and encouraged, cannot be counted as an industry contribution. Such contributions should be accounted for within the NE-NC cost-share component.

#### **7.4.2 Funding from NE-NC sources (direct costs)**

NE-NC funding received from international funding bodies such as EU Framework Programmes, Wellcome trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation can be counted towards the NE-NC cost share. In addition, charitable donations and philanthropic sources which can be used to fund research activities within the Centre can also be included.

#### **7.5 Eligible Costs**

Eligible costs include:

- Contributions to salaries/stipends of research staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme;
- Contributions towards salaries of operations staff (e.g. Executive Director or CEO, Centre Manager, EU Grants Manager, Administration staff);
- Materials and consumables, equipment, travel;
- Access to facilities and services not available to the applicant, including test-bed facilities for technology demonstration;
- SFI-approved access charges;

- Travel fellowships and travel costs associated with hosting senior international researchers in the proposed Research Centre;
- Directly related education and public engagement costs, including a contribution towards an EPE resource;
- Costs associated with the Research Centre Governance Committee (fees plus travel costs);
- A Director's discretionary fund.

Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Contingency or miscellaneous costs;
- Entertainment costs;
- Technology transfer or patent costs;
- Legal Fees;
- Conference & workshop organisation costs;
- Journal subscriptions;
- Relocation expenses.

## **7.6 Overheads**

In addition to the direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect, or overhead, contribution to the host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage (currently 30%) of the “modified” total direct costs (i.e., total direct costs less the cost of equipment) of SFI's contribution. 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, including contributions towards the costs of technology transfer and filing and maintenance of patents.

Indirect costs (overheads) must be used to support non-economic activities, in line with compliance with State aid law (see section 2.4).

SFI will ask Research Bodies to clearly describe how they will support the proposed Phase 2 Research Centre, both as a partner and as a recipient of overhead funding.

## 8 Submission

### 8.1 General

**For the 5 x 2016 Research Centres Phase 2 Programme (2021 Call) full proposal submissions will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.**

The username and password of the Lead Applicant is necessary to log in to SESAME and complete the application form which should appear on the workbench a minimum of 6 weeks in advance of the full proposal submission deadline.

*Please note that access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the research office of the Applicants' host Research Body. Please follow internal organisational process to request this access. If Lead/Co-Applicants are not registered with SESAME, then they will need to register through their respective Research Body before the application can proceed.*

**SFI's grants and awards management system, SESAME**, is accessed using the Internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. 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 using the following Internet address:**

<https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the [SESAME Researcher User Guide](#) for more detailed information

**SESAME enables:**

- Individual researchers to apply online for SFI grants.
- Host Research Bodies to review and authorise all applications.

**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**

### 8.2 ORCID ID

ORCID provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.<sup>19</sup> There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

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<sup>19</sup> <http://orcid.org/>

- 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 Research Centres Phase 2 Proposal, the Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted.**

### 8.3 Application Process

Lead Applicants from each of the 5 x 2016 RCs are invited to submit the following documentation:

- Abstract
- Full proposal

Note that only one application from each of the 5 x 2016 RCs is permitted.

- The abstract should be submitted *via* email to [centres@sfi.ie](mailto:centres@sfi.ie) (see Appendix A for template), by 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 13.00h Dublin local time.
- Full proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the Lead Applicant's research body before the call deadline, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 13.00h Dublin local time.

Applicants are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with the [SESAME Researcher User Guide](#) before they submit their full proposal to SESAME. Applicants should closely follow the instructions provided below.

#### Full proposal submission requirements:

- All text should be in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 12, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams should be in a clearly legible font. Include page numbers. Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only

- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review.**
- Unsolicited appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review.**
- The currency to be used is the **Euro (€)**.

**It is the responsibility of the Lead 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.**

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

**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.**

#### **8.4 Full Proposal Submission**

As part of the application process, the Lead Applicant will be guided to complete a number of fields which are detailed below. They will then be prompted to upload three documents in pdf format:

- **Progress Report** using the template provided in Appendix C
- **Phase 2 Proposal** using the template provided in Appendix G
- **Cost Share Document** using the template provided in Appendix L

Full Proposals must be received by SFI through SESAME no later than **13:00h (Dublin local time) on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022**.

#### **Step 1:**

##### **Acknowledgement of Eligibility Criteria**

Applicants will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the eligibility criteria for the 2021 Research Centres Phase 2 Programme Call. The application cannot proceed until this acknowledgement is confirmed.

#### **Step 2:**

## Full Proposal Information Entry

The Lead-Applicant will be able to edit this information as outlined below:

### 8.4.1 Proposal Summary

**Proposal Title** – This will be the existing name of the Centre \_Phase 2.

After confirming that the Proposal title is correct by selecting “Save Draft” a Proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME. The following additional fields will appear in the SESAME application form.

### Duration of Award Requested

This will be pre-populated as 72 months.

### Primary Priority Area

Select one of [14 Refreshed Priority Areas 2018-2023](#) which best aligns with the RC’s activities.  
(This field replaces ‘NRP area’ field)

### Secondary Priority Area

Select one of [14 Refreshed Priority Areas 2018-2023](#) which best aligns with the RC’s activities.  
(This field replaces ‘NRP area’ field)

### Research Area (Primary)

The Research Area (Primary) area that is currently aligned with the Centre will appear. The applicant will be guided to edit this field, if required.

### Research Area (Secondary)

The Research Area (Secondary) area that is currently aligned with the Centre will appear. The applicant will be guided to edit this field, if required.

### Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)

This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns with SFI’s legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

#### 8.4.2 Lead Applicant Details

**It is assumed that the Lead Applicant will be the existing Research Centre Director. If this is not the case, SFI must be informed at least 3 months in advance of the full proposal submission deadline.**

##### **Lead Applicant - Commitment to Project**

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Lead Applicant, to the proposed research programme, which should represent a substantial time commitment to the overall management of the Research Centre.

##### **Lead Applicant - CV (upload; max. 7 pages)**

A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in Appendix B, must be completed and uploaded. The CV not only provides information about the applicant's education, employment record and research outputs, but also identifies up to five key achievements in research and impact. In addition, the Lead Applicant must provide a statement on current commitments and workload in Section 3 of the CV template. The CV must be uploaded in pdf format.

##### **Lead Applicant - Supervisory Experience**

Provide summary information on supervisory history of the Lead Applicant to date. Indicate the total numbers of graduated MSc and PhD students, the number currently under supervision, and the number of staff currently under supervision.

#### 8.4.3 Co-Applicant Details

The Lead-Applicant must assign all co-Applicants to the proposal using the following procedure:

- In the Co-Applicant section of the application, the Lead-Applicant will be prompted to click the button labelled "Add" adjacent to the 'Add Co-Applicants' text;
- In order to add a Co-Applicant, the SFI PIN number of each Co-Applicant and their last name is required;
- If the Co-Applicant is not registered with SESAME, then they will need to register through their respective Research Body before the application can proceed;
- Once a valid SFI PIN number and Researcher Last Name is entered, click the Retrieve Researcher button and the co-Applicant details will be displayed;
- If the details are correct, then click on the 'Associate Researcher with Application' button;



- The resulting pop-up will confirm that the Researcher has been added and that you must click Save Draft to have the Co-Applicant listed against the application;
- Once a Co-Applicant has been assigned to an application, SESAME will send an email to the Co-Applicant providing them with login instructions.

The Co-Applicant must log in to the application and provide the following information:

#### **Co-Applicant - Percentage Time Commitment**

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicants, to the proposed research programme.

#### **Co-Applicant - Publications to Date**

Provide summary information on the total numbers of publications to date. Values should be entered for the number of publications attributed directly to the Co-Applicant.

#### **Co-Applicant - Supervisory Experience**

Provide summary information on supervisory history of the Co-Applicant to date. Indicate the total numbers of graduated MSc and PhD students, the number currently under supervision, and the number of staff currently under supervision.

#### **Co-Applicant - CV (upload; max. 7 pages)**

A CV for each Co-Applicant, using the template provided in Appendix B, must be completed and uploaded. The CV not only provides information about the Co-Applicant's education, employment record and research outputs, but also identifies up to five key achievements in research and impact. In addition, the Co-Applicant must provide a statement on current commitments and workload in Section 3 of the CV template. The CV must be uploaded in pdf format.

**Note: SESAME does not permit two individuals to concurrently modify an application. The Lead Applicant must log out of the application to allow a Co-Applicant to make modifications, and vice versa. Given the large number of Co-PIs in each Research Centre, it is the responsibility of the Lead-Applicant to ensure that this activity is co-ordinated well in advance of the submission deadline.**

#### **8.4.4 Research Funding History**

The Lead-Applicant and all Co-Applicants must list any prior research funding that has been received since the award of their PhD or equivalent qualification. **Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User**

Guide)<sup>20</sup>. If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has **NO expired, current or pending funding**. Both the Lead and Co-Applicant(s) need to complete this section within SESAME. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant, or the profile of the Co-Applicant, has actually been included in the application. A text box is provided in the SESAME application form to describe (in a maximum of 1,000 words) any scientific overlap that exists between any of the previously funded projects and the research proposed in the Phase 2 application.

#### **8.4.5 Collaborator Details (Funded Investigators and industry/academic collaborators)**

Include organisation (academic/industrial), name, contact information and other required details of Funded Investigators, official or industry collaborator(s), if any. Please indicate whether collaborators are based in academia or industry. Note that the “Mentor” role is not applicable for this call. Once all collaborator information has been entered, the collaborator may then be associated with the proposal by the Lead Applicant.

