EPSRC-SFI Lead Agency Agreement

Guidance

and

SFI Documentation

1   Introduction

EPSRC and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) have entered an agreement to welcome, encourage and support research applications that cut across national boundaries involving collaborative teams led by researchers from the UK and Ireland. The new partnership will support joint research and technology development in all areas of EPSRC's remit which covers chemistry, engineering, information and communications technologies, materials, mathematical sciences and physics.

Under the lead agency agreement, a single joint proposal from applicants in both countries is submitted to EPSRC. The application is processed according to the normal procedures of EPSRC Standard Grants, and funding by EPSRC and SFI is decided by the appropriate EPSRC Theme Lead following the recommendation of the EPSRC panel. UK-based research groups will be funded by EPSRC and Republic of Ireland (ROI)-based research groups will be funded by SFI.

EPSRC will accept joint applications for Responsive Mode Standard Research grants at any time; however, potential applicants should submit an Expression of Interest to EPSRC in advance of their full application to ensure that applicants meet their respective funding organisations' eligibility requirements and that the proposed research falls within their remits.

The usual guidance for Responsive Mode Standard grants applies for the UK team, along with the additional guidance provided below pertaining to the ROI-based collaborators and research programme. Further information can also be found on the UKRI EPSRC website: [Lead agency agreement with Science Foundation Ireland – UKRI](#).

Please note that New Investigator Awards and Fellowships are not included under this agreement and we <u>do not</u> currently accept joint EPSRC-SFI proposals under these schemes or any other research funding routes except Responsive Mode Standard Research grants.

2   Expression of Interest

At least three months prior to planned submission of a joint application, potential applicants should submit an Expression of Interest to ensure that applicants meet their respective funding organisations' eligibility requirements and that the proposed research falls within their remits. At this stage, applicants should submit the following information:

- Lead Agency Agreement under which you wish to apply; SFI in this case

- Organisation where the EPSRC grant would be held

- Organisation where the SFI grant would be held

- Project title

- Start date and duration

- Name, organisation, department, role on the project and e-mail address for each lead and co-lead (for the UK side please provide the e-mail address held in your UKRI Funding Service account)

- Summary of proposed research (up to 5000 characters including spaces)

- Attached signed cover sheet using template given in Appendix 1; this is also available to download from EPSRC's website (either pdf or odt format)

- Summary of resources required for the project

- Please include a primary contact e-mail address for correspondence

All of the above information should be submitted by the UK lead applicant via the form on the EPSRC webpage [Lead agency agreement with Science Foundation Ireland – UKRI](). This information will be shared with SFI for eligibility checking and to ensure that they are aware of potential budget implications.

3 Full Proposal

Only applicants who have received prior written confirmation from EPSRC that they may proceed with their proposal should submit a joint EPSRC-SFI application. The applicant will be advised of the timeframe / deadline by which a full proposal should be submitted. Joint EPSRC-SFI applications are submitted through the normal EPSRC Standard Research Grant application process via The Funding Service under the call 'EPSRC responsive mode working with overseas scientists'. Please read carefully the guidance below on how to prepare a joint application as well as the additional documentation required by SFI, which will be uploaded as part of the application. We expect full proposals to be submitted within 12 months of the invitation date; if this criterion may not be met please discuss with EPSRC in advance of the 12 month deadline.

3.1 EPSRC Application

In the preparation of a joint application, please note the following:

- The title of all applications submitted under this partnership must begin with "EPSRC-SFI: "

- Except where indicated otherwise below, joint applications should follow standard EPSRC format; no additional pages will be permitted.

- A single joint proposal should be submitted to EPSRC via TFS with the UK applicants designated as project lead and project co-lead(s) UK and the ROI applicants designated as project partners. The contact name for each ROI academic project partner on the application should be the lead investigator for that research organisation. Please note that although applicants based in the ROI are designated as project partners, their role in the joint application will be equivalent to that of a co-lead and will be reviewed as such. If there are applicants from more than one research organisation in the ROI, they should be entered separately as multiple project partners. In the following, the ROI-based applicant will be referred to as the SFI co-lead.

- Although ROI collaborators should be listed as project partners, a section on the SFI co-lead(s) must be included in the applicant and team capability to deliver section .

- A letter of support is required for each project partner included in your application, which for SFI co-lead must be a letter of support from each of their host Research Bodies (see section 3.4 below). These should be submitted as an attachment in the project partner section.

- The UK-based project lead must include the total direct costs requested by the SFI co-lead from SFI in the project-partner contributions section (this amount should be entered in GBP using the EUR-GBP exchange rate on the day of submission). A maximum request of €500,000 direct costs for durations of 12-60 months will apply to the total ROI budget. An additional contribution to overhead costs will also be made, as detailed in Section 4 below.

- The resources and cost justification must include the costs requested by the SFI co-lead(s), making sure that it is clear which costs will be funded by SFI and which costs will be funded by EPSRC if the application is successful.

- The SFI Application Form and associated documents described below must be included with the Funding Service submission as a single PDF attachment. This document should be submitted as an attachment (this is not used in the peer review process).

- Please note that all proposal documentation will be shared with SFI, including reviewers' comments and the project lead response to reviews.

3.2   SFI Additional Documentation

As part of a joint proposal to the EPSRC Standard Grants Scheme, SFI co-leads are required to submit the following documentation, using the template provided in Appendix II and adhering to the guidance given below.

- SFI Full Application Form

- A detailed budget breakdown prepared using the template in Appendix II (Excel version available for download from SFI's webpage for this call)

- Detailed ROI budget justification (in addition to the resources and cost justification section of the TFS application)

These documents should be merged into **a single PDF** and uploaded as an attachment to TFS by the UK project lead. This document should be submitted as an attachment (this is not used in the peer review process). If more than one SFI co-lead is named on an application, only **one** SFI application form and **one** budget breakdown should be submitted, with a single institution to be designated as the lead institution if SFI co-lead are based at different institutions. All SFI co-leads, their host institutions and their time commitments must be listed on the cover sheet, but an insitutional signature must be supplied only by the lead institution. Completion and submission of this signed cover sheet constitutes agreement to SFI's Terms and Conditions of Research Grants[1].

3.3   Eligibility Criteria of ROI Applicants

To receive support from SFI, the SFI co-lead(s) must hold a PhD or equivalent[2] and be based at an institution eligible for SFI support[3]. Additionally, the SFI co-lead(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 eligible Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host eligible Research Body for which he/she will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the grant. The SFI co-lead (s) must also have the capability and authority to mentor and supervise team members.

The above criteria apply to all SFI co-lead to be included on an application. It is noted that team members, such as Research Fellows or postdoctoral researchers, may not be included as SFI co-lead, although applicants may choose to include them within the Case for Support, if deemed to strengthen the application.

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[1] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/

[2] SFI's Policy on PhD Equivalence can be found at this link: http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf. Applicants holding an equivalent qualification may be eligible, but should nevertheless seek approval from SFI in advance of submitting a proposal

[3] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/index.xml

3.4 Host Research Body Letter of Support (up to two sides of A4)

A letter of support from the host Research Body of each SFI co-lead **must** be submitted as a letter of support in the project partner section of the application. This letter, which should be no more than two sides of A4, serves as the Research Body's endorsement of the eligibility of the applicant (as defined in Section 3.3) as well as approval of the budget requested and the infrastructure to be provided by the Research Body. It is a formal dated letter on headed paper and is signed by an authorised institutional representative and must include the following declaration:

[Research Body name], which is the host Research Body of *[Applicant]*, confirms its association and support of the application entitled *[Application title]* and endorses that the Applicant meets the eligibility criteria of the EPSRC-SFI Joint Funding Programme and is either a member of the academic staff, a contract researcher or a researcher awaiting appointment.

4 Budget

Applicants must include the total direct costs for the ROI component of the research programme in the project-partner contributions section of the application . A corresponding description must be included in the resources and cost justification section as part of the joint application. In addition, SFI co-leads are requested to submit a detailed budget using the SFI consolidated budget spreadsheet (available on the SFI website) as well as a detailed budget justification (up to two sides of A4) which clearly explains the request for each item listed in the budget in terms of the planned research programme. A maximum request of €500,000 in direct costs for durations of 12-60 months will apply to the ROI budget. **Please adhere to the relevant sections of SFI's Grant Budget Policy**[4] **in the preparation of the budget and budget justification.**

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the EPSRC-SFI Partnership are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the ROI component of the proposed research project. SFI co-leads must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel. Contributions to the salary of the applicant or co-applicants are not eligible costs. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs requested from SFI. All awards are made directly to the designated lead institution for the SFI co-lead.

Direct costs only should be included in the requested SFI budget. In addition to 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). 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.

> **Please note that PhD studentships are not eligible costs under EPSRC Standard Research Grants. Accordingly PhD studentships are also ineligible costs for ROI applicants to the EPSRC-SFI joint scheme. This will be subject to review and may be amended in the future.**

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[4] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml

Change log

Date	Version	Change
01/04/17	1.0	N/A
02/08/17	1.1	Change of Expression of Interest submission process and guidance
09/08/17	1.2	Changes to reflect consultation with SFI and Internal colleagues
19/07/18	1.3	Changes to clarify programmes included under the partnership, submission procedure and eligibility of SFI Co-Investigators
11/01/2019	1.4	Changes to SFI Expression of Interest form to reflect updated National Research Priorities
30/06/2023	1.5	Changes to EPSRC submission process (move to UKRI Funding System)

Appendix I

SFI Expression of Interest Form

EPSRC-SFI Expression of Interest

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SFI CO-LEAD ON EPSRC-SFI JOINT FUNDING APPLICATIONS, AND SUBMITTED WITH EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BY UK-BASED PROJECT LEAD VIA THE FORM ON THE EPSRC WEBPAGE

PROGRAMME NAME			
EPSRC-SFI Joint Research Grants			

TITLE OF PROPOSAL (max. 150 characters)			
EPSRC-SFI:			

FULL NAME OF SFI CO-LEAD	HOST INSTITUTION	POSITION/JOB TITLE	CONTRACT STATUS (TEMPORARY/PERMANENT)

Insert additional rows if needed to detail other SFI Co-leads.

FULL NAME OF EPSRC PROJECT LEAD(S)	HOST INSTITUTION(S)
TOTAL INDICATIVE SFI BUDGET (€)	PROPOSED DURATION (12 - 60 MONTHS)
NRP AREA ALIGNMENT[1]:	

Signatures below confirm acceptance and agreement with the SFI grants and awards Terms and Conditions, and that the institution ensures the applicant meets eligibility requirements.
INSTITUTIONAL SIGNATORY AUTHORITY (ROI LEAD INSTITUTION ONLY)   Name: Position: Email: Signed: Date:

COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998
In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal data provided on this form will be processed by EPSRC, and may be held on computerised database and/or manual files.

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[1] Select from: **A** Future Networks, Communications and Internet of Things; **B** Data Analytics, Management, Security, Privacy, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (including Machine Learning); **C** Digital Platforms, Content and Applications, and Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality; **D** Connected Health and Independent Living; **E** Medical Devices; **F** Diagnostics; **G** Therapeutics; **H** Food for Health; **I** Sustainable Food Production and Processing; **J** Decarbonising the Energy System; **K** Sustainable Living; **L** Advanced and Smart Manufacturing; **M** Manufacturing and Novel Materials; **N** Innovation in Services and Business Processes; **X** Other (please specify)

Appendix II

Full Proposal:
SFI Additional Documentation

The following additional documentation should be prepared using the templates provided below, merged into **a single PDF or ODT** (saved as SFI Application Form) and uploaded as an attachment to the Funding Service by the UK Project Lead.

- SFI Full Application Cover Sheet
- Detailed budget breakdown prepared using the budget template (Excel version available for download from SFI's webpage on this call)
- Budget Justification (up to two sides of A4)

EPSRC-SFI Full Application

PROGRAMME NAME **EPSRC-SFI Joint Research Grants**	
TITLE OF PROPOSAL (max. 150 characters) **EPSRC-SFI:**	
FULL NAME OF EPSRC PROJECT LEAD(S)	HOST INSTITUTION(S)
FULL NAME OF SFI CO-LEAD(S)	HOST INSTITUTION(S)
Please note – if any SFI Co-leads have been added to the proposal since the Expression of Interest stage, information on their position/job title and contract status (permanent/temporary) **must** *be provided.*	
% SFI CO-LEAD (S) COMMITMENT	% EPSRC PROJECT LEAD COMMITMENT
TOTAL REQUESTED SFI BUDGET (€)	TOTAL REQUESTED EPSRC BUDGET (£)
REQUESTED STARTING DATE	PROPOSED DURATION (12 - 60 MONTHS)

Signatures below confirm acceptance and agreement with the SFI grants and awards Terms and Conditions, and that the institution ensures the applicant meets eligibility requirements, and that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland, and no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and all details provided are correct.
INSTITUTIONAL SIGNATORY AUTHORITY (ROI LEAD INSTITUTION ONLY) Name: Position: Email: Signed: Date:

An Excel version of the following template is available for download from SFI's webpage on this call.

EPSRC-SFI SFI Budget

SFI Lead

EPSRC Lead

Planned Start Date | **Duration** | XX months | (12-60 mths)

Please refer to the Guidance documentation for this call and to the SFI Grant Budget Policy in the preparation of this budget. Note that PhD studentships are not eligible costs under this call.

Cost items	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (Direct)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

STAFF

Position	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
						0
						0
						0
						0
						0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

EQUIPMENT

Items	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
						0
						0
						0
						0
						0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

MATERIALS AND CONSUMABLES

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
						0
						0
						0
						0
						0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

TRAVEL

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
						0
						0
						0
						0
						0
						0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Justification of costs requested from SFI (up to two sides of A4)