

SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Spokes Programme 2022



Call for Submission of Proposals

Key dates:

The Spokes Programme is run as a rolling call. Full proposal 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.

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1 Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) 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* 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 in Delivering Today aims for the research we fund to make the greatest possible difference for our society and economy. In support of this, SFI seeks to foster academia-industry interactions by building strategic partnerships with industry to perform cutting-edge, industry-informed STEM research. A key objective of *Shaping our Future* is to grow and evolve the SFI enterprise-facing programmes.

SFI Research Centres aim to exploit opportunities in science, engineering, and technology where the complexity of the research agenda requires the advantages of scope, scale, dynamism, synergy, duration, equipment, and facilities that a Centre can provide. The consolidation of research activities across higher education institutes in SFI Research Centres aims to create a critical mass of internationally leading researchers in strategic areas which become a key attractant to industry, laying the foundation for effective and productive academic and industrial partnerships. The SFI Spokes programme is a vehicle to enable the addition of new industrial and academic partners and projects to existing SFI Research Centres, allowing the Centre(s) to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities, and enhances the ability of SFI Research Centres to deliver significant economic and societal impact for Ireland. The Spokes programme also provides a vehicle to link together, in a meaningful and relevant way, SFI Research Centres, and helps to link researchers in partnerships across academia, industry and other co-funding partners, to address crucial research questions, contributing to Ireland's economy through fostering development of indigenous companies and attracting FDI, together with addressing research questions of national societal importance.

The Spokes programme serves to enhance the objectives of the Research Centres programme around research excellence with economic and societal impacts, leading to enhanced outputs for the centre(s) including diversified funding, commercialisation, education & public engagement and training, in addition to increasing the number of targeted projects within an existing SFI Research Centre.

The specific objectives of the SFI Spokes programme are:

- To support and incentivise SFI Research Centres to drive activity in a collaborative manner in areas of national strategic importance, both in the context of economic recovery and growth, as well as with a societal focus, to deliver tangible benefits for Ireland.
- To provide a mechanism to support multi-stakeholder partnerships of scale with SFI Research Centres, encompassing a variety of funding sources, enabling new industry, academic and other partners such as government bodies, charity and philanthropy to join a Research Centre, and to increase geographical involvement and engagement.

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- To provide a mechanism to drive cross-centre initiatives between the SFI Research Centres as well as with other national partnerships/centres in support of a more cohesive research ecosystem.
- To allow current SFI Research Centres to expand, evolve and build capabilities in line with emerging opportunities.
- To support joint collaborative research projects with industry.¹
- To improve SME engagement in SFI Research Centres and collaboration with academics and larger companies.
- To address gender imbalance at all levels within the SFI Research Centres.

The objectives of the Research Centres programme are also relevant to the Spokes programme, since all Spokes awards will become part of the existing Research Centres. Spokes proposals may be new projects with a co-funding partner(s) with whom the SFI Research Centre already collaborates with on a separate project, or they may be projects with new co-funding partners with whom the SFI Research Centre has never collaborated previously. **Spokes proposals may not, however, be existing projects that have already been funded as part of an SFI Research Centre or through other funding schemes, from SFI or other sources of funding.** It is important to note that whilst one of the objectives of the Spokes programme is to provide a mechanism to allow new co-funding partners to participate in a Research Centre, proposals submitted to the programme should represent a strategic development of the Research Centre's activities and should result in significant added value to the Research Centre's strategic objectives. In addition, SFI Spokes projects must exhibit outstanding research quality, intellectual rigour, and active collaboration.

Applications to the SFI Spokes Programme must fall within SFI's legal funding remit and must align with areas of strategic opportunity for Ireland, as outlined in the report of the refreshed Research Priority Areas 2018-2023.² Additionally, in line with SFI's 2025 strategy, Shaping Our Future³, consideration will be given to applications in emerging areas of major economic importance where Ireland has an opportunity to lead both in leveraging international funding (e.g., Horizon Europe) as well as in future industrial and economic development. Applicants must ensure that proposals align with, complement and add value to the current mission & activities of the SFI Research Centre(s) involved.

¹ The project must have the characteristics of an 'effective collaboration' as set out in paragraph 27 of the European Commission's Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) (the "Framework") and satisfy one of the conditions set out in paragraphs 28 and 29 (as appropriate) of the Framework. See also section 2.4 State aid and SFI Grant funding.

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

³ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

2 Programme Details

2.1 Remit

The legal remit⁴ 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. SFI funds in the research areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As outlined in Shaping Our Future 2025⁵, the Foundation is committed to continuing its focus on funding excellent science that will deliver strongly on impact, thus realising significant benefits for the Irish economy and Irish society. **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 in this call 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 2018-2023⁶ 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 General Eligibility

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

The Lead Applicant, who is the Centre Director of the lead Research Centre involved in the Spoke, will have overall responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of SFI.

The Spoke Leader is defined as the Scientific and Technical lead for the proposed Spoke and will have responsibility for the delivery of the objectives of the proposed Spoke. The Spoke Leader will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the award. The Spoke Leader will have a well-defined, critical and a continuing role in the proposed Spoke and will provide the leadership for the Spoke proposed in the application and for the duration of the award. The Spoke Leader may be a Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. Spoke Leader(s) will be designated as a Co-Applicant on a Spokes proposal. The Spoke Leader must meet the eligibility criteria detailed later in this document.

⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025-Shaping-Our-Future.pdf>

⁶ <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

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A Co-Applicant has a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed Spoke. A Co-Applicant would be expected to lead one or more Targeted Projects within the Spoke. For the purposes of eligibility, reviewing and monitoring, a Co-Applicant applying for funding under the Spokes programme will receive equal evaluation to the Lead Applicant and Spoke Leader and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives. There is no limit to the number of Co-Applicants but the number should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposed Spoke project. All Co-Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria detailed later in this document.

The Spokes programme operates under two application tracks:

- **Single-centre** – where 1 SFI Research Centre is involved.
- **Multi-centre** – where more than 1 SFI Research Centre is involved. For multi-centre Spoke applications, a lead centre must be nominated, and the Spoke Lead Applicant will be the Centre Director of the assigned lead centre. There is no limit to the number of SFI Research Centres that can be involved in a Spoke application.

2.3 Rolling Call

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

Applicants to the Spokes Programme must submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) prior to the submission of a full application. EoI submission is by invitation only and through SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system. Applicants who submit EoIs that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a full application which will be evaluated by international peer review.

Proposals submitted to the Spokes Call are expected to be characterised by their high level of strategic importance and urgency to both the Research Centre(s) and co-funding partners. The following should be noted regarding the evaluation of applications to the Spokes Call:

- Timing of the application submission is determined by the applicants and not SFI.
- SFI endeavours to fast-track the review process, where possible.
- Assessment of the proposal is on its own merit and not in competition with other proposals.

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 of SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).⁷

⁷ [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 \(europa.eu\)](#)

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Where a proposed programme of research involves a collaboration with an “undertaking”⁸ 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 (2014/C 198/01) (the “Framework”).⁹ 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.¹⁰

Recipients of Grant funding under SFI’s Spokes Programme are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration”, as per the aforementioned Framework, 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. Recipients of Grant funding must 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 Spokes Programme the form should be submitted by the Principal Investigator by email to spokes@sfi.ie. A download of the ICF and related guidance, inclusive of an FAQ document, can be found on the SFI website.¹¹

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.¹⁰

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

2.5 Funding

SFI will support a maximum of 50% of funding of the direct project costs. The co-funding partner(s) must commit to providing a minimum of 50% of the direct project costs in cash. 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).

Co-funding partners for Spoke applications are typically industry partners, but can also include sources such as funding from charities and philanthropic organisations. In addition, and where strongly justified, exchequer funding may be considered as part of the Spoke cost-share and this will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In such cases, the total exchequer funding should not exceed 50% (inclusive of the SFI contribution), except in exceptional cases where the exchequer co-funding partner

⁸ 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.

⁹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

¹⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/>

¹¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/ICF-FAQs.pdf>

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is co-creating and contributing to the research programme. In this exceptional case, it will still be the expectation that non-exchequer cash funding will be the primary contribution to the co-funding component.

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

The Spokes cost-share/budget will be incorporated into the budgets of the Research Centres, where applicable. This will depend on the Phase of the Research Centre, the funding model used (hybrid/standard) and will be in line with the agreed Research Centre cost-share guidelines issued by SFI. Where Spoke budgets are incorporated into the Research Centre, Centre Directors must ensure that the collective budget of their Research Centre (i.e., the SFI Research Centre award in addition to new SFI Spokes awards) achieves a minimum industry cost share requirement for their Research Centre.

For Spokes utilising a **hybrid funding**¹² mechanism, details on the contributions of the SFI Research Centre(s) budget towards the Spoke will be requested at EoI and Full Proposal stage. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that sufficient budget is available to deliver on the research programme proposed. The **total Spoke budget for hybrid models** will incorporate the following:

- SFI budget request through the Spoke award
- SFI Research Centre(s) budget allocation towards the Spoke
- Industry/co-funding partner cash contributions.

Co-funding partner in-kind contributions are welcomed and should also be detailed in the budget description but will not count towards the cash cost-share targets for the Spoke.

Please note, an indicative budget is a requirement of the EoI and this should outline which funding model will be utilised i.e., standard or hybrid. Should the SFI budget requirement increase following full development of the Spokes 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

¹² Hybrid funding refers to funding that leverages SFI contributions through the Spoke Programme, SFI Research Centre budget funding and contributions from co-funding partners. The cost-share for Spokes utilising hybrid funding incorporates three components: 1) SFI funding from Spoke grant; 2) SFI funding from existing Research Centre budgets and 3) co-funding partner cash contributions. In all cases, the total SFI contribution (SFI Spoke + Research Centre(s) contributions) must not exceed 50% of the total Spoke budget. Spokes funded through hybrid mechanisms will require a review of the entire Spoke application.

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all requested budgets must be strongly justified and prepared in accordance with the SFI Grant Budget Policy.¹³

2.6 Cost Share

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

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

- Partner scientists, engineers and technicians assigned to work on the Spokes research programme
- Student or faculty placements with industry partners¹⁴
- Equipment donations
- Access to, and use of, infrastructure housed within the industry partner premises
- Software
- Materials
- Data(sets)

Co-funding partner monies that have already been used as cost share, or are earmarked as cost share for any other Irish exchequer supports/projects (e.g. government department, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Irish Research Council supports etc.) may not be counted as cost share in Spokes applications. In cases where co-funding partner contributions exceed the minimum requirements, this should be reflected in a decreased budget request being made to SFI.

2.7 Budget

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the Spokes 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 Spoke award. All awards are made directly to the lead applicant's Research Body. Please also refer to the SFI General Terms and Conditions¹⁵ and the SFI Grant Budget Policy

i. Staff: Salaries and benefits

All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in the Staff section of the Grant Budget Policy¹⁶ and the associated SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting

¹³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

¹⁴ Must be in compliance with State Aid legislation as outlined in SFI State Aid guidance <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/>

¹⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

¹⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

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Scale.¹⁷ Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved by the relevant Research Office(s).

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

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

Contributions to salary for administrative & coordination support roles may be supported on awards where strongly justified and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. 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). Information should be provided on Research Centre(s) operations and administrative supports that will be provided to the Spoke. Further guidance is provided in the Grant Budget Policy. Please note that it is the expectation that Spoke awards are fully integrated to the Research Centre(s) and draw upon operations support from the associated centres.

ii. Equipment

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

iii. Materials and Consumables

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

iv. Travel

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

v. Ineligible Costs

Information regarding ineligible costs can be found in the Ineligible Costs section of SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

¹⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/FINAL-SFI-Team-Member-Salary-Scales.pdf>

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2.8 Overheads

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

2.9 Duration

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

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

2.10 Definitions

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| Lead Applicant | <p>The Lead Applicant is defined as the Research Centre Director of the SFI Research Centre submitting the Spokes application. The Lead Applicant will have overall responsibility for delivery of the objectives of the Research Centre and the Spokes project. In cases where a Spokes proposal involves more than one Research Centre, one of the Research Centres should be designated as the lead administrator of the Spokes proposal, and the associated Centre Director's details should be inputted in the Lead Applicant field.</p> <p>The Lead Applicant will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The Lead Applicant has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with SFI's General Terms and Conditions. The Lead Applicant, together with the Spoke Leader, will serve as the primary points of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the award.</p> |
| Spoke Leader | The Spoke Leader is defined as the Scientific and Technical lead for the proposed Spoke and will have responsibility for delivery of the objectives of |