Please note that CVs for Funded Investigators and academic/industry collaborators are not required as part of this Call. CVs for FIs will be requested at a later stage if the application is successful to ensure that the FI eligibility criteria are met.

**SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an Industry Partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., a decision-making role in company, such as being the CEO or a major shareholder in the 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 the Foundation and Research Body and is managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in the document: Ireland’s National IP Protocol 2019 – A Framework For Successful Research Commercialisation. The Research Body Letters of Support should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.**

#### **8.4.6 Main Body of Proposal**

##### **Keywords (max. 15)**

List a number of descriptors (max. 15) that best characterise the subject of the proposal.

##### **Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)**

Provide a succinct and accurate scientific summary of the proposed work. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Scientific Abstract.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/SFI\\_SESAME\\_User\\_Guide\\_-\\_Researcher-v\\_6\\_13\\_\(Arcadia\).pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/SFI_SESAME_User_Guide_-_Researcher-v_6_13_(Arcadia).pdf)

### **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)**

Provide a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work in lay (i.e. non-technical) language. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Lay Abstract.

#### **8.4.7 Ethical Issues**

All Applicants are required to answer questions related to ethical issues and will be guided to answer two questions initially:

1. *“Does your research involve the use of animals?”*
2. *“Does your research involve human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data?”*

If the answer is Yes for either of these questions, you will be prompted to answer further questions to further define the nature of the research. please refer to the [SFI Guidance document for applicants on ethical and scientific issues](#).

#### **Ethical Issues:**

**All applicants**, in particular those expecting to carry out research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data, are required to complete an Ethical Issues Table, which forms part of the application. The Research Programme section must include a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal- and/or human-based studies.

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

#### **Clinical Trials:**

Requests for early-stage regulated clinical trials (Phase I or combined Phase I/II) and investigations may be submitted through the SFI Research Centres Programme.

Please refer to the SFI Guidance document for applicants on ethical and scientific issues.

#### **8.4.8 Sex/Gender Dimension in Research**

In this section, consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions and then select yes/no:

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?

#### **8.4.9 SESAME Budget Information**

The budget section on SESAME is to be completed. Further guidance can be found in this section on SESAME.

Note that a detailed budget justification and budget tables are to be included as part of the Phase 2 Proposal PDF (using template provided). For further details on the funding and budget justification please see section 0 of the proposal template.

#### **8.4.10 Programme Documents - Uploading of the Progress Report, Phase 2 Proposal and Cost-share Document**

The following three documents, which are detailed in Appendix C, G and L must be completed and **uploaded as three separate pdf files using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form.**

1. **Progress Report using the template provided in Appendix C**
2. **Phase 2 Proposal using the template provided in Appendix G**
3. **Cost Share Document using the template provided in Appendix L**

**Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only.**  
**The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.**  
**Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.**  
**The currency to be used is the Euro (€).**

#### **8.4.11 Excluded reviewers**

Up to three individuals may be excluded from acting as reviewers of proposals for reasons of competition. In addition, for planning purposes, such information will be requested outside of SESAME as part of the abstract submission step. The excluded reviewers (maximum of 3 individuals) named in the abstract must match those included in the full proposal submission on SESAME.

#### **8.4.12 View Proposal Prior to Submission**

The PDF of the Full Proposal submission (through SESAME) should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. The responsibility lies with the Lead Applicant in this regard. The Lead Applicant and Host Research Body 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 under review at SFI) is displayed in SESAME.

#### **8.4.13 Declaration**

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs).<sup>21</sup> Applications that fail to comply with SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions, or with requirements outlined in this call document, will not be eligible and will be withdrawn without review.

#### **8.4.14 Research Body Approval**

It will be noted that Research Body submission of a proposal under this call represents their approval of an application and agreement with SFI's Grant Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs).<sup>21</sup> Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative.

In particular, the Research Body is approving:

Eligibility of the Lead Applicant, each Co-Applicant and Funded Investigator;

- That the Lead Applicant, each Co-Applicant and Funded Investigator are recognised as an employee of one of the collaborating Research Bodies for the duration of the award;
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables are in line with accepted institutional and national guidelines;
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the applicant group in the research proposal;
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources;
- That relevant legal and ethical approval has been sought and will 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.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/SFI-Discover-Programme-Grant-TCs-October-2018-Final.pdf>

#### 8.4.15 Deadlines

The abstract should be submitted *via* email to [centres@sfi.ie](mailto:centres@sfi.ie), by 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 13.00h Dublin local time.

Full proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the Lead Applicant's research body before the call deadline.

**Full proposals must be received by SFI no later than 13:00h (Dublin time) on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

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

## 9 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*

Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study (see Section 5.6) must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,<sup>22</sup> as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

### *Animal Usage*

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**,<sup>23</sup> and should also ensure that their studies align with the HRPAs 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**

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf)

**Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**<sup>24</sup>; that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**,<sup>25</sup> in addition to their respective institutional policies and procedures for handling research misconduct allegations.

Good research practices are based on fundamental principles of research integrity. As such, applicants should consider how they will support good research practices in training, supervision and mentoring, methodology, data practices and management, collaborative working and publication / dissemination, and outline these supports in a short statement (max. 1 page, submitted as part of their Phase 2 proposal (Appendix J). Applicants should describe the plan for ensuring that all members of the research team are aware of relevant policies and mechanisms to support integrity (e.g., authorship policy; formal training and informal discussion of integrity issues among the research team, process for reporting concerns), and explain specific measures intended to foster a positive research environment.

#### *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 described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)**,<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> 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)**<sup>28</sup>, applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

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<sup>24</sup><https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics\\_code-of-conduct\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national\\_framework\\_for\\_doctoral\\_education\\_0.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Gender-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf>

In the SFI Strategy 2025 Shaping Our Future,<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

### *Appeals Process*

The Appeals Process Policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.<sup>31</sup>

### *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 **2014 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01)**<sup>32</sup> and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.<sup>33</sup> 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**,<sup>34</sup> and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare**

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025-Shaping-Our-Future.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

<sup>32</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>



**of Children 2017.**<sup>35</sup> 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 Regulation**<sup>36</sup> is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.<sup>37</sup> 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 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**.<sup>38</sup>

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

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<sup>35</sup> [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.eugdpr.org/>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

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**.<sup>39</sup>

### *Open access*

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S<sup>40</sup> and those of the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment<sup>41</sup> 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 at least one of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), the researcher(s) should adhere to **SFI's Open Access policy**.<sup>42</sup> SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and its Annual Stocktake of 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.<sup>43</sup> Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI.<sup>44</sup> 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 are reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.**

## **10 Progress Reporting Requirements**

The Research Centre must continue to follow the reporting requirements set out by SFI<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://norf-ireland.net/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFIs-Open-Access-Policy-2019-Updated.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-centres-award-management/>

### **10.1 State aid**

SFI will monitor and verify, on an on-going basis and as required, the host and partner Research Bodies' compliance with State aid law. Upon request, the Research Body will provide the Foundation with all documentation reasonably required to satisfy SFI that the Research Body complies with State aid law. The Research Body is responsible for retaining such documentary records as are required to demonstrate compliance with State aid law, and ensure, where relevant, that all necessary third-party consents are procured to allow for such documentation to be disclosed to SFI.

## **11 Further Information**

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on the call webpage of the SFI website. For all additional queries please contact: [centres@sfi.ie](mailto:centres@sfi.ie)

## Appendix A: SFI Research Centres Phase 2 Abstract Sheet

<b>PROGRAMME NAME:</b>	<b>CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ABSTRACTS</b>
SFI Research Centres Phase 2 Programme 2021	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021, 13:00h Dublin, local time
<b>TITLE OF PROPOSAL</b>	
Research Centre Acronym_Phase 2 ( <i>e.g. FutureNeuro_Phase 2</i> )	
<b>NAME OF HOST INSTITUTION</b>	<b>FULL NAME OF LEAD APPLICANT</b>
<b>CO-APPLICANTS (CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE)</b>	
<i>Include name and Research Body for each Co-Applicant</i>	
<b>FUNDED INVESTIGATORS (CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE)</b>	
<i>Include name and Research Body for each Funded Investigator</i>	

**EXCLUDED REVIEWERS** (UP TO THREE INDIVIDUALS MAY BE EXCLUDED FROM ACTING AS REVIEWERS)

*Include name and institution*

**SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT** (MAXIMUM 2 PAGES, MINIMUM FONT SIZE 12, TIMES NEW ROMAN OR SIMILAR)

*Overview of vision and research themes/strands for the Phase 2 proposal.*

**Note:**

- There is no page limit on the abstract cover sheet sections except for the scientific abstract section. The total length will depend on numbers of co-applicants and FIs, current and prospective.
- There is a **2-page limit on the scientific abstract section**

## Appendix B: Applicant CV Template

Max. 7 pages

To be used for the Research Centres Phase 2 2021 call.

Please note that the applicant's full research funding track record and supervisory details should be uploaded via SESAME and should **not** be included in this CV.

Minimum Font Size 12, Times New Roman or similar.

