

SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Spokes Programme 2020



Call for Submission of Proposals

Key dates:

The Spokes Programme is run as a rolling call. Applications are by invitation only, following the submission and evaluation of an Expression of Interest.

Terms of Reference

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All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act, 2003, the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

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1 Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland's (SFI) legal remit¹ 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. Towards this goal, SFI has made a significant investment in order to establish world leading Research Centres of scale.

The SFI Spokes programme is a vehicle to enable the addition of new industrial and academic partners and projects to SFI Research Centres, so allowing the Centre to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities. It is expected that the Spokes Programme will enhance the ability of SFI Research Centres to deliver significant economic and societal impact for Ireland. The Spokes programme also provides a vehicle to link together different Research Centres, in a meaningful and relevant way.

The SFI Spokes programme will help link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry to address crucial research questions, foster the development of new and existing Ireland-based technology companies, attract industry that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy, and expand educational and career opportunities in Ireland in science and engineering.

The Spokes Programme is a rolling call, which will operate on a non-thematic basis.

Objectives of the Spokes Programme

The specific objectives of the SFI Spokes programme are to:

- increase the number of targeted projects within an existing SFI Research Centre
- build new capabilities into an SFI Research Centre
- provide a mechanism to allow new industry partners to join the Research Centre consortium
- provide a mechanism to incentivise the commencement of new projects with existing industry partners
- encourage clusters of SMEs to join the consortium that individually may not otherwise have the financial means to do so
- provide a mechanism to allow new academic partners to join the Research Centre
- link existing Centres and other major Grant Holders and build an integrated, efficient and coherent Research Centre ecosystem
- allow the Research Centre to develop and evolve dynamically and thereby enhance its sustainability

The objectives of the Research Centres programme are also relevant to the Spokes programme, since all Spokes awards will become part of the existing Research Centres. Spokes proposals may be new projects with industry partners with whom the SFI Research Centre already has a commercial relationship, or they may be new projects with new industry partners with whom the SFI Research Centre has never worked previously. Spokes proposals may not, however, be existing projects that

¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

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have already been funded as part of an SFI Research Centre or through other funding schemes, from SFI or otherwise. It is important to note that whilst one of the objectives of the Spokes programme is to provide a mechanism to allow new industry partners to join a Research Centre, proposals submitted to the programme should represent a strategic development of the Research Centre's activities and should result in significant added value to the Research Centre.

SFI Spokes projects must exhibit outstanding research quality, intellectual rigour, and active collaboration; and must add value to the strategic objectives of the SFI Research Centre.

Applications to the SFI Spokes Programme must fall within SFI's legal funding remit and must align with areas of strategic opportunity for Ireland, as outlined in the report of the refreshed Research Priority Areas 2018-2023.² Additionally, in line with SFI's Agenda 2020 strategy³, consideration will be given to applications in emerging areas of major economic importance where Ireland has an opportunity to lead both in leveraging international funding (e.g., Horizon 2020) as well as in future industrial and economic development. Applicants must ensure that proposals align with, complement and add value to the current activities of the SFI Research Centre.

2 Economic and Societal Impact

Each year the Irish Government spends in the region of €800 million 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.

In addition to the requirement for scientific excellence, applications considered under the Spokes programme must clearly demonstrate the value of the research to the expansion, development and sustainability of the SFI Research Centre and the potential for economic and societal impact to Ireland. As part of the review process, reviewers will be asked to evaluate the potential impact of the application as articulated by the applicant in the Impact Statement.

What is meant by Impact?

Impact can be described as *the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society*. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations. SFI has developed detailed guidelines on research impact which are available on the SFI website.⁴

Impact Statement

A maximum of 3 pages is allowed for the impact statement. The statement should be as specific and comprehensive as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. It should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language. Appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables associated with the potential

² <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/research-impact/AGENDA-2020.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

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impact may also be indicated. Potential economic and societal impacts should be addressed by answering, at a minimum, the following overarching questions:

- **How will the SFI Research Centre and the industry partner benefit from this research?**
- **How will the host institution benefit from this research?**
- **Who are other potential beneficiaries?**
- **What will be the benefit to Ireland?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from the research be realised?**

Applicants are encouraged to consider SFI's Agenda 2020 and to review the SFI 'Research Impact' guidance documentation before writing their impact statement.

In critically appraising various possible impacts, the following points should be considered:

- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the outputs of the SFI Research Centre?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the capabilities of the SFI Research Centre?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the R&D activities and product pipeline of the industry partner(s)?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the Irish economy, competitiveness and development?
- Is the research likely to lead to patents, licenses or spin-outs?
- How will the industry partner(s) enable increased impact? What supports are they offering? Have routes to commercialisation been considered?
- Letters of support must be included from the industry partner(s), and may be included from other bodies and individuals who will be directly involved in supporting the work described in the application but not listed as official 'industry' partners. Letters should provide full details of the intended intellectual and financial (if relevant) input. Letters which do not demonstrate direct involvement will be removed from the proposal.
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke 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? It is important to highlight the added value that will be provided from the training provided under the Spoke award.
- How will the potential impacts of your research best be realised?
- How do you propose the impact of your research could be measured?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on society and the quality of life of Ireland's citizens?
- Does the proposed Spoke link in other Research Centres and/or investigators and/or industrial collaborators in an integrated and efficient way? What are the anticipated interface benefits?
- 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)?

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3 Programme Details

3.1 General Eligibility

Applications to the Spokes programme may only be made by Centre Directors of SFI-funded Research Centres. Applications cannot be submitted directly by industry partners. The award will be administered by the host Research Body of the Research Centre award but can involve other Research Bodies who are involved in the Research Centre.

The nominated Spoke Leader(s) will provide the leadership for the Spoke proposed in the application. Spoke Leaders may consist of the Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. All Spoke Leaders must meet the eligibility criteria detailed later in this document. The Centre Director will ultimately be responsible for the governance of all Spokes associated with that Centre. The development of any Spokes proposal should, at an early stage, involve close liaison between the Spoke Leaders and the Centre Director.

3.2 Spokes Call Description

The Spokes Call will remain open, with no closing date (until further notice), to allow Research Centres to apply for funding at any time for new collaborative research projects with an industry partner(s).

Industry partner(s) must make a minimum cash contribution of 50% of the Spoke Budget associated with an application. If multiple industry partners are associated with the proposal, the minimum combined industry cash contribution must be 50% of the total award size. In-kind contributions are encouraged and should be quantified as part of an application, but do not count towards the minimum cost share contribution.

Proposals submitted to the Spokes Call are expected to be characterised by their high level of importance and urgency to both the Research Centre and industry partners. The following should be noted regarding the evaluation of applications to the Spokes Call:

- Timing of the application submission is determined by the applicants and not SFI
- The proposal review process is fast-tracked
- Assessment of the proposal is on its own merit and not in competition with other proposals

Applicants to the Spokes Call must submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) prior to submission of a full application. Applicants who submit EoIs that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a full application which will be evaluated by international peer review.

3.3 Definitions

Lead Applicant	<p>The Lead Applicant is defined as the Research Centre Director of the SFI Research Centre submitting the Spokes application. The Lead Applicant will have overall responsibility for delivery of the objectives of the Research Centre and the Spokes project. In cases where a Spokes proposal involves more than one Research Centre, one of the Research Centres should be designated as the lead administrator of the Spokes proposal, and the associated Centre Director's details should be inputted in the Lead Applicant field.</p> <p>The Lead Applicant will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The Lead Applicant has primary fiduciary 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, during the course of the award.</p>
Spoke Leader(s)	<p>Spoke Leader(s) will have well-defined, critical and continuing role(s) in the proposed Spoke. The nominated Spoke Leader(s) will provide the leadership for the Spoke proposed in the application. Spoke Leaders may consist of the Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. Spoke Leader(s) will be designated as a Co-Applicant on a Spokes proposal. There is no limit to the number of Spoke Leaders (i.e., Co-Applicants). The number of Spoke Leaders should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposed Spoke project. All Spoke Leaders must meet the eligibility criteria detailed later in this document.</p> <p>In cases where proposed Spoke Leaders are not already part of the Research Centre, they should be designated a formal status within the Research Centre upon funding of a Spokes proposal (e.g., Research Centre Co-PI or Funded Investigator). Research Centres should follow the process outlined on the SFI website in order to add new PI's and FI's to their Centre.</p>
Academic Collaborator	<p>An academic collaborator may be an academic member of staff of an Irish or international Higher Education Institution; or a member of a relevant non-academic institution, such as a Government Agency, who is committed to providing a focused contribution to specific tasks within the Spokes work programme. Collaborators will serve under the direction of Spoke Leaders and may or may not receive funding through the award. Official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the award.</p>
Industry Collaborator	<p>An industry collaborator is the lead contact person from an industry partner contributing cash or in-kind costs to the Spoke Budget. Note that industry collaborators are not eligible to receive funding under this programme.</p>

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Industry Partner	An industry partner is a company making a financial contribution to the budget of the Spoke, as well as an intellectual contribution to the research programme of the Spoke. The industry partner is represented by its Industry Collaborator(s).
Research Centre	A group funded under the SFI Research Centres Programme are referred to as a SFI Research Centre.
Spoke Budget	The Spoke Budget is defined as the total budget for the Spoke programme of research. SFI will contribute a maximum of 50% cash towards the Spoke Budget. Industry partners must contribute at least 50% cash to the Spoke Budget. The Spoke Budget is considered to be direct costs only and does not include the SFI or industry contribution towards the overheads of the Research Body.

3.4 Eligibility Criteria of Lead Applicant (Centre Director) and Spoke Leaders

The Lead Applicant is defined as the Research Centre Director of the SFI Research Centre submitting the Spokes application. The Lead Applicant will have overall responsibility for delivery of the objectives of the Research Centre and the Spokes project.

