

# SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

## International Partnership Programme SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017

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### Call for Submission of Proposals

#### Key Dates

**Advance notice released:** 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**Release of call documentation:** 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Deadline for submission of preliminary information to SFI:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time

**Deadline for proposal submission to SFI:** 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time

**Applicants in China should consult the NSFC [webpage](#) for details on the NSFC deadline for submission of proposals. For the Applicants based in Ireland, please note that the Applicant based in China will require the version of the proposal submitted to SFI (in PDF) format for submission both by post and via the NSFC's online system in advance of the NSFC's deadline of 16:00 Beijing, China local time on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.**

#### 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.

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## 1 Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is pleased to launch the Science Foundation Ireland International Partnership Programme. The first call for proposals under the programme is in partnership with the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). The SFI-NSFC partnership will focus on enhancing and developing research relationships between Ireland and the People's Republic of China, with an emphasis on supporting impactful research of scientific excellence.

The overall goal of the SFI-NSFC Partnership is to fund excellent and innovative collaborative research projects in priority areas of relevance to both countries. Proposals submitted to the call will include a joint programme of research prepared by a leading academic in Ireland alongside a leading academic partner based in the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China). Following international peer review evaluation, each agency will fund the elements of research undertaken in their respective country. Importantly, the Partnership must add significant value to each research programme above that achievable by the academics in each jurisdiction working alone. The specific objectives of the SFI-NSFC Partnership are outlined below.

### Objectives of the SFI-NSFC Partnership

- To stimulate new collaborations and enhance existing collaborations of strategic relevance between excellent researchers and research institutions in the Republic of Ireland and the People's Republic of China
- To build capacity, expertise and mutually beneficial relationships between Ireland-based and China-based researchers
- To support excellent collaborative scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact
- To offer both Ireland-based and China-based researchers the opportunity to find new outlets and applications for their work
- To build capacity, expertise and relationships that will allow researchers in Ireland and China to collaborate and to win support through various EU-China opportunities within Horizon 2020<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some EU-China H2020 opportunities are detailed at the link below

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/search/search\\_topics.html#c,topics=callStatus/t/Forthcoming/1/1/0/default-group&callStatus/t/Open/1/1/0/default-group&callStatus/t/Closed/0/1/0/default-group&topicFileName,callIdentifier,callTitle,plannedOpeningDate,callProgramme,identifier,title,description,tags,flags/s/China/1/1/0&+identifier/desc](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/search/search_topics.html#c,topics=callStatus/t/Forthcoming/1/1/0/default-group&callStatus/t/Open/1/1/0/default-group&callStatus/t/Closed/0/1/0/default-group&topicFileName,callIdentifier,callTitle,plannedOpeningDate,callProgramme,identifier,title,description,tags,flags/s/China/1/1/0&+identifier/desc)

## 2 Programme Details

### 2.1 Funding

SFI-NSFC Partnership grants are **four years** in duration. The minimum direct costs requested from SFI by the Applicant based in Ireland will be **€500,000** and the maximum will be **€1,000,000**. The NSFC will provide **4,000,000 RMB** (direct costs) for the research costs of the Applicant based in China.

### 2.2 Programme Remit

The legal remit<sup>2</sup> of 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. **Oriented basic research** is “*research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge that is likely to form the background to the solution of recognised, or expected, current or future problems or possibilities*”. Additionally, **applied research** is defined as “*an original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge and is directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective. The results of applied research are intended primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods, or systems*”. To be eligible for funding through the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme, all research activities funded by SFI must be aligned to SFI’s legal remit. The NSFC supports basic research, fosters talented researchers and promotes socioeconomic development. All NSFC-funded research must align to the NSFC’s remit. All proposals must also be aligned to one of the priority research areas outlined in the box below. These areas have been identified as strategically relevant for economic and/or societal impact in both Ireland and China. It is anticipated that future calls for proposals will include thematic areas within the life science field, particularly related to health.

#### SFI-NSFC Partnership Thematic Areas

- Novel Functional Materials and Devices
- Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy
- Digital Platforms, Content and Applications
- Smart Grids and Smart Cities
- Future Networks and Communications
- Energy and Environmental Sustainability
- Manufacturing Competitiveness
- Future Agri-Food

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/>

### 2.3 Definition of Applicant and Collaborator

Each SFI-NSFC Partnership proposal must have **two applicants**, one based in an SFI eligible Research Body<sup>3</sup> in the Republic of Ireland and one based in an NSFC eligible Research Body in the People's Republic of China. It is expected that each partner will be responsible for approximately 50% of the research activities and no additional applicants in either jurisdiction are permitted.

The **Applicant based in Ireland** will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the aspects of the research programme funded by SFI and the submission of reports to SFI. The Applicant based in Ireland is responsible and accountable for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of SFI.<sup>4</sup> The Applicant based in Ireland will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the grant, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant.

The **Applicant based in China** will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the aspects of the research programme funded by the NSFC and the submission of reports to the NSFC. The Applicant based in China is responsible and accountable for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the NSFC. The Applicant based in China will serve as the primary point of contact for the NSFC on the grant, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant.

Individuals may only be listed as an Applicant on one proposal to an open call of the SFI-NSFC Partnership. If an individual is listed as an Applicant on more than one proposal to an open SFI-NSFC Partnership call, both applications will be returned without review.

**Please note that the term "Co-Applicant" is not employed for the SFI-NSFC Partnership. Both applicants are designated as Lead Applicant in their respective jurisdiction.**

An **Academic Collaborator** is an individual working in an academic institution who is committed to providing a valuable intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research. As appropriate, Academic Collaborator(s) based in an SFI Eligible Research Body within the Republic of Ireland may receive funding from SFI through the grant (see Section 3.2.9), but the funding allocated should reflect the supporting role that such Collaborator(s) are expected to play in the research programme. Academic Collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the grant, but may be the local supervisor if these team members are based in a different institution to the Ireland-based Applicant. Academic Collaborators intending to act as a local supervisor to team members should be able to demonstrate a competitive track record of achievements and must have previously held a supervisory role in research programmes.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

Industry partners are not obligatory, but are permitted and, where appropriate for the topic of the research, are encouraged. An industry partner should be listed within the documentation as an **Industry Collaborator**.