Three sections should be completed for each Lead/Co-Applicant CV:

1. Applicant Details (max. 3 pages)
2. Publication Details (max. 3 pages)
3. Time Commitment Statement and Conflict of Interest Declaration (max. 1 page)

### SECTION 1 – Applicant Details (max. 3 pages)

#### NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

#### CAREER PROFILE (Education and Employment)

*Applicants may provide details of any career breaks (for example, due to parental leave or long-term absence through illness) or periods of part-time work.*

#### INNOVATION/COMMERCIALISATION ACTIVITY

*Include details on, for example, relevant industry collaborations, qualified invention disclosures, pending and granted patents, licences and spin-out activities.*

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (Research and Impact)

*Give details of **up to five** achievements that have provided significant impact or which have greatly influenced any field in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Any type of achievement may be included in this section, and applicants are encouraged to elaborate on the various ways in which they have influenced researchers and their disciplines, or demonstrated significant economic and/or*

*societal impact(s). For each example, provide an outline of the stated achievement, what **specific role was played by the applicant**, and how the field and, where relevant, the wider community and society have benefitted or have been influenced as a result. References to published material may be added as required.*

## **SECTION 2 – Publication Details (max. 3 pages)**

### **SELECTED SENIOR-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS**

*Detail **10 peer-reviewed, senior-author** (that is, first, joint-first or last author) **primary-research publications, which will confirm, where relevant, that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for publications for this programme.** Refer to the appropriate section of this call document for details on senior-authorship requirements. Preprints may only be included where a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is quoted. **Note that publications where the applicant claims joint-first authorship will only be accepted as senior-author publications where the article clearly verifies this.***

### **OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

*Applicants should list any other publications (where they are a senior author or otherwise) that they wish to be considered in the assessment of this application. Applicants should ensure that their primary research outputs are prioritised; however, reviews, essays and any other secondary-research articles relevant to this application may also be listed.*

## **SECTION 3 – Time Commitment Statement and Conflict of Interest (Col) declaration (max 1 page)**

- **Max 1 page;** include as Section 3 of the CV
- Where Lead or Co-Applicants are already in receipt of significant SFI research funding (e.g. recipients of SFI Research Professorship, PI, IvP or Investigators awards, strand leaders or co-PIs on Strategic Partnerships or Research Centres), the evaluation process will examine the commitment and work load of the Lead/Co-Applicant in determining the suitability of such an arrangement. The time commitment and workload statement of the CV should describe such commitments and include strong justification for their role in the applicant group.
- Where relevant, a declaration on potential conflicts of interest with respect to industry collaborators/partners named in the Research Centres should be provided. See Section 9, SFI Policies and Positions of the call document for further details.



**Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**

**The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.**

**Appendices other than those indicated or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.**

**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 Lead Applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded**

## Appendix C: Progress Report Template

There are three key documents which are required as part of the submission process for consideration of Phase 2 funding for the 5 x 2016 Research Centres; a Progress Report and a Proposal for Phase 2 funding and a Centre Cost Share document. The template for the **Progress Report** is provided in this Appendix C.

The Progress Report document must be uploaded to SESAME using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form, see Section 8 of the Call Document.

The Progress Report must capture the outputs, achievements and impact of the Centre from the start date of the award to the date of report submission.

The overriding purpose of the Progress Report is to enable the RCs to provide sufficient information for an international review panel to determine whether the Centre has delivered on undertakings submitted as part of its original proposal and furthermore, if it has surpassed original objectives set including targets set against defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), leveraged funding etc. Moreover, the review panel will determine whether the Centre has attained excellence across the Scientific and Impact pillars. All panel members will provide an independent written postal review, inclusive of scoring, of the Centre's progress, in advance of the site review. The postal reviews of the Progress Report will be circulated to the Centre Directors and the Centre will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the postal reviews during the site visit.

The Progress Report is structured such that the Centre provides information under each of the headings in the template below, all of which must be addressed. Specified page limits must not be exceeded.

### General instructions

The front cover must meet SFI Research Centre branding guidelines, with the SFI branding lock-up above the title, and the host and partner institutions lock-up below. The full SFI Research Centre name should be used on the front cover, and the reporting period should be clearly indicated.

Section page limits are not target lengths, and it is up to Centres to decide how long is appropriate, up to the limit indicated. Duplication of information across section should be kept to a minimum. Section 2 (Research Centre Overview) may contain some information that is also presented in other sections, but this should be in the form of a high-level summary. Likewise, APPENDIX E - Responses to Recommendations, can contain information duplicated in other sections.

All text should be in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 12 and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams should be in a clearly legible font. Include page numbers.

The document must be saved in a format that preserves links from the table of contents to individual sections in the report.

Within the Progress Report document include:

- The completed Progress Report template (sections 1-8)
- Additional documents/appendices:
  - Appendix D – Clinical Trials and Clinical Investigations, where relevant
  - Appendix E – Responses to Recommendations
  - Appendix F – Research Activities

**Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**

**The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.**

**Appendices other than those indicated or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.**

**The currency to be used is the Euro (€).**

Progress Report Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. SFI RESEARCH CENTRE OVERVIEW

3. SFI RESEARCH CENTRE TEAM

4. RESEARCH

5. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6. KPI PERFORMANCE

7. CENTRE IMPACT

8. COMMUNICATIONS

APPENDIX D – Clinical Trials and Clinical Investigations

APPENDIX E – Responses to Recommendations

APPENDIX F – Research Activities

## **1. Executive Summary (max. 2 pages)**

The executive summary should be readable by a broad scientific but non-specialist audience.

### **1.1 Strategy**

Comment on how the Centre is performing against its strategy, and whether any changes have been made to the Centres strategy during the reporting period. This should include new opportunities identified by the Centre.

### **1.2 Accomplishments**

Summarise significant accomplishments during the reporting period. These can be from any area of the Centre's activities, including research advances, industry engagement, EPE achievements, notable hires, etc.

### **1.3 Challenges**

Discuss key challenges or setbacks the Centre has experienced during the reporting period, and how the Centre has responded to these challenges. Also note if any future risks have been identified, and summarise the actions being taken to manage or address these risks.

## **2. SFI Research Centre Overview (max. 10 pages)**

The title of this section can be replaced with '[Centre acronym] Overview'.

### **2.1 Strategy**

Discuss the Centre's long-term direction.

Include alignment with current national priorities and industry sectors.

Present a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the Centre.

### **2.2 Research Centre Structure**

Use a schematic to illustrate how the Research Centre is structured across research strands/themes, platform research, targeted projects, Spokes, C2C, etc.

### **2.3 Team**

Use an organigramme to present a high-level view of the Centre's team. This should clearly map to the Research Centre structure included in section 2.2 and detail the co-PIs that lead research strands/themes.

### **2.4 Budget**

Provide high level figures on the Centre's SFI budget, as well as industry and non-exchequer non-commercial funding received by the Centre. The full SFI budget for the duration of the Centre should be displayed, whereas for the industry and non-exchequer non-commercial budgets the amounts received to-date should be shown. The industry figures provided should be combined figures for cash and in-kind.

Specify the budgets allocated to both the research strands/themes illustrated in section 2.2 (show Spokes and C2Cs separately) and the Centre's partner Research Bodies, in two separate graphs using the template provided in the link below. If a portion of the SFI budget has not been committed to themes/Research Bodies and is being held in reserve, show this as a separate category on the graphs.

Use the Excel template, located on the [SFI Phase 2 Call site](#), to generate the budget tables and plots (save the template locally before adding Centre data, and then insert the resulting graphs and tables into Annual/Progress Report).

### **2.5 International benchmarking**

Benchmark the Centre against other, similar research entities around the world.

Ideally, benchmarking should aim to cover many of the same outputs and KPIs reported by SFI Research Centres, but benchmarking can include other factors that are deemed to be relevant comparators, such as personnel and budget.

Refer to any plans to address areas where the Centre does not perform highly internationally.

## **2.6 Collaboration with other research groups and Centres**

Discuss active collaborations with other research groups and Centres, such as those that arose through EU-funded collaborative awards, C2C awards and Spokes. Detail any efforts to collaborate with other SFI Research Centres and highlight prominent collaborations established during the reporting period.

### **3. SFI Research Centre Team (max. 10 pages)**

The title of this section can be replaced with '[Centre acronym] Team'.

#### **3.1 Team overview**

Provide brief bio-sketches of the Centre's team, including Director(s), co-PIs, FIs, and Operations team members. Each bio-sketch should provide a synopsis of what the team member brings to the Centre in terms of expertise and experience, and also include their current role and responsibilities. Divide up PIs/FIs by research theme.

Detail any changes made to the Research Centre team during the reporting period and describe the impact that such changes have had on the Centre.

#### **3.2 Governance and Advisory committees**

Detail the composition of the governance and advisory committee structures of the Centre.

Highlight changes in composition that occurred during the reporting period.

#### **3.3 Talent development and recruitment**

Describe the Centre's approach to talent development among its staff and researchers, and any significant activities that have taken place during the reporting period.

Comment on recruitment, with reference to any delays that have occurred as well as future plans.

#### **3.4 Gender equality**

Describe and explain the breakdown of gender representation within the SFI Research Centre, with breakdowns for different levels within the Centre (Director and co-lead Applicants, Funded Investigators, postdoctoral researchers and students). Describe any action undertaken to redress gender under-representation within the Centre, particularly at senior levels. Describe other supports for gender equality initiatives.

#### **3.5 Spread of efforts across institutions**

Discuss the extent to which different institutional partners are engaged in Centre activities, and efforts made by Centre leadership to involve a wide research community across Ireland.

