SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND
SFI Discover Programme 2022

2022 Call Document

Call document updated on 04/05/2022

Key Dates
Call launch: **26th April 2022**
Deadline: **13.00 hours (Irish time) 21st June 2022**.
Applications must be submitted via SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system.

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 and 2003.

Webinar and Informal Consultation Sessions
-A pre-recorded webinar on the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 will shortly be made available on the relevant Call page of www.sfi.ie.   If you have any questions regarding the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 that are not addressed in the webinar, please email these to discover.programme@sfi.ie and we will compile a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to answer these on our website.

- SFI welcomes requests for meetings to discuss the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022. In particular, we welcome discussion with community and youth work organisations who have expertise in working with communities that are underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM).

- Informal consultation sessions will be organised subject to demand. If you wish to avail of these sessions, please email discover.programme@sfi.ie. Please note that these consultations should not be scheduled in place of reading the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 documents or viewing the Webinar. They should be used for any subsequent clarifications.

1. Introduction

It is part of SFI's role to support and **grow** the communities engaging with and contributing to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and to empower and inspire people to **shape** Ireland's future through innovation.

In line with **SFI's 2025 Strategy – Shaping Our Future**, the SFI Discover Programme Call aims to empower and inspire deep public engagement and the programme is a key part of the SFI Education and Public Engagement activity. The programme contributes to the themes of *Top Talent*, *Tangible Benefits* and *A Cohesive Ecosystem*. Through its core objectives, the SFI Discover Programme will contribute to growing opportunities for engaged research[1], to enabling projects which have strong public purpose and value and, through engagement with community partners, draw on multiple sources to improve, understand or investigate an issue of societal interest or concern. SFI Discover will drive dialogue on science and aim to contribute to improving diversity and inclusion, through its aims to broaden participation both geographically and amongst less represented voices. Underpinning all of this is SFI's ambition to empower participation, grow talent and be a beacon of best practice in STEM education and public engagement, while always endeavouring to achieve this through the spirit of inspiration.

Building on the success of the recent national conversation on research and science, **Creating Our Future**, SFI encourages continued dialogue with the public on how we can shape a better Ireland through research and science. Through the national brainstorm, Creating Our Future captured the voice of the public and their priorities, ideas, hopes and concerns. SFI encourages applicants to the Discover Programme to consider these inspirational findings and recommendations and, where relevant, integrate into their proposed activities.

SFI welcomes contributions from across the sciences, arts, media, education, youth and/or community work sectors. SFI is keen to push the boundaries of participation and welcomes novel approaches to engaging the public, in ways that are most suited to them.

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of the SFI Discover Grant Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted under this Call 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)[2].

Applicants are required to assess whether they believe State aid will be a factor before applying under this Call and must outline in their application to SFI whether they believe State aid will or will not apply to a project. Please see Section 5 on State aid for further details.

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[1] https://www.campusengage.ie/our-work/making-an-impact/engaged-research/
[2] 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

2. Programme Details

2.1 SFI Remit

SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprise in the fields of 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 to the growth of the economy.

2.2 Programme Objectives

The overarching purpose of the SFI Discover Programme is to support and develop STEM education and public engagement by investing in, developing and extending activity and ability in this area, and exploring and encouraging novel means of engaging the public in STEM.

More specifically, the programme aims to support projects that address one or more of the following objectives, namely projects that:

- Inspire and create greater public awareness of the impact of STEM on society and its connection and contribution to everyday life.
- Stimulate and create debate and dialogue amongst the public, and opportunities for dialogue with STEM experts/researchers, on topics of societal importance where STEM has a key role.
- Use new ways, including through the arts and creative approaches, to understand and engage with those who would not typically engage with STEM, with particular emphasis on equal access, inclusion and diversity.
- Support and build engagement with, and participation of, a broader range of civil society and community groups through specific and appropriate targeted interaction, ideally involving co-creation and/or co-design.
- Build an awareness, curiosity and confidence in the scientific method through relevant experiences.
- Provide insights into STEM-related careers and discoveries while breaking down any barriers to entry including negative stereotypes.
- Support projects which develop capacity and skills for the delivery of STEM Education and Public Engagement (EPE) in Ireland.

Applicants are expected to address one or more of these objectives in their proposal and will be asked to evaluate and report on achievement of outcomes relating to the selected objective(s) at the end of the project/initiative. In all cases projects/initiatives should clearly demonstrate how they are informed by best practice in the field.

Further details on these expected outcomes are provided in Section 7 - Project Evaluation Plan and Section 10.1 - Reporting.

Please note: SFI does not expect that all objectives will be relevant for every application. Therefore, it is up to the applicant to identify which objectives are most relevant to their individual project/initiative and to outline how they propose to achieve these.

2.3 Sustaining Excellence

To date SFI has invested €34.8M in STEM education and public engagement initiatives through the SFI Discover Programme Call. With growing numbers of applications received each year, the call is becoming increasingly competitive. Only projects of the highest quality that clearly demonstrate excellence are awarded funding.

While sustaining excellence is a high priority for SFI, as the call becomes more competitive, applicants should be aware that reliance on funding through the SFI Discover Programme in the long-term cannot be guaranteed. The long-term sustainability of a project should be considered and outlined by applicants. Proposals that include clear plans for leveraging additional investment from other sources and/or plans for ensuring financial viability of the project/initiative beyond the SFI Discover Programme funding period will therefore be particularly welcome and favourably reviewed, once all other criteria have been met. Furthermore, as part of the application process, applicants will be asked to comment on their track record and the impact of receiving SFI Discover funding and to provide a rationale, where relevant, as to why SFI should continue to fund a project/initiative. This will form part of the review process.

2.4 Application Categories

The SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 includes the following application categories which are described below in more detail. Please note that for the SFI Discover Programme Call in 2022, a new additional category has been added (Category 3 - Sustaining Regional or National Initiative Funding).