The **Spoke Leader(s)** is expected to direct the research in the Spokes award. **Spoke Leader(s)** must:

1. Be a member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), *or*
2. A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which he/she will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI grant, *or*
3. An individual who will be recognised by the Research Body upon receipt of the SFI grant as a member of the academic staff or as a contract researcher as defined above (this is only relevant in cases where the Spoke Leader is a new academic partner). The applicant does not necessarily need to be employed by the Research Body at the time of proposal submission.
4. Hold a PhD or equivalent for at least 8 years at the time of submission. Applicants must consult SFI's policy on PhD equivalence⁵.

The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred, i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate. The number of years is determined by calendar year.

⁵ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf

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5. Be a senior author on at least 10 international peer reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles, are acceptable. Consult the accompanying FAQ document regarding the definition of 'senior author'. Please note that 10 senior author publications is a minimum eligibility criterion; however applicants with higher numbers of publications are likely to be more competitive.
6. Have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as a lead investigator or as co-investigator. Personal awards such as travel awards, career fellowships (which only include the salary of the PI and not research team costs (i.e., salary for team member(s) & consumables etc.) do not count as independent research grants. Consult the accompanying FAQ document for further details.
7. Have proven prior experience, capability and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

Spoke Leaders that are currently under evaluation within other SFI programmes are permitted to apply to the Spokes programme as long as the proposed research programmes are sufficiently unique.

In all cases where Spoke Leader(s) are already in receipt of significant SFI or other research funding (e.g., they hold SFI IvP or Investigators awards, are strand leaders on CSETs or SRCs, or hold other significant awards), the evaluation process will examine the commitment and work load of the Spoke Leader(s) in determining their capacity to take up the Spokes award. Such applicants should include strong justification in their CV for their role as a Spoke Leader.

Spoke Leaders may be located at different SFI-eligible Research Bodies than the Centre Director. In this case, the grant will be administered through the Research Body of the Centre Director only.

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.

3.5 Funding

The industry partner(s) must make a minimum cash contribution of 50% of the Spoke Budget associated with an application.

There is no minimum or maximum project size. Whilst there is no minimum project size, it is expected that all proposals submitted to the Spokes programme will involve the addition of strategically important projects/partners, and will represent projects of scale which will result in a significant value add to the Research Centre. The maximum project size should be determined by the objectives of the proposed research programme.

Centre Directors must ensure that the collective budget of their Research Centre (i.e., the SFI Research Centre Award in addition to new SFI Spokes awards) achieves a minimum industry cost share of 30%, with a minimum of 10% industry cash contribution.

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3.5.1 Industry Cost Share

Spokes applications must include minimum industry contributions as defined above. Industry cash contributions should be calculated with reference to direct funding for the research programme, after any overheads or other Research Body contributions are deducted.

Contributions, whether in cash or in-kind from Irish exchequer sources such as other funding agencies, Government Departments or other Agencies of the State cannot be counted as industry contributions⁶. Likewise, funding from charities, not-for-profit organisations or philanthropic donations, while welcomed and encouraged, cannot be counted as industry contributions.

Industry in-kind contributions include, but are not necessarily limited to the costs associated with provision of the following items to a Spokes project:

- Industry scientists, engineers and technicians assigned to work on the Spokes research programme
- Student or faculty placements with industry partners
- Equipment donations
- Access to, and use of, infrastructure housed within the industry partner premises
- Software
- Materials
- Data(sets)

Industry funding that has already been used as cost share, or is earmarked for cost share for any other Irish exchequer supports (e.g. IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Irish Research Council supports etc.) may not be counted as industry cost share in Spokes applications. In cases where industry contributions exceed the minimum requirements, this should be reflected in a decreased budgetary request from SFI.

3.5.2 Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Eligible costs include:

- Contributions to salaries/stipends of research staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme
- Materials and consumables, equipment and travel
- Access to facilities and services not available to applicant team, including test-bed facilities for technology demonstration
- SFI approved access charges

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

- Contingency or miscellaneous costs
- Entertainment costs
- Technology transfer or patent costs
- Legal fees
- Conference & workshop organisation costs

⁶ Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, ESB, Ervia, etc. are *excluded* from this definition.

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- Journal subscriptions
- Relocation expenses
- Clinical time or teaching buyout

3.6 Overheads

In addition to the direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect or overhead contribution to the host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment) of the SFI contribution to the research project. Overheads will only be paid on the SFI portion of the award and not on the industry contribution. Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services, including contributions towards the costs of technology transfer and the filing and maintenance of patents.

3.7 Duration

The period of the award should be a *minimum* of 12 months and a *maximum* of 60 months. In the event that an application is approved for funding and for which the term of the award extends beyond the end date of the parent Research Centre award, it will be the responsibility of the Centre Director and lead Research Body, in agreeing to the terms and conditions as outlined in the Letter of Offer, to ensure that the requisite infrastructures are in place to support the completion of the project as defined in the Spokes proposal.

Since Spokes projects are reported as part of the Research Centre, the Centre Director must ensure that the appropriate reporting frameworks remain in place for the Spokes project, even after the associated Research Centre award has ended.

3.8 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 an applicant to submit a proposal to the SFI Spokes programme if it deems the applicant to be ineligible. Full proposals received to the Spokes Call without prior written approval will be returned without review.

Expression of Interest Review

Applicants to the Spokes Call must submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) prior to submission of a full proposal. Eois will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- The credentials of the applicant team
- The strategic benefit of the collaborative project to the Research Centre and industry partner(s)
- The potential impact (both economic and societal) of the co-funded initiative

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Postal Review

Applicants who submit EoIs that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a full proposal which will be evaluated by international peer 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 to return applications without review where the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria (or where the research programme does not fit with the remit of the Foundation). SFI Scientific Programme Managers will solicit reviews of proposals from at least three (3) peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research who may be from academic or industrial settings. The applicant may specify **up to** three referees or companies who should **not** be approached to act as reviewers for the application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. SFI shall not refer the application to these reviewers. Otherwise, selection of reviewers shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

Reviews received from peers will be collated and forwarded to applicants. Applicants will then be afforded the opportunity to submit a response to reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to respond (advance 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 funding decision. SFI reserves the right to implement an on-site panel review as part of the overall review procedure.

During the postal review process, the following review criteria will be applied:

- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields
- Alignment/value add of the proposed project(s) with the current objectives of the SFI Research Centre
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigator(s), taking into account the career stage of the applicant(s), and the applicant's record of securing non-exchequer funding
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland

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 reviewers involved in the review process.

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Site Review

SFI reserves the right to schedule a pre-award site visit in advance of a funding decision. This will be particularly relevant in the case of larger awards and/or where discrepancies arise among postal reviews for the Spokes call.

4 Expression of Interest (Eoi) Application Procedure

Applicants to the Spokes Call must request an invitation to submit a full proposal. This is done outside of SESAME. This Eoi should be submitted by email to spokes@sfi.ie by the Centre Director, and should include the following information:

- *Title of proposed Spokes proposal*
- *Name, position and institution of the Centre Director(s) and Spoke Leader(s)*
- *Name of SFI Research Centre (title and award code)*
- *Outline of budget (including industry partners intent to fund the project with a minimum of 50% cash)*
- *Brief description of the proposed Spokes research programme (max. 1 page)*
- *Brief description on the alignment of proposed research with the current Centre objectives and the added value of the proposed Spoke to the Research Centre (max. 1 page)*
- *Brief description of research commercialisation plan (max. 1 page)*
- *CVs of the Spoke Leader(s) including details of funding history, supervision experience, innovation/commercialisation experience and publications (short 2 page CV, no template)*

Once submitted, an Eoi will be acknowledged by email. SFI will endeavour to decline/invite a full proposal within 6 weeks of Eoi submission.

5 Full Proposal Application Procedure

Full proposals to the Spokes Programme will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.

Once SFI has approved the Eoi, a Rolling Spokes Application template will be created on SESAME specifically for that application, which will be visible on the applicant's workbench.

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 the following:

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

Your **username** and **password** are needed to log in to SESAME. The Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) must provide their PIN number to the Lead Applicant, in order to associate them with the application. To obtain their SESAME SFI PIN, Co-Applicants should navigate to the 'Profile' section of their SESAME account and select the 'SFI PIN/ORCID ID' tab.

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

The SESAME system is accessed using the following Internet address:

<https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide for more detailed information.⁷

SESAME enables:

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

Please note that submission of an application to the Spokes Programme may affect eligibility to submit to other SFI programmes – please refer to appropriate call documents.

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

Full proposals are submitted through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the Centre Directors Research Body. Applicants should carefully follow the instructions below and in the [SESAME Researcher User Guide](#) to complete the various sections of the application. Please contact your Research Office well in advance in order to obtain registration details for SESAME and so that you are aware of any internal institutional deadlines.

General Guidelines

- **All text in uploaded PDF attachments** must 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 2.54cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font
- Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**
- The number of pages in attachments must not exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these guidelines 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**.

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

⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the proposal checklist included in the call documentation (Appendix II) and to review the proposal document prior to submission to SFI.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and modified for resubmission in the same call.

Please note that SESAME will **not** alert applicants when page limits have been exceeded.

In order to ensure that uploaded documents are displayed in the correct order in a particular field, applicants should either combine individual documents into one single PDF prior to uploading, or number all documents consecutively in the correct order.

5.1 ORCID iD

ORCID⁸ provides a unique identifier for researchers, which can then be linked to their research works across different platforms. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

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

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Research Profile. Both Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted.

5.2 Full Proposal Eligibility Questionnaire

Applicants will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the eligibility criteria for the Spokes Call to which they are applying. The application cannot proceed until this acknowledgement is confirmed.

5.3 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title**
The proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken, in up to 30 words. The proposal title should be non-confidential.

⁸ <http://orcid.org/>

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After entering the proposal title and clicking 'Save Draft', a proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME. Additional fields now appear in the SESAME application form.

- **Name of Research Centre**
From the dropdown box, select the name of the Research Centre of which the Lead Applicant is the Director.
- **Name of Spoke Leader**
- **Duration of Grant Requested (in months):**
Select the duration (in months) of the award requested from the drop-down menu.

The options for duration are in units of 12 months (12, 24, 36 months etc). If requesting funding for a period of time which is not specified in the drop-down menu, please select the option which is closest and is greater than the number of months you are seeking to be funded e.g., for 40 months select 48 months. This will ensure the budget template displays the appropriate duration. Please indicate the exact proposed award duration within the body of the proposal.

- **Resubmission Statement (max. 1000 words)**
Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details.⁹
- **Priority Area Alignment (Primary and Secondary)**
Applicants should select one of the 14 Research Priority Areas from the drop-down menu as the area which best describes the proposed research (as outlined in the report of the refreshed Research Priority Areas 2018-2023¹⁰). Alternatively, applicants may select "Other". It is also possible to detail Secondary Priority Areas that the research will be relevant to.
- **Research Area (Primary)**
Applicants should select a primary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.
- **Research Area (Secondary)**
Applicants should select a secondary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary SFI research area already selected, best describes the proposed research.
- **Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**
This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.¹¹

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

¹⁰ <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

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5.4 Lead Applicant (Centre Director) Details

- **Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission**
Select the country in which the Lead Applicant (Centre Director) is employed at the time of submission.
- **Lead Applicant CV (max. 2 pages)**
Upload the CV (max. 2 pages) of the Lead Applicant (Centre Director) using the template provided on the Spokes Programme webpage.¹² Clicking 'Save Draft' at the bottom of the page will make the uploaded CV visible on the SESAME application form.
- **Supervisory Experience to Date**
Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, which can be directly attributed to the Lead Applicant (Centre Director).

5.5 Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) Details

Spoke Leaders should be added into SESAME under the Co-Applicant field. Please note that Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) will appear in the proposal document in the order which they are added into SESAME.

To add Spoke Leaders to a proposal, click the 'Add Co-Applicants' button and **enter their surname and SESAME SFI PIN**. To obtain their SESAME SFI PIN, Spoke Leaders should navigate to the 'Profile' section of their SESAME account and select the 'SFI PIN/ORCID ID' tab.

Please note that SESAME does not permit two individuals to concurrently modify a proposal. The Lead Applicant must close the proposal in order to allow Co-Applicants (Spoke Leaders) to make modifications, and vice-versa.

- **Percentage Time Commitment**
Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader), to the proposed research programme.
- **Co-Applicant CV (max. 5 pages)**
Upload the CV (max. 5 pages) of the Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) using the template provided on the Spokes Programme webpage. Clicking 'Save Draft' at the bottom of the page will make the uploaded CV visible on the SESAME application form.
- **Supervisory Experience to Date**
Provide summary information on supervisory experience directly attributed to the Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) to date.

5.6 Research Funding

The Lead Applicant (Centre Director) and Co-Applicant(s) (Spoke Leader(s)) must report on expired, current and pending funding. Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile.¹³

¹² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

¹³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

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- Include details of any financial support pending, current or expired from the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry etc.
- When adding entries from profile, please ensure the 'Status' is up-to-date (Current, Pending, Expired), as this determines how the funding is listed on the application (e.g. the grant will be listed as 'Current' even if the end date has passed, if the status has not been updated to list the award as 'Expired').
- When adding new entries, please complete the requested details for each research funding entry. Fields coloured red are mandatory. When adding funding to the application from your SESAME profile, please check the information is up-to-date, including the status of the funding (pending, current or expired).
- For each grant listed, provide a brief description of the research. Applicants should 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.
- 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. Applicants with extremely large numbers of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. The most prestigious grants and those most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has no expired, current or pending funding. Both the Lead and Co-Applciant(s) (i.e., the Centre Director and Spoke Leader(s)) need to complete this section within SESAME.

Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant (Centre Director), or the profile of the Co-Applciant(s) (Spoke Leader(s)), has been included in the application.

The applicants must complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application (max. 1,000 words). For each current and pending grant listed, 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). SFI will not support research programmes currently being funded by another source.

5.7 Collaborator Details

To add collaborators to the proposal, click the 'Add' button and enter the name, contact information and other required details for the academic or industry collaborators. After adding collaborator details, click the 'Assign Collaborator' button. To exit the window, click the 'Close' button. In order for the collaborator(s) to be visible on SESAME click 'Save Draft'.

- **Collaborator CV (max. 2 pages)**

Upload a CV (max. 2 pages) for each collaborator using the template provided on the SFI Spokes webpage.¹⁴ Clicking ‘Save Draft’ at the bottom of the page will make the uploaded CV visible on the SESAME application form.

5.8 Main Body of Proposal

- **Keywords (max. 15)**

List the keywords/phrases that best describe the research proposed in the application.

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

Provide a succinct summary of the proposed work programme when separated from the application. The scientific abstract should be non-confidential.

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

Provide a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application. The lay abstract should be non-confidential.