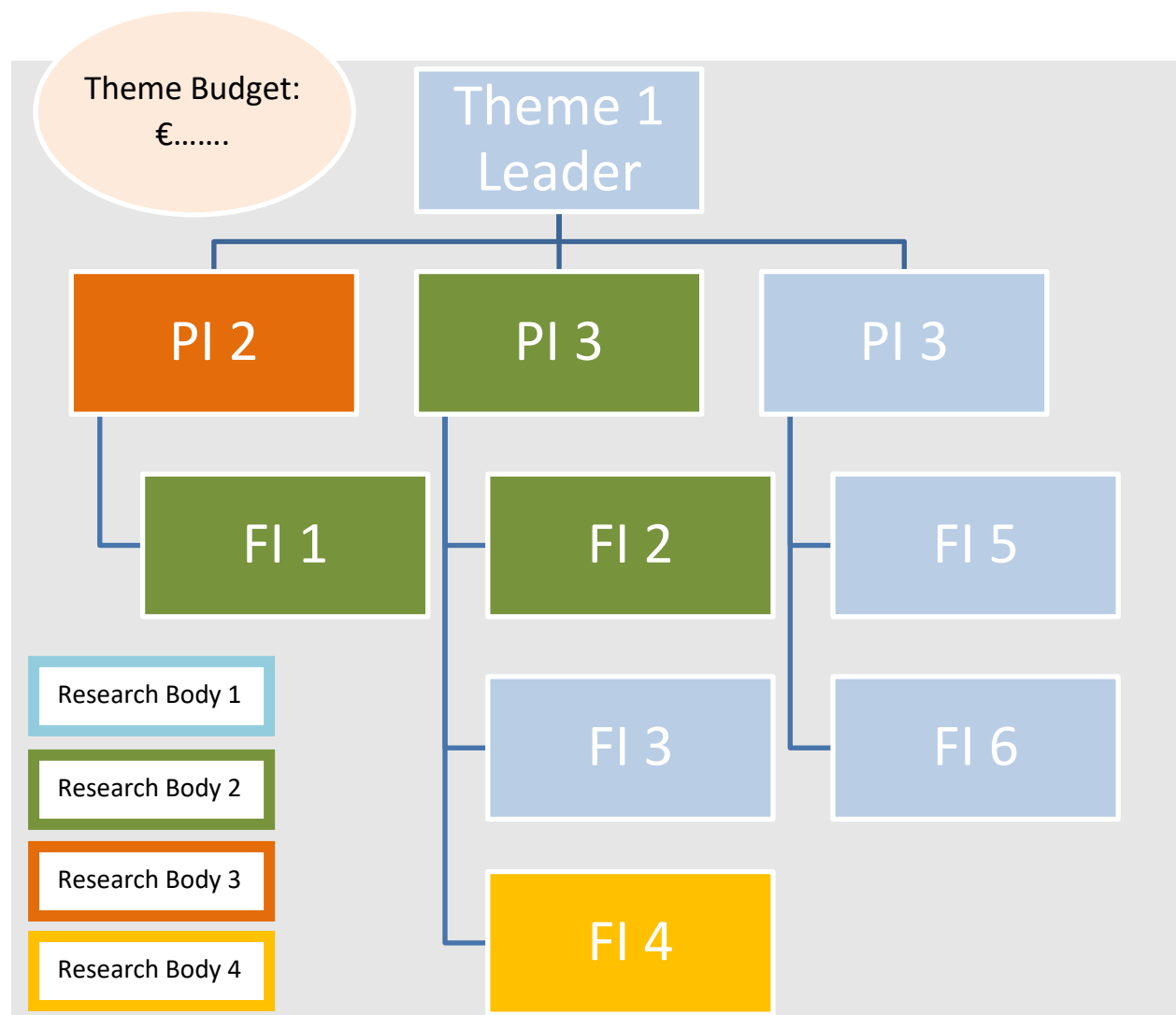
#### 4. Research (max. 10 pages)

Please note that detailed updates on research projects should not be entered in this section, but instead should be entered in APPENDIX F - Research Activities (see below).

##### 4.1 Research team organigramme

Provide a more detailed organisational chart than that shown in section 2.3 that visualises the co-PIs leading research themes, and the co-PIs and FIs that work under them. The overall budget assigned to the theme should be included in the chart, and the host/partner institution of each co-PI/FI should be visible.

A simplified example of the detailed organigramme is shown below. Centres are free to use a style that suits the Centre best, once the requested information – research theme, PIs/FIs with Research Bodies, and hierarchical structure – is clearly shown. The organigramme should be broken into separate themes/domains and/or displayed in landscape orientation if it is too large to be conveniently displayed on a standard A4 sheet.





## **4.2 Changes to the Centre's research structure**

Discuss any significant changes to the research structure during the reporting period.

## **4.3 Notable breakthroughs and publications**

Describe the most important breakthroughs that the Centre has made during the reporting period, clearly outlining what the breakthrough is, why it is important, how it has been translated and who has or will benefit from it. These descriptions should be understandable by non-experts. The number of breakthroughs presented here can be decided by each Centre.

Highlight the Centre's ten most significant publications during the reporting period, include surrounding narrative that clearly explains, in non-scientific language, why these papers are important. These publications can include publications linked to the breakthroughs above, or can be in addition.

Explicitly reference where breakthroughs or publications have arisen from Spoke or C2C awards.

## **4.4 Good research practices**

Describe how the Centre promotes good research practices. Reference specific actions, including data management and training.

## **5 Education and Public Engagement** (max. 10 pages)

### **5.1 EPE strategy**

Give an overview of the Centre's EPE plan, and progress to date against the EPE operational plan. Highlight and explain any deviations from this plan.

### **5.2 EPE budget**

Present the EPE non-staff budget during the reporting period, separated into SFI (please include the exact source of SFI funding e.g. operations or platform budget), industry or NE-NC sources. Please comment on the budget, and its sources.

Include one or more graphs/images to display the budget.

Provide a summary of where this budget was spent. Include a table/graph/image if this aids the discussion.

### **5.3 EPE activities**

Describe the Centre's key EPE activities, using the outline below. The number of activities chosen is up to Centres, but major activities listed in the EPE plans during the reporting period should be a focus.

#### **Activity Title**

#### **Vision and objectives:**

Include the target groups, why these groups were chosen, and if they include underrepresented groups.

#### **Inputs:**

How many Centre staff members participated? What other inputs were required (consumables, equipment etc)? Specify the expenditure for this activity. Did industry partners contribute staff time/resources? Highlight any industry cash/other in-kind contributions received.

#### **Outputs:**

Outline the type of events/activities delivered. How many participants were directly engaged? Include a brief description of any challenges encountered, the causes and how they were

overcome. Highlight any recommendations to help prevent similar challenges in future projects/activities.

### **Outcomes and evaluation:**

Outline the outcomes expected or achieved. Explain how you evaluated the activity – include methodology, findings and dissemination. Indicate whether objectives and expected outcomes were met/exceeded/not met, and why. Indicate where outcomes of an activity influenced other activities, in particular the research programme.

### **5.4 Additional activities completed during the reporting period**

These are any EPE activities other than the key activities outlined above.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Numbers engaged</b>	<b>Frequency of engagement</b>

## 6. Non-cost share KPI performance (max. 10 pages)

This section should begin with table of the Centre's most recently validated non cost share KPI results against targets for the reporting period and cumulatively to date.

Discuss the Centre's performance against each of the KPI targets for the reporting period and cumulatively to date. Please note, this is with the exception of KPIs for industry cost share and non-exchequer/non-commercial funding which will be discussed in the Cost Share document. The KPIs to be discussed here are:

- Journal Publications
- Conference Publications
- # MSc/MEng Graduates
- # PhD Graduates
- # Trainee departures with industry as first destination
- % Trainee departures with industry as first destination
- # participations in major EU initiatives
- # coordinations in major EU initiatives
- # ERC awards granted
- # spin out companies formed
- # EI commercialisation awards
- # licence agreements
- % of team participating in EPE activities

The centre is requested to present the most recently validated KPIs so that this report matches the information provided to the review panel prior to the site review. However, subsequent discussion of each KPI in this section should include information on activity that is more recent than the validated KPIs. This can include a projection of how the recent outputs will affect the Centre's progress against KPIs.

Example: A Centre's validated KPIs indicate 0 spinouts against a target of 1, but a spinout has been formed in the period since the validated KPIs. The validated KPI table will show 0, but the spinout should be included in discussion, and in commentary of how KPIs will be/are being achieved.

Discussion should also include the challenges and setbacks that have been encountered, and the Centre's strategy for achieving the KPI targets.

## **7. Centre impact (max. 5 pages)**

Before completing this section, please consult with SFI's information and guidance on reporting on the impact arising from its funding, which can be found on the SFI website under [Research Impact](#).

Discuss the impact arising from the Centre's activities during the reporting period. Include individual case studies where the Centre has used its knowledge and research ideas to create impact, or to progress along a pathway to impact. Impacts can be at an economic, societal, international engagement, policy and public service, health and wellbeing, environment professional services, or human capacity level, either in Ireland or internationally.

Explicitly reference where impacts (or potential impacts) have arisen from Spoke or C2C awards.

Reference should be made to the impact statement submitted as part of the original proposal.

## **8. Communications (max. 10 pages)**

### **a. SFI Research Centre communications plan**

Discuss how the Centre has used strategic communications to support its goals and to promote itself as a world leading SFI Research Centre during the previous year.

### **b. Communications activities**

Provide an overview of national and international communications/marketing actions undertaken by the Centre, broken into different sections including:

- engagement with key stakeholders to promote the work of the Centre (media, industry, government, etc.),
- marketing/branding/advertising materials produced to promote the Centre,
- online activities, including social media platforms,
- media coverage over the reporting period.

Discuss communications challenges or setbacks that were encountered during the reporting period.

### **c. Communications case studies**

Please provide 3-5 case studies highlighting the Centre's top achievements. These can be highlights from research outputs, EPE, or other Centre activities.

These case studies should present short summaries of:

- challenge/background,
- action and engagement,
- impact,
- next steps (if relevant).

