SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2024

Call for Submission of Proposals

KEY DATES

- Call Launch   **22 March 2024**
- Call deadline   **26 June 2024 at 13:00 Dublin Local Time**
- Notification to Applicants   **October 2024**

Call document updated on 20ᵗʰ May 2024 to allow Category C applicants include a second academic collaborator.

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. Science Foundation Ireland 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.

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***[1] 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.

SFI is pleased to launch the 2024 call for proposals under the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme. This programme seeks to support academia-industry interactions and will be an important vehicle to support industry research, development and innovation. Grants awarded under the programme can be made to academic researchers (at faculty, postdoctoral and late-stage PhD level) wishing to spend time in industry worldwide. Fellowships can be between 1 and 24 months in duration and can be taken on a full or part-time basis. SFI recognises that the type, mode, structure and duration of Fellowships must be flexible and scalable, and must facilitate different sorts of activities, ranging from knowledge exchange, skills development and collaborative research projects. The expectation is that the award will enhance the skills of the Fellow and will be of mutual benefit to both the industry and academic partners.

Researchers placed into industry will have the opportunity to gain a working knowledge of relevant business drivers (e.g., intellectual property, regulatory, investors and markets) and will gain from the industry's established contacts. The upskilling and industry exposure provided to postdoctoral academic researchers through the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme will prepare them for a career in industry and maximise the impact of the training received by these researchers so far. For faculty researchers, it is expected that their Fellowship will help seed subsequent industry collaborations and shape the direction of their research going forward.

Industry partners hosting researchers will benefit from the expertise of the Fellow embedded in their company bringing innovative solutions to industry challenges, providing support to enhance competitive advantage and future resilience, and developing links with academia to seed future longer-term collaborations.

The Grants awarded under the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme will operate under European Commission State aid rules and in particular, will be subject to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)[2]. GBER sets out a number of conditions under which research, development and innovation funding is exempt from the obligation of prior notification to the European Commission.

SFI is in the process of amalgamating with the Irish Research Council to form Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland. This call of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme will not be materially affected

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[1] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/
[2] EU Commission Regulation (EC) No. 651/2014 as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 (referred to collectively as the "GBER")

by the amalgamation process. Adjustments, if any, will be communicated to Research Offices and via FAQ documentation.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY

The SFI Strategy: *Shaping Our Future* underscores SFI's commitment to building equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector.[3] SFI recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, SFI aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

In SFI's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 203-2028[4], increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities[5] in Applicant Teams are key objectives. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme. Further details on SFI's data on application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found on the SFI website.[6] Applications are welcome from those wishing to return to employment following a career break.

Whilst gender data fields on the SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, have been expanded to encompass more inclusive gender identifiers, SFI has decided to continue with the objective of increasing the representation of women in the higher education sector for the purpose of this Industry RD&I Programme Call. Therefore, the gender tiebreak criterion previously deployed, which has been successful in meeting this objective, has been retained for this Call.

As such, when ranking applications, in the event of applications receiving the same final score, SFI will give priority in the review process to applications from woman lead applicants.

Furthermore, as part of its EDI Strategy, SFI also aims to increase awareness of the sex and gender dimension in research, by requesting that researchers demonstrate that they have considered any potential biological sex and/or socio-cultural gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

SAN FRANCISCO DECLARATION ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT (DORA)

SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)[7] in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member[8]. To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,[9] SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and

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[3] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025.pdf
[4] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[5] For the purposes of this Strategy, Historically Underserved Community encompasses a broad and diverse range of historically marginalised groups including but not limited to the nine protected grounds established in the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and socioeconomic status.
[6] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[7] https://sfdora.org/read/
[8] Contributor level membership
[9] https://www.coalition-s.org/

accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030[10]. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment[11] and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)[12].

2. Programme overview

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2024 are to:

- Connect scientific research and researchers with beneficiaries and potential users through supporting the exchange of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.
- Maximise the economic and societal impact of Irish State-funded research and resources, by enhancing and co-funding collaborations between researchers in academia and industry.
- Foster impactful innovation by supporting industry-informed research.
- Enhance the breadth of training of researchers and their employability.
- Facilitate increased participation in research, development and innovation by Small, Medium and Large enterprises in the regions across Ireland.
- Support companies to build/enhance competitive advantage and future resilience by engaging in research, development and innovation through partnership with academia.

2.2 Definitions

Fellow (applicant)	A faculty, postdoctoral researcher **or late-stage PhD researcher** currently working in an eligible Irish *Research Body*, or a postdoctoral researcher having held a research contract in an eligible Irish *Research Body*, or the holder of a PhD awarded by an eligible Irish *Research Body* (see specific eligibility criteria in Section 4 below)*.* The Fellow will be hosted by the *Industry Mentor* to work on the *Industry Partner's* premises. The Fellow (applicant) is responsible for submitting the proposal to SFI and, if successful, for the technical direction of the work programme and the submission of reports to SFI. If successful, the applicant becomes the independent award holder of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship award and has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the award activities within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants. The applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI during the review process and, if successful, on the award. No co-applicants are permitted on SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship applications.
Faculty Researcher	A researcher who is, at the time of application, employed as an academic staff member of an eligible Irish *Research Body* (e.g., lecturers, assistant, associate and full professors), who is either permanent or temporary (contract of more than 2

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	years). [Classified as a **Category A applicant** under the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.]
Postdoctoral Researcher	A researcher who holds a PhD at the time of application and who additionally holds, or has held, a postdoctoral research contract in an eligible Irish *Research Body* or is the holder of a PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish *Research Body*. [Classified as a **Category B applicant** under the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.]
PhD Researcher *new*	PhD students who are registered at an eligible Irish Research Body **and are** in the final 6 months of their studies at the time of application are now eligible to apply to the programme. [Classified as a **Category C applicant** under the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.]
Industry Mentor	An industry researcher/leader employed by an *Industry Partner* who will host a Fellow. The Industry Mentor is the primary contact on the *Industry Partner's* premises where the Fellow is hosted, and who will accommodate the Fellow during their *Fellowship*. The Industry Mentor is committed to providing mentoring, an appropriate work environment and infrastructure for the duration of the award, as well as logistical support required to facilitate the Fellowship.
Industry Partner	The company that will host the Fellow. Please see Section 4 for further details.
Academic Collaborator	**Category B applicants** may include a maximum of one academic collaborator on their application. An academic collaborator is an individual based in the applicant's *Research Body* who is committed to providing a valuable intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research. Academic collaborators may not receive funding through the grant. **Category C applicants must** include at least one academic collaborator on their application who must be their current PhD supervisor and be based in the applicant's *Research Body*. *A second academic collaborator may be included where their expertise is relevant to the Fellowship project, this individual is not required to be based in the applicant's host Research Body.*
Research Body	The Research Body signs off on the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship application and submits it to SFI on behalf of the applicant. The Research Body may be the current employer of the applicant at the time of application or may become the employer of the applicant if the application is successful.
Placement	The time spent by the Fellow working on their project on the Industry Partner's premises.
Award Duration	The overall time between the beginning and the end of the award.
Time Commitment	The percentage of the total award duration spent on the placement (typically 50-100% time).
Aid Intensity	The aid intensity is the gross aid amount expressed as a percentage of the total eligible costs. Under State aid guidelines, the permitted SFI funding rate (aid intensity) can vary from 25% to a maximum of 80% of total project costs depending on the size of the Industry Partner company and the type of research involved. See Section 3 below for further details.

2.3 Duration and Structure of the Fellowship

Awards can have an award duration of between 1 and 24 months.

Full-time awards. For full-time awards, the Fellow spends between 1 and 12 months on placement over a maximum award duration of 12 months (e.g., a full-time Fellow spends 100% of their time working on their project).

Part-time awards. For part-time awards, the Fellow spends only part of their working time on placement i.e., the Fellow spends between 2 and 12 months on placement over a maximum award duration of 24 months. The time commitment is expected to be 50% of the award duration but may vary depending on the needs of the project and training plan. Only the placement time is funded through the award (see Funding section 3 below). Applicants are required to demonstrate that the duration, frequency and number of visits associated with a part-time placement is appropriate to deliver the proposed project and training plan. Part-time awards are also suitable for Category A applicants and applicants wishing to work reduced hours due to family commitments and/or those wishing to return to employment following a career break.

Location Fellows are expected to be embedded in the industry partner's premises and located there for the duration of the placement.

Start date. Successful applicants will be expected to start the Fellowship within 6 months following notification of funding from SFI. In the case of maternity leave[13] or other justified circumstances, the start date of the Fellowship may be further delayed, subject to prior approval from SFI.

2.4 Programme Remit

The legal remit of SFI is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State.[14] Oriented basic research is "research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge that is likely to form the background to the solution of recognised, or expected, current or future problems or possibilities". Additionally, applied research is defined as "an original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge and is directed primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods, or systems".

Research carried out under this 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 2018-2023[15] or with any other area where there is convincing evidence that there will be significant potential for economic and/or societal impact in Ireland. In this call, there is an additional requirement for projects to meet the definition of Industrial Research or Experimental Development (See Section 3.1) which implies that the research is oriented-basic or applied.

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[13] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[14] https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/
[15] https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf

3. Funding

3.1 State Aid

The SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme is subject to the EU Commission General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)[16] under Article 25 in which different categories of research, development and demonstration projects can be supported. The EU Commission Regulation stipulates the levels of funding support (grant aid) that can be provided by SFI. The maximum funding level for which a project is eligible depends on the category of research the project falls under and the status of the industry partner company. As such, SFI can only provide a fixed proportion of the total eligible project costs with the remaining funding to be met by the industry partner. For example, the SFI funding rate will vary from 25% to a maximum of 80% of total eligible project costs depending on the size of the industry partner and the category of research being undertaken.

Categories of Research

Under the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, proposals must align with SFI's legal remit **and** fall under one of the following categories of research* as defined by the EU[17]:

Industrial Research:

- planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as supercomputing, quantum technologies, blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud technologies).
- comprises the creation of component parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.

Experimental Development:

- means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as supercomputing, quantum technologies, blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies).
- this may also encompass, for example, activities aimed at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services.
- may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating

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[16] EU Commission Regulation (EC) No. 651/2014 as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 (referred to collectively as the "GBER")

[17] The definition of the categories of research/studies as are described in Articles 2(84), (85), (86) and (87) of the GBER.

conditions, where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set.

- this may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product, and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.
- experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

*If your proposed project spans more than one research category, please contact SFI by email to irdif@sfi.ie to request a modified budget template.

Applicants will be required to justify in their application the category of research their project falls under.

Fellowship projects

Applicants are required to submit their application to the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme prior to project commencement and the application must be approved in writing by SFI before work can commence on the project. Where the industry partner is a large company, additional conditions will be applied to ensure that the aid has an incentive effect. The applicant, in conjunction with their industry mentor, must provide justification in their proposal which establishes that the aid will achieve one or more of the following: a material increase in the scope of the project/activity; a material increase in the total amount spent by the industry partner on the project/activity; or a material increase in the speed of completion.

Funding under this programme must not be used for any purpose or activity other than as approved in writing by SFI. Further, funding under this programme must not be used to subsidise the costs of an activity that an industry partner would incur anyhow and must not compensate for the normal business risk of an economic activity.

3.1.1 Budget

Under State aid guidelines, the SFI funding rate (aid intensity) can vary **from 25% to a maximum of 80%** of total eligible project costs depending on the size of the industry partner company, the type of research involved and on whether project outputs will be widely disseminated. The industry partner supports the remaining project costs. The maximum SFI contribution to the cost of the Fellowship is €100,000 direct costs.

The baseline funding rate for each Fellowship project is determined as follows:

- 50% of the total eligible costs for **Industrial Research**
- 25% of the total eligible costs for **Experimental Development**

The funding rate may be increased up to a **maximum aid intensity of 80%** of the total eligible costs as follows:

a. by 10% for medium-sized enterprises
b. by 20% for small enterprises
c. by a further 15% (available to all industry partners irrespective of company size) if **one** of the following conditions is satisfied:
    i. the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open-source software. [SFI will monitor awards to ensure outputs are widely disseminated.]
    ii. the beneficiary commits to, on a timely basis, make available licences for research results of aided research and development projects, which are protected by intellectual property rights, at a market price and on non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis for use by interested parties in the EEA.
    iii. the R&D project is carried out in an assisted region fulfilling the conditions of Art 107(3)(a) TFEU.

The below table summarises the <u>maximum</u> aid intensity that can be granted by SFI.

	Industry Partner Company Size		
Category of Research: R&D Projects	**Small**	**Medium**	**Large**
Industrial Research	70%	60%	50%
Experimental Development	45%	35%	25%
Category of Research: R&D Collaborative Projects plus at least one requirements of point c. above fulfilled			
Industrial Research	80%	75%	65%
Experimental Development	60%	50%	40%

The applicant, in conjunction with their industry mentor, and Technology Transfer Office as appropriate, is responsible for selecting a research category which appropriately reflects the proposed project activities, however, SFI reserves the right to the final assessment of project research categorisation.

Company Size

The size of the industry partner company determines the funding rate available under the call. The European Commission defines what qualifies as a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). In general, the staff headcount and financial thresholds determine the enterprise categorisation.

Company Size	Number of employees AND	Annual Turnover OR	Annual Balance Sheet
Small	1-49	<€10 M	<€10 M
Medium	50-249	<€50 M	<€43 M
Large	>250	>€50m	>€43 m

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm that is part of a larger group may also need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group.[18]

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[18] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

Industry partners will be required to provide SFI with the latest set of financial records (P&L and balance sheet). SMEs will need to verify their status by submitting an SME Declaration.

For clarification with regard to the potential eligibility of an industry partner, please email irdif@sfi.ie.

3.2 SFI Supported Costs

SFI will fund up to a maximum of **€100,000** in direct costs to support the Fellow's salary (or teaching buy-out), open-access publishing and mobility costs only.

Applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget that includes a full breakdown of both the industry partner's costs in supporting the project and the SFI requested costs (i.e., the total eligible costs). The industry partner costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices. The requested budget from SFI must not exceed the permitted aid intensity (as described in section 3.1.1) as a percentage of the total eligible costs. The applicable aid intensity of a project is to be determined on the basis of the total "**eligible costs**" of the project (e.g., and may include costs of the Fellow, the industry partner, etc.)[19].

The budget for the **requested SFI contribution** to the Fellowship must be completed within the SESAME grants system. Additionally, applicants are also required to prepare a separate **detailed budget** of the total eligible costs (SFI requested costs plus industry partner company contribution) using a Microsoft Excel budget template provided, which must be uploaded as an attachment to the proposal in SESAME.

Teaching Buy-out (Category A applicants only)

Teaching buy-out can be requested when the Fellow (Category A) is located on the industry partner's premises, but only for Fellowships of >3 months duration**.** Teaching buy-out costs should be fully justified, detailing the number of hours per week of teaching buy-out. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

Salary (Category B and C applicants only)

Category B applicants may apply for funding to support their own salary; salary requests should be in line with their number of years post-PhD experience. **Category C** applicants may apply for funding to support their own salary; the salary request must be at the first point of the New Post Doctoral Researcher scale (i.e. Level 2A point 1). Please refer to the **SFI Grants Team Member Salary Scale**[20].

Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once the salary requested has been approved and justified. Applicants who are employed at the time of application should specify their current salary in the Research Body letter of support. Unless appropriately justified in the budget justification section and by the letters of support, the salary will be allocated based on the number of years post-PhD of the applicant at the time of application, counting one salary point per year. For example, a Category B applicant with 3 years' experience post-PhD at the time of application will be allocated a salary corresponding to Level 2A Point 4 on the Grants

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[19] Article 25(3) and (4) of GBER
[20] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_October-2022-plus-future-pay-increases-March-and-October-2023-inc-er-prsi-0.1-Oct-2024.pdf

Team Member Budgeting Scale. When information on the current salary is not provided, a salary based on the number of years post-PhD of the researcher will be allocated. Salary requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment of the applicant.

If the salary requested is on the Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow SFI salary scale, an additional formal letter from the Research Body should be supplied describing how Research Fellows are contractually differentiated by the Research Body from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers. Please refer to the **SFI Grant Budget Policy**[21] for further details. It is important to note that the inclusion of a support letter will strengthen but not guarantee funding contributions at Research Fellow level.

Mobility Allowance (all applicants)

A contribution (max. €10,000) towards travel and accommodation costs directly related to the progress of the Fellowship may be requested. Where relevant and justified, these costs can be requested to support:

- Attendance at one relevant international conference. This is limited to €1,500 unless specific costings for a named conference are provided.
- Attendance at one relevant national conference, only where a specific conference is named, and appropriate costs supplied.
- It is now permitted to request up to €500 per annum for research-related resources and/or activities as alternatives to travel (e.g., videoconferencing, communication and file-sharing software), in the budget submitted at the application stage.
- Temporary accommodation costs (in the case of part-time awards). These costs must be relevant and justified.
- In the case of Fellows relocating overseas:
    - Travel to and from the industry partner location at the beginning and end of the Fellowship. Travel costs should be calculated based on the cheapest available public
    - transport option.
    - Visa and health insurance costs related to the relocation of the Fellow.
    - One return trip per year for personal reasons.
- Costs associated with one short visit (e.g., a few weeks) to a location relevant to the award, such as the company's headquarters.
- Costs associated with visits to the Fellow's Research Body e.g., to consult with the academic collaborator, if relevant and fully justified.

Applicants are encouraged to follow SFI's carbon-focused travel hierarchy as outlined in SFI's Guidance for Sustainable Travel, encouraging travel options to be deployed with the lowest carbon emissions.
Requests for day-to-day commuting costs of the Fellow will not be supported.

Should any taxation issue related to these costs arise, it is the responsibility of the Fellow and the Research Body to address it.

Open Access Costs

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[21] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

For Fellowship applications where *additional grant aid* (See Section 3.1.1) is requested for wide dissemination of results, applicants may request open access publishing costs; these costs should be included under the 'Materials' cost heading in the SESAME budget table and must be justified in the budget justification. No other materials or consumables costs will be supported by SFI. All other materials costs should be supported by the industry partner.

Indirect Costs

In addition to the SFI direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect or overhead contribution to the applicant's Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the **SFI requested** direct costs. Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting or facilitating SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. All awards are made directly to the applicant's Research Body[22].

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

Applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget for the project that includes both the SFI requested costs (Fellow salary/teaching buy-out, open access and mobility costs) **and a full breakdown of all the industry partner's costs in supporting the project**. All costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices. In line with State aid requirements, the following costs are eligible:

- **Personnel costs:** researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project. SFI will contribute to the salary costs/teaching buy-out of the Fellow as outlined above. The industry partner costs of its staff working on/contributing to the Fellowship project may be included and should be detailed in the industry partner costs. Eligible costs should include salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs and must be in line with the industry partner's standard remuneration policy.
- **Costs of instruments and equipment** provided by the industry partner to the extent and for the period used for the project. If such instruments and equipment are not used for the full life of the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practices, are considered eligible.
- **Costs of contractual research** and knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's length conditions, as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project.
- **Other operating expenses:** including costs of materials, supplies and similar products incurred directly by the industry partner as a result of the project.

A budget template is provided (available for download on the programme webpage) and must be completed and uploaded onto the SESAME grants system as part of the application. This spreadsheet checks to ensure that the requested SFI budget does not exceed the permitted State aid intensity.

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[22] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

For awarded Fellowships, in line with the submission of the final scientific report, SFI will require confirmation by the industry partner (broken down by cost category) of the remitted monies by the industry partner.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Eligibility of the Research Body

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative coordination of research programmes supported by research grants from SFI. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website. The Research Body will administer the funds of successful awardees[23].

4.2 Eligibility of the Industry Partner

Only one industry partner company per application is permitted.

Eligible industry partner companies:
- Must be a research-active company, with a minimum of one employee engaged in research.
- Must be a private for-profit company located in Ireland or abroad.
- Must have the financial capacity to provide a *minimum* contribution of 20% of total eligible project costs. Please refer to Section 3 above for further details on the company contribution.
- Must possess the appropriate independent infrastructure, revenue and staffing, to provide appropriate working conditions and training to prospective Fellows.
- Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, EirGrid, ESB etc. and their similar counterparts worldwide are eligible industry partners.
- Academic spinouts are eligible industry partners provided they meet all other eligibility criteria, including the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.

Note also that industry employees seconded to Research Bodies, such as Researchers-in-Residence, are not eligible industry mentors.

Non-eligible industry partner companies include:

- Government-funded entities such as hospitals, technology transfer offices of public entities, Government departments or other agencies of the State.
- Charities and not-for-profit organisations.

4.2.1 Undertakings in Difficulty

Under State aid rules **(General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER))**, SFI cannot provide funding for Fellows to be placed with industry partners that are 'undertakings in difficulty'[24]. Industry partners will be required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations to SFI (see Section 14). These documents will be used by SFI to determine the eligibility of the company to receive State aid. Please refer to programme FAQs for the definition of 'undertaking in difficulty'.

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

[24] article 2, no. 18 of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014

4.3 Eligibility Criteria Of The Applicant (Fellow)

There are three categories of applicants:

A) Faculty Researcher

B) Postdoctoral Researcher

and

C) PhD Researcher

Category A and B applicants must be:

- A permanent member of the academic staff ("Faculty researcher") of an eligible Irish Research Body

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OR

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- A former or current contract postdoctoral researcher in an eligible Irish Research Body

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OR

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- The holder of a PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish Research Body.

All Category A and B applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent. Please consult the **SFI Policy of PhD Equivalence**[25] for further information. Note that *the PhD must have either been:*

i) conferred at the time of application. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred i.e., the month and year printed on the official PhD certificate.

> Verification of the official date of conferral/certification of fulfilment of requirements by the awarding University must be available upon request.

<div align="center">

OR

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ii) the applicant has been certified by the awarding University as having fulfilled all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis at the date of submission.

> In the case of ii) above, the applicant's Research Body must confirm in its Letter of Support that the applicant has met the stated requirements.

Category C applicants must be currently registered as a PhD student at an eligible Research Body and be within 6 months of submitting their thesis.

Please note:

- The Fellow remains an employee of the Research Body at all times, *including* during the placement.
- Proposals are not accepted from applicants who wish to be hosted in an organisation in which they have a financial interest or hold a decision-making role (see Section 10 – Disclosure of Conflict of Interest).

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

Specific eligibility criteria for each category of applicant are outlined below:
(A) Faculty Researcher

All Category A Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be a member of the academic staff ("Faculty Researcher") of an eligible Irish Research Body (permanent or with an active contract at the time of application).
- Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent for at least 3 years by the submission deadline. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred i.e., the month and year printed on the official PhD certificate.
- Applicants must be senior author on 3 international peer-reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles, are acceptable.

Additionally:

- Applicants holding a fixed-term contract academic/faculty appointment, including full-time, fixed-term lecturing contracts **of more than 2 years** should apply under Category A. Please note that for these applicants, SFI will not support a Fellowship beyond the end date of their faculty appointment. As such, these applicants are only eligible to apply before the last year of their contract and must ensure that the award duration does not extend beyond the end of the applicant's faculty appointment.
- Applicants holding a fixed-term contract academic/faculty appointment, including full-time, fixed-term lecturing contracts **of less than 2 years** should apply under Category B.

(B) Postdoctoral Researcher

All Category B Applicants must be:

- A postdoctoral researcher (including Research Fellows and holders of personal Fellowships) *currently* working on either an SFI-funded or a non-SFI-funded research, innovation or commercialisation award in an eligible Irish Research Body,

<div align="center">**OR**</div>

- A postdoctoral researcher (including Research Fellows and holders of personal Fellowships) who *previously* held a contract to work on either an SFI-funded or a non-SFI-funded research, innovation or commercialisation award in an eligible Irish Research Body,

<div align="center">**OR**</div>

- The holder of a *PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish Research Body*, who is:
    - i. Not eligible under Category A.
    - ii. Not a current or previous contract postdoctoral researcher, as per the two points above.
    - iii. Not currently employed in industry, either in Ireland or abroad (i.e., the applicant may be based overseas at the time of application).

Additionally:

- Category B applicants currently residing or working abroad are eligible to apply to undertake Fellowships with industry partners based in Ireland only.
- Category B applicants may apply through an eligible Irish Research Body that is different from their current employer. In such cases, the application must be submitted through the prospective employing Research Body, and not the current one.

- Postdoctoral holders of individual Fellowships (e.g. IRC postgraduate scholarships, MSCA Fellowships) must apply under Category B and cannot apply earlier than one year before the end of their Fellowship/contract.

(C) PhD Researcher

All Category C Applicants must:
- Be a PhD student who at the time of application is within the final 6 months of their studies.
- Be registered as a PhD student in an eligible Irish Research Body.
- Have the support of their current PhD supervisor who will act as an academic collaborator on the award.

Please note:
- Successful Category C applicants must have completed their PhD before they commence their Fellowship.

4.4 Eligibility Criteria Of The Industry Mentor

The industry mentor must be an employee of an eligible industry partner company, and have the following:

- Relevant experience working in an industry environment.
- Experience and knowledge of industry processes including operational and business procedures.
- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment appropriate to international standards in their field, industry sector and career stage.

Additionally:
- Academic employees currently seconded on industry partner's premises are not eligible industry mentors.
- Industry employees seconded to Research Bodies, such as Researchers-in-Residence, are not eligible industry mentors.

SFI expects that the industry mentor and Fellow will be located at the same industry partner site during the course of the award; if this is not the case (e.g., for multinational companies with several sites), applicants must provide a full justification for any remote mentoring in the proposal. In addition, a nominated point of contact at the industry partner company who will take responsibility for day-to-day supervision of the Fellow must be named in the industry partner letter of support. Where it is proposed to undertake remote working, (only in cases where it is the policy of the industry partner) a full justification must be provided.

Research Body endorsement certifies that the applicant meets the relevant eligibility criteria. Where an applicant, industry partner or industry mentor fail to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

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5. Research Impact

SFI funds research on behalf of the Government of Ireland. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research. Applicants are required to address the impact of the proposed programme as part of their application.

Defining Impact

Impact can be described as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society[26]. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- Powering an innovative and enterprising economy.
- Creating high-value jobs.
- Attracting, developing and nurturing businesses, scientists and talented people.
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy.
- Enhancing the quality of life, health and creative output.
- Developing the country's international reputation.
- Educating and training the population.
- Solving the major national and global problems and challenges, such as food security and world hunger, climate change, energy security, ageing population, rural sustainability, and other sustainability challenges.

Measuring and assessing impact

SFI recognises that some research projects may have an immediate impact whereas other projects may take much longer to achieve impact. For example, an output such as a filed patent is unlikely to create an impact until the patent is licensed to develop a product, which can then generate revenue and jobs. The adoption of a project output such as a new standard or protocol could improve the performance of an existing business, which could also impact revenue and jobs. The discovery of a new treatment or medical device will have obvious health, as well as potential economic benefits. Enhancing the sustainability of an agricultural or energy system will have societal and environmental impacts as well as potential economic benefits e.g., through resource use efficiency.

6. Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

Following the submission of proposals to the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2024 Call, all proposals will be checked for compliance with: **non-technical** mandatory criteria (e.g., all sections complete, page numbers not exceeded, all letters of support included); **technical** mandatory criteria (e.g., employment/qualification status, publication requirements, alignment with the legal remit of SFI and State aid requirements, and all other relevant eligibility criteria); and any other requirements outlined in the call document. Proposals identified as ineligible at this stage will be declined without

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[26] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/

review. Additionally, SFI will assess the financial documents submitted by the industry partner to determine their eligibility to receive State aid through this programme.

San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)

SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)[27] in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member[28]. To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,[29] SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030[30]. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment[31] and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).[32]

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a 'virtual panel' comprised of a large number of domain-specific international reviewers; where each member of the virtual panel receives a number of proposals, typically six, to review. Proposals are assigned to each reviewer based on expertise. All reviewers engaged by SFI are required to adhere to the **SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**[33]. During the review, three equally weighted review criteria (Quality of the Research and Training Programme; Potential for Impact; Execution and Delivery) are applied by the international reviewers. Please see Table 1 below for further details.

Following the submission of reviews from the virtual panel, all eligible proposals will progress to the second stage of full proposal review. This is undertaken by a sitting panel composed of SFI staff and at least one independent expert engaged by SFI. This panel convenes to discuss each proposal and the postal reviews submitted as part of the first stage of review. Only proposals demonstrating a strong potential for deepening intersectoral engagement, academia-industry exchange of knowledge and upskilling of researchers are recommended for funding by the sitting panel. In the event of applications receiving the same final score when evaluated for their quality, SFI will give priority in the review process to applications from women candidates. If required, further ties will be decided based on the quality of the proposed research plan criterion. SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

The written evaluations provided by the virtual reviewers will be provided as feedback to applicants at the end of the overall review process.

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[27] https://sfdora.org/read/
[28] Contributor level membership
[29] https://www.coalition-s.org
[30] https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/
[31] https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf
[32] https://coara.eu/
[33] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/

Table 1 Evaluation criteria and associated guidance provided to reviewers.

Review Type	SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme
Review Questions	**1. Question pertaining to the Quality of the Research and Training Programme** **Please comment on the following sub-criteria:** • Quality and innovative aspects of the research programme. • Relevance of the sex /gender dimension in the research area. • Quality and innovative aspects of the training programme, where appropriate, including mentoring. • Suitability and/or complementarity of the Fellow's expertise with the research and training programme. *Please note the following guidance:* *Sex and Gender Dimension in Research* **This section should not** include information on gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the research team/environment but should focus on the proposed research. • Has the applicant adequately addressed the sex and/or gender dimension/s in their proposal? Yes/No • If the applicant **has not** included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, are you satisfied that they have justified this position sufficiently? If not, please explain. • If the applicant **has** included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, is the design/analysis described sufficiently rigorously to test for differences between the sexes and/or genders? If not, please explain. • If the applicant is only studying one biological sex and/or gender, has the applicant provided sufficient justification with reference to the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant consideration in their proposal? *Suitability and/or complementarity of the Fellow's expertise with the research and training programme.* SFI became a signatory of the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA)[34] in 2019 and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member[35]. To this end, all types of research output are recognised by SFI and we are committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,[36] SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. SFI is also a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030[37]. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment[38] and thus became a member of the Coalition

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[34] https://sfdora.org/read/
[35] Contributor level membership
[36] https://www.coalition-s.org/
[37] National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum (norf.ie)
[38] https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)[39]. Please take these positions into account during your assessment of the Narrative CV(s) submitted by the applicant(s).

Please rate the quality of the research and training programme, including the Sex and Gender Statement aspects (half scores are permitted**)**

Score Description:

- 1 Quality of research and training is not in line with programme objectives
- 2 Quality of research and training has serious deficiencies
- 3 Quality of research and training is lacking in one or two critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed
- 4 High quality of research and training in most respects
- 5 Outstanding quality of research and training

2. Question pertaining to Potential for Impact

Please comment on the potential impact of the Fellowship. In your assessment, please consider points such as:

- Potential for long-term collaboration and knowledge exchange between the participants, and their commitment to the programme.
- Enhancement of the career perspectives and employability of the Fellow and contribution to their skills development (in the case of Category B and C applicants).
- Potential to shape and inform the future direction of the Fellow's research (in the case of faculty applicants, Category A).
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the results, including IP management plans.

Please rate the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential for impact of the Fellowship (half scores are permitted)

Score Description:

- 1 Very low impact potential
- 2 Low impact potential
- 3 Good impact potential
- 4 High impact potential
- 5 Outstanding impact potential

3. Question pertaining to Execution and Delivery

Please comment on the:

- Coherence and feasibility of the work and training plan. Please note: SFI is entirely supportive of researchers applying to undertake a part-time Fellowship.
- Appropriateness of the infrastructure and mentoring arrangements provided by the industry mentor. Please note where relevant, SFI recommends that reviewers do not differentiate between Fellows being hosted in a microSME or spin-out setting, and those hosted by an SME or MNC once the appropriate facilities/supports are available. SFI values the experience a researcher gains from being embedded in all types of companies.

Please rate the execution and delivery plans

Score Description:

- 1 Execution and delivery plans not credible
- 2 Poor execution and delivery plans
- 3 Good execution and delivery plans
- 4 High execution and delivery plans
- 5 Outstanding execution and delivery plans

4. Question pertaining to Budget and Award Duration

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[39] https://coara.eu/

	Please comment briefly on the appropriateness of the budget and duration requested.
	5. Question pertaining to Ethical Issues Please comment on any ethical issues, particularly related to any aspects of the proposed research that involves animals, human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data.

SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct

Experts engaged by SFI are required to abide by the **SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**[40]. Amongst other requirements, this includes operation in a confidential, fair, independent and equitable manner. Experts are required to confirm, in advance of carrying out their review(s), that they will do so in a confidential manner. The identity of experts who conduct the postal reviews 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 experts involved in the peer-review process.

Adherence to the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct also requires experts to immediately identify and declare where a conflict of interest exists or arises; in such cases, alternative reviewers will be appointed.

Reviewers must adhere to high standards of integrity during the peer-review process. They must not compromise the intellectual property integrity of the application and may not appropriate and use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts or data contained in the applications they review.

7. Deadlines

- Call deadline   26 June 2024 at 13:00 Dublin Local Time

Please note that in addition to the proposal documents, the industry partner is required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations (see Section 14.2 below), which must be emailed to irdif@sfi.ie by a delegated officer of the company by 10 July 2024 These documents will be used to determine eligibility of the industry partner to receive State aid.

Please refer to Appendix A for detailed instructions on how to submit your application through SFI's grant management system SESAME.

8. Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property management practices will be in accordance with national guidelines. In particular, the management of IP arising out of the Industry RD&I Fellowship must comply with the practices and procedures described in the national IP protocol document ***Ireland's National IP***

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[40] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/

Protocol 2019[41]. The arrangements related to the management of IP arising from the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.

An intellectual property rights agreement must be concluded by the Research Body with the relevant industry partner prior to commencement of the research programme.

9. Fellowship Agreement

Fellowship agreements shall be agreed by the Research Body with the industry partner company prior to the commencement of the Fellowship and such agreements shall be provided to the Foundation upon request. The agreement should name a designated point of contact in the Research Body and outline the terms and conditions of the Fellowship including, but not limited to, the working conditions and arrangements of the Fellow, performance management processes, confidentiality, data protection and other specific requirements of the industry partner company. Please note the Fellowship agreement can be incorporated in the intellectual property agreement with the industry partner.

10.   Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants or their supervisors may have a prior relationship with the prospective industry partner (e.g., holding a decision-making role in the company, such as being the CEO or a major shareholder in the company). In the context of applications submitted to SFI that involve industry either directly (e.g., as partners or collaborators) or indirectly (e.g., through engagement for concept/market validation), applicants and Research Bodies should manage any potential conflicts of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that you disclose it to the Foundation and Research Body and that it is managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in the document: *Ireland's National IP Protocol[41]*.

Potential conflicts of interest with respect to any industry partners named in the application should be directly declared within a Conflict-of-Interest Statement. Furthermore, the host Research Body letter of support (see Appendix 1) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.

All applicants are required to submit a Conflict-of-Interest Statement as part of their application. When a potential or perceived conflict of interest arises e.g., when a postdoctoral researcher proposes to carry out a Fellowship in a company where the researcher's current supervisor has a financial interest or decision-making role, these must be disclosed, and a management plan provided in their

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[41] https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/National-IP-Protocol/

Conflict-of-Interest Statement. Where there is no conflict of interest, the applicant must confirm that is the case in their Conflict-of-Interest Statement.

By endorsing the application, the Research Body represents and warrants on its own behalf and on behalf of the applicant, having made reasonable and diligent enquiries, that no conflict of interest (CoI) arises from their participation in the programme and full and frank disclosure has been made in the proposal concerning all pre-existing interests.

Failure to provide a Conflict-of-Interest statement may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

11. SFI Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the GT&Cs[42], applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme. All members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time. Some of the policies listed may not apply to this particular programme (noted with an *).

*Clinical Trials (*not relevant to this programme)*

> Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**[43], 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**[44] and should also ensure that their studies align with the HRPA'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;**[45] that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**,[46] in addition to their respective institutional policies and procedures for handling research misconduct allegations.

Doctoral Education

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[42] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml
[43] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/
[44] http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf
[45] https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IUA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf
[46] https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf

For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2023)**,[47].

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**[48] and must comply with State aid Regulations[49]. The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project and the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the industry partner. IP arrangements should be explicitly described in collaborative research agreements (CRAs).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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

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

In the SFI Strategy 2025 *Shaping Our Future*,[50] targets are set for 35% of SFI's funded leadership positions (PIs & Co-PIs) to be women and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of the underrepresented gender by 2025. As such, applicants should consider and describe how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

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

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in 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 by an SFI award, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.[51]

Appeals Process

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[47] https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2023/02/National-Framework-for-Doctoral-Education-2023.pdf
[48] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/
[49] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/
[50] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy
[51] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/

The Appeals Process Policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.[52]

State aid

Please refer to the **State aid** section (section 3.1) above.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**[53] and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**[54]**.** It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation[55] 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**[56]**.**

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

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[52] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/
[53] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf
[54] http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
[55] https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm
[56] http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/

spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**[57].

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by **Plan S**[58] and as a signatory of the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022- 30[59] , SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI funded research (i.e., where at least one of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), the researcher(s) should adhere to **SFI's Open Access policy.**[60] SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and data gathered through Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies[61]. Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI[62.]   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.

12.   Award Management

12.1 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.

12.2 Progress Reporting Requirements

SFI has stringent requirements for the reporting on awards that it makes. Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk

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[57] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/
[58] https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/
[59]   https://norf.ie
[60]   https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research
[61]   https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/
[62] https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/

of having their grant payments suspended. Failure to report can also prevent future applications being considered for funding. Please refer to SFI's guidance on reporting compliance[63] for further detail.

Industry RD&I Fellowship grant holders will be required to complete the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs, an annual report and a final report (which includes a statement from the industry partner confirming remitted monies in support of their contribution to the total eligible costs of the Fellowship), guidance for which is provided.[64] The purpose of the annual and final reports will be to assess how the award has delivered on the programmatic objectives and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as set out in **SFI's 2025 strategy *Shaping our Future***[65].

Awardees are obliged to keep their SESAME research profile updated since the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs is drawn directly from the data entered into the research profile; this must be updated and completed in January every year[66].

Each of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

Connecting scientific research with potential users through supporting the transfer of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.

Both partners will be requested to illustrate the key areas of expertise acquired as a result of the Fellowship and how this expertise will benefit the relevant groups beyond the funding period. Both partners will be expected to explain how the Fellowship has enhanced the exploitation and commercialisation of Irish State-funded research and/or how the Fellowship has helped solve issues faced by the industry partner. It would be anticipated that as a consequence of this, the award will result in the industry partner gaining new knowledge and identifying growth areas and new market opportunities.

Maximise the economic and societal impact of Irish State-funded research and resources, by enhancing academia-industry collaborations through the funding of collaborative industry-academia projects.

The Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme sets out to provide support for the research community to foster new partnerships with industry, or to enhance existing ones. In this regard, it is anticipated that the Fellowships will result in academic researchers being equipped to participate in more rewarding and ongoing collaborations with innovative businesses and that they will act as a platform to enable industry to garner new networks with academia and academic institutions. Academic awardees will be asked to outline how they benefited from this expertise and knowledge, and how they intend to use this within their group and institution beyond the term of the award/funding period.

Foster impactful innovation by supporting industry-informed research and the exchange of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.

In the scientific information section of the report, awardees are asked to outline the progress with reference to the associated outputs and outcomes from the collaborative research project carried out over the term of the award. Reference should be made to the deliverables outlined in the research

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[63] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-compliance/

[64] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/IRDIF-Reporting-Guidelines_v1.pdf

[65] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/

[66] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/

programme and Gantt charts, where relevant. Furthermore, the report will gather information pertaining to dissemination of research outputs (where additional aid intensity is granted for wide dissemination of results) and key areas of expertise acquired by both partners as a result of the programme, and how this expertise will benefit the relevant groups beyond the term of the award.

Enhance the breadth of training of researchers, and their employability.

It is anticipated that this close alliance between academia and industry will contribute to upskilling the next generation of academic researchers with a broader skill set encompassing business and industry relevant competencies. The Fellowship will enable academic researchers to gain a better understanding of the business requirements and operations central to carrying out research and development activities in industry.

Facilitate increased participation in research, development and innovation by Small, Medium and Large enterprises in the regions across Ireland.

The Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme aims to support companies in enhancing their existing research efforts through collaboration with academic research institutions/bodies. This includes companies of all sizes ranging from micro SMEs and SMEs through to MNCs. The programme provides the opportunity for companies across Ireland, including those that have not previously engaged in collaborative research with the Irish Higher Education system, to participate in the hosting of academic researchers in order to support industry-informed research and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Support companies to build/enhance competitive advantage and future resilience by engaging in research, development and innovation through partnership with academia.

It is anticipated that the collaboration between academia and industry will provide research and innovation opportunities enabling companies to be more resilient and respond to new market opportunities or to consolidate and strengthen existing business practice within their company.

13. Questions

Please read this call document thoroughly. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are available on the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme webpage[67]. For general queries, including eligibility queries, please contact the Research Office of the Research Body you intend to submit your application through. For additional information or clarification, please contact: irdif@sfi.ie.

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[67] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/index.xml

14. Appendix A – Application Procedure

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage early with their Research Office and Technology Transfer Office while preparing their application.

14.1 General Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's online 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.

SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the 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 using the following Internet address:
https://grants.sfi.ie

Please see the **SESAME Researcher User Guide**[68] for more detailed information.

Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the applicant's Research Body before the call deadline.

- **Call deadline**   26 June 2024 at 13:00 Dublin Local Time

> Please note that in addition to the proposal documents, the industry partner is required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations (see Section 14.2 below), which must be emailed to **irdif@sfi.ie** by a delegated officer of the company by **10 July 2024.**These documents will be used to determine eligibility of the industry partner to receive State aid.

Once logged into the SESAME system, the full proposal application form will be available to applicants under the "Applications Pending Action" heading on your workbench.

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Times New Roman 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.
- Uploads to SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**. Please 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 <u>must not</u> exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review**.

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[68] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/

- 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**.
- Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted in call documents or SESAME guidance/instructions. The use of hyperlinks is typically limited to citing information already in the public domain which is non-critical to the evaluation of the proposal. 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 and are cautioned that they should not directly access a website (unless the link to the site was specifically requested in application instructions). When allowed, you must reference the actual URL text so it appears on the page, for example in brackets or in a footnote, rather than hiding the URL behind a specific word or phrase. You must complete all mandatory SESAME profile fields (marked in red) before submitting your application. It is not possible to submit an application without completing all mandatory sections.

Early submission in SESAME is strongly recommended. Applicants who wait until shortly before the close of the call to upload their proposal for Research Body review and approval prior to the deadline, are at serious risk of encountering submission issues. The submit button will cease to be active at the indicated deadline.

Once an application is submitted by the Research Body to SFI, it cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

Please note that the deadlines referred to in the call document refer to submission of the finalised application to SFI by the applicant's Research Office. Research Offices may mandate internal submission deadlines in order to ensure that they have sufficient time to review applications and submit them to SFI.

Applications that are incomplete in content, or exceed the page limit specifications, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

Proposal eligibility checks will be completed by SFI staff.

14.1.1 ORCID ID

ORCID[69] provides a unique digital identifier for researchers which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.

There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD that include:

1. 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.
2. Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
3. Using the ORCID iD assists in making your research works more visible to funders and publishers. It allows you to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

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[69] http://orcid.org/

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Researcher Profile.

For the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2022 Call, you are required to have your SESAME Researcher Profile linked to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted.

14.2 Application Documents

The following documents must be created outside SESAME and uploaded onto the system as PDF documents:

1. Proposal (Upload, max. 6 pages). See Proposal Template in Appendix B.

2. Applicant Narrative CV (Upload, max. 5 pages). A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI (Industry RD&I Fellowship) Programme website[70], must be completed and uploaded. **Please click on "Save Draft" after upload**. The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as that relating to periods of leave from research, where relevant. <u>Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.</u>[71]

3. Industry Mentor CV (Upload; max. 5 pages). While a template is not provided for the industry mentor, SFI aligns its review and evaluation processes with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)[72], which focuses on the quality, impact and variety of outputs arising from research. SFI requests that this and the following areas are considered by the industry mentor in preparing their CV:
- Contribution to the generation and implementation (including the commercialisation) of new knowledge.
- Mentorship, supporting colleagues or teams, demonstration of successful collaborations.
- Evidence of cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary experience.
- If including a publication list, reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are <u>not permitted</u>. **If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

4. References List (max. 1 page). A list of references should be provided, which includes author(s), title of article, name of publication, date of publication, and details (such as volume, pages).

5. Budget Justification (max. 3 pages). The applicant should provide a justification for all eligible project costs including both the SFI supported costs and the industry partner's costs in supporting the project. Please note that costs that are not considered to be fully justified in this section will not be approved for funding. The industry partner costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices.

6. Conflict of Interest Statement (max. 2 pages). See Section 10 of the main call document for details.

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[70] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/
[71] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/
[72] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/

7. Letters of Support (max. 2 pages each). See Section 14.3.7 for details.

8. If relevant, **Academic Collaborator CV (max. 2 pages).** A CV template is provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme website.[73]

Industry partner Documents

The following documents must be confidentially provided by the industry partner to SFI directly by email to irdif@sfi.ie from the industry partner mentor or designated representative before **10 July 2024**. Please ensure that the Applicant's Name and Proposal ID are quoted in the email subject line.

1. Declaration of financial capacity.
2. Declaration of SME status (only required for SMEs).
3. Declaration of solvency.
4. Latest set of financial records (P&L and balance sheet). If the industry partner is not required to produce audited accounts, management accounts signed off by an accountant will be accepted.

Templates for the industry partner documentation are provided in Appendix D and can also be downloaded from Downloads section of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme website.

14.3 Sesame Instructions for Proposal Submission

14.3.1 Applicant Details

- **PhD awarding institution:** Please provide the name of the institution that awarded your PhD.
- **PhD awarding country:** Please provide the country of the institution that awarded your PhD.
- **Applicant category:** You will be asked to select either: *Faculty Researcher* (Category A) or *Postdoctoral Researcher* (Category B) or *PhD Researcher* (Category C)*.* Applicants who are a postdoctoral researcher (Category B applicants) will be asked to select an applicant sub-category based on their current circumstances. Category (B) applicants who are current or previous postdoctoral researchers on a research or commercialisation grant held by an eligible Irish Research Body are requested to name the grant code that is or has been, funding their work.
- **Location of applicant:** Please provide your location at the time of application; select from the drop-down menu.
- **Applicant associated with an SFI Research Centre:** Please indicate whether you are currently associated with an SFI Research Centre and provide the name of the Centre.
- **Supervisory experience:** Please provide details of supervisory experience to date.
- **Current, pending and expired support of applicant:** You must report on any <u>current, pending</u> and <u>expired</u> funding. You must complete the textbox detailing any potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed above, you must <u>clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, referring only to overlap in content</u>.
- **Applicant Narrative CV:** An applicant CV, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme website[65], must be completed and uploaded (max. 5 pages). The template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. **Also, reference to metrics such as**

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[73] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/

journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.

14.3.2 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal title (max. 30 words):** The research proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken, in up to 30 words. Please note that the title should be non-confidential.

- **Duration of award requested:** The duration of the award (in months) should be provided. For full-time Fellowships, the award duration may vary between 1 month and 12 months. For part-time Fellowships, the award duration may vary between 2 months and 24 months.

- **Research Body:** If you are applying through another Research Body you will be asked to select the Research Body that will endorse the proposal.

- **Time commitment to Fellowship:** Indicate the percentage time spent on placement against the total award duration.

- **Duration of placement requested:** The duration of the placement (in months) should be provided. This is the time spent by the Fellow working on their project which should be on the industry partner's premises. Fellows are expected to be embedded in the industry partner's premises and located there for the duration of the placement. The duration of the placement may vary between 1 month and 12 months. The duration of the placement must be 100% of the total award duration for full-time Fellowships (100% time commitment). For part-time Fellowships, the duration of the placement (and related time commitment) is expected to be 50% of the award duration but can vary depending on the needs of the project.

- **Total industry partner costs:** Enter the total value (€) of contributions which the industry partner will commit to the project (this should be the same value as that provided in the budget spreadsheet, see Budget section below).

- **Resubmission statement:** Applications to any call that are based primarily on unsuccessful submissions (following peer review) to any SFI programme must demonstrate that the review comments resulting from the initial application have been taken into account in the preparation of the new submission. Resubmissions that have not clearly taken into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior assessment will be withdrawn without review. You must declare whether this proposal relates to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme. Where the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and references to reviewers' comments must be made where relevant. This statement will assist SFI scientific staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. Resubmissions that have not clearly taken into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior assessment will be withdrawn without review. Please see **SFI Policy on Resubmission of Grant Applications**[74] for further information.

- **Alignment with SFI's legal remit:** You must complete a statement (max. 250 words) justifying how your proposed research is aligned with SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used as part of SFI's determination on the eligibility of the application.

- **Priority area and alignment:** You should select one of the 14 refreshed priority areas from the drop-down menu as the primary priority area, which best describes the proposed research. It is also possible to detail secondary priority areas that the research will be relevant to. Alternatively, applicants may select "Other".

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[74] https://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI_Resubmission-Policy_August-2016.pdf

- **Research area (Primary):** Select a primary research area to which the proposed research best aligns.
- **Research area (Secondary):** Select a secondary research area to which the proposed research best aligns.
- **Research category:** Please select the appropriate research category: *Industrial Research* or *Experimental Development* and provide a justifying narrative for the selected research category (max. 250 words). Please refer to Section 3 of the main call document for definitions of each research category. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the selection of research category with their Technology Transfer Office.
- **Alignment with the objectives of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme:** You must complete a statement (max. 250 words) outlining how the proposed project is aligned with the objectives of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.

14.3.3 Collaborator(s) Details

ADD INDUSTRY MENTOR

Information on the industry mentor must be added in this section. Clicking on the "Add" button will open a form into which details about the industry partner should be completed. Ensure that "Industry" is selected in the 'Collaborator Type' drop-down menu. Once details regarding the name and affiliation of the industry partner have been added, you must click on 'Assign Collaborator' and then save, which is achieved by clicking on the 'Save Draft' button at the bottom of the application form.

It will be possible to upload the industry mentor's CV (max. 5 pages) by clicking on the appropriate button. The use of a template is not mandatory for Collaborator CVs; however, we suggest that the Collaborator Narrative CV template available on the programme webpage is used[75].

Additional industry mentors are not permitted on SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship applications.

ADD ACADEMIC COLLABORATOR

Category C applicants must include at least one academic collaborator on their application who must be their current PhD supervisor and be based in the applicant's *Research Body. A second academic collaborator may be included where their expertise is relevant to the Fellowship project, this individual is not required to be based in the applicant's host Research Body.*

Category B applicants may *choose* to include one academic collaborator from their Research Body. This individual may provide intellectual and/or technical contributions to the proposed research or may act in the capacity of a mentor to the Fellow. The role of the academic collaborator must be clearly outlined in the proposal. The academic collaborator may not receive funding through the grant.

Clicking on the "Add" button will open a form into which details about the academic collaborator should be completed. Ensure that "Academic" is selected in the 'Collaborator Type' drop-down menu. Once details regarding the name and institution of the academic collaborator have been saved it will

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[75] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/

be possible to upload the academic collaborator's CV (max. 2 pages) by clicking on the appropriate button. A template CV can be downloaded from the programme webpage and must be used.

COMPANY INFORMATION

You will be asked to indicate if your industry partner is located in the Republic of Ireland and if so, state the county in which they are based. Information on the company (industry partner) must be added in this section including annual turnover, type of organisation (Small, Medium, Large enterprise) a description of the organisation and business sector (max. 1000 words) and details on the number of employees in the company.

14.3.4 MAIN BODY OF PROPOSAL
- **Keywords (max. 15 words):** Please list the keywords/phrases from the research discipline or sub-discipline that best describe the research proposed in the application.
- **Scientific abstract (max. 200 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary, in <u>technical language</u>, of the proposed work. Confidential information should **not** be included in the scientific abstract.
- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary in lay, <u>non-technical language</u> of the proposed work. Confidential information should **not** be included in the lay abstract.
- **Fellowship proposal (max. 6 pages):** The proposal <u>must</u> be a maximum of 6 pages in total (excluding references) and <u>must</u> be structured under the headings and sub-headings described in Appendix B. This document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF.
- **References (max. 1 page):** This document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF.
- **Conflict of Interest statement (max. 2 pages):** This document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF.

14.3.5 Ethical Issues
All applicants, in particular those expecting to carry out research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data, are required to complete an ethical issues questionnaire within SESAME, which forms part of the application. The project proposal section must include 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 related to such studies is provided on the SFI website[76]. For any studies where research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data will be conducted outside of Ireland, applicants must ensure that this research will comply with both Irish legislation and the legislation of the jurisdiction in which the work takes place.

SFI will require evidence that relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been granted for studies involving human or animal subjects prior to an award commencing. In cases where such research does

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[76] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/

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.

Sex and gender dimension in research statement (max. 1000 words).

In accordance with the SFI External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy[77], all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues[78] 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.

Clinical trials

Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.

14.3.6 Proposed Budget

Please note that the **Budget Table** is located at the end of the full proposal application in SESAME. **See notes for completion in the SESAME Users Guides**[79] **and within SESAME.**

Applicants are required to complete two budget templates for this programme:

1) A SESAME budget table detailing the SFI requested costs (the industry partner costs should NOT be included in the SESAME budget table) and

2) A detailed budget, which includes the industry partner costs as well as the SFI requested costs, using a Microsoft Excel budget template provided, this must be **uploaded as an attachment** to the proposal in the SESAME.

SFI BUDGET TABLE

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[77] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[78] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/
[79] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

- **Staff: Teaching Buy-out (Category A applicants only)**
  Teaching buy-out can be requested for when the Fellow (Category A) is located on the industry partner's premises, but only for Fellowships of >3 months duration**.** Teaching buy-out costs should be fully justified, detailing the number of hours per week of teaching buy-out. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

- **Staff: Salary (Category B and C applicants only)**
  Category B and C applicants may apply for funding to support their own salary. Salary requests for Category B applicants should be in line with their number of years post-PhD experience. Salary requests for Category C applicants must be at the first point of the New Post Doctoral Researcher scale (i.e. Level 2A point 1). Please refer to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**[80].

- **Travel: (Category A, B and C applicants)**
  A contribution (max. €10,000) towards travel and accommodation costs directly related to the progress of the Fellowship may be requested (see eligible costs under Section 3).

- **Materials and Consumables: (Category A, B and C applicants)**
  Applicants who request additional aid intensity in return for the wide dissemination of results may request open access costs. Applicants should consult with SFI's Grant General Terms & Conditions[81], Open Access Policy and Publishing guidelines[82] to ensure when they come to publish their research outputs, that their chosen publication platform or journal is compliant with SFI's Open Access policy and associated requirements. As per SFI's Grant Budget Policy[83], funds can be requested to pay Article Processing Charges (APCs) for Plan S compliant OA journals. SFI will not offer specific additional funding for Open Access charges outside of your grant budget. SFI encourages grant holders to consider the appropriateness of an APC and to satisfy themselves that the cost associated with an APC is justified. Note all other materials and consumables costs should be met by the industry partner.

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

In addition to the SFI-requested budget, applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget that includes both the SFI requested costs (Fellow salary/teaching buy-out and mobility costs) and a full breakdown of all the industry partner's costs in supporting the project. A budget template is provided on the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme webpage[84] and must be completed and uploaded onto the SESAME grants system as part of the application. This spreadsheet checks to ensure that the requested SFI budget does not exceed the permitted aid intensity (see total eligible project costs under Section 5).

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[80] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_October-2022-plus-future-pay-increases-March-and-October-2023-(1).pdf

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

[82] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/

[83] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

[84] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (MAX. 3 PAGES)

All information required to complete the budget justification can be found in Section 7 of the **SFI Grant Budget Policy** [85]. Details of the industry partner costs should be included.

Please include the salary scale (as per **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**) for Category B applicants.

14.3.7 Letters Of Support

Category A Applicants (Faculty Researchers)

The following letters of support should be provided by Category A Applicants:

- **Research Body letter of support [mandatory].** The Research Body submitting the application must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the suitability of the applicant's expertise for the proposed research project and comment on the industry mentor's expertise. The letter should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of Conflicts of Interest. It is recommended, where possible, that this letter is signed by both the applicant's Head of School/Department and Vice-President for Research (or equivalent).
- **Industry Mentor letter of support [mandatory].** The industry mentor must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the relevance of the applicant's expertise to the proposed research project. The industry mentor must also describe how they will provide the required infrastructure and capability to host the Fellow for the duration of the programme. The industry partner's financial contribution should be detailed in the letter of support and correspond to the detailed project budget spreadsheet submitted as part of the application**.**
- **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) letter of support [mandatory].** A signed letter of support from the Research Body's TTO should indicate that the TTO is aware of the proposed Fellowship and highlight any relevant IP issues or discussions. The letter is expected to describe how the IP generated by the project will be protected and managed. For the purpose of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, the IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body, and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.
- **Statement from an SFI-funded applicant [where relevant].** If you are already the holder of an active SFI award, a signed statement must be submitted describing how this programme will not negatively impact on the activities of all active SFI awards in which you are involved, how these awards will be managed for the duration of the Fellowship and what arrangements will be put in place for the supervision of associated team members. If you have previously held an SFI Industry Fellowship award, describe the added benefit to your career of the proposed Fellowship.
- **Centre Director letter of support [where relevant].** If you are a co-PI in a SFI Research Centre, a signed letter of support from the Centre Director, indicating their support for the application and describing what arrangements will be put in place such that temporary departure from the Centre will not negatively impact on the activities of the award.

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[85] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

Category B and C Applicants (Postdoctoral and PhD Researchers)

The following letters of support should be provided by Category B and C Applicants:

- **Research Body letter of support [mandatory].** The Research Body submitting the application must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the suitability of the applicant's expertise for the proposed research project and comment on the industry mentor's expertise. Where an applicant has previously held an SFI Industry Fellowship award, the added benefit of the proposed Fellowship to the applicant's career should be described. For Category B applicants, this letter of support **must** include details of the postdoctoral researcher's current funding award, details of the funding body and details of the postdoctoral researcher's current remuneration level as aligned to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**[86]. The letter should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of Conflicts of Interest. It is recommended, where possible, that this letter is signed by both the applicant's Head of School/Department and Vice-President for Research (or equivalent).
- **Industry Mentor letter of support [mandatory].** The industry mentor must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the relevance of the applicant's expertise to the proposed research project. The industry mentor must also describe how they will provide the required infrastructure and capability to host the Fellow for the duration of the programme. The industry partner's financial contribution should be detailed in the letter of support and correspond to the detailed project budget spreadsheet submitted as part of the application.
- **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) letter of support [mandatory].** A signed letter of support from the Research Body's TTO should indicate that the TTO is aware of the proposed Fellowship and highlight any relevant IP issues or discussions. The letter is expected to describe how the IP generated by the project will be protected and managed. For the purpose of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, the IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body, and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.
- **Academic Collaborator letter of support [where relevant for Category B applicants].** A signed letter of support (max. 2 pages) from any named academic collaborator. [Please note that the inclusion of an academic collaborator is optional for Category B applicants]. Letters from academic collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. Letters of support that do not originate from the officially listed academic collaborator will be removed from the proposal. The letter should include a statement outlining how the collaborator will provide added value to the proposal.
- **Academic Collaborator letter of support [mandatory for Category C applicants].** Category C applicants must include their current PhD supervisor as an academic collaborator. The academic collaborator must provide a signed letter of support (max. 2 pages) in which they confirm their support for the application and also confirm that the applicant is within the final 6 months of their PhD studies, providing an estimated date of completion. In addition, the letter should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. A second academic collaborator may be named if appropriate.

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[86] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales-effective-January-2022.pdf

- **Research Fellow salary justification [where relevant]**. If the salary requested is on the Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow SFI salary scale, an additional formal letter from the Research Body should be supplied describing that you will be contractually differentiated by the Research Body from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers. Please refer to the **SFI Grant Budget Policy**[87] for further details. It is important to note that the inclusion of a support letter will strengthen but not guarantee funding contributions at Research Fellow level.

14.3.8 View Proposal Prior to Submission

A PDF of your proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable you to validate your application. The responsibility lies with the applicant in this regard. Submission is made initially to your local Research Office for approval, prior to submission by the Research Office to SFI. Please contact your Research Office well in advance to obtain registration details for SESAME and familiarise yourself with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

You will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of your proposal changes. Alternatively, if you wish to track the status of your proposal e.g., proposal pending Research Office approval or under review at SFI, this information will be displayed in SESAME.

14.3.9 Applicant Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions

It should be noted that Research Body submission of an application represents their approval of an application and confirms that the SFI Grant General Terms & Conditions have been read and understood.

Submission of an application confirms that **SFI's Grant General Terms & Conditions**[88] have been read and understood; that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland; that no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and that all details provided are correct; that the information supplied in the application is correct and the research proposal is the applicant's own work. Failure to do so, or to comply with requirements outlined in this call document, will deem an application ineligible resulting in its withdrawal prior to expert review. SFI's Grant Conditions shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement. Research Body Approval

Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

- The eligibility of the applicant.
- That the applicant is, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of the Research Body for the duration of the grant.
- That the requested SFI budget including salaries/stipends, teaching buy-out and travel are in line with accepted institutional guidelines.
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the applicant in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.

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[87] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/
[88] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/

- That relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been or will be sought and must 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 and expired grants, as detailed in the application, are valid and accurate.

15. Appendix B – Proposal Template

The proposal must be a maximum length of 6 pages in total (excluding references). All text in uploaded PDFs should be provided in Times New Roman 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.

The proposal content <u>must</u> be structured under the following 3 headings and address each sub-heading:

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1) Research & Training
- **Challenge:** Describe the research/technological challenges to be addressed and their relevance to the industry partner's activities.
- **State of the art:** Describe the current state of the art in the area.
- **Research programme**: Describe the novelty and/or innovative aspects of the research programme, including work packages
- **Training plan:** detail any training activities as appropriate.
- **Applicant and Mentor**: Describe the mentor's expertise and business sector, and how the Fellow's expertise is suitable to carry out the proposed research programme.

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2) Impact
- Describe the potential for long-term collaboration between the participants, and their commitment to the programme.
- Describe how the Fellowship will enhance the career perspectives and employability of the Fellow and how it will contribute to their skills development.
- Describe how the proposed research will impact on the industry partner's activities.
- Describe the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the results, including intellectual property (IP) management measures.
- Applications where additional grant aid is requested for wide dissemination of results must detail how results will be disseminated.

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3) Execution & Delivery
- Describe how the research programme will be implemented (include a Gantt chart).
- Describe the supervision and mentoring arrangements, including risk management.
- Describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the mentor. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, including the equipment and materials that will be available.

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16. Appendix C – Industry Partner Financial Declarations & Templates

1) Declaration of Financial Resources

On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABILITY FOR THE PROJECT

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director / (or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called "the Industry Partner") confirm to Science Foundation Ireland that the Industry Partner has access to an amount of _____ in place to meet the costs of the project outlined in the applicant's grant application to the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2024.

Managing Director/Finance Director

(or equivalent): (Print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

2) SME Declaration- *only required for small/medium companies*

<mark>On Company Letterhead</mark>

DECLARATION OF SME STATUS*

Industry Partner Identification:

Name or Business Name	
Address (of registered office)	
Company Registration Number	
VAT Number	
Names & titles of the principal director(s)	

Data used to determine the category of enterprise:

Reference period (**):		
Headcount *	**Annual Turnover (€) ***	**Balance Sheet Total (€) ***

Signature:

Name & position of the signatory authorised to represent the enterprise.

_____

I declare that the information provided above is a true and accurate reflection of the size of the enterprise.

I declare that in case of change affecting the SME status of the enterprise, I will immediately inform the Research Body.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

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*Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the EU recommendation 2003/361. Data must be related to the last approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. In the case of a newly established enterprise whose accounts are not yet approved, the data should be derived from a reliable estimate made during the course of the year.
** Headcount number of full-time equivalent employees.
*** Please submit a copy of your company's most recent financial and management accounts (Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet signed off by an accountant)

3) Declaration of Solvency

DECLARATION OF SOLVENCY

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director/(or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called "the Industry Partner ") wish to assure Science Foundation Ireland that I am unaware at this time of any issue that could present a threat to the solvency of the Industry Partner.

I declare, based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, that the Industry Partner can meet its financial obligations and does not envisage any challenge to this situation in the immediate future. I believe the Industry Partner will continue to operate as a going concern.

Furthermore, I am not, at this time, aware of any undisclosed matter which could be damaging to the financial interests of the Industry Partner, including a pending litigation.

I commit to informing Science Foundation Ireland via the Research Body immediately should such a situation arise. In accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/20144 as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315I declare that the company is NOT:

- An undertaking subject to a recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market,

- a limited liability company where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,

- a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company, where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,

- an undertaking which is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors,

- an undertaking which has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan,

- an SME regarding which, for the past two years, it's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7,5 and its EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1,0. I understand that any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements knowingly made by me to Science Foundation Ireland may result in the grant being revoked, demand for grant repayment and current and future grant applications being deemed ineligible by Science Foundation Ireland.

Managing Director/Finance Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

17. Appendix D – Industry RD&I Fellowship Proposal Checklist

SECTION	*DESCRIPTION*	*REQUIREMENTS*
	Proposal title (max. 30 words)	Max. 30 words
	Proposal ID	Autogenerated
	Research Body	
Applicant Details	Applicant name	
	Department	
	Applicant Research Body	
	Address details	
	Telephone	
	Email	
	Year of PhD	
	Gender	
	Location of applicant at time of submission	
	Applicant associated with an SFI Research Centre	If Yes - Specify Research Centre name or proposal ID
	PhD awarding institution (name and country)	
	Applicant category	
	Applicant sub-category	
	Grant number of current or previous employing grant	
	Name of current or previous supervisor	Category B/C applicants
	Applicant's current or previous contract expiry date	Category B applicants
	Expected Date of Submission of PhD thesis	Category C applicants only
Proposal summary	Duration of grant requested (in months)	1-24 months
	Time commitment to Fellowship (percentage time spent on placement against the total award duration)	
	Placement duration	1-12 months
	Total Industry Partner Costs (€)	
	Does your proposal relate to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme? If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided below, making reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI scientific staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers:	Yes/ No
	Resubmission statement	Max. 1000 words
Research Alignment	Primary Priority Area	
	Secondary Priority Area	
	Research Area - Primary	

	Research Area - Secondary	
	Please describe how your proposal is aligned with SFI's legal remit	Max. 250 words
	Please describe how your proposal is aligned with the remit of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme	Max. 250 words
	Select Research Category	
	Please provide justifying narrative for the selected Research Category	Max. 250 words
Applicant Details & supervisory experience	Supervisory experience	
	Narrative CV (PDF upload)	Max. 5 pages (use template provided)
Research Funding	For each current and pending grant listed above, clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, referring only to overlap in content (max. 1000 words)	Max. 1000 words
	Please confirm that you have completed the research funding section or that you have no current, pending or expired funding.	Yes/No
Collaborator Details Industry Mentor	Organisation	Name of company
	Department	
	Prefix	Select title
	First name	Insert name of industry mentor
	Last name	
	Job title	
	Collaborator type	'Industry' must be selected
	Email	
	Address	
	City	
	Country	
	Postal code	
	Industry mentor CV (PDF upload)	Max. 5 pages
Collaborator Details Academic Collaborator	Organisation	
	Department	
	Prefix	Select title
	First name	Insert name of academic collaborator
	Last name	
	Job title	
	Collaborator type	'Academic' must be selected
	Email	
	Address	
	City	
	Country	
	Postal code	
	Narrative CV (PDF upload)	Max. 2 pages

Company Information	Company name	
	Location of Company	
	Annual turnover (€)	
	Organisation type	
	Organisation description/Business sector	Max. 1000 words
	Total number of employees (FTEs)	
	Number of employees in R&D (FTEs)	
	Independently owned premises	Yes/No
	Irish Owned	
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
	Fellowship proposal (PDF upload)	Max. 6 pages
	References (PDF upload)	Max. 1 page
	Conflict of Interest Statement	Max. 2 pages
Ethical Issues	Does your research involve the use of animals?	Yes/No
	Does your research involve human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data?	Yes/No
Sex/Gender Dimension in Research	Is there a sex and/or gender dimension to be considered in your research proposal?	Yes/No
	If yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal.	Max. 1000 words
	If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.	Max. 1000 words
Budget	Research Category (Grand aid intensity 1)	Drop-down
	Company Size (Grant aid intensity 2)	Drop-down
	Dissemination (Grant aid intensity 3)	Drop-down
	Requested Grant Aid (%)	
	Please indicate the requested salary level (point on scale)	Drop-down
	SFI requested budget	Budget table
	Budget Justification (PDF upload)	Max. 3 pages
	Detailed project budget (Excel upload)	
Letter(s) of Support	Category A (Faculty Researchers)	Research Body	PDF upload max. 2 pages
		Industry Mentor	
		Technology Transfer Office	
		Statement from SFI-funded applicant (where relevant)	
		Centre Director (SFI Research Centre co-PIs only)	
		Research Body	
		Industry Mentor	

	Category B & C (Postdoctoral/ PhD Researchers)	Technology Transfer Office	
		Academic Collaborator (where relevant)	
		Research Body (Research Fellows only)	

Viewing the PDF of your application prior to submission allows you to verify content.

There is no system validation on multiple upload file fields as the number of documents required may vary for each application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.