

SFI Research Centres Reporting Requirements

February 2017

1. Introduction

SFI's Agenda 2020¹ strategy aims to position Ireland as a global knowledge leader. A key objective of Agenda 2020 is to develop a set of world-leading, large-scale Research Centres that will provide major economic impact for Ireland. The SFI Research Centres Programme was launched in 2012 to achieve this objective. Furthermore, Innovation 2020¹, Ireland's five-year strategy on research and development, science and technology, has a commitment to "*further develop the network of Centres, building critical mass and addressing enterprise needs*". Seven Research Centres were funded as a result of the first Research Centres Call in 2012, and five were funded as a result of the second call in 2013. The SFI investment in the twelve Centres is the largest investment that SFI has ever made in a single programme. Stringent reporting requirements have been put in place so that SFI can determine whether the Research Centres have delivered on undertakings submitted as part of their original proposal and furthermore, if they have surpassed original objectives, including but not limited to academic publications, trainees, cost share targets, targets set against defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), leveraged funding etc. This document provides a description of the Research Centre reports, and the reporting schedule to which Research Centres must adhere.

2. Reports and Submission Schedule

The following reports are required:

- Monthly SESAME update on the status of the Collaborative Research Agreements (CRAs) with Industry
- Annual Report
- Half yearly Governance Report
- Half yearly KPI Report (performance against targets)
- SESAME Research Profile update
- Half yearly SESAME Financial Reports

The submission schedule for all the Research Centre reports is outlined in Figure 1. Research Centres must adhere to the deadline dates.

Please note that the seven 2012 Research Centres (AMBER, APC, INFANT, IPIC, Insight, MaREI, SSPC) DO NOT have to submit an annual report in March 2017 or a governance report in May 2017. This is because as part of the submission of a proposal for Phase 2 funding, they must submit a Progress Report. The Progress Report must capture the outputs, achievements and impact of the Centre from the start date of the award to the date of report submission, a time span of four years.