### **d. SFI Research Centre branding**

Outline the actions taken to implement SFI Research Centre branding, as detailed in the agreed IUA-SFI guidelines.

Please indicate any outstanding actions relating to the updating of branding and give an estimated completion date for these.

### **e. Evaluation**

Explain how you have evaluated communications activities and share any key statistics.

**f. Future communications plan**

Please provide an overview of key plans for the next year

## Appendix D: Clinical Trials and Clinical Investigations (no page limit)

[illegible]



## **Appendix E: Responses to Recommendations (max. 20 pages)**

This section should be devoted to setting out how the Centre has responded to the recommendations provided by a previous review panel. Recommendations should be dealt with separately, in clearly marked sections.

## **Appendix F: Research Activities (Max. 120 pages, plus 10 additional pages per Spoke and C2C award)**

### **Format guidance**

**Please note that this appendix should have its own table of contents that links to each project.** Projects should be grouped by research theme to enable easy navigation. If desired, this appendix can begin with the illustration of the Centre's structure (section 1.2).

For each Centre project include a completed 'Section A – Project overview'. In the case of a Progress Report (prior to a site review), 'Section B – Detail' should be included. For an Annual Report (i.e., in a year with no site review) only 'Section A' should be completed for each project. Section B should not be completed.

Only projects that were active during the reporting period should be reported on. Length and level of detail may vary significantly between projects.

Projects should be separated with a page break.

### **How to group activities into Centre projects**

For the purposes of this appendix, a Centre 'project' is a grouping of research efforts into a coherent Centre platform or targeted project. Centres should not list each PhD/postdoc project as a separate Centre project with its own section. Instead, each project should have one or more PIs/FIs, and a number of postdocs and/or PhDs. Individually these researchers may be working on their own thesis/papers, but for the purposes of presenting Centre activities in a succinct and coherent manner they should be grouped together as working towards a joint project goal. Centres should consult with their SFI Scientific Programme Manager for advice on project groupings, if required.

Each Spoke and C2C award associated with the Centre must be included as a distinct project, clearly labelled as being to the relevant award.

For multi-Centre Spoke awards, each SFI Research Centre involved in the award should report on the Spoke in their respective Annual/Progress Reports, with reporting concentrating on the Centre in question's activity and progress in the Spoke.

### **Section A – Project overview**

Project title	Name of the platform project/targeted project/Spoke/C2C, etc.
Research theme/strand	
PIs	Provide the name and affiliation of each researcher.
FIs	
Postdoctoral researchers	
PhDs	
Industry partners	
Budget	Overall budget figure for this project, broken into SFI, industry cash/in-kind and NE-NC, as relevant.
Technology readiness level	
Project start date – end date	
Key publications	Key publications resulting from this project during the reporting period.
Other key outputs and impacts	Licences, patents, or other notable outputs or impacts during the reporting period.
Project status	Indicate if the project status is ‘Green’, ‘Orange’ or ‘Red’, based on internal assessments of progress against the workplan. Provide a very short reason for Orange or Red status.

## **Section B – Project detail**

This section should only be included in a Progress Report, and not in an Annual Report.

### **Goals and strategy**

State the overarching objectives and approach of the project.

Note, for awards such as Centre-to-Centre partnerships and Spokes this section should include an introductory overview of the award, how it aligns with and is integrated into the Centre, and how it fits within the overall strategy of the Centre.

In the case of multi-Centre Spokes, this overview should make clear to external readers how the Spoke operates across the Centres involved, how the award has enabled existing Centres to link together and how such linkage has enabled the research programme to be delivered. It should also explain the Centre's specific involvement in the Spoke that is being discussed in this report.

### **Summary of progress to date**

Short summary of the overall progress made on this project. Comment on whether this work is ahead, on track, or behind schedule at this point. Is the budget expenditure on track, if not why?

### **Progress in the reporting period**

Scientific overview of activities within this project. You may include images. Please include discussion of the contribution of any industry partners during the reporting period.

For Centre-to-Centre partnerships, please make clear which work was carried out by which Centre.

This is the main section for the discussion of research work undertaken, and it should be significantly larger than the other sections for this project.

### **Challenges and risks**

Comment on any significant issues that have arisen during the reporting period, whether these have impacted on budget/deadlines. How has the Centre worked to reduce the impact of any setbacks?

## **Future direction**

Short description of the planned direction of future work on this project.

## Appendix G: Phase 2 Proposal Template

The template for the Phase 2 Proposal is provided in this Appendix G.

The Phase 2 Proposal document must be uploaded to SESAME using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form, see Section 8 of the Call Document.

**All text should be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 12, 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.**

The Phase 2 Proposal will be made available to the review panel. Each panel member will provide an independent written postal review, inclusive of scoring, of the proposal in advance of the site review.

The postal reviews of the Phase 2 Proposal will be circulated to the Centre Directors. Each Centre will be afforded the opportunity to respond to these postal reviews during the site visits.

The Phase 2 Proposal template is structured to provide information under a number of headings, all of which must be addressed. The page limits of each section must not be exceeded.

**Within the Proposal document include the following:**

- **The completed proposal template (sections 1-11)**

**Additional documents/appendices:**

- **Investigator details - tables (templates in Appendix H)**
- **Budget tables (templates in Appendix I)**
- **Good Research Practice statement (template in Appendix J)**
- **Data Management Plan (template in Appendix K)**
- **Research Body Letters of Support (guidance in section 11 of proposal template)**

**Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only.**

**The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.  
Appendices other than those indicated or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.**

**The currency to be used is the Euro (€).**

## **1. Phase 2 Proposal Executive Summary (max. 5 pages)**

Provide a summary overview of the proposal, including key aspects of the team composition, the research programme and the proposed economic and societal impact; a summarised budget must also be included. This summary should capture the pertinent aspects of the proposal, inclusive of the Centre's vision for Phase 2, and how the Centre plans to evolve with respect to the current state of the art. Key problems and challenges in the research area should be considered, along with of the limits of current practice and of the relevant seminal and recent work in this space.

## **2. Strategy (max. 5 pages)**

This section of the Phase 2 Proposal must clearly describe the long-term strategic direction, mission and vision of the Centre and should include the following:

- Describe how the Centre will engage in collaborative research with industry
- Describe how the Centre is building capacity and expertise in leveraging funding from national and international sources.
- Describe how the Centre will actively collaborate with other National Centres and leverage opportunities that can only be realised through collaboration.



### **3. SFI Research Centre Team (max. 10 pages)**

The Progress Report, which must be submitted in parallel with the Phase 2 Proposal and Cost-share document, includes a section in which the Centre must provide a description of the leadership team, i.e. names and responsibilities and a brief bio-sketch of the Centre's management team including the Director, Deputy Director(s), Co-PIs, FIs, senior managers, IP managers, etc. The Phase 2 Proposal must concentrate on changes or expansion of the team required to meet the future objectives of the Centre.

This section of the proposal must address the following:

- An outline of the proposed leadership plan for Phase 2 of the Research Centre.
- A description of and justification for any changes which will be made to the leadership team.
- Description of a succession plan for the Director, and for other key management positions and Co-PIs.
- Plans to add new Co-PIs and/or FIs to the Centre plus a description of the impact that the new PI/FI will have on the operations or research activities of the Centre.
- An outline of plans to expand the pool of PIs, for example through the SFI Research Professorship and Future Research Leaders programmes. This should include a description of the impact that the new PI/FI will have on the operations or research activities of the Centre.
- To improve the gender balance under the SFI Research Centres programme, include specific objectives related to gender equality perspectives, especially with a view to recruitment, with reference to the targets set out in SFI's Gender Strategy.

Note that a statement on current workloads/time commitments should be provided by the Lead- and each Co-Applicant in section 3 of the CV template (Appendix B).

Note in Appendix H, there is a template for Funded Investigator details which should be completed and included as an appendix to the proposal. A high-level summary table on the applicant group and gender breakdown should also be included in this appendix using the table format provided.

#### **Governance and Management**

The Phase 2 Proposal must provide an overview of how the governance structure will be changed or optimised during the second phase of funding, to meet and support the ambitions of the Centre.

Within this section, the anticipated composition of the Governance Committee should be described and how it will evolve in Phase 2 to oversee the strategy of the Centre.

The success of the Research Centres programme is dependent on the partnership between Science Foundation Ireland, the Research Centre and the host and participating Research Bodies. The Research Centres Partnership Agreement (RCPA) defines the partnership between Science Foundation Ireland, the SFI Research Centres and the host Research Bodies, detailing the roles,

responsibilities and expectations of SFI, the Research Centres, their Governance Chairs, and the Research Bodies.

## 4. Research Programme (max. 40 pages exclusive of references)

The Phase 2 Proposal must provide detail on the future research direction as the Centre moves into its second phase. **Note: Any change in research direction from Phase 1 must be highlighted and justified within this section, and explanations provided on research areas that are no longer being pursued and why.**

**In this section the following must be included:**

- An outline, at a high-level, of the key research objectives of the proposed research programme, identifying the critical novel discoveries/inventions/innovations that are to be sought by the Centre and why they are important.
- A detailed description of the Centre's Research Programme, with reference to the proposed Platform Research component of the Centre and each of the proposed Targeted Projects and how they will comply with the definition of "effective collaboration" and the conditions relating to the use and/or allocation of research results/IPR in accordance the Framework (see Section 2.4 above). The specific aims, objectives, milestones and deliverables of each should be described clearly and concisely. SFI acknowledges that the aims, objectives and milestones of each Targeted Projects may not be known. If they are not known, please provide a high-level overview of the type of Targeted Project that will form the basis of your business plan.
- Convincing evidence as to why the proposed research is relevant, timely and novel.
- **A project plan**, identifying any dependencies between the Platform Research and Targeted Projects, or the Targeted Projects with each other.