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| | <p>proposed Spoke. The Spoke Leader will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the award, in conjunction with the Lead Applicant.</p> <p>The Spoke Leader will have a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed Spoke and will provide the leadership for the research proposed in the Spoke application for the duration of the award. The Spoke Leader may be a Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. Spoke Leader(s) will be designated as a Co-Applicant on a Spokes proposal.</p> <p>Spoke applications can only have one assigned Spoke Leader.</p> <p><i>In cases where the proposed Spoke Leader is not already part of the Research Centre, they should be designated a formal status within the host Research Centre upon funding of a Spokes proposal (e.g., Research Centre Co-PI or Funded Investigator). Research Centres should follow the process outlined on the SFI website in order to add new PIs and FIs to their Centre.</i></p> |
| Co-Applicant | <p>Co-Applicants will have well-defined, critical and continuing role(s) in the proposed Spoke programme. Co-Applicants may consist of the Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. There is no limit to the number of Co-Applicants but it should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposed Spoke project. All Co-Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria detailed later in this document.</p> <p><i>In cases where proposed Co-Applicants are not already part of the Research Centre, they should be designated a formal status within the Research Centre upon funding of a Spokes proposal (e.g., Research Centre Co-PI or Funded Investigator). Research Centres should follow the process outlined on the SFI website in order to add new PIs and FIs to their Centre.</i></p> |
| Academic Collaborator | <p>An academic collaborator may be an academic member of staff of an Irish or international Higher Education Institution; or a member of a relevant non-academic institution, such as a Government Agency, who is committed to providing a focused contribution to specific tasks within the Spokes work programme. Collaborators will serve under the direction of the Spoke Leader and may or may not receive funding through the award. Official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the award.</p> |
| Co-funding Collaborator | <p>A co-funding collaborator is the lead contact person within a co-funding partner contributing cash and/or in-kind costs to the Spoke research</p> |

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| | programme. Note that co-funding collaborators are not eligible to receive funding under this programme. |
| Co-funding Partner | <p>Co-funding partners for Spoke applications can be from industry, charities and philanthropic organisations. Typically co-funding partners make both a financial contribution as well as an intellectual contribution to the research programme of the Spoke. Co-funding partners for Spoke applications may also include government departments or state agencies.</p> <p>The co-funding partner is represented by its co-funding collaborator(s).</p> |
| Research Centre | A group funded under the SFI Research Centres Programme is referred to as an SFI Research Centre. |
| Spoke Budget | <p>The Spoke Budget is defined as the total budget for the Spoke programme of research. SFI will contribute a maximum of 50% cash to the Spoke Budget. Co-funding partners must contribute at least 50% cash to the Spoke Budget. For hybrid Spokes, the Spoke Budget incorporates SFI funding through the Spokes programme, SFI Research Centre budget contributions and co-funding partner cash contributions. Hybrid Spokes must meet the minimum 50% cash funding from co-funding partners.</p> <p>The Spoke Budget is considered to be direct costs only and does not include the SFI or industry contribution towards the overheads of the Research Body.</p> |
| Hybrid funding | <p>Hybrid funding refers to funding for a Spoke research programme which leverages SFI contributions through the Spoke Programme, SFI Research Centre budget funding and contributions from co-funding partners. The cost-share for Spokes utilising hybrid funding incorporates three components: 1) SFI funding from the Spoke award; 2) SFI funding from existing Research Centre budgets and 3) co-funding partner contributions. In all cases, the total SFI contribution (SFI Spoke + Research Centre(s) contributions) must not exceed 50% of the total Spoke budget. Spoke proposals applying for funding through a hybrid mechanism will require a review of the entire proposed Spoke research programme</p> |

2.11 Eligibility Criteria of Lead Applicant (Centre Director), Spoke Leader and Co-Applicants

The Lead Applicant is defined as the Research Centre Director of the SFI Research Centre submitting the Spoke application. The Lead Applicant will have overall responsibility for delivery of the objectives of the Research Centre and the Spokes project, in conjunction with the Spoke Leader. The Lead Applicant has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with SFI's General Terms and Conditions. The Lead

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Applicant, together with the Spoke Leader, will serve as the primary points of contact for SFI on the award, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the award.

The Spoke Leader will have a well-defined, critical and a continuing role in the proposed Spoke research programme. The nominated Spoke Leader will provide the leadership for the research proposed in the Spoke application for the duration of the award. The Spoke Leader may be a Centre Director, an existing Research Centre investigator or a new academic partner. The Spoke Leader will be designated as a Co-Applicant on a Spokes proposal.

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

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

The eligibility criteria presented below are minimum requirements only and it should be noted that the Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicants 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 Lead Applicant, including how the Lead Applicant meets the eligibility criteria for this call. A letter of support from the host Research Body of the Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(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, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(s) 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), *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 research space at the 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.

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Retired or Emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments; further details are available on the SFI website.¹⁸

It should be noted that Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader or Co-Applicant salary is not an eligible cost for the SFI Spokes Programme. Postdoctoral researchers, Research Fellows or other non-independent researchers are not eligible to be a Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader or Co-Applicant. 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 Starting Investigator Research Grant), due to the time commitment required.

PhD Duration

The Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicants must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least three years at the time of the submission of the EoI.

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.

Details on SFI's PhD equivalence policy can be found on the SFI website.¹⁹

Senior-Author Publications

The Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicants 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 that 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.

¹⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

¹⁹ 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 are required in their CV 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.

Supervision

Furthermore, the Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicants are expected to have the experience, capability, and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

2.12 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.²⁰ The term 'Research Body' and 'Institution' are equivalent and interchangeable in SFI documentation and in the SFI SESAME system.

3 Research Impact

Government Budget Allocations for Research & Development (GBARD) in 2020 was €866.8m which marks an increase of 8.1% in expenditure over 2019. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research. In the current climate of constrained public spending there is an even greater focus on demonstrating the economic, social and cultural benefits of publicly funded scientific research to wider society if this level of funding is to be maintained.

In addition to the requirement for scientific excellence, applications considered under the Spokes 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 Statements.

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

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3.1 Defining Impact

Impact can be described as the *demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to 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 Spokes 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.

3.2 Impact Statement

An **Impact Statement** is a requirement at Expression of Interest and Full Proposal stage. 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.

Applicants are encouraged to consult [Shaping Our Future 2025](#), [Innovation 2020](#) and the [Project Ireland 2040](#) strategy documents before writing their impact statement. For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the [SFI website](#). A [webinar](#) is also available. Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the Impact sections of the Spokes proposal.