## 2.4 Eligibility Criteria for the Applicant based in China

The eligibility of the Applicant based in China will be determined solely by NSFC and not by SFI. The Applicant based in China should consult with the NSFC regarding their eligibility for this call.

## 2.5 Eligibility Criteria for the Applicant based in Ireland

### 2.5.1 Employment Status

The Applicant based in Ireland must be a member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), **or**

A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, 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**

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

Retired or Emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments; further details are available on the SFI website.<sup>5</sup>

Research Body submission confirms that the Applicant is either a member of the academic staff, a contract researcher, or awaiting appointment as defined above. The Research Body of the Applicant based in Ireland is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by funding from SFI. A list of Eligible Research Bodies<sup>6</sup> is available on the SFI website.

### 2.5.2 Funding Track Record

The Applicant based in Ireland must either hold, or have held a SFI research award (\*) as either lead Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI, or if the Applicant is not an SFI Awardee, s/he is required to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as lead investigator or as co-investigator. The grant must have been competitively awarded and internationally peer reviewed. Eligible research grants would be expected to support at least one full-time equivalent, excluding the applicant(s), and include research team costs (e.g., materials and

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

consumables). This excludes smaller awards such as travel grants, equipment grants, postgraduate fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, and awards of short duration (12 months or less). Laboratory fit-out/start-up funding, and awards that have not been subject to external international peer review are also excluded. Applicants may be required to provide evidence to support the validity of an award upon request. If there is any uncertainty regarding the eligibility of funding received, contact SFI at [partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie).

*(\*) Research awards include but are not limited to SFI IvP, SFI PI, SFI RFP, SFI SRC, SFI CSET, SFI Research Professor, SFI PIYRA, SFI SIRG, SFI CDA, SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders award, SFI Charles Parsons, SFI Mathematics Initiative, US-Ireland R&D Partnership award, Royal Society-Science Foundation Ireland University Research Fellowship, or SFI Research Centre. Grants such as personal fellowships or travel grants are not included. If you are unsure as to whether your SFI award is considered eligible, please contact SFI in advance of your submission.*

### 2.5.3 PhD Duration

The Applicant based in Ireland must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification<sup>7</sup> for at least **five years** by the proposal deadline (30<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

- *Applicants holding an equivalent qualification may be eligible, but should nevertheless seek approval from SFI in advance of submitting a proposal.*
- *The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year. Therefore, only individuals with an official date of 2012 or earlier are eligible to apply to the SFI-NFSC Partnership Programme 2017 call.*

### 2.5.4 Senior-Author Publications

The Applicant based in Ireland is required to have demonstrated that they have been a **senior author** on at least **5 international peer-reviewed articles**. Only original research publications, and not review articles or other secondary research literature, are acceptable. Please note that 5 senior-author publications is a minimum eligibility criterion; applicants with higher numbers of publications are likely to be more competitive. For this programme, senior authors are defined as follows:

- An author that is listed as first or joint first author, reflecting the fact that he/she has provided the greatest intellectual contribution, has held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts.
- The last author will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects his/her overall responsibility for the study and suggests that a level of mentorship has been provided.

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<sup>7</sup> Please see the SFI website for further details on equivalence - <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

- It will be noted that different publishers have differing rules on how the senior authorship is indicated (e.g., by using asterisks, underlining, placing the name first or last in the list of authors, etc.); of overriding importance however is that the applicant should be able to convince and reassure reviewers that they are the key author on these publications. Joint senior authorship may only be claimed **where the article clearly states** that two (or more) authors have provided equal and significant contributions to the work described. Please note that senior authorship does not necessarily mean that they were responsible for the finance associated with the research that was reported.
- Corresponding authorship that is not listed as first or last author is **not sufficient** as evidence of senior authorship.

### 2.5.5 Supervisory Experience

The Applicant based in Ireland is required to demonstrate proven prior experience, capability and authority in the mentorship and supervision of postgraduate students and team members.

## 3 Application Procedure

### 3.1 Submission of Preliminary Information

Researchers based in Ireland intending to act as the Ireland-based Applicant on a proposal to the SFI-NSFC Partnership must first contact the Research Office of the intended Irish host institution and provide their staff with preliminary information through a completed version of the form found in Appendix A of this call document. This form provides a provisional title for the proposal and a brief scientific abstract (max. 200 words) that describes in high-level detail the main objectives of the research to be carried out.

**Research Offices of the host Research Body in Ireland must provide SFI with the identity of the Applicant from their institution, the identity of the partner based in China, and the associated titles and abstracts (as a single PDF document) by email ([partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie)) no later than the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time.**

**The preliminary information requested is mandatory and is required by SFI for planning purposes. No assessment of the eligibility of applicants or proposals will be carried out at this stage.**

**The detail in the preliminary information may be modified when completing the proposal to this call. However, SFI expects the details in the proposal to be consistent with the preliminary information submitted to the host institution Research Office. SFI reserves the right to withdraw applications where the preliminary information differs significantly from the proposal.**

**Only Applicants that have submitted the requested preliminary information through the Irish host institution Research Office will be permitted to submit a proposal to the call. Any information submitted directly to SFI, and not through the host institution Research Office, will not be accepted, and submission of a proposal will not be permitted.**



### 3.2 Submission of a Proposal

For SFI-NSFC Partnership proposals, the host Research Body of the Applicant based in Ireland must submit the joint proposal to SFI via SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system. Proposals submitted to SFI outside the SESAME system will not be accepted. The proposal submitted to SFI will contain the joint programme of research and the details of both applicants (Ireland-based and China-based).

The Applicant based in China must submit the joint proposal PDF document (prepared through the SESAME system) and an additional proposal using the NSFC's template application to the NSFC<sup>8</sup>.

**The deadline for submissions to SFI is the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time.**

**Applicants in China should consult the NSFC webpage<sup>9</sup> for details on the NSFC deadline for submission of proposals. For the Applicants based in Ireland, please note that the Applicant based in China will require the version of the proposal submitted to SFI (in PDF) format for submission both by post and via the NSFC's online system in advance of the NSFC's deadline of 16:00 Beijing, China local time on the 30th June 2017.**

Proposals which are only submitted to a single agency will not be eligible and will be returned without review.

#### Joint Proposal Submission via SESAME

**Both Applicants are required to have SESAME Research Profiles and have them linked to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted. See the SESAME Researcher User Guide<sup>10</sup> and Section 3.2.1 of this call document for more information.**

Access to SESAME for Applicants based in Ireland is controlled by staff at the Research Office of the host Research Body of the Applicant based in Ireland. Please follow internal organisational process to request this access.

Access to SESAME for Applicants based in China is controlled by staff in SFI. The following information must be emailed to [partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie) in order to generate a SESAME profile.

- **Applicant Details**
  - Applicant's Full Name (First and Last Name)
  - Applicant's Job Title
  - Applicant's Title (e.g. Dr, Prof)
  - Applicant's Telephone Number, including country code
  - Applicant's Email Address

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<sup>8</sup> The Applicant based in China should consult the NSFC for details of the NSFC's application form

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nsf.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab87/info53841.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SESAME-User-Guide-Researcher-v-6-11.pdf>

- **Applicant's Research Body Details**

- Name of Research Body
- Address of Research Body, including Postal Code
- Website of Research Body
- Telephone Number of Research Body (main office), including country code

Once Applicants have been registered by the Research Office or SFI, **they will receive an email** containing their:

1. Username
2. Password
3. SFI PIN
4. SESAME website address

A **username** and **password** are needed to log in to SESAME. The SESAME Profile PIN of the Applicant based in China must be provided to the Applicant based in Ireland, in order to be associated with the same application. This PIN is stored in the **contact profile** section on SESAME.

SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. SESAME can be accessed 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<sup>11</sup> for more detailed information.

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

**Applicants based in Ireland must submit the SESAME proposal to their Research Office in advance of any internal deadline that may be set by the office. It is then the Research Office's responsibility to submit the proposal to SFI, via SESAME, in advance of the call deadline.**

Applicants should carefully follow the instructions below and in the SESAME Researcher User Guide to complete the various sections of the application. In addition, a checklist of requirements is provided in Appendix D of this call document.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SESAME-User-Guide-Researcher-v-6-11.pdf>

**Proposal submission requirements:**

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**.
- 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.**
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review.**
- File sizes of attachments should be less than 5MB.
- **Both applicants must complete all mandatory Sesame profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without this information.**

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

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

**It is the responsibility of the applicant based in China to ensure that eligible proposals are received by the NSCF on, or before, NSFC's deadline.**

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

### 3.2.1 ORCID ID

ORCID<sup>12</sup> provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms. In December 2015, SESAME integrated with ORCID to make it possible for researchers with a SESAME Research Profile to connect directly to an ORCID iD from their profile. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms, creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier, which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://orcid.org/>

- 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 SFI-NSFC Partnership, all applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**.

### 3.2.2 Eligibility Questionnaire

Applicants based in Ireland are required to complete the eligibility questionnaire upon commencing an application to the SFI-NSFC Partnership (see Sections 2.4 and 2.5 for eligibility details). Please note that the Applicant based in Ireland completes the eligibility questionnaire on behalf of the Applicant based in China.

### 3.2.3 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**  
The Research Proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken and should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded proposals are published by SFI.
- **Resubmission Statement**  
Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and make reference to reviewer comments, where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and **will not be shared with reviewers**. Full details on SFI's Resubmission Policy are available on the SFI website<sup>13</sup>.
- **Duration of Award Requested**  
SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme awards are funded for a period of 4 years (48 months).
- **Thematic Area**  
Applicants must select one of the thematic areas from the drop-down menu. Each proposal must be aligned to at least one of these thematic areas.
- **Alignment to Selected Thematic Area (max. 250 words)**  
This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to one of the programme's thematic areas as outlined in Section 2.2. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.
- **Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**  
This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to SFI's legal remit, as defined in Section 2.2. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

- **Primary NRP Area**  
Applicants should select one of the 14 priority research areas from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research. Alternatively, applicants should select “Other” if their research does not align to one of the 14 priority areas.
- **Research Area (Primary)**  
Applicants should select a primary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.
- **Research Area (Secondary)**  
Applicants should select a secondary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary SFI research area already selected best describes the proposed research.
- **Ethical Issues**  
All applicants are required to answer the questions related to ethical issues (see Section 3.2.7).

### 3.2.4 Applicant Details (To be completed by both applicants)

Each Applicant must provide the following information and documentation on the SESAME application. Applicants cannot provide this information on behalf of other Applicants.

- **Orcid iD**  
Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted. See Section 3.2.1 for details.
- **Time Commitment to Project**  
Indicate the Applicant’s time commitment to the proposed research project as a percentage of his/her total working time. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested. Reviewers are likely to question time commitments that are lower than 30% of the Applicant’s total available time.
- **Applicant CV (upload; max. 6 pages)**  
A CV of each Applicant, using the template provided in Appendix B, must be completed and uploaded.
- **Publications and Supervisory Experience**  
Provide summary information on the total numbers of publications to date and also provide supervisory experience to date for each Applicant.
- **Research Funding History**  
(See Section 3.2.5 for details).
- **Both applicants must complete all mandatory Sesame profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without this information.**

### 3.2.5 Research Funding History

Both Applicants must report on expired, current and pending funding.

- Applicants should include details of any financial support pending, or received over the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry, etc.

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

**Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide).<sup>14</sup> If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has NO expired, current or pending funding.**

**Both applicants must complete this section within SESAME. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Applicants has actually been included in the application.**

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

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SESAME-User-Guide-Researcher-v-6-11.pdf>

### 3.2.6 Collaborator(s) Details

Include the name, contact information and other requested details of Collaborator(s), if any. Please indicate whether Collaborators are based in academia or industry; only Academic or Industry Collaborators will be considered for SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 applications (see Section 2.3 for further information).

#### Collaborator CVs

CVs (max. 2 pages) for all Academic Collaborators **must** be uploaded. CVs may also be provided for Industry Collaborators; failure to provide Industry Collaborator CVs may disadvantage an application during the review process. A template is not provided for Collaborator CVs.

#### Collaborator Letters of Support

Each Academic or Industry Collaborator **must** provide a letter of support (max. 2 pages) with the grant application and this must clearly outline the role of that Collaborator in the programme of research proposed. The role of the Collaborator must also be *referenced* in the main body of the research proposal (for example: *Will the Collaborators be supplying samples, data, etc.? Will the Collaborators be providing training in techniques or the use of equipment? Will the Collaborators directly participate in specific projects? Will Collaborators be acting in a purely advisory capacity?*).

**Letters of support that do not originate from officially listed Collaborators will be removed from the proposal, as will letters from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal.** Please see Section 3.2.11 for more details on letters of support.

**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: *Inspiring Partnership - the National IP Protocol 2016*.<sup>15</sup>**

**Potential conflicts of interest with respect to Industry Partners named in the application should be directly declared within the applicant CV. Furthermore, the Host Research Body Letter of Support (see Section 3.2.11) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.**

### 3.2.7 Main Body of Proposal

- **Keywords (max. 15)**

These should be descriptors that best characterise the proposed research.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/KTI-Protocol-2016.pdf>

- **Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)**  
This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application.
- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)**  
This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work. This abstract should be clearly understood when read separately from the proposal.
- **Research Description (upload; max. 15 pages)**  
The Research Description should be completed by both the Applicant based in Ireland and the Applicant based in China. This document should describe the joint programme of research. Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for peer reviewers to comment on the quality of the ideas and proposed implementation.

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

- o Describe clearly and concisely the specific aims and objectives of the proposal. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables.
- o Explain the background and significance of the problem – does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important? How will the proposed collaborative project uniquely benefit both Ireland and China? What is the current state of the art in the area? Describe and explain how the proposed work, if successful, will advance the state of the art. The background section should reference the state of the art in this research field.
- o Are the concepts described novel? Ensure that the novelty of the approach is clearly explained, again with reference to the state of the art.
- o How does the collaboration between Ireland and China result in a distinctive approach to this research problem such that this could not be addressed by either applicant alone?
- o The methodology of the proposed programme should be well developed, and how this proposed methodology advances the current state of the art should be described in detail. Is the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

The application should also include:

- o Appropriate timelines, milestones and expected outputs for the proposed research (e.g., a Gantt chart), and clearly described roles of the Applicant based in Ireland, the Applicant based in China, Collaborators and Team Members in the work programme.
- o Details on the management of the collaborative research, including description of decision-making processes, communication and plans, and resolution of conflicts.
- o Relevant preliminary data, which may either take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research, or (b) a summary of results where the data has yet to be published. In the latter case, this should be included within the 15-page research description as evidence that the applicant team has a track record in the field of the proposed research.
- o Contingency plans if setbacks or delays occur.



**Ethical Issues:**

All applicant groups, 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. In particular, applicants must state clearly in their proposals which country the proposed research involving humans and/or animals will take place.

Guidance on the ethical and scientific issues in carrying out such studies is provided on the SFI website<sup>16</sup>. The SFI Policy on the Use of Animals in Research can be found at this link: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

For SFI-funded 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. For SFI-funded studies to be carried out in China, the Research Body and the Award Holder must ensure that this research will comply with both Irish and Chinese legislation.

For NSFC-funded studies, Chinese guidelines and regulations must be followed and appropriate approvals must be obtained for studies involving human or animal subjects. For NSFC-funded studies to be carried out in Ireland, the Research Body and the Award Holder must ensure that this research will comply with both Irish and Chinese legislation.

**Clinical Trials:**

Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (i.e., HPRA) or the relevant regulatory agency in China will not be permitted through the SFI International Partnership Programme.

- **References (upload; max. 5 pages)**

Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided in a separate PDF document. A five-page limit is allowed for uploaded references.

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

The Impact Statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated; see Section 4 for further details. Where appropriate for the topic of the research, industry collaborations including co-funding through cash and/or in-kind contributions should be discussed.

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<sup>16</sup>

[http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance\\_for\\_Applicants\\_on\\_Ethical\\_and\\_Scientific\\_Issues.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance_for_Applicants_on_Ethical_and_Scientific_Issues.pdf)

### 3.2.8 Proposed Budget

#### NSFC Budget Request

For SFI-NSFC Partnership proposals, Applicants based in China must upload a separate Budget Table and Description of Resources in PDF format using the NSFC Budget Template (Appendix C). Within this template, Applicants based in China must provide a narrative justifying the funding requested from the NSFC. This narrative should include details of team size and resources required. Enough detail should be provided so that peer reviewers have sufficient information to understand why the resources requested are necessary for the proposed project. The NSFC Budget Template will also be available for download on SESAME.

#### SFI Budget Request

Applicants based in Ireland must complete a single Budget Table in SESAME (using € amounts), outlining the SFI budget request only.

There should be exactly one SESAME budget for Ireland-based applicants and exactly one uploaded PDF Budget Table for China-based Applicants.

#### SFI's Grant Budget Policy

SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the Applicant based in Ireland and his/her research group. Eligible costs include:

- Contributions to salaries/stipends for staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme. Please consult the SFI website for more information on the **SFI Grant Budget Policy (GBP)**.<sup>17</sup>
- Relevant research expenses, including equipment, consumables and travel.
- Access charges for the use of large items of infrastructure or testbed facilities may be requested in certain situations; see the GBP for details.

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

The costs eligible for grant support under the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel. Ensure that the

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml>

final total provided includes all direct costs requested from SFI. Costs which will be covered by industry partners should not be included. All grants are made directly to the host Research Body. Please also refer to the **SFI Grant Terms and Conditions**,<sup>18</sup> and the GBP.

- **Staff: Salaries and Benefits**

SFI-NSFC Partnership grants do not fund the core salary or benefits of the applicant. Contributions to team-member salaries, and fees and stipends for postgraduate students (PhD and MSc by research) may be requested. Salary contributions for Collaborators are not permitted. All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.1** of the GBP and the associated **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**.<sup>19</sup> Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved by the relevant Research Office.

- **Equipment**

All information required to complete the Equipment section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.2** of the GBP.

- **Materials and Consumables**

All information required to complete the Materials and Consumables section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.3** of the GBP. Where relevant, a list of current **SFI Approved Access Charge Plans** and associated key contacts is available.<sup>20</sup>

- **Travel**

All information required to complete the Travel section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.4** of the GBP. Travel costs for SFI-NSFC Partnership progress/project meetings are eligible – these costs should be split between both Applicant groups.

- **Ineligible Costs**

Under the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme, the salary of the applicant is **not** an eligible cost. Information regarding other ineligible costs can be found in **Section 5** of the GBP.

### 3.2.9 Budget Justification (upload, max. 3 pages)

All information required to complete the Budget Justification can be found in **Section 7** of the GBP. This section should only be completed by the Applicant based in Ireland and should not justify the budget requested by the Applicant based in China.

If cash and/or in-kind industry contributions have been agreed, provide details and describe how they complement the requested budget from SFI. Similarly, provide details of cash and/or in-kind contributions from international Academic Collaborators. Costs that will be covered through

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

<sup>19</sup>

[http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/1.-SFI-Team-member-scales\\_amendments\\_January-2018\\_Final.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/1.-SFI-Team-member-scales_amendments_January-2018_Final.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml>

leveraging of funds from Industry or Academic Collaborators should not be included in the proposed budget.

Clear information should be provided where funding is to be apportioned to Collaborators. Please note that Collaborators based outside the Republic of Ireland or those not located within eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding from SFI through the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme.

If SFI funding is sought for overseas services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for carrying out this activity outside of Ireland must be explained.

### 3.2.10 Infrastructure and Services (upload; max. 1 page)

The Applicants must describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the host Research Bodies in Ireland and China. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be carried out, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the Research Body. **A separate letter of support must be included from the Applicant's Research Body based in Ireland (see Section 3.2.11).**

### 3.2.11 Letters of Support (uploads; max. 2 pages for each letter)

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

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Applicant based in Ireland**, which should comment on the infrastructure and services available, as outlined by the Applicant (see Section 3.2.10). This letter should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest (see Section 3.2.6).
- A letter of support is not required from the **host Research Body of the Applicant based in China**. Host Research Bodies in China confirm their commitment by stamping the NSFC's application template.
- A letter of support from **each Academic and Industry Collaborator**. See Section 3.2.6 for full details.

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

### 3.2.12 Excluded Reviewers

Up to three individuals may be excluded from acting as reviewers of proposals for reasons of competition.

### 3.2.13 Research Body Approval

Submission of proposals to SFI may only be made by an authorised representative of the Research Body of the Applicant based in Ireland. In particular, the Research Body is approving the following in relation to the Ireland-based Applicant and the proposal:

- The eligibility of the Applicant
- That the applicant is, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of their Research Body for the duration of the grant

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

### 3.2.14 Applicant Agreement to Terms and Conditions

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants.<sup>21</sup> The submission of an application shall also be construed as consent by the applicants to participate in the peer-review process. SFI reserves the right to return applications without review where they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

### 3.3 Proposal Submission to SFI

A PDF of the proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. The responsibility for verifying that the proposal is ready for submission and the submission itself lies with the Applicant based in Ireland. A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Ireland-based Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Irish Research Office to SFI.

Proposals must be received by SFI no later than **13:00 (Dublin time) on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017**.

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

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

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

### 3.4 Proposal Submission to the NSFC

The Applicant based in China must submit the joint proposal PDF document (prepared through the SESAME system) and an additional proposal using the NSFC's template application to the NSFC<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

<sup>22</sup> The Applicant based in China should consult the NSFC for details of the NSFC's application form

## 4 Economic and Societal Impact

Each year the Irish Government spends in the region of €750M on scientific research, training and development. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research.

For the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient in isolation; applications must also be able to clearly articulate the potential for economic and societal impact. SFI regards clear and convincing Impact Statements as being fundamental components of competitive proposals. Applicants should be aware that proposals that are not seen to have the potential to deliver impact, or have not successfully articulated how this impact can be delivered, will not be funded through this programme, regardless of scientific excellence.

### 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 by:

- Powering an innovative and enterprising economy
- Creating high-value jobs
- Attracting, developing and nurturing businesses, scientists and talented people
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output
- Developing the country's international reputation
- Educating and training the population
- Solving major national and global problems and challenges, such as food security and world hunger, climate change, energy security, ageing population, rural sustainability, and other sustainability challenges

### How will impact be assessed and measured?

SFI recognises that some research projects may have immediate impact whereas other projects may take much longer to achieve impact. For example, an output such as a filed patent is unlikely to create an impact until the patent is licensed to develop a product, which can then generate revenue and jobs. The adoption of a project output such as a new standard or protocol could improve the performance of an existing business, which could also impact revenue and jobs. The discovery of a new treatment or medical device will have obvious health impacts, as well as potential economic benefits. Researchers applying to the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme have an obligation to articulate how and when they believe **their proposed research programme** will deliver impact on Ireland and China's economy and society in the Impact Statement section of the application (see below).

Reviewers will be asked to assess the potential impact and the likelihood of the delivery of that impact, as described in the Impact Statement. The relevant impact review criterion is:

- *Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and/or economic effects on Ireland and/or China as a result of the proposed research, which may be realised in the short term or over a longer period.*

**For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the SFI website.<sup>23</sup> A webinar<sup>24</sup> is also available. Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the Impact Statement in an SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme application.**

### Impact Statement

An **Impact Statement (maximum of three pages)** is a requirement in applications to the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme. The Impact Statement should articulate the planned and potential impact of the proposed research. SFI recognises that impact can take time and in many cases is unforeseen; as such, it is not possible to predict all impacts at the time of submission. 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 to be fully realised.

The statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should also be indicated. Plans to utilise appropriate alternative funding sources to assist with achieving impact should be included, where relevant. Applicants are encouraged, where relevant, to discuss their proposals and Impact Statements with Technology Transfer Offices and/or other institutional personnel with responsibility for the commercialisation of research, prior to submission.

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

- **Who will benefit from this research?**
- **What plans will you put in place to increase the chances of economic and societal impacts from the proposed research?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from your research be realised?**

In order to best describe the possible impacts in an SFI-NSFC Partnership Impact Statement, the following points should also be considered:

- What is the potential impact of the proposed research on the development of Ireland's and/or China's industry, economy, competitiveness and development?
- Are there potential international beneficiaries or collaborations with international industry or partner organisations?

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>



- The SFI-NSFC Partnership encourages industry collaborations where appropriate to the topic of the research. How will the Industry Collaborators contribute to increased impact? What supports/contributions are they offering? Have routes to commercialisation been considered?
- With whom might you partner to increase the likelihood of potential impacts? It may be valuable to include one or more Industry Collaborators in your application.
- How will the proposed research impact on the education, training and career of students and research team members in both Ireland and China? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education (e.g., facilities and instrumentation)? Applicants should note that all SFI-NSFC Partnership grants will offer training opportunities of some degree, therefore it is important to highlight the added value from the training provided under your award; for example, highlight where past researchers/students have found employment in industry.
- Highlight industrial interest in past/current research (e.g., consultancy, projects funded, collaborative publications, licenses granted, companies formed, VC funding, problems solved, etc.).
- How will the potential impacts of your research be best realised?
- What benchmarks or metrics can be applied to clearly demonstrate in the future that the various impacts outlined in the Impact Statement are both realistic and achievable?
- How will the proposed research impact on society and the quality of life for Ireland's and/or China's citizens?
- If relevant, how will the proposed research impact on the natural and built environment, together with societies, individuals or groups of individuals who benefit as a result?
- If relevant, describe how your research will impact policy or public service?
- Are there potential beneficiaries within the private sector, public sector, third-level sector or any others (e.g., professional or practitioner groups, charities or patient groups)?

## 5 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

The review process outlined below will be managed by SFI. Proposals will be assessed through a review process that combines postal and panel review stages, both carried out by international experts. The process is defined below and also described in the form of a flow diagram<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-nsf-china-partnership/SFI-NSFC-Partnership-Review-Process.pdf>



## Postal Review Stage

All eligible proposals will be forwarded to distinguished international experts for evaluation of scientific excellence and potential economic and societal impact. SFI Programme Managers will solicit reviews of proposals from at least three peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research and the associated impacts. NSFC Programme Managers will input into the selection of reviewers, where appropriate. The applicant may specify up to three individuals who should not act as reviewers for his or her application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. SFI shall not refer the application to any of these selected individuals. Otherwise, the selection of reviewers shall be at the discretion of SFI.

Reviews received from peers will be collated and forwarded to applicants. Applicants will then be afforded the opportunity to submit a response to the reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to respond (advanced notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants). All proposals will then progress to Panel Review.

### **The Postal and Panel Reviews will apply the following review criteria:**

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigators, taking into account the career stage of the Applicants, performance on recent awards, and the Applicants' record of securing relevant funding over the previous ten years.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field and/or across different fields.*
- *Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and/or economic effects on Ireland and/or China as a result of the proposed research, which may be realised in the short term or over a longer period.*
- *Quality of the joint collaboration between Ireland and China, the potential for the research programme to build new or substantially stronger links between the Irish and Chinese research groups and availability of evidence to demonstrate the added value of active collaboration between partner countries.*

**A summary of the review criteria, score descriptors and weighting can be found in Appendix E.**

## Panel Review Stage

International panel members will be selected with appropriate experience and will not have been involved in the Postal Review stage. NSFC Programme Managers will also input into the selection of reviewers at this stage of the review. The panel members will exhibit a broad range of expertise relevant to the proposals under review and the criteria under which they will be assessed. In addition to briefing material, the panel members will receive the proposal, anonymised postal reviews and the Applicant's response to the postal reviews. Panel members will assess the inputs of the postal reviews and the overall merit and priority of applications. Panels will be invited to rank proposals and to make recommendations on which applications should be given consideration for funding by SFI and the NSFC. **The same review criteria will be applied at this stage as used for the Postal Review.**

The identity of international experts who conduct either the Postal or Panel reviews shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the applicants. However, decisions resulting from the evaluation will be given to the applicant(s), including the postal reviews, the panel reviews and the scribe notes taken by SFI Scientific Staff at the panel meeting. SFI shall not be liable for the release of

information concerning proposals to third parties by those international scientists involved in the merit review process.

### Other Review Information

The performance of applicants on previous SFI grants, as determined through site visits and/or annual reports, will be taken into consideration in the decision-making process. **The final funding decisions are at the discretion of SFI and the NSFC**, which are arrived at following consideration and approval by the SFI Executive Committee, the SFI Grant Approval Committee and the equivalent management groups in the NSFC.

SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

### SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct

Experts engaged by SFI are required to abide by the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.<sup>26</sup> Amongst other requirements, this includes operation in a confidential, fair, independent and equitable manner. Experts are required to confirm, in advance of carrying out their review(s), that they will do so in a confidential manner. The identity of experts who conduct the postal reviews shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicant. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international experts involved in the peer-review process.

Adherence to the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct also requires experts to immediately identify and declare where a conflict of interest exists or arises; in such cases, alternative reviewers will be appointed.

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.

## 6 SFI Policies and Positions

In advance of applying to any SFI programme, Ireland-based applicants are expected to be familiar with all relevant national and SFI policies including, but not limited to, the following:

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/other/index.xml>

*Resubmission Policy* – **SFI’s Policy on Resubmission of Grant Proposals**<sup>27</sup> describes the procedure that applicants must adhere to when resubmitting unfunded proposals previously submitted to SFI through any funding scheme.

*Clinical Trials* – Research programmes that include clinical trials or clinical studies (see Section 3.2.7) must adhere to the SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy<sup>28</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>29</sup> and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HPA’s position on the use of animals in research.

*Research Integrity* – SFI places high importance on ensuring research integrity and endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**.<sup>30</sup> All applicants and institutions are expected to abide by this policy and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.<sup>31</sup>

*Doctoral Education* – For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education as described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)**,<sup>32</sup> which SFI has endorsed.

*Intellectual Property Management* – Ownership of Intellectual Property generated during the project and rights to exploitation, as well as any costs regarding management of Intellectual Property, should be agreed between relevant Institutions hosting the Chinese and Irish researchers funded by a successful grant awarded under the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme. In respect of any research that is funded by SFI or conducted in Ireland, IP arrangements should comply with the provisions of ‘Inspiring Partnership – the **National IP Protocol 2016**’<sup>33</sup> as may be amended or updated from time to time. The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Bodies and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the Industry Partner and compliance with State Aid Regulations.

*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**,<sup>34</sup> applicants are recommended to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland-2014.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public\\_documents/Publications/Code\\_Conduct\\_ResearchIntegrity.pdf](http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national\\_framework\\_for\\_doctoral\\_education\\_0.pdf](http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/KTI-Protocol-2016.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/organisational-publications/SFI\\_Gender\\_Strategy\\_2016-2020.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/organisational-publications/SFI_Gender_Strategy_2016-2020.pdf)

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

## 7 Award Management

### 7.1 Reporting Requirements

SFI has stringent requirements for reporting on the awards that it makes. Awardees that fail to comply with these reporting requirements run the risk of having their grant payments suspended and/or the processing of any applications under review in other SFI Programme funding calls paused, until their reporting status is rectified.

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for all SFI reporting. The reporting requirements for awards made under this programme include the following:

Required Reports	Aim	Due Date
Annual report	Describes all activity on the award for the previous calendar year (January – December)	End of January for each year the award is active
Research Profile	Provides details of the researcher, their team and related activity-based information and outputs from all SFI awards. Used by SFI in the annual Research Outputs stocktake	Mid-January for each year the award is active and for subsequent years, as per SFI's Grant Terms and Conditions
Researcher Snapshot	Provides an overview of the researchers work across all SFI awards and is published on the SFI website	Mid-January for each year the award is active
Final Report	Describes all activity on the award since the last annual report along with the progress over the term of the award	Within 3 months of the award expiration date

The SFI-NSFC annual/final report is a means by which SFI can track the return on its investment for awards made under the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme. SFI is primarily interested in the progress being made on the part of the award relevant to the Republic of Ireland (ROI) research team. However, SFI is also interested in understanding the level of co-operation between the ROI and China teams and the impact that this co-operation is having on the project overall.

To gather outcomes and impacts from awards made under the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme, the Standard Annual/Final Report template will be used in conjunction with an additional document (max 2 pages) which outlines the research work carried out by co-PI(s) in China during the reporting period and highlights the added value of the partnership.

Reporting on SFI awards is used to monitor the progress of individual awards against the overall objectives of the Programme under which the award is made and associated Key Performance

Indicators (KPIs), as set out in SFI's Strategic Plan, Agenda 2020<sup>35</sup>. Each of the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme 2017 call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

- To stimulate new collaborations and enhance existing collaborations of strategic relevance between excellent researchers and research institutions in the Republic of Ireland and the People's Republic of China
- To build capacity, expertise and mutually beneficial relationships between Ireland-based and China-based researchers

In the scientific information section of the report, awardees are asked to outline the progress with reference to the associated outputs and outcomes from the collaborative research project carried out over the term of the award. Reference should be made to the deliverables outlined in the research programme and Gantt charts, where relevant. Furthermore, the report will gather information pertaining to key areas of expertise acquired by both partners as a result of the Partnership, and how this expertise will benefit the relevant groups beyond the term of the award. In their reports, SFI-NSFC Partnership awardees are particularly encouraged to report on new collaborations and new joint funding applications / awards relevant to the programmatic objectives of the SFI- NSFC Partnership. Additionally, awardees should document any exchanges between Ireland- and China-based research teams.

- To offer both Ireland-based and China-based researchers the opportunity to find new outlets and applications for their work

Awardees are asked to input details on Invention disclosures filed, patents files granted or exploited, licensing agreements signed, industry collaborations, ICT standards and spin out companies created. Gathering of this information will enable SFI to report against the following KPI, "By 2020, the proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licenses, and spin outs recorded by Enterprise Ireland that are linked to SFI research, will be doubled"

- To support excellent collaborative scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact

Awards are made under the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme 2017 call with reference to both scientific excellence and impact. In the Strategic Impact section of the annual report, awardees are provided with a list of 11 impact statements or declarations and are asked to prioritise those that are relevant to the outputs on their award. Narrative must then be provided with additional details justifying the options chosen, with cross reference to relevant metrics included in the Research Profile. This data will help towards quantifying the types of impacts arising from the awards SFI has made under the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme 2017 call.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/research-impact/AGENDA-2020.pdf>

- To build capacity, expertise and relationships that will allow researchers in Ireland and China to collaborate and to win support through various EU-China opportunities within Horizon 2020

SFI's expectation is that awards made under the SFI-NSFC International Partnership Programme 2017 call will provide the support necessary for awardees to build capacity, expertise and relationships to a point where they can compete successfully for funding in Horizon 2020 funding programmes that cater for partnership between China and the EU. This success is not only pertinent to the Irish Government, which has set a target of securing €1.25bn in research funding under Horizon 2020, it is also essential for meeting and exceeding targets set against relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in SFI's Agenda 2020. SFI expects that Ireland-based researchers will obtain research funding from as wide a range of sources as possible. In their annual report, awardees are asked to report on the funding opportunities that they have pursued and won, allowing SFI to track this progress on an annual basis. Awardees are also asked to report on the position held by the PI on successful funding awards.

## 7.2 Progress Reviews

SFI will conduct progress reviews in the form of a site visit conducted by international peer reviewers during the period of the award. These progress reviews will take place in the Research Body of the PI based in Ireland, are typically held at the midway point on the award, and may be attended by representatives of the NSFC. NSFC researchers have the option of attending this site review, either in person or via conference call. It is understood that it may not always be possible for the NSFC researchers to attend. The panel will be guided to review the progress and direction of the research, the quality of the team (including the gender balance of the team) and partnerships, the management of the budget and the impact being generated. The panel will also be guided to consider the impact the partnership / co-operation with China based PIs is having on the progress being made, and whether synergies are being created in both directions. In relation to the latter, the panel will review the progress against the impact statement provided by the applicant(s) in their original proposal. The outcome of the review may be taken into consideration in the assessment of future applications made to SFI.

