SFI-NSFC PARTNERSHIP 2017 FAQs

Last updated 22nd May 2017

APPLICANTS & COLLABORATORS

Q1a: *Can researchers in Research Bodies outside the Republic of Ireland or the People's Republic of China be Applicants and Collaborators on an SFI-NSFC Partnership grant?*
Researchers in Research Bodies outside the Republic of Ireland or the People's Republic of China cannot be Applicants but can be listed as Collaborators on SFI-NSFC Partnership proposals.

Q1b: *Is it possible for Collaborators on the SFI-NSFC Partnership to receive SFI funding from the grant?*
Only <u>Academic</u> Collaborators based in an <u>SFI Eligible Research Body</u> are eligible to receive SFI funding through the SFI-NSFC Partnership grant. The funding allocated should reflect the supporting role that such Collaborator(s) are expected to play in the research programme. Clear indication should be given where funding is apportioned to Collaborators. Please note that Collaborators outside the Republic of Ireland or those not located within eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the SFI-NSFC Partnership.

Industry Collaborators may not receive SFI funding from SFI-NSFC Partnership grants, regardless of their location.

In exceptional cases, a project may require the use of facilities or services not available in Ireland. SFI funding for such a request may be considered, subject to a detailed justification for the funding being provided upon application.

Q1c: *How many Applicants are permitted on an SFI-NSFC Partnership proposal?*
Each SFI-NSFC Partnership proposal must have **two applicants only**, one based in an SFI eligible Research Body in the Republic of Ireland and one based in an NSFC eligible Research Body in the People's Republic of China. It is expected that each partner will be responsible for approximately 50% of the research activities and no additional applicants in either jurisdiction are permitted. **Please note that the term "Co-Applicant" is not employed for the SFI-NSFC Partnership. Both applicants are designated as Lead Applicant in their respective jurisdiction.**

Q1d: *How many Collaborators are permitted on an SFI-NSFC Partnership proposal?*
There is no limit on the number of Collaborators, however, Applicants must make sure that the role of any listed Collaborator fits the description available in the call document.

SUBMISSION

Q2a: *How many applications can an individual make to the SFI-NSFC Partnership?*
Individuals may only submit **one** single proposal either as the Applicant based in Ireland or as the Applicant based in China to the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 call.

A Collaborator can be included and named on multiple applications.

If an Applicant submits more than one proposal to a call, both applications will be returned without review.

Q2b: *Can the names of the Applicant based in Ireland and/or the Applicant based in China submitted as part of the preliminary information request in May differ from the names of the Applicants submitted in advance of the June deadline?*
No. The names of the applicants submitted as part of the preliminary information request in May cannot be altered for the full proposal submission.

Q2c: *Can the abstract submitted as part of the preliminary information request in May differ from the abstract in the proposal submitted in advance of the June deadline?*
SFI expects the content of the abstract submitted as part of the preliminary information to be, in the main, consistent with the abstract submitted as part of the proposal. The abstracts do not need to be identical in terms of wording but should describe similar concepts and describe a similar programme of research.

Q2d: *If I do not submit the requested preliminary information in advance of the May 19th deadline, will I be able to submit a proposal in advance of the June deadline?*
No - only Applicants that have submitted the requested preliminary information through their host institution Research Office (in the Republic of Ireland) will be permitted to submit a proposal to the call. Any information submitted directly to SFI, and not through the host institution Research Office, will not be accepted, and submission of a proposal will not be permitted.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Q3a: *Can current SFI grant holders apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership?*
Investigators funded through an existing award from SFI may apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership call at any stage of their award and once all other eligibility criteria are met.

If a current grant holder of a major SFI award wishes to apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership, they must provide justification and rationale for how they would manage two or more major SFI grants under the heading: "Management of More Than One Major SFI Award" as part of the information concerning scientific overlap.

Q3b: *Can applicants who are currently under review for other SFI programmes apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership?*
Yes, any researcher currently under review by SFI as Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant on other SFI programmes may apply to this call assuming all other eligibility criteria are met.