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
1. Project Funding	**2 A**. Regional or National Initiative Funding (12 months) **2 B**. Regional or National Initiative Funding (24 months)	**3 A**. Sustaining Regional or National Initiative Funding (12 months) **3 B**. Sustaining Regional or National Initiative Funding (24 months)
	- Projects/Initiatives which have not been in receipt of Regional or National Initiative SFI Discover funding previously; *or* - Projects/Initiatives which have been in receipt of **less than four years'** of Regional or National SFI Discover funding; Applicants who have received SFI Discover Project funding are eligible to apply under this category	- Projects/Initiatives which have previously received Discover Regional or National Initiative funding for **four or more of years**; It is important to note that the funding **does not** need to have been consecutive.
Up to a maximum of €50,000	Up to a maximum of €300,000 over a maximum of two years (2023/2024)	
Projects must be completed within 2023	Initiatives may request single or multi-annual funding (for 2023 or 2023/2024)	
	If an applicant wishes to request more than the maximum allowable budget of €300,000 over a maximum of two years, a strongly justified case for exceeding this limit, including evidence of **fully matched monetary funding** for the full amount requested, must be submitted in the application form.	
	It is expected that applications **for broadcast projects** would be funded under one of these categories. The requirement for multi annual funding must be clearly justified in the application.	
Collaborative projects (e.g., between different sectors and organisations such as scientists and ethicists, educators and artists) are welcomed. All applications are subject to and are required to comply with State aid rules (see **Section 5** for further details)		

2.4.1 Category 1 Project Funding

Project Funding of up to €50,000 for a maximum of one year, i.e., 2023, for projects that support the STEM education and public engagement sector in Ireland by developing and extending capacity in this area and also exploring and encouraging novel means of public engagement.

It is expected that the majority of applications to the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 will sit within this category.

2.4.2 Category 2A Regional or National Initiative (12 months); and 2B Regional or National Initiative (24 months)

Regional or National Initiative Funding of up to €300,000 over a maximum 24 months for a project/initiative of significant scale that will have, at a minimum, regional or national impact and which clearly aligns to the call objectives outlined **in Section 2.2**. These initiatives require longer-term investment to allow for their further development, for scaling and delivery of increased impact. Projects/initiatives which have not been in receipt of Regional or National Initiative Discover funding before or projects/initiatives which have been in receipt of **less than four years of Regional or National Discover Funding** are eligible to apply under this category.

Proposals under this category can include the expansion of proven projects to a national scale, or for the development of new projects/programmes. Evidence should be provided to support the expansion, including track record to date and a summary of evaluation, highlighting the key points. Applicants must include adequate justification for applying for this higher amount of funding, including a clear rationale for how this larger scale regional/national initiative differs from a project.

Total funding requests in excess of €300,000 may be considered but applicants must provide **matched** cash funding, as opposed to in-kind, for the full amount requested and a strong justification for the scale of the request. If you intend to apply for more than €300,000, please contact the SFI Discover Programme Call Manager at discover.programme@sfi.ie in advance of submission.

Applications for Regional/National Initiative funding must provide a clear rationale for how the proposed initiative differs from a project and provide adequate justification for applying for this higher amount of funding. The strength of the rationale and justification for the higher and longer- term funding request will be considered in the evaluation. If it is not clear, and well argued it will negatively impact on the review.

This longer-term commitment from SFI should be viewed as seed funding to facilitate greater leverage of investment from other partners which will help with future planning and sustainability. Applicants are therefore required to demonstrate the plan to financially sustain excellence and impact of their initiative at the end of the funding period as appropriate.

In order to be competitive in this category, it is also essential that applicants demonstrate that they have considered how they will or have developed the initiative based on best practice.

2.4.3 Category 3A Sustaining Regional or National Initiative (12 months); 3B Sustaining Regional or National Initiative (24 months)

> **The Discover call is a competitive process. In order to evaluate if SFI funding should be continued Projects/initiatives which have received previous Regional or National Initiative funding over four or more years, (the funding does not need to be consecutive) will be required to provide strong evidence of how the previously funded projects have addressed their objectives and lead to significant, measurable impact on the target audience.**

In addition to the requirements outlined in 2.4.2 projects/initiatives which have previously been in receipt of Discover Regional or National funding (for four or more years) will be required to clearly demonstrate the following:

- critical reflection into programme design

- a strong focus on evaluation and the impact of past activity

- how the programme is developing/improving

- how the programme is evolving its cost model and addressing issues related to long-term sustainability – e.g., through attracting partnerships that create future long-term sustainability and/or having processes to manage potentially intermittent funding.

For applicants in this category who progress to the Sitting Panel phase (see Section 9.1) an interview between the Sitting Panel and the applicant group will be conducted. An emphasis will be placed on the above points during this interview.

2.5 Special Consideration

As part of the review process for the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022, special consideration will be given to projects/initiatives that also include one of more of the following themes or approaches.

> **It is essential that you clearly outline how your proposal aligns with your chosen special consideration category or categories. For example, if you intend to target/include a specific group or employ a specific approach, this must be clearly articulated. Simply indicating the alignment will not be sufficient.**

1. **Climate Action and Sustainability**
   By addressing important problems in responsible ways, SFI's strategy places an emphasis on the critical role that STEM research must play in improving our climate and environment, impacting positively on the needs of society. Within the submissions to Ireland's national brainstorm, *Creating Our Future,* there was a strong focus on issues concerning climate change, biodiversity, the circular economy, and environmental sustainability. Incorporation of these themes into Discover Call applications is being highlighted as a theme of special consideration under the current call.

2. **Broadening participation and equity of access:**
   SFI welcomes applications that:
   - encourage and promote greater gender balance in STEM, in particular those working with, inspiring and supporting women and girls, non-binary people, and those at the intersections of these identities.
   - encourage and support participation of the LGBTQ+ Community.

- address racial and ethnic inequality in STEM by specifically and appropriately engaging with relevant ethnic and minority groups.
- are designed to engage with socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged population groups.
- target an adult participant group (participating without young children) or facilitate engagement with adult education groups or community groups.

3. **Co-Creation**

   Projects/initiatives which include a strong element of co-creation with their target participant groups are encouraged. The principle of co-creation is the process of creating new initiatives **with** people and not **for** them. In the context of the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 we refer to co-creation as engaging with participant groups in the design, development, production and delivery phases of projects/initiatives. By working in this way, applicants will aim to gather the necessary insight in order to deliver an effective high-quality project. Applicants may include co-creation throughout their entire project/initiative or as applicable to a specific element. This application of co-creation will be particularly welcome where applicants are attempting to broaden participation in STEM amongst groups currently under-represented in the field.

   Key features of co-creation include [3]
   - Brings together various stakeholders from all over society, with their respective expertise/ experience
   - Has a purpose; it is not a finalised thing in itself, but a means to some other end
   - Tackles a 'bigger challenge' while helping each stakeholder to achieve their own goal(s)
   - Needs structure yet it should also remain open to individual proposals and approaches. It needs to enhance creativity and problem solving
   - Is a non-linear process of thinking and creating

   It is important to emphasise that co-creation is not appropriate or necessary for all projects. An individual applicant should determine if their project will benefit from co-creation and if so, where this might be most relevant and impactful.

   In all projects/initiatives, whether engaging in co-creation or not, applicants must ensure that they have a clear plan to formatively evaluate the project/initiative. Formative evaluation is explained in more detail in Section 7, Project Evaluation Plan.