## 8 Further Information

FAQs will be available from the SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme webpage: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-nsf-china-partnership/index.xml>

Researchers based in Ireland should direct all enquiries to [partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie)

Researchers based in China should direct all enquiries to Wencong Li at [liwc@nsfc.gov.cn](mailto:liwc@nsfc.gov.cn)

The NSFC has provided details of the programme on this webpage <http://www.nsf.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab87/info53841.htm>

### Appendix A: SFI-NSFC Partnership Abstract Sheet

<b>PROGRAMME NAME:</b> SFI-NSFC Partnership Programme 2017		<b>CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ABSTRACTS</b> 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2017, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time	
<b>PROPOSAL TITLE (up to 30 words):</b>			
<b>NAME OF IRISH HOST INSTITUTION:</b>	<b>FULL NAME OF APPLICANT BASED IN IRELAND:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS OF APPLICANT BASED IN IRELAND:</b>	
<b>NAME OF CHINESE HOST INSTITUTION</b>	<b>FULL NAME OF APPLICANT BASED IN CHINA:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS OF APPLICANT BASED IN CHINA:</b>	
<b>SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT (up to 200 words):</b>			

## Appendix B: Applicant CV Template

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.

### 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)**

### **A. SELECTED SENIOR-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS**

*Detail up to 5 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.*

### **B. 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.*

## Appendix C: NSFC Budget Template

### SFI-NSFC Partnership Budget Template for the Applicant Based in China (Max. 2 Pages)

Title of Proposal:

Name and Research Body of Applicant based in China:

Name and Research Body of Applicant based in Ireland:

#### NSFC Budget

I. Direct costs	Total (RMB)	Total (Indicative € Amounts)
1. Equipment purchase, Trial-manufacture, Rental or Transformation		
2. Materials & Consumables		
3. Test/Calculation/Analysis		
4. Power Consumption		
5. Travel/Workshops/International Collaboration		
6. Publication/Dissemination/Intellectual Property		
7. Allowance for PhD Students, Postdoctoral Researchers and Research Ssistants		
8. Other Costs		
<b>II. Indirect Costs</b>		
<b>Total Costs</b>		

#### Description of Resources

Applicants based in China must provide a narrative justifying the funding requested from the NSFC. This narrative should include details of team size and resources required. Enough detail should be provided so that peer reviewers have sufficient information to understand why the resources requested are necessary for the proposed project.

## Appendix D: SFI-NSFC Partnership Proposal Checklist for Submission to SFI

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS</b>
<b>Proposal Summary</b>	Title	Up to 30 words
	Resubmission statement (if relevant).	
	Duration	48 months
	Selection of Thematic Area	Select from list
	Justification of alignment with the selected thematic area	Max. 250 words
	Justification of alignment with SFI's Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
	Selection of Primary NRP Area	Select from list
	Select Primary and Secondary Research Areas	Select from list
	Provide requested information on Ethical Issues	See Sesame application for details
<b>Applicant details (to be completed by both applicants)</b>	Complete mandatory Sesame Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link Sesame profile to ORCID iD
	Percentage Time Commitment	
	CV – use template provided	Max. 6 pages
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
<b>Expired, Current or Pending Support of Applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List Expired, Current &amp; Pending Funding for both Applicants</li> <li>Indicate scientific overlap with other current or pending awards.</li> <li>For Applicants currently holding a major SFI award, provide details on how this will be managed: "Management of More Than One Major SFI Award"</li> </ul>	Max. 1000 words for scientific overlap section
<b>Collaborator(s) details</b>	Name/Contact details etc.	
	CV for <b>each</b> Collaborator	Max. 2 pages
<b>Main Body of Proposal</b>	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific Abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay Abstract	Max. 100 words
	Research Description	Max. 15 pages
	References	Max. 5 pages
	Impact Statement	Max. 3 pages
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Description of the infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by Research Bodies	Max. 1 page
<b>SFI Proposed Budget</b>	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table in SESAME
<b>SFI Budget Justification</b>	Upload the budget justification	Max. 3 pages

<b><i>NSFC Budget Template</i></b>	Applicants based in China must complete an indicative NSFC budget and description of resources required	Budget Template in Appendix C Max. 2 pages
<b><i>Letters of Support</i></b>	Collaborators, including industry	Max. 2 pages
	Host Research Body of the Applicant	Max. 2 pages
<b><i>Excluded Reviewers</i></b>	Up to three individuals may be excluded from reviewing the proposal	

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

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

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

## Appendix E: SFI-NSFC Partnership Review Criteria and Scoring

<i>Criteria Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Scores</i>	<i>Score Description</i>
Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigators, taking into account the career stage of the Applicants, performance on recent awards, and the Applicants' record of securing relevant funding over the previous ten years.	25%	1-5	1 - Applicants not internationally competitive 2 - Applicants track record has considerable weaknesses 3 - Applicants track record lacking in one or two critical aspects 4 - High quality applicants in nearly all respects 5 - Outstanding applicants
Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field and/or across different fields.	25%	1-5	1 - Research proposed is not worthy of funding 2 - Research proposed has serious deficiencies 3 - Research proposed is lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed 4 - High quality research programme in most respects 5 - Outstanding research programme in all respects
Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and/or economic effects on Ireland and/or China as a result of the proposed research, which may be realised in the short term or over a longer period.	25%	1-5	1 - Very low potential for economic or societal impact 2 - Low potential for economic or societal impact 3 - Good potential for economic or societal impact 4 - High potential for economic or societal impact 5 - Outstanding potential for economic or societal impact
Quality of the joint collaboration between Ireland and China, the potential for the research programme to build new or substantially stronger links between the Irish and Chinese research groups and availability of evidence to demonstrate the added value of active collaboration between partner countries.	25%	1-5	1 - Very low potential for successful collaboration 2 - Low potential for successful collaboration 3 - Good potential for successful collaboration 4 - High potential for successful collaboration 5 - Outstanding potential for successful collaboration