

SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Research Centres Programme 2023

Guidance for Applicants

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2 SFI Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the SFI Grant General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs), applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme. All members involved in the funded research should be appraised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time:

Clinical Trials

Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**¹, 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**², and should also ensure that their studies align 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**³; that is, all institutions and SFI grant holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**⁴, in addition to their respective institutional policies and procedures for handling research misconduct allegations.

Doctoral Education

For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2023)**⁵.

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019** and must comply with State aid Regulations⁶. The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the

¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

² http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

³ <https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf

⁵ <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2023/02/National-Framework-for-Doctoral-Education-2023.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

collaborative nature of the project and the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the Industry Partner. IP arrangements should be explicitly described in collaborative research agreements (CRAs).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

SFI's ambition is that its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028 will be a key driver of an inclusive, engaged research culture and, through this Strategy, SFI will be an agent of change. As such, the SFI EDI Strategy presents a vision and strategy for SFI, as a leading research funder, to help reduce systemic barriers to participating in the research endeavour.

SFI has already demonstrated leadership in improving the representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research more broadly in the entire education talent pipeline. Whilst gender will remain a central tenet of the new EDI strategy, SFI will now proactively consider other areas of inequality or disadvantage to support an intersectional approach, in keeping with our values and best practice.

In the SFI Strategy 2025 Shaping Our Future⁷, targets are set for 35% of SFI's funded leadership positions (PIs & Co-PIs) to be women and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of the underrepresented genders by 2025. As such, applicants should consider and describe how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the SFI EDI Strategy, applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in STEM careers. SFI invites its grant holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI-funded grant when either an SFI Awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded by an SFI grant, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave⁸.

Appeals Process

The Appeals Process Policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI⁹.

State Aid

All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must comply with, State aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not,

⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid. Applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2022 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01)**¹⁰ and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland¹¹. If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**¹², and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**¹³. 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 Regulation¹⁴ is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union¹⁵. 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**¹⁶.

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.

¹⁰ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG

¹¹ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

¹² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

¹³ http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

¹⁵ <https://www.eugdpr.org/>

¹⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

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**¹⁷.

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S¹⁸ and as a signatory of the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-30¹⁹, SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI-funded research (i.e., where at least one of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), the researcher(s) should adhere to **SFI's Open Access policy**²⁰. SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and data gathered through Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. SFI is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies²¹. 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 SFI²². Applicants should review individual programme funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

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

3 San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)²³ in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022,

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

¹⁸ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

¹⁹ <https://norf.ie>

²⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research>

²¹ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

²² <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

²³ <https://sfdora.org/read/>

SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member²⁴. To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S²⁵, SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030²⁶. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment²⁷ and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)²⁸.

4 Expression of Interest

Applicant Teams intending to submit an application to the call must provide an Expression of Interest (EoI) to centres@sfi.ie no later than 1st November 2023, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time. This information is mandatory. The EoI template, available in Section 8.1 of this document and on the call website, must be used.

5 Guidance for SESAME

The Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal applications must be submitted via SESAME. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the eligibility criteria for the call. The application cannot proceed until this acknowledgement is confirmed. Please note that if more than one Director is being proposed, one individual is required to serve as Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant will be asked to provide basic applicant details on SESAME and will then be guided to complete a number of fields as detailed in the step-by-step guide below. Certain steps in this guide are unique to either the Pre-Proposal or Full Proposal stage and are indicated as such.

5.1 Registering for SESAME access

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.

SESAME is accessed online; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. 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 here: <https://grants.sfi.ie>. Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide²⁹ for more detailed information.

²⁴ Contributor level membership

²⁵ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

²⁶ [National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum \(norf.ie\)](#)

²⁷ https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

²⁸ <https://coara.eu/>

²⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

5.2 General Guidelines

Proposal submission requirements:

- All text in uploaded PDFs should be provided in Calibri 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.
- Applications should be prepared using the templates provided by SFI.
- Applications must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only. Please ensure to use unencrypted, non-password protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft word PDF convertor software only.
- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review.
- File sizes of attachments should be less than 5MB.
- The use of hyperlinks is limited to citing information already in the public domain which is non-critical to the evaluation of the proposal. The actual URL text should be referenced, so it appears on the page, for example in brackets or in a footnote, rather than embedding the URL in a specific word or phrase. Hyperlinks and URLs may not be used to provide additional information, which would be necessary for application review, and as a means of circumventing page limits. Reviewers are not obligated to view linked sites.

Note: It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI on, or before, the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation.

Once submitted by the Administrative Partner 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.

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.

5.3 ORCID iD

Applicants are **required** to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**. ORCID³⁰ provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different 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.

³⁰ <http://orcid.org/>

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.

6 Pre-Proposal Submission

6.1 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title** – This will be the name of the Centre for the purpose of the proposal. The following format should be used for the name of the proposed Centre: SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of ‘ABC’ to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre. Please note that any name should be considered to be interim, with final Centre branding to be discussed and agreed with the funder prior to grant start date.
- **Duration of Grant requested (in months)** – The dropdown will be pre-populated as 96 months. Please select 96.
- **Proposal ID** – After entering the Proposal Title and selecting the Duration, select ‘Save Draft’. A Proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME. Additional fields now appear in the SESAME application form.
- **Total funding request amount (in €)** – This figure will be populated from the high-level summary SFI requested budget (table completed on SESAME application form).
- **Alignment to SFI’s Legal Remit (max. 250 words)** – This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns with SFI’s legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

6.2 Lead Applicant Details

Note: The Applicant Team must meet the requirements set out in ‘Call for Submission of Proposals’ document³¹ or their application will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to peer review.

- SESAME Profile Information including ORCID iD
- **Location of Applicant at time of Submission**
- **Lead Applicant % Commitment to the Project** – Indicate the time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Lead Applicant, to the proposed research programme. This should represent a substantial time commitment to the overall management of the Research Centre. For the Lead Applicant the minimum time commitment to the grant is 40%.
- **Lead Applicant Narrative CV (upload; max. 6 pages)** – A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Research Centres Programme 2023 website³¹, must be completed and uploaded. **Please click on ‘Save Draft’ after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as that relating to periods of leave from research, where relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, H-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.

³¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

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

Note: SFI recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for Applicant Teams to modify their Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs between the EoI and Pre-Proposal, and hence it is not required that an identical set of Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs be identified on the Pre-Proposal as were identified on the EoI. Applicant Teams intending to change their Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs **must contact SFI in advance of submission** of the Pre-Proposal and have received approval in writing from SFI for such a change.

6.3 Co-Applicant Details

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

- In the Co-Applicant section of the application, the Lead Applicant will be prompted to click the button labelled 'Add' adjacent to the 'Add Co-Applicants' text;
- In order to add a Co-Applicant, the Researcher SFI PIN of each Co-Applicant and their last name is required;
- If the Co-Applicant is not registered with SESAME, then they will need to register through their respective Research Body before the application can proceed;
- Once a valid Researcher SFI PIN and Researcher Last Name is entered, click the Retrieve Researcher button and the Co-Applicant details will be displayed;
- If the details are correct, then click on the 'Associate Researcher with Application' button;
- The resulting pop-up will confirm that the Researcher has been added and that you must click 'Save Draft' to have the Co-Applicant listed against the application;
- Once a Co-Applicant has been assigned to an application, SESAME will send an email to the Co-Applicant providing them with login instructions.

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

- SESAME Profile Information including ORCID iD
- **% Commitment to the Project** – Indicate the time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicant, to the proposed research programme.
- **Co-Applicant Narrative CV (upload; max. 6 pages)** – A CV of the Co-Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Research Centres Programme 2023 website³², must be completed and uploaded. **Please click on 'Save Draft' after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, H-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.
- **Supervisory Experience to date** – Provide summary information on supervisory history of the Co-Applicant to date. Indicate the total numbers of graduated MSc and PhD students and the number of staff currently under supervision.

Note: SESAME does not permit two individuals to concurrently modify an application. The Lead Applicant must log out of the application to allow a Co-Applicant to make modifications, and

³² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

vice versa. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that this activity is co-ordinated well in advance of the submission deadline.

6.4 Research Funding History

The Lead-Applicant and all Co-Applicants must list any prior research funding that has been received since the award of their PhD or equivalent qualification. **Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide³³). If this section is left blank it will indicate that the Applicant Team has NO expired, current or pending funding.** Both the Lead and Co-Applicant(s) need to complete this section within SESAME. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant, or the profile of the Co-Applicant, has actually been included in the application. A text box is provided in the SESAME application form to describe (in a maximum of 1,000 words) any scientific overlap that exists between any of the previously funded projects and the research proposed in the application.

6.5 Collaborator Details

An academic collaborator is a person or team that typically works in a Research Body and is a significant source of expertise and experience in a specific area of research relevant to the Centre. Academic collaborators are not eligible to receive funding through the grant. Include name and institution. Please note that CVs for academic collaborators are not required as part of this Call.

6.6 Budget Information

The budget section on SESAME is to be completed to summarise the funding requested. Further guidance can be found in this section on SESAME. A detailed Research Centre budget prepared using the Pre-Proposal budget template (Excel file), available on the call website, is also required which will provide a breakdown of funding requested. Please note that there are separate budget templates for the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal application stages. The relevant budget file should be uploaded in Microsoft Excel format to SESAME.

The tables from the relevant budget template are to be included as part of the Pre-Proposal programme document alongside a budget justification. Please ensure the figures in the tables match those in the Excel template. For further details on the funding and budget justification please see the budget section of the proposal templates.

6.7 Programme Documents (Upload)

The programme document, as per the template provided in Section 8.2 of this document and the call website, for the Pre-Proposal must be completed and uploaded as a PDF file using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form. Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only. Please note that page limits (where applicable) must be strictly adhered to. The SESAME system will not alert applicants when page limits have been exceeded. Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.

³³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

The Pre-Proposal budget template (Excel file) must be completed and uploaded using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form.

6.8 Letters of Support

Letters of Support can be uploaded in PDF format directly to the Letter(s) of Support section of the SESAME application form.

Applicants must include the following letters of support with their proposals:

- A letter of support from each industry partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Research Centre. Industry letters of support should outline the area of interest and intention to engage with the Research Centre, why the Research Centre is important and any previous history of collaboration with the Applicant Team.
- A letter of support from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant and each Co-Applicant. These letters should address:
 - The importance of the Research Centre to the Research Body and how it aligns with key institutional strategic priorities and strategies.
 - A list of the specific commitments from the Research Body to the Research Centre, including planned strategic hires aligned with the objectives of the proposed Research Centre.
 - A statement from the Research Body on how the partner institutions will work together to realise the shared vision and ensure the success of the Research Centre, including effective management arrangements and the provision and support of a robust and cohesive system for inter-institutional co-operation.
 - Facilities and infrastructure, student and staff conditions and wellbeing support, training and career development opportunities.
 - Steps to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of research.
 - A commitment to the Research Centre EDI Action Plan, outlining how the Research Centre's proposed strategy aligns with institutional EDI objectives and making specific commitments to progress EDI within the Research Centre throughout the term of the Grant.
 - The letter of support should name the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) from their Research Body who are listed on the application and include an endorsement of their eligibility. The letter of support from the Research Body of the Director(s) should also describe what services and supports will be made available to the proposed Director(s).
- Where applicable, a letter of support from each organisation committing other non-exchequer contributions (e.g., philanthropic sources, charitable donations) towards the Research Centre should be provided.

6.9 View Proposal Prior to Submission

The PDF of the Pre-Proposal submission (through SESAME) should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. This responsibility lies with the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant and the Research Body of the Lead Applicant will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes.

6.10 Declaration

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs).³⁴ Applications that fail to comply with SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions, or with requirements outlined in the call document, will not be eligible and will be withdrawn without review.

6.11 Research Body Approval

Note: All Partner Research Bodies must meet the requirements set out in the 'Call for Submission of Proposals' document³⁵ or their application will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to peer review.

It will be noted that submission of an application by the Administrative Lead Research Body 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 Administrative Lead Research Body is approving:

- Eligibility of each Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant as well as the eligibility of the Applicant Team 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 grant.
- 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 Team in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant legal and ethical approval has been sought and will be granted prior to the grant commencing.
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of grant.
- 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.

Furthermore, submission of an application further represents the approval of the Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants of the application and agreement to [SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants](#).

7 Full Proposal Submission

7.1 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title** – This will be the name of the Centre for the purpose of the proposal. The following format should be used for the name of the proposed Centre: SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of 'ABC' to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre. Please note that any name should be considered to be interim, with final Centre branding to be discussed and agreed with the funder prior to grant start date.

³⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

³⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

- **Proposal ID** – A Proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME.
- **Total funding request amount (in €)** – This figure will be populated from the high-level summary SFI requested budget (table completed on SESAME application form).
- **Duration of Grant requested (in months)** – The duration will be pre-populated as 96 months.
- **Alignment to SFI's Legal Remit (max. 250 words)** – This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns with SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

7.2 Lead Applicant Details

Note: The Applicant Team must meet the requirements set out in 'Call for Submission of Proposals' document³⁶ or their application will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to peer review.

- SESAME Profile Information including ORCID iD
- **Location of Applicant at time of Submission**
- **Lead Applicant % Commitment to the Project** – Indicate the time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Lead Applicant, to the proposed research programme. This should represent a substantial time commitment to the overall management of the Research Centre. For the Lead Applicant the minimum time commitment to the grant is 40%.
- **Lead Applicant Narrative CV (upload; max. 6 pages)** – A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Research Centres Programme 2023 website³⁶, must be completed and uploaded. **Please click on 'Save Draft' after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as that relating to periods of leave from research, where relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, H-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.
- **Supervisory Experience to date** – Provide summary information on supervisory history of the Lead Applicant to date. Indicate the total numbers of graduated MSc and PhD students and the number of staff currently under supervision.

Note: SFI recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for Applicant Teams to modify their Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs between the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal, and hence it is not required that an identical set of Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs be identified on the Full Proposal as were identified on the Pre-Proposal. Applicant Teams intending to change their set of Lead Applicant/Co-Applicants/Centre PIs **must contact SFI in advance of submission** of the Full Proposal and have received approval in writing from SFI for such a change.

7.3 Co-Applicant Details

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

- In the Co-Applicant section of the application, the Lead Applicant will be prompted to click the button labelled 'Add' adjacent to the 'Add Co-Applicants' text;
- In order to add a Co-Applicant, the Researcher SFI PIN of each Co-Applicant and their last name is required;

³⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

- If the Co-Applicant is not registered with SESAME, then they will need to register through their respective Research Body before the application can proceed;
- Once a valid Researcher SFI PIN and Researcher Last Name is entered, click the Retrieve Researcher button and the Co-Applicant details will be displayed;
- If the details are correct, then click on the 'Associate Researcher with Application' button;
- The resulting pop-up will confirm that the Researcher has been added and that you must click 'Save Draft' to have the Co-Applicant listed against the application;
- Once a Co-Applicant has been assigned to an application, SESAME will send an email to the Co-Applicant providing them with login instructions.

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

- SESAME Profile Information including ORCID iD
- **% Commitment to the Project** – Indicate the time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicant, to the proposed research programme.
- **Co-Applicant Narrative CV (upload; max. 6 pages)** – A CV of the Co-Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Research Centres Programme 2023 website³⁷, must be completed and uploaded. **Please click on 'Save Draft' after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, H-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.
- **Supervisory Experience to date** – Provide summary information on supervisory history of the Lead Applicant to date. Indicate the total numbers of graduated MSc and PhD students and the number of staff currently under supervision.

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

7.4 Research Funding History

The Lead-Applicant and all Co-Applicants must list any prior research funding that has been received since the award of their PhD or equivalent qualification. **Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide³⁸).** If this section is left blank it will indicate that the Applicant Team has **NO** expired, current or pending funding. Both the Lead and Co-Applicant(s) need to complete this section within SESAME. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant, or the profile of the Co-Applicant, has actually been included in the application. A text box is provided in the SESAME application form to describe (in a maximum of 1,000 words) any scientific overlap that exists between any of the previously funded projects and the research proposed in the application.

³⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

³⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

7.5 Collaborator Details

An academic collaborator is a person or team that typically works in a Research Body and is a significant source of expertise and experience in a specific area of research relevant to the Centre. Academic collaborators are not eligible to receive funding through the grant. Include name and institution. Please note that CVs for academic collaborators are not required as part of this Call.

7.6 Main Body of Proposal

- Keywords (max. 15) – List a number of descriptors (max. 15) that best characterise the subject of the proposal.
- Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words) – Provide a succinct and accurate scientific summary of the proposed work. Confidential information should not be included in the Scientific Abstract.
- Lay Abstract (max. 100 words) – Provide a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work in lay (i.e. non-technical) language. Confidential information should not be included in the Lay Abstract.

7.7 Ethical Issues

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

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

If the answer is 'Yes' for either of these questions, you will be prompted to answer further questions to further define the nature of the research. Please refer to the [SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues](#).

7.8 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)³⁹, all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Please consult the SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues⁴⁰ 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 equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in the body of the proposal and/or in your CV, as appropriate.

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?

³⁹ Until such time that the implementation of the SFI EDI Strategy is fully operationalised.

⁴⁰ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

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.

7.9 Budget Information

The budget section on SESAME is to be completed to summarise the funding requested. Further guidance can be found in this section on SESAME. A detailed Research Centre budget prepared using the Full Proposal budget template (Excel file), available on the call website, is also required which will provide a full breakdown of funding requested. Please note that there are separate budget templates for the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal application stages. The relevant budget file should be uploaded in Microsoft Excel format to SESAME.

The summary tables from the relevant budget template are to be included as part of the Full Proposal programme document alongside a detailed budget justification. Please ensure the figures in the summary table match those in the Excel template. For further details on the funding and budget justification please see the budget section of the proposal templates.

7.10 Programme Documents (Upload)

The programme document, as per the template provided in Section 8.3 of this document and the call website, for the Full Proposal, must be completed and uploaded as a PDF file using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form. Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only. Please note that page limits (where applicable) must be strictly adhered to. The SESAME system will not alert applicants when page limits have been exceeded. Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.

The Full Proposal budget Excel file must be completed and uploaded using the file upload buttons located in the Programme Documents section of the SESAME application form.

7.11 Data Management Plan Requirements for SFI Grant Applicants

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Research Centre Programme are required to provide a short (2 or 3 page upload) Data Management Plan (DMP) as part of their Full Proposal application. In preparing this plan, consideration should be given to SFI's Guidance on Data Management Plans, which is available [here](#). A DMP is a living document which details the procedures for careful handling of data and other research outputs. A DMP follows the data through the lifecycle of the programme of research⁴¹, from collection to analysis and interpretation, sharing and dissemination, and long-term storage.

⁴¹ SFI-funded research programmes, as described in call documents, can range from a single research project to a collection of research projects encompassed in several work packages. The data management plan should reflect the relevant standards for individual research projects while describing a cohesive approach to managing data across the overall programme of research as appropriate.

DMPs will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information on practices and standards as guided below; this assessment will be incorporated into the overall scoring criteria for the Research Programme section of the application. Although practices and standards vary across disciplines, SFI recommends the use of [Science Europe DMP templates and guidelines](#). Each DMP should include the following as appropriate to the programme or project⁴²:

1. Data description and collection or re-use of existing data
2. Documentation and data quality
3. Storage and backup during the research process
4. Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct
5. Data sharing and long-term preservation
6. Data management responsibilities and resources including institutional or project-specific resources dedicated to managing data and ensuring adherence with the [FAIR](#) principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable).

The completed DMP should be saved as a separate PDF file and uploaded to SESAME in the Programme Documents section.

7.12 Good Research Practice Statement

Please submit a Good Research Practice Statement (max. 1 page, to be uploaded to SESAME as a separate PDF file in the Programme Documents section) as part of your Full Proposal application.

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

Please consult with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland⁴³ and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁴⁴ when preparing this statement.

7.13 Letters of Support

Letters of Support can be uploaded in PDF format directly to the Letter(s) of Support section of the SESAME application form.

Applicants must include the following letters of support with their proposals:

⁴² *Based primarily on guidance provided by Science Europe: <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/> and supplemented by guidance from the European Research Council of the European Commission: https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_info_document_Open_Research_Data_and_Data_Management_Plans.pdf*

⁴³ <https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf>

- A letter of support from each industry partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Research Centre. Industry letters of support should outline any previous history of collaboration with the academic team 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 a collaborative research project in an area of mutual research interest, where the industry partner would be interested to work with the Applicant Team if funded and 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. The letter of support should cover at a minimum the first two years of the grant and the plans, interests and other potential collaborative research projects during the course of the grant from each industry partner. Applicants should ensure that a completed company contribution table (Industry Partner Letter of Support) is included within each letter.
- A letter of support from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant and each Co-Applicant. These letters should address:
 - The importance of the Research Centre to the Research Body and how it aligns with key institutional strategic priorities and strategies.
 - A list of the specific commitments from the Research Body to the Research Centre, including planned strategic hires aligned with the objectives of the proposed Research Centre.
 - A statement from the Research Body on how the partner institutions will work together to realise the shared vision and ensure the success of the Research Centre, including effective management arrangements and the provision and support of a robust and cohesive system for inter-institutional co-operation.
 - Facilities and infrastructure, student and staff conditions and wellbeing support, training and career development opportunities.
 - Steps to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of research.
 - A commitment to the Research Centre EDI Action Plan, outlining how the Research Centre's proposed strategy aligns with institutional EDI objectives and making specific commitments to progress EDI within the Research Centre throughout the term of the Grant.
 - The letter of support should name the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) from their Research Body who are listed on the application and include an endorsement of their eligibility. The letter of support from the Research Body of the Director(s) should also describe what services and supports will be made available to the proposed Director(s).
- Where applicable, a letter of support from each organisation committing other non-exchequer contributions (e.g., philanthropic sources, charitable donations) towards the Research Centre should be provided.

7.14 Excluded Reviewers

Applicants will be provided with the option of listing up to three individuals to be excluded from acting as postal reviewers for reasons of competition.

7.15 View Proposal Prior to Submission

The PDF of the Full Proposal submission (through SESAME) should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. This responsibility lies with the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant

and the Research Body of the Lead Applicant will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes.

7.16 Declaration

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs)⁴⁵. Applications that fail to comply with SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions, or with requirements outlined in the call document, will not be eligible and will be withdrawn without review.

7.17 Research Body Approval

Note: All Partner Research Bodies must meet the requirements set out in the 'Call for Submission of Proposals' document⁴⁶ or their application will be deemed invalid and will not proceed to peer review.

It will be noted that submission of an application by the Administrative Lead Research Body 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 Administrative Lead Research Body is approving:

- Eligibility of each Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant as well as the eligibility of the Applicant Team 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 grant.
- 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 Team in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant legal and ethical approval has been sought and will be granted prior to the grant commencing.
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of grant.
- 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.

Furthermore, submission of an application further represents the approval of the Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants of the application and agreement to [SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants](#).

⁴⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

8 Templates

Please see the SFI website⁴⁷ for editable versions of these templates.

8.1 Expression of Interest

SFI Research Centres Programme Expression of Interest (Eoi)

Applicant Teams intending to submit an application to the call must provide an Expression of Interest (Eoi) to centres@sfi.ie no later than 1st November 2023, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time. This information is mandatory. This Eoi template must be used. Please note that the Eoi should only include details, such as the proposal title and abstract, that are non-confidential.

NOTE: Any guidance text provided in the sections of this document *in italics* may be deleted as part of the Eoi submission.

Title of Proposal

This will be the name of the Centre for the purpose of the proposal. The following format should be used for the name of the proposed Centre: SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of 'ABC' to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre. Please note that any name should be considered to be interim, with final Centre branding to be discussed and agreed with the funder prior to grant start date.

Thematic Area

Thematic Areas:

1. *Digital Technologies*
2. *Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability*
3. *Food*
4. *Life Sciences and Health*
5. *Manufacturing and Materials*
6. *Services and Business Processes (applications under this theme must have a strong STEM focus, aligned with SFI remit)*

Applicant Teams must be able to demonstrate a primary alignment of the proposed Research Centre to one of the themes, clearly articulating how their research and its outputs will address challenges and opportunities in that domain. Secondary alignment with one further theme can also be indicated in the proposal. Interdisciplinary research programmes are strongly encouraged, as are programmes and research teams that include Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences research and researchers.

Primary thematic area:

⁴⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres/>

Does this proposal relate to any current or previously funded SFI research grant?

Yes/No

SFI grant number if yes:

Details if yes:

Centre Director(s)

Please note that if two Co-Directors are proposed, one individual is required to serve as Lead Applicant.

Name:

Institution:

SESAME Researcher PIN:

E-mail:

Deputy Director

Name:

Institution:

SESAME Researcher PIN:

E-mail:

Research Theme Leads

1. Name, Institution and SESAME Researcher PIN

2.

3.

4.

5.

Centre Principal Investigators

1. Name and Institution

2.

3.

4.

5.

SFI Funding Request (in euro)

Please note that this is the approximate SFI funding request.

Abstract (500 words or less)

Provide a succinct summary of the proposed Research Centre, its overall area of focus and key research themes. Confidential information should not be included in the Abstract.

Lead Applicant	Institutional Signatory Authority
Name (print):	Name:
Signature:	Position:
Date:	Signature:
	Date:

8.2 Pre-Proposal Programme Document

SFI Research Centres Programme 2023

Pre-Proposal Programme Document

[INSERT CENTRE TITLE]

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NOTE: Please ensure that you update the table of contents (TOC) before you save this document in PDF format.

NOTE: Any guidance text provided in the sections of this document in italics may be deleted as part of the proposal submission.

Executive Summary

(Max. 1 A4 side)

Proposal Title

This will be the name of the Centre for the purpose of the proposal. The following format should be used for the name of the proposed Centre: SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of 'ABC' to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre. Please note that any name should be considered to be interim, with final Centre branding to be discussed and agreed with the funder prior to grant start date.

Lead Applicant

Thematic Area**Thematic Areas:**

1. *Digital Technologies*
2. *Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability*
3. *Food*
4. *Life Sciences and Health*
5. *Manufacturing and Materials*
6. *Services and Business Processes (applications under this theme must have a strong STEM focus, aligned with SFI remit)*

Applicant Teams must be able to demonstrate a primary alignment of the proposed Research Centre to one of the themes, clearly articulating how their research and its outputs will address challenges and opportunities in that domain. Secondary alignment with one further theme can also be indicated in the proposal. Interdisciplinary research programmes are strongly encouraged, as are programmes and research teams that include Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences research and researchers.

Primary thematic area:**Does this proposal relate to any current or previously funded SFI research grant?**

Yes/No

SFI grant number if yes:

Details if yes:

Applicant Team

(Max. 6 A4 sides excluding EDI Action Plan)

Please provide a description of the Research Centre team as a whole, including the Director(s), Deputy Director, Research Theme Leads and Centre Principal Investigators, and their recent key scientific and technical discoveries or achievements and impacts. Outline the Director(s)' experience leading and managing large-scale initiatives or significant international awards. Describe the background to the Applicant Team's history and development including any significant collaborations, experience leading and managing large-scale initiatives and track record of interdisciplinary research excellence and innovation. Outline the competitive advantage, strengths and cohesiveness of the team and the added value of the team in a national research centre. Explain how the configuration of the team relates to the overall vision and anticipated impact of the Research Centre and how the Centre will be structured to create a cohesive national research centre with strong commitment and engagement from all participating Research Bodies. Provide a Research Centre EDI Action Plan (with deliverables) for the Research Centre (max. 2 A4 sides).

Research Programme

(Max. 8 A4 sides)

Please describe the overall vision and scientific importance of the research of the proposed Centre, detailing the overall aims and objectives of the research programme and background to the proposed work. Describe the research themes of the Research Centre and the objectives of each one of these themes. Describe the current state-of-the-art in the field and how the proposed research will advance this. Outline the practical value and applications of the proposed research to advance our knowledge and understanding in the relevant area and enable innovations in the field. Describe why a national research centre, as opposed to a number of individual investigator awards, is required to address the research programme, and to achieve the overall vision of the Research Centre.

Education and Public Engagement

(Max. 4 A4 sides)

Referencing SFI's guidance on EPE Framework and Impact, please outline the high-level vision and plan for Education and Public Engagement (EPE) including clarity of purpose and approach to EPE, plan for engaging the non-academic public with the work of the Research Centre, how EPE will be a core part of the research programme and Research Centre activities and how EPE will contribute to the mission of the Research Centre. Describe the Research Centre team's relevant EPE experience and expertise and/or proposal to include additional EPE expertise. Outline how the Applicant Team will embed, support and enable the proposed EPE approach and plan to ensure that EPE is part of the fabric and culture of the proposed Research Centre.

Impact

(Max. 5 A4 sides)

Please outline the anticipated economic, societal and environmental impact of the Research Centre including who will benefit from the Research Centre and how they will benefit. Referencing SFI's guidance on [Impact](#)⁴⁸ and [EPE Framework and Impact](#), outline the impact objectives and measures of progress and success (internal metrics or key performance indicators) for the Research Centre. When setting the impact objectives refer to the Programme Objectives as outlined in the call document. Describe the potential technologies developed as part of the research programme and the likely applications of that technology. Outline the potential impact of the Research Centre outputs on the research and development activities in the field, product and talent pipelines of the industry partner(s), and the objectives of other Irish Public Bodies. Describe the added value of the Research Centre to the existing national research ecosystem and how the Centre will contribute to a cohesive research environment.

Execution and Delivery

(Max. 5 A4 sides)

Please outline the plans for execution and delivery of the Research Centre including the overall vision, the impact objectives, inter-institutional co-operation and effective management of the Research Centre and the cost-share commitments. Outline the management structures of the Research Centre including the roles and the responsibilities and the decision-making process. Describe the recruitment and succession plans, training and career development opportunities, and the student and staff well-being support for the Research Centre. Outline how the institutional decision-making processes for areas that will impact the Research Centre will involve the Applicant Team. Outline the key services, facilities and infrastructure for the Centre, including those planned into the future. Describe the relevant industry support for the Research Centre with reference to the letters of support. Describe the strategic value for money of the Research Centre. Describe the steps to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of research carried out in the Research Centre. Outline the specific commitments to support and drive progress on the Research Centre EDI Action Plan with details on how the Research Centre's EDI Action Plan aligns with institutional EDI objectives and initiatives.

1. Budget

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the Research Centres Programme are those costs that can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must provide details of all relevant costs, including operations (staff, materials and travel), platform research (staff, students, materials and travel), targeted projects (staff, students, materials and travel), Centre Strategic Fund, EPE materials and travel, and equipment. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs. All grants are made directly to the Lead Applicant's Research Body. Please refer to the SFI Grant Terms & Conditions and the SFI Grant Budget Policy.

⁴⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

Please copy and paste the tables below from the Pre-Proposal budget Excel file.

Total SFI Contribution									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Total
Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Platform Research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre Strategic Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EPE Materials and Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total SFI Contribution Breakdown *The total of this table should be equal to that of the table above									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Total
Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre Strategic Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SFI Cost-Share Contribution *This table will be automatically populated									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Total
Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Platform Research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre Strategic Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total Research Centre Budget in Cost-Share									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Total
SFI Cost-Share Contribution (populated from table above)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Industry Cash Commitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Industry In-Kind Commitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Exchequer Non-Commercial Cash Commitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exchequer Cash Commitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Research Centre Cost-Share Model (%) *This table will be automatically populated									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Total
SFI Cost-Share Contribution									
Industry Cash Commitment									
Industry In-Kind Commitment									
Non-Exchequer Non-Commercial Cash Commitment									
Exchequer Cash Commitment									

2. Budget Justification

(Max. 2 A4 sides)

The Applicant Team should provide a budget justification for the requested resources including operations (staff, materials and travel), platform research (staff, students, materials and travel), targeted projects (staff, students, materials and travel), EPE materials and travel, and equipment. The Applicant Team should discuss the level of budget to be held in the Centre Strategic Fund and outline some potential uses of this fund.

References

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

8.3 Full Proposal Programme Document

SFI Research Centres Programme 2023

Full Proposal Programme Document

[INSERT CENTRE TITLE]

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NOTE: Please ensure that you update the table of contents (TOC) before you save this document in PDF format.

NOTE: Any guidance text provided in the sections of this document in italics may be deleted as part of the proposal submission.

NOTE: Please specify any changes or comments in the Full Proposal programme document made in relation to feedback from the Pre-Proposal submission.

Executive Summary

(Max. 2 A4 side)

Proposal Title

This will be the name of the Centre for the purpose of the proposal. The following format should be used for the name of the proposed Centre: SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of 'ABC' to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre. Please note that any name should be considered to be interim, with final Centre branding to be discussed and agreed with the funder prior to grant start date.

Lead Applicant

Thematic Area**Thematic Areas:**

1. *Digital Technologies*
2. *Energy, Climate Action and Sustainability*
3. *Food*
4. *Life Sciences and Health*
5. *Manufacturing and Materials*
6. *Services and Business Processes (applications under this theme must have a strong STEM focus, aligned with SFI remit)*

Applicant Teams must be able to demonstrate a primary alignment of the proposed Research Centre to one of the themes, clearly articulating how their research and its outputs will address challenges and opportunities in that domain. Secondary alignment with one further theme can also be indicated in the proposal. Interdisciplinary research programmes are strongly encouraged, as are programmes and research teams that include Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences research and researchers.

Primary thematic area:**Does this proposal relate to any current or previously funded SFI research grant?**

Yes/No

SFI grant number if yes:

Details if yes:

Applicant Team

(Max. 15 A4 sides excluding EDI Action Plan)

Please provide a description of the Research Centre team as a whole, including the Director(s), Deputy Director, Research Theme Leads and Centre Principal Investigators, and their recent key scientific and technical discoveries or achievements and impacts. Outline the Director(s) experience leading and managing large-scale initiatives or significant international awards. Describe the background to the Applicant Team's history and development including any significant collaborations, experience leading and managing large-scale initiatives and track record of interdisciplinary research excellence and innovation. Outline the competitive advantage, strengths and cohesiveness of the team and added value of the team in a national research centre. Explain how the configuration of the team relates to the overall vision and anticipated impact of the Research Centre and how the Centre will be structured to create a cohesive national research centre with strong commitment and engagement from all participating Research Bodies. Provide a Research Centre EDI Action Plan (with deliverables) for the Research Centre (max. 2 A4 sides).

Research Programme

(Max. 30 A4 sides)

Please describe the overall vision and scientific importance of the research of the proposed Centre, detailing the overall aims and objectives of the research programme and background to the proposed work. Describe the research themes of the Research Centre and the objectives of each one of these themes. Describe the current state-of-the-art in the field and how the proposed research will advance this. Outline the experimental design and methods to be used to address the research objectives and the Research Team members leading and engaging in the research themes, indicating involvement of external partners in the context of targeted projects. Outline the practical value and applications of the proposed research to advance our knowledge and understanding in the relevant area and enable innovations in the field. Describe why a national research centre, as opposed to a number of individual investigator awards, is required to address the research programme, and to achieve the overall vision of the Research Centre.

Education and Public Engagement

(Max. 10 A4 sides)

Referencing SFI's guidance on EPE Framework and Impact, please outline the high-level vision and plan for Education and Public Engagement (EPE) including clarity of approach to EPE. Provide an overview of the specific aims and objectives and how they clearly align to the Research Centre's overall strategy and research programme. Outline the plan for identifying and engaging the non-academic public and other stakeholder groups, including consideration of broadening participation, both geographically and amongst under-represented voices. It is expected that this plan will include some elements of deep public engagement and/or engaged research that have the potential to inform and shape the delivery of aspects of the research programme. Outline how EPE will be a core part of the research programme and activities and how EPE will contribute to the overall mission of the Research Centre. Describe how the Applicant Team will embed, support and enable the proposed EPE approach and will ensure that EPE is part of the fabric and culture of the Research Centre. Outline how the research bodies will support the EPE programme. Outline and provide justification for the resources and budget required for the EPE programme. Provide details of the Applicant Team's relevant EPE experience and expertise and/or proposal to include additional EPE expertise. Describe how the EPE activities and culture of the Research Centre will be monitored and evaluated, including progress on aims, and objectives, and success indicators.

Impact

(Max. 15 A4 sides)

Please outline the anticipated economic, societal and environmental impact of the Research Centre including who will benefit from the Research Centre and how they will benefit. Referencing SFI's guidance on Impact⁴⁹ and EPE Framework and Impact, outline the impact objectives and measures of progress and success (internal metrics or key performance indicators) for the Research Centre. When setting the impact objectives refer to the Programme Objectives as outlined in the call document. Describe the potential technologies developed as part of the research programme and the likely applications of that technology. Outline the potential impact of the Research Centre outputs on the research and development activities in the field, product and talent pipelines of the industry partner(s), and the objectives of other Irish Public Bodies. Describe the added value of the Research Centre to the existing national research ecosystem and how the Centre will contribute to a cohesive research environment.

⁴⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

Execution and Delivery

(Max. 15 A4 sides)

Please outline the plans for execution and delivery of the Research Centre including the overall vision, the impact objectives, inter-institutional co-operation and effective management of the Research Centre and the cost-share commitments. Outline the management structures of the Research Centre including the roles and the responsibilities and the decision-making process. Describe the recruitment and succession plans, training and career development opportunities, and the student and staff well-being support for the Research Centre. Outline how the institutional decision-making processes for areas that will impact the Research Centre will involve the Applicant Team. Outline the key services, facilities and infrastructure for the Centre, including those planned into the future. Describe the relevant industry support for the Research Centre with reference to the letters of support. Describe the strategic value for money of the Research Centre. Describe the steps to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of research carried out in the Research Centre. Outline the specific commitments to support and drive progress on the Research Centre EDI Action Plan with details on how the Research Centre's EDI Action Plan aligns with institutional EDI objectives and initiatives.

1. Budget

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the Research Centres Programme are those costs that can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must provide details of all relevant costs, including operations (staff, materials and travel), platform research (staff, students, materials and travel), targeted projects (staff, students, materials and travel), Centre Strategic Fund, EPE materials and travel, and equipment. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs. All grants are made directly to the Lead Applicant's Research Body. Please refer to the SFI Grant Terms & Conditions and the SFI Grant Budget Policy.

*Applicants must include the following summary budgets, which will be automatically generated by the Full Proposal budget Excel file (**This must be copied into this section from the Centre Summary Budget tab of the Full Proposal budget Excel file**):*

- *Budget tables showing the detailed breakdown of the SFI contribution across Operations, Platform Research, Targeted Projects, the Centre Strategic Fund, EPE Materials and Travel, and Equipment.*
- *Summary budgets of the total SFI contribution and the SFI contribution within the cost-share model (see Section 5.8 for expenses outside the cost-share model)*
- *A budget showing the proposed industry financial contributions to the Centre, both cash and in-kind (e.g. staff, equipment, other). Note that the financial commitments identified in this table should be supported by the commitments provided by the industry partners in their letters of support.*
- *A budget showing the proposed 'other non-exchequer contributions' (e.g. philanthropic, charity etc.) being made to the Centre*
- *A budget showing the proposed 'Exchequer commitment' being made to the Centre.*
- *A summary budget showing the total budget in the cost-share*
- *A table showing the percentage of the total budget attributed to Industry Cash, Industry In-Kind, Non-Exchequer Non-Commercial, and Exchequer.*

Budgets should be prepared on a project year basis (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 etc.) at the application stage and should cover a period of 96 months (eight years).

2. Budget Justification

(Max. 5 A4 sides)

The Applicant Team should provide a budget justification for the requested resources (e.g., operations including EPE staff, research staff, students, materials and consumables, EPE non-staff costs, equipment and travel). The Applicant Team should discuss the level of budget to be held in the Centre Strategic Fund and outline some potential uses of this fund.

The Applicant Team should outline the required expertise for each requested researcher and justify the researcher's role in the research project. Include the salary scale (as per SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale) for each team member. Clear and explicit justification is required for any request for an experienced post-doctoral researcher, i.e. one who will be appointed higher than Level 2A, Point 1 of the SFI team member budgeting scales. Justification should also be provided for requested equipment, consumables and travel, and the requested duration of funding.

Where contributions to salary for administrative support roles are requested, clear rationale and justification must be provided and reference must be made to the relevant role description, HR recruitment procedure and local Research Body salary scale. This information must be detailed in the budget justification. SFI will not contribute to the funding of any permanent core staff (e.g., funded by the HEA block grant). The following details also apply in cases where SFI contributions to administrative support salary are being considered:

- *A description of the qualifications required for an individual to be hired, together with the expected roles and responsibilities of the post*
- *Requests for non-research posts must be aligned to the relevant point on the Research Body scale*
- *Appropriately detailed justification must be provided for senior administrative posts attracting substantial salaries*
- *The Research Body must make provision for an open and transparent recruitment process*

Access charges may be sought for use of infrastructure where SFI pre-approved access charge plans are in place or for use of other shared facilities or national test-beds, which are required as part of the proposed research. The requested access charges should be specified in the budget and justified in the budget justification section. The scientific rationale for undertaking such experiments should be outlined in the research description.

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

Note: *SFI funding may not be used to fund access to facilities, where access by the research community has already been provided for by alternate Exchequer funding.*

3. Cost-Share and Business Plan

(Max. 5 A4 sides)

The Applicant Team should provide a cost-share and business plan for the proposed Research Centre. This plan should be divided into two parts; cost-share and commercialisation.

1) Cost-share

This section must describe plans to scale towards the cost-share model outlined in detail in Section 5.6 of the call document by the end of the funding period.

The plan should include details of the strategy for targeting industry partnerships, the strategy for major wins in European funding and other sources of funding, including charity and philanthropic sources, and describe the Centre's strategic approach to leverage funding from eligible exchequer sources.

The following must be addressed within the industry cost-share section:

- *An overview of plans to achieve industry cost-share, cash and in-kind.*
- *How will activities such as acquisition of new partner companies and projects, licensing of IP, development of spin-outs, etc., be enabled and what resources will be required to do so.*

Applicants are invited to consider, but are not limited to, the following within the NE-NC cost-share section:

- *Influencing future EU or other funding programmes.*
- *Plans to coordinate multi-national collaborative research projects.*
- *Plans to ensure high participation rates of PIs.*
- *Training/mentoring of staff for funding proposals, such as in EU programmes.*
- *Plans for engagement with industry to help secure NE-NC funding, such as from EU programmes.*
- *Describe the Centre's strategic approach to leveraging funding from NE-NC funding programmes, including but not limited to EU programmes.*
- *Describe the Centre's strategic approach to leverage funding from charities, not-for-profit organisations or philanthropic sources.*

2) Commercialisation

Outline the Research Centre's commercialisation plans, processes and overall strategy, including, but not limited to, the following:

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

4. Membership Structure (optional)

(Max. 2 A4 side)

Applicant Teams intending to institute a Membership Scheme as outlined in Section 5.6.1 of the Call Document should provide a brief description as to how the intended Membership Scheme will operate. Applicant Teams not intending to institute a Membership Scheme should delete this section.

References

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

8.4 Applicant/Co-applicant CV

Applicant/Co-applicant CV Template

Please note that full research funding track record and supervisory details should be uploaded via SESAME and should **not** be included in this CV. Please **do not** include any type of journal or publication metrics or research performance metrics, e.g., impact factor and H-index⁵⁰, or refer to the total number of papers authored or co-authored. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review. More details on SFI's Narrative CV can be found [here](#).

SECTION 1 – Applicant Details (max. 4 pages)

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

CAREER PROFILE (Education and Employment)

Please outline your education and employment history, provide details of any periods of leave from research (for example, due to parental leave, long-term absence through illness or working in industry) or periods of part-time work.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

*Describe the **significance and / or impact** of up to 3 key achievements per category below. For each example, provide an outline of the stated achievement, what **specific** role you played, why you think it is important, any benefit to the field and, where relevant, the resulting impact.*

A. Key Achievements in the Generation of Knowledge

[Please describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas, hypotheses and tools in your field. These can include but should not be limited to, preprints, open data sets, software, publications, blogposts, innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g. verified invention disclosures, patents, licences, novel assays and reagents), policy publications, and evidence synthesis pieces. Highlight if these are openly available and include a DOI, if available. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

B. Key Achievements in the Development of Individuals and Collaborations

[Please describe how you have contributed to the development of individuals and how your role shaped the team's or organisation's direction and strategy. These can include, but should not be limited to, teaching activities; workshops; project management; supervision; mentoring or line management contributions to the success of a team or advancement of colleagues; involvement in collaborations/networks within your organisation or where you demonstrated strategic leadership in shaping the direction of a team, organisation, company or institution. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

C. Key Achievements Supporting Broader Society & the Economy

[Please describe your key achievements in supporting society and knowledge exchange, such as engagements with the private sector, the public sector, the non-profit sector, clients and the

⁵⁰ Examples include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index

broader public. These can include, but should not be limited to, positive stakeholder feedback, inclusion of patients in process/procedural development and clinical trials, and other impacts on research policy and/or business practice, evidence of advising policymakers at local, national or international level, and the provision of information through the press, social media etc. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

D. Key Achievements Supporting the Research Community

[Please describe your key achievements supporting the wider research community and improving research culture including, but should not be limited to, contributions to research consortia; research community outreach/engagement; editing, reviewing, and refereeing responsibilities; appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership, boards, sitting panels, and administrative roles within your department, institution or organisation; organisation of events that have benefited your research community; contributions to raising awareness of research integrity and other good research practices, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, reward and recognition of researchers' various activities). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

SECTION 2 – Publication Details (max. 2 pages)

Please **do not** exceed the maximum number of publications requested. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details prior to expert review. Please briefly describe the importance/impact⁵¹ of your publication and whether these publications are openly available.

A. SELECTED SENIOR-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS

Detail up to 3 peer-reviewed, senior-author (that is, first, joint-first or last author) primary-research publications. 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

You should list up to 7 other publications (where you are a senior author or otherwise) that you wish to be considered in the assessment of this application. You should ensure that your primary research outputs are prioritised; however, reviews, essays and any other secondary-research articles relevant to this application may also be listed.

⁵¹ Number of citations is appropriate in this instance.

8.5 Industry Partner Letter of Support

A letter of support from each industry partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Research Centre must be provided at both the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal stages. Industry letters of support should outline any previous history of collaborations with the academic group and outline how the research to be undertaken aligns itself with the current and future needs of that industry partner. It should provide an overview of the profile of individuals in the company who will be involved with the proposed Research Centre, and provide details of their role within the Research Centre.

For Full Proposal stage 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									
	Year 1 €	Year 2 €	Year 3 €	Year 4 €	Year 5 €	Year 6 €	Year 7 €	Year 8 €	Total €
Cash Contribution									
In-kind Contribution									
Total									

8.6 “Other Non-Exchequer Contribution” Letter of Support

A letter of support from each organisation/individual committing ‘other non-exchequer contributions’ (e.g. philanthropic, charity) towards the Research Centre must be provided at the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal stages. The letter should provide details of the source of the funding, a background of the organisation / individual committing the funds, and details of what the funds are to be used for.

For Full Proposal stage the letter of support should describe the level of cost-share commitment from the organisation/individual, 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:

Organisation “X” Contributions									
	Year 1 €	Year 2 €	Year 3 €	Year 4 €	Year 5 €	Year 6 €	Year 7 €	Year 8 €	Total €
Cash Contribution									
In-kind Contribution									
Total									

9 Submission Checklist

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
Proposal Summary	Title	SFI Research Centre for ABC. Please use two to three words in place of 'ABC' to describe the general remit of the research to be undertaken by the Centre.
	Duration of Award Requested	Will be pre-populated
	Proposal ID	Will be pre-populated
	Total SFI Funding Request	Will be pre-populated from budget tables
Research Alignment	Justification of alignment with SFI's legal remit	Max. 250 words
Lead Applicant details	*SESAME Profile information	Complete your SESAME profile (including ORCID) before proceeding with proposal. Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	Percentage Time Commitment	Insert time commitment (%)
	Narrative CV	Max. 6 pages (use template provided)
	Supervisory Experience	Enter details
Co-Applicant details	Add Co-Applicants	All Co-Applicants registered on SESAME and added to the application page
	*SESAME Profile information	Complete your SESAME profile (including ORCID) before proceeding with proposal. Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	Percentage Time Commitment	Insert time commitment (%)
	Narrative CV	Max. 6 pages (use template provided)
	Supervisory Experience	Enter details if relevant
Research Funding	Research Funding History	Enter details of funding secured
Collaborator(s) details	Assign Academic Collaborators	Academic collaborators added (name and institution)
Main Body of Proposal (Full Proposal)	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Research Abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay Abstract	Max. 100 words
Ethical Issues (Full Proposal)	Answer questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data)	Select relevant answers
Sex & Gender Dimension in Research (Full Proposal)	Sex & Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Max. 1000 words
Budget	Prepare Budget	Details of all relevant SFI costs using Budget Table in SESAME
Programme Documents	Programme document	Template provided
	Detailed budget request	Excel template provided
	Data Management Plan (Full Proposal)	2-3 pages
	Good Research Practice Statement (Full Proposal)	Max. 1 page
Letter(s) of Support	Industry Partner	Template provided
	Research Body	To be provided by Research Body of the Lead Applicant and each Co-Applicant
	Other Non-Exchequer Contribution	Template provided
Excluded Reviewers (Full Proposal)	Up to three individuals may be excluded from reviewing the proposal for postal review	