Q3c: *I am the corresponding author on a number of publications where I am not listed as first or last author. Is being listed as corresponding author enough to prove senior authorship for the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017?*
For the purposes of eligibility for the SFI-NSFC Partnership, being listed as corresponding is not sufficient as evidence of senior authorship. Senior authorship is defined in the call document.

Q3d: *Do abstracts, patent applications, or invention disclosures count as publications for the senior author publications requirement?*
No, they do not. Only original research publications are acceptable.

Q3e: *Is there a requirement for the Applicant in Ireland to have previously collaborated with the Applicant in Ireland to be eligible to apply?*
There is no requirement to have an existing relationship/collaboration with the partner in China. One of the programme's objectives outlined in the call document is "to stimulate new collaborations and

enhance existing collaborations of strategic relevance between excellent researchers and research institutions in the Republic of Ireland and the People's Republic of China".

SALARIES AND BUDGETS

Q4a: *I am a postdoctoral researcher on a contract; can I apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership and request my own salary?*
No. Lead PI/co-PI salary is not an eligible cost. Further details about SFI's Grant Budget Policy are at http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml

Q4b: *I am a team member on an SFI research grant but am not the PI and do not have a faculty position; can I apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership?*
Yes, assuming you meet all other eligibility criteria and the research body will recognise that you will be an employee of the institution for at least the duration of the new SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 grant and that your salary will be provided from a source other than a SFI-funded award. PI salaries are not eligible costs. If your application is successful and you accept the SFI-NSFC Partnership grant, your participation in the existing research grant must terminate.

Q4c: *Should the requested funding amounts from Ireland and China be similar?*
Given the difference in costs in Ireland and China, the funding amounts requested do not need to be the same for each applicant. However, each Applicant must be responsible for approximately 50% of the research activities funded by the award.

Q4d: *Are requests for SFI funding to allow personnel to train at a collaborator's lab acceptable?*
Reasonable requests for travel costs including accommodation, subsistence and transport to allow personnel to participate in necessary training at a collaborator's lab are acceptable. Please provide detailed justification in the budget justification.

REMIT

Q5a: *I'm a researcher based in Ireland and not sure if my research topic aligns with SFI's legal remit?*
Additional guidance on SFI's Legal Remit is available at this link:
http://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/

Q5b: *My research is in the health-related life sciences area. Can I apply to the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017?*
No. It is anticipated that future calls for proposals will include thematic areas within the life science field, particularly related to health.

The thematic areas for the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 are as follows:

SFI-NSFC Partnership Thematic Areas
• Novel Functional Materials and Devices
• Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy
• Digital Platforms, Content and Applications
• Smart Grids and Smart Cities
• Future Networks and Communications
• Energy and Environmental Sustainability
• Manufacturing Competitiveness

- Future Agri-Food

Q5c: *Is bioengineering in this programme's remit?*
If your planned research is primarily focused on the engineering (eg. materials and devices) and not the biological or therapeutic effects of the materials, it may fit within the "Novel Functional Materials and Devices" theme in the current call. Research in the health-related life sciences area cannot be reviewed under this call.

Q5d: *You mention a call in the future that includes thematic areas in the areas of health. Is there a date set for this call announcement or opening?*
The timelines for this programme are yet to be decided.

REVIEW PROCESS

Q6a: *Will science and impact be reviewed by the same postal reviewers?*
All eligible proposals will be forwarded to distinguished international experts for evaluation of scientific excellence and potential economic and societal impact (postal reviewers). Each postal reviewer will evaluate both scientific excellence and impact.

Q6b: *Who will make up the "Sitting Panel(s)" of the Evaluation Process?*
Reviewers on the sitting panels will be leading international scientific experts who have both the ability and experience to conduct a review of a number of proposals on the basis of scientific excellence and impact. The panel members will exhibit a broad range of expertise relevant to the proposals under review and will assess the inputs of the postal reviews, the applicants' response to these reviews and the overall merit and priority of applications. Panels will be invited to rank proposals and to make recommendations on which applications should be given consideration for funding by SFI and the NSFC.

SESAME

Q7a: *I am requesting funding for 40 months, but the options in the drop-down menu do not allow me to do this. How should I proceed?*
The funding period for an SFI-NSFC Partnership award is 48 months. 40 months is not a valid funding period for this award.