The statement should be as specific and comprehensive as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. It should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language. 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. In assessing various potential economic and societal 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 SFI Research Centre(s) and the co-funding partner(s) benefit from this research?**
- **How will the host (and partner) institution(s) benefit from this research?**
- **Who are the other potential beneficiaries?**
- **What will be the benefit to Ireland?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from the research be realised?**

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

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- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the outputs & capabilities of the SFI Research Centre(s)?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the R&D activities and product pipeline of the co-funding partner(s), and how will the co-funding partner(s) enable increased impact? What supports are they offering? Have routes to commercialisation been considered?²¹
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the Irish economy, competitiveness and development and the likelihood of the research to lead to patents, licenses or spin-outs?
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on the education, training and career of Ireland's students and research team members? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education, e.g. facilities and instrumentation? It is important to highlight the added value that will be provided from the training provided under the Spoke award.
- What is the potential impact of the proposed Spoke on society and the quality of life of Ireland's citizens?
- Does the proposed Spoke link in other Research Centres and/or investigators and/or industrial collaborators in an integrated and efficient way? What are the anticipated interface benefits?
- Are there potential beneficiaries within the private sector, public sector, third level sector or any others (e.g., professional or practitioner groups, charities or patient groups)?

For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information is available on the SFI website²². Applicants are also advised to review the peer review criteria in Section 5 for guidance on how their impact statement will be evaluated.

4 SESAME

Expression of Interest and Full Proposal applications to the Spokes 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

²¹ Letters of support must be included from the industry partner(s), and may be included from other bodies and individuals who will be directly involved in supporting the work described in the application but not listed as official 'industry' partners. Letters should provide full details of the intended intellectual and financial (if relevant) input. Letters which do not demonstrate direct involvement will be removed from the proposal.

²² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

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internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result, to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

The SESAME system is accessed here: <https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide for more detailed information.²³

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

4.1 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 & Conditions²⁴, and the SFI Grant Budget Policy²⁵.

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.

²³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

²⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/SFI-Board-approved-GTCs-2019.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy-November-2021.pdf>

4.2 ORCID iD

ORCID²⁶ provides a unique identifier for researchers, which can then be linked to their research works across different platforms. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

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

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

5 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant to participate in the peer review process. SFI reserves the right to refuse to grant permission to an applicant to submit a proposal to the SFI Spokes Programme if it deems the applicant to be ineligible or uncompetitive. Full proposals received to the Spokes Call without prior written approval will be returned without review.

SFI is a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment](#) (DORA).²⁷ As such, SFI is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. 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 impact factors. SFI has developed a DORA-compliant CV template to assist with compliance to DORA principles. Furthermore, in the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,²⁸ SFI will positively consider where there is a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible.

5.1 Expression of Interest Review

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

- Quality, significance, and relevance of experience and achievements of the academic team (Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader, Co-Applicant(s) and Collaborators).

²⁶ <http://orcid.org/>

²⁷ <https://sfdora.org/read/>

²⁸ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

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- 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.
- The strategic benefit of the collaborative project to the Research Centre(s) and co-funding partner(s), including evidence for co-creation of the research programme.
- The potential economic and societal impact expected to arise from the co-funded initiative.
- Quality, significance, and relevance of the vision/high level plan for Education and Public Engagement.
- Research Centre(s) performance to date (including cost-share results and other KPIs)

5.2 Full Proposal Review

Applicants who submit EoIs that are reviewed positively by SFI will be invited to submit a full proposal which will be evaluated by international peer review. In accordance with the international peer review process used to evaluate proposals submitted to SFI, all *eligible* proposals will be forwarded to international experts for evaluation. SFI reserves the right to return applications without review where the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria (or where the research programme does not fit with the remit of the Foundation). SFI staff will solicit reviews of proposals from at least three (3) peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research who may be from academic, or industrial settings. SFI may also elect to include international experts in Education and Public Engagement for Spokes proposals. The applicant may specify **up to** three referees or companies who should **not** be approached to act as reviewers for the application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. SFI shall not refer the application to these reviewers. Otherwise, selection of reviewers shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

Reviews received from peers will be collated and forwarded to applicants. Applicants will then be afforded the opportunity to submit a response to reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to respond (advance notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants). This response document will be considered by SFI alongside the proposal and postal reviews in making a funding decision. SFI reserves the right to implement further peer-review steps as part of the overall review procedure in advance of making a funding decision.

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

- **Quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant Team'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**

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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 and Spoke Leader are appropriate, including their track record in leadership and research management
- Whether the expertise and experience of the Co-Applicant(s), 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 the 'Academic Team' section of the Research Programme (See Section 12 Full Proposal Template).
- **Quality, significance, novelty and strategic relevance of the proposed research** 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, etc
- **Alignment/value-add of the proposed project(s) with the current objectives of the SFI Research Centre(s)** This section should include information on the alignment and value-add to the Research Centre(s) and also reference to performance of the Centre to date
- **Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in 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
- **Quality, significance, and relevance of the vision/high level plan for Education and Public Engagement**
- **Quality of the proposed business and commercialisation plan** and its likelihood for success

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The identity of experts who conduct the postal review shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicant. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international reviewers involved in the review process.

Advance Review

SFI reserves the right to schedule a pre-award review in advance of a funding decision. The format for such a review will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This will be particularly relevant in the case of larger awards and/or where discrepancies arise among postal reviews of the Spoke application.

6 Expression of Interest (Eoi) Application Procedure

Applicants to the Spokes Call must submit an Expression of Interest to SFI through SESAME. Potential applicants to the programme should contact SFI (spokes@sfi.ie) to discuss their proposed programme of research and any queries they may have *prior to submission*. The Eoi application template will be made available to the Lead Applicant (Lead Research Centre Director) following these discussions.

The Eoi submission should include the following information:

6.1 Eligibility Questionnaire

Applicants will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the eligibility criteria for the SFI Spokes 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. After entering the proposal title and clicking 'Save Draft', a Proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME. Additional fields now appear in the SESAME application form.

Single- or Multi-Centre

Please select whether the Spoke Application is a single- or multi-centre application.

Name of Research Centre(s)

Please select the SFI Research Centre(s) involved.

Name of Spoke Leader

Please state the name of the proposed Spoke Leader. See section 2.10 for definition of Spoke Leader.

Duration of Grant requested (in months)

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

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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.

Total SFI Funding Request (in €)

Enter the total requested **SFI** budget in direct costs. 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).

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

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

6.3 Resubmission

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 reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details.²⁹

6.4 Research Alignment

Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)

This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns with SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.³⁰

²⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

³⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

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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.

Lead Applicant DORA-compliant CV (Upload)

A CV of the Lead Applicant must be completed and uploaded, using the DORA-compliant 'SFI Spokes Programme Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant CV Template' provided on the SFI Spokes Programme website³¹, (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

This template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications is not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

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 Spoke Leader Details

*note that the Spoke Leader will have a designated Co-Applicant status on SESAME.

To add a Co-Applicant(s) to a proposal, click the 'add' Co-Applicant(s) 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.

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.

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 Spoke Leader.

Spoke Leader DORA-compliant CV (Upload)

A CV of the Spoke Leader must be completed and uploaded, using the DORA-compliant 'SFI Spokes Programme Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant CV Template' provided on the SFI Spokes Programme website, (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

This template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of

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

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publications are not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

6.7 Co-Applicant Details

To add a Co-Applicant(s) to a proposal, click the 'add' Co-Applicant(s) 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.

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.

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 DORA-compliant CV (Upload)

A CV of the Co-Applicant must be completed and uploaded, using the DORA-compliant 'SFI Spokes Programme Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant CV Template' provided on the [SFI Spokes Programme website](#), (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

This template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

6.8 Collaborator Details

To add 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'.

CVs are not required for Official Collaborators.

6.9 Programme Document (Upload)

Applicants should note that there is a template for the EoI Programme Document in Section 11 and there are variations to the template depending on whether the application is a Single-centre or Multi-centre Spoke.

The Programme Document templates are also available for download from the Spokes Programme webpage.

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The completed Programme Document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF in the Programme Documents upload section.

6.10 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 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.

7.1 Eligibility Questionnaire

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

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

Single- or Multi-Centre

Please select whether the Spoke Application is a single- or multi-centre application.

Name of Research Centre(s)

Please select the SFI Research Centre(s) involved.

Name of Spoke Leader

Please state the name of the proposed Spoke Leader. See section 2.10 for definition of Spoke Leader.

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.

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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.

Requested start date

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

Total SFI Funding Request (in €)

Enter the total requested SFI budget in direct costs.

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).

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

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

7.3 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 reviewers. See SFI's Resubmission policy for further details.³²

7.4 Research Alignment

Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 500 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.³³

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

³² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

³³ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

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Priority Areas 2018-2023³⁴). 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.

7.5 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 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 DORA-compliant CV (Upload)

A CV of the Lead Applicant must be completed and uploaded, using the DORA-compliant ‘SFI Spokes Programme Applicant, Spoke Leader, and Co-Applicant CV Template’ provided on the [SFI Spokes Programme website](#), (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on “Save Draft” after upload.

This template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

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.

³⁴ <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

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7.6 Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant Details

To add a Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(s) to a proposal, click the 'add' Co-Applicant(s) 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.

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 the Spoke Leader or 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 Spoke leader / Co-Applicant, to the proposed research programme. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested.

Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(s) DORA-compliant CV (Upload)

A CV of the Co-Applicant(s) must be completed and uploaded, using the DORA-compliant SFI Spokes Programme Applicant, Spoke Leader, and Co-Applicant CV Template' provided on the [SFI Spokes Programme website](#), (upload; max. 5 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload.

This template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

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 Spoke Leader/Co-Applicant(s).

7.7 Research Funding

The Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader 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 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').

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- When adding new entries, please complete the requested details for each research funding entry. Fields coloured red are mandatory. When adding funding to the application from your SESAME profile, please check the information is up-to-date, including the status of the funding (pending, current or expired).
- For each grant listed, provide a brief description of the research. Applicants should also indicate their percentage time commitment to these other projects, as a function of 100% of their total working time.
- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.
- If the applicant is solely a collaborator on a collaborative research project, the grant should not be included here.
- The portion of research funding claimed in an applicant's name must be an accurate and a fair reflection of their responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. SFI may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.
- This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with extremely large numbers of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. The most prestigious grants and those most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has no expired, current or pending funding. The Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(s) all 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, within this textbox, under the sub-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.

7.8 Official Collaborator Details

To add 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'.

CVs are not required for Official Collaborators.

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7.9 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.

7.10 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 webpage³⁵ and in SFI's 'Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues'.³⁶

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'.³⁷

³⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

³⁶ [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)

³⁷ [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)

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7.11 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),³⁸ all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research. Please consult the 'Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues'³⁹ 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 your CV, should you choose to highlight.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

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

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

7.12 Programme Documents (Upload)

Applicants should note that there are there are variations to the Programme Document template depending on whether the application is a Single-centre or Multi-centre Spoke. See Section 12 for more details.

The Programme Document templates are also available for download from the Spokes Programme webpage.

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

7.13 Budget Template in SESAME (SFI Request only)

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

³⁸ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

³⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

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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**. 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 2.11. 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 8 for details). If a Spoke Leader and/or Co-Applicant is based in the same Research Body as the Lead Applicant, a single letter of support providing details of both applicants is sufficient. This is a formal letter on headed notepaper and is signed by an authorised institutional representative.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the Spoke Leader and Co-Applicant(s) (if different from the Research Body of the Lead Applicant)**. The details of the letter should be outlined as above.
- 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).
- 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.

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Please note that the Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader 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:

- The eligibility of each Lead Applicant/Spoke Leader/Co-Applicant as well as the eligibility of the applicant group as a whole.
- That the Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader 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 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 an 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, some of which may not apply to this particular programme.

Clinical Trials

Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,⁴⁰ as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

Animal Usage

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**⁴¹ and should also ensure that their studies align with the HRA's position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity

SFI places paramount importance on ensuring that the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, SFI endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**;⁴² that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.⁴³ 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)**,⁴⁴ 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**⁴⁵ and must comply with State aid Regulations. 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

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

⁴¹ http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

⁴² https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IUA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf

⁴³ <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

⁴⁴ http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf>

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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)**⁴⁶, 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 Future⁴⁷ targets 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 are set. 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.⁴⁸

Appeals Process

The Appeals Policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.⁴⁹

State aid

All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid. Potential applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2014 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01)**⁵⁰ and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.⁵¹ If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, potential applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

⁴⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/SFI-Gender-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025-Shaping-Our-Future.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁴⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

⁵⁰ [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

⁵¹ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf>

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Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,⁵² and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.⁵³ 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 Regulation⁵⁴ 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**.⁵⁵

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

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

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research

⁵² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

⁵³ http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>

⁵⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

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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**.⁵⁶

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S⁵⁷ and those of the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment⁵⁸ SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI funded research (i.e., where one or other of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), **SFI's Open Access policy**⁵⁹ should be adhered to. SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and its Annual Stocktake of Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.⁶⁰ 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 SFI⁶¹. 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.

9 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.

⁵⁶ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

⁵⁸ <http://norf-ireland.net/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

⁶¹ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

10 Award Management

10.1 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.

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

10.2 Progress Site Reviews

The Spokes programme will be reviewed as part of the SFI Research Centre as a whole and as such, progress of the programme will be reviewed in conjunction with the other Spokes and targeted projects at the SFI Research Centre(s) progress reviews every 2 years. SFI reserves the right to conduct an independent external progress review of the Spokes award to adequately assess progress on the award should it be deemed necessary. Multi-centre Spoke awards will undergo a separate progress review conducted by international peer reviewers during the period of the grant, typically held at the midway point on the award and may be attended by representatives from the co-funding partner agencies. The review panel, which typically comprises 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, integration within the Research Centre(s), 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. Progress reviews 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,⁶² SFI reserves the right to terminate a grant if, in the reasonable opinion of SFI, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.

10.3 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.

⁶² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

11 Expression of Interest Template

The Expression of Interest application is submitted through SESAME and requires an upload of the programme document, which must include the following sections (note page limits for single vs multi-centre applications):

| Eoi programme document section | Single-centre Max page limit | Multi-centre Max page limit |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Research Programme | 3 pages | 3 pages |
| Role in the National Research Landscape | 1 page | 1 page |
| Strategic Alignment with Research Centre(s) | 1 page | 1 page per Research Centre |
| Partner Overview | 3 pages | 5 pages |
| Business & Commercialisation Plan | 1 page | 2 pages |
| Impact | 2 pages | 2 pages |
| EPE | 1 page | 1 page |

Please refer to the Expression of Interest Checklist before SESAME submission (see Appendix I).

The Expression of Interest Programme Document consists of the following sections:

11.1 Research Programme

Outline the overall research objectives of the Spoke, their alignment with Research Centre(s) research programmes 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.

11.2 Role in the 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.

11.3 Alignment with Research Centre(s)

Provide a description on the alignment of proposed research with the current Centre(s) objectives and the added value of the proposed Spoke to the Research Centre (max. 1 page per Research Centre

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involved). Describe how the Spoke will be embedded in the Research Centre(s) and supports available. Within this section, please also describe the Research Centre (s) performance to date with particular reference to cost-sharing and how this Spoke will serve to enhance outputs and activities of the Research Centres(s) involved.

11.4 Partner Overview

Academic team

Describe the experience and achievements of the Lead Applicant, Spoke Leader, Co-Applicant(s) and collaborators (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.

Given the important role of the Spoke Leader, please provide key information on leadership experience to date.

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, financial and otherwise; and (3) the anticipated benefits for both the academic and co-funding partner.

11.5 Business and Commercialisation Plan

Describe the strategy which will be adopted to achieve the co-funding requirements for the Spoke award. Describe also, how will activities such as acquisition of new partner companies and projects, licensing of IP, development of spin-outs, etc. be enabled and what resources will be required to do so. Describe how these activities will be supported by the Centre(s) involved.

This is particularly relevant for Spoke applications with multiple co-funding partners.

11.6 Impact

Outline the potential economic and societal impact expected to arise from the Spoke. 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.

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11.7 EPE

- Single-Centre Spoke. Outline the engagement activities related to the proposed Spoke award. These activities should be in addition to the original Centre activities and should be clearly related to area of research of the proposed Spoke. Outline the budget required to develop/deliver these activities.
- Multi-Centre Spokes. Outline how the partner centres will work together to engage the public on the specific research areas covered by the proposed Spoke award. These efforts should be in addition to the individual Centre activities. Outline the budget required to deliver these activities.

12 Full Proposal Template

The Full Proposal application is submitted through SESAME and requires an upload of the programme document, which must include the following sections (note page limits for single vs multi-centre applications):

| Full proposal programme document section | Single-centre Max page limit | Multi-centre Max page limit |
|---|--|--|
| Executive Summary | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Research Programme | 15 pages | 30 pages |
| References | 5 pages | 10 pages |
| Strategic Alignment with Research Centre(s) | 1 page | 1 page per Research Centre |
| Project Management Plan | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Spoke Leadership & Management | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Co-Funding Partner Overview | 1 page per partner (plus max 1 page overview of collective where multiple co-funding partners involved) | 1 page per partner (plus max 1 page overview of collective where multiple co-funding partners involved) |
| EPE | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Business & Commercialisation Plan | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Impact | 5 pages | 10 pages |
| Business & Commercialisation Plan | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Intellectual Property | 1 page | 2 pages |
| Research Infrastructure | 2 page | 5 pages |

Please refer to the Full Proposal Checklist before submission (see Appendix II).

The Full Proposal Programme Document must include the following sections:

12.1 Executive Summary (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre max. 5 pages)

Provide an Executive Summary of the full proposal, including details of the applicant group and associated Research Centre(s), 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 Spokes Programme.

12.2 Research Programme (single-centre max. 15 pages; multi-centre 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. Overall goal of the Spoke

Describe clearly the overall goals of this Spoke 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 market opportunity does the research address?
- What is the current state-of-the-art in the area and how will the proposed research advance this?
- What is the competitive advantage of the team to deliver in this area?

Applicants should consider the specific objectives of the SFI Research Centres Programme and the SFI Spokes 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 aims and objectives of the project(s) within the research programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables. Relevant preliminary data must be provided. This may take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research or (b) where data has yet to be published, this can be included within the research description, as evidence that the applicant(s) has a track record in the field of his/her proposed research.

iv. Approach and 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.⁶³

⁶³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

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12.3 References (single-centre max. 5 pages; multi-centre max. 10 pages)

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

12.4 Alignment with Research Centre(s) (max 1 page per Research Centre)

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

12.5 Project Management Plan (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre max. 5 pages)

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

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

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

12.6 Spoke Leadership and Management (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre max. 5 pages)

Describe the experience and achievements of the Spoke Leader, including their track record in leadership and research management. Describe the experience and achievements of the co-applicants and academic collaborators (if applicable) to support their roles in the proposed project. Describe the roles of administrative and coordination roles where relevant and also the Research Centre(s) operational support that will be provided to the Spoke. Describe the impact the team will have on the operations or research activities of the Centre(s) involved.

Describe the structures that will be in place for the management and governance of the Spoke, and in the cases of multi-centre Spoke applications, how this will integrate into existing structures within participating Research Centres.

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.

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12.7 Co-funding Partner Overview (upload, max. 1 page per partner, plus max. 1 page overview of collective where multiple co-funding partners involved)

Where multiple co-funding partners are involved, please provide a max. 1 page overview of the collective.

In addition, applicants should include an overview of each individual co-funding partner (industry, charity and other partners, as applicable) involved in the proposed partnership. The individual overviews of each co-funding partner 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.

