

Science Foundation Ireland



# Open for partnerships

## SFI Strategic Partnership Programme



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## SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

# SFI Strategic Partnership Programme

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## Call for Submission of Proposals

*Version: September 2023*

*The following updates have been made to the programme call:*

- *For first term applications the review of full proposals will now incorporate a second step where the combined anonymous reviews are shared with the original reviewers, and they may adjust their review.*
- *Data Management Plans are now required for full proposals.*
- *A letter of support from the host Research Body's Technology Transfer Office is now required for full proposals.*
- *Updated guidance on Narrative CVs is provided.*
- *An Excel Budget file is now required for all full proposals regardless of the scale of budgetary request from SFI.*

### KEY DATES

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

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Science Foundation Ireland, the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the

applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act, 2003, the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

SFI will collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the Application and otherwise obtained under or in connection with the application for processing the application and 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 individuals' rights in respect of personal data relating to them which is held by SFI are available elsewhere in this Call Document, in the privacy statement on the SFI Website and in reports, documents and other bulletins published by SFI.

During the application process or at any time following the termination of the application process and decision, SFI may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team concerning funding opportunities, SFI activities or any events, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation including but not limited to collecting scientific data and data related to the applications 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.

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## 1. Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland funds excellent and impactful research and talent, and shapes the future of Ireland through anticipating what's next and widening engagement and collaboration. SFI's 2025 strategy, *Shaping Our Future*<sup>1</sup> sets out the vision that Ireland will be a global innovation leader in scientific and engineering research for the advancement of Ireland's economy and society. The strategy has two ambitions: Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow. The Tangible Benefits theme within Delivering Today aims for the research SFI funds to make the greatest possible difference for our society and economy. In support of this, SFI seeks to foster collaborations with co-funding partners to perform cutting-edge, innovative STEM research.

The Science Foundation Ireland Strategic Partnership Programme was launched in 2013 to provide a flexible mechanism for academic researchers to build strategic collaborations with key stakeholders such as industry, other funding agencies, charities, philanthropic organisations or higher education institutes (HEIs). The programme is specifically aimed at co-funding unique and compelling research opportunities that are not otherwise served by other national funding programmes. The scheme aims to support stand-alone research initiatives of scale with strong potential for delivering economic and societal impact to Ireland, in partnership with key stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme are to:

- Build strategic national, and international partnerships to drive economic impact and to address societal challenges.
- Build stronger, more direct relationships with co-funding partners from industry, charity and academia.
- Transfer technology, through licences, to Multinational Companies (MNCs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- Support enhanced training of researchers in areas of importance to the industrial sector
- Maximise the state investment in research through leveraging of non-exchequer funding, including funding available through philanthropic and charitable sources.
- Enable alliances with industry/charity/philanthropy that enhance competitiveness in securing European funding.
- Support the development of test beds of national strategic importance that harnesses academic knowledge with industrial know-how and experience.
- Support the attraction and retention of talented researchers.
- Build stronger links with other key stakeholders and end-users of research.
- Engage the general public and equip them with the tools to confidently participate in, understand and debate science, technology and engineering research in Ireland.

The Strategic Partnership Programme is one strand available to build collaborations with key partners, funding excellent science that benefits society and the economy. If your potential partnership does not appear to fit with the requirements of this programme, please contact [partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie) to discuss whether there may be other opportunities available.

### 1.1 San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment

SFI has become a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)<sup>2</sup> in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member<sup>3</sup>. 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 S<sup>4</sup>, SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030<sup>5</sup>. 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 Assessment<sup>6</sup> and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)<sup>7</sup>.

## 1.2 SFI's Gender Strategy 2016-2020.

As part of its Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation), SFI also aims to increase awareness of the sex and gender dimension in research, by requesting that researchers demonstrate that they have considered any potential biological sex and/or socio-cultural gender aspects in their proposed research.

## 2 Programme Details

### 2.1 Remit

The legal remit of SFI is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State<sup>8</sup>. **Oriented basic research** is "research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge that is likely to form the background to the solution of recognised, or expected, current or future problems or possibilities". Additionally, **applied research** is defined as "an original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge and is directed primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods, or systems".

Research carried out under this programme must be aligned to SFI's legal remit: 1) the research should be oriented basic or applied; and 2) the research should align with one of the six Refreshed Priority Themes for 2018-2023<sup>9</sup> or with any other area where there is convincing evidence that there will be significant potential for economic and/or societal impact in Ireland.

### 2.2 Rolling Call

The SFI Strategic Partnership Programme call is an open, non-thematic call with no submission deadline. Potential applicants to the programme should contact SFI ([partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie)) to discuss their proposed project and any queries they may have.

Applicants to the Strategic Partnership Programme must submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) prior to the submission of a full proposal. Applicants who submit Eois that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a full proposal which will be evaluated by international peer review.

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<sup>3</sup> Contributor level membership

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022\\_07\\_19\\_rra\\_agreement\\_final.pdf](https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://coara.eu/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

Applicants should note that there are two Programme Document templates for full proposals under the Strategic Partnership Programme. Where the SFI budget requested is less than €2.5M, Template A should be used (Appendix III). Where the SFI budget requested is greater than €2.5M, Template B should be used (Appendix V).

### 2.3 Applications for second-term funding

Science Foundation Ireland permits Strategic Partnership awardees to apply for second-term funding under the programme, where an additional term of funding is strongly justified. Though the programme objectives of a Strategic Partnership second-term funding award will remain largely the same, there is an expectation that the ambition and scale of the award will increase. The proposed programme of research should represent a significant step-change and build on the success of the first-term award but not be viewed simply as a continuation of the same research programme.

The review process will involve a detailed “look back” at the progress of the first-term of the Strategic Partnership award compared with the original objectives. This is in addition to a review of the proposal for second-term funding and the justification/rationale of the need for a second-term.

### 2.4 State aid and SFI Grant funding

As per SFI’s Grant Conditions (inclusive of SFI’s General Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).<sup>10</sup>

Where a proposed programme of research involves a collaboration with an “undertaking”<sup>11</sup> or industry party, the activities **must** comply with the definition of “effective collaboration” and the conditions relating to the allocation between the parties of the results and/or intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration, as per the Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (202/C 414/01) (the “Framework”).<sup>12</sup> SFI has set out guidance to support how the programme of research or project is developed and undertaken in accordance with these conditions. See ‘Guidance on State aid for applicants to, and recipients of, SFI Grant funding’ for further information.<sup>13</sup>

Recipients of Grant funding under SFI’s Strategic Partnership Programme are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” and to support this, SFI has developed an ‘Industry Collaboration Form’ (ICF). The ICF is to assist applicants in defining the relationship with the relevant industry partners in order to comply with the conditions of “effective collaboration” and the conditions relating to the allocation between the parties of the results and/or intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration.

Award holders are required to complete and return the ICF to SFI on or before the date that the Collaborative Research (or Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement (CRA) has been ‘agreed’, or signed by, the relevant partner(s). For the Strategic Partnership Programme, the form should be submitted by the Principal Investigator and uploaded to SESAME, as requested. A download of the ICF and related guidance, including an FAQ document, can be found on the SFI website.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> The concept of an “undertaking” under EU competition law rules is an entity that is engaged in an “economic activity” regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed. An activity is economic in nature when it involves offering goods or services on a market.

<sup>12</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52022XC1028\(03\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/>

A copy of each CRA arising from the Grant must be held on file by the relevant Research Body. SFI may request a copy of the signed CRA to be provided (as advised in the Grant Terms & Conditions) and held on file by SFI for audit purposes. Further information on the role of the CRA and SFI's ex-post State aid verification checks (i.e., on-going checks after the granting of funds / partial funds) can be found in 'Guidance on State aid for applicants to, and recipients of, SFI Grant funding' on the SFI website.<sup>13</sup>

Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice in advance of applying to SFI for funding where further clarification is sought.

## 2.5 Funding

The co-funding partner(s) must commit to providing a minimum of 50% of the direct project costs in cash. The SFI budget for the Strategic Partnership must be a minimum of €400,000, meaning the total award size (SFI and co-funding partner budget) is a minimum of €800,000 (direct costs). There is no maximum request level. Co-funding partner 'in kind' contributions should be specified in the application but cannot be counted towards the required 50% cash contribution from the co-funding partner(s).

Please note, an indicative budget is a requirement for the EoI. Should the SFI budget requirement increase following full development of the partnership proposal, please note that the maximum permitted increase in the requested budget between EoI and Full Proposal stages is 20%. If the increase is in excess of this, justification must be submitted to SFI for approval prior to submission of the full proposal. Note that all requested budgets must be strongly justified and prepared in accordance with the SFI Grant Budget Policy.<sup>14</sup>

### Overheads

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

### Co-Funding partners

Eligible co-funding partners include companies, international funding agencies, charities, philanthropic organisations, higher education institutes or a combination of these. Funding from an entity based outside of Ireland is an eligible source of co-funding for the Strategic Partnership Programme.

Contributions, whether in cash or in-kind, from Irish exchequer sources such as other funding agencies, Government Departments or other Agencies of the State cannot be counted as co-funding partner contributions.<sup>15</sup>

In-kind contributions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the costs associated with provision of the following items to a Strategic Partnership award:

- Co-funding Partner personnel assigned to working on the Strategic Partnership research programme

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

<sup>15</sup> Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, ESB, Ervia, etc. are *excluded* from this definition.

- Equipment donations
- Access to, and use of, infrastructure housed within the industry partner premises
- Software
- Materials
- Data(sets)

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

### **Budget**

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the Strategic Partnership Programme are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant direct costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel, and must ensure that the final total provided includes all costs requested from SFI. General overheads should not be included in the requested budget to cover costs incurred directly as a result of the Strategic Partnership award. All awards are made directly to the lead applicant's Research Body. Please also refer to the SFI General Terms and Conditions<sup>16</sup> and the SFI Grant Budget Policy.<sup>17</sup>

#### **i. Staff: Salaries and benefits**

Contributions to team-member salaries, fees, and stipends for postgraduate (PhD and MSc by research) may be requested. Grants awarded through the Strategic Partnership Programme do not fund the core salary or benefits of either the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, Co-Funding Partners or any other collaborators.