Q7b: *Will SESAME alert me if the required documents have not been uploaded or if fields have not been completed, as part of my submission to SFI-NSFC Partnership?*
To check that required fields have been completed prior to submission, click "Validate". Validation will also automatically occur when "Submit" is selected. However, it is important to note that there is no system validation on multiple upload file fields, including, for example, collaborator CVs and letters of support, where required. The number of documents required may vary depending on each application. There is also no system validation on the addition of funding support. You should view the PDF of your application prior to submission to allow you to verify content, print or save your application. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded. Please refer to the checklist in the SFI-NSFC Partnership call document.

Q7c: *Can you list the most common issues that researchers have identified when submitting proposals using the SESAME system?*

Failure to submit before the call deadline: In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems or omissions with your application. Research Officers will need ample time to review submissions. Please note that SFI will not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. Additionally, applications cannot be submitted after the deadline.

Issues with PDF generation: (created with open source software, page count issue, etc.)
Please ensure to use unencrypted, non-password protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft Word PDF convertor software ONLY. Also do NOT use commas or special characters in the title of your uploaded PDF document.

Issues with PDF document titles:
Do NOT use commas or special characters in the title of your uploaded PDF document.

Password issues/resets:
If you forget your password, click on the '*Forgot password?*' link on the SESAME homepage.

Pop-ups enabled in browser:
Please ensure that popups ARE ENABLED in your browser configuration.

SESAME checks word counts and pages queries?
Yes, SESAME does perform system validation around word/page counts, but it is the responsibility of the researcher/research body to check that the correct documents are uploaded and reviewed within the full PDF prior to submission.

Single/multiple upload field:
If you wish to use the multiple upload field, please ensure that you have the Java plugin installed. If you click the "multiple files" button and it does not work, you will see a link to the Java website where you can download the latest plugin.

Browser "Back" button:
Please do NOT use the browser "back" button when navigating SESAME.

Documentation uploads:
Please ENSURE all documents are uploaded into the correct fields in the application.

Funding support from profile:
Creating new funding support details while working on the application will add those details to both the application and to the profile. If you are not adding these new funding support details direct to your application, but are instead adding them directly to your profile, please ensure that you later also attach the relevant details to the application. Please refer to the SESAME researcher user guide.

Applicant based in China access issues:
It is only possible for one person to work on the proposal at any one time. To allow the Applicant based in China to access your proposal, please save the proposal and close the browser window. The Applicant based in China will then be able to access the proposal. Access to SESAME for Applicants based in China is controlled by staff in SFI- please refer to Section 3.2 of the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 call document for details.

IMPACT

Q8a: ***What is impact?***
Please refer to Section 4 of the SFI-NSFC Partnership 2017 call document. Please also see the Impact page on the SFI website. Applicants are advised to view the SFI Impact webinar in advance of preparing their Impact Statements - http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/

Q8b: ***What if my research has no potential economic or societal impacts?***
SFI recognise that impact can take time and in many cases is unforeseen. It is not possible to predict all impacts at the research stage. For the SFI-NSFC Partnership, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient in isolation; applications must also demonstrate potential impact. If applicants feel that achieving impact as defined in the call document is not possible for their research, alternative funding programmes should be considered.

Q8c: ***What if my proposed research is reviewed as excellent but my impact statement is reviewed as poor?***
For the SFI-NSFC Partnership, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient in isolation; applications must also demonstrate potential impact. If the impact statement is not reviewed positively, the proposal overall will not be competitive and will not receive funding.

Q8d: ***Will impact be assessed at the postal review stage?***
Yes, the impact statement will be reviewed at the postal review stage.

Q8d: ***Should the Impact Statement focus on the impacts to Ireland only or impacts to both Ireland and China?***
The review criterion related to impact is as follows; "Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and/or economic effects on Ireland and/or China as a result of the proposed research, which may be realised in the short term or over a longer period". Any research funded by SFI must, at a minimum, have societal and/or economic impacts in Ireland.

NATIONAL FACILITIES

Q9a: ***How do I apply for access costs to national facilities costs through the SFI-NSFC Partnership?***
Full details on how to apply for access costs are available on the SFI website: http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml