

# SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

## SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

---

### Call for Submission of Proposals

#### Key Dates

Expression of Interest deadline: **3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 at 13:00**

Full proposal deadline: **8<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 13:00**

#### 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.



## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	The Applicant: Eligibility and Programme Remit.....	5
3	Economic and Societal Impact .....	9
4	Programme Details .....	11
5	Application Process .....	12
6	Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria .....	25
7	SFI Policies and Positions.....	27
8	Award Management .....	29
9	Further Information .....	31
	Appendix A: Applicant CV Template (max. 6 pages).....	32
	Appendix B: Expression of Interest Checklist.....	34
	Appendix C: Full Proposal Checklist .....	35

## **1 Introduction**

The legal remit of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State.<sup>1</sup> **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”. As outlined in SFI’s strategic plan, Agenda 2020,<sup>2</sup> the Foundation is committed to working towards a goal where Ireland, by 2020, will be “the best country in the world for both scientific research excellence and impact”. Furthermore, Innovation 2020,<sup>3</sup> Ireland’s five-year strategy on research and development, science and technology, recognises that “Ireland must ensure a continued flow of top research talent and attract and retain leading Principal Investigators from overseas ... in areas where we need to develop research capacity”.

Following on from its national research strategy Innovation 2020, the Irish Government recently launched **Project Ireland 2040**,<sup>4</sup> which is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland from 2018 until 2040. As part of the Project Ireland Framework, funding will be made available for **challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives** to ensure that the Irish public gains substantial societal and economic benefits from high-risk, high-reward scientific research and innovation. SFI Future Research Leaders will be empowered to lead on these initiatives and, as relevant, applicants to this programme should reflect on this opportunity when preparing their applications.

SFI is committed to supporting and developing early- and mid-career researchers to become excellent, fully independent research leaders and offers a suite of funding opportunities to help facilitate this transition, including support for those who are transitioning to independence and leadership, as well as supporting more established research leaders.<sup>5</sup>

Current SFI schemes include the **SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG)**, which aims to support excellent postdoctoral researchers who wish to take steps towards a fully independent research career, the **SFI Career Development Award (CDA)**, which aims to support early- and mid-career researchers who already hold a salaried, independent research post and who are looking to expand their research activities, and the **SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**.

In addition to these SFI-led schemes, the Foundation provides funding opportunities for early-career researchers through the **SFI–HRB–Wellcome Trust**-funded Research Career Development Fellowship and Senior Research Fellowship in Basic Biomedical Science,<sup>6</sup> and the **Royal Society–Science Foundation Ireland** University Research Fellowship (RS-SFI URF).<sup>7</sup>

Attracting outstanding research talent to Ireland is one of the principal ambitions of SFI. The **SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme** is a recruitment-driven programme designed to attract to Ireland outstanding new and emerging research leaders in all areas of SFI’s legal remit, where candidates may have academic and/or industry-relevant backgrounds with a focus on research excellence with impact. Candidates are expected to address current gaps in leadership, methodologies and skillsets in specific discipline areas. Candidates may also be recruited to complement and strengthen ongoing activities (e.g., SFI Research Centres), or as part of Research Body succession planning for areas that will require leadership in

---

<sup>1</sup> [About SFI - What we do](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Agenda 2020; Published 2012](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Innovation 2020; Published 2015](#)

<sup>4</sup> <http://npi.ie/project-ireland-2040-national-planning-framework/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/programmes-for-early-and-/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-hrb-wellcome-biomedic/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-royal-society-university/>

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

coming years. In addition, candidates who have already demonstrated excellence through other competitive international funding programmes (e.g., through ERC funding schemes) are particularly sought in this call.

This call is open to applicants based outside of Ireland as well as to those recently recruited from abroad (i.e., within two years of the Expression of Interest deadline). The applicant must have received their PhD (or equivalent qualification) between three and 15 years prior to the year of this call; that is, on any date from 2003 to 2015.<sup>8</sup> Applicants are expected to have demonstrated research excellence, independence, maturity and leadership by having several important publications without the participation of their PhD supervisor, and should have secured independent research funding and accumulated supervisory experience. It is also expected that the applicant will be of international standing as demonstrated by various indicators of scientific maturity, such as peer-review experience, invited keynote talks, international collaboration, conference and workshop organisation, amongst others.

This programme also provides an opportunity for Research Bodies in Ireland to encourage relevant industrial partners or philanthropic organisations to be involved with the recruitment and/or support of talented, new researchers within the national academic sector. Although an endowed position may not immediately follow success through this programme, it is possible for proposals to include cash or in-kind contributions, which may form the basis for a future endowed post, should such a position eventually be offered to the successful awardee. In any case, SFI expects the winners of awards through this programme to be offered a full-time position by the host Research Body before the funding period has ended, and considers such posts to have the greatest-possible impact where they are endowed through industrial or philanthropic support.

The award has a five-year duration and is designed to provide the best setting for award holders to foster their creativity and further develop their leadership role. The recruitment and support of future research leaders will reinforce the national research and enterprise base with outstanding early/mid-career researchers, and enhance Ireland's reputation for its research and innovation. The ambitions of appointed SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardees will be consistent with the strategic research direction of their host institutions.

### **1.1 Objectives of the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

- To identify and recruit to Ireland the most promising of a new generation of future research leaders who are top-tier cutting-edge researchers in science or engineering, which will address gaps in leadership in specific discipline areas, enable succession planning in areas which will require leadership in coming years due to retirements, or complement/strengthen ongoing activities (e.g., Research Centres)
- To enable an appropriate environment (i.e., support and infrastructure) to assist the awardee in realising their potential and further develop as research leaders
- To support excellent scientific and engineering research that has potential impact
- To drive challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives to ensure that the Irish public gains substantial societal and economic benefits from high-risk, high-reward scientific research and innovation
- To further encourage and promote Ireland's participation in the international research community and to increase the number of ERC and other Horizon 2020 awards secured by Ireland-based PIs
- To maintain Ireland's top-20 position in international bibliometric rankings through an increase in the number and quality of journal publications
- To enable collaborations with academic and industry partners particularly in areas of strategic priority
- To increase the proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licenses and spin outs recorded by Ireland that are linked to SFI research

---

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/PHD-equivalence-policy\\_Final\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/PHD-equivalence-policy_Final_June_2016.pdf)

## 2 The Applicant: Eligibility and Programme Remit

### 2.1 Definitions of Lead Applicant, Collaborator and Advisor

The **Lead Applicant** will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The lead applicant has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of SFI. The lead applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, over the course of the award. The lead applicant will be recognised as an **SFI Principal Investigator**. The research activities proposed may include collaborations with partners from other academic research bodies, research centres and the commercial sector. Partners **cannot** participate as co-applicants. **Proposals submitted with co-applicants included will not be reviewed or considered for funding.**

An **Official Collaborator** is an individual who is committed to providing a focused contribution for a specific task(s). The collaborator will serve under the direction of the lead applicant, and may or may not receive funding through the grant (see budget justification). Industry partners are not required, 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**.

**Required documentation for all Official Collaborators:** At the **Full Proposal stage only**, CVs must be provided for all official collaborators including **Industry Collaborators**. In addition, **at Full Proposal stage only**, each official collaborator must provide a letter of support with the grant application, which clearly outlines the specific 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, at both Expression of Interest stage and at Full Proposal stage. (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 work projects? Will collaborators be acting in a purely advisory capacity?*).

If a collaborator is to receive funding from this award, this should be clearly stated in the budget justification section. Please note that collaborators outside the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme. Individuals contributing to the research proposal, but not to a level to warrant listing as an Official Collaborator, may be referred to within the text of the research programme.

For the purpose of the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme, the Host Research Body is required to nominate an **Advisor** who will serve to guide, assist and facilitate the awardee in settling into their new institution. All successful SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardees will have been stringently reviewed and assessed on their scientific independence and leadership capability, but continuous guidance from an established and experienced local member of faculty will be beneficial as they establish an independent research group and integrate into their respective school. The Research Body Advisor of an SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardee does not play a supervisory or presiding role but **should actively assist** the awardee with:

- **General facilitation and orientation, for example:**
  - Introduce the awardee to the rest of the faculty
  - Provide appropriate contact information to the awardee (e.g., research office, staff office)
  - Ensure the awardee is placed on appropriate distribution lists (e.g., seminar schedules)
  - Facilitate access to non-academic resources (e.g., GP, childcare, schools, housing, etc.)
  - Ensure the awardee is aware of possibilities for career enhancement within the Research Body (e.g., promotions, awards)

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

- **Research facilitation, for example:**
  - Assist with negotiating an appropriate start-up package and arranging access to shared equipment
  - Advise on hiring decisions and team structure; assist with interviews and recruitment
  - Be available to discuss supervision of staff and graduate students
- **Teaching facilitation, for example:**
  - Ensure the awardee is briefed on departmental teaching and examination policies and procedures
  - Protect the awardee from being overburdened with teaching duties during the establishment and early years of their research group
  - Inform the awardee if there are opportunities to enhance their teaching skills
- **Service facilitation, for example:**
  - Advise the appropriate level of involvement in departmental/school/Research Body service activities and ensure that the awardee is not overloaded with such assignments
  - Suggest the optimum service activities and committees in which the awardee should take part (e.g., those that will assist in making contacts, hiring staff, etc.)

Please note that Science Foundation Ireland will expect the Advisor to assist the applicant at application stage, and if successful, to support in the relocation process of the awardee and team members, if applicable, and in the establishment of an independent group at the host institution. It is expected that the role of the Advisor will be phased out as the programme progresses and the awardee becomes established at the host institution. The Advisor should complete the 'Advisor' section in the Expression of Interest and, if invited, in the full proposal.

## 2.2 Eligibility Criteria of Applicant

The lead applicant must:

- Be an outstanding early/mid-career researcher between three and 15 years post-PhD (or equivalent), who has undertaken research in areas aligned to SFI's legal remit in an overseas academic institution or industry, or who has recently been recruited to Ireland (within two years of the Expression of Interest deadline), and who has demonstrated research excellence, independence and leadership, and shown exceptional potential to become a research leader of the future.
  - *Applicants holding an equivalent qualification may be eligible, but must seek approval from SFI in advance of submitting a proposal;<sup>8</sup>*
  - *The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred, that is, the year printed on the official PhD certificate. The number of years is determined by calendar year; thus those wishing to apply in 2018 to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme must have been conferred with their PhD degrees on any date between 2003 and 2015;*
  - *Allowances will be made for eligible, documented leave (see below).*
- Have an outstanding track record commensurate with their field and career stage, which includes significant publications (as senior author) in major international peer-reviewed journals and invited presentations at well-established international conferences
- Have secured independent research funding from competitive publicly funded sources as a lead investigator or co-investigator. The grant must have been competitively awarded and internationally and independently 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 consumables). This **excludes** smaller awards such as travel grants, equipment grants, postgraduate

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, and awards of short duration (12 months or less). Laboratory fit-out/setup funding, awards from the applicant's institution, and awards that have not been subject to external international peer review are also excluded. Evidence to support the validity of an award may be requested.

- Have accumulated supervisory experience of Masters-level and/or PhD students.
- Have demonstrated international standing (e.g., peer review, keynote talks, collaboration, conference and workshop organisation, etc.) as indicators of scientific maturity, in addition to potentially demonstrated capability of working collaboratively with private enterprise.
- Be an individual who will be recognised by the Research Body upon receipt of the SFI award as an independent investigator with an independent office and research space at the host research body for which s/he will have responsibility for at least the duration of the SFI grant.
- Be submitting an Expression of Interest to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme **for the first time**, or making their first resubmission; **only one resubmission of an Expression of Interest to this programme is permissible** (also see Section 5.5.1). Applications from individuals who have already submitted two Expressions of Interest will not be reviewed.

As this programme is aimed at attracting a new generation of research leaders to Ireland, applicants may not hold a significant SFI award such as an SFI Investigators Programme award (including Investigator Awards or Projects), Stokes Professorship or Lectureship, Research Professorship, SFI PIYRA, SFI FRL, SFI SIRG or SFI CDA, nor should they have received an SFI Research Centre award as a lead investigator or co-PI.

*Research Body submission confirms that the lead applicant meets the above criteria and is either a member of the academic staff, or awaiting appointment as defined above.*

### **2.2.1 Eligible Leave**

An SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme applicant may extend their period of eligibility by **18 months** for each separate period in which they have taken **a minimum of 12 weeks** of consecutive documented eligible leave since the conferring of their PhD (or equivalent qualification).

This can include, but is not limited to the examples below:

- Statutory adoptive leave
- Statutory parental leave
- Statutory maternity leave
- Statutory paternity leave
- Carer's leave
- Long-term medical illness leave
- Conscription or other national service

No allowance will be made for part-time working (two years of half-time working counts as two full-time years). The maximum extension to the period of eligibility under this scheme is **54 months**. Note that career breaks (i.e., to go travelling or for other reasons not in line with those described above) do not constitute eligible leave.

Additionally, applicants may extend their period of eligibility by **12 months** for each year spent working in a science- or engineering-related industry, which must have taken place **after the award of a PhD**. The maximum extension to the period of eligibility under this scheme is **24 months**. In all cases, applicants wishing to extend their period of eligibility must produce documentary evidence from their host institution's Human Resources (HR) Department or, where applicable, the HR Department of their employer at the time of their eligible leave period(s). Any queries in relation to eligible leave can be forwarded to [fri@sfi.ie](mailto:fri@sfi.ie).

Research Body submission confirms that the applicant meets these criteria.

Where, in the opinion of SFI, an applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

Please note that submission of an application may affect your eligibility to apply to other programmes. For certain SFI programmes such as the SFI Future Research Leaders Programme, individuals may only be under active review for one programme at any one time - these programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI IvP, SFI CDA, SFI SIRG, SFI ERC Development Programme and the SFI Research Professorship Programme.

In addition, SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awardees are not entitled to hold other significant SFI awards (e.g., SFI Principal Investigator, SFI Research Professor Award, etc.) concurrently, as either lead applicant or co-applicant. However, to secure continuity of funding, a grant holder may apply for a subsequent grant during the last 24 months of their existing grant. If successful, the new grant will normally start at the end of the existing grant.

### 2.3 Eligibility of the Research Body

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of the research programmes supported by funding from SFI. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website.<sup>9</sup>

*The term 'Research Body' and 'Institution' are equivalent and interchangeable in SFI documentation and in the SFI SESAME system.*

### 2.4 Programme Format and Remit

The SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme consists of a two-stage submission process encompassing a three-stage review. Applicants who are successful at Expression of Interest stage will be invited to submit a full proposal in advance of the full-proposal deadline. Applicants whose full proposal receives excellent reviews will be invited to take part in an interview. Interviews will comprise a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session, which will be undertaken by an international review panel. Awards may be **up to €1,000,000 direct costs and five years in duration**, including a 50% PI salary contribution where required. In addition, all applicants may request an **additional €250,000** to cover start-up costs with appropriate justification.

The Irish Government has recently undertaken a review of the objectives of National Research Prioritisation, building upon the original exercise carried out in 2012,<sup>10</sup> and taking into account a number of important current challenges and developments, including the growth of disruptive technologies, Brexit and the adoption of UN Sustainable Development Goals, amongst others.<sup>11</sup> Research Prioritisation will continue to demand that the majority of Ireland's competitive funding is concentrated on areas deemed likely to yield the greatest economic and societal impact. For this call, proposals may be aligned to one of the 14 *Refreshed Priority Areas* for 2018-2023, which are the constituents of six broad Research Priority themes that underpin the updated prioritisation exercise (see Section 5.5.1).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>10</sup> [Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group, Published 2012](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

### **3 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 President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient; 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. As part of the review process, reviewers will be asked to consider the potential impact of applications as described in the Impact Statements.

#### **3.1 Defining 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

#### **3.2 Measuring and Assessing Impact**

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 President of Ireland Future Leaders Programme have an obligation to articulate how and when they believe their proposed research programme will deliver impact on Ireland'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 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 economic effects on Ireland as a result of the proposed research.*

#### **3.3 Impact Statement**

An **Impact Statement (maximum of two pages)** is a requirement in full applications to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders 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. The impact statement

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

should, nonetheless, be as specific as possible and should provide information that external reviewers will find useful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Plans to utilise appropriate SFI and other funding sources to assist with achieving impact should be included if relevant. Applicants are advised to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous, and **realistic** impact case with appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables, and an objective view on how long it may require for the potential impact to be realised.

The Impact Statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language. It should be as specific and comprehensive as possible, and it should 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?**

**Applicants are encouraged to consult the SFI's Agenda 2020 and Innovation 2020 strategy documents before writing their impact statement. For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information and a dedicated webinar can be found on the SFI website.<sup>12</sup> Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the Impact Statement in an SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme application.**

In order to best describe the possible impacts in an impact statement, the following points should also be considered:

- What is the potential impact of the proposed research on the development of Ireland's industry, economy, competitiveness and development?
- Are there potential international beneficiaries, collaborations with international industry or partner organisations?
- The SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme encourages industrial collaborations where appropriate considering the stage and topic of the research. How will industry collaborators enable increased impact? What supports 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. Letters of support must be provided if Industry Collaborators are included. The letters should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. Industry letters of support that do not originate from officially listed industry collaborators will be removed from the proposal.
- How will the proposed research impact on the education, training and career of Ireland's students and research team members? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education (e.g., facilities and instrumentation)? Applicants should note that all President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awards will offer training opportunities of some degree, therefore it is important to highlight the added value that will be provided from the training provided under your award; for example, highlight where past researchers/students have found employment.
- 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?

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

- How will the proposed research impact on society and the quality of life for Ireland's citizens?
- 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)?

## **4 Programme Details**

In addition to demonstrating the exceptional quality of the applicant, most, if not all of the following conditions must also be demonstrated as part of a President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme proposal:

### **4.1 Applicant**

- There is an urgency and timeliness in recruiting the applicant; in particular, the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme mechanism may be used as part of a targeted strategic recruitment process for a key academic position;
- The applicant is currently productive and flourishing in an academic or industrial setting, and can demonstrate that increased research productivity is likely;
- The applicant's research clearly aligns to strategic priorities of the proposed Host Institution.

### **4.2 Research Body**

The host Research Body must also demonstrate their commitment to recruiting the applicant by, for example:

- Stating their intention to offer the identified applicant a full-time, permanent academic position before funding provided through a President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme award expires;
- Providing the physical infrastructure and support services appropriate for a future, world-leading researcher;
- Offering the identified applicant the opportunity to work within a major SFI investment (e.g., in an SFI-funded Research Centre, etc.);
- Assisting the applicant through the provision of start-up funding or financial support to hire additional team members (e.g., PhD students)
- Providing applicants holding ERC awards with the required facilities and infrastructure to successfully move their ERC-funded activities to the new host institution, where applicable.

### **4.3 Funding**

SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awards may be up to a **maximum of €1,000,000 (direct costs) over five years**. In addition, applicants may apply for **an additional €250,000 to cover start-up costs** (see below and Section 5.6.6). General overheads, currently 30% of 'modified' total direct costs, should not be included in the requested budget.

SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardee and their research group. Eligible costs include:

- A contribution of **up to 50%** of the salary of the applicant, in cases where they will not be in receipt of a full salary from the Research Body. Where the applicant is already in receipt of a full salary (e.g., where they are a permanent member of staff), no salary contribution may be requested. Where a contribution to the applicant's salary is being requested, the Research Body must, in their letter of support, guarantee to provide the balance of the salary **for the duration of the award**. Furthermore, in this situation, the total value of the research award will be up to a maximum of €1,000,000, **exclusive** of the Research Body's salary contribution and start-up costs.

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

- Host institutions may, at their discretion, request that their contribution to the applicant's salary be introduced on a phased or graduated basis over the course of the award. That is, the host institution does not necessarily have to contribute 50% of the applicant's salary every year, provided that their salary contribution over the full course of the award is at least 50% of the applicant's salary costs. It is the expectation of SFI that the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardee would have moved to a full-time position funded by the host institution by the end of the award.
- Contributions to salaries/stipends for staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme. Please consult the **SFI Grant Budget Policy** for more information.<sup>13</sup>
- Relevant research expenses, including personnel, equipment, consumables and travel.
- Access to necessary special facilities, which are not available in the host institution. Access charges for the use of large items of infrastructure or test bed facilities may be requested in certain situations (see Section 4.3b of the SFI Grant Budget Policy).
- Start-up costs of up to €250,000 are offered to all applicants. Such costs are not subject to an overhead contribution, and hence should be entered into the **Equipment section** of the budget template as a single line item, and should be fully detailed and justified in the budget justification section (see Section 5.6.6 for more details on start-up costs).

In addition to the direct costs, Science Foundation Ireland also makes an indirect or overhead **contribution** to the host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution to the *Research Body* for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. As stated previously, the start-up costs are not eligible for an overhead contribution.

## 5 Application Process

### 5.1 SESAME

Applications to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme will only be accepted through **SESAME**, SFI's grants and awards management system. All applicants are required to have their SESAME Research Profiles linked to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted (see Section 5.2 for more information).

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access.

Once you have been registered by your Research Office, **you will receive an email** containing your:

- **Username**
- **Password**
- **SFI PIN number**
- **SESAME website address**

Your **username** and **password** are needed to log in to SESAME. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

---

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy\\_2016\\_July-url-updates.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2016_July-url-updates.pdf)

The SESAME system is accessed using the following Internet address:

<https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the **SESAME Researcher User Guide** for more detailed information.<sup>14</sup>

**SESAME enables:**

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

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

## 5.2 ORCID iD

ORCID provides a unique identifier for all researchers which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.<sup>15</sup> There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
- Using the ORCID iD assists in making 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 applicants to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme, applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted.**

## 5.3 Application Procedure

Applicants are invited to submit an **Expression of Interest** before **13:00 Dublin time on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018**. If invited to do so after the Expression of Interest evaluation stage, applicants may submit a **Full Proposal** before **13:00 Dublin time on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018**. **Expressions of Interest and Full Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the applicant's Research Body.**

Applicants should carefully follow the instructions below and in the Sesame Researcher User Guide to complete the various sections of the application.<sup>14</sup> In addition, a checklist of requirements is provided in Appendices B and C of this call document.

**Expression of Interest and Full 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**

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://orcid.org/>

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

- 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**
- The currency to be used is the **euro (€)**.
- File sizes of attachments should be less than 5MB

**Expressions of Interest and Full Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the applicant's Research Body.**

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

**It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI 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.**

**Once submitted by the host Research Body to SFI through SESAME, an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission.**

### 5.4 Eligibility Questionnaire

Applicants must complete the eligibility questions (see Section 2.2 for eligibility details).

### 5.5 Expression of Interest Preparation

#### 5.5.1 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**  
The Research Proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken. Confidential information should not be included in the proposal title.
- **Resubmission Statement**  
Applications to any call that are based primarily on unsuccessful submissions (following peer review) to any SFI programme must demonstrate that the review comments resulting from the initial application have been taken into account in the preparation of the new submission. Resubmissions that have not clearly taken into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior assessment will be withdrawn without review. Please see the SFI Policy on Resubmission of Grant Applications for further information.<sup>16</sup>

Applicants must declare whether a new proposal relates to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme. Where the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and references to reviewers' comments must be made 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.

**Only one resubmission of an Expression of Interest to this programme is permissible. Applications from individuals who have already submitted two Expressions of Interest will not be reviewed.**

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI\\_Resubmission-Policy\\_August-2016.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI_Resubmission-Policy_August-2016.pdf)

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

- **Priority Area**  
Research in proposals to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme is not **required** to be aligned with a Refreshed Priority Area, however, *where relevant*, please select the appropriate priority or underpinning area to which the research programme aligns. Where a proposal does not align to any of the Priority Areas, please select 'Other' from the drop-down menu.
- **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 best describes the proposed research.
- **Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**  
This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns with SFI's legal remit as defined in Section 1. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

### 5.5.2 Lead Applicant Details

- **Location of Applicant at Time of Submission**  
Applicants must enter the country in which they are employed at the time of submission.
- **Lead Applicant Time Commitment to the Project**  
Due to the significant scale of this award, it is expected that the applicant's time commitment will be **at least 50%**.
- **Applicant CV (max. 6 pages)**  
A CV of the lead applicant should be completed and uploaded using the template provided at the end of this document (see Appendix A). The CV not only provides information about the applicant's education, employment record, research outputs, and details of their funding history and eligibility, but also identifies up to five key achievements in research and impact.
- **Eligible Leave**  
If applicable, applicants who have taken documented eligible leave and wish to extend their period of eligibility must upload the information requested in Section 2.2.1 of this call document.
- **Summary Information on Publication Output and Supervisory Experience**  
Please provide summary information on the total numbers of publications to date and also provide supervisory experience to date for the lead applicant.
- **Expired, Current and Pending Support of Applicants**  
The Lead Applicant must report on expired, current and pending funding:
  - The applicant should include details of any financial support pending, or received to date. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry, etc.
  - The applicant must include details of any financial support from another body currently provided, or currently being sought. SFI will not support research programmes currently being funded by another source.

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

- For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant should provide a brief description of the research. Applicants must also indicate their percentage time commitment to these other projects, as a function of 100% 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 collaborative research project, the grant should not be included here.
- The portion of research funding claimed in an applicant's name must be an accurate and a 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.

**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. The Lead Applicant must complete this section within SESAME.**

**Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant 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).

### **5.5.3 Collaborator(s) and Research Body Advisor Details**

Include the name, contact information and other requested details of the proposed Research Body Advisor, and official collaborator(s), if any. Please indicate whether collaborators are based in academia, or industry (i.e., an 'industry collaborator'). Advisor or collaborator CVs are not permitted in the Expression of Interest. See Section 2.1 for further information.

### **5.5.4 Main Body of Expression of Interest**

- **Keywords (max. 15)**

These should be descriptors that best describe the research proposed in the application.

- **Programme Documents Upload**

Please note that the total number of pages in the Programme Documents upload **must not exceed three pages**, and must consist of a **Research Description** (2 pages) and the **Strategic Fit with the Host Institution** (1 page).

- **Research Description (max. 2 pages)**

Please ensure that adequate detail is provided in relation to what is being proposed, clearly describing the specific aims and objectives of the programme and linking with real deliverables. The proposed research should be novel, cutting-edge, competitive and strategically important. Describe how what is proposed will advance the state of the art. Ensure that information is provided regarding how collaborators (if any) will input on aspects of the proposed research. It is important to clarify how the proposed research is independent of work ongoing with previous supervisors. Please note that references are to be included within the two-page limit.

- **Strategic Fit with the Host Institution (max. 1 page)**

As this is a recruitment-driven programme, the Research Body, together with the applicant, is required to provide a document outlining why the applicant is a 'good fit' with the Research Body, how the research proposed complements the institutional strategy/strategic plan for the institution and how the targeted area aligns with national strategic priorities. The applicant may address current gaps in leadership, methodologies and skill sets in specific discipline areas, or may also be recruited to complement and strengthen ongoing activities (e.g., within SFI Research Centres, or as part of Research Body succession planning for areas that will require leadership in coming years). The fit to the national research landscape is also an important aspect; as such, reference should be made to how the proposed research strengthens/complements research ongoing in Ireland.

### **5.5.5 View Proposal Prior To Submission**

A PDF of the Expression of Interest is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable you to validate your application. The responsibility lies with the applicant in this regard. Submission is made initially to your host Research Office for approval, prior to submission by the Research Office to SFI. Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, if you wish to track the status of your proposal (e.g., '*proposal pending Research Office (RO) approval*' or '*under review at SFI*'), this information will be displayed in SESAME.

### **5.6 Full Proposal Preparation**

**If invited to submit a Full Proposal**, applicants should follow the instructions below and in SESAME (see Sesame Researcher User Guide) to complete their full proposal application correctly.<sup>14</sup> Please refer carefully to these instructions. In addition, a checklist is provided at the end of this call document (see Appendix C).

<b>Full proposals that deviate significantly in content from the Expression of Interest will be administratively withdrawn without review.</b>
--

#### **5.6.1 Full Proposal Summary**

The proposal details will be automatically populated from the Expression of Interest. Applicants should check the details, and update them if necessary.

- **Ethical Issues**

**All applicants** are required to answer the questions related to ethical issues (see Section 5.6.3 for details)

#### **5.6.2 Lead Applicant Details**

The applicant details will be automatically populated from the Expression of Interest. Applicants should check the details, and update them if necessary. A CV of the lead applicant (max. 6 pages), as requested for the

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

Expression of Interest application using the template found at the end of this document, should be completed and uploaded (see Appendix A).

- **Lead Applicant Time Commitment to the Project**  
Due to the significant scale of this award, it is expected that the applicant's time commitment will be **at least 50%**.
- **Collaborator(s) Details**  
CVs (max. 2 pages) for all official collaborators must be uploaded. Please indicate under the 'collaborator type' category whether the collaborator is an academic or an industry collaborator. A template is not provided for collaborator CVs. Please note **collaborator(s) details are allowed to change** between the Expression of Interest and full Full Proposal stage of submission. Please update the collaborator details as necessary, adding new collaborators as described in the Expression of Interest preparation section, and uploading their CVs.
- **Research Body Advisor Details**  
Please include details of the Research Body Advisor. It is not necessary to include a CV for the Advisor but a letter of support from the Advisor must be uploaded (see Section 5.6.8).

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>17</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 5.6.8 below) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.

### 5.6.3 Main Body of Proposal

- **Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)**  
This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Scientific Abstract.
- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)**  
This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Lay Abstract.
- **Keywords (max. 15)**  
Please list the keywords/phrases from the research discipline or sub-discipline that best describe the research proposed in the application.
- **Use of Animals**  
Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned in their proposal. Selecting "Yes" in the drop-down menu will provide access to a downloadable Ethical Issues Table, which is also shown in the *SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/KTI-Protocol-2016.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

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

Applicants must indicate whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Selecting “Yes” in the drop-down menu will provide access to a downloadable Ethical Issues Table, which is also shown in the *SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues*.<sup>18</sup>

**Ethical Issues:**

**All applicants, in particular those expecting to carry out research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data, are required to complete an Ethical Issues Table, which forms part of the application. The Research Programme section must include a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal-and/or human-based studies. Guidance on the ethical and scientific issues in carrying out such studies is provided on the SFI website.<sup>18</sup>**

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

**Clinical Trials:**

**Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the SFI Future Research Leaders Programme.**

- **Programme Documents Upload**

Please note that the total number of pages in the Programme Documents upload **must not exceed 24 pages**, and must include an **Impact Statement** (max. 2 pages), a **Development and Leadership Plan** (max. 2 pages), the **Research Description** (max. 15 pages) and **References** (max. 5 pages).

- **Research Description (max. 15 pages)**

Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for peer reviewers to comment on the quality of the proposed ideas. It should be noted that a lack of appropriate and sufficient detail within the research programme is a recurring issue raised by reviewers. Applicants should aim to:

- Describe clearly and concisely the **specific aims and objectives** of the programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with **real deliverables**.
- Explain the **background** and **significance** of the problem – does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important? 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.
- Are the concepts described **novel**? Ensure that the novelty of the approach is clearly explained, again with reference to the state of the art.
- 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

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

The application should also include:

- **Appropriate timelines, milestones and expected outputs** for the proposed research (e.g., Gantt chart), and the **roles of the applicant and collaborators** in the work programme need to be clearly described.
- Relevant **preliminary data** must be provided. This may take the form of a) supporting reference(s) from the applicant's previous research or b) a summary of results where data has yet to be published. In the latter case, this can be included within the 15-page research description as evidence that the applicant has a track record in the field of the proposed research.
- **References (max. 5 pages)**  
Appropriate references and citations for the research programme must be provided in a separate uploaded PDF.
- **Development/Leadership Plan (max. 2 pages)**  
The applicant must articulate how they will manage the project, how the project will enable their career development and the development of their credentials as a future research leader.

The applicant should outline how the proposed research aligns with national priorities, with the strategic plan of the institution, and how it complements ongoing research within Ireland. In addition, it must be articulated how the applicant will address current gaps in leadership in specific discipline areas, methodologies and skill sets, or may enable succession planning in areas that will require leadership in coming years due to retirements, and how s/he will advance the international competitiveness of the Research Body by fostering research excellence and new enterprising opportunities. This plan should be developed in consultation with the Advisor, department head and/or equivalent organisational official, and should include an integration plan for the applicant.

- **Impact Statement (max. 2 pages)**  
The statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful for assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated (see Section 3 for further details). Where appropriate for the topic of the research, industry collaborations including co-funding in cash or in-kind should be discussed. Letters of support from industry may be included where appropriate (see Section 5.6.8 below).

### 5.6.4 Expired, Current and Pending Support of Applicants

This information will be automatically populated from the Expression of Interest but can subsequently be edited and should be updated if necessary.

**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.**

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, where relevant.

### **5.6.5 Proposed Budget**

Please note that the **Budget Table** for completion by the lead applicant is located at the end of the full proposal application in SESAME.

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders 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 final total provided includes all costs requested from SFI. Applicants may request start-up costs of an additional €250,000. These costs need to be entered into the equipment section of the budget template as a single line item, and need to be clearly detailed (including costs for each item requested) and fully justified in the budget justification section. Start-up costs are not eligible for an overhead contribution. **The total value of the research award will be up to a maximum of €1,000,000, exclusive of the Research Body's salary contribution and start-up costs.**

All awards are made directly to the applicant's research body. Please also refer to the SFI General Terms and Conditions.<sup>19</sup> It is essential that applicants refer to the SFI Grant Budget Policy when preparing your budget.<sup>13</sup>

**See notes for completion in the Sesame Researcher User Guide,<sup>14</sup> and within SESAME.**

- **Staff: Salaries and Benefits**

It is important to note that SFI-funded researchers and their teams are employees of the host Research Body. SFI makes a contribution to the overall salary budget for the programme. Please refer to the SFI Team Member Budget Scale and note that the 'Cost to Grant' figures in these scales include the 20% employer's pension contribution.<sup>20</sup> Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved and justified. Contributions to Principal Investigator and team-member salaries, as well as fees and stipends for postgraduate students (PhD and MSc by research) may be requested. Salaries for collaborators are *not* permitted.

Do not include the Research Body contribution to salary in the budget table as this represents the request to SFI only. Please include details on the co-funded salary contribution in the budget justification. It is expected that salary requests for the applicant will be aligned with the SFI Research Fellow/Senior Research Fellow scales (Levels 3 and 4).

SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of a postdoctoral researcher at either Level 2A or 2B of the SFI Team Member Budget Scale. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience, and the rationale for seeking a team member at that point should be explained in the budget justification. SFI would expect to see new postdoctoral researchers appointed at Level 2A, Point 1.

- **Equipment**

Details of all requested equipment necessary for the research programme should be itemised. Small equipment of a value of **less than €2,000** should be included in the materials and consumables section. The exception to this is costs associated with computers/laptops, which must be listed in the equipment section regardless of cost. If funding for computer cluster resources is requested in this application, justification must be given as to why national high- performance computing facilities cannot be used for the purposes of the project. For an equipment item **in excess of €50,000**, the

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI\\_Grants\\_Team\\_Member\\_Budgeting\\_Scale\\_May\\_2017.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI_Grants_Team_Member_Budgeting_Scale_May_2017.pdf)

quote number and cost must be included in the budget justification. The documentation supporting this quotation must be fully auditable and available to SFI on request.

For large items of infrastructure requested as part of the current application, applicants may also submit an associated access charge plan, which will be reviewed by SFI should funding be awarded for the infrastructure requested. Please contact SFI prior to submission of an access charge plan to obtain the relevant template and guidelines. Plans may be submitted **by email** to [fri@sfi.ie](mailto:fri@sfi.ie) (and not via SESAME), and should be referred to accordingly in the budget justification.

- **Start-up Costs**

Start-up costs of **up to €250,000** may be sought by all applicants applying to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme. The costs are designed to facilitate the establishment of a laboratory in a new location and can cover the purchase of equipment and/or access to large facilities, but should not include a salary contribution. These costs are not subject to an overhead contribution, and should be entered into the budget template **under the Equipment section as a single line item**. Requested start-up costs **must** be clearly detailed (including costs for each item requested) and fully justified in the budget justification to be considered for funding – **this is particularly the case where the applicant is already in place at the Host Institution**. SFI reserves the right to decline requests for start-up costs in funded applications where it is felt that insufficient justification has been provided.

Note that individuals who have received an SFI ERC Support Programme award may not be eligible to apply for the start-up costs (contact [FRL@sfi.ie](mailto:FRL@sfi.ie) for clarification).

- **Materials and Consumables**

Details of all materials and consumables that will be used in the course of the research programme should be provided.

Access charges may be sought for use of infrastructure where SFI pre-approved access charge plans are in place. Note that these may include, with SFI approval, access to facilities and services not available to the applicant, such as the costs associated with accessing international databases or commissioning specific experiments in national facilities (e.g., Tyndall NAP, CRANN AML, etc.). These may also include, for example, access charges for use of SFI-funded infrastructure where pre-approved access charge plans are now in place.

Access charge requests must be included as a separate line item in the budget and, where relevant, must include the grant code and name of the relevant infrastructure to be used. A rationale for the amount of use proposed must be provided in the budget justification. In addition, where access charge plans are submitted for infrastructure requested as part of the *current* application, indicative associated access charges may be included.

- **Travel**

Only travel costs for journeys directly related to the progress of the research programme may be requested as a direct cost on the research grant. The applicant should detail travel expenses directly related to conferences, scientific collaboration on the research programme, or learning special research techniques, and should indicate the number of team members participating in each event. Where possible, please supply the conference name and location. In the case of working visits, the rates sought for subsistence and other allowances may be no more than those which the Research Body's permanent staff may claim.

- **Ineligible Costs**

The following costs are *examples* of ineligible costs: Collaborator salary; teaching buyout; clinical buyout; contingency or miscellaneous costs; hospitality and entertainment costs; technology transfer or patent costs; workshop organisation; journal subscriptions; relocation expenses. Please refer to the SFI Grant Budget Policy for further details on ineligible costs.

### **5.6.6 Infrastructure, Facilities, Services and Space Provided by the Research Body (max. 1 page)**

Describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the Research Body. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, 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 letter of support must be included from the applicant's Research Body (see Section 5.6.8).

### **5.6.7 Budget Justification (max. 3 pages)**

Please provide details of the requested contribution to salary of the applicant including the Research Body contribution. The applicant should outline the required expertise for each requested team member and justify the team member's role in the research programme. Please include the salary scale for each team member, based on the SFI Team Member Budget Scale.<sup>20</sup> Clear and explicit justification is required for any request for an experienced postdoctoral researcher (i.e., one who will be appointed higher than Level 2A, Point 1 on the SFI Team Member Budget Scale). In the case of requests (justified in the budget justification) for experienced postdoctoral researchers (>8 years post-PhD), SFI will pay a contribution to their salary at the Level 2B, Point 4 on the SFI Team Member Budget Scale for the requested duration. To demonstrate to reviewers that appropriate candidates may be available to fill such a role, the applicant may, in the body of the proposal, wish to indicate the identity of potential candidates for this role, where appropriate.

Justification should also be provided for requested equipment, consumables and travel, and the requested duration of funding. Clear indication should be given where funding is apportioned to collaborators (within the Republic of Ireland and within an eligible Research Body **only**). Please note that collaborators outside the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme. Only eligible Research Bodies will be entitled to receive direct funding through the award and all funding will be administered through the lead applicant's Research Body.

If funding is sought for overseas services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for not carrying out this activity in Ireland must be explained.

Applicants may request an additional €250,000 to cover start-up costs (see Section 5.6.6). As these costs are added into the budget template as a single line item, they need to be clearly detailed (including costs for each item requested) and fully justified in the budget justification. If this justification is unclear and not fully detailed, the start-up costs will not be considered for funding.

### **5.6.8 Letters of Support**

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

- A letter of support from **each official collaborator**, including each industry collaborator. Letters from Academic Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. In addition, Academic Collaborators seeking funds through the award must describe how these funds will be utilised. Letters from Industry Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash and/or in-kind) contribution to the research programme. Similarly, letters of support from international Academic Collaborators should provide details of any cash and/or in-kind contributions being offered. Any

## President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme

future plans to strengthen the association of an industrial (or philanthropic) partner (i.e., through the creation of an Endowed Chair or similar position) during the lifetime of an award may be elaborated on in the relevant letters of support. Letters of support from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal will be removed. Letters of support from academics not listed as official collaborators or Advisor will be removed from the proposal.

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body**. In recognition of the newly recruited early/mid-career researcher's role as a new member of the academic staff, and to demonstrate the commitment of the Research Body to this partnership, the proposal must include one endorsement letter from the Vice President for Research (or equivalent organisational official) of the nominating Research Body. For information, it is the expectation of SFI that the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardee would have moved to a full-time position funded by the host institution by the end of the award.

The letter should be on headed paper and should:

- Confirm the Research Body's support for the candidate's career and professional development. In particular, it should outline the measures that will be taken to ensure that the candidate is not overburdened with teaching commitments in the early part of their appointment and should describe the candidate's maximum teaching commitment, if successful;
  - For those applicants who have been recently recruited to Ireland, the letter must confirm that the applicant has been employed in Ireland for no more than two years on the date of the Expression of Interest submission;
  - Provide a brief description of the Department's/School's/Institution's research strategy and describe how the candidate will be integrated into this strategy;
  - Confirm that a suitable point of contact (Advisor) at the host institution has been identified (with the agreement of the candidate) for the duration of the award;
  - Describe the support and capital facilities (both building and equipment) that the department/host institution will provide. This could include, but is not limited to, commitments for instrumentation, laboratory facilities and research support;
  - Confirm that for the duration of the award, the candidate will be eligible to apply and compete for any and all permanent faculty positions that arise within the host institution, appropriate to their field of research;
  - Confirm that the Research Body will create a post in the candidate's research area not less than two years before the expiration date of the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme award;
  - Confirm that the Research Body will provide a minimum of 50% of the applicant's salary if the applicant does not have a tenured position;
  - Confirm the date of award of the candidate's PhD degree.
- A letter of support from the **Advisor** at the host institution confirming that s/he understands the role of Advisor as described in the call document and is prepared to undertake such a role should the applicant be successful with their application to this programme.

### 5.6.9 Excluded Reviewers

The exclusion of reviewers is not encouraged unless there is a *specific* historical reason for excluding a potential reviewer. In such exceptional cases, **up to three individuals** may be excluded from acting as reviewers for reasons of specific conflict of interest or competition.

#### **5.6.10 View Proposal Prior To Submission**

A PDF of the Full Proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable you to validate your application. The responsibility lies with the applicant in this regard. Submission is made initially to your local Research Office for approval, prior to submission by the Research Office to SFI.

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, if you wish to track the status of your proposal (e.g., '*proposal pending Research Office (RO) approval*' or '*under review at SFI*'), this information will be displayed in SESAME.

#### **5.6.11 Research Body Approval**

It should be noted that Research Body submission of an application represents their approval of an application and agreement to SFI General Terms and Conditions. Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

- The eligibility of the applicant
- That the applicant is, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of the 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 the relevant ethical approval has been or will be sought and should 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
- That the applicant has been employed in Ireland for no more than two years on the date of the Expression of Interest submission (relevant only to recently recruited applicants)
- That permission from all team members and collaborators has been obtained, such that SFI may receive their personal information, and may process such data for the purpose of peer review

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

#### **5.6.12 Applicant Agreement To Terms And Conditions**

It should be noted that submission of an application represents your agreement as the applicant to SFI General Terms and Conditions.<sup>19</sup> Applications that fail to comply with the above terms and conditions, or with requirements outlined in this call document, will not be eligible and will be withdrawn without review.

## **6 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria**

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant to participate in the peer-review process. SFI reserves the right to refuse to grant permission to a candidate to submit a proposal to the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme if it deems the applicant to be ineligible or uncompetitive. Full proposals received without prior written approval will not be reviewed.

## **6.1 Expressions of Interest**

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by SFI technical staff. Each application will be evaluated with regard to the applicant's track record, their suitability for the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme, and their appropriateness to either fill the leadership gap in the area of strategic importance defined in the application, or to complement and/or strengthen ongoing activities aligned with the strategic plan of the institution. All Expressions of Interest will be evaluated by the SFI Programmes Directorate and the SFI Executive Committee; the highest-ranked candidates will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. The final decision rests with the SFI Executive Committee.

## **6.2 Postal Review**

In accordance with the international peer-review process used to evaluate proposals submitted to SFI, all *eligible* proposals will be forwarded to international experts for evaluation. SFI reserves the right not to review applications where the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria (or where the research programme does not fit with the legal remit of the Foundation). SFI technical staff will solicit reviews of proposals from at least three peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research. The applicant may specify up to three individuals who should not act as reviewers for the application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. SFI shall not refer the application to any of these individuals. Otherwise, selection of reviewers shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

The reviews returned by the peer experts will be collated and forwarded to the applicant, who will be provided with a defined period of time to submit a response to the comments made (advanced notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants). This response document will be considered by SFI, alongside the proposal and postal reviews in making a decision as to whether the applicant will progress to the interview stage.

The following, equally weighted review criteria will be applied during the review of Full Proposals:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the research track record of the proposed investigator together with evidence of their potential for research leadership*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields*
- *Quality of the development/leadership plan, including the importance and timeliness of the strategic fit with the host institution and national research agendas, where appropriate*
- *Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and economic effects on Ireland as a result of the proposed research*

## **6.3 Interview Stage**

A panel of high-level experts will convene for the interview stage of the review process. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes in total. The identity of the panel members will be shared in advance with the interviewees. Interviews will commence with a short presentation by the applicant, describing the proposed research project. The remaining time will be devoted to a question-and-answer session with the panel. In addition, the Vice President for Research (or equivalent) will be invited to address the panel relating to the plans for recruitment and retention of the applicant, should they be successful. The panel will take into account the results of the interviews alongside the submitted postal reviews. The output of the panel meeting will be a ranked list of applicants. The SFI Executive Committee will consider the outputs of the review process and all related documents and will refer the final funding decision to the SFI Grants Approval Committee in compliance with SFI policy for funding requests above a threshold.

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

The identity of experts who conduct the postal review 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 scientists involved in the merit review process.

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

### **6.4 SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**

Experts engaged by SFI are required to abide by the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.<sup>21</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.

## **7 SFI Policies and Positions**

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

*Clinical Trials* – Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study (see Section 5.6.3) must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy** as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).<sup>18</sup>

*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>22</sup> and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HRA'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>23</sup> All applicants and institutions are expected to abide by this policy and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.<sup>24</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>25</sup> which SFI has endorsed.

*Intellectual Property Management* – Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Inspiring Partnership - the National IP Protocol 2016**.<sup>17</sup> In cases where additional guidelines are specified by SFI they must also be followed. The IP arrangements are the

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/Reviewer-Code-of-Conduct\\_March-2017.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/Reviewer-Code-of-Conduct_March-2017.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland-2014.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics\\_code-of-conduct\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national\\_framework\\_for\\_doctoral\\_education\\_0.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf)

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

responsibility of the Research Body 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>26</sup> applicants are recommended to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

*Appeals Process* – This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.<sup>27</sup>

*State Aid* – All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must be compliant with, State Aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State Aid. Potential applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2014 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01)**.<sup>28</sup> If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, potential applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

*Child Protection* – Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,<sup>29</sup> and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.<sup>30</sup> It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

*Data Protection Policy – The General Data Protection Regulation* is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.<sup>31</sup> Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement**.<sup>32</sup>

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

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

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Gender-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf>

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

<sup>28</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.eugdpr.org/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

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.

## **8 Award Management**

### **8.1 Reporting Requirements**

The State has made a significant investment via SFI into scientific research and as such, it is the responsibility of SFI to monitor the progress and outcomes of all funding it administers. Therefore, all SFI award holders are required to report on emerging outputs and impacts for the duration of their awards and for up to five years beyond. The progress reporting requirements for awards made under the SFI Future Leaders Programme is inclusive of **Annual Reports**, completion of the annual stock take of SFI **Research Outputs** (formerly referred to as the SFI Census) and the completion of a **Researcher Snapshot**.

The annual report is used to monitor the progress of individual awards against the overall objectives of the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as set out in SFI's Strategic Plan, Agenda 2020. Each of the Future Research Leaders Programme call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

- **Objective:** *To identify and recruit to Ireland the most promising of a new generation of future research leaders who are top-tier cutting-edge researchers in science or engineering, and will address gaps in leadership in specific discipline areas, enabling succession planning in areas that will require leadership in coming years*  
**Expected Outcomes:** The recipient of the award will be an exceptional early/mid-career researcher in their own right, as indicated by having a record of producing excellent scientific research with demonstrable or potential economic and societal impact. Additionally, SFI encourages Future Research Leaders to establish themselves as key leaders in their expertise area in their host institutions and to engage with relevant SFI Research Centres by becoming a Research Centre collaborator, investigator, or by winning a Research Centre Spokes award.
- **Objective:** *With the support of the host Research Body, to enable an appropriate environment (support and infrastructure) to assist the awardee in realising their potential and further develop as research leaders*  
**Expected Outcomes:** In addition to encouraging excellence as demonstrated by a range of outputs as described above, the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awards are intended to support the development of researchers who will earn recognition and respect for their work at an international level. It is expected that the host Research Body will remain committed to supporting the development of the awardee in order to achieve this. Additionally, President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awardees will be expected to have the support from their host Research Body in facilitating their (successful) bidding for funding in international funding programmes such as the ERC and other Horizon 2020 schemes.
- **Objective:** *To support excellent scientific/engineering research that has potential impact*  
**Expected Outcomes:** Awards are made under the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders 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 Researcher Profile. This data will help towards quantifying the types of impacts arising from the awards SFI has made under the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme.

- **Objective:** *To drive challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives to ensure that the Irish public gains substantial societal and economic benefits from high-risk, high-reward scientific research and innovation*  
**Expected Outcomes:** SFI Future Research Leaders and their teams are expected to be at the forefront of activities that have the potential to radically alter the way we work and live, and how businesses may operate and compete, by carrying out research that is highly innovative and ambitious. While appreciating that research supported directly through the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme can contribute to the creation of disruptive technologies, SFI will also empower awardees to take leadership on a variety of challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives. In their annual report, awardees are asked to report on disruptive research supported through the award and any impacts realised in addition to providing updates on the funding opportunities that they have pursued and secured to support additional challenge-based Disruptive Technology Initiatives.
- **Objective:** *To further encourage and promote Ireland's participation in the international research community and to increase the number of ERC and other H2020 awards secured by Ireland-based PIs*  
**Expected Outcomes:** SFI expects that researchers based in Ireland will obtain research funding from as wide a range of sources as possible. 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 KPIs in Agenda 2020. Innovation 2020 notes that *"our current engagement at EU level focuses on contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and on maximising Irish participation in Horizon 2020"*. SFI's expectation is that awards made under the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme 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, including the European Research Council (ERC). In their annual report, awardees are asked to report on the funding opportunities that they have pursued and won and also to report on the position held by the PI on successful awards. This will allow SFI to track this progress on an annual basis.
- **Objective:** *To maintain Ireland's top-20 position in international bibliometric rankings through an increase in the number and quality of journal publications*  
**Expected Outcomes:** To date, SFI funding has produced high-quality, high-impact publications that have resulted in Ireland rising to be among the top 20 nations in international bibliometric rankings of repute. Agenda 2020 sets a target for Ireland to maintain its position in these rankings. SFI's expectation is that the grants made through the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme will contribute significantly to this target. Awardees will be asked to report on all refereed journal and conference publications and international presentations directly supported by the grant. This support must be acknowledged in all publications.
- **Objective:** *To enable collaborations with academic and industry partners particularly in areas of strategic priority*  
**Expected Outcomes:** One of the key measures of a successful research group is the level of productive collaboration. A key objective of the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme is to foster and support these collaborations and, as such, SFI's expectation is that awardees will have the capacity to develop such relationships. Data gathered in support of this metric will enable SFI to report against the following KPI targets: 1) A measureable increase in joint funding instruments with key agencies and companies by 2020; 2) A demonstrable increase in collaborations with Ireland's strategic partners by 2020 and 3) Co-fund at least one partnership with industry per year to 2015 and at least two per year to 2016–2020. Awardees will be asked to report on all academic and industry engagements relevant to the award.
- **Objective:** *To increase the proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licenses and spin-outs recorded by Ireland that are linked to SFI research*

## **President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme**

**Expected Outcomes:** It is expected that research carried out by SFI Future Research Leaders Programme awardees will result in excellent scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact. Awardees will be asked to report on all commercialisation outputs arising from this award, including the number of invention disclosures, patents, licenses and spin-outs.

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for annual reporting. President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme awardees will be requested to submit their annual report by 31<sup>st</sup> January every year to report on activity during the previous calendar year (January – December). The Standard Report template, which is available on SESAME, must be used. An additional final report must be submitted (also using the Standard Report template) within three months of the expiration date of the award. In addition to the annual report, awardees are also obliged to keep their SESAME Research Profile updated, as the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs is drawn directly from the data entered into the Research Profile; this must also be updated and completed by 31<sup>st</sup> January every year. Reporting procedures are detailed on the SFI website,<sup>33</sup> and further assistance on using SESAME to prepare reports is available.<sup>14</sup>

**The reporting requirements for awards made under the SFI President of Ireland Future Leaders Programme must be adhered to. 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.**

## **8.2 Progress Site Reviews**

Each recipient of an SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme award will be subject to progress review assessment in the form of a site review performed by international peer reviewers during the period of the award. These progress reviews are typically held at the midway point of the award. The panel are asked to assess the progress and direction of the research, the quality of the team and partnerships, the management of the budget and the potential impact of the research programme. The commitment of the research body as outlined in the letter of support, in particular the teaching and non-research commitments of the PI, will be assessed. The outcome of such a review will be taken into consideration in the assessment of future applications to the Foundation. As stated in the Terms and Conditions of Research Grants,<sup>19</sup> the Foundation reserves the right to terminate an award if, in the opinion of the Foundation, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.

## **9 Further Information**

FAQs are available on the SFI website.<sup>34</sup> For all additional queries, please contact: [FRL@sfi.ie](mailto:FRL@sfi.ie)

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-president-of-ireland/FRL-FAQs-\(May-2018-update\).pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-president-of-ireland/FRL-FAQs-(May-2018-update).pdf)

## Appendix A: Applicant CV Template (max. 6 pages)

### 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 (e.g., relevant industry collaborations, invention disclosures, patents, spin-outs)

*Please distinguish between patents applied for and under review, and those already granted. Furthermore, patents that are still active and those that have lapsed should be detailed as such.*

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

**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 B: President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme Expression of Interest Checklist

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS</b>
<b>Eligibility Questionnaire</b>	Confirm eligibility	Complete questions
<b>Proposal Summary</b>	Proposal Title	Up to 30 words
	Resubmission statement (if relevant)	
	Priority Area	Choose at least 1 if applicable, otherwise please select 'other'
	Research area (Primary and Secondary)	Select one option from each list
	Justification for SFI legal remit	Max. 250 words
	Percentage time commitment	
<b>Lead Applicant details</b>	ORCID iD	Link Sesame profile to ORCID iD
	CV – use template provided	Max. 6 pages
	Eligible leave: copies of supporting docs (if applicable)	
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
	Expired, Current & Pending Funding	
	Percentage time commitment	
<b>Advisor and Collaborator(s) details</b>	Name/Contact details etc.	
<b>Main Body of Pre-Proposal</b>	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Description of the Proposed Research ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 2 pages
	Strategic fit with the host institution ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 1 page
<b>Declaration</b>	Agreement to SFI Terms and Conditions	Tick box to agree

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

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

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

## Appendix C: President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme Full Proposal Checklist

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
<b>Proposal Summary</b>	Title	Up to 30 words
	Total funding requested	Up to €1.25m
	Duration	60 months
	Priority Area	Choose at least 1 if applicable, otherwise please select 'other'
	Research area (Primary and Secondary)	Select one option from each list
	Justification of alignment of proposed research with SFI's legal remit	Max. 250 words
<b>Lead Applicant details</b>	ORCID iD	
	Percentage time commitment	At least 50%
	CV – use template provided	Max. 6 pages
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
<b>Collaborator(s) details</b>	Name/Contact details etc.	
	CV for <b>each</b> official collaborator	Max. 2 pages
	Letter of support for <b>each</b> official collaborator	
<b>Advisor details</b>	Name/contact details	
	Letter of support from Advisor	
<b>Main Body of Full Proposal</b>	Keywords	Max. 15
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
	Impact statement ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 2 pages
	Development/Leadership Plan ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 2 pages
	Research description ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 15 pages
	References ( <i>Combined programme documents upload</i> )	Max. 5 pages
<b>Expired, Current or Pending Support of Applicants</b>	Expired, Current & Pending Funding	
	Indicate overlap of proposed research with current and pending proposals	Max. 600 words
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by HEI	Max. 1 page
<b>Ethical issues</b>	Complete ethical issues table	
<b>Proposed Budget</b>	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table
<b>Budget Justification</b>	Outline the justification for the requested costs, and include full details and justification of the requested start-up costs	Max. 3 pages
<b>Letters of Support</b>	Official collaborators, including industry	
	Host Research Body of the lead applicant	
	Advisor	
<b>Excluded Reviewers</b>	Up to 3 individuals may be excluded	

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

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

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