



## US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme

### FAQs on the Partnership with the U.S. National Science Foundation

*updated 27 July 2020*

#### I. GENERAL

##### 1. What is the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme?

The purpose of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme is to foster an increase in collaborative R&D among researchers from the United States (US), Northern Ireland (NI), and the Republic of Ireland (RoI) that will generate innovation and lead to improvements in society. Under this programme, Principal Investigators (PI) from the US, RoI, and NI collaborate to submit a single, joint “tri-partite” proposal. There must be at least one PI from each jurisdiction on the single proposal. The US PI is responsible for submitting that single proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF). Each funding partner supports the PI from their respective jurisdictions.

##### 2. Who are the partner agencies?

Partner agencies are the [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) in the US, [Science Foundation Ireland](#) (SFI) in the Republic of Ireland and the [Department for the Economy](#) (DfE) in Northern Ireland.

##### 3. Which thematic areas are covered under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme - NSF submissions?

- Sensors & Sensor Networks
- Nanoscale Science and Engineering
- Telecommunications
- Energy & Sustainability
- Cybersecurity (*new theme*)

##### 4. What is the benefit of submitting a proposal under the US-Ireland R&D partnership programme?

The US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme allows collaboration among PIs from across the US, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland through a single proposal that will go through a single review at a single funding agency (NSF). This single proposal-single review approach eliminates uncertainty that can arise from multiple review processes at multiple funding agencies. It allows for collaborative projects to be supported through a leveraging of funds, thereby forging or strengthening research partnerships to address research challenges that will benefit from an international team approach.

**5. Do US-Ireland R&D Partnership proposals have a competitive advantage with the NSF calls?**

US-Ireland R&D Partnership proposals compete head-to-head with 'non-US-Ireland partnership' proposals submitted to the same NSF programme or call. There is no separate review for proposals submitted under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme. The competitive advantage comes from the additive nature of the collaboration, international opportunities for workforce development, as well as the leveraged funds from other jurisdictions. It is important for PIs to specify in the proposal title and introduction to the proposal that the application is being submitted under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme and to explain in the proposal the value added of the partnership to ensure NSF reviewers have full and complete information.

**6. Is the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme currently open to proposal submission?**

Yes. Within SFI and DfE, it is a rolling call. RoI and NI applicants who are eligible must send a mandatory Intention to Submit form to the relevant funding agencies as well as a close-to-final draft proposal at deadlines specified in Section 6. (Submission process) of the [US-Ireland R&D Partnership Guidance document](#).

Within NSF, proposals submitted under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme must be submitted to a specific NSF funding program or opportunity that addresses one of the five Programme topics listed FAQ #3. Some NSF program have recently moved to no-deadline calls. US PIs are strongly encouraged to contact the relevant NSF program manager for the program to which the proposal will be submitted to ascertain the details of specific calls, deadlines, and submission procedures and to confirm eligibility/suitability of potential proposals. PIs are also encourages to contact the program manager for Ireland in the [NSF Office of International Science and Engineering](#).

**7. Where can I find information on NSF funding programs open to the US-Ireland Programme?**

NSF funding programs and points of contact for the US-Ireland Programme can be found at [NSF - Further Information on the US-Ireland R&D Programme](#)

**8. Is it necessary to have a PI from each jurisdiction on a proposal?**

Yes, there must be at least one PI each from the US, RoI and NI who come together to write a single proposal. One of the key objectives of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme is to encourage the development of three-way, trans-national and collaborative merit-reviewed research projects.

**9. How do I go about finding research partners in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the US?**

RoI: as a first step please check the SFI researcher database on the SFI webpage: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/researcher-database/>

NI: Contact the respective Research Officers at Queen's or Ulster University.

US: Current and past NSF awards, including in the topics covered under the US-Ireland Programme can be found in the NSF Award Search at <https://nsf.gov/awardsearch/>.

**10. Can anyone apply to this programme?**

Each PI must meet the eligibility requirements for their funding entity as described below:

For US PIs please refer to the eligibility requirements for the individual program or call. More information is available at: [NSF - Further Information on the US-Ireland R&D Programme](#)

For RoI PIs there are a number of eligibility criteria. Please consult the call documents on the [SFI US-Ireland R&D Partnership webpage](#).

For NI PIs, please see [Guidance for ROI & NI applicants for submission of Tri-Partite Proposals to NSF which details the eligibility requirements](#).

**11. What are the eligibility criteria for a co-PI?**

The **eligibility criteria for a co-PI is the same as for the lead PI** – see question above. Please note only one US-Ireland application per PI/co-PI may be under review at SFI at any one time.

**12. I am a researcher who has an Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation award (CFTD) for 300k. Am I eligible to apply to the US-Ireland programme?**

Unfortunately, Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund Technology Development (CFTD) awards do not satisfy the SFI eligibility criteria for an internationally peer reviewed research award as these awards do not solely engage international peer reviewers.

**13. Can the partner in Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland be an SME/ industry?**

No, the RoI and NI partners have to be from eligible research bodies.

**14. Can a PI on an existing US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme project apply for a second project?**

If an applicant has been successful in securing a US-Ireland award, s/he will not be entitled to apply for a second award until the last 18 months of his/her first award.

**15. Is it possible to apply for two awards at the same time?**

No. SFI and DfE will not accept a second application whilst the first application is still under review.

**16. Is it possible to apply for two awards at the same time, but one project being submitted to NSF and one – to NIH?**

At present SFI will not accept a second application to a different US agency whilst the first application is still under review. Applicants based in NI should contact DfE and HSC R&D for advice.

**17. How do I find out about upcoming workshops or webinars promoting the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme?**

Subscribe to SFI e-alerts on the SFI homepage [www.sfi.ie](http://www.sfi.ie)

## **II. AVAILABLE FUNDING**

**1. What level of funding is available under the US-Ireland Partnership Programme?**

For US PIs, the level of funding depends on the program to which the proposal is submitted. Information on NSF programmes is available at: [NSF - Further Information on the US-Ireland R&D Programme](#)

For RoI PIs, the budget for full applications has been capped at €350K direct costs for a 3-5 year award.

For NI PIs, applications to DfE-Invest Northern Ireland for total costs can be up to £300K for a 3-5 year duration.

Regardless of jurisdiction, the funding sought should be commensurate with the work proposed and of an appropriate scale relative to the other partners given their respective roles in the project.

## **2. What is funded under the US-Ireland Partnership Programme? Where can I find information about eligible costs?**

US PIs should refer to the NSF [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) for general information on what may or may not be funded through NSF. Additional guidelines and specifics, including the level of funding, can be found in individual program announcements or other calls.

For RoI PIs, SFI does not fund the salary of grant applicant/co-applicant. Please note that for projects that are three years in duration requests for contributions towards PhD stipends and fees are not permitted under this programme. For further guidance on eligible costs please see SFI Grant Budget Policy <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/>

NI PIs should refer to Grant Funding Policy. <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/US-Ireland-R-and-D-Partnership-Programme-Budget-Policy.pdf>

## **3. If proposals are successful, does the funding come from the NSF?**

If a proposal is successful, NSF will fund the US PI(s) only. Funding for NI PI(s) comes from DfE and funding for RoI PI(s) comes from SFI.

## **4. Is there funding for the salary of lead or co-PI?**

Neither SFI nor DfE fund the salary of grant applicant/co-applicant.

## **5. Are overheads included in SFI budgets?**

For the SFI budget request – overheads are not included and should not be included in the requested budget to SFI – Direct Costs only (max €350k SFI budget request)

# **III. SUBMISSION PROCESS**

## **1. What is the submission process for the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme?**

- US, RoI, and NI PIs identify an opportunity to collaborate on a topic within the remit of NSF, SFI, and DfE.
- The US PI, with the RoI and NI PIs, discusses the idea with the cognisant NSF program manager for the NSF program or call to which the proposal will be submitted to ensure suitability.

- RoI and NI PIs notify SFI and DfE Ireland, respectively, of their intention to prepare and submit a proposal via an Intention to Submit form.
- RoI and NI PIs submit a “close-to-final” proposal to SFI and DfE, respectively, in advance of the US PI submitting the final proposal to NSF. RoI and DfE use the “close-to-final” proposals to check the budget and the broad approach (the detailed merit review of the final proposal is conducted later at NSF).
- Should SFI and DfE approve of the “close-to-final” proposal, each will prepare a Funding Commitment Letter (FCL). This letter is an upfront guarantee that SFI and DfE will fund the RoI and NI components of the project, respectively, should the final proposal be recommended for award through NSF. It contains details of the team of PIs, the title of the proposal and the amount of funding committed by SFI and DfE. The US PI submits these letters with the final proposal to NSF. In addition, a copy of each letter is sent to the cognisant NSF program manager as assurance that SFI and DfE funding will be provided. SFI coordinates the communication of SFI and DfE to NSF. InterTradeIreland is also copied on this communication.
- The US PI submits the final proposal to NSF for merit review. The full review process can take 6 months. Proposals submitted under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme are reviewed along with proposals submitted outside of the programme.
- NSF communicates the outcome of the merit review to the US PI. The US PI communicates the result to the RoI and NI PIs, who inform SFI and DfE, respectively.

#### IV. INTENTION TO SUBMIT FORM

##### 1. Who needs to complete the Intention to Submit form?

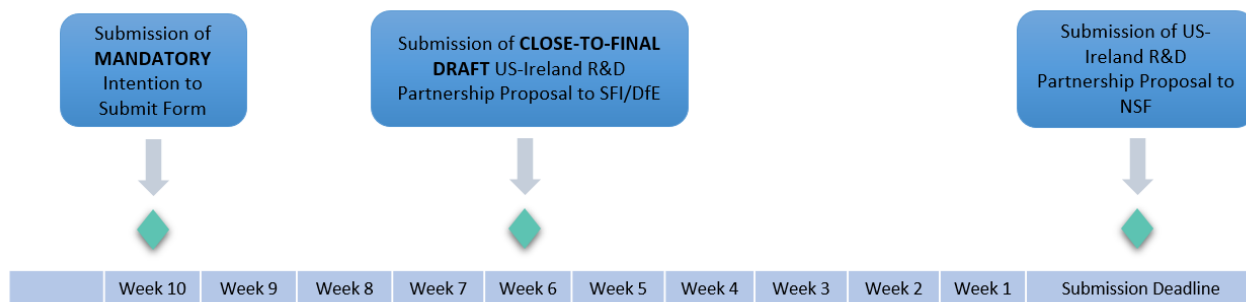
RoI and NI PIs are required to submit a mandatory “Intention to Submit” form to [USIreland@sfi.ie](mailto:USIreland@sfi.ie) and [USIreland@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:USIreland@economy-ni.gov.uk) at least 10 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline for NSF calls with a fixed deadline, and by either of the following deadlines for NSF calls with no fixed deadline: 1<sup>st</sup> of February; 1<sup>st</sup> of June and 1<sup>st</sup> of October. Please see further information here: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/us-ireland-rd-partnership/>

##### 2. Do all lead applicants and co-applicants have to complete the Intention to Submit form if applying to the NSF?

The applicants from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have to complete an ‘Intention to submit’ form which must be submitted by the institution’s Research Office to the relevant funding agency on behalf of the applicant. For example, if there is more than one RoI applicant proposing to participate in a US-Ireland proposal to the NSF, the Intention to Submit form must include relevant details for all such applicants. Submission of the Intention to Submit Form is mandatory for all RoI and NI applications under the US-Ireland programme to the National Science Foundation (NSF). Draft proposals to the NSF will only be accepted from applicants who have submitted an Intention to Submit form in advance of specified deadline.

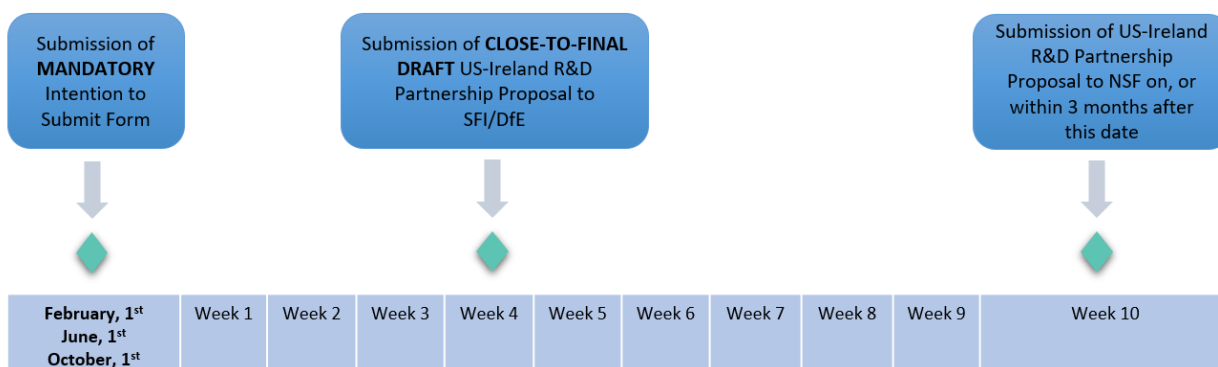
##### 3. When are Intention to Submit forms due?

For NSF programs with a fixed call deadline, this form must be submitted by Research Institutions on behalf of Ireland and Northern Ireland lead proposers, respectively, at least 10 weeks in advance of the NSF full proposal submission deadline.



Please note that the above timelines are the **latest dates** for submission of forms/proposals

For NSF programs without a fixed call deadline, SFI and DfE will assess Intention to Submit forms triannually. Intention to Submit forms must be submitted by Research Institutions on behalf of Ireland and Northern Ireland lead proposers by one of the following deadlines: **1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1<sup>st</sup> of June and 1<sup>st</sup> of October.**



**4. Why does an intention to submit form need to be submitted to SFI and DfE in advance of the NSF submission deadline?**

While the information in the Intention to Submit form is not formally reviewed and applicants do not receive an approval notice, some queries regarding lead RoI/NI applicants' eligibility may be made at this stage, and the form is also critical for planning purposes.

**5. What needs to be included in the scientific abstract in the Intention to submit form?**

Please refer to the guidance/call document for further information.

**V. CLOSE-TO-FINAL DRAFT PROPOSAL**

**1. Why do I have to submit a draft of the proposal to SFI and DfE in advance of the NSF deadline?**

The purpose of this step is to ensure compliance of the research with remit of each agency, to assess the budget requested, and to confirm that the work proposed for each jurisdiction adds significant value so that the overall programme of research goes beyond what might be achieved by any one PI working alone supported only by national funding.

Tri-jurisdictional proposals must be pre-approved by SFI and DfE through this close-to-final proposal process before being submitted to NSF. SFI and DfE are required by NSF to ensure the eligibility of proposals under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme, and also of the proposed RoI and NI costs, prior to full submission to the NSF. For details of the pre-submission procedures, please see the appropriate Guidelines for Submission documents available on the [SFI](#) and [DfE](#) websites. It is also strongly recommended that you contact your Research Office to discuss your proposal well in advance of submitting the close-to-final proposal.

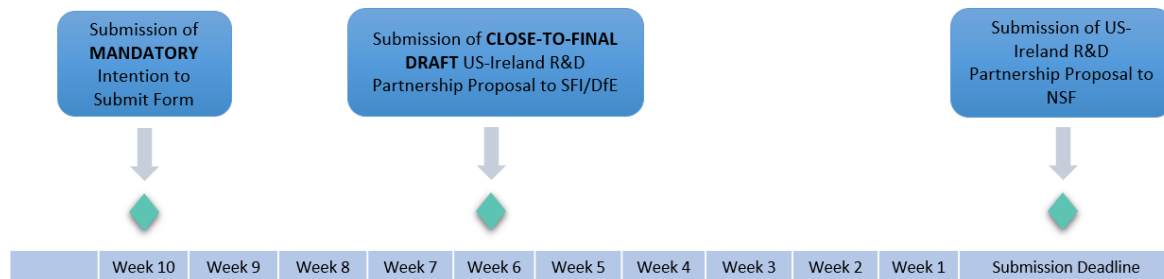
If SFI and DfE agree to support the proposal, a funding commitment letter is provided to the RoI or NI applicant, respectively, for inclusion in the full proposal to be submitted to NSF. This letter is also sent to the responsible person at NSF to indicate our commitment to this proposal should it be deemed fundable by the NSF peer-review process. Please ensure that all relevant appendices are included with the close-to-final draft proposal.

## 2. How do I submit to SFI and DfE?

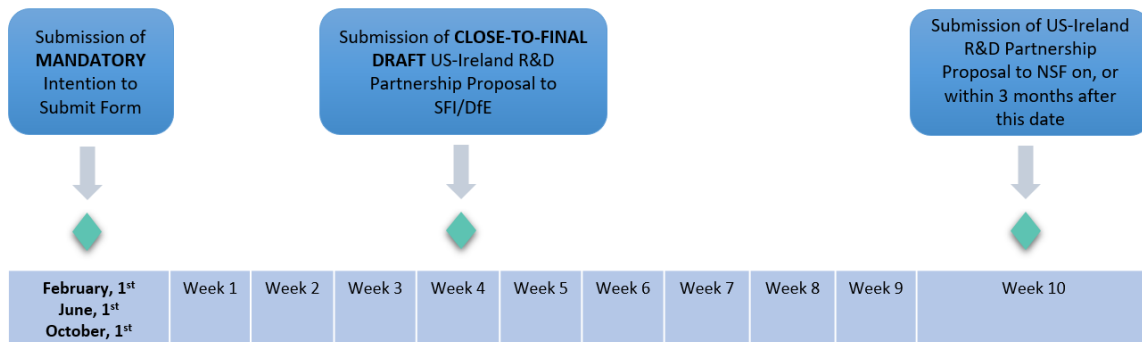
Convert all documents to a single pdf (only the cover sheet with signatures should be scanned) and submit by email to SFI at [usireland@sfi.ie](mailto:usireland@sfi.ie) and DfE at [usireland@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:usireland@economy-ni.gov.uk)