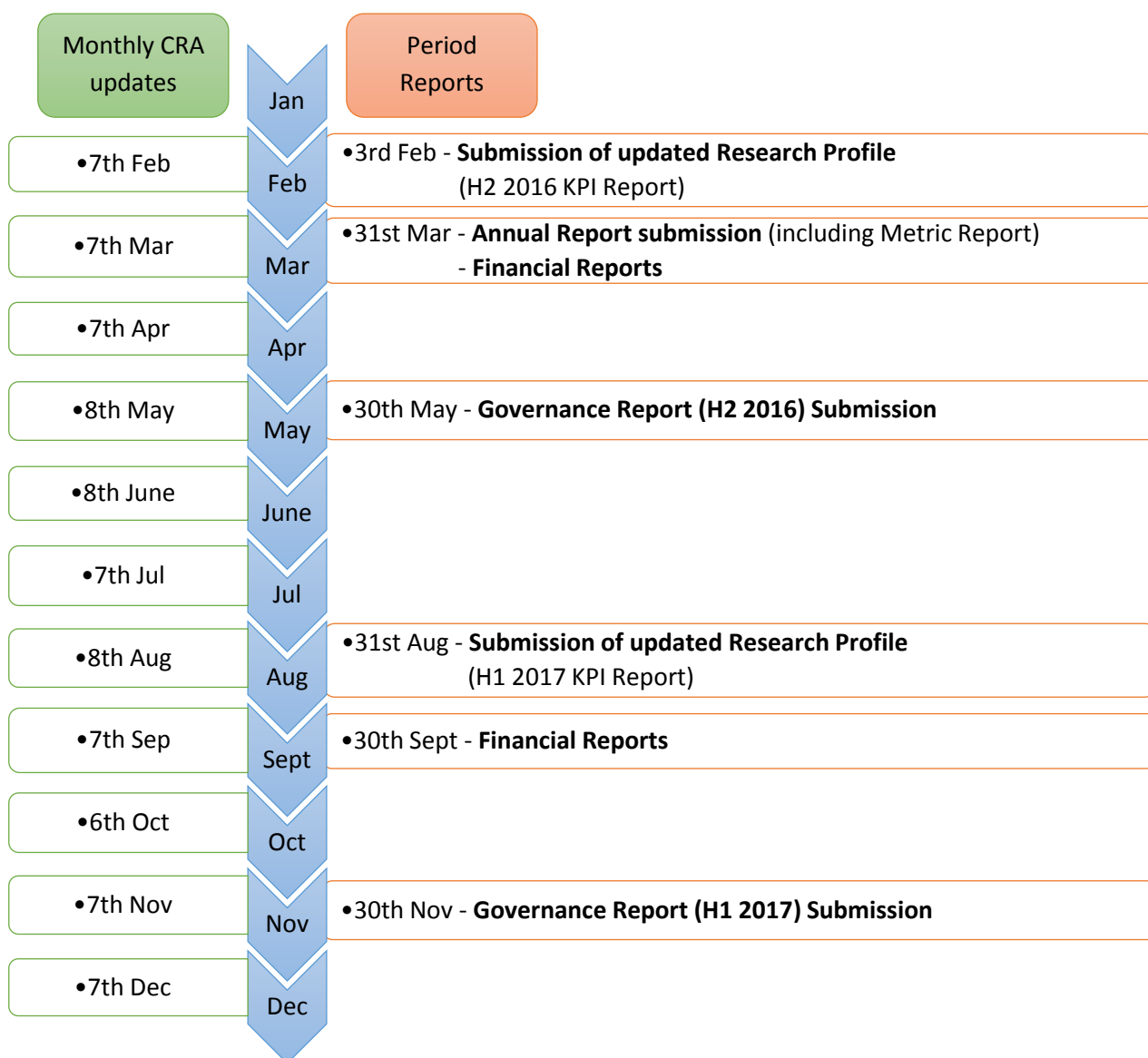


Figure 1 Submission schedule for all Research Centre reports

3. SESAME Research Profile

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for all SFI reporting. Each Research Centre has a Research Profile which is generally managed by an “Award Administrator”. The Award Administrator will have a separate logon account to SESAME and will be responsible for uploading data regularly.

The Research Profile captures all of the relevant activities of the Research Centre, its Co-PIs, Funded Investigators and their team members.

The Research Centres are strongly encouraged to keep their Research Profiles up-to-date on an on-going basis as this will facilitate real-time reporting of the Centre activities, especially given that the monthly Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) status updates, KPI and Metrics reports are all

drawn directly from the data entered into the Research Profile. In turn, this data feeds into the Annual Report and Governance Reports, as indicated in Figure 2.

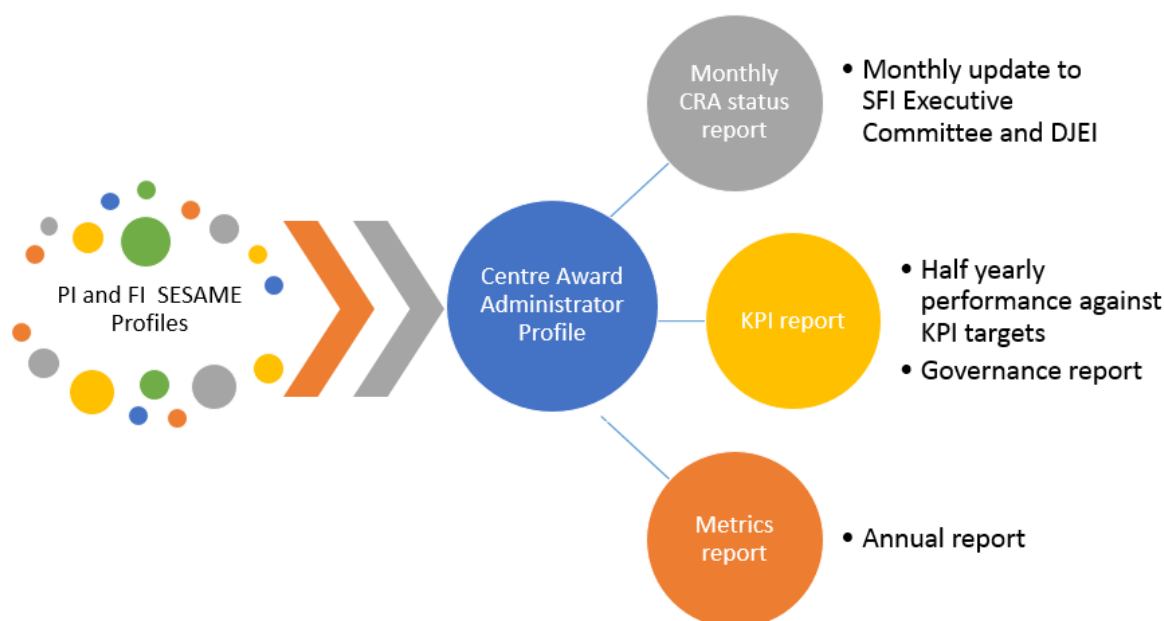


Figure 2 Flow of information through SESAME into required reports

The Research Profile allows Research Centres to capture and report on a wide range of activities, which include:

- Significant Distinctions / Awards
- Funding Diversification
- Team Members
- Innovation & Commercialisation Activities
- Publications & Proceedings
- Presentations
- Academic Collaboration
- Non-Academic Collaborations
- Conferences / Workshops / Seminars Organised
- Outreach Initiatives
- SFI Funding Ratio
- Education & Public Engagement (EPE)
- Technical Reports

To try to alleviate some of the burden of this process on the Centre Award Administrators, SFI has provided a reporting facility to the Centre Administrators that allows them to extract the outputs of Centre researchers directly from their individual Research Profiles, subject to the permission of each researcher. An upload facility is provided to allow bulk entry of this data, once collated. Details on the data upload facility, the KPI and the Metrics reports are provided separately on the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#).