Contributions to salary for administrative support roles may be supported on awards where the SFI budget requested is greater than €2.5M. Where such 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 (please provide a link to relevant scale). Further guidance is provided in the Grant Budget Policy. A contribution towards an Education and Public Engagement (EPE) resource is also an eligible cost (the individual may be full- or part-time on the award, commensurate with its scale).

All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in the Grant Budget Policy and the associated SFI Team Member Salary Scales.<sup>17</sup> Please note that submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once requested salaries have been approved by the relevant Research Office(s).

#### **ii. Equipment**

All information required to complete the Equipment section of the budget can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.

#### **iii. Materials and Consumables**

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

#### **iv. Travel**

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

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

All information required to complete the Travel section of the budget can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.

#### v. Education and Public Engagement (EPE)

Direct funding of EPE activities is permitted under the Strategic Partnership Programme. Requests should be included as separate line items under the Materials and Consumables and/or Staff sections of the budget and should be specifically described in the budget justification. A high-level guiding principle is that 5% of the budget should be allocated to the EPE programme.

#### vi. Ineligible Costs

Information regarding ineligible costs can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.

### 2.6 Award duration

The duration of the programme can range from a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 60 months.

### 2.7 Definitions

<b>Lead Applicant</b>	The <b>Lead Applicant</b> will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The Lead Applicant has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with SFI General Terms and Conditions. <sup>18</sup> The Lead Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI for the application, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant.
<b>Co-Applicant</b>	The <b>Co-Applicant</b> has a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed investigation. For the purposes of eligibility, reviewing and monitoring, a co-applicant applying for funding under the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme will receive equal evaluation to the lead applicant and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives. In this documentation, the terms and conditions for ‘applicant’ and ‘co-applicant’ are interchangeable. A Co-Applicant may be located at a different eligible Research Body to the Lead Applicant. However, the grant will be administered through the Research Body of the Lead Applicant only.
<b>Funded Investigator</b>	A <b>Funded Investigator</b> (FI) is an academic member of staff who is undertaking a management role in a research project within a Strategic Partnerships. It is anticipated that an SFI FI should have budgetary responsibility for a specific research project within a larger programme of work, but will not be a named Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant. SFI FIs will serve under the direction of the Lead Applicant (PI) or one of the Co-Applicants (Co-PIs).  The FI designation should be a reflection of the level of input of the individual to the research programme, and should take account of the career stage of the investigator. SFI does not expect that FIs will be added to the programme once the award is funded. Additional FIs will only be approved by SFI in exceptional circumstances.

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

	An FI may be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the Award.
<b>Official Collaborator</b>	<p>An <b>Official Collaborator</b> may be either (a) an academic member of staff of an Irish or international Research Body or (b) a member of a relevant non-academic institution, such as a Government Agency, who is committed to providing a focused contribution for a specific task(s). The collaborator will serve under the direction of the Lead Applicant or one of the Co-Applicants, and <b>may not</b> receive funding through the award.</p> <p>Official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the Award.</p>
<b>Co-Funding Partner</b>	A <b>Co-Funding Partner</b> is an organisation making a direct financial contribution to the budget of the collaborative research programme, as well as being actively engaged in co-directing the research being undertaken in the partnership. Each Co-Funding Partner involved in the partnership must assign a representative (known as the <b>Co-Funding Collaborator</b> ) who will serve as lead contact point. Co-funding partner organisations are not eligible to receive funding through the award.
<b>Co-Funding Collaborator</b>	A <b>Co-Funding Collaborator</b> is the lead contact point from a Co-Funding Partner organisation who is named on the Letter of Support (although may not necessarily be the signatory on the Letter of Support).

## 2.8 Eligibility Criteria of Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant and Funded Investigator

The eligibility criteria presented below are minimum requirements only and it should be noted that both the Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicants or Funded Investigators are expected to have strong, highly-competitive track records in their research fields.

The letter of support from the host Research Body of the Lead Applicant must detail the employment status of the Applicant(s), including how the Applicant(s) meet the eligibility criteria for this call. A letter of support from the host Research Body of the Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigator(s) (if different from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant) is also required. For further information on Research Body Letters of Support, please see Section 7.14.

### Employment Status

The Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigator(s) (if applicable) must be:

- A member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant)<sup>19</sup>, or
- A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI grant, *or*

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

Retired or Emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments. Please refer to the eligibility related information available on the SFI website for further details.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted that Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant or Funded Investigator salary is not an eligible cost for the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme. Postdoctoral researchers, research fellows or other non-independent researchers are not eligible to be a Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant or Funded Investigator. Applicants must obtain their salary either from an award in their own name (excluding fellowship-type awards) or be salaried by the host institution.

Consideration should be given to time commitments on existing awards, including other SFI awards. Where applicants have agreed to significant time commitment on existing awards, the relevant research funder should be consulted as required. This is particularly important where an applicant is in the first 12 months of an SFI early career award (such as the SFI-IRC Pathways Programme), due to the time commitment required.

### **Years Post PhD**

The Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicants or Funded Investigators must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least three years at the time of the submission of the full proposal.

The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year. For example, only individuals with an official date of 2020 or earlier are eligible to apply to SPP in 2023.

Details on SFI's PhD equivalence policy can be found on the SFI website.<sup>21</sup>

### **Senior-Author Publications**

The Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicants or Funded Investigators are required to demonstrate that they are a senior author on at least three international peer-reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles or other secondary research literature, are acceptable.

Senior authors are defined as follows:

- Authors who are listed as first or joint-first author, reflecting the fact that they have provided the greatest intellectual contribution, have held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts.
- Last authors will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects their overall responsibility for the study and suggests that a level of mentorship has been provided.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy\\_September\\_2018.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf)

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

Applicants/Co-applicants/FIs are required to detail three peer-reviewed, senior-author primary-research publications (which will confirm that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for publications for this programme) in their CV.

### Supervision

The Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicants or Funded Investigators are expected to have the experience, capability and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

### 2.9 Eligibility of Research Body

The Research Body of the Lead Applicant is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of the research programmes supported by funding from SFI. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland. In cases where more than one applicant shares responsibility for a grant, the grant will be administered by the host Research Body of the Lead Applicant. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website.<sup>22</sup> The term 'Research Body' and 'Institution' are equivalent and interchangeable in SFI documentation and in the SFI SESAME system.

## 3 Research Impact

Each year the Irish Government spends in the region of €800 million on scientific research, training and development. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research.

In addition to the requirement for scientific excellence, applications considered under the Strategic Partnership Programme must clearly demonstrate the value of the research in terms of potential for economic and societal impact to Ireland. SFI regards clear and convincing impact statements as being fundamental components of competitive proposals. As part of the review process, reviewers will be asked to consider the potential impact of applications as described in the Impact Statement.

### 3.1 Defining Impact

Impact can be described as the *demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society*. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations.

SFI recognises that some research projects may have immediate impact whereas other projects may take much longer to achieve impact. Researchers applying to the Strategic Partnership Programme should articulate how and when they believe their proposed research programme will deliver impact on Ireland's economy and society in the Impact Statement section of the application.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

### 3.2 Impact Statement

An **Impact Statement** is a requirement at both Expression of Interest (max. 1 page) and Full Proposal stage (Template A, Max. 3 pages; Template B, Max 10 pages). The Impact Statement should articulate the planned and potential impact of the proposed research. SFI recognises that impact can take time and, in many cases, is unforeseen; as such, it is not possible to predict all impacts at the time of submission. The impact statement should, nonetheless, be as specific as possible and should provide information that reviewers will find useful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity.

The impact statement should include methods for the regular review of the Strategic Partnership for potential impact and for maximising the economic and societal impacts of the proposed research. Plans to utilise appropriate SFI and other funding sources to assist with achieving impact should be included if relevant. Applicants are advised to write the impact statement with the input of the co-funding partner(s) and to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous, and realistic impact case with appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables, and an objective view on how long it may require for the potential impact to be realised.

The Impact Statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language, it should be as specific and comprehensive as possible. In assessing various possible impacts, applicants are encouraged to make reference to the programme objectives described in Section 1 of this call document and to consider the following overarching questions:

- How will the co-funding partner(s) benefit from this research?
- How will the academic partner(s) benefit from this research?
- Who are other potential beneficiaries (e.g., public, policy makers, patients)?
- What will be the benefit to Ireland?
- Over what timeframe might the benefits from the research be realised?

For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the SFI website<sup>23</sup>. Applicants are also advised to review the peer review criteria in Section 8.2 for guidance on how their impact statement will be evaluated.

Applicants are encouraged to consider SFI's Strategy 2025<sup>24</sup> and Innovation 2020<sup>25</sup> documents before writing their impact statement.

## 4 Education and Public Engagement

At Science Foundation Ireland we fund research that makes a real difference to our society and economy, both now and into the future. SFI believes that this real difference can only be achieved when the public are involved in shaping research. From stimulating conversations to understand perspectives, to end user engagement in research, to inspiring the future STEM talent, SFI recognises the importance of engaged research to achieve innovation and impact from research. As part of its remit to engage the public with science, technology, engineering and mathematics, SFI expects its award holders to stimulate public understanding, interest and involvement in research and STEM, through relevant, inclusive and accessible means. SFI believes the best decisions and policies for society will be made when informed by science that represents and is understood by society. Every

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

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Innovation-2020.pdf>

researcher has a part to play in ensuring this happens. This is informed by the SFI ‘Science in Ireland Barometer’ which was published in 2015<sup>26</sup> and 2021.<sup>27</sup>

The process of public engagement is important to ensure two-way conversations take place between researchers and those who fund the research, the public. It is important to recognise that end user engagement leads to more impactful outputs and outcomes from research. It is important that engagement activity is integrated into the research programme from the start, rather than as an afterthought or add-on. This should include assigning an appropriate budget and including the relevant expertise in the team.