2.6 Partnerships

2.6.1. Co-Funding Partnership with the Department of Education

The SFI Discover Programme Call includes a co-funding partnership with the Department of Education. The partnership is based on alignments to areas as identified under the STEM Education Policy Statement and are of particular significance to the Department of Education.

Following the submission of proposals, SFI will reach agreement with the Department of Education on which proposals may be supported through the partnership. All applications that potentially align to the interest areas outlined by the Department of Education will be considered for support under the partnership. There is no requirement for applicants to indicate specifically that funding through the partnership is sought. Partnership and non-partnership applications to this call will be treated the same, with respect to the review process.

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[3] Taken from ACCOMPLISSH Guide to Co-Creation published as part of H2020 Project ACCOMPLISSH, funded by the European Commission under grant agreement number: 693477

Projects that address one or more of the following elements, are highlighted as relevant to the co-funding partnership with the Department of Education;

- **Programmes that focus on development of key skills and increasing awareness of STEM education and careers**
  SFI and the Department of Education welcomes applications for programmes that build and increase access to STEM education and STEM careers and for girls in particular. These programmes would consider the development of key skills, increasing awareness of STEM subjects, increasing awareness of STEM careers and the different pathways to those STEM careers through the provision of sustained contact with the programme participants to include mentoring.

- **Programmes that seek to increase STEM awareness with families**
  SFI and the Department of Education welcomes applications for programmes to increase awareness and appreciation of the importance, value and opportunity in STEM for families. Parents/guardians can have a profound impact on children's learning, interests and educational and career outcomes. When parents are not confident with STEM their children can miss opportunities to build positive identity and engagement in STEM learning. These programmes should be fun and interactive for both the children and the adults and ensure positive STEM learning experiences.

- **Programmes that increase awareness of STEM for learners and their parents in advance of transition from primary to post primary school**
  SFI and the Department of Education welcomes applications for programmes that increase awareness of STEM and STEM choices for learners, their teachers and their parents in advance of the transition from primary to post primary school when conversations traditionally occur between parents/guardians and their children on subject choices for post-primary school. The programme could focus on the provision of resources to include information on STEM subjects and STEM careers and direct interventions with learners/teacher and parents

- **Provide connections between STEM and the Arts**
  SFI and the Department of Education welcomes applications of STEAM based projects/initiatives that target early years, primary or post primary schools. These pilot projects would promote the cross disciplinary nature of STEAM with STEAM integration that incorporates quality arts education rather than book-ending integrated STEAM learning e.g. art teachers at post primary leading STEAM projects that are integrated with one or more of the STEM disciplines.

By submitting an application to the SFI Discover Programme Call, an applicant is accepting that SFI has the right to share information (including the application and any post-award reports submitted to SFI) with co-funding partners, on a confidential basis, without the need to obtain any further consents from such applicants.

2.6.2 ESERO Ireland: Space Related content
Applicants are advised that projects with a space context are encouraged under this call and will be reviewed in association with the European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO) Ireland. If your project uses space as a context, you are expected to discuss (in advance of submission) with the ESERO Ireland office contact (**Contact:** stephanie.oneill@sfi.ie) how it may meet ESERO Ireland objectives and if/how you propose to collaborate with the ESERO Office. This may involve your project outputs being reported to the European Space Agency and the output being branded as ESERO Ireland in partnership with your organisation.

The ESERO objectives are to use Space as a context:

- to enhance the literacy and competence of young people in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)
- to motivate and enable young Europeans to pursue a career in the STEM field, in the space domain in particular
- to increase young people's awareness of the importance of space research, exploration and applications in modern society and economy

We particularly welcome applications which deliver ESERO-related objectives and include Teacher Continuous Professional Development (Teacher CPD).

2.7 Audio-Visual Projects

SFI has supported a range of audio-visual projects, and in particular broadcast projects, in the STEM education and public engagement field that have supported embedding more scientific data and experience within culturally relevant programmes. They require a collaborative approach to production, involving both scientific and production expertise. SFI will also continue to invite audio-visual (film, tv, radio and animation) proposals through the SFI Discover Programme that are aligned to specific areas.
These projects should clearly indicate the STEM collaborators or experts contributing to the development of the project and outline the role these collaborators will play. Proposals should also clearly identify how they will be scheduled (shown to the audience) in the proposal, including support from a broadcaster or distribution partner

Applicants applying for funding for Audio-Visual projects are subject to and must comply with State aid rules and the provisions of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)[4] under Article 54 Aid schemes for audio-visual works and the enabling legislation of SFI. Please see Section 5 on State aid for further details.

Audio-Visual proposals must:

- Be programmes that raise public awareness and understanding of global issues impacting on the State and that are underpinned by STEM.
- Be on a free television service (for TV proposals) which provides near universal coverage in Ireland, or on freely available radio service (for radio proposals).

Proposals that address one or more of the following are welcome:

- Content that represents the diversity of Irish STEM culture and heritage
- Content that aims to support improved adult or media literacy
- Proposals in the Irish language.
- Content that highlights and shows Irish experience through human interest stories.

Proposals should be broadcast during peak times on the schedule, with the exception of children's programming.
All TV proposals must make provision for subtitling.
Proposals across all formats will be accepted including documentary, education, animation, drama or entertainment.

Applicants for Audio-Visual projects must outline in their proposals how their application meets the criteria above.

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[4] European Commission Regulation EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1)

3. Who Can Apply?

This Call is open to a wide range of people and organisations. Organisations are defined in the SFI Discover Programme Call Terms and Conditions.

All projects must be represented by a Project Lead. **The Project Lead is** the person who is responsible for the main intellectual input, direction and ownership of, the outcomes if the application is successful. The Project Lead has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the programme of work within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the SFI Discover Programme General Terms and Conditions. The Project Lead 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.

SFI has a list of **Eligible Research Bodies** (which includes Higher Education Institutes) – check list of Eligible Research Bodies here.
If your organisation is included on this list, then your application must be stamped and signed off by the appropriate officer (typically the Research Office) within your organisation using the Eligible Research Body Cover Sheet available on SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system.

Applications are also welcome from **other bodies** (i.e. any organisation not included on the above list). There are **two categories of other bodies** that can become eligible for the SFI Discover Programme Call 2022:

(a) **State Body** (e.g. city or county council)
To become eligible for the SFI Discover Call 2022, then your application must be stamped and signed off by the appropriate person (senior executive) within your organisation using the "*Other Bodies - State Body*" Cover Sheet available on SESAME. A senior executive within the organisation is required to sign the cover sheet to indicate the organisation's support for the application.

(b) **Other Body** (i.e. not an Eligible Research Body or a State Body)
To become eligible for the Discover Call 2022, applicants in this category are required to complete the *Other Body – Cover Sheet"* available on SESAME and must demonstrate financial sustainability.
They are required to:
✓ complete the *"Other Body - Cover Sheet"* available on SESAME, providing details of the organisation's status, registration number, auditors, solicitors and bankers
✓ provide details of the organisation structure detailing positions and names of post holders
✓ provide a copy of the most recent annual report (if appropriate, i.e. if your organisation is required to publish an annual report), i.e., if your organisation is required to publish an annual report). If your organisation is not required to publish an annual report, please download, and upload the signed confirmation on SESAME.
✓ provide a signed copy of the most recent Audited full Financial Statements (if applicable)[5]
✓ complete the Declaration of Solvency Letter, available on SESAME
✓ complete the Declaration of Bona Fides
All of the above information must be included.

Please Note: Failure to provide the required eligibility documentation outlined above, and as relevant for your organisation, will result in your application being deemed ineligible and will not be sent for review.

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[5] If your organisation is not required to produce audited accounts, management accounts signed off by an accountant will be accepted. Please contact discover.programme@sfi.ie if you have any queries in relation to this requirement.

If you have any doubt about your organisation's status, please email discover.programme@sfi.ie for clarification. This _must be done in good time before the closing date (minimum seven days)_ to ensure that your application is completed and submitted before the deadline, as no exceptions can be made in relation to the submission date for this, or any other, reason.

Additional Eligibility Considerations

Proposals must be explicitly aimed at engaging audiences and participant groups in the Republic of Ireland however the subject matter can be international. Applications are welcome from organisations not based in the Republic of Ireland; however, they must demonstrate in their application how the project will explicitly engage with their target audience in the Republic of Ireland.

Applications will only be accepted from an organisation meeting the eligibility criteria outlined above. Typically, these include academic institutions, charitable bodies, not-for-profit organisations or commercial companies.

See Also Section 5 for State aid eligibility considerations.
Under **GBER** SFI cannot provide funding for undertakings in difficulty. Organisations will be required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations to SFI**.** These documents will be used by SFI to determine eligibility of the company to receive State aid.

If work begins before the applicant has submitted a written application to SFI the initiative/project will be ineligible for State aid.

Applicants may submit more than one grant application under the call to SFI at any one time, provided the proposals are clearly differentiated. A statement of time commitment may be required to ensure adequate resourcing is possible.

Applications will **not** be accepted from individuals and/or sole traders.

Regional or County Science Week Festivals are not eligible to apply for funding under this call. A separate Science Week Call is published by SFI on an annual basis. To receive regular updates on SFI's activities, including the Science Week Call please sign up to SFI e-alerts https://www.sfi.ie/subscribe/

4. Eligible Costs

Total project costs must include ALL costs of the project including project lead/team time.

In all categories partner contributions, financial or otherwise (in-kind), should be demonstrated and all costs must be justified and will be subject to cost scrutiny. Other sources of funding (including In-Kind support) must be clearly identified in the application including any income to be derived from the project, if relevant.

Any letters of support provided with this application must include details of the financial commitment from partners, as appropriate.

The schedule of funding will be set out in the Letter of Offer.

Costs requested can include:
- Personnel and project management costs directly related to the project

- Production costs, including venue hire, AV, additional insurances required specifically for the project or event, catering etc.
- Equipment and materials
- Project travel costs
- Project administration costs where these are not already covered by other funding
- Project publicity costs, including launch event costs, website etc.
- Costs relating to training and engagement for citizen science projects e.g. training material, workshops, sharing platforms, showcase events etc.
- Quality assurance evaluation on the user experience and impact measurement
- Access requirements, such as Irish Sign Language interpretation

Ineligible costs:
- Core overheads of the applicant organisation not related to the project e.g. heating, rent, general insurance, auditing etc.
- Expenses incurred in preparing and submitting an application
- Fees relating to academic courses including taught/research postgraduate courses.
- Conference registration fees or attendance costs
- Value-Added Tax (VAT) - if your organisation is registered for VAT
- Direct costs for research elements of citizen science projects e.g. researcher salary, consumables, licences, publishing fees, etc.

Queries relating to cost eligibility should be sent to SFI at discover.programme@sfi.ie prior to submission.

Specific Obligations for Audio-Visual Projects (*see further details on State aid in Section 5 State Aid Regulations*)
Under European Commission (EC) regulations concerning State aid to audio-visual works the maximum grant aid intensity permissible is limited to 50%. It is expected that applications for audio-visual projects under the SFI Discover Programme, will be funded at a maximum of 50% of the overall project costs.

The aid intensity may be increased in certain circumstances to the following:
- 60% of the eligible costs for cross-border productions funded by more than one Member State and involving producers from more than one Member State; or
- 100% of the eligible costs for difficult audio-visual works and co- productions involving countries from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of the OECD.

"Difficult audio visual works" may include the following:
- Commercially difficult works or works that lack commercial potential;
- Low budget works;
- Works where the sole version is in the Irish language with a limited territory, population or language area; or
- Works that have a high level of creative risk.

As part of any audio-visual proposal, seeking in excess of 50% of the overall budget, applicants will need to provide justification as to how a project falls within the definition of a "difficult audio-visual work". SFI Discover Programme will accept proposals seeking aid for the pre-production and production of audio-visual works.

The eligible costs shall be the following:

(a) for production aid: the overall costs of production of audio-visual works including costs to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities;
(b) for pre-production aid: the costs of script-writing and the development of audio-visual work

The aid intensity for pre-production shall not exceed 100% of the eligible costs. If the resulting script or project is made into an audio-visual work such as a film, the pre-production costs shall be incorporated in the overall budget and taken into account when calculating the aid intensity.

Aid shall not be reserved for specific production activities or individual parts of the production value chain. Aid for film studio infrastructures shall not be eligible under this Article.

Aid shall not be reserved exclusively for national, and beneficiaries shall not be required to have the status of undertaking established under national commercial law.

For additional information please refer to *Guidance on State Aid for Applicants to, and recipients of, SFI funding – see here*

Cumulation of aid
State aid provided under this Call that is exempted (e.g., by GBER) and provided through this or another public grant may be cumulated with:
- any other State aid, as long as those aid measures concern different identifiable eligible costs
- any other aid measure in relation to the same eligible costs, partly or fully overlapping, only if such cumulation does not result in exceeding the highest aid intensity or aid amount applicable to this aid under GBER.

All sources of State aid shall be taken into account when considering cumulation and in determining that the relevant aid intensity or aid amount is not exceeded.

5. State Aid Regulations

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of the SFI Discover Grant 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[6]).

Applicants are required to assess whether they believe State Aid will be a factor before applying under this Call and must outline in their application the reasons why they believe State aid will or will not apply to a project.

In general, State aid will **not be deemed to be a concern** where a project does not involve an "economic activity", the recipient is not considered an "undertaking"[7], or for example where a project has no (or at most marginal) foreseeable effects on cross-border trade (i.e., has only a *purely local* impact[8]).

Where an applicant separately pursues economic activities but the project, for which an SFI grant is being sought, involves non-economic activities, applicants must ensure that the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities be accounted for separately to avoid cross subsidisation.

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[6] See 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 for further guidance on what constitutes State aid.

[7] Under the State aid rules, an "undertaking" is an entity which is engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status and the way in it is financed. An activity is economic when it involves "offering gods or services on a market". The fact that goods or services are not offered by private entities does not prevent them being characterised as an economic activity provided it is *possible* for them to be carried out by economic agents (i.e., where there is a market in comparable goods or services).

[8] Commission gives guidance on local public support measures that do not constitute state aid (21 September 2016, and 29 April 2015)

Where State aid does apply to a project, SFI may grant funds to successful applicants in accordance with the *De Minimis* Regulation[9]. De minimis aid refers small amounts of State aid that is considered to have a negligible impact on trade and competition and therefore does not require European Commission approval. In relation to applications for all audio-visual projects, SFI will only grant funds to successful applicants in accordance with the **GBER**. Details of the SFI Research and Innovation GBER Scheme are available here

To assess whether a State aid exemption applies, it may be necessary for SFI to request further information from applicants going beyond that provided in any application. Applicants should note that where further information is requested, replies should be consistent with, and reconcile to, information already provided, including financials.

For all applications where State aid is confirmed, SFI will notify the appropriate bodies at the point of awarding the grant, as required by prevailing State aid guidance. Additional financial reporting may be requested at intervals during the duration of the grant.

Under **GBER** SFI cannot provide funding for undertakings in difficulty. Organisations will be required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations to SFI. These documents will be used by SFI to determine eligibility of the company to receive State aid.

If work begins before the applicant has submitted a written application to SFI the initiative/project will be ineligible for State aid.

5.1 De Minimis

Where applicants identify that State aid applies to a project, SFI may grant awards to successful applicants in accordance with the De Minimis regulation. The total De Minimis aid that can be given to any one undertaking over a three year period is €200,000, regardless of the source of the public funds.

Small amounts of aid to one undertaking, i.e., less than €200,000 in any rolling three-year period (from one or multiple state sources), are considered to be so small as to have no appreciable effect on competition or trade and, under the De Minimis rule, these are exempt from the requirement to notify the aid to the European Commission.

In accordance with Regulation (EC) 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013, where a Member State grants De Minimis aid to an organisation, it shall inform the organisation about the De Minimis character of the aid and obtain from the enterprise concerned full information about other De Minimis aid received during the previous three years. The Member State may only grant the new De Minimis aid after having checked that this will not raise the total amount of De Minimis aid received during the relevant period of three years to a level above the €200,000 ceiling (at the time of awarding the grant). If the aid being sought is provided under the European Commission Regulation on De Minimis aid, applicants will be required to provide details of all other De Minimis aid which has been granted to the organisation within the past three years as part of the application form. It should be noted that a false declaration by a company resulting in the threshold of €200,000 being exceeded could later give rise to the aid being recovered with interest.

5.2 Audio-Visual projects

Audio-visual projects are invited and will be considered under the SFI Research and Innovation Programme 2021 – 2025. In general, audio-visual works (e.g., film production) is considered an economic activity capable

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[9] Commission Regulation No 1407/2013of 18 December 2013on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de Minimis aid (*De Minimis Regulation*)

of affecting trade between Member States[10]. Therefore, state-funded grants for audio-visual projects is likely to give rise to State aid. GBER provides an exemption for certain categories of aid, if they fulfil the specific conditions, to be notified for prior approval by the European Commission, including aid for audio-visual works. Audio-visual projects under the SFI Discover Programme Call are subject to, and must be compliant with, the conditions of GBER under Article 54, Aid for audio-visual works and the enabling legislation of SFI.

Science Foundation Ireland Research and Innovation Programme 2021-2025

Audio-visual projects under the SFI Discover Programme Call are subject to, and must be compliant with, the conditions of GBER under Article 54, Aid for audio-visual works and the enabling legislation of SFI.

To fall within the GBER, its provisions must be complied with in all cases and in all respects in so far as they apply to State aid for a particular project.

6. General Call Criteria

6.1 Alignment with SFI and Call Objectives

All applicants should demonstrate:
- how the proposal is aligned to one or more of the Call objectives outlined in **section 2.2**
- how they have evaluated the need for the proposed activity and have defined the target audience
- how the programme is excellent and impactful – why will it be effective?
- how they plan to formatively evaluate the proposed activity, including how they will monitor, measure and evaluate if they have succeeded in meeting the project/initiative objectives.
- how the proposal is informed by best practice in the field.

6.2 Outputs

Applicants are reminded that significant investment has been made globally into best practice across the STEM education and public engagement field. Therefore, applicants are expected to have investigated and explored the field to ensure the proposal adheres to these best practices. Applications are welcome for projects which promote engagement with STEM through proven, robust methods or pilot novel methods to test proof of concepts. Evidence of this should be demonstrated in the application.

Project/initiatives activities and outputs may include:
- Broadcast or media including TV, film, animation or radio
- Digital content (on pervasive platforms) with high audience reach including websites, social media campaigns and multi-platform projects, for example, a project supported by an app, website etc.
- Aspects of **Citizen Science** [11] projects
  Applications may include funding requests for particular aspects of citizen science projects. Funding can be requested for training and engagement activities of citizen science projects but not for direct research costs, as research activity falls outside the scope of the SFI Discover Programme. Exhibitions, theatre and museum outreach
- STEAM Projects
- Games or apps
- Workshops, events, debates and discussions

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[10] Communication from the Commission on State aid for films and other audiovisual works (2013/C 332/01)
[11] The European Commission advises that citizen science should be understood broadly, covering a range of different levels of participation, from raising public knowledge of science, encouraging citizens to participate in the scientific process by observing, gathering and processing data, right up to setting scientific agenda and co-designing and implementing science-related policies

- Informal learning activities that encourage children and young people to engage with, and participate in, STEM activities outside the formal education system. These projects must aim to increase the uptake of STEM options at third level and beyond
- Novel projects that encourage general public engagement with STEM – to create dialogue with the public and introduce STEM into the community to create these conversations.
- Projects that embrace wider partnership from the arts, social sciences and humanities, as well as STEM, are encouraged.
- Activities that support national STEM festivals (Science Week, Tech Week, Engineers Week, Maths Week, Space Week), in particular with communities and in regions where there is little, or no STEM engagement.
- Creation of classroom activities, teaching materials or development of teaching methods. Note that these activities to be delivered in classrooms or to teachers **must** demonstrate evidence and rationale of a direct link to the relevant curricula and why teachers would engage in the programme, in an already packed timetable. Details of how these outputs will be disseminated and scaled must also be provided.

6.4 Supplementary Information

In certain circumstances (e.g. when a pilot has been funded by SFI in the year previous to application, or a project evaluation is underway and sufficient evidence to support the application at the time of submission is not available) SFI will allow the applicant to submit such information at a later date.

The applicant must obtain written confirmation in the format of an email from the SFI Discover Programme Call Manager in advance of the application process.

In addition, the applicant must
1. Indicate on the SESAME application that they will be sending this information,
2. Indicate on the SESAME application what the nature of the supplementary information is,
3. Indicate why this information cannot be submitted at the time of the application,
4. Upload the email from the SFI Discover Programme Manager (at the time of submission) which permits this supplementary information to be sent
5. Send the supplementary information in the format of a two A4-page PDF (max) by email to discover.programme@sfi.ie **by 27th July 2022 13.00 hrs. (Irish time).** Information received after this date and time will not be reviewed. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit this supplementary information before the date and time specified above. A reminder will <u>not</u> be issued to the applicant.

7.   Project Evaluation Plan

Applicants will be required to outline how their project/initiative is clearly aligned to one or more of the call objectives as defined above and detail the credibility of their proposed approach to achieve that objective.

Applicants should demonstrate how they plan to formatively evaluate the proposed project/initiative. Formative evaluation is any evaluation that takes place before or during a project's implementation with the aim of improving the project's design and performance. It is especially important in community engagement and behavioural change projects/initiatives and it should be viewed as a valuable investment which improves the likelihood of achieving a successful outcome through better programme design. Formative evaluation is essential for trying to understand why a project works or doesn't work, and what other factors (internal and external) are at work during a project's life.

Categories of formative evaluation[12]

	Proactive	Clarificative	Interactive	Monitoring
When	Pre-project	Project development	Project implementation	Project implementation
Why	To understand or clarify the need for the project	To make clear the theory of change that the project is based on. *(A theory of change explains how the activities undertaken by an intervention (such as a project or policy) contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended or observed impacts)*	To improve the project's design (continual improvement) as it is rolled out	To ensure that the project activities are being delivered efficiently and effectively

Applicants should demonstrate their plan to formatively evaluate the project by establishing clear goals which can be assessed pre and post project, for example engaging with members of the target audience to gauge interest and determine specific needs and expectations. The plan should incorporate how the proposed activity will ensure the project is appealing and beneficial to the target audience, for example by demonstrating how the proposal has been reviewed or co-designed with the target participant.

> **Applicants for Sustaining Regional or National Initiative funding should ensure that they adequately address the information required for this category as outlined in section 2.4.3 Applicant Categories and provide strong evidence to support the justification for continued SFI funding.**

> **SFI recognises that some projects/initiatives may not have had sufficient time to achieve demonstrable impact. However, projects/initiatives which have been in receipt of Discover Programme funding over a number of years and those which undertake deep engagement are expected to demonstrate the impact of their work. The cost of such impact evaluation is an eligible cost under this Call**.

Applicants are required to outline in the relevant sections of their funding application the projected outputs, outcomes and expected impact of the project/initiative.

Applicants are required to provide a detailed evaluation plan based on best practice. The evaluation plan must clearly outline the method for measuring **both;**

1. the **outputs** (i.e. activities/deliverables/results)

2. the **outcomes** and the extent to which the proposed outcomes have been achieved (i.e. what has changed as a result of what they have done).

It should be clear from this evaluation plan how the project/initiative will measure the extent to which the proposed outcomes have been achieved, as opposed to a measurement of project outputs only.

> **Applicants should use the headings from the Logic Model table below when outlining their evaluation plan.**

A Sample Logic Model – a Robotics Workshop for Post Primary Schools

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Potential Impacts
Project objectives – to improve understanding	Map and deliver iterative stakeholder engagement and	Agreed and approved fit for purpose	Participants demonstrate a self-perceived greater understanding of robotics.	Increased uptake of the Leaving Certificate Computer Science

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[12] Taken from Community Sustainability Engagement Evaluation Toolbox

of robotics through experiential learning	collaboration process	resources for Robotics workshop	Participants demonstrate self-perceived greater awareness of robotics and the part they potentially play in everyday life.	subject by target groups
Robotics and post primary teaching Expertise	Iterative evaluation	Delivered 100 workshops, to post primary students (25 participants per workshop)		
Funding	Develop a Robot workshop (with appropriate resources)		Participants demonstrate a greater understanding of basic robotics	
Project team		Hands on experience of robotics for participating students	Participants demonstrate greater awareness of Leaving Certificate Computer Science	
Stakeholder/community partnership, in particular to ensure participation of target groups	Promote and engage to achieve 100 participating schools	Pre and Post workshop access to resources for students		
Link into new Leaving Certificate Computer Science curriculum				

SFI recommends that external evaluation be factored into the project plan. Applicants should clearly indicate if they have budgeted to have their project/initiative externally evaluated and if so provide a detailed and clear evaluation plan.

In projects/initiatives which will not undergo external evaluation applicants must detail how they plan to objectively evaluate their project/initiative in accordance with best practice.

The Evaluation Plan should detail the following:

- Aim – What are you trying to achieve overall?

- Outcomes – What do you hope will result from your project?

- Markers - What evidence will show that your Outcomes have been realised?

- Measures – What do you need to ask or record to get those Markers?

- If the project has been running for a longer period (i.e. greater than 4 years), emphasis should be placed on the long-term impact of the project and this should be reflected in the impact evaluation plan

- Methods – How will you go about capturing the data you need?

- Data analysis – highlight how the raw data will be analysed and presented

- Dissemination – identify how the results of the evaluation will be disseminated among key stakeholders

For further information on how to embed evaluation into all project planning stages, and to identify various methodologies for evaluation data collection, analysis and dissemination please see the Evaluation toolkit on SFI.ie. There are further useful resources in relation to evaluation available from the National Science Foundation funded Centre for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) website here, and guidance documents from Campus Engage here.

Applicants will be required to submit annual and / or final reports in relation to their Award outlining the impact and outcomes of the project/initiative, including demonstrating how the project/initiative has been a success or not. Reporting templates will be provided on SESAME.

8.   Submitting your Application

All applications must be submitted via SESAME, and log-in details are required to access SESAME.
Helpful tips for completing your SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 application, along with a webinar and user guide for submission through SESAME, are included on the SFI Discover Programme page on www.sfi.ie.

- If you are already registered on SESAME you can log in using the same email address; if you have forgotten your password, you can use the Forgot Password functionality to re-set it.

- If you are from an Eligible Research Body but not registered on SESAME, you should contact the Research Office in your institution to be registered

- If you have not previously been registered with SESAME, please email the following information to discover.programme@sfi.ie:
  - ✓ Project Lead Name
  - ✓ Email address
  - ✓ Registered Company Name
  - ✓ Legal Status: (e.g. company limited by guarantee, limited company, charity etc.)
  - ✓ Trading Name
  - ✓ VAT Number

A SESAME profile will be created for you and log-in details will be emailed to the email address provided.

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 (pop-up 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 IT support team.

Draft applications may be amended as many times as required but once submitted no further changes can be made.

Once submitted, applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same Call.

> **Early submission in SESAME is strongly recommended. Applicants who wait until shortly before the close of the call take serious risk of encountering submission issues. The submit button will cease to be active at the indicated deadline and no late entries will be accepted.**

A checklist of requirements is provided at the end of this document.

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

9. Review Process

9.1 Process

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicants to participate in the peer review process. Following submission, applications are checked for eligibility[13].

Applications considered ineligible or unaligned to the SFI Discover Programme Call objectives or uncompetitive for the programme, will not be reviewed. Applicants will be notified within 8 weeks of the submission deadline if their proposal has **not** been deemed eligible for review.

Proposals will be assessed through a two-stage review process comprising of a Virtual panel and Sitting panel phase, both carried out by international experts and based on the criteria set out below.

Applicants whose proposals receive sufficient support based on the evaluations and ranking of the Virtual reviewers will progress to the Sitting panel phase.

As part of the Sitting Panel phase an interview between the Sitting Panel and the applicant group will be included for applicants who have applied for **Category 3, Sustaining Regional or National Initiative Funding**. The emphasis of the interview will be in relation to the points outlined in 2.4.3. Applicant whose proposals do not receive sufficient support at the first stage of review, will not progress to interview. Further details will be provided to relevant applicants in advance of the panel meeting.

The decision of SFI is final. Every effort has been made to develop a thorough and informed assessment process. SFI reserves the right not to enter into any correspondence about the assessment process and/or any subsequent monitoring procedures.

9.2 Assessment Criteria

Reviewers of applications will be asked to comment on the following aspects of a grant proposal:
- The **project details** (clarity around the project details, objectives and alignment to SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 objectives, quality indicators, content, target participant groups and suitability of venues/facilities). Special consideration and weighting will be given in the review process to projects targeting specific themes/approaches, as outlined in Section 2.5.
- The strength of justification and rationale presented for
  - Projects to be considered as **a Regional/National Initiative**.
  - Continued funding for **Sustaining Regional/National Initiatives** – assessment will include evidence-based justification on the impact of past activity, critical reflection into programme design, the outlined plan to develop and evolve the initiative.
- **Resubmissions:** Projects/initiatives which were previously submitted but not funded under the SFI Discover Programme Call will be assessed on how previous review feedback has been addressed.
- **Budget and funding** (project costs, value for money and leverage of funding from other partners, benefit of SFI funding to the project. Applications for projects previously funded through the SFI Discover Programme Call will also be:
  - assessed on their ability to demonstrate growing levels of impact achieved through the awards and
  - assessed on how the initiative is building on any previous SFI Discover funding received to-date to move towards a more sustainable model with long-term committed partners and increased non-exchequer financial support).

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[13] Applications are checked for compliance with: non-technical mandatory criteria (e.g. all sections complete, page numbers not exceeded); technical mandatory criteria (e.g. any applicant eligibility requirements, alignment with the remit of the call); and any other requirements outlined in the call document.

- **Evaluation plans** (outputs and impacts, evaluation methodology, dissemination of learnings, strategic planning approach and appropriate exit strategy. See Section 7, Project Evaluation Plan.
- The **project team** (suitability of the project lead and any partners and whether the skills required to deliver the project successfully are evident

10. Award Management

10.1 Reporting

SFI has specific requirements for the reporting on awards that it makes. Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk of having their grant payments suspended and their eligibility to apply for funding in forthcoming SFI Calls affected.

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for reporting. SFI Discover 2022 Project Funding awardees will be required to submit their final report by 31 March 2024. Awardees of two year regional/national initiatives are required to submit a draft annual report by 30th November 2023 and to meet with the SFI Discover Programme team before the end of year 1 to discuss the grant to-date and plans for the second year. A final version of this annual report must be submitted by 31 March 2024. The final report is due on 31 March 2025. Templates for these reports will be provided on SESAME.

Each of the SFI Discover Programme Call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

Objective: *Inspire and create greater public awareness of the impact of STEM on society and its connection and contribution to everyday life.*
The SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 seeks to empower society to engage with STEM activities and stakeholders to examine the important role that STEM plays in addressing key challenges affecting our society. A scientifically engaged society involves debate, dialogue, critical engagement and opportunities for the public and evidence to influence policy. The SFI Discover Programme Call seeks to increase the proportion of funding awarded to projects that inspire and create debate, dialogue, and critical engagement.

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be required to include detail of outcomes such as change of attitude, perception, opinion, or increased learning, arising from the funded activity.

Objective*: Stimulate and create debate and dialogue amongst the public, and opportunities for two-way dialogue with STEM experts, on topics of societal importance where STEM has a key role.*
STEM plays an increasingly important role in addressing the economic, social and environmental problems faced by the world today. That role needs the support, understanding and active engagement of the public who are the ultimate beneficiaries of it. The SFI Discover Programme Call seeks to promote STEM engagement, curiosity and opportunities for two-way dialogue with the Irish public, to work together in addressing key challenges affecting our society.

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be required to report details of how they engaged with their target audiences in addressing this aim and what has changed for the target group as a result of this engagement e.g. how pre and post evaluation of an event can measure the change in public perception or increased knowledge of the audience in the role of STEM in addressing societal challenges.

Objective: *Use new ways to attract those who would not typically engage with STEM, with particular emphasis on <u>equal access,</u> inclusion, and diversity*

The SFI Discover Programme Call 2022 seeks to provide innovative and novel STEM experiences, in particular in ways which will attract audiences who typically do not engage with STEM. SFI's expectation is that target audiences will include the LGBTQ+ community, women and girls, non-binary people, socially, economically and/or educationally disadvantaged groups; adults attending without children; older populations; ethnic and minority groups; first time STEM event/project attendees and those involved with interest groups outside of STEM, such as sports or the arts.

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be asked to report on the different types of audience that they have targeted, how they identified their target audiences, did they undertake elements of co-creation/co-design with the target group and ultimately how they engaged with them. Applicants will be required to outline the approach taken to reach these audiences and provide details of how this approach increased inclusivity of engagement with these identified groups, and will inform future similar inclusive engagement.

Objective: *Support and build engagement with and participation of a broader range of civil society and community groups through specific and appropriate targeted interaction, ideally involving co-creation and/or co-design*

The SFI Discover Programme Call seeks to support partners with experience of, engagement with *a broader range of civil society and community groups*. This should include projects that emphasise group work, co-creation/co-design and the use of emerging digital tools, as well as those that offer enjoyable hands-on inspirational experiences of STEM. SFI seeks to increase the number of Awards made to community work and youth groups and welcomes applications that detail projects helping to develop 21st century skills (creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking and team working) which are critical to engagement with society.

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be asked to report on the different types of audience that they have engaged with, outline elements of co-creation/co-design carried out with the target group and the relevant skills that have been developed. Applicants will be required to outline the innovative approach taken to reach these audiences and provide details of how this approach will inform future innovative engagement.

Objective: *Build an awareness, curiosity and confidence in the scientific method through relevant experiences.*

Projects supported by the SFI Discover Programme Call should have clear STEM content, either through direct collaboration with a qualified STEM professional (e.g. scientist, engineer) leading or acting in an advisory role. Applicants are encouraged to work with STEM professionals to ensure that they are competent and confident in communicating and collaborating with non-specialist audiences and to help them to share their story with the groups targeted. Applicants are encouraged to include projects through which participants engage with the scientific method enabling them to understand the process, to distinguish between fact and evidence-based information vs opinion or "fake news".

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be required to include details of outcomes such as change of attitude, perception, opinion, or increased understanding and/or appreciation of the scientific method arising from the funded activity.

Objective: *provide insights into STEM-related careers and discoveries while breaking down any barriers to entry including negative stereotypes.*

Having a STEM qualified pipeline to support Ireland's knowledge economy is vital. To that end, we need to support young people in exploring and understanding the opportunities that are open to them. The SFI Discover Programme Call seeks to support projects that break down any barriers to entry and promote the diversity of STEM careers available and to increase:

- Children, young people's and teachers' understanding of STEM careers and pathways

- Children and young people's interaction with STEM role models
- Young people's knowledge of what working life is like in STEM-related jobs
- Young people's and teachers' awareness of areas with the greatest employment prospects/skills need in STEM

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be asked to report on the different types of participants that they have engaged with and to outline the innovative approach taken to reach these audiences. Applicants will be required to include details of outcomes such as heightened awareness and understanding of STEM careers and discoveries and attitudinal changes or perceptions on stereotypes.

Objective: *Support projects which develop capacity for the delivery of STEM Education and Public Engagement (EPE) in Ireland.*
SFI recognises the need for increased training and up-skilling in the delivery of high quality EPE experiences. To this end the SFI Discover Programme seeks to increase the number of capacity building projects it supports, including developing networks and sharing mechanisms that will increase capacity and enable best practice to be understood, developed and shared nationally.

Expected Outcomes: Applicants will be required to report on the different types of participants reached, and the skills developed as part of the capacity building exercises.

10.2 Publicity and Progress

Funded organisations will be required to ensure that SFI is credited and acknowledged in all promotional material in a prominent place in line with Clause 17 of the SFI Discover Programme Grant Terms and Conditions. In addition to Clause 17:

- SFI should be acknowledged in all press materials (in the first paragraph), web site (at the top), collateral (on the front) and branding for event etc. Acknowledgement should indicate applicable SFI support for specific events, speakers, lectures, etc. The SFI logo and brand guidelines are available to download from the www.sfi.ie website. It is essential that the SFI team is kept informed of any promotional activity, project progress and media plans
- Any printed materials e.g. brochures, reports, promotional materials, banners etc., must include the SFI logo in a clear and visible position in accordance with the SFI brand guidelines
- The project lead shall notify SFI at least 10 days in advance of any media activity (including but not limited to) photo calls, press releases, press briefings etc. pre-arranged by project lead or their Research Body.

10.3 Child Safeguarding

Where relevant, applicants and Organisations are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,[14] and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.[15] It is the responsibility of the Organisation to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law. Applicants should note that compliance with the Children First Act is a condition of funding under the SFI Discover Programme and confirmation of compliance will be sought before any funding can be released. Applicants are reminded to ensure the appropriate policies and procedures are in place to cover all aspects of delivery, including digital delivery to young people to avoid any delays in the payment of the grant.

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[14] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf
[15] http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

10.4 Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation[16] is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.[17] 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.**[18]

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 Organisation and members of the Project 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 Organisation, the Project Lead, or any member of the Project 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 Organisation, the Project Lead or any member of the Project Team on its behalf

11. Application Submission Checklist

To allow SFI to fully evaluate completed applications you should:

☐ Complete all sections of the application form via SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system.

☐ Upload a one-page CV, using the CV template provided on SESAME for the project lead and each of the project team members **written with relevance to this project.** In the case of a role being sought under this award a one-page job description must be included in place of a CV.

☐ Upload a Gantt chart to provide a timeline for key milestones in the project. See template here.

☐ **Eligible Research Bodies** should complete, sign, stamp and upload the Eligible Research Body cover sheet (i.e. if your organisation is listed here).

☐ **Other Body – State Body** (e.g. city or county council) should complete, sign, stamp and upload the "Other Body -State Body" Cover Sheet available on SESAME.

☐ **Other Body** (i.e. not an Eligible Research Body or a State Body) should complete, sign and upload, relevant cover sheet (Other Organisation Cover Sheet) and all required corporate / financial information as outlined in the Call Document/on SESAME.

Other Bodies Only: Complete, sign and upload the Declaration of Bona Fides (available to download from SESAME).

☐ Upload a description of your track record in STEM Education and Public Engagement (max 2 pages)

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[16] https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm
[17] https://www.eugdpr.org/
[18] http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/

☐ Upload any letters of support / commitment to the project from partners if appropriate. Letters of support are only required from relevant organisations whose contribution is a key element to the delivery of the project. The level and type of funding being provided by a project partner should be indicated in their letter of support.

☐ Upload a Glossary of any acronyms included in your proposal.

☐ List of references where appropriate.

The above checklist is for guidance purposes only and SFI will not accept any responsibility for omissions from this checklist or in an application. Applicants are advised to read all the documentation in full in order to provide a comprehensive submission.

12. Grant Conditions

SFI Terms and Conditions for the Discover Programme Calls can be found here.

State Aid

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of the SFI Discover Grant Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted under this Call 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).

The State aid information in this Call document is provided by way of guidance only and it is not a substitute for legal or professional advice, which is the responsibility of applicants.

Guidance on State aid for applicants to and recipients of, SFI grant funding can be found here.