Within **the project plan** include the following details:

- Provide a summary of the **objectives** of the proposed research.
- Describe the **milestones and deliverables** for each project along with delivery dates and key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure progress.
- Describe the role of specific **PIs** and their teams with responsibility for delivering the project plan in the proposal, including the role of PIs towards delivering each milestone.
- Include an assessment of **risks** associated with the delivery of each Targeted Project and explain measures to mitigate and manage these risks. (SFI acknowledges that this may not be possible at the project level given the fact that Targeted Projects may not yet be defined. However, based on the Centre's experience to date, a high-level risk management plan must be provided).

**Note:** The project plan should be written in a way that facilitates evaluation by the postal and panel reviewers, and with due consideration to on-going annual assessment by SFI.

- Describe a few exemplar projects (e.g. one example project for each research theme) so that the quality of the research proposed can be further assessed by the review panel.

*Note: A Good Research Practice statement (max 1 page) and Data Management Plan (max 2 pages) are to be submitted as an appendix to the proposal document. See Appendices J and K for templates/guidance.*

### **References relating to the research programme (no page limit)**

Provide a full list of all references. The reference list should include the following details: author(s), title of article, name of publication, date of publication, and other appropriate details (such as volume, pages).

## **5. Education and Public Engagement (max. 5 pages)**

There is an expectation that the strategic approach to EPE in Phase 2 continues to evolve, including the continuing development of logic models for activities. In this section, articulate how the existing EPE strategy and plan will develop and be informed from Phase 1 and expanded to support a greater engagement of non-specialist audiences with the work within the Centre. It might include:

- A logic model for the EPE Phase 2 programme, informed by learning and experiences from Phase 1.
- The vision for EPE in the Centre including aims, target audiences and impacts.
- Reference to the growth in public engagement experience of the team.
- How EPE will be monitored and evaluated, including success indicators.
- Details on host Research Body support for the EPE programme.

### **Team**

Consideration should be given to adequately resourcing the Research Centre's EPE Programme in the context of resourcing the overall operations team. It is likely that an EPE programme of scale will require a full EPE Manager role, as opposed to a combined role dealing with the areas of EPE and Communications.

### **Budget**

The budget allocated to the EPE programme should be discrete and clearly identifiable and should fully support the full programme identified here.

### **Note:**

In the budget breakdown the pay and non-pay costs for EPE should be clearly identified.

Note that the EPE role(s) should be included in the Operations Team cap but the non-pay costs can be allocated from research strand budgets or other sources (industry partners' CSR etc). The sources should be clearly indicated as coming from SFI (please include the exact source of SFI funding e.g. operations or platform budget), industry or NE-NC sources.

## **6. KPIs (max. 5 pages)**

For SFI Research Centres awarded Phase 2 funding, a set of KPIs different to those used in Phase 1 will be used over the 6-year duration of the award. The 6 KPIs to be considered in Phase 2 are as follows:

- # Active Spin Outs
- % Trainee Departure from Academia
- # Stand-Alone ERCs
- % EPE Participation
- % Gender Balance
- Field-Weighted Citation Index

Narrative should be provided on how the Centre would deliver against ambitious KPI targets in Phase 2.

Please note that targets for the Phase 2 KPIs will be set as part of a KPI setting process for Centres that are approved for a further 6 years of funding.

## **7. Impact Statement (max. 15 pages)**

In this section of the proposal, a new impact statement should be prepared for the second 6-year term which clearly articulates the potential impact of the Centre over the longer term. It is expected that aspects of this new statement will be an extension of the original impact statement and associated roadmap submitted as part of the original application for Research Centre funding, recognising that impact can be longer term, non-linear and unpredictable. Guidance can be found [here](#) and should be consulted with whilst preparing this statement. SFI has observed that impact statements which are clearly articulated and present a convincing case are key components of competitive proposals.

The impact statement should be as specific as possible and should provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate plans, milestones, and deliverables associated with delivering the potential impact may also be included. Plans to utilise appropriate SFI and other funding sources to assist with achieving impact should be included if relevant. However, considering that impact is a key review criterion, applicants are advised to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous, and realistic impact case with appropriate emphasis and an objective view on how long it may require for the potential impact(s) to be fully realised.

The impact statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language. It should be as specific and comprehensive as possible, and it should describe potential economic and societal impacts by answering the following overarching questions:

- Who will benefit from this research? (academic partner(s), industry partner(s), public, policy makers, other stakeholders)?
- What plans will you put in place to increase the chances of economic and societal impacts from the proposed research?
- When will there be a benefit from this research? (i.e., over what timeframe might the expected benefits of the proposed research programme be realised)
- What is the competitive “edge” of the proposed Research Centre? (e.g. novelty, innovation, ability to create synergistic opportunities, ability to become world leading)
- How will stakeholders benefit from this research?
- Where will the benefit of this research be realised? (e.g., Ireland, Europe, market sectors)

When describing the potential economic impact arising during the entire funding period, cross reference should be made to the business and commercialisation plans.

The Centre should also consider and describe how a culture of entrepreneurship will be developed and supported within the Centre and how researchers will be encouraged, incentivised and rewarded for entrepreneurial activities, and how these activities in turn can underpin a variety of

different impact indicators. Entrepreneurship is recognised as a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation. The **National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship**<sup>46</sup> in Ireland published in 2014, sets out a number of strategic objectives to support Ireland's ambition to be among the most entrepreneurial countries in the world. SFI Research Centres can play a significant role in this ambition.

Additionally, the impact statement should describe the training and education activities proposed for the Centre. This should include both the training of students directly funded through the Centre (e.g., taught MSc and PhD courses) as well as the wider training and education activities of the centre in the HEI and industry/commercial sectors.

Applicants are encouraged to consult [Shaping Our Future, Innovation 2020](#) and the [Project Ireland 2040](#) strategy documents, in addition to the Small Advanced Economies Initiative - "[Broadening the Scope of Impact](#)" document before writing their impact statement.

For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the [SFI website](#). A [webinar](#) is also available. Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the Impact sections of the Phase 2 proposal (progress report and proposal).

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<sup>46</sup> <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/National-Policy-Statement-on-Entrepreneurship-in-Ireland-2014.html>



## **8. Communications (max. 5 pages)**

A description of how the existing Communications plan will be expanded to build the profile of the Research Centre as a world leader should be provided in this section.

## **9. Support from the Host Research Bodies (max. 5 pages)**

As the Centres become more sustainable, the expectation is that they will become more integrated into the operations of the host and partner Research Bodies.

For the purposes of the proposal, please provide the following:

- Describe any additional infrastructures, facilities space and / or services that will need to be provided by the host Research Body;
- Describe any additional support services that will be provided, for example IP/technology transfer services, HR, contracts and legal supports, by the Research Body;
- Describe how the overhead income will support the operation, sustainability and impact of the Centre;
- Describe how the host Research Body will continue to support the Centre Director;
- Describe the reporting structure which has been / will be put in place within the Research Body.
- Describe how the Research Body plans to support the Centre in redressing gender imbalance during Phase 2. This can include reference to initiatives described in applications for Athena SWAN accreditation.

When preparing this section, consideration should be given to the RCPA (described in Section 3).

In addition, a Letter of Support must be included from the Lead Applicant's Research Body (Host Research Body) and from the Research Body of the Co-Applicants (Co-PIs) and FIs (see Section 11 - Letters of Support).

## 10. SFI Budget Request and Justification (max. 10 pages\*)

*\*page limit of 10 pages excludes the budget tables which should be included as an appendix to the proposal document using the budget table templates provided in Appendix I.*

There is no cap on the budget levels which can be requested. However, the scale of request will be considered by the review panel as part of their overall assessment, which will include consideration of value for money.

Applicants must follow [SFI's Grant Budget Policy](#). Budgets should be prepared on a project year basis (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 etc.) at the application stage and should cover a period of 72 months (six years).

A high-level budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Research Centre must be provided in the table formats shown in Appendix I. **These tables should be included as an appendix to the proposal** document to provide the following:

- A budget for the requested SFI contribution (direct costs) to the Research Centre budget separated into staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- A budget for the SFI contribution (direct costs) to the Research Centre Operations, Platform Research and Targeted projects.
- Projected (high-level) industry financial contributions to the Centre, both cash (direct costs) and in-kind (e.g. staff, equipment, other).
- A high-level breakdown of the projected cash contributions (direct costs) from NE-NC sources.

### **The following budget justification must be provided:**

A high-level overview of the research and operational staff required to run the Centre is required. SFI acknowledges that, as Targeted Projects are not yet defined, it is difficult to say exactly how many research staff are required. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, a description of the types of researchers required and their salary level should be possible. If the Centre is funded for Phase 2, a more detailed review of the budget will follow. Increases in the total amount requested will not be permitted following the funding decision, but a detailed budget allocation across years and categories will be requested.

- Outline the required expertise for each requested researcher and justify the researcher's role in the research project. This must be provided for core research staff working on Platform Research Projects, it does not have to be provided for researchers working on Targeted Projects. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, an estimate of the numbers of researchers required and their combined expertise should be possible.

- Include the salary scale (as per the SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale) for each team member. Clear and explicit justification is required for any request for an experienced post-doctoral researcher, i.e. one who will be appointed higher than Level 2A, Point 1 of the SFI team member budgeting scales. This must be provided for core research staff working on Platform Research Projects, it does not have to be provided for researchers working on Targeted Projects. However, based on experience gained through the first four years of operation, an estimate of the numbers of researchers required and their salary levels should be possible.
- Justification should also be provided for requested equipment, consumables and travel.
- Where contributions to salary for administrative support roles, inclusive of the Operations Team, are requested, clear rationale and justification must be provided, and reference must be made to the relevant role description, HR recruitment procedure and local Research Body salary scale. This information must be detailed in the budget justification. SFI will not contribute to the funding of any permanent core staff (e.g., funded by the HEA block grant). The following details also apply in cases where SFI contributions to Administrative Support salary are being considered:
  - A description of the qualifications required for an individual to be hired, together with the expected roles and responsibilities of the post must be provided.
  - Requests for non-research posts must be aligned to the relevant point on the Research Body scale.
  - Appropriately detailed justification must be provided for senior administrative posts attracting substantial salaries.
  - The Research Body must make provision for an open and transparent recruitment process.
- Access charges may be sought for use of infrastructure where SFI pre-approved access charge plans are in place or for use of other shared facilities or national test-beds, which are required as part of the proposed research. The requested access charges should be specified in the budget and justified in the budget justification section. The scientific rationale for undertaking such experiments should be outlined in the research description. Note: SFI funding may not be used to fund access to facilities, where access by the research community has already been provided for by alternate Exchequer funding.
- If funding is sought for use of overseas equipment/services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for not carrying out this activity in Ireland must be provided.

**Note: In the original Research Centre proposal submission, Letters of Support from each industry partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Research Centre and their cash and in-kind contributions, were required. These are not required for the Phase 2 proposal. Instead 'projected' industry cost share must be provided, together with projected cost-share from NE-NC sources.**

## 11. Letters of Support

**A Letter of Support from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant, each Co-Applicant and each Funded Investigator must be provided.**

Each letter must include the following:

- The names of the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s), and/or Funded Investigator(s) from their Research Body who are listed on the application.
- An endorsement of the eligibility of the Lead/Co-Applicants and FIs from their Research Body.
- A description of how the overhead income will support the operation, sustainability and impact of the Centre.
- A description of the infrastructures, facilities space and / or services that will need to be provided by the Research Body.
- A description of any additional support services that will be provided, for example IP/technology transfer services, HR, contracts and legal supports, by the Research Body.
- A description of the reporting structure which has been / will be put in place within the Research Body.
- Plans to redress gender imbalance in the Centre during Phase 2. This can include reference to initiatives described in applications for Athena SWAN accreditation.
- A brief description of the institutional policies regarding management of conflicts of interests in industry partners.
- Reference should be made to the RCPA – see section 3 of the proposal template for further details.
- In addition, the host Research Body Letter of Support should describe what services and supports will be made available to the proposed Research Centre Director.

## Appendix H: Investigator Details

### A) Provide a summary table of #s PIs and FIs (Phase 1 and Phase 2)

	# PIs (total)	# FIs (total)
Phase 1		
Phase 2		

### B) Provide a summary table with FI details (current and prospective)

CVs are not required for FIs, but a high level 'Proposed Funded Investigators' table should be included as part of the application

#### Summary table with FI details (current and prospective)

Name	Involved in Phase 1 as PI/FI (Y/N)*	Research Body	Position	Year of PhD	# senior author publications	ORCID ID link	# PhDs	# Masters students	Funding History (1 example per FI which demonstrates eligibility)

\*If N (i.e. if a FI is not currently a FI in the RC) – please provide the following information:

- Research Body
- Position
- Year of PhD
- Number of senior author publications (original research articles only, peer reviewed)
- Number of PhD students graduated to-date
- Number of Masters students (research only) graduated to-date

- Funding history (provide details of 1 example of eligible funding). Please include grant ID where relevant
- FI eligibility criteria outlined in Section 4.3 of the call document

## Appendix I: Budget Tables

Budget figures in each table should be presented in euro (€)

Applicants must follow [SFI's Grant Budget Policy](#). Budgets should be prepared on a project year basis (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 etc.) at the application stage and should cover a period of 72 months (six years).

A high-level budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Research Centre must be provided in the table formats shown in below. These tables should be included as an appendix to the proposal document to provide the following:

### Requested SFI Contribution – budget summary

- Provide a summary breakdown of the requested SFI contribution (direct costs) to the Research Centre budget separated into staff, equipment, materials and travel.

REQUESTED SFI CONTRIBUTION: RESEARCH CENTRE BUDGET							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Staff							-
Equipment							-
Materials							-
Travel							-
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Requested SFI Contribution – budget summary for Operations, Platform and Spokes

- Provide a budget summary of the requested SFI contribution (direct costs) for the Centre Operations, Platform Research and each Targeted Project in the Research Centre. **SFI reserves the right to request more detailed budgets for the items listed below.**

REQUESTED SFI CONTRIBUTION: OPERATIONS, PLATFORM, SPOKES BUDGET							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Operations							-
Platform							-
Targeted Project 1							-



Targeted Project 2							-
Targeted Project 3							-
Targeted Project 4							-
Targeted Project 5							-
Targeted Project 6							-
Targeted Project 7							-
Targeted Project 8							-
Targeted Project 9							-
Targeted Project 10							-
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Total Centre Budget Summary

- Provide a summary of the total Centre Budget inclusive of the following:
  - Requested SFI contribution (direct costs)
  - Projected (high-level) industry financial contributions to the Centre, both cash (direct costs) and in-kind (e.g. staff, equipment, other)
  - A high-level breakdown of the projected cash contributions (direct costs) from non-exchequer, non-commercial sources

TOTAL CENTRE BUDGET SUMMARY							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Requested SFI Contribution							
Industry Cash Contribution							-
Industry In-Kind Contribution							-
Contribution from Non-Exchequer, Non-Commercial sources							-
<b>Total Centre Budget</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## **Appendix J: Good Research Practice Statement**

**Max. 1 page**

Please submit a Good Research Practice Statement (max. 1 page) as part of your Phase 2 Proposal. This should be included as an appendix to the proposal document.

Good research practices are founded on the fundamental principles of research integrity. As such, applicants should consider how they will support good research practices in their centre through training, supervision and mentoring, research protocols, data practices and management (cross reference can be made to the Data Management Plan), collaborative working and publication/dissemination, and outline these supports in a short statement (max. 1 page) as part of their Phase 2 proposal.

Please consult with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland<sup>47</sup> and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>48</sup> when preparing this statement.

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics\\_code-of-conduct\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf)

## Appendix K: Data Management Plan

Max. 2 pages

Please provide a Data Management Plan (max. 2 pages) as part of your Phase 2 proposal with consideration to the guidance below. This plan should be included as an appendix to the proposal document.

### Core requirements for research data management

Good data management is fundamental to all stages of the research process and a plan to support it is best established at the outset.

Good data management is a key component in ensuring that data is accessible and reusable; it supports high quality research and safeguards good research practices.

Ultimately, good data management supports the long-term preservation of data.

The following is a non-exhaustive list to consider when preparing your Data Management Plan (DMP). These points have been adapted from **Science Europe working guidelines**.<sup>49</sup>

1. Data description and collection/ reuse of existing data
2. Documentation and data quality
3. Storage and back-up
4. Ethics and legal compliance, codes of conducts
5. Data sharing and long-term preservation

When preparing your DMP, you may not necessarily have to consider each of the above topics in detail. Furthermore, it may be helpful to refer to relevant policies made available by your Research Body or to domain specific protocols broadly accepted by researchers in their field/community.

Finally, you may wish to consult with the **FAIR**<sup>50</sup> principles of data management.

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<sup>49</sup> [http://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SE\\_Guidance\\_Document\\_RDMPs.pdf](http://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SE_Guidance_Document_RDMPs.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

## Appendix L: Cost Share Document

The template for the Cost Share Document is provided in this Appendix L.

The Cost Share document must be uploaded to SESAME using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form, see Section 8 of the Call Document.

**All text should be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 12, 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.**

The Cost Share Document will be made available to the review panel. Each panel member will provide an independent written postal review, inclusive of scoring, of the Cost Share Document in advance of the site review.

The postal reviews of the Cost Share Document will be circulated to the Centre Directors. Each Centre will be afforded the opportunity to respond to these postal reviews during the site visits.

The Cost Share Document template is structured to provide information under a number of headings, all of which must be addressed. The page limits of each section must not be exceeded.

**Within the Cost Share Document include the following:**

- **Funding Diversification in Phase 1**
- **Proposed Business Plan**
- **Industry Partner Engagement**

## **1. Funding Diversification in Phase 1 (max. 10 pages)**

This section should begin with a table of the Centre's validated industry cost share and non-exchequer non-commercial results against targets for the reporting period and cumulatively to date.

Information should be provided for the Centre's overall performance, as well as for each Spoke award held by the Centre.

As with Section 6 of the Progress Report, KPI performance, this section should include information on activity that is more recent than the validated results.

### **1.1 Commercial strategy and industry cost share**

Describe the Centre's commercial strategy and discuss the Centre's performance against its industry cost share targets for the reporting period and cumulatively to date. Highlight any significant successes, setbacks and challenges during the reporting period, and comment on any changes to the Centre's commercial strategy.

Discussion should be provided on the Centre's overall performance, as well as on each Spoke award (i.e. status of Spoke CRAs) held by the Centre.

### **1.2 Non-exchequer non-commercial funding**

Describe the Centre's strategy to leverage non-exchequer non-commercial funding, taking into account the following aspects:

- Collaborations in European funding programmes, including partner type (SMEs, MNCs, SFI Research Centres and non-national research centres)
- Influencing activities relevant to non-exchequer non-commercial funding that the Centre has been involved in during the reporting period, and the strategy for the coming year or longer-term (for instance, participation/membership of High-Level Groups, publication of white papers, liaison with NCPs/European contacts in the field, etc.)
- Identified Horizon 2020 funding opportunities, including high-level plans for significant multi-partner proposals for the coming year.