Education and Public Engagement is important to SFI. It is a broad area, which includes a variety of ways in which engagement with research can happen. Public Engagement is a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with a mutual benefit. The “public” can be segmented into a wide variety of groups such as communities or places of interest, community organisations and societies, NGOs, social enterprises, industry and business sectors, local authorities, regional or national government, cultural and leisure services and of course education sectors from primary school level right through secondary, third and fourth levels. The levels of engagement can vary from awareness raising, through to consulting and on to deeper collaboration, always with the aim of meaningful two-way dialogue taking place between the researcher and the public or publics.

As stated above, SFI has an expectation that award holders of scale will deliver EPE activities directly related to their research programme.<sup>28</sup> This should be meaningful and should be thought through, so it is of value to the research, the researcher and the engaged community. The approach should be informed by best practice, with expertise involved.

The level of expectation relating to EPE activities will be influenced by the scale of the Strategic Partnership award. For those awards of less than €2.5M SFI direct costs, an EPE component is encouraged but is not required. Where the SFI budget requested is greater than €2.5M, the inclusion of a high level EPE plan is a requirement at application stage and within six months of a successful application being finalised, a detailed EPE Strategy must be submitted to SFI for approval.

## 5 SESAME

Expression of Interest and Full Proposal applications to the Strategic Partnership Programme will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI’s grants and awards management system. Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access. Once you have been registered by your Research Office, you will receive an email containing your username, password and SFI PIN number.

SESAME enables:

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

SESAME is accessed using the internet; 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

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Science-in-Ireland-Barometer\(2\).pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Science-in-Ireland-Barometer(2).pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/engagement/barometer/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/engagement/guidance/>

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 Guide for more detailed information.<sup>29</sup>**

Applicants should carefully follow the instructions below and in the SESAME Researcher User Guide to complete the various sections of the application.

### 5.1 General Submission Guidelines

- 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 template provided by SFI, located at the end of this call document.
- Uploads in SESAME 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.
- Applications must comply with the SFI Grant General Terms & Conditions<sup>30</sup>, and the SFI Grant Budget Policy<sup>31</sup>.

**It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.**

**Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by SFI staff.**

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

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/SFI-Board-approved-GTCs-2019.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy\\_2019\\_urlupdates.pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2019_urlupdates.pdf)

## 5.2 ORCID iD

ORCID<sup>32</sup> provides a unique identifier for researchers, which can then be linked to their research works across different platforms. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

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

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

## 6 Expression of Interest (EoI) Application Procedure

Potential applicants to the programme should contact SFI ([partnerships@sfi.ie](mailto:partnerships@sfi.ie)) to discuss their proposed programme of research and any queries they may have. SFI will make the EoI application template available to the Lead Applicant on SESAME following these discussions.

### 6.1 Eligibility Questionnaire

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

### 6.2 Proposal Summary

#### Proposal Title

The proposal title (up to 30 words) should clearly convey the nature of the work programme to be undertaken. The proposal title should be non-confidential.

#### Duration of Grant requested (in months)

Select the duration of the award requested from the drop-down menu.

The minimum duration is 12 months, and the maximum is 60 months. The options for duration are in units of 12 months (12, 24, 36 months etc). If requesting funding for a period of time which is not specified in the drop-down menu, please select the option which is closest and is greater than the number of months you are seeking to be funded e.g., for 40 months select 48 months. This will ensure the budget template displays the appropriate duration. Please indicate the exact proposed award duration within the body of the proposal.

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

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<sup>32</sup> <http://orcid.org/>

### **Requested start date**

Please enter your preferred start date for the award, if successful

### **Total SFI Funding Request**

Enter the total requested SFI budget in direct costs in euro. A detailed budget breakdown will be requested at full proposal stage.

### **Co-funding Partner(s)**

Enter the name(s) of the co-funding partner(s).

### **Co-funding partner(s) Cash Contribution**

Enter the total cash contribution by the co-funding partner(s) in euro.

### **Co-funding partner(s) In-Kind Contribution**

Enter the estimated total value of the in-kind contribution by the co-funding partner(s) in euro.

### **Is this a second-term funding application?**

Science Foundation Ireland permit Strategic Partnership awardees to consider an application for second-term funding under the programme. Select 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate.

## **6.3 Resubmission**

### **Does your proposal relate to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme?**

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. Select 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate.

### **Resubmission Statement (if applicable) (max. 1000 words)**

If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details.<sup>33</sup>

## **6.4 Research Alignment**

### **Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**

This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.<sup>34</sup>

## **6.5 Lead Applicant Details**

### **Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission**

Select the country in which the Lead Applicant is employed at the time of submission.

### **Percentage Commitment to Project**

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Lead Applicant, to the proposed research programme.

### **Lead Applicant Narrative CV (Upload, max. 5 pages)**

A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the narrative CV template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Strategic Partnerships Programme website<sup>35</sup>, must be completed and uploaded. Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-strategic-partnership/>

### **Supervisory Experience to Date**

Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising, which can be directly attributed to the Lead Applicant.

### **6.6 Co-Applicant Details**

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

If there is a Co-Applicant on the proposal, they must log in to SESAME and select 'Applications Pending Action' to upload their CV, insert their time commitment to the project and supervisory experience, as described below, and agree to the Terms and Conditions of the proposal.

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

### **Percentage Commitment to Project**

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicant, to the proposed research programme.

### **Supervisory Experience to Date**

Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising, which can be directly attributed to the Co-Applicant.

### **Co-Applicant Narrative CV (Upload, max. 5 pages)**

A CV of the Co-Applicant, using the narrative CV template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme website, must be completed and uploaded.<sup>36</sup> Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

### **Collaborator Details**

To add Funded Investigators or Official Collaborators to the proposal, the Lead Applicant should click the 'Add' button and enter the name, contact information and other required details for the individual. After adding collaborator details, click the 'Assign Collaborator' button. To exit the window, click the 'Close' button. In order for the collaborator(s) to be visible on SESAME click 'Save Draft'.

**CVs are not required for Official Collaborators and should not be included.**

### **Funded Investigator(s) Narrative CV (Upload, max. 5 pages)**

A CV of the Funded Investigator(s) (if applicable) must be completed and uploaded, using the narrative CV template provided on the SFI Strategic Partnerships Programme webpage.<sup>36</sup> Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

**Please note: for Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant and FI CVs, the narrative CV template allows for the provision of additional information such as that relating to periods of leave from research, where relevant. Also, 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.**

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-strategic-partnership/>

### **6.7 Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)**

This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary, in technical language, of the proposed work.

### **6.8 Programme Document (Upload)**

The completed Programme Document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF in the Programme Documents upload section. The Programme Document should be structured under the following headings:

#### **Research Programme (max. 3 pages, or 4 pages for second-term funding applications)**

Outline the overall research objectives of the partnership and why are they important. Describe clearly and concisely the specific scientific/technical aims and objectives of the project, providing details of specific work packages, deliverables and assigned project leads.

If applying for second-term funding:

Outline how this project builds on the research achievements of the first-term Partnership award.

#### **Role in the National Research Landscape (max. 1 page)**

Provide an overview of the current national research landscape as it pertains to your proposal. Describe other relevant research activity (both SFI and non-SFI funded), and how this proposal will relate to them. Describe relevant national infrastructure that is available to support this research programme.

Please justify the merits of this being a standalone project rather than a Spoke linked to an SFI Research Centre. This is relevant to those working in a research area which aligns with an SFI Research Centre and/or those with a Co-PI or FI role in a Centre. For further information on the Spokes programme, see the SFI website.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Partner Overview (max. 3 pages)**

##### *Academic team*

Describe the experience and achievements of the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigators (if applicable) to support their roles in the proposed project, including the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership. When composing this section, you may wish to consider the experience and achievements of the team in the areas of 'Generation of Knowledge', 'Development of Individuals and Collaborations', 'Supporting Broader Society & the Economy' and, 'Supporting the Research Community' and how this will help ensure that the proposed project is successful.

If applying for second-term funding:

If there have been changes to the applicants involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and provide explanation (e.g., change of lead applicant, addition of new co-applicants, loss of co-applicants).

##### *Co-funding partners*

Describe the specific role of each co-funding partner (industry, charity and other co-funding partners, as applicable), outlining (1) motivations for engaging; (2) specific contributions to the programme,

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

financial and otherwise; and (3) the anticipated benefits for both the academic and co-funding partner. Where possible within the page limit, applicants are encouraged to provide this information in tabular form, as illustrated below.

<b>Role of Partner</b>	
<b>Motivation for engaging</b>	
<b>Specific Contribution to the programme</b>	
<b>Anticipated Benefits</b>	

If applying for second-term funding:

If there have been changes to the co-funding partners involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and explain reasoning.

### **Education and Public Engagement (max. 1 page)**

As part of the Expression of Interest, SFI wants to understand your vision for Education and Public Engagement (EPE) within your research programme. You should address the following:

- Why is public engagement important to your proposed research?
- What does public engagement mean to you?
- Describe, at a high level, likely approaches you will take for engaging the non-academic public with your work, including details of team experience in delivering previous public engagement activity, if applicable.
- Outline the role that the co-funder(s) will have in the planned EPE activities, if applicable.
- What impacts are expected from this engagement work?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the information provided on the SFI Engagement webpage.<sup>38</sup>

If you are applying for an award of less than €2.5M SFI direct costs, you are encouraged but not required to include an EPE component in your application to SPP.

### **Impact (max. 2 page)**

Outline the potential economic and societal impact expected to arise from the partnership. The statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language and be as specific and comprehensive as possible. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated. The statement should include reference to the timeframe (short-term, medium-term or longer-term) of the impact and its scale (national, international).

If applying for second-term funding:

Describe how this project builds on the impact realised as part of the original first-term Partnership award.

See section 3 for further information on SFI's definition of impact and composing the impact statement.

## **6.9 Expression of Interest Submission**

A PDF of the Expression of Interest is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. The responsibility for verifying that the proposal is ready for

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/engagement/guidance/>

submission lies with the Applicant(s) in this regard. A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Lead Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Research Office to SFI.

## 7 Full Proposal Application Procedure

If the EoI is approved to progress to Full Proposal, an application template will be created on SESAME specifically for that application, which will be visible on the applicant's workbench under 'Applications Pending Action'. Information provided at Expression of Interest stage, including CVs, will migrate to the Full Proposal application template on SESAME. Additions/updates can be made as needed.

### 7.1 Proposal Summary

#### Proposal Title

The proposal title (up to 30 words) should clearly convey the nature of the work programme to be undertaken. The proposal title should be non-confidential.

#### Total SFI Funding Request (in €)

This will automatically be updated when the requested SFI budget table is completed (see section 7.11)

#### Duration of Grant requested (in months)

Select the duration of the award requested from the drop-down menu.

The minimum duration is 12 months, and the maximum is 60 months. The options for duration are in units of 12 months (12, 24, 36 months etc). If requesting funding for a period of time which is not specified in the drop-down menu, please select the option which is closest to and is greater than the number of months you are seeking to be funded e.g., for 40 months select 48 months. This will ensure the budget template displays the appropriate duration. Please indicate the exact proposed award duration within the body of the proposal.

#### Requested start date

Please enter your preferred start date for the award, if successful

#### Co-funding Partner(s)

Enter the name(s) of the co-funding partner(s).

#### Co-funding partner(s) Cash Contribution

Enter the total cash contribution by the co-funding partner(s) in Euro.

#### Co-funding partner(s) In-Kind Contribution

Enter the estimated total value of the in-kind contribution by the co-funding partner(s) in Euro.

#### Is this a second-term funding application?

Science Foundation Ireland permit Strategic Partnership awardees to consider an application for second-term funding under the programme. Select 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate.

### 7.2 Resubmission

#### Does your proposal relate to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme?

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. Select 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate.

#### Resubmission Statement (if applicable) (max. 1000 words)

Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any SFI scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI Scientific Staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a

revised application and will not be shared with external reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details.<sup>39</sup>

### 7.3 Research Alignment

#### Priority Area Alignment (Primary and Secondary)

Applicants should select one of the 14 Research Priority Areas from the drop-down menu as the area which best describes the proposed research (as outlined in the report of the refreshed Research Priority Areas 2018-2023<sup>40</sup>). Alternatively, applicants may select "Other". It is also possible to detail Secondary Priority Areas that the research will be relevant to.

#### Research Area - Primary

Applicants should select a primary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.

#### Research Area - Secondary

Applicants should select a secondary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary SFI research area already selected, best describes the proposed research.

#### Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)

This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.<sup>41</sup>

### 7.4 Lead Applicant Details

#### Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission

Select the country in which the Lead Applicant is employed at the time of submission.

#### Percentage Time Commitment

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Lead Applicant, to the proposed research programme. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested.

#### Lead Applicant Narrative CV (Upload, max 5 pages)

A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme website<sup>40</sup>, 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. **Also, 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 the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising, which can be directly attributed to the Lead Applicant.

### 7.5 Co-Applicant Details

To add a Co-Applicant to a proposal, the Lead Applicant should click the 'Add Co-Applicants' button and **enter their surname and SESAME SFI PIN**. To obtain their SESAME SFI PIN, the Co-

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

Applicant should navigate to the 'Profile' section of their SESAME account and select the 'SFI PIN/ORCID ID' tab.

If there is a Co-Applicant on the proposal, they must login to SESAME and select 'Applications Pending Action' to upload their CV, insert their time commitment to the project, supervisory experience and research funding (see section 7.6) and agree to the Terms and Conditions of the proposal.

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

### **Percentage Time Commitment**

Indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the Co-Applicant, to the proposed research programme. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested.

### **Co-Applicant Narrative CV (Upload, max. 5 pages)**

A CV of the Co-Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme website, must be completed and uploaded. Please click on "Save Draft" after upload<sup>42</sup>. The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. **Also, 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 the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising, which can be directly attributed to the Co-Applicant.

## **7.6 Research Funding**

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

- Include details of any financial support pending, current or expired from the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry etc.
- When adding entries from your profile, please ensure the 'Status' is up to date (Current, Pending, Expired), as this determines how the funding is listed on the application (e.g., the grant will be listed as 'Current' even if the end date has passed, if the status has not been updated to list the award as 'Expired').
- When adding new entries, please complete the requested details for each research funding entry. Fields coloured red are mandatory.
- For each grant listed, provide a brief description of the research. Applicants should also indicate their percentage time commitment to these other projects, as a function of 100% of their total working time.
- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.
- If the applicant is solely a collaborator on a collaborative research project, the grant should not be included here.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-strategic-partnership/>

- The portion of research funding claimed in an applicant's name must be an accurate and a fair reflection of their responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. SFI may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.
- This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with extremely large numbers of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. The most prestigious grants and those most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has no expired, current or pending funding. **Both the Lead and Co-Applicant(s) need to complete this section within SESAME.**

The applicants must complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application (max. 1,000 words). For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant must clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, based on the methodologies being employed and the stated objectives of the funded project(s). SFI will not support research programmes currently being funded by another source.

Also, under the heading "Management of More Than One Major SFI Award" applicants should provide justification and rationale for how they would manage two or more concurrent major SFI grants, where applicable.

### 7.7 Funded Investigator and Official Collaborator Details

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

#### Funded Investigator(s) Narrative CV (Upload)

A CV of the Funded Investigator (s) (if applicable) must be completed and uploaded, using the narrative CV template, 'SFI Strategic Partnerships Programme Applicant, Co-Applicant and Funded Investigator CV Template', provided on the SFI Strategic Partnerships Programme webpage<sup>43</sup> (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

The template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. **Also, 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.**

CVs are not required for Official Collaborators.

### 7.8 Main Body of Proposal

#### Keywords (max. 15)

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

#### Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)

Provide a succinct, stand-alone summary of the proposed work programme. The scientific abstract should be non-confidential.

#### Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)

Provide a succinct, stand-alone summary of the proposed work programme in lay, non-technical language. The lay abstract should be non-confidential.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-strategic-partnership/>

## 7.9 Ethical Issues

### Use of Animals

Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned. Further details on SFI's Policy on the 'Use of Animals in Research' can be found on the SFI Ethical Policies webpage<sup>44</sup> and in SFI's 'Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues'.<sup>45</sup>

### Research Involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data

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

**The Research Body and Principal Investigator must ensure that, before the research commences and for the full award duration, all the necessary ethical, legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and all the necessary licences and approvals have been obtained.**

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

**Further information can be found in in SFI's 'Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues'.<sup>46</sup>**

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

In accordance with the SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)<sup>47</sup>, all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues<sup>48</sup> for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

**Do not** include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in 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?

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues.pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20on%20Ethical%20and%20Scientific%20Issues.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues.pdf](https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/1-Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20on%20Ethical%20and%20Scientific%20Issues.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

<sup>48</sup> <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.

### **7.11 Budget (SFI-requested budget only)**

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

In addition, a breakdown of the total Research Programme Budget (SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment, Direct Costs) should be included as part of the Programme Documents upload. The Budget Tables for completion by the applicant(s) are located in Appendix VI – Budget Templates. The full Research Programme Budget will be provided to reviewers.

### **7.12 Budget template (MS Excel upload)**

In addition, applicants are required to complete the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme webpage.<sup>49</sup> Please note that separate templates are provided where the SFI requested budget is <€2.5M and >€2.5M. As part of the Excel budget template, applicants are required to provide a detailed breakdown of the SFI and each co-funding partner's financial contributions both cash and in-kind associated with each research strand and the operations budget, if applicable. Applicants are required to upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Budget upload section.

### **7.13 Programme Documents**

#### **Programme Document (Upload)**

Completed Programme Documents should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF in the Programme Documents upload section.

**Applicants should note that there are two Programme Document templates.  
Where the SFI budget requested is less than €2.5M, Template A should be used (Appendix III).  
Where the SFI budget requested is greater than €2.5M, Template B should be used (Appendix V).**

#### **Data Management Plan (upload; max. 2 pages)**

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Strategic Partnership Programme are required to provide a short (2 page) 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.<sup>50</sup> 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

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-strategic-partnership/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFI-DMP-Guidance-FINAL-140322.pdf>

the lifecycle of the programme of research<sup>51</sup>, from collection to analysis and interpretation, sharing and dissemination, and long-term storage.

### Data Management Plan Requirements for SFI Grant Applicants

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 project<sup>52</sup>:

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.

### 7.14 Letters of Support (upload; max. 2 pages for each letter)

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

The following letters of support **must** be included at full proposal stage:

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Lead Applicant**. If a Co-Applciant or Funded Investigator is based in the same Research Body as the Lead Applicant, a single letter of support providing details of all applicants is sufficient. If there are a large number of applicants to detail in the one letter of support, they can be listed in an appendix, which does not count towards the page limit of the letter. The Letter of Support should detail the employment status of the applicant(s), including how the applicant(s) meet the eligibility criteria for this call as detailed in Section 2.8. The letter should also comment on the infrastructure and services available and should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest (see Section 9 for details). This is a formal letter on headed notepaper and is signed by an authorised institutional representative.

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<sup>51</sup> 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.

<sup>52</sup> 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](https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_info_document-Open_Research_Data_and_Data_Management_Plans.pdf)

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigators (if different from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant)**. The details of the letter should be as outlined above.
- A letter of support from the **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO)** of the host Research Body. A signed letter of support from the host Research Body's TTO should indicate that the TTO is aware of the proposed partnership. The letter should highlight any relevant Intellectual Property (IP) issues or discussions. The letter is expected to describe how the IP generated by the project will be protected and managed.
- A letter of support from each **Co-Funding Partner** outlining how they have jointly defined the scope of the project with the applicant team, participated in its design and will contribute to its implementation. Co-Funding Partner letters of support should outline any previous history of collaborations with the academic applicants and outline how the proposed research aligns itself with the current and future needs of the Co-Funding Partner. The letter of support should describe the level of cost-share commitment from the Co-Funding Partner, both in terms of cash and in-kind contributions and the time period for which the contribution is being made. Applicants should ensure that a completed Co-Funding contribution table is included within each letter (see Appendix VII). A lead contact point from a Co-Funding Partner organisation (**Co-Funding Collaborator**) should be named in the Letter of Support (although may not necessarily be the signatory on the Letter of Support). Please note, a CV for the Co-Funding Collaborator should **not** be included.
- A letter of support from each **Official Collaborator**. Details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposed research programme must be clearly described.

#### 7.15 Excluded Reviewers

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

#### 7.16 View Proposal Prior to Submission

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

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

#### 7.17 Applicant Agreement to Terms and Conditions

It should be noted that submission of an application represents your agreement as the applicant to SFI General Terms and Conditions. Applications that fail to comply with the above terms and conditions, or with requirements outlined in this call document, will not be eligible.

#### 7.18 Research Body Approval

Submissions must be approved by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the host Research Body is approving:

- Eligibility of each Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant as well as the eligibility of the applicant group as a whole.
- That the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant are, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of one of the collaborating Research Bodies for the duration of the award.
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables are in line with accepted institutional guidelines and appropriate to the intended time commitments.
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the applicant group in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant ethical approval has been or will be sought and should be granted prior to the award commencing.
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of award.
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history i.e., current, pending or expired awards, as detailed in the application, are valid and accurate.
- That permission from all team members and collaborators has been obtained, such that SFI may receive their personal information, and may process such data for the purpose of peer review.

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

## 8 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant to participate in the peer review process. SFI reserves the right to refuse to grant permission to an applicant to submit a proposal to the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme if it deems the applicant to be ineligible or uncompetitive.

SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)<sup>53</sup> in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member<sup>54</sup>. To this end, all types of research output are recognised by SFI and we are 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 S<sup>55</sup>, SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030<sup>56</sup>. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI

<sup>53</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

<sup>54</sup> Contributor level membership

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

<sup>56</sup> [National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum \(norf.ie\)](#)

became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment<sup>57</sup> and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)<sup>58</sup>.

### 8.1 Expression of Interest Review

Applicants to the Strategic Partnership Programme must submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) prior to submission of a Full Proposal. Eois will be reviewed internally in SFI using the following criteria:

- Significance and relevance of the proposed research programme, including strategic fit with SFI and national research agendas, where appropriate, and role in the national research landscape
- Quality, significance, and relevance of experience and achievements of the academic team (Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigators)
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed partnership with the co-funding partner(s), including evidence for co-creation of the research programme
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the potential economic and societal impact expected to arise from the partnership
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the vision/high level plan for Education and Public Engagement (if applicable)

If applying for second-term funding, the following additional criterion will be used:

- Quality and significance of the achievements of the Partnership during the first term of funding and the impact this has delivered

### 8.2 Full Proposal Review

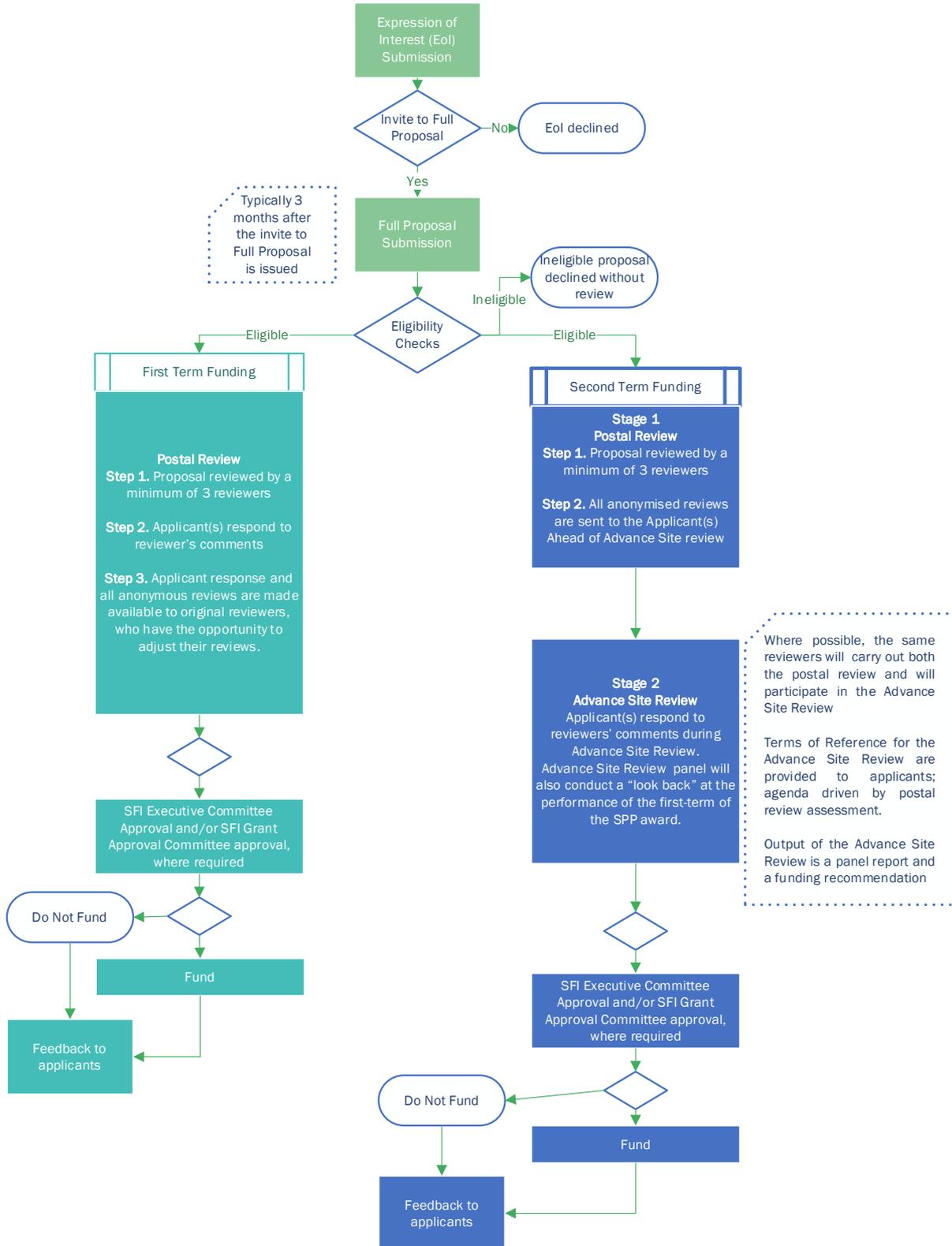
Applicants who submit Eois that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Full Proposals are expected to be submitted within 3 months of being invited. Full proposals received without prior written approval will be returned without review. A Schematic of the full proposal review process is provided below.

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<sup>57</sup> [https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022\\_07\\_19\\_rra\\_agreement\\_final.pdf](https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> <https://coara.eu/>

SFI Strategic Partnership Programme (SPP)- Review Process



### 8.3 Review process for applications for a first term of funding

**Step 1:** SFI will solicit postal reviews of proposals from at least three international scientific peer reviewers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research who may be from academic or industrial settings. The applicant may specify up to three referees or companies who should not be approached to act as reviewers.

Reviewers engaged by SFI are required to abide by the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.<sup>59</sup> The identity of international experts who conduct reviews shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the applicants. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international peer reviewers involved in the review process.

**Step 2:** Postal reviews received from the international reviewers will be collated and forwarded to applicants. Applicants will then be afforded the opportunity to submit an **applicant response** to reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to succinctly respond (*advance notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants*).

**Step 3:** The applicant response and all anonymous reviews received will be made available to the Step 1 reviewers, who will then have the opportunity to adjust their reviews and ratings based on their assessment of the quality of the response. The Step 1 reviewers will also be able to provide a final comment.

The adjusted reviews following Step 3 will be considered by SFI alongside the proposal, the original postal reviews and the applicant response in making a funding decision.

*SFI reserves the right to conduct a site visit in advance of a funding decision for first-term awards.*

### 8.4 Review process for applications for second-term funding

Applicants applying for second-term funding are asked to articulate how the proposed project builds on the achievements of the first-term strategic partnership award, across the various sections of the full proposal template. Reviewers are asked to consider these "look back" sections describing the progress of the first term of the Strategic Partnership award compared with the original objectives and the justification/rationale provided for the need for a second term, in addition to a review of the proposal for second-term funding.

Applications for second-term funding will undergo a two-stage review process: postal review followed by an advance site visit<sup>60</sup>.

#### Postal Review

**Step 1:** SFI will solicit postal reviews of proposals from at least three international scientific peer reviewers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research who may be from academic or industrial settings. The applicant may specify up to three referees or companies who should not be approached to act as reviewers.

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

<sup>60</sup> If the postal reviews are not supportive, SFI reserves the right to make a funding decision after postal review stage without implementing the advance site review.

**Step 2:** The postal reviews returned by the international reviewers will be collated and forwarded to the applicant(s) and the advance site review will afford the opportunity for the applicant(s) to respond to the comments made (i.e. the applicants will respond to the postal reviews at the advance site visit).

### Advance Site Review

The advance site review typically takes place at the lead applicant's Research Body, with a panel of international experts. In certain circumstances, the advance site review may take place virtually via video-conferencing. Where possible, the same reviewers will carry out the postal review and participate in advance site review.

A Terms of Reference for the advance site review will be provided to applicants; the agenda for the review will be driven by the postal reviewer assessments, and will also incorporate a "look back" at the performance of the first term of the SPP award. SFI reserves the right to request an 'end of project' report on the first-term award to provide additional detail on the performance of the first-term award.

The output of the advance site review is a panel report and a funding recommendation which will be considered by SFI alongside the proposal and postal reviews in making a funding decision.

## 8.5 Review Criteria

During the full proposal review process, the following review criteria will be applied:

- **Quality, significance and relevance of the Lead Applicant's, Co-applicant's and Funded Investigator's key achievements and research track record, and the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, including likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership.**

Including:

- How the applicant group has addressed each of the following areas (commensurate with their career stage and research discipline, taking any periods of leave into account):
  - 1) Generation of Knowledge
  - 2) Development of Individuals and Collaborations
  - 3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and
  - 4) Supporting the Research Community
- Whether the expertise and experience of the Lead Applicant is appropriate, including their track record in leadership and research management.
- Whether the expertise and experience of the Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigator(s), if relevant, are appropriate given their proposed contribution to the research programme.
- The strength and cohesiveness of the group, including likely synergies that would enable them to deliver world-leading research. This should include consideration of 'Academic Team' section of the Research Programme (See Template A (Appendix III) or Template B (Appendix V) as applicable).
- **Quality, significance, novelty, and strategic relevance of the research programme.**  
Including importance, timeliness of the proposed research; quality of institutional support (as detailed in the Research Infrastructure statement and Research Body letter of support);

communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; value for money, the 'Sex and Gender Dimension in Research' statement, Data Management Plan etc.

- **Quality, significance, and relevance of the potential economic and societal impact expected to arise from the partnership and value to Ireland.**  
Including appreciation of how research may be developed and exploited in the medium-to long term; realistic and convincing evaluation of the benefits that will result from a successful research programme, including benefit to the academic partner and co-funding partner(s); areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made; potential to transfer knowledge/technology from academia to industry.

### **Education and Public Engagement**

In the case of large-scale awards (greater than €2.5M SFI direct costs), SFI will engage an Education and Public Engagement expert to provide an additional postal review, focusing specifically on the EPE element of the proposal. They will be asked to consider the quality of the EPE plan, taking into consideration the proposed expertise, if applicable, and resources required:

- **Quality, significance, and relevance of the vision/high level plan for Education and Public Engagement.**  
Including clarity of approach to EPE and how it will be a core part of the research programme; evidence of how the research programme leadership will embed, support and enable the proposed EPE approach; clarity of objectives and vision for impact; quality and relevance of plan, appropriateness of target audiences/participants/stakeholders and approaches for engaging them; appropriateness of the expertise and resources requested; appropriateness of role of co-funder(s) in EPE activities, if applicable

For awards of less than €2.5M SFI direct costs, the inclusion of an EPE plan is encouraged but not required. For these smaller scale awards, the review of EPE in the full proposal will be conducted by internal SFI EPE experts.

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

**Final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.**

## **9 SFI's Policies and Positions**

In addition to complying with the 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 apprised 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**,<sup>61</sup> as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

### *Animal Usage*

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**<sup>62</sup> and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HRPAs' 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**;<sup>63</sup> that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**,<sup>64</sup> 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 as described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)**,<sup>65</sup> which SFI has endorsed.

### *Intellectual Property Management*

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019** and must comply with State aid Regulations.<sup>66</sup> The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the 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).

### *Gender Strategy*

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the **SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**<sup>67</sup>, applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

In the SFI Strategy 2025 Shaping Our Future<sup>68</sup> 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 how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

### *Maternity Supplement*

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI funded award when either an SFI Awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded on an SFI award takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IUA\\_Research\\_Integrity\\_in\\_Ireland\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IUA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

<sup>65</sup> [http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national\\_framework\\_for\\_doctoral\\_education\\_0.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Gender-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025-Shaping-Our-Future.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

### *Appeals Process*

The Appeals Process Policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.<sup>70</sup>

### *State aid*

All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid. Potential applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2022 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01)**<sup>71</sup> and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.<sup>72</sup> If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, potential applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

### *Child Protection*

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,<sup>73</sup> and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.<sup>74</sup> It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

### *Data Protection Policy*

**The General Data Protection Regulation**<sup>75</sup> is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union. Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement**.<sup>76</sup>

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

During the application process or at any time thereafter, SFI may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator, or any member of the Research Team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by SFI or other relevant bodies, or for the

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

<sup>71</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG)

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

<sup>74</sup> [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application process). SFI may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

### *Conflict of Interest*

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**.<sup>77</sup>

### *Open access*

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S<sup>78</sup> and as a signatory to the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022- 2030<sup>79</sup>, 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**<sup>80</sup>. SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and data gathered through SFI Research Outputs.

### *Data Management*

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.<sup>81</sup> Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI.<sup>82</sup> 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 will be reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.**

## **10 Confidentiality**

Science Foundation Ireland takes all reasonable steps to ensure that information provided in the application is treated as confidential subject to submission to the members of its committees and merit review and to any obligations under law.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://norf.ie/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

## 11 Project/Award Management

### 11.1 Progress Reporting Requirements

The State has made a significant investment via SFI into scientific research and as such, it is the responsibility of SFI to monitor the progress and outcomes of all funding it administers. All SFI grant holders are required to report on outputs and impacts arising from their research programme for the duration of their award and for up to five years after the award end (close) date. The progress reporting requirements for awards made under the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme include the completion of an Annual Report and SFI Research Outputs (formerly referred to as the SFI Census). The Annual Report is used to monitor the progress of individual awards against the overall objectives of the programme, as per Section 1. A template for the annual report and further guidelines on the reporting requirements will be provided to successful applicants. Submission of annual reports will be made through SESAME.

### 11.2 Key Performance Indicators and Governance

In the case of Strategic Partnership awards of significant scale, SFI reserves the right to implement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as well as defined governance and advisory structures in order to ensure optimal performance and oversight of the partnership.

### 11.3 Progress Site Reviews

Each recipient of a Strategic Partnership award will be subject to a progress review in the form of a site visit conducted by international peer reviewers during the period of the grant. These progress reviews are typically held at the midway point of the award and may be attended by representatives from the co-funding partner agencies. The review panel, which typically comprises two to three international subject matter experts, will be asked to review the progress and direction of the research, the quality of the team (including gender balance) and partnerships, progress of the Education and Public Engagement programme, the management of the budget and progress towards generating impact. In relation to the latter, the panel will be guided to review progress against the impact statement provided by the applicant(s) in their original proposal. Site visits will also involve a data provenance review, where a dataset will be reviewed in the context of experimental design, data capture, analysis, storage and curation. The research team will also be assessed on matters concerning training, mentoring and supervision. The outcome of the review will be taken into consideration in the assessment of future applications made to SFI. As stated in the SFI General Terms and Conditions,<sup>83</sup> SFI reserves the right to terminate a grant if, in the reasonable opinion of SFI, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.

## 12 State aid

SFI will monitor and verify, on an on-going basis and as required, the Research Body's compliance with State aid law. Upon request, the Research Body will provide the Foundation with all documentation reasonably required to satisfy SFI that the Research Body complies with State aid law. The Research Body is responsible for retaining such documentary records as are required to demonstrate compliance with State aid law, and ensure, where relevant, that all necessary third-party consents are procured to allow for such documentation to be disclosed to SFI.

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

### 13 Appendix I: Expression of Interest Checklist

SECTION	DETAILS
<b>Proposal Summary:</b>	
Title	Up to 30 words
Duration of Grant requested (in months)	Drop-down menu: Select the duration of the award. Minimum of 12 and maximum of 60
Requested Start Date	Select preferred start date
Total SFI Funding Request	Enter number in € (direct costs only)
Co-funding Partner(s)	Enter the name(s)
Co-funding partner(s) Cash Contribution	Enter total cash contribution (€)
Co-funding partner(s) In-Kind Contribution	Enter total in-kind contribution (€)
Is this a second-term funding application?	Select 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate.
Resubmission Statement (if applicable)	Max. 1000 words
Alignment to SFI Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
Scientific Abstract	Max. 200 words
<b>Lead Applicant details:</b>	
Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission	Select country
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Lead Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Co-Applicant Details:</b>	
Co-applicant	Add co-applicant by entering co-applicant surname and SESAME SFI PIN
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Co-Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Collaborator Details</b>	
Funded Investigators or Official Collaborators	Enter the name, contact information and other required details for the individual.
Funded Investigator Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
<b>Programme Document:</b>	
Programme Document	Upload containing the below sections
Research Programme	Max. 3 pages, 4 pages for second-term funding applications
Role in the National Research Landscape	Max. 1 page
Partner Overview	Max. 3 pages
Education and Public Engagement	Max. 1 page
Impact	Max. 2 pages

## 14 Appendix II: Full Proposal Checklist for TEMPLATE A (For SFI Budget request of less than €2.5M)

SECTION	DETAILS
<b>Proposal Summary:</b>	
Proposal Title	Up to 30 words
Duration of Grant requested (in months)	Drop-down menu: Select the duration of the award. Minimum of 12 and maximum of 60
Requested Start Date	Select preferred start date
Co-funding Partner(s)	Enter the name(s)
Co-funding partner(s) Cash Contribution	Enter total cash contribution (€)
Co-funding partner(s) In-Kind Contribution	Enter total in-kind contribution (€)
Is this a second-term funding application?	Select 'Yes' of 'No' as appropriate.
Resubmission Statement (if applicable)	Max. 1000 words
<b>Research Alignment:</b>	
Priority Area Alignment (Primary and Secondary)	Drop-down menu
Research Area (Primary)	Drop-down menu
Research Area (Secondary)	Drop-down menu
Alignment to SFI Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
<b>Lead Applicant details:</b>	
Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission	Select country
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Lead Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Co-Applicant Details:</b>	
Co-applicant	Add co-applicant by entering co-applicant surname and SESAME SFI PIN
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Co-Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Research Funding:</b>	
Lead Applicant Funding History	Enter expired, current and pending funding of Lead Applicant
Co-Applicant Funding History	Enter expired, current and pending funding of Co-Applicant
<b>Collaborator Details</b>	
Funded Investigators or Official Collaborators	Enter the name, contact information and other required details for the individual.
Funded Investigator Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)

<b>Main Body of Proposal:</b>	
Keywords	Max. 15 words
Scientific Abstract	Max. 200 words
Lay Abstract	Max. 100 words
<b>Ethical issues:</b>	
Questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data)	Select relevant answers
<b>Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement:</b>	
Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Max. 1000 words
<b>Budget:</b>	
Budget (SFI-requested budget only)	Press open in the 'Prepare Budget' section and input the costs under each category heading.
Budget for applications less than €2.5M	Upload completed template (Excel)
<b>Programme Document:</b>	
TEMPLATE A (For SFI Budget request of <€2.5M)	Upload containing the below sections
Research Programme	Max. 15 pages To include: Goals of the partnership, Background and significance of the research question, Scientific/Technical Aims and Objectives of the Research Programme, Approach/Methodology, Project Management plan.
References	Max. 5 pages
Academic team	Max. 2 pages
Co-funding Partner Overview	Max. 1 page per partner
Education and Public Engagement	Max. 3 pages (encouraged but not required)
Impact	Max. 3 pages
Intellectual Property	Max. 1 page
Research Infrastructure	Max. 1 page
Budget	Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document.
Budget justification	Max. 2 pages
<b>Data Management Plan:</b>	
Data Management Plan	Upload; max. 2 pages
<b>Letters of Support:</b>	
Letters of Support	Upload; max. 2 pages for each letter
<b>Excluded Reviewers</b>	
Excluded Reviewers	Specify up to three

## 15 Appendix III: Full Proposal TEMPLATE A (For SFI Budget request of less than €2.5M)

### Research Programme (max. 15 pages)

Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for reviewers to comment on the quality of the ideas and proposed implementation. The Research Programme Description should be structured under the following headings:

#### i. Goals of the partnership

Describe clearly the overall goals of this partnership and how the proposed research programme supports this.