Although the Research Profile can be updated at any time, there are two dates during the year when SFI captures the Research Centres' data in order to perform an analysis of the Centres' outputs/activities for the previous 6-month period (KPI Report). As indicated on Figure 1, this is typically done early February and at the end of August in any given year.

4. SESAME Attributions

All outputs reported in SESAME must have either a primary or secondary attribution to the specific SFI award.

- The primary attribution should reflect the main award that has contributed to the output.
- The secondary attribution reflects other sources of funding that have contributed to the same output.

Therefore, outputs which can be directly accredited to the Centre's research activities should have a primary attribution to the Research Centre. Outputs that are a product of research activities undertaken as part of a Spokes award or a US-Ireland Centre-to-Centre (C2C) award should have a primary attribution to the Spoke/C2C award and a secondary attribution to the Research Centre.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Director to ensure that the Research Profile is up to date with all outputs attributable to the Centre's research. Attributions will be reviewed periodically by SFI and will be made available to reviewers in advance of progress site reviews, so it is important to ensure that attributions are correctly assigned.

5. Half yearly performance against KPI targets

The twelve SFI Research Centres (RC)s were funded with a primary objective to deliver significant economic and societal impact to Ireland. As was clearly outlined in the original call documents, *"The performance of the SFI Research Centres programme as a whole will be strongly driven by numerical indicators. Each Research Centre will be expected to set targets for the relevant indicators, and will be continually measured against these targets"*. As was stated in the official Letters of Offer **"The Investigators shall maintain an industry cost-share of the centre budget of not less than 10% cash and not less than 30% in total (cash and in-kind) for each individual calendar year of the Award"**.

The Centres were required to set ambitious targets against fifteen Key Performance Indicators (KPI)s. The 15 KPIs are reported and validated with Research Centres on a 6-monthly basis. Very recently, a new KPI for Education and Public Engagement (EPE) has been added and Centres must report on this KPI from January 2017 onwards. Therefore, **from 2017 onwards Research Centres will report against 16 KPIs.**

Thirteen of the KPI results can be captured directly from SESAME by running the "KPI Report" between any two given dates. The KPI report will only ever be as accurate as the data that is entered into the Research Centre's Research Profile on SESAME. Although the Research Profile can be updated at any time, there are two dates during the year when SFI captures the Research Centres' data in order to perform an analysis of the Centres' outputs/activities for the previous 6-month period (KPI Report). As indicated on Figure 1, this is typically done early February and at the end of August in any given year.

The three finance-related KPIs, namely “Cash in Bank”, “%Industry Cost Share (cash)” and “%Industry Cost Share (total)” are calculated from cash and in-kind actually received through the Targeted Projects. This data is captured from the detailed financial reports which are submitted to the SFI Finance Director in March and September of each year (Figure 1). Once the financial data is analysed and validated, SFI scientific staff combine the financial data with the SESAME reported KPIs into a single KPI table. This table is then sent to the Research Centre Directors with a table containing the 16 KPI results against target. Cumulative results of the Research Centre’s overall KPI performance up to that date are also circulated. This KPI table should be discussed and approved at the Governance Committee meetings.

Details of the KPIs and the submission process for the KPI targets are described in the document entitled “*Research Centres Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Targets*” [Research Centres Award Management](#).

6. Annual Reports

Annual Reports are typically due on the last working day of March (Figure 1), and will cover the period January 1st – December 31st of the previous year. The annual report is uploaded as a PDF document to SESAME by the Centre Director. The SFI Research Centres Annual Report template can be downloaded from the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#).

The **Metrics Report** generated by SESAME provides a detailed overview of Centre data, based on the information provided in the Research Profile. This report should be run for the reporting period in question and appended to the Annual Report prior to being uploaded. Guidance is available on the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#).

Please note that due to the current Phase 2 Call for Proposals involving the seven Research Centres awarded in 2012, there is no requirement for these seven Centres (AMBER, APC, INFANT, IPIC, Insight, MaREI, SSPC) to submit an Annual Report as progress will be reviewed using the Progress Report which will be submitted in conjunction with their applications for Phase 2 funding.

7. Governance Reports

Each Research Centre’s Governance Committee meets at least twice per year, typically during March/April and Sept/Oct.

Arising from these meetings, the Governance Committee compiles a number of documents:

- A Governance Report which focuses on the KPI report from SESAME and specifically comments on the Centre’s performance against the KPI targets.
- Minutes of the meetings of the Governance Committee, Scientific Advisory Board and Industry Advisory Board
- A supporting letter from the relevant host Research Body President

These documents and reports are submitted by the Centre Director on behalf of the President via e-mail at the end of May and the end of November (Figure 1). The May Governance Report should reflect

activity in H2 of the previous year whilst the November Governance Report should reflect activity in H1 of the current year.

The reason for an approximate 5-month time-lag between the end of the relevant reporting period and the report submission is the delay required in submission and validation of the financial reports. The financial reports are vital for the reporting of the cost share KPIs, namely Cash in Bank, % Industry cost Share (total) and % Industry cost Share (cash).

A more detailed description of the Governance structures and meeting schedule can be found in a separate, companion document, entitled *“Research Centres Management and Governance - Requirements”*.

Specific details on the format for the Governance Report can be found in the document entitled *“SFI Research Centres – Governance Report”* on the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#).

The seven 2012 Research Centres (AMBER, APC, INFANT, IPIC, Insight, MaREI, SSPC) DO NOT have to submit a governance report in May 2017 as they will be focussed on submission of their proposals for Phase 2 funding. It is however expected that the Governance Committee will meet as scheduled and review the KPI report. Minutes of the meeting should be submitted as part of the November governance report.

8. Monthly Industry Reports

SFI Research Centres are required to provide monthly updates on the status of their industry collaborative research agreements (CRA) including contracts in preparation, under discussion or signed with industry partners. From January 2017 onwards, any updates to CRAs must be made directly on SESAME before COB on the 5th working day of each month (Figure 1). The metrics provided by each Centre are combined for further analysis for monthly reporting to the SFI Executive Committee. To that end, it is essential that Research Centres provide their metrics in a clean and consistent fashion. Guidance is available on the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#) under the title “Guidelines for Completion of Monthly Reports on Industry Collaborative Research Agreements (CRAs)”.

9. Financial Reporting

The Research Centres are required to submit a number of financial reports as outlined below:

Financial Report

This report compares SFI expenditure incurred on the main Research Centre award against the SFI budget. An analysis of the various categories of staff against the agreed budget together with an analysis of equipment purchased in excess of €10k is also required.

This report is submitted by the Research Body via SESAME on a biannual basis based on expenditure incurred at June and December with a deadline for submission of September and March.

Research Centre Expenditure Report

This report analyses SFI and industry expenditure incurred in the Research Centre during the reporting period. Industry expenditure is broken down as follows:

- (i) partially funded collaborative research
- (ii) wholly funded collaborative research
- (iii) donations
- (iv) additional Spokes awards

As with the Financial Report, the Research Centre Expenditure Report is submitted on a biannual basis based on expenditure incurred at June and December with a deadline for submission of September and March, respectively. This report is submitted by the Research Centre to the Finance and Operations Directorate of SFI via email.

Industry Partner Cost Share Report

This report must be completed by each industry partner who engages in a project with the Research Centre.

This report documents the cost share (cash and in-kind) received by the Research Centre from the industry partner. The cost share received must be in accordance with the cash and in-kind definitions as outlined in the SFI Research Centres KPI Targets document available on the SFI website under [Research Centres Award Management](#) under the title “Guidelines for Completion of Monthly Reports on Industry Collaborative Research Agreements (CRAs)”.

As with the Financial Report, the Industry Partner Cost Share Report is submitted on a biannual basis based on cost share received at June and December with a deadline for submission of September and March, respectively. This report is submitted initially by the Industry Partner to the Research Centre for approval, prior to submission to the Finance and Operations Directorate of SFI via email.

Consolidated Industry Partner Cost Share Report

This report provides a summary of all the individual Industry Partner Cost Share reports received by the Centre with the cost share categorised as follows:

- (i) partially funded collaborative research
- (ii) wholly funded collaborative research
- (iii) donations and
- (iv) separate Spokes awards.

The figures in this report are used to calculate whether the Research Centre is meeting its minimum cost share KPI targets.

This report must be completed by the Research Centre on a biannual basis each June and December with a deadline for submission of September and March, respectively. This report is submitted by the Research Centre to the Finance and Operations Directorate of SFI via email.