5.9 Ethical Issues

- **Use of Animals**

Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned. Further details on SFI’s Policy on the ‘Use of Animals in Research’ can be found on the SFI Ethical Policies webpage¹⁵ and in SFI’s ‘Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues’.¹⁶

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

Applicants must complete the questionnaire indicating whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Further details can be found on the SFI Ethical Policies webpage and in SFI’s ‘Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues’.

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

In accordance with the SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)¹⁷, all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research. Please consult the

¹⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

¹⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

¹⁶ [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues.pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20on%20Ethical%20and%20Scientific%20Issues.pdf)

¹⁷ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

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'Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues' for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

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

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

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

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

5.11 Programme Documents

Applicants must complete the Programme Document template which is available for download from the Spokes Programme webpage.¹⁸ **Please note that the completed Programme Document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF in the Programme Documents upload section.** The Programme Document consists of the following sections:

- **Research Programme Description (max. 15 pages)**
Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for reviewers to comment on the quality of the ideas and proposed implementation. The Research Programme Description should be structured under the following headings:
 - i. **What is the overall goal of the research programme?**
 - ii. **What research question will the programme address?**
Describe clearly and concisely the specific aims and objectives of the project(s) within the research programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables. Relevant preliminary data must be provided. This may take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research or (b) where data has yet to be published, this can be included within the 15 page research description, as evidence that the applicant(s) has a track record in the field of his/her proposed research.
 - iii. **Why is the question significant?**
What are the unique and innovative aspects of this research? What market opportunity does the research address? What is the current state-of-the-art in the area and how will the proposed research advance this? What is the competitive advantage of the team to deliver in this area? Applicants should consider the

¹⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

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specific objectives of the SFI Research Centres Programme and the SFI Spokes Programme when justifying the importance of the proposed research.

iv. How does the Spokes research programme align with the Research Centre's objectives? How does this research programme add value to the Research Centre(s) into which it will join?

Describe in detail how the proposed Spoke aligns with the goals and objectives of the SFI Research Centre(s) into which it will join. Describe how the proposed Spoke will add value and enhance the outputs and subsequent impact of the Research Centre, and ultimately promote/contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Research Centre. Describe why the proposed Spoke is strategically important to the Research Centre.

v. What approach or methodology will be used?

The methodology of the proposed programme should be well developed, and how this proposed methodology advances the current state-of-the-art should be described in detail. Is the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

vi. What is the project management plan?

Describe the milestones and deliverables for the research programme along with delivery dates and key performance indicators used to measure progress. A Gantt chart should be provided.

Describe the roles and responsibilities of each partner (i.e., Spoke Leaders, industry collaborators, academic collaborators etc.) in delivering the research programme.

Include an assessment of risks associated with the delivery of the Spokes research programme and explain measures to mitigate and manage these risks.

• References and Citations (max. 5 pages)

Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided.

• Impact Statement (max. 3 pages)

The statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated. The impact statement should include a commercialisation plan for the outputs of the proposed Spokes research programme. Please refer to the details on the SFI website¹⁹ when writing your impact statement.

• Intellectual Property (IP) (max. 1 page)

Applicants should include as much detail as possible on the relevant Intellectual Property (IP) landscape surrounding the research in question, which should detail any background IP that will be introduced to the project. A plan for management of all IP relating to the Spokes research programme must be provided which should be in accordance with national guidelines, including 'Ireland's National IP Protocol'.²⁰

¹⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

²⁰ http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/About_KTI/Knowledge-Transfer-Framework/

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Suitable contracts and IP agreements/Collaborative Research Agreements between the Research Body or Bodies, and the industry partner(s) must be concluded and signed within a set number of days after the official start date of the Spoke award and prior to the start of the individual Spoke project, as detailed in the Letter of Offer. Copies of these agreements are to be returned to SFI. As a matter of policy, until an IP agreement relating to the awarded Spoke is executed, the corporate partner(s) has no access or exploitation rights to foreground IP.

- **Industry Partner Overview (max. 1 page per industry partner)**

Applicants should include a 1-page overview of each industry partner(s) involved in the proposed research project. The overview should include:

- a) A brief description of the company (including legal definition such as e.g., commercial for-profit, semi-state), its size, business, relationship with the Research Body;
- b) A brief description of how the industry partner will engage in this research programme;
- c) Details of how the technology/research collaboration will directly benefit the company/companies involved, how it will contribute towards strengthening the competitive advantage and long term survival of the company, and how the proposed collaboration could benefit the Irish economy;
- d) Details of the amount and type of contribution that the proposed partner will provide to the research programme.

5.12 Budget

Please refer to SFI's Grant Budget Policy²¹ when preparing the budget.

5.12.1 Budget Template in Excel (SFI Request and Industry Commitment)

Applicants are required to prepare a high-level budget by completing the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the Spokes Programme webpage.²²

A copy of the completed budget tables must be uploaded to SESAME as an Excel file in the 'Programme Documents' section.

This budget must include:

- A budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Spokes budget separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel
- Where applicable, budgets for the SFI contribution to the Research Centre Operations and Platform
- A detailed breakdown of industry financial contributions to the Spoke, both cash and in-kind (e.g., staff, equipment, other). Note that the financial commitments identified in these tables should be in accordance with and supported by the commitments provided by the industry partner(s) in their letter(s) of support

²² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

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- An overall Spokes budget encompassing the SFI contributions as well as the industry cash and in-kind contributions

Please only enter values in the white cells. Applicants must follow the SFI Grant Budget Policy.²³

5.12.2 Budget Template in SESAME (SFI Request only)

Applicants are additionally required to complete a detailed budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Spokes project within SESAME. This budget should provide a detailed breakdown of costs under each of the headings of staff, equipment, materials & travel. To complete this, press open in the 'Prepare Budget' section and input the costs under each category heading.

5.12.3 Budget Completion Guidelines

I. Staff: Salaries and benefits

All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in Section 4.1 of the Grant Budget Policy²⁴ and the associated SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale.²⁵ Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved by the relevant Research Office(s).

Contributions to team-member salaries, and fees and stipends for postgraduate students (PhDs and MScs by research) may be requested. Salaries for Principal Investigators, industry collaborators, industry staff members and all other collaborators are not permitted.

SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of postdoctoral researchers according to the SFI Team Member Budgeting Scale, Level 2. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience, and the rationale for appointing a named individual at that point should be explained in the budget justification. SFI would expect to see individuals directly post-PhD to be appointed at point 1 of the scale.

II. Equipment

All information required to complete the Equipment section of the budget can be found in Section 4.2 of SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

III. Materials and Consumables

All information required to complete the Materials and Consumables section of the budget can be found in Section 4.3 of SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

IV. Travel

All information required to complete the Travel section of the budget can be found in Section 4.4 of SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

²³https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2019_urlupdates.pdf

²⁴<http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

²⁵<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/FINAL-SFI-Team-Member-Salary-Scales.pdf>

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V. Ineligible Costs

Information regarding ineligible costs can be found in Section 5 of SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

5.12.4 Budget Justification (upload, max. 3 pages)

The budget justification is the narrative explanation of the budget. It helps SFI and reviewers to evaluate whether the budget requested is reasonable. It should clearly explain why requested eligible costs are necessary for the proposed research programme and how they have been calculated. Guidance on completion of the Budget Justification can be found in SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

For the cash and in-kind industry contributions, provide high level details on the level of commitment. The budget justification should cover the full award budget (SFI request and Industry commitment).

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 Spokes programme.

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.

5.13 Letters of Support

The following letters of support must be included:

- A letter of support from **each industry collaborator** outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Spoke project. Industry letters of support should outline any previous history of collaborations with the academic applicants and outline how the research to be undertaken aligns itself with the current and future needs of that industry partner. The letter of support should describe the level of cost share commitment from the industry partner, both in terms of cash and in-kind contributions and the time period for which the contribution is being made. Applicants should ensure that a completed company contribution table (Appendix I: Industry Collaborator Letter of Support) is included within each letter.
- A letter of support from **each academic collaborator** (1 page). Details of how the academic collaborator will contribute to the proposed research programme must be clearly described.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Centre Director** which should comment on the infrastructure, services and support available to the programme.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of each Spoke Leader**, where different from the Research Body of the Centre Director. This letter should comment on the infrastructure, services and support available to the programme and in addition should include the endorsement of eligibility of the Spoke Leader(s).

Letters of Support may be uploaded as single or multiple files, using the appropriate buttons in the application form.

5.14 Excluded Reviewers

Applicants may specify up to three international researchers who should not act as reviewers for the application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. Please note that applicants can request exclusion of specific companies within this list.

5.15 View Proposal Prior to Submission

A PDF of the proposal is available to view 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. **Please note that the deadlines referred to in this Call Document refer to submission of the finalised application to SFI by your local Research Office. Local Research Offices may mandate internal submission deadlines in order to ensure that they have sufficient time to review applications and submit them to SFI.**

Please note that the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) may choose to complete fields and upload documentation that are common to all applicants (e.g. keywords, abstracts etc.) but only the Lead Applicant can submit the application.

5.16 Research Body Approval

It will be noted that Research Body submission of an application represents their approval of an application and agreement to the [SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants](#). Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

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

Furthermore, submission of an application further represents the approval of the Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants of the application and agreement to SFI General Terms and Conditions of Research

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Grants.²⁶ Proposals not in compliance with any details specified in this document or in the General Terms & Conditions will not be eligible for a grant and will be returned without review.

6 SFI's Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with SFI's Grant General Terms & Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme. The following is a non-exclusive list of relevant policies; it should be noted that these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

Clinical Trials

SFI permits early stage regulated clinical trials (Phase I or combined Phase I/II) and investigations to be undertaken under the scope of the following SFI programmes: SFI Research Centres, Spokes, and Strategic Partnerships in addition to SFI Research Professorship where the successful candidate will become a Co-Principal Investigator within an SFI Research Centre. Any such clinical trial must be conducted in accordance with SFI Terms and Conditions and adhere to **SFI's Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,²⁷ as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

Animal Usage

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**²⁸ and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HPA's position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity

SFI places paramount importance on ensuring that the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, SFI endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**,²⁹ that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this policy statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.³⁰

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)**,³¹ which SFI has endorsed.

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**.³² The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the

²⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

²⁷ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

²⁸ http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

²⁹ https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IAA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf

³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf

³¹ http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf

³² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

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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 (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**,³³ applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

The strategy also sets out a target for 30% of SFI's portfolio of award holders to be female and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of each gender by 2020. As such, applicants should consider how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI funded award when either an SFI Awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded on an SFI award takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.³⁴

Appeals Process

This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the decline of a proposal by SFI.³⁵

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)**³⁶ and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.³⁷ 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**³⁸ and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.³⁹ It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

³³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

³⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

³⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

³⁶ [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)

³⁷ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

³⁸ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

³⁹ http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

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Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation⁴⁰ is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union. 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**.⁴¹

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

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

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**.⁴²

Potential conflicts of interest with respect to industrial collaborators named in the Spokes application should be directly declared within the applicant CV at the full proposal stage. Furthermore, the Host Research Body letter of support should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of such conflicts.

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S⁴³ and those of the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment,⁴⁴ SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI funded research (i.e., where one or other of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), **SFI's Open Access policy**⁴⁵ should be adhered to. SFI monitors compliance with this

⁴⁰ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>

⁴¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

⁴² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

⁴³ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

⁴⁴ <http://norf-ireland.net/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFIs-Open-Access-Policy-2019.pdf>

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policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and its Annual Stocktake of Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.⁴⁶ Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI.⁴⁷ Applicants should review individual programme funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

7 Award Management

SFI has stringent requirements for the reporting by applicants on the grants that it makes. Applicants that fail to comply with these reporting requirements run the risk of having their grant payments suspended.

Since awards granted through the Spokes programme will integrate into the SFI Research Centre, reporting on the progress of the Spokes award will be included in the reporting requirements for the Research Centre. SFI reserves the right to request a separate report for the Spokes award should it be required.

The Spokes programme will be reviewed as part of the SFI Research Centre as a whole and as such, progress of the programme will be reviewed in conjunction with the other Spokes and targeted projects at the SFI Research Centre site review. SFI reserves the right to conduct an independent external site review of the Spokes award to adequately assess progress on the award should it be deemed necessary.

⁴⁶ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

APPENDIX I: Industry Collaborator Letter of Support

A letter of support from each industry collaborator outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Spokes project must be provided at the full-proposal application stage. Industry letters of support should outline any previous history of collaborations with the academic applicants and outline how the research to be undertaken aligns itself with the current and future needs of that industry partner. The letter of support should describe the level of cost share commitment from the industry partner, both in terms of cash and in-kind contributions and the time period for which the contribution is being made as per the following table:

INDUSTRY PARTNER 'X' CONTRIBUTIONS						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Cash Contribution						
Staff Contribution						
Equipment Contribution						
Other in-kind contribution						

APPENDIX II: Proposal Checklist

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST		
SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
Proposal Eligibility	Read and understand the eligibility criteria for the Spokes Call	Confirm eligibility
Proposal Summary	Title	Up to 30 words
	Duration of award requested	Up to 60 months
	Name of Research Centre	Select from list
	Resubmission statement (if relevant)	Max. 1000 words
	Justification of alignment with SFI's Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
	Priority area alignment	Select from list
	Research area (primary and secondary)	Select from list
Lead Applicant (Centre Director) details	Complete mandatory SESAME profile information	Mandatory fields are marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Country location at time of submission	Select from list
	CV	Max. 2 pages (use template provided)
	Supervisory experience	Enter details
	Research funding history	Enter details (mandatory fields are marked in red)
Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader) details	Complete mandatory SESAME profile information	Mandatory fields are marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Percentage time commitment	Insert time commitment
	CV	Max. 5 pages (use template provided)
	Supervisory experience	Enter details
	Research funding history	Enter details (mandatory fields are marked in red)
Collaborator(s) details	Contact information	Add name, contact details etc.
	CV	Max. 2 pages (use template provided)
Main body of proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
Ethical issues	Answer questions regarding ethical issues (use of animals, research involving human	Select relevant answers

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	participants, biological material or identifiable data)	
Sex & gender dimension in research	Sex & gender dimension in research statement	Max. 1000 words
Programme documents	Research programme description	Max. 15 pages
	References and citations	Max. 5 pages
	Impact statement	Max. 3 pages
	Intellectual property (IP)	Max. 1 page
	Industry partner overview	Max. 1 page per industry partner
Budget	High level budget (SFI request & industry commitment)	Use Microsoft Excel budget template provided
	Detailed budget (SFI request only)	Use SESAME budget template
	Budget justification	Max. 3 pages
Letter(s) of support	Each industry collaborator	Must include a completed company contribution table
	Each academic collaborator	Max. 1 page
	Host Research Body of the Lead Applicant (Centre Director)	
	Host Research Body of each Co-Applicant (Spoke Leader), where different to Centre Director	
Excluded reviewers	Up to three international researchers may be excluded from reviewing the proposal	