## 3. When are close-to-final draft proposals due?

For NSF programmes with a fixed call deadline, a draft of the “tri-partite” proposal must be simultaneously submitted to the SFI and DfE *at least* 6 weeks in advance of the NSF deadline or, *if applicable*, the deadline at the US University’s Research Office in advance of the NSF submission deadline (please refer to Section 7 for details).



For NSF programs without a fixed call deadline, SFI and DfE will assess close-to-final proposals triannually. Proposers must simultaneously submit identical copies of a draft of the “tri-partite” proposal to SFI and DfE *no later than 4 weeks after submitting an Intention to Submit Form* to one of the following deadlines: **1<sup>st</sup> of February**, **1<sup>st</sup> of June** and **1<sup>st</sup> of October**.



SFI and DfE will endeavour to inform the RoI and NI PIs at the earliest possible date whether the close-to-final draft proposal is approved or declined, but please bear in mind that this review takes 6 weeks. If there is a submission deadline at the US partners' institution research office, please ensure that the close to-final draft proposal is submitted to SFI and DfE at least 6 weeks in advance of this institutional research office deadline.

**4. What happens if I do not submit all documents as required by SFI by the specified deadline?**

Incomplete documents will be returned without review. Applications received after the SFI/DfE deadline prior to NSF submission will be returned without review.

**5. If I am successfully approved by SFI and DfE – what are the next steps?**

If approved by SFI and DfE for submission to NSF,

- SFI and DfE will send an approval notification email to the RoI and NI applicants, respectively including a Funding Commitment Letter stating SFI's and DfE's support of the project, for inclusion in the full proposal submission to the NSF
- SFI will also send both Funding Commitment Letters to the NSF
- The RoI and NI applicants may need to submit a revised budget and signed cover sheet to SFI and DfE if modifications have been made to the budget
- Once you have been approved by SFI and DfE, you can submit the final proposal to NSF. Details on NSF submission are provided in the Section VI of the FAQs
- RoI and NI PIs must send a copy of the final NSF-submitted proposal to SFI and DfE, respectively, with official email confirmation including NSF proposal number within 2 weeks following submission to NSF.

**6. What is the Funding Commitment Letter or FCL?**

This is a letter of commitment from SFI and DfE confirming their support of the proposed research. This letter must be included in the final joint application to the NSF. The letter includes details of the applicants as well as the amount of funding committed by each jurisdiction (RoI and NI) to their applicants should the application be approved for funding following international peer review process at the NSF.

**Please note** that in cases of submission to the NSF programs without a fixed call deadline, a Funding Commitment Letter will include a statement that such proposals must be submitted within 3 months



of the issue date. If proposal is not submitted to the NSF within this period, SFI and DfE may revoke their Funding Commitment Letters

**7. The title of the research proposal has changed - do I need to inform SFI or DfE?**

Yes, please inform SFI as soon as possible of any title change as the title is listed in the Funding Commitment Letter (see above) which needs to be accurate.

**8. We have heard that the proposal has not been approved for funding by the NSF. We would now like to resubmit to the next NSF call. Do I need to resubmit to SFI and DfE?**

Yes, all resubmissions need to be reviewed by SFI and DfE to ensure there are no substantial changes to the research programme. Please inform SFI and DfE as early as possible of your intention to resubmit (there is no requirement for a new Intention to Submit form submission if the proposed research programme is similar and the applicants' team has not changed). Please submit the resubmission to SFI and DfE alongside a statement of how the reviewers' comments were addressed at least 6 weeks in advance of the NSF or internal US university deadline (for NSF calls with a fixed deadline call), or at least 6 weeks in advance of anticipated NSF submission date (for NSF calls without a fixed call deadline). Once a resubmission has been reviewed and if approved, new Funding Commitment Letters with details of the new call will be issued by SFI and DfE to the RoI and NI PIs, respectively. This should be included in the joint application to the NSF.

**9. The US partners have decided to submit to a different call at NSF. This is different to the original call/programme details sent to SFI. What should RoI and NI PIs do?**

This is a delayed submission and a proposal will need to be reviewed to ensure there are no substantial changes.

Please submit the proposal to SFI and DfE at least 6 weeks in advance of the NSF or internal US university deadline (for NSF calls with a fixed deadline call), or at least 6 weeks in advance of anticipated NSF submission date (for NSF calls without a fixed call deadline). Once a submission has been reviewed and if approved, new Funding Commitment Letters with details of the new call will be issued by SFI and DfE to the RoI and NI PIs, respectively. This should be included in the joint application to the NSF.

**10. When do I need to send the resubmission/delayed application to SFI?**

**All** resubmissions and delayed applications are required to be submitted to SFI *at least 6 weeks* prior to any US partner institution/NSF deadlines for NSF calls with a fixed deadline, and at least 6 weeks in advance of anticipated NSF submission date for NSF calls without a fixed deadline. This is the responsibility of the RoI partner and no early notifications of the outcome of the SFI/DfE review are possible.

**VI FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TO NSF**

**1. Who submits the final proposal and to which funding agency?**

The US PI is responsible for submitting the final proposal to the NSF on behalf of all partners.

**2. Is there a requirement to submit a full proposal to SFI and DfE?**

Within 2 weeks following submission to NSF, RoI and NI PIs must send a copy of the final proposal to SFI and DfE, respectively, together with official email confirmation including NSF proposal number.

**3. When are final proposals due?**

The due date varies depending on the NSF programme or call to which the proposal will be submitted. Some of the NSF programmes have moved to having no fixed call deadlines.

Information on NSF programmes is available here: <https://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

**4. What should be included in the final proposal to NSF?**

In general, proposals submitted under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme should address the value added of the US-RoI-NI collaboration, why such collaboration is beneficial versus a single-nation project, and contributions of the three jurisdictions.

The title of the proposal to NSF should indicate “US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme.” The RoI and NI investigators should be included as “non-funded senior personnel.” A biographical sketch for each of these individuals should be provided in the “Biographical Sketches” section of the proposal with a format that conforms to the NSF PAPPG guidelines. “Current and Pending Support” information does not have to be provided for RoI and NI investigators. However, since this is a required section of an NSF proposal, upload a document that states “RoI and NI Investigators - Current and Pending Support information not required” for each RoI and NI investigator designated as senior personnel. A “Results of Prior Support” Section is also NOT required for the RoI and NI personnel. The proposal to NSF should only include the U.S. funds requested from NSF on the NSF Budget form. A detailed breakdown of funding requested from SFI and DfE should be included as a Supplementary Document. The Budget Justification should address the full project budget combined (U.S., RoI, and NI funding items).

US PIs should refer to the NSF [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#) for information on submitting a proposal to NSF. Additional instructions may be given in announcements for individual programs or calls to which proposals are submitted. PIs must follow these additional program- or call-specific instructions.

Information on individual NSF program announcements or other calls is available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

**5. How do the PIs indicate to the NSF reviewers that RoI and NI components will be funded by SFI and DfE, respectively?**

You may include a general statement at the beginning of the budget justification, make a note in the project description where appropriate (and the Facilities and Other Equipment section), and/or make a reference to the supplementary documents, whether the FCLs and project descriptions as submitted to RoI and NI are included.

**6. I understand the instructions for “regular” proposal submission to NSF, but are there additional requirements under the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme?**

Yes, please follow the additional instructions below for information/materials to be included in the final proposal submission to NSF:

- Funding Commitment Letters should be included as Supplemental Documents.
- The budget for the RoI and NI components of the project should be included as Supplemental Documents.
- Include the version of the project description that was submitted to SFI and DfE as a single copy document.
- Under Senior Personnel (non-funded) list the RoI and NI PIs. This will allow you to submit required biosketches for them, as well.
- Current and Pending Funding for the RoI and NI PIs can be listed as \$0, unless they happen to have funding from a U.S. entity, in which case list the funding amount.

Include Collaborators and Other Affiliation (COA) Information for the RoI and NI PIs. This information allows for an easier review. Listing the RoI and NI PIs as Senior Personnel (non-funded) will prompt inclusion of their COA information.

**7. Is a post-doctoral mentoring plan needed in the final proposal submitted to the NSF if funding for postdoctoral fellows is requested only from SFI and/or DfE?**

No, there is no such a requirement, however, you may wish to provide one which may be helpful to reviewers. If you do not include it, you may consider including a statement noting that the postdoctoral researchers for the project will not be funded by NSF, so no postdoctoral mentoring plan is required.