12.8 Education and Public Engagement (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre max. 5 pages)

For single-centre Spoke applications: Outline the engagement activities related to the proposed Spoke award. These activities should be in addition to the original Centre activities and should be clearly related to the area of research of the proposed Spoke. Outline the budget required to develop/deliver on these activities. Outline the role that the co-funder(s) will have in the planned EPE activities, if applicable

For multi-centre Spoke applications: Outline a high-level plan for Education and Public Engagement, including vision and objectives for the EPE Programme. Outline how the partner centres will work together to engage the public on the specific research areas covered by the proposed Spoke award. These efforts should be in addition to the individual Centre activities. Outline the budget required to deliver these activities. 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 any supports or resources available within your academic institution(s) 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.

12.9 Impact (single-centre max. 5 pages; multi-centre 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). **The statement should describe potential economic and societal impacts by answering the following overarching questions:**

- Who will benefit from this research? (academic partner(s), industry partner(s), public, policy makers, other stakeholders)?
- What plans will you put in place to increase the chances of economic and societal impacts from the proposed research?
- When will there be a benefit from this research? (i.e., over what timeframe might the expected benefits of the proposed research programme be realised)
- What is the competitive “edge” of the proposed Research Centre? (e.g. novelty, innovation, ability to create synergistic opportunities, ability to become world leading)
- How will stakeholders benefit from this research?
- Where will the benefit of this research be realised? (e.g., Ireland, Europe, market sectors)

When describing the potential economic Impact arising during the entire funding period, cross reference should be made to the business and commercialisation plans.

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

12.10 Business Plan & Commercialisation (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre max. 5 pages)

Provide a business plan which outlines how the Spoke will meet the cost-share requirements of the Spokes programme (see Section 2.6).

The following must be addressed/provided within the business plan:

- Describe the strategy which will be adopted to achieve the cost share.
- How will activities such as acquisition of new partner companies and projects, licensing of IP, development of spin-outs, etc. be enabled and what resources will be required to do so?
- Provide an overview of plans to achieve cost share, cash and in-kind.
- A risk analysis of the business plan towards meeting the required cost share.

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Where applicable (e.g. where a hybrid funding model is proposed), the plan should include details of the strategy for targeting significant new industry partnerships, re-engagement and upscaling of existing partnerships and the strategy for other sources of funding, including charity and philanthropic sources.

The commercialisation section of the business plan should describe the Spokes commercialisation plans, inclusive but not limited to the following:

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

12.11 Intellectual Property (IP) (single-centre max. 1 pages; multi-centre 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 must comply with State Aid legislation (Please see Section 2.4 in relation to compliance with the Framework) and be in accordance with national guidelines, in particular 'Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019'⁶⁴.

12.12 Research Infrastructure (single-centre max. 2 pages; multi-centre 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.

A letter of support must be included from the Lead Applicant's Research Body and from the Research Body of the Co-Applicant(s), if different (see Section 7.14 on letters of support below).

12.13 Good Research Practice Statement (Max. 1 page)

Please submit a Good Research Practice Statement (max. 1 page) as part of full proposal.

Good research practices are founded on the fundamental principles of research integrity. As such, applicants should consider how they will support good research practices in the Spoke award through training, supervision and mentoring, research protocols, data practices and management (cross reference can be made to the Data Management Plan), collaborative working and

⁶⁴ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf>

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publication/dissemination, and outline these supports in a short statement (max. 1 page) as part of the proposal.

Please consult with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland⁶⁵ and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁶⁶ when preparing this statement

12.14 Data Management Plan (max. 2 pages for both single and multi-centre applications)

Please provide a Data Management Plan as part of your full proposal with consideration to the guidance below.

Core requirements for research data management

Good data management is fundamental to all stages of the research process and a plan to support it is best established at the outset.

Good data management is a key component in ensuring that data is accessible and reusable; it supports high quality research and safeguards good research practices.

Ultimately, good data management supports the long-term preservation of data.

The following is a non-exhaustive list to consider when preparing your Data Management Plan (DMP). These points have been adapted from **Science Europe working guidelines**.⁶⁷

1. Data description and collection/ reuse of existing data
2. Documentation and data quality
3. Storage and back-up
4. Ethics and legal compliance, codes of conducts
5. Data sharing and long-term preservation

When preparing your DMP, you may not necessarily have to consider each of the above topics in detail. Furthermore, it may be helpful to refer to relevant policies made available by your Research Body or to domain specific protocols broadly accepted by researchers in their field/community. Finally, you may wish to consult with the **FAIR**⁶⁸ principles of data management.

⁶⁵ <https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

⁶⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf

⁶⁷ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management>

⁶⁸ <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

13 Budget

| Budget section | Single-centre Max page limit | Multi-centre Max page limit |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Budget | Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document. Upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Programme Documents upload section. | Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document. Upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Programme Documents upload section. |
| Budget justification | 2 pages | 5 pages |

The **Budget Tables** for completion and upload by the applicant(s) are located in **APPENDIX III: Budget Templates**. Please copy over the tables to relevant section of the Programme Document. See Section 7.13 or details on how to complete the budget.

Budget Template in Excel (SFI request, SFI Research Centre funding commitment (where relevant) and co-funding partner commitment)

Applicants are required to prepare a high-level budget by completing the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the Spokes Programme webpage.⁶⁹

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

This budget must include:

- **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. For Spoke applications utilising a hybrid funding approach, please specify the contributions from the Research Centre(s) budget.
- **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 SFI Budget:** for spokes utilizing hybrid funding, complete the total SFI budget which should include a breakdown of the requested SFI requested budget contribution separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel, and the SFI budget contribution from Research Centre(s) budget separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel.

⁶⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

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- **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.

A budget for the requested SFI contribution to the Spokes budget separated by staff, equipment, materials and travel

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

Please only enter values in the white cells. Applicants must follow the SFI Grant Budget Policy.⁷⁰

In addition, applicants are required to prepare a detailed budget by completing the Microsoft Excel budget template provided on the SFI Spokes Programme website.⁷¹ As part of the Excel budget template, applicants are required to provide a detailed breakdown of the SFI, SFI Research Centre (where hybrid is utilised) and each co-funding partner's financial contributions both cash and in-kind associated with each research strand and the operations budget, as applicable. Applicants are required to upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Programme Documents upload section.

Budget Template in SESAME (SFI Request only)

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

⁷⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy-November-2021.pdf>

⁷¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-centres-spokes/>

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Budget Justification (upload, single-centre max. 2 pages, multi-centre 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. Guidance on completion of the Budget Justification can be found in SFI's Grant Budget Policy.