#### ii. Background and significance of the research question

Describe clearly the background and significance of the research to be undertaken. The following questions may assist you in developing this description:

- What is the current state-of-the-art in the area and how will the proposed research advance this?
- Does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important?
- What are the unique and innovative aspects of this research?
- What market opportunity does the research address, if relevant?

Applicants may wish to consider the specific objectives of the Strategic Partnership Programme when justifying the importance of the proposed research.

#### iii. Scientific/Technical Aims and Objectives of the Research Programme

Describe clearly and concisely the specific scientific/technical aims and objectives of the research programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables identified as part of the strategic value of the partnership.

Relevant preliminary data should be provided. This may take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research or (b) where data has yet to be published, can be included within the 15-page research description, as evidence that the applicant(s) has a track record in the field of his/her proposed research. Any preliminary data must be accompanied by a clear explanation as to their significance in relation to the proposed work programme.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

Outline how this project builds on the research achievements of the first-term Partnership award.

#### iv. Approach/methodology

The methodology of the proposed programme should be well developed, including a description of how this proposed methodology advances the current state-of-the-art. This section should include justification that the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) is feasible and realistic. It should include, if relevant, a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal and/or human-based studies. Guidance

for applicants on the ethical and scientific issues in carrying out such studies is provided on the SFI website.<sup>84</sup>

**v. Project management plan**

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

Include an assessment of risks associated with the delivery of the partnership project and explain measures to mitigate and manage these risks.

**References (max. 5 pages)**

Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided. A five-page limit is permitted for uploaded references.

**Academic team (max. 2 pages)**

Describe the experience and achievements of the lead applicant, including their track record in leadership and research management. Describe the experience and achievements of the co-applicants and FIs (if applicable) to support their roles in the proposed project. Include the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership. When composing this section, you may wish to consider the experience and achievements of the team in the areas of 'Generation of Knowledge', 'Development of Individuals and Collaborations', 'Supporting Broader Society & the Economy' and, 'Supporting the Research Community' and how this will help ensure the proposed project is successful.

If applying for second-term funding:

If there have been changes to the applicants involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and provide explanation (e.g., change of lead applicant, addition of new co-applicants, loss of co-applicants).

**Co-funding Partner Overview (upload, max. 1 page per partner)**

Applicants should include an overview of the co-funding partner(s) (industry, charity and other partners, as applicable) involved in the proposed partnership. The overview should include:

- A brief description of the organisation (including legal definition such as e.g., commercial for-profit, semi-state), its size, area of activity etc.
- Details of each co-funding partner's motivations for engaging
- A brief description of the role of the partner and how they will engage in this research programme
- Details of their specific contributions to the programme, including co-development of the research programme, financial contributions and otherwise
- How the collaboration will jointly benefit the academic and co-funding partner

Information provided in this section should provide assurance that research that involves a collaboration with an industry party, complies with the definition of "effective collaboration", as per section 2.4.

If applying for second-term funding:

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

If there have been changes to the co-funding partners involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and explain reasoning.

### **Education and Public Engagement (encouraged but not required, max. 3 pages)**

Outline a high-level plan for Education and Engagement, including vision and objectives for the EPE Programme. You should identify your target audiences, the activities to be delivered and the outputs expected. Describe your objectives for EPE and how they will influence the research programme. Outline the staffing proposed, if applicable, and what expertise and resources will be required to deliver the programme. Outline any supports or resources available within your academic institution which could be utilised in the delivery of your EPE programme. Outline the role that the co-funder(s) will have in the planned EPE activities, if applicable.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

In addition to the above, applicants for second-term funding should outline if or how EPE was included in the first term funding award and describe how this second term of funding will build upon previous work in this area and how learnings will be applied.

### **Impact (max. 3 pages)**

Outline the potential economic and societal impact and value to Ireland expected to arise from the partnership. The statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language and be as specific and comprehensive as possible. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated. The statement should include reference to the timeframe (short-term, medium-term or longer-term) of the impact and its scale (national, international).

See section 3 for further information on SFI's definition of impact and composing the impact statement.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

Describe how this project builds on the impact realised as part of the original first-term Partnership award.

### **Intellectual Property (max. 1 page)**

Applicants should include as much detail as possible on the relevant Intellectual Property (IP) landscape surrounding the research in question, which should detail any background IP that will be introduced to the project. A plan for management of all IP relating to the partnership project must be provided which should be in accordance with national guidelines, in particular 'Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019'<sup>85</sup> and must comply with State aid legislation.

### **Research Infrastructure (max. 1 page)**

Describe the infrastructure, facilities, services and space to be provided by the Research Body/Bodies. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the Research Body.

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf>

A letter of support must be included from the Lead Applicant's Research Body and from the Research Body of the Co-Applicant(s) and Funded Investigator(s), if different.

### **Budget**

The **Budget Tables** for completion are located in **Appendix VI – Budget Templates**. Please copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document. See Section 2.5 for details on eligible costs.

Applicants are requested to complete:

- **Total Research Programme Budget:** a total budget for the research programme, including both the SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment, separated out by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Total Requested SFI Budget:** a breakdown of the requested SFI budget contribution separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Breakdown of SFI Requested Budget:** a detailed breakdown of the requested SFI budget contribution in each of the areas of staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Total Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment:** a budget for the total Co-Funding Partner commitment to the research programme separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Breakdown of Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment (Direct Costs):** a detailed breakdown of the Co-Funding Partner contribution in each of the areas of staff, equipment, materials and travel.

In addition, applicants are required to complete the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme webpage, the completed Excel budget is uploaded to SESAME in the Budget upload section.

### **Budget Justification (max. 2 pages)**

The budget justification is the narrative explanation of the budget. It helps SFI and reviewers to evaluate whether the budget requested is reasonable. It should clearly explain why requested eligible costs are necessary for the proposed research programme and how they have been calculated. The budget justification should be inclusive of both the SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) budget so that the budget spend for the entire project is justified. General guidance on completing the budget justification can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

## 16 Appendix IV: Full Proposal Checklist for TEMPLATE B (For SFI Budget greater than €2.5M)

SECTION	DETAILS
<b>Proposal Summary:</b>	
Proposal Title	Up to 30 words
Duration of Grant requested (in months)	Drop-down menu: Select the duration of the award. Minimum of 12 and maximum of 60
Requested Start Date	Select preferred start date
Total SFI Requested Funding	Enter number in € (direct costs only)
Co-funding Partner(s)	Enter the name(s)
Co-funding partner(s) Cash Contribution	Enter total cash contribution (€)
Co-funding partner(s) In-Kind Contribution	Enter total in-kind contribution (€)
Is this a second-term funding application?	Select 'Yes' of 'No' as appropriate.
Resubmission Statement (if applicable)	Max. 1000 words
<b>Research Alignment:</b>	
Alignment to SFI Legal Remit	Max. 250 words
Priority Area Alignment (Primary and Secondary)	Drop-down menu
Research Area (Primary)	Drop-down menu
Research Area (Secondary)	Drop-down menu
<b>Lead Applicant details:</b>	
Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission	Select country
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Lead Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Co-Applicant Details:</b>	
Co-applicant	Add co-applicant by entering co-applicant surname and SESAME SFI PIN
Percentage Commitment to Project	Enter time commitment (% of the total working time)
Co-Applicant Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
Supervisory Experience to Date	Provide the number of Masters and PhD students graduated and currently supervising, and the number of other staff currently supervising
<b>Research Funding:</b>	
Lead Applicant Funding History	Enter expired, current and pending funding of Lead Applicant
Co-Applicant Funding History	Enter expired, current and pending funding of Co-Applicant
<b>Collaborator Details</b>	
Funded Investigators or Official Collaborators	Enter the name, contact information and other required details for the individual.
Funded Investigator Narrative CV	Upload (5 pages)
<b>Main Body of Proposal:</b>	

Keywords	Max. 15 words
Scientific Abstract	Max. 200 words
Lay Abstract	Max. 100 words
<b>Ethical issues:</b>	
Questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data)	Select relevant answers
<b>Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement:</b>	
Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Max. 1000 words
<b>Budget:</b>	
Budget (SFI-requested budget only)	Press open in the 'Prepare Budget' section and input the costs under each category heading.
Budget for applications greater than €2.5M	Upload completed template (Excel)
<b>Programme Document:</b>	
TEMPLATE B (For SFI Budget request of >€2.5M)	Upload containing the below sections
Executive Summary	Max. 5 pages
Background Context	Max. 5 pages To include: Literature Survey/State of the Art Review, International Benchmarking, National Research Landscape
References	Max. 1 page
Research Programme	Max. 30 pages To include: Goals of the partnership, Background and significance of the research question, Scientific/Technical Aims and Objectives of the Research Programme, Approach/Methodology
References	Max. 10 pages
Project Management plan	Max. 5 pages
Academic team	Max. 5 pages
Co-funding Partner Overview	Max. 1 page per partner
Education and Public Engagement	Max. 5 pages
Impact	Max. 10 pages
Intellectual Property	Max. 2 pages
Research Infrastructure	Max. 5 pages
Budget	Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document.
Budget justification	Max. 5 pages
<b>Data Management Plan:</b>	
Data Management Plan	Upload, max. 2 pages
<b>Letters of Support:</b>	
Letters of Support	Upload; max. 2 pages for each letter
<b>Excluded Reviewers:</b>	

Excluded Reviewers	Specify up to three
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## **17 Appendix V: Full Proposal TEMPLATE B (For SFI Budget greater than €2.5M)**

### **Executive Summary (max. 5 pages)**

Provide an Executive Summary of the full proposal, including details of the applicant group, the research programme, the proposed economic/societal impact and a summarised budget. The Executive Summary should capture all key aspects of the full proposal and should emphasise how the proposed work programme aligns with the objectives of the Strategic Partnership Programme.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

Include a summary of how this project builds on the research achievements of the first-term Partnership award.

### **Background Context (max. 5 pages)**

Provide a description of the background context to the proposal. In particular, the following areas must be addressed:

#### **i. Literature Survey/State of the Art Review**

Provide a brief summary of the current state of the art in those fields related to your proposal. Clearly demonstrate in your summary that you are aware of the key problems and challenges in the area, of the limits of current practice and of the relevant seminal and recent work in this space.

#### **ii. International Benchmarking**

Provide a brief overview of other international academic and/or commercial research groups that are active in the fields related to your proposed research. Describe how the applicant group benchmarks itself against those groups. In so doing, provide a brief description of the unique configuration of research activities that will make the proposed programme of research competitive relative to other international groups.

#### **iii. National Research Landscape**

Provide an overview of the current national research landscape as it pertains to your proposal. Describe other relevant research activity (both SFI and non-SFI funded), and how this proposal will relate to them. Describe relevant national infrastructure that is available to support this research programme.

### **References (max. 1 page)**

Appropriate references and citations for the 'Background Context' section must be provided. A one-page limit is permitted for uploaded references.

### **Research Programme (max. 30 pages)**

Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for reviewers to comment on the quality of the ideas and proposed implementation. The Research Programme Description should be structured under the following headings:

#### **i. Goals of the partnership**

Describe clearly the overall goals of this partnership and how the proposed research programme supports this.

#### **ii. Background and significance of the research question**

Describe clearly the background and significance of the research to be undertaken. The following questions may assist you in developing this description:

- What is the current state-of-the-art in the area and how will the proposed research advance this?
- Does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important?
- What are the unique and innovative aspects of this research?
- What market opportunity does the research address, if relevant?

Applicants may wish to consider the specific objectives of the Strategic Partnership Programme when justifying the importance of the proposed research.

#### **iii. Scientific/Technical Aims and Objectives of the Research Programme**

Describe clearly and concisely the specific scientific/technical aims and objectives of the research programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables identified as part of the strategic value of the partnership.

Relevant preliminary data must be provided. This may take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research or (b) where data has yet to be published, can be included within the 30-page research description, as evidence that the applicant(s) has a track record in the field of his/her proposed research. Any preliminary data must be accompanied by a clear explanation as to their significance in relation to the proposed research programme.

If applying for second-term funding:

Outline how this project builds on the research achievements of the first-term Partnership award.

#### **iv. Approach/Methodology**

The methodology of the proposed programme should be well developed, including a description of how this proposed methodology advances the current state-of-the-art. This section should include justification that the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) is feasible and realistic. It should include, if relevant, a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal and/or human-based studies. Guidance on the ethical and scientific issues in carrying out such studies is provided on the SFI website.<sup>87</sup>

#### **References (max. 10 pages)**

Appropriate references and citations for the 'Research Programme' section must be provided. A ten-page limit is permitted for uploaded references.

#### **Project Management (max. 5 pages)**

Describe the plans for management of the research programme. In doing so, ensure that milestones and deliverables for the programme (along with delivery dates) and key performance indicators used to measure progress are provided. A Gantt chart must be provided.

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<sup>87</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

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

### **Academic team (max. 5 pages)**

Describe the experience and achievements of the lead applicant, including their track record in leadership and research management. Describe the experience and achievements of the co-applicants and FIs (if applicable) to support their roles in the proposed project. Include the strength and cohesiveness of the applicant group, likely synergy in delivering research and potential for international leadership. When composing this section, you may wish to consider the experience and achievements of the team in the areas of 'Generation of Knowledge', 'Development of Individuals and Collaborations', 'Supporting Broader Society & the Economy' and, 'Supporting the Research Community' and how this will help ensure the proposed project is successful.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

If there have been changes to the applicants involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and provide explanation (e.g., change of lead applicant, addition of new co-applicants, loss of co-applicants).

### **Co-funding Partner Overview (upload, max. 1 page per partner)**

Applicants should include an overview of the co-funding partner(s) (industry, charity and other partners, as applicable) involved in the proposed partnership. The overview should include:

- A brief description of the organisation (including legal definition such as e.g., commercial for-profit, semi-state), its size, area of activity etc.
- Details of each co-funding partner's motivations for engaging.
- A brief description of the role of the partner and how they will engage in this research programme.
- Details of their specific contributions to the programme, including co-development of the research programme, financial contributions and otherwise.
- How the collaboration will jointly benefit the academic and co-funding partner.

Information provided in this section should provide assurance that research that involves a collaboration with an industry party, complies with the definition of "effective collaboration", as per section 2.4.

#### If applying for second-term funding:

If there have been changes to the co-funding partners involved compared with the original first-term Partnership project, please highlight this and explain reasoning.

### **Education and Public Engagement (max. 5 pages)**

Outline a high-level plan for Education and Engagement, including vision and objectives for the EPE Programme. You should identify your target audiences, the activities to be delivered and the outputs expected. Describe your objectives for EPE and how they will influence the research programme. Outline the staffing proposed, if applicable, and what expertise and resources will be required to deliver the programme. Outline any supports or resources available within your academic institution which could be utilised in the delivery of your EPE programme. Outline the role that the co-funder(s) will have in the planned EPE activities, if applicable.

If applying for second-term funding:

In addition to the above, applicants for second-term funding should outline if or how EPE was included in the first term funding award and describe how this second term of funding will build upon previous work in this area and how learnings will be applied.

**Impact (max. 10 pages)**

Outline the potential economic and societal impact and value to Ireland expected to arise from the partnership. The statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language and be as specific and comprehensive as possible. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated. The statement should include reference to the timeframe (short-term, medium-term or longer-term) of the impact and its scale (national, international).

See section 3 for further information on SFI's definition of impact and composing the impact statement.

If applying for second-term funding:

Describe how this project builds on the impact realised as part of the original first-term Partnership award.

**Intellectual Property (IP) (max. 2 pages)**

Applicants should include as much detail as possible on the relevant Intellectual Property (IP) landscape surrounding the research in question, which should detail any background IP that will be introduced to the project. A plan for management of all IP relating to the partnership project must be provided which should be in accordance with national guidelines, in particular 'Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019'<sup>88</sup> and must comply with State aid legislation.

**Research Infrastructure (max. 5 pages)**

Describe the infrastructure, facilities, services and space to be provided by the Research Body/Bodies. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the Research Body.

**Budget**

The **Budget Tables** for completion and upload by the applicant(s) are located in **Appendix VI – Budget Templates**. Please copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document. See Section 2.5 for details on eligible costs.

- **Total Research Programme Budget:** a total budget for the research programme, including both the SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment, separated out by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Total Requested SFI Budget:** a breakdown of the requested SFI budget contribution separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Breakdown of SFI Requested Budget:** a detailed breakdown of the requested SFI budget contribution in each of the areas of staff, equipment, materials and travel.

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf>

- **Total Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment:** a budget for the total Co-Funding Partner commitment to the research programme separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel.
- **Breakdown of Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment (Direct Costs):** a detailed breakdown of the Co-Funding Partner contribution in each of the areas of staff, equipment, materials and travel.

Note that the financial commitments identified in these tables should be in accordance with and supported by the commitments provided by the industry partners in their letters of support.

[In addition, applicants are required to complete the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme webpage, the completed Excel budget is uploaded to SESAME in the Budget upload section.]

### **Budget Justification (max. 5 pages)**

The budget justification is the narrative explanation of the budget. It helps SFI and reviewers to evaluate whether the budget requested is reasonable. It should clearly explain why requested eligible costs are necessary for the proposed research programme and how they have been calculated. The budget justification should be inclusive of both the SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) budget so that the budget spend for the entire project is justified. General guidance on completing the budget justification can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

## 18 Appendix VI: Budget Templates

### Total Research Programme Budget (SFI and Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment, Direct Costs)

CATEGORY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
Staff					
Equipment					
Materials					
Travel					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

### Total SFI Requested Budget (Direct Costs)

CATEGORY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
Staff					
Equipment					
Materials					
Travel					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

### Breakdown of SFI Requested Budget (Direct Costs)

STAFF	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

\*Indicate exact level for each post

EQUIPMENT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

MATERIALS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

TRAVEL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

**Total Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment (Direct Costs)**

CATEGORY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
Staff					
Equipment					
Materials					
Travel					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

**Breakdown of Co-Funding Partner(s) Commitment (Direct Costs)**

STAFF	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

\*Indicate exact level for each post

EQUIPMENT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

MATERIALS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

TRAVEL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>					

## 19 Appendix VII: Letter of Support Co-Funding Contribution Table

CO-FUNDING PARTNER "X" CONTRIBUTIONS					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
Cash Contribution					
Staff In-Kind Contribution					
Equipment In-Kind Contribution					
Other In-Kind Contribution (provide details)					
<b>TOTAL</b>					