Discuss the Centre's performance against relevant KPI targets, and cost share targets for Phase 2 Centres. Highlight any significant successes, setbacks and challenges during the reporting period and comment on any changes to the Centre's non-exchequer non-commercial strategy.

### **1.3 Additional exchequer funding**

Discuss other exchequer funding that the Centre has secured and detail the contribution that this funding has made to Centre activities and the delivery of the Centre's strategy.

## 2. Proposed Business Plan (max. 25 pages)

This business plan section is divided into two parts:

2.1 Cost share (Industry and NE-NC funding)

2.2 Commercialisation

### 2.1 Cost-share

As part of the Phase 2 proposal, the Centre must provide a business plan which outlines how the Centre will secure an overall Centre budget which combines a maximum **SFI contribution of 33% and the remaining 67% of leveraged funding from industry (cash plus in-kind) and NE-NC sources (cash only)**. Of this 67%, a minimum 20% of funding must come from industry and a minimum 20% of funding from NE-NC sources. The remaining 27% can come from industry (cash or in-kind) or NE-NC sources. **There is a minimum requirement of 16.5% of industry cash funding.**

The cost share model for Phase 2 funding has been described in detail in Section 7.4 of the call document.

**The cost share section of the business plan must describe plans to scale towards the cost share model outlined in Section 7.4 by the end of the second phase of funding.** The plan should include details of the strategy for targeting significant new industry partnerships, re-engagement and upscaling of existing partnerships, the strategy for major wins in Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and other international sources of funding, including charity and philanthropic sources. Projects must comply with the definition of “effective collaboration” as per the Framework and with the conditions in paragraphs 28 and 29 of the Framework (as appropriate) with respect to the use and/or allocation of IPR; see section 2.4 above.

#### 2.1.1 Industry cost-share

For details on industry funding which can be counted towards industry cost share, see Section 7.4.1 of the call document.

The following must be addressed/provided within the business plan (industry cost-share section):

- Describe the strategy which will be adopted to achieve the cost share and how that strategy has evolved from Phase 1.
- Described how the projected cost share will be achieved.
- How will activities such as acquisition of new partner companies and projects, licensing of IP, development of spin-outs, etc. be enabled and what resources will be required to do so?

- Describe the key performance indicators and targets related to the execution of the business development plan.
- Provide an overview of plans to achieve industry cost share, cash and in-kind.
  - A risk analysis of the business plan towards meeting the required cost-share.

### **2.1.2 Non-exchequer, non-commercial funding**

This section of the business plan must enable the review panel to assess the plans and ultimate success of the Centre in achieving its cost share funding requirements from NE-NC sources for Phase 2. NE-NC funding includes cash amounts (direct costs) received from:

- EU Framework programming
- Other international funding bodies such as Wellcome Trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Charitable donations
- Philanthropic sources

Applicants are invited to consider, but are not limited to, the following within the NE-NC funding section of the business plan:

- EU Framework programme funding
  - Influencing future European funding programmes.
  - Plans to coordinate multi-national collaborative research projects.
  - Plans to ensure high participation rates of PI/FIs.
  - Training/mentoring of staff for European funding proposals.
  - Plans for engagement with industry to help secure European funding.
- Other international funding bodies
  - Describe the Centre's strategic approach to leveraging funding from NE-NC sources outside of the EU Framework programme.
- Charitable donations and Philanthropic sources
  - Describe the Centre's strategic approach to leverage funding from charities, not-for-profit organisations or philanthropic sources.

## **2.2 Commercialisation**



The commercialisation section of the business plan should describe the Research Centre's commercialisation plans, processes and overall strategy during Phase 2, inclusive but not limited to the following:

- To spin out new, high-technology start-up companies that have the potential to grow and raise external angel or venture funding.
- To transfer technology, through licences, to Irish based companies, both indigenous and FDI, ranging from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to large Multinational Companies (MNCs).
- To transfer knowledge, expertise and know-how to MNCs and SMEs based in Ireland.
- To further support an entrepreneurial culture within Irish Research Performing Organisations.

### 3. Industry Partner Engagement (no page limit)

#### 3.1 Industry engagement overview (max. 2 pages)

Provide an overview of the industry engagement strategy including engagement with partners currently involved in the Centre and plans for engagement into Phase 2.

#### 3.2 Industry partner case studies (max. 1 page per case study)

The Centre must provide a one-page case study for each industry partner involved with the Centre to date and likely to be involved going forward, describing what ‘benefits’ they will gain from the Centre both in the near and long term. The case studies must come from the **existing industry partners** who have already worked with the Centre and who are likely to continue working with the Centre in Phase 2. **Case studies from new potential industry partners in the Phase 2 Proposal are not allowed.** The case studies will not be published without prior permission being granted to SFI by the Centre and the industry partner.

The case studies will be used by the review panel to assess the strength of the existing industry partnerships with the Centre. They must give the panel confidence that the collaborations with existing partners will continue because of success demonstrated to date. It would be our expectation that the Centre Director or Manager would work with the industry partner to develop these case studies. The industry partner needs to be aware that the case studies will be shared with the international review panel.

The case study must be one page long and should provide the following

- Name of company
- Primary contact person within the company
- Location of company (or subsidiary) involved in the collaboration
- Size of company (overall and in Ireland)
- When did the collaboration begin?
- How did the company become involved in the Centre?
- Why did the company decide to work with this Centre, as opposed to other competitive Centres in Ireland or abroad?
- What is the level of investment (Cash and in-Kind)?
- Scope of the collaboration: what research work is involved and what are the contributions made by both partners?

- Scale: Number of people supporting the collaboration in the Centre and in the company (specifically mention any new jobs/roles created in the company because of the collaboration, has it developed over the years, etc.)
- Outputs and Impact: Evidence of specific outcomes from the collaborations - joint publications, products brought to market, invention disclosures, patents, licenses, additional jobs created in Ireland, further investment in Ireland, joint EU funding obtained, training initiatives, recruitment by company from Research Centre, international component, etc.
- Has the collaboration led to other research projects and/or supported further investment by the company in Ireland (specific number of jobs, level of investment, etc.)?
- Has the collaboration with the Centre grown and will it continue?

## Appendix M: Research Centres Phase 2 Programme Full Proposal Checklist

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
<b>Proposal Summary</b> <i>(SESAME fields)</i>	Proposal Title	Up to 30 words (RC title_Phase 2)
	Duration	6 years
	Priority area (Primary and Secondary)	Select
	Research Area (Primary and Secondary)	Select
	Justification of alignment with SFI's Legal Remit	Max 250 words
<b>Lead and co-Applicant Details</b>	Lead Applicant CV – use template provided	Max 7 pages
	Lead Applicant required fields completed	Enter details
	All Co-Applicants registered on SESAME and added to the application page	Enter details
	Lead and Co-Applicants' ORCID IDs linked in Research Profiles	Enter details
	Co-Applicants' required fields completed	Enter details
	Co-Applicants' CVs uploaded to application page	Max 7 pages per CV
	Lead and Co-Applicants' Research Funding section completed on application page	Enter details
	Funded Investigators, industry partners and collaborators added to Collaborator section on application page	Enter details
	Excluded Reviewers	Up to 3 individuals
<b>Main Body of Full Proposal</b> <i>(SESAME fields)</i>	Proposal Keywords	Max 15 words
	Scientific Abstract	Max 200 words
	Lay Abstract	Max 100 words
<b>Programme Application Document</b> <u>Progress Report</u> <u>Appendix (C)</u> <i>(submit as single PDF document to SESAME)</i>	Executive Summary	Max 2 pages
	SFI Research Centre Overview	Max 10 pages
	SFI Research Centre Team	Max 10 pages
	Research	Max 10 pages
	Education and Public Engagement	Max 10 pages
	Non-cost share KPI Performance	Max 10 pages
	Centre Impact	Max 5 pages
	Communications	Max 10 pages
	<b>Appendix (D):</b> Clinical Trials and Clinical Investigations	No page limit
	<b>Appendix (E):</b> Responses to Recommendations	Max 20 pages

	<b>Appendix (F) Research Activities</b>	Max 120 pages
<b>Programme Application Document</b>  <b><u>Phase 2 Proposal</u></b>  <b>Appendix (G)</b>  <b>(submit as single PDF document to SESAME)</b>	Phase 2 Proposal Executive Summary	Max 5 pages
	Strategy	Max 5 pages
	SFI Research Centre Team	Max 10 pages
	Research Programme	Max 40 pages
	Education and Public Engagement	Max 5 pages
	KPIs	Max 5 pages
	Impact Statement	Max 15 pages
	Communications	Max 5 pages
	Support from the Host Research Bodies	Max 5 pages
	SFI Budget Request and Justification	Max 10 pages
	Letters of Support	N/A
	<b>Appendix H: Investigator Details tables</b>	Not specified
	<b>Appendix I: Budget Tables</b>	N/A
	<b>Appendix J: Good Research Practice Statement</b>	Max 1 page
	<b>Appendix K: Data Management Plan</b>	Max 2 pages
<b>Cost Share Document</b>  <b>Appendix (L)</b>  <b>(submit as single PDF document to SESAME)</b>	Funding Diversification	Max 10 pages
	Proposed Business Plan	Max 25 pages
	Industry partner Engagement	No page limit
	Agreement to SFI Terms and Conditions	Tick box to agree