For the cash and in-kind co-funding partner contributions, provide high level details on the level of commitment. The budget justification should cover the full award budget (SFI request and Industry commitment). Where relevant it should include details of SFI Research Centre budget contributions for hybrid funding approaches.

General guidance on completing the budget justification can be found in the Grant Budget Policy.⁷²

⁷² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

APPENDIX I: Expression of Interest Checklist

| SECTION | DETAILS | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Proposal Summary: | | |
| Title | Up to 30 words | |
| Single- or Multi-Centre Spoke | Select single or multi | |
| Name of Research Centre(s) | Drop-down menu. If multi, include all Research Centres involved | |
| Name of Spoke Leader | Enter name of Spoke Leader | |
| Duration of Grant requested (in months) | Drop-down menu: Select the duration (in months) of the award. Minimum of 12 and maximum of 60. | |
| 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 the estimated total value of the in-kind contribution (€) | |
| Resubmission Statement (if applicable) | Max. 1000 words | |
| Alignment to SFI Legal Remit | Max. 500 words | |
| Lead Applicant details: | | |
| Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission | Select country | |
| Lead Applicant DORA-compliant 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, which can be directly attributed to the Lead Applicant. | |
| Co-Applicant Details: | | |
| Co-Applicant | Add Co-Applicant by entering co-applicant surname and SESAME SFI PIN | |
| Co-Applicant DORA-compliant 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, which can be directly attributed to the Co-Applicant. | |
| Programme Document | | |
| Programme Document | Upload PDF containing the sections mentioned below | |
| | Single | Multi |
| Research Programme | Max. 3 pages | Max 3 page |
| Role in National Research Landscape | Max 1 page | Max 1 pages |
| Strategic Alignment with Research Centre(s) | Max 1 page | Max 1 page per RC |
| Partner overview | Max 3 pages | Max 5 pages |
| Business & commercialisation plan | Max 1 page | Max 2 pages |
| Impact | Max 2 page | Max 2 pages |
| EPE | Max 1 page | Max 1 pages |

APPENDIX II: Full Proposal Checklist

| SECTION | DETAILS |
|---|--|
| Proposal Summary: | |
| Proposal Title | Up to 30 words |
| Duration of Grant requested (in months) | Drop-down menu: Select the duration (in months) 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 the estimated total value of the in-kind contribution (€) |
| Resubmission Statement (if applicable) | Max. 1000 words |
| Research Alignment: | |
| Alignment to SFI Legal Remit | Max. 500 words |
| Priority Area Alignment (Primary and Secondary) | Drop-down menu |
| Research Area (Primary) | Drop-down menu |
| Research Area (Secondary) | Drop-down menu |
| Lead Applicant details: | |
| Location of the Applicant at the time of Submission | Select country |
| Percentage Time Commitment | Enter time commitment of the Lead Applicant to the proposed research programme (% of the total working time) |
| Lead Applicant DORA-compliant 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, which can be directly attributed to the Lead Applicant. |
| Co-Applicant Details: | |
| Co-applicant | Add co-applicant by entering co-applicant surname and SESAME SFI PIN |
| Percentage Time Commitment | Enter time commitment of the Co-Applicant to the proposed research programme (% of the total working time) |
| Co-Applicant DORA-compliant 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, which can be directly attributed to the Co-Applicant. |
| Research Funding: | |
| 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 |

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| Funded Investigator and Official Collaborator Details: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Funded Investigator(s) DORA-compliant CV | Upload (5 pages) | |
| Main Body of Proposal: | | |
| Keywords | Max. 15 words | |
| Scientific Abstract | Max. 200 words | |
| Lay Abstract | Max. 100 words | |
| Ethical issues: | | |
| Answer questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data) | Select relevant answers | |
| Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement: | | |
| Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement | Max. 1000 words | |
| Programme Document: | | |
| Full Proposal Spokes Application | Upload containing the below sections | |
| | (max page limit indicated) | |
| | Single-centre | Multi-centre |
| Executive Summary | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Research Programme | 15 pages | 30 pages |
| References | 5 pages | 10 pages |
| Strategic Alignment with Research Centres | 1 page | 1 page per Research Centre |
| Project Management plan | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Spoke Leadership and Management | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Co-funding Partner Overview | 1 page per partner (plus max 1 page overview of collective where multiple co-funding partners involved) | 1 page per partner (plus max 1 page overview of collective where multiple co-funding partners involved) |
| Education and Public Engagement | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Impact | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Business Plan & Commercialisation | 5 pages | 10 pages |
| Intellectual Property | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Research Infrastructure | 1 page | 2 pages |
| Good Research Practice Statement | 1 page | 1 page |
| Data Management Plan | 2 pages | 2 pages |
| Budget: | | |
| Budget | Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant | Complete budget templates and copy over the tables to relevant |

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| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>section of the Programme Document.</p> <p>Upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Programme Documents upload section.</p> | <p>section of the Programme Document.</p> <p>Upload the completed Excel budget to SESAME in the Programme Documents upload section.</p> |
| Budget justification | 2 pages | 5 pages |
| Letters of Support: | | |
| Letters of Support | Upload; max. 2 pages for each letter | |

APPENDIX III: 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 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

Total SFI Requested Budget (Direct Costs)

| CATEGORY | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Staff | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | |
| Materials | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

Breakdown of SFI Requested Budget (Direct Costs)

| STAFF | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

*Indicate exact level for each post

SFI Spokes Programme

| EQUIPMENT | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

| MATERIALS | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

| TRAVEL | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

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

| CATEGORY | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Staff | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | |
| Materials | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

SFI Spokes Programme

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

| STAFF | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

*Indicate exact level for each post

| EQUIPMENT | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

| MATERIALS | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

| TRAVEL | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

APPENDIX IV: Co-funding partner Letter of Support

A letter of support from each co-funding partner outlining their intention to participate in the proposed Spokes project must be provided at the full-proposal application stage. Co-funding partner letters of support should outline any previous history of collaborations with the academic applicants and outline how the research to be undertaken aligns itself with the current and future needs of that co-funding partner.

The letter of support must describe the level of cost share commitment from the partner, both in terms of cash and in-kind contributions and the time period for which the contribution is being made as per the following table:

| CO-FUNDING PARTNER 'X' CONTRIBUTIONS | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | TOTAL |
| Cash Contribution | | | | | | |
| Staff Contribution | | | | | | |
| Equipment Contribution | | | | | | |
| Other in-kind contribution | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | |