



# SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

## Investigators Programme 2013

### Call for Submission of Proposals

#### Key Dates

#### Investigators Programme – two stage review process

- Deadline for pre-proposal submission: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 13.00 Dublin Local Time
- Call opens for full proposal submission: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013
- Deadline for full proposal submission: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 13.00 Dublin Local Time

#### Terms of Reference

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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 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

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## 1. Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was formally established in 2003 under the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act. SFI's current legal remit is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State. Strategic areas of scientific endeavour are biotechnology (BIO), information and communications technology (ICT) and sustainable energy and energy-efficient technologies (ENERGY).

Current Irish government policy mandates that the majority of public research funding is aligned with areas identified in the [report](#) of the National Research Prioritisation (NRP) Steering Group published in 2012.

SFI has chosen to run the Investigators Programme 2013 using two components. The open component of the call is aligned with the 14 NRP areas and the 6 underpinning Platform Science and Technology (PST) areas. The second component of the call is themed, is run in partnership with Teagasc, is aligned with the NRP report, and is entitled "Future Agri-Food".

The Investigators Programme will operate open and themed calls in alternate years from 2013 onwards. Specifically, the Investigators Programme 2014 will be a thematic call only. Potential applicants should be aware of the possibility that their area of research will not fit the thematic call in 2014 and should consider applying to Investigators Programme 2013. In 2015 there will be an open call, potentially with broader criteria around the NRP areas and encompassing other areas of potential economic importance that may have emerged.

For the Investigators Programme, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient; applications must also demonstrate potential impact. [SFI Agenda 2020](#) sets out a vision in which Ireland will, by 2020, be the best country in the world for both scientific research excellence and impact.

SFI recognises the excellence of researchers funded by the European Research Council (ERC) and has programmes designed to develop, incentivise and reward ERC applicants and awardees. These include special exemptions from several eligibility requirements of Investigators Programme 2013. Investigators Programme 2013 will fund ERC grant holders to carry out excellent scientific research in all of SFI's legal remit areas, and not restrict them to those aligned with the NRP report.

The Investigators Programme is one of a suite of programmes designed to support scientific research and researchers at different levels and in different ways, as articulated in SFI's Annual Plan 2013, to help achieve the objectives of SFI's Strategic Plan "Agenda 2020".

### **Purpose of the Investigators Programme**

The purpose of the Investigators Programme is

- To fund scientific research projects of excellence in focussed areas.

## **SFI Investigators Programme**

- To build capacity, expertise and relationships so as to enable researchers to compete in future SFI Research Centre Programmes or in other funding programmes such as ERC and Horizon 2020.
- To encourage researchers to build capacity, expertise, collaborations and relationships in areas of strategic economic importance through themed calls.
- To facilitate partnerships with other agencies through co-funded themed calls.
- To support collaborations and partnerships between academia and industry. Industrial collaboration is not required in Investigators Programme 2013 but is permitted and, where appropriate for the topic of research, encouraged.

### **Objectives of the Investigators Programme**

The objectives of the Investigators Programme are:

- To support excellent scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact.
- To increase the average research income secured by Ireland based PIs from international funding entities such as the EU and in doing so reduce the number of researchers that rely on SFI for the majority of their funding.
- To increase the level of leadership roles held by Ireland based PIs in major European Initiatives, in particular Horizon 2020.
- To increase the number of ERC grants secured by Ireland based PIs.
- To maintain Ireland's top 20 position in international bibliometric rankings through an increase in the number and quality of journal publications.
- To support the winning of top tier international prizes (e.g. Nobel prize, Fields Medal, European science prize, Lasker etc.) by Ireland based PIs.
- To support through the ICA Programme those researchers returning to active academic research after a prolonged absence.
- To foster and support collaborations with significant research entities, and industry.

### **Objectives of the Teagasc/SFI co-funded Future Agri-Food Theme**

The Future Agri-Food Theme aims to strengthen and accelerate research and innovation in the agri-food sector through the funding of joint grants between scientists from the agriculture and food disciplines and scientists from other scientific and engineering disciplines. The Theme is focused on contributing to the research requirements of two of the 14 areas identified in the NRP Steering Group report, namely Area H: Food for Health and Area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing. The Theme will underpin the growth targets set in the [Food Harvest 2020](#) vision for the agri-food industry, and delivers on actions identified in the Prioritisation Action Group implementation plan.

In addition to the Investigators Programme objectives above, objectives of this co-funded Theme are:

- To strengthen research and innovation in Ireland's agri-food sector through the convergence of a broad range of disciplines and technologies so as to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability in line with the targets set out in Food Harvest 2020.

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- To contribute to the strategic research opportunities identified in NRP Area H: Food for Health and Area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing and to deliver on the actions identified by the Prioritisation Action Group implementation plan.
- To prepare the Irish scientific community to compete, lead and win in relevant Horizon 2020 funding programmes and other relevant international funding programmes.
- To offer scientists in a wide range of disciplines the opportunity to find new outlets and applications for their work.

### Anticipated success rates of the Future Agri-Food Theme

It is an explicit aim of the Future Agri-Food Theme to encourage the best researchers from different relevant disciplines to collaborate and put forward outstanding research proposals with potential high impact, including developing a strong record of researching and publishing together, so as to be able to lead and win in future Horizon 2020 research funding proposals. It is therefore anticipated that the funding success rate in the Future Agri-Food Theme will be higher than that in the Non-Themed component. Applicants who are eligible for both components are therefore encouraged to select and develop thematic proposals.

## 2. Programme Format, Eligibility and Remit

**Investigators Programme** grants represent funding of significant scale, catering specifically for established researchers with innovative and ambitious research programmes. Other SFI programmes such as SIRG and PIYRA are available to support researchers at an earlier career stage. Investigators Programme applications will undergo a two-stage review, with a pre-proposal and, if successful at pre-proposal review, an invitation to submit a full-proposal. The table below summarises the eligibility criteria for both the Non-Themed component and the Future Agri-Food Theme:

	Non-Themed	Future Agri-Food Theme
Contract *	Yes	Yes
Award Duration	3 - 5 years	3 - 5 years
Min. No. of years post PhD **	5	5
Min. No. of senior author publications	15	15
Held an independent research grant	At least 1	At least 1
Minimum award size	€300,000	€300,000
Maximum award size ***	€2,500,000	€2,500,000
Co-Applicants allowed	Yes	Minimum of 2 applicants and a maximum of 3 applicants per proposal (1 PI and 1 or 2 Co-PIs). At least one applicant must be a Teagasc employee. At least one applicant must not be a Teagasc employee.

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Investigator Career Advancement Category	Yes	Yes
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- \* Applicants must have a permanent contract OR will have a contract that spans the duration of the grant and be recognised as independent researchers with independent lab and office space.
  - \*\* PhD, MD, or equivalent.
  - \*\*\* Award sizes are commensurate with the duration of the grant. For example, the maximum size of an Investigators Programme grant of 3 years duration will be €1,500,000, of 4 years will be €2,000,000, etc. Applicants who apply for Investigators Programme grants at the upper end of the scale will be expected to demonstrate a track record of managing and delivering large programmes of research. The minimum award size of a grant of 3 years duration will be €300,000, of 4 years will be €400,000, etc.
- For full details of applicant eligibility see Section 4.2.
  - Retired or Emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments – [detailed here](#).
  - Recognising the excellence of researchers funded by the ERC, special exemption is granted to ERC grant holders from certain eligibility requirements, namely the restrictions on years post PhD and on the number of senior author publications. See also the Programme Remit section below for related exemptions for ERC grant holders concerning the topic of the proposed research.

### Eligibility of Research Body

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by research grants from SFI. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland. In cases where more than one PI shares responsibility for a grant, the grant will be administered by the host Research Body of the lead applicant. Queries regarding eligibility of Research Bodies should be directed to SFI prior to submission. A list of [eligible Research Bodies](#) is available on the SFI website.

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

### Programme Remit (Non-Themed)

This section describes the technical remit of the Investigators Programme 2013 Non-Themed component. The technical remit of the Investigators Programme 2013 Future Agri-Food Theme is described later.

To be eligible for Investigators Programme 2013 funding, the applicant must be working on a research topic in at least one of the SFI legal remit areas of BIO, ICT or ENERGY. At the application stage, the applicant will be asked specifically whether their proposal underpins BIO, ICT or ENERGY. The applicant is required to complete a brief (250 word maximum) statement justifying how the proposed research fits within SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

The applicant must also demonstrate that their topic of research aligns with the areas identified in the report of the National Research Prioritisation Steering Group published

in 2012. Applicants are strongly advised to review the NRP report for details on the priority areas and the Platform Science and Technology (PST) areas. Applicants will be asked to identify which of the 14 NRP areas OR the 6 PST areas their proposal is primarily aligned with. Applicants will be asked to provide a brief (250 word maximum) statement justifying how the proposed research topic aligns with at least one of the 14 NRP areas, or, if the topic is in a PST area, how the topic directly underpins one of the primary NRP areas. Although it is recognised that an applicant's research discipline may not fall directly into the NRP areas, it may be that the outputs of the proposed research are expected to have significant effects on one or more of them. If this is the case, it should be clearly articulated in the 250 word statement bearing in mind that this statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

Applications from holders of major ERC grants (Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, Advanced Grant, Synergy Grant) are exempt from the above NRP remit requirement. The subject of their proposed research need not align with one of the NRP areas, but it must lie within SFI's legal remit.

In summary, to be eligible for funding under the Non-Themed Investigators Programme 2013:

(a) In all cases, applicants **MUST** demonstrate that the research topic fits within at least one of SFI's legal remit areas of BIO, ICT and ENERGY,

AND

(b) With the EXCEPTION of those applicants who hold major European Research Council Funding, applicants must demonstrate that their research topic fits within at least one of the 14 NRP areas OR one of the 6 PST areas outlined in the NRP report. If the area of research primarily fits within a PST area, applicants must demonstrate that the research topic directly underpins one of the 14 priority areas.

### **Teagasc/SFI Future Agri-Food Theme Remit**

The research topic must be multidisciplinary in nature, and must combine research from the agriculture or food disciplines with one or more of the following areas:

- Computational and Systems biology
- Genomics and proteomics
- Glycobiology
- Gut health
- Human nutrition
- ICT and 'Big Data'
- Immunology, Diagnostics and Therapeutics
- Materials science
- Mechanical and manufacturing engineering
- Nanotechnology



- Physical, organic and inorganic chemistry
- Processing and chemical engineering
- Robotics
- Sensors/biosensors

Eligible proposals under the Future Agri-Food Theme are implicitly aligned with NRP area H: Food for Health and NRP area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing. The applicant will be asked to provide a brief (250 word maximum) statement justifying how the proposed research topic aligns with the above Future Agri-Food Theme remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

In addition, as for all proposals, the proposed research must fit within one of SFI's legal remit areas of BIO, ICT and ENERGY. The applicant is required to complete a brief (250 word maximum) statement justifying how the proposed research fits within SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

### 3. Research Impact

Each year the Irish Government spends in the region of €800million on scientific research, training and development. **As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research. In the current climate of constrained public spending there is an even greater focus on demonstrating the economic, social and cultural benefits of publicly-funded scientific research to wider society if this level of funding is to be maintained.**

For the Investigators Programme, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient; applications must also demonstrate potential impact. **SFI has always asked applicants to articulate the value of their research to Ireland and will now place increased emphasis on the Impact Statement submitted as part of the Investigators Programme 2013 proposal.** As part of the review process, reviewers with expertise in research translation and commercialisation will be asked to consider the potential impact of applications as described in the Impact Statements.

#### **What is meant by Impact?**

Impact can be described as **the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to economy and society.** Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations 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 quality of life, health and creative output
- Developing the country's international reputation
- Educating and training the population
- Solving 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



### How will impact be assessed and measured?

SFI recognises that some research projects may have 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 economic benefits. Researchers applying to Investigators Programme 2013 have the opportunity to articulate how and when they believe their research will impact Ireland's economy and society in the Impact Statement part of the application.

As part of the review process, reviewers with expertise in research translation and commercialisation will be asked to assess the potential impact of applications as described in the Impact Statements. The relevant impact review criterion is:

- Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland

In order to provide guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, SFI will provide a list of types and examples of impact on the SFI website.

In terms of measuring impact, successful grantees will be asked to report on the impact their projects are making in addition to academic outputs such as journal papers and patents in the annual report (see Section 9 on reporting requirements). Both academic and impact outputs will be requested and assessed in any interim or final review of the grant.

### Impact Statement

For the Investigators Programme, for both Themed and Non-Themed proposals, an **Impact Statement** is required at both pre-proposal and full proposal stages. At the pre-proposal stage this will take the form of a maximum of 2 pages devoted to articulating the planned and potential impact of the proposed research. At the full proposal stage a maximum of 3 pages is allowed for the impact statement. SFI recognises that impact can take time and in many cases is unforeseen. It is not possible to predict all impacts at the research stage. However considering that impact is a key review criterion and the fact that reviewers with expertise in research translation and commercialisation will be asked to assess the impact statements, applicants are advised to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous impact case with appropriate emphasis.

The statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact may also be indicated. Plans to utilise appropriate SFI, Enterprise Ireland, DAFM, and other programmes to assist with achieving impact should be included if relevant.

The Impact Statement will be reviewed by reviewers with expertise in research translation and commercialisation therefore it should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language, it should be as specific and comprehensive as possible and it

should cover potential economic and societal impacts by answering the following overarching questions:

- **Who will benefit from this research?**
- **How will they benefit from this research?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from your research be realised?**

**Applicants are encouraged to consider SFI's Agenda 2020 and the NRPE report before writing their impact statement.**

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

- What is the activity's potential impact on the development of industry and the Irish economy, competitiveness and development?
- Are there potential international beneficiaries, collaborations with international industry or partner organisations?
- Investigators Programme 2013 encourages industrial collaborations where appropriate considering the topic of the research. How will industry collaborators enable increased impact? What supports are they offering? Have routes to commercialisation been considered?
- Letters of support may be included from industrial partners, or other bodies and individuals who will be directly involved in supporting the work described in the application but not listed as official 'industry' collaborators. Letters should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. Letters which do not demonstrate direct involvement will be removed from the proposal.
- What is the activity's potential impact on the education, training and career of Ireland's students and research team members? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education, e.g. facilities and instrumentation? Applicants should note that all Investigators Programme grants will offer training opportunities of some degree, therefore it is important to highlight the added value that will be provided from the training provided under your award, for example highlight where past researchers / students have found employment in industry.
- Highlight industrial interest in past / current research - consultancy, projects funded, collaborative publications, licenses granted, companies formed, VC funding, problems solved etc.
- How will the potential impacts of your research best be realised?
- How do you propose the impact of your research could be measured?
- What is the activity's potential impact on society and the quality of life of Ireland's citizens?
- Are there potential beneficiaries within the private sector, public sector, third level sector or any others (e.g. professional or practitioner groups, charities or patient groups)?

#### **SFI/Teagasc Future Agri-Food Theme Impact Statement**

Applicants under the Future Agri-food Theme should use the impact statement to explain how the proposed research will achieve impact as outlined above, primarily in the agri-food industry.

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Applicants may also discuss how the proposed research will assist with achieving the objectives of the Future Agri-Food Theme (see Section 1). The impact statement may also outline how existing agricultural knowledge and information systems could be used to achieve agricultural impact and/or how established channels for food industry innovation could be used as appropriate.

Under the Future Agri-Food Theme, a contribution to impact could be achieved through creating the foundation for securing significant Horizon 2020 agri-food research funding. Applicants could discuss how they will develop international consortia intending to apply to Horizon 2020 and other relevant future funding programmes. Travel funding to support the development of relevant collaborations and partnerships is an eligible cost for Investigators Programme 2013, see Section 4.5 Step 3 (ix) (d).

## 4. Programme Details

### 4.1 Definition of Lead Applicant, Co-applicant and Collaborator

The **Lead Applicant** will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and the submission of reports to SFI. The lead applicant has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of SFI. The lead applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI on the grant, during the review process, and if successful, during the course of the grant.

The **Co-applicant** has a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed investigation. For the purposes of **eligibility, reviewing and monitoring**, a co-applicant applying for funding under the SFI Investigators Programme will receive equal evaluation to the lead applicant and will hold equal accountability for the delivery of the proposed research objectives. In this documentation, the terms and conditions for 'applicant' and 'co-applicant' are interchangeable.

An **Official Collaborator** is an individual who is committed to providing a focused contribution for a specific task(s). The collaborator will serve under the direction of the lead applicant, and may or may not receive funding through the grant (see budget justification). **Official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff enrolled on the grant.** Industrial partners are not required, but are permitted and, where appropriate for the topic of the research, are encouraged. An industrial partner should be listed within the documentation as an **Industry Collaborator**.

**Required documentation** for all Official Collaborators: **At full proposal stage only**, CVs must be provided for ALL official collaborators including **Industry Collaborators**. In addition, **at full proposal stage only**, each official collaborator must provide a letter of support with the grant application and this must clearly outline the role of that collaborator in the programme of research proposed. The role of the collaborator must also be *referenced* in the main body of the research proposal, at both pre-proposal stage and at full proposal stage. (For example: *Will the collaborators be supplying samples, data, etc? Will the collaborators be providing training in techniques or the use of equipment? Will the collaborators directly participate in specific work projects? Will collaborators be acting in a purely advisory capacity?*).

An individual contributing to, but not substantially involved in the research proposal to warrant listing as an Official Collaborator, may be referred to within the text of the research programme.

### 4.2 Eligibility Criteria of Applicant and Co-applicant(s)

The lead applicant (and co-applicant/s) must be:

- 4.2.1 A member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body (permanent or with a contract that covers the period of the grant), or
- 4.2.2 A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the grant, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for

which he/she will be fully responsible for *at least* the duration of the SFI grant, or

- 4.2.3 An individual who will be recognised by the research body upon receipt of the SFI grant as a member of the academic staff or as a contract researcher as defined above. The applicant does not necessarily need to be employed by the Research Body at the time of proposal submission.

Research Body submission confirms that the lead applicant (and co-applicant/s) meets these criteria and is either a member of the academic staff, a contract researcher, or awaiting appointment as defined above. A co-applicant may be located at a different eligible Irish research body than the lead applicant. In this case, the grant will be administered through the Research Body of the lead applicant only. A co-applicant, where applicable, must comply with the same eligibility and evaluation criteria as the lead applicant.

For holders of major ERC grants (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced or Synergy), the above condition is sufficient for applicant eligibility. For all other applicants, the following additional conditions must be satisfied:

- 4.2.4 The lead applicant and co-applicant(s) must hold a PhD/MD or equivalent for at least **5 years** by the pre-proposal deadline.
- *An equivalent qualification and/or demonstrated research accomplishments may be accepted but must be approved in advance by SFI. Please consult FAQ 3j for an expanded explanation.*
  - *The official date of a PhD/MD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred, i.e., the year printed on the official PhD/MD certificate. The number of years is determined by calendar year. Therefore, only individuals with an official date of 2008 or prior are eligible to apply to the Investigators Programme 2013 call.*
- 4.2.5 The lead applicant and co-applicant(s) must be **senior author** on at least **15 international peer reviewed articles**. Only original research publications, and not review articles, are acceptable.
- *Please consult FAQ 3d regarding the definition of “senior author”.*

Certain **concessions** on the number of publications are possible if an applicant/co-applicant meets the criteria for the Investigator Career Advancement Programme (Section 4.2a).

- 4.2.6 The lead applicant and any co-applicant(s) are required to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as a lead investigator or as co-investigator.
- *Personal awards such as travel awards, career fellowships (which only include the salary of the PI and not research team costs (i.e., salary for team member(s) & consumables) etc. do not count as independent research grants. Please refer to FAQ 3e.*
- 4.2.7 The lead applicant and co-applicant(s) is (are) expected to have proven prior experience, capability and authority to mentor and supervise postgraduate students and team members.

Investigators currently funded by SFI as either Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) under certain programmes are not entitled to apply to the Non-Themed component of SFI Investigators Programme 2013. These programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI PI/PICA, SFI Investigators Programme Awards, SFI PIYRA, SFI SIRG, SFI Research Professor Recruitment Programme and SFI Mathematics Initiative. However, in order to secure continuity of funding, a holder of any of the above grants may apply for an Investigators Programme grant during the last 24 months of their existing grant.

Investigators currently funded by SFI as either Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) under certain programmes may apply to the Future Agri-Food Theme of SFI Investigators Programme 2013. These programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI PI/PICA, SFI Investigators Programme Awards, SFI PIYRA, SFI SIRG, SFI Research Professor Recruitment Programme and SFI Mathematics Initiative. Such individuals who are not in the last 24 months of their existing grant must provide justification and rationale in their CV for how they would manage two major SFI grants under the heading “Other Information as Appropriate” (see Appendix A).

Investigators funded by an existing SFI RFP grant or an existing Investigators Programme Project grant may apply to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013.

Investigators funded by an existing SFI US-Ireland grant may apply to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013.

Investigators funded by an existing HRB-SFI Translational Research Award may apply to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013.

Investigators funded by an existing SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Biomedical Research Partnership Award may apply to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013.

Investigators funded by an existing SFI TIDA grant may apply to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013.

Applicants currently under active review by SFI as either lead applicants or co-applicants under certain programmes are not entitled to apply to the SFI Investigators Programme. These programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI PIYRA, SFI SIRG and SFI Research Professor Programme.

PIs/co-PIs under the SFI SRC, CSET or Research Centres Programmes should note that their progress on the SRC, CSET or Research Centres grants will be assessed if they submit an application to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013. Individuals, therefore, who have received SRC, CSET or Research Centres grants recently, may be deemed to be less competitive. Individuals who are funded as either PI or co-PI under the SFI SRC, CSET or Research Centres Programmes must provide justification and rationale in their CV for how they would manage two major SFI grants under the heading “Other Information as Appropriate” (see Appendix A).

Where an applicant or co-applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

Applicants or co-applicants with submissions under active review in the Investigators Programme 2013 will not be permitted to apply to several other SFI programmes. These programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI PIYRA, SFI SIRG and SFI Research Professor Programme.



#### 4.2a Eligibility Criteria for the Investigator Career Advancement (ICA) category.

Applicants to the SFI Investigators Programme (including the Future Agri-Food Theme) may choose to be evaluated under the SFI Investigator Career Advancement (ICA) criteria. The aim of the ICA category is to support those researchers returning to active academic research after either a prolonged absence, or those within the early consolidating stages of their independent research career. ICA applicants must be eligible under all of the standard Investigators Programme criteria (with the exception of the publication number requirement) as outlined below.

To be eligible to apply to ICA, the applicant must fall into one of the following categories:

**Category 1:** Any applicant who has taken consecutive documented eligible leave (minimum 18 weeks) since 1st January 2005 and has since returned to work. This can include, but is not limited to, the examples below.

- Statutory adoptive leave
- Statutory parental leave
- Statutory maternity leave
- Statutory paternity leave
- Carer's leave
- Long-term medical illness leave
- Conscription

Certified maternity leave of less than 18 weeks will be considered.

Any queries in relation to eligible leave can be forwarded to [investigators@sfi.ie](mailto:investigators@sfi.ie)  
Part-time employment will be treated the same as full time employment (2 years of half-time working counts as 2 full-time years).

**Category 2:** Permanent or contract academic staff who have returned to an academic research position since 1st January 2008, having worked for a minimum of 2 years in a science or engineering-related industry.

All applicants eligible for ICA under Categories 1 or 2 must include a short statement detailing that they are eligible and elect to be evaluated under ICA. Furthermore, they should state the category (1 or 2) under which they are eligible, and the start and end dates of their eligible leave, if applicable.

Applicants who meet the ICA requirements must have **7 or more international peer-reviewed articles as senior author.**

In all cases, applicants wishing to be considered under ICA must produce at full proposal stage documentary evidence of their eligibility from their host institution's Human Resources Department or, where applicable, the HR Department of their employer at the time of their eligible leave(s).

**Please note:** PIs who have previously been funded under the SFI PICA categories are **not eligible** to apply for ICA status again. This is a one-off career advancement grant. Successful ICA applicants will not be differentiated from the standard cohort of SFI Investigators once a grant has been made.



Individuals who previously applied **but were unsuccessful under PICA or ICA** can re-apply under ICA for this call, *if eligible*, according to the categories above.

**Teaching buyout component of ICA:** In order to allow enhanced focus on research activities following eligible leave, successful ICA applicants under **Category 1** will be entitled to request funding for teaching buyout of **up to 50%** of their teaching load for a period of up to 24 months from the start of their grant. Such a request must be made at the time of application, and should be included in the requested budget and detailed in the budget justification. Requests for teaching buyout post-application will not be considered by SFI.

The teaching buy-out component only applies to those within **Category 1**.

If applicants have incurred significant career breaks but are not eligible under the ICA Programme, they are still encouraged to detail these breaks within their CV. Any queries in relation to eligible leave can be forwarded to [investigators@sfi.ie](mailto:investigators@sfi.ie)

#### 4.2b Eligibility Criteria for the Teagasc/SFI Future Agri-Food Theme

In addition to the applicant eligibility criteria in section 4.2 above, there are additional conditions for the Future Agri-Food Theme. There is a minimum of 2 applicants and a maximum of 3 applicants per proposal (1 lead applicant and 1 or 2 co-applicants). This does not affect the number of collaborators. At least one of the lead or co-applicants must be a Teagasc employee. In addition, at least one of the lead or co-applicants must not be a Teagasc employee. The term “Teagasc employee” does not include researchers employed by other institutions, even if their research is funded by Teagasc.

#### 4.3 Funding

In the current call, SFI Investigators Programme grants may range from **€100,000 to €500,000** direct costs per year and may be 3 to 5 years duration. General overheads, currently 30% of ‘modified’ total direct costs, should not be included in the requested budget (see below). Larger grants may be subject to additional review mechanisms, for example site review, as determined by the Foundation.

**The budget requested should be appropriate to the proposed work, and should take into account the applicant’s experience and recent research funding record.**

*Value for money is explicitly part of the review criteria; applicants are strongly advised to consider the scale of their requests.*

SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the investigator and their research group. Eligible costs include:

- Relevant research expenses, including equipment, consumables and travel.
- Contributions to salaries/stipends for staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme. Lead PI/co-PI salaries are not eligible costs. Please consult the SFI website for more information on the [SFI grant application budget policy](#).
- Access charges for use of large items of infrastructure or test bed facilities may be requested in certain situations; see Section 4.5, Step 3, (ix), c for details.

In addition to direct costs, Science Foundation Ireland also makes an indirect or overhead **contribution** to the host research body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution *to the Research Body* for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the research body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services.

### **Future Agri-Food Theme budgets**

In each application to the Theme, there are limits on the direct costs under the responsibility of the Lead-Applicant and each Co-Applicant (and thus their respective institutions). There are two possibilities allowed:

- 1) Lead-Applicant and one Co-Applicant. Each of these two Applicants must have responsibility for no less than 30% of the budget. The remainder of the budget is the responsibility of the other Applicant. Examples of possible budget divisions are 50%/50%; 60%/40%; 70%/30%; 36%/64%; etc.
- 2) Lead-Applicant and two Co-Applicants. Each of these three Applicants must have responsibility for no less than 30% of the budget. The remainder of the budget is the responsibility of the other Applicants. Examples of possible budget divisions are 30%/30%/40%; 33%/33%/34%; 40%/30%/30%; etc.

In the Future Agri-Food Theme, applicants should summarise at full proposal stage how direct costs responsibility is divided between the lead applicant and co-applicant(s) in the budget justification (see Section 4.5 Step 3 (x)).

#### 4.4 Submission

**For Investigators Programme 2013, proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.**

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the research office of your host research body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access.

Once you have been registered by your research office, **you will receive an email** containing your:

1. Username
2. Password
3. SFI PIN number
4. SESAME website address

Your **username** and **password** are needed to log in to SESAME. The co-applicant's PIN number must be provided to the lead applicant, in order to be associated with the same application. This PIN number is also stored in your **contact profile** on SESAME.

**SFI's grants and awards management system, SESAME**, is accessed using the Internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. 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** for more detailed information.  
[SESAME researcher user guide](#)

#### **SESAME enables:**

- Individual researchers to apply online for SFI grants.
- Host research bodies to review and authorise all applications.

Please note that submission of an application to the SFI Investigators Programme may affect eligibility to submit to other SFI programmes – please refer to appropriate call documents.

**Individuals may only submit, as applicant or co-applicant, one proposal to an open call of the SFI Investigators Programme.** If an applicant or co-applicant submits more than one proposal to an open SFI Investigators Programme call, both applications will be returned without review. The Future Agri-Food Theme component and the Non-Themed component are part of the same call; individuals may not submit proposals to both components.

**Individuals may only be under active review for one of the following programmes at any one time** - these programmes include, but are not limited to: SFI IvP/ICA, SFI

## SFI Investigators Programme

PIYRA, SFI Research Professor Programme, SFI SIRG. If an applicant or co-applicant submits more than one proposal to an open SFI Programme, the second submission will be withdrawn without review.

**Once submitted by the host research body to SFI through SESAME, an application cannot be withdrawn** and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

### 4.5 Application Procedure

Applicants are invited to submit the following documentation:

- Pre-proposal  
*and if invited to do so after the pre-proposal evaluation stage,*
- Full proposal

**Pre- and full proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the lead applicant's research body before the call deadline.**

Applicants should follow carefully the instructions below and in the [SESAME researcher user guide](#) to complete the various sections of the application. In addition, a checklist of requirements is provided in Appendices B and C of this call document.

#### **Pre- and full proposal submission requirements:**

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Times New Roman font, with minimum font size of 12, 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 in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**
- The number of pages in uploads must not 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.**
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review**
- The currency to be used is the **euro (€)**.
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB**

Pre- and full proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the lead applicant's research body before the call deadline.

Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI on, or before, the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same call.

## Step 1: Eligibility Questionnaire

Applicants will initially be asked to specify one of the four alternatives below:

- Future Agri-Food Theme and ERC grant holder
- Future Agri-Food Theme and not an ERC grant holder
- Non-Themed and ERC grant holder
- Non-Themed and not an ERC grant holder

The appropriate set of eligibility questions will then appear. Applicants must then complete the eligibility questions (see Section 4.2 of this call document for eligibility details).

Please note that the lead applicant completes the eligibility questionnaire on behalf of the lead as well as all of the co-applicant(s), where applicable. See FAQ 3n for the case where there is an ERC holder as part of an applicant / co-applicant team.

## Step 2: Pre-Proposal Preparation

### (i) Proposal Summary

The Research Proposal **title** should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken, in up to 30 words.

Applicants must indicate the **total funding request** amount in euro (€). At pre-proposal stage, this budget is indicative only and a full supporting budget is not required and should not be included.

Please indicate the **duration of grant** requested in months (36, 48 or 60 months). If the duration of grant requested does not correlate with the durations listed, please select the option which is greater than the number of months you are seeking funding for, this will allow you to complete the budget template for the appropriate period of time in that year.

Applicants must then follow the directions in the corresponding box below, followed by the directions underneath the boxes which apply to all alternatives.

#### **Future Agri-Food Theme (ERC holder or not-ERC holder):**

As described in Section 2, applicants must justify the alignment of the proposed research with the Future Agri-Food Theme (250 words maximum). This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

Applicants should then choose, if applicable, a primary NRP area or a Platform Science and Technology (PST) area with which the research is aligned. Teagasc and SFI expect that all applicants to this Theme will choose NRP area H: Food for Health or NRP area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing.

**Non-Themed (ERC holder):**

As described in Section 2, proposals from ERC grant holders do not have to be aligned with one of the 14 NRP areas. SFI must however track all NRP related expenditure; therefore, **if** the proposed research **is** aligned with an NRP area, ERC holder applicants should select the appropriate NRP area, OR select the option “One of the Platform Science and Technology areas”.

If the applicant selects “One of the Platform Science and Technology areas”, the applicant must then specify one of the 6 PST areas with which the proposed research is aligned, and also, if applicable, select one of the 14 NRP areas which the proposed research directly supports.

**Non-Themed (Not ERC holder):**

In the Non-Themed and non-ERC case, applicants **must** select one of the 14 NRP areas with which the proposed research is aligned, OR select the option for “One of the Platform Science and Technology areas”.

If the applicant selects “One of the Platform Science and Technology areas”, the applicant **must** then specify one of the 6 PST areas with which the proposed research is aligned, and also **must** select one of the 14 NRP areas which the proposed research directly supports.

In either case, the applicant must justify the alignment of the proposed research with the chosen area(s) (250 words maximum). This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

If the proposed research is relevant to other NRP areas, the applicant may then select as many of the other NRP areas as appropriate.

SFI tracks a number of research categorisation areas (separate from the NRP areas) for reporting purposes. The applicant must choose a primary and a secondary category from the dropdown lists which best align with the subject area of the proposed research.

As described in the Section 2, the applicant must select which of the three disciplines of SFI’s legal remit (BIO, ICT, ENERGY) the proposed research underpins.

The applicant must then complete a statement (250 words maximum) justifying why their proposed research underpins the selected SFI legal remit discipline. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

## (ii) Lead Applicant details

Please note that **neither the lead applicant nor co-applicant(s) may be modified between the pre-proposal and full proposal submission stage**. Official collaborators may be changed.

### (a) Investigator Career Advancement grant (ICA)

If applicable, please indicate whether the lead applicant or co-applicant(s) are applying under the ICA criteria and select one category (1 or 2) under which they are eligible.

- **ICA:** Those eligible under categories 1 or 2 of the ICA Programme must include a **short statement** detailing that they are eligible and elect to be evaluated under the ICA Programme. Furthermore, they should indicate start and end dates of their eligible leave, if applicable. This short statement should be uploaded under the ICA documentation field on Sesame.

### (b) Percentage time commitment

Please indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the lead applicant, to the proposed research project.

### (c) Lead Applicant CV

A CV of the lead applicant (up to 5 pages maximum) using the template found at the end of this document should be completed and uploaded (*see Appendix A*).

### (d) Summary information on publication output and supervisory experience to date

Please provide summary information on the total numbers of publications to date and also provide supervisory experience to date for the lead applicant.

## (iii) Co-applicant details

To add co-applicants to your proposal, please **add their surname and SESAME SFI PIN number**. This will then allow them access to the draft proposal.

**The co-applicant must login to SESAME to provide details relating to ICA (if applicable), summary of publications and supervisory experience and must agree to the terms and conditions of the proposal, as part of this login procedure.**

### (a) Percentage time commitment

Please indicate the percentage time commitment, as a percentage of the total working time of the co-applicant(s), to the proposed research project.

### (b) Summary information on publication output and supervisory experience to date



Please provide summary information on the total numbers of publications to date and also provide supervisory experience to date for the co-applicant.

- (c) A **CV** (5 page max.) for the co-applicant must be uploaded for each co-applicant using the SFI CV template at the end of this document. (See Appendix A).
- (d) **ICA documentation**, as described above, must be uploaded for each co-applicant applying under ICA criteria (see Section 4.2a in this call document).

Please note that the co-applicant and/or the lead applicant may choose to complete fields or upload documentation that are common to both applicants e.g. scientific summary, research description etc., **however only the lead applicant can submit an application.**

#### (iv) Collaborator(s) details

Include name, contact information and other requested details of official collaborator(s), if any. Please indicate whether collaborators are based in academia or industry i.e. 'industry collaborator'. Collaborator CVs are not permitted in the pre-proposal. See Section 4.1 for further information.

#### (v) Main Body of Pre-Proposal

##### (a) **Keywords** (max. 15)

These should be descriptors that best characterise the subject of your proposal.

##### (b) **Scientific abstract** (max. 200 words)

This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application.

##### (c) **Lay abstract** (max. 100 words)

This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application.

##### (d) **Research Description and Impact Statement (max. 5 pages)**

(INCLUDING Impact Statement and EXCLUDING references).

A brief description of the proposed research, under the following headings:

***What is the question that this proposal addresses?*** This section should include research aim, objectives, hypotheses and reference to preliminary data.

***Why is this question significant?*** This section should include the background for context, including current state-of-the-art and how this project will advance the current state-of-the-art. The section should explain why the proposed research is at the cutting edge, and should compare with related on-going international research.

***How will the question be addressed?*** This section should include details of the methodology and intended work packages along with anticipated deliverables from the programme.

**Impact Statement** (max. 2 pages): Considering that Impact is a key review criterion, applicants are advised to make full use of the allowed space for the Impact statement. Where appropriate for the topic of the research, industry collaborations including co-funding in cash or in kind should be discussed. See Section 3 for more details on Impact.

**(e) References** (max. 2 pages)

**(vi) Expired, Current and Pending Support of Applicants**

**The lead applicant and co-applicant(s) must report on expired, current and pending funding.**

- The applicant should include details of any financial support pending, or received over the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international & national), charities, industry, etc.
- The applicant must include details of any financial support from another body *currently provided, or currently being sought*. SFI will not support research programmes currently being funded by another source.
- For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant should provide a brief description of the research. Applicants must also indicate their percentage time commitment to these other projects, as a function of 100% of their total working time.
- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.
- For grants for which applicant is/was contractually responsible (expired or current), the applicant must indicate the funding source, the value of the grant (€), the grant number, and the duration. The grant specific website, where possible, should also be provided in the description box.
- For collaborative expired and current grants where the applicant is not the sole grant-holder, indicate the funding source, whether the applicant is the PI, or co-PI, name the other partners on the grant, state the total value of the grant (€) and the amount of the grant (€) allocated in the applicant's name, state the grant number, and the duration. The grant specific website, where possible, should also be provided.
- If the applicant is solely a collaborator on a collaborative research project, the grant should not be included here.
- The portion of research funding that you claim in your name must be an accurate and a fair reflection of your responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. SFI may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.
- This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with extremely large numbers of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. The most prestigious grants and those most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile. (See [SESAME researcher user guide](#)). If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has NO expired, current or pending funding. **Both lead and co-applicant(s) need to complete this section within SESAME.**

The applicant must complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed above, the applicant must clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, referring only to overlap in content.

### (vii) View Proposal Prior To Submission

**A PDF of the pre-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.

**The deadline for receipt of pre-proposals is 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 13:00 Dublin local time.**

Please contact your Research Office well in advance in order to obtain registration details for SESAME and familiarise yourself with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

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

**Only applicants who submit a pre-proposal before the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 13:00 will be eligible, if invited after the pre-proposal evaluation, to submit a full proposal.**

SFI will notify applicants of the outcome of the pre-proposal evaluation stage by the **15<sup>th</sup> July 2013**. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal in advance of the full proposal deadline on **13<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 13:00**.

### Step 3: Full Proposal Preparation

If invited to submit a **full proposal**, applicants should follow the instructions below and in SESAME (see [SESAME researcher user guide](#)) to complete their full proposal application correctly.

Please refer carefully to these instructions. In addition, a checklist is provided at the end of this call document, see Appendix C.

**Full proposals that deviate significantly in content from the pre-proposal will be administratively withdrawn without review.**

**Please note that key information in the full proposal will be automatically populated from the pre-proposal, but can subsequently be edited and should be updated if necessary.**

### **(i) Full proposal summary**

The proposal details will be automatically populated from the pre-proposal. Applicants should check the details, and update them if necessary.

### **(ii) Applicant and Co-Applicant details**

The applicant and co-applicant details will be automatically populated from the pre-proposal. Applicants and co-applicants should check the details, and update them if necessary.

#### **Investigator Career Advancement grant (ICA)**

If the applicant has elected to be evaluated as an ICA candidate, please confirm the selections made.

**In addition to the statements already provided at pre-proposal stage and now displayed as uploaded documents, the following documentation is also required:**

- ICA Category 1: Scanned copies of the relevant supporting documents from the HR Department of the applicant's host institution (or the relevant HR Department at the time of the applicant's eligible leave) demonstrating the applicant's eligible leave for the period.
- ICA Category 2: Scanned copies of relevant supporting documents to verify time in industry and/or return to academic position since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

### **(iii) Collaborator(s) details**

CVs (max. 2 pages) for all official collaborators must be uploaded. A template is not provided for collaborator CVs. Please note **collaborator(s) details are allowed to change** between the pre- and full proposal stage of submission. Please update the collaborator details as necessary, adding new collaborators as described in the pre-proposal preparation section, and uploading their CVs.

### **(iv) Main Body of Proposal**

#### **Keywords** (max. 15)

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 and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application.

#### **Lay abstract** (max. 100 words)

This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application.

#### **Impact Statement** (max. 3 pages)

The statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact

should be indicated. See Section 3 for further details. Where appropriate for the topic of the research, industry collaborations including co-funding in cash or in kind should be discussed. Letters of support from industry may be included where appropriate (**see Section (xi) below**).

**Research description** (max. 15 pages) **and References** (max. 5 pages)

Applicants are requested to **provide sufficient detail** for peer reviewers to comment on the quality of the proposed ideas. It should be noted that a lack of appropriate and sufficient detail within the research programme is a recurring issue raised by reviewers.

The following points should be considered when writing the research programme:

- Describe clearly and concisely the **specific aims and objectives** of the programme. They should be coherent, well-planned and should **be linked with real deliverables**.
- Explain the **background** and **significance** of the problem – does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important? What is the current state-of-the-art in the area? Describe and explain how the proposed work, if successful, will advance the state-of-the-art. The background section should reference the state-of-the-art in this research field.
- Are the concepts described **novel**? Ensure that the novelty of the approach is clearly explained, again with reference to the state-of-the-art.
- The **methodology** of the proposed programme should be well developed, and how this proposed methodology advances the current state-of-the-art should be described in detail. Is the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

**The application should also include:**

**Appropriate timelines, milestones** and **expected outputs** for the proposed research (e.g., Gantt chart), and the **roles of the applicant, co-applicant(s)** and **collaborators** in the work programme need to be clearly described.

Relevant **preliminary data** must be provided. This may take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the applicants' previous research or (b) where data has yet to be published, this can be included within the 15-page research description, as evidence that the applicant(s) has a track record in the field of his/her proposed research.

**Appropriate references and citations for the research programme must be provided in a separate uploaded PDF. A 5-page limit is allowed for uploaded references.**

A general presentation on grant-writing tips and common pitfalls can be found through the following link: [Grant Writing Tips](#)

**(vii) Expired, Current and Pending Support of Applicants**

The research funding/ support details will be automatically populated from the pre-proposal. Applicants should check the details, and update them if necessary. Particular

attention should be paid to grants which were pending at pre-proposal stage but for which results have since been released.

**(viii) Infrastructure, facilities, services and space to be provided by Research Body (max. 1 page)**

Describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the Research Body. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the research body. A letter of support must be included from the lead applicant's research body and from the research body of the co-applicant, if different (see Section (xi) on letters of support below).

**(ix) Proposed Budget**

Please note that the **Budget Table** for completion by the applicant(s) is located at the end of the full proposal application in SESAME.

The costs eligible for grant support by SFI under the SFI Investigators Programme are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel. Ensure that the final total provided includes all costs requested from SFI. Costs which will be covered by industry partners should not be included. All grants are made directly to the lead applicant's research body. Please also refer to the "[Science Foundation Ireland: Grants and Awards: Grant Terms & Conditions](#)" and also the [SFI grant application budget policy](#)

**See notes for completion in the [Sesame Researcher User Guide](#) and within SESAME.**

**a. Staff: Salaries and benefits**

It is important to note that SFI-funded researchers and their teams are employees of the research body. SFI makes a contribution to the overall salary budget for the programme. Please refer to the [SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale](#) and note that the 'Cost to Grant' figures in these scales include the 20% employer's pension. Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved and justified. SFI Investigators Programme grants do not fund the core salary or benefits of either the lead applicant or co-applicant. Contributions to team-member salaries, and fees and stipends or postgraduate students (PhDs and MScs by research) may be requested. Salaries for collaborators are not permitted. As stated in Section 4.1, official collaborators may not be the primary supervisor/mentor of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers or research staff.

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



Requests for funding for Research Fellows and Senior Research Fellows are not supported by SFI unless those individuals are contractually differentiated by the HEI from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers - this information must be contained in a formal letter from the HEI uploaded against the proposal as a letter of support. If known, the team member's name should be included in the budget justification.

In the case of requests (justified in the budget justification) for experienced post-doctoral researchers (>8 years post-PhD), SFI will pay a contribution to their salary at the level of L2B, Point 4 for the requested duration within the grant. If known, the team member's name should be included in the budget justification.

**b. Equipment**

Details of all requested equipment necessary for the research programme should be itemised. Small equipment of a value of **less than €2,000** should be included in the materials and consumables section. The exception to this is costs associated with computers/laptops, which must be listed in the equipment section regardless of cost. If funding for computer cluster resources is requested in this application, justification must be given as to why national high performance computing facilities cannot be used for the purposes of the project. For an equipment item in excess of €50,000, the quote number and cost must be included in the budget justification. The documentation supporting this quotation must be fully auditable and available to SFI on request.

For large items of infrastructure requested as part of the current application, applicants may also submit an associated access charge plan which will be reviewed by SFI, should funding be awarded for the infrastructure requested. Please contact SFI prior to submission of an access charge plan to obtain relevant template and guidelines. Plans may be submitted *prior* to the call deadline by email to [investigators@sfi.ie](mailto:investigators@sfi.ie) (and not via SESAME), and should be referred to accordingly in the budget justification.

**c. Materials and Consumables**

Details of all materials and consumables that will be used in the course of the research programme should be provided.

Access charges may be sought for use of infrastructure where SFI pre-approved access charge plans are in place. Note that these may include, with SFI approval, access to facilities and services not available to the applicant, such as the costs associated with accessing international databases or commissioning specific experiments in national facilities (e.g. Tyndall NAP, CRANN etc., see FAQ 9a). These may also include, for example, access charges for use of infrastructure approved under the SFI Research Infrastructure Call 2012 or the SFI Research Centres Call, where pre-approved access charge plans are now in place.

Access charge requests must be included as a separate line item in the budget and where relevant must include the grant code and name of the relevant infrastructure to be used. A rationale for the amount of use proposed must be provided in the budget justification.



In addition, where access charge plans are submitted for infrastructure requested as part of the *current* application, indicative associated access charges may be included.

**d. Travel**

Only travel costs for journeys directly related to the progress of the research programme may be requested as a direct cost on the research grant. The applicant should detail travel expenses directly related to conferences, scientific collaboration on the research programme, or learning special research techniques and should indicate the number of team members participating in each event. Where possible, please supply the conference name and location. In the case of working visits, the rates sought for subsistence and other allowances may be no more than those which the Research Body's permanent staff may claim. In the Future Agri-Food Theme, travel costs for developing international collaborations may be requested.

**e. Ineligible Costs**

The following costs are *examples* of ineligible costs:

PI or Co-PI salary, collaborator salary, administrator salary, teaching buyout (except for ICA 'category 1' applicants.), clinical buyout (except in exceptional circumstances-please contact SFI in advance of any such request); contingency or miscellaneous costs, hospitality and entertainment costs; technology transfer or patent costs; workshop organisation; journal subscriptions; relocation expenses. If cash or in-kind industry contributions have been agreed, provide details and describe how they complement the requested budget from SFI in the budget justification. Costs which will be covered by industry contributions should not be included in the proposed budget.

**(x) Budget Justification (max. 2 pages)**

The applicant should outline the required expertise for each requested team member and justify the team member's role in the research programme. Please include the salary scale (as per SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale) for each team member. If known, the team member's name should also be included. Clear and explicit justification is required for any request for an experienced post-doctoral researcher, i.e. one who will be appointed higher than Level 2A, Point 1 of the SFI team member budgeting scales (Please see FAQ 1e). Requests for funding for Research Fellows and Senior Research Fellows are not supported by SFI unless those individuals are contractually differentiated by the HEI from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers - this information must be contained in a formal letter from the HEI uploaded against the proposal as a letter of support. In the case of requests (justified in the budget justification) for experienced post-doctoral researchers (>8 years post-PhD), SFI will pay a contribution to their salary at the level of L2B, Point 4 for the requested duration within the grant.

Justification should also be provided for requested equipment, consumables and travel, and the requested duration of funding. Clear indication should be given where funding is apportioned to collaborators (within the Republic of Ireland and within an eligible Research Body *only*). Please note that collaborators outside the Republic of Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the SFI Investigators Programme. Only eligible Research Bodies will be entitled to receive direct funding through the grant and all funding will be administered through the lead applicant's research body.

If funding is sought for overseas services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for not carrying out this activity in Ireland must be explained.

If cash or in-kind industry contributions have been agreed, provide details and describe how they complement the requested budget from SFI. Costs which will be covered by industry contributions should not be included in the proposed budget.

Applicants to the Future Agri-Food Theme must summarise how direct costs responsibility is divided between the lead applicant and co-applicant(s) in the budget justification. This will enable the eligibility criteria in Section 4.2b to be verified.

#### **(xi) Letters of Support**

The following letters of support **must** be included:

- A letter of support from **each official collaborator**, including each industry collaborator.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body** of the lead applicant which should comment on the infrastructure and services available to the applicant.
- Letters of support may be included from industrial partners. Industrial partners are not required, but are permitted and, where appropriate for the topic of the research, are encouraged. Additional letters of support may also be included from other bodies and individuals who will be directly involved in achieving economic or societal impact and are not listed as official 'industry' collaborators. Letters should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. Letters which do not demonstrate direct involvement will be removed from the proposal. Letters of support from academics not listed as official collaborators will be removed from the proposal.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of any co-applicant**, where different to the Research Body of the lead applicant. This letter should comment on the infrastructure and services available to the programme and, in addition, should include the endorsement of eligibility of the co-applicant as detailed below. *Please see text box below for requirements of this letter.*

Submission of an application through SESAME serves as the research body's endorsement of the eligibility of the lead applicant as well as approval of the budget requested, the infrastructure to be provided by the Research Body, and furthermore, confirms the validity and accuracy of the details provided in relation to the current, pending and expired grants as detailed in the application. However, in the case of the Research Body of the co-applicant, a letter of support is required, which is a formal letter on headed notepaper and is signed by an authorised institutional representative and must include the following declaration:

*[Research Body name - insert name]* which is the host Research Body of *[co-applicant – insert name]* confirms its association and support of the application entitled *[Application title – insert title]* and endorses that the co-applicant meets the eligibility criteria of the SFI Investigators Programme and is either a member of the academic staff, a contract researcher or a researcher awaiting appointment as defined in Section 4.2.3.

#### (xii) Excluded Reviewers

Up to three (3) individuals may be excluded from acting as reviewers for reasons of competition.

#### (xiii) Research Body Approval

It should be noted that Research Body submission of an application represents their approval of an application and agreement to SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants. Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

- Eligibility of the applicants
- That the applicants are, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as employees of the Research Body for the duration of the grant
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables 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
- That relevant ethical approval has been sought
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application, are valid and accurate

#### (xiv) Applicant Agreement To Terms And Conditions

It should be noted that submission of an application represents your agreement to [SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants](#).

#### 4.6 Deadlines

Pre-proposals must be received by SFI no later than **13:00 on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013**. Invitations for full proposals will issue by the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2013.

If invited to submit a full proposal, the deadline will be **13<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 13:00**.

**After these deadlines, applications will not be accepted by Sesame. Therefore they will not be reviewed by SFI.**

#### 4.7 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant(s) to participate in the peer-review process.

##### (a) Pre-proposal

Pre-proposals must be received by the deadline of **13:00 on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013**. The assessment will be carried out by panels of distinguished international scientists and engineers. Certain panel members with expertise in research translation and commercialisation will have the responsibility of assessing the potential impact of the proposed research based primarily on the impact statement. Applicants who submitted to the pre-proposal stage will be notified by 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, and will be invited to submit a full proposal by the deadline of **13<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 13:00**.

**During Pre-proposal review:** The following review criteria will be applied:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigator(s), taking into account the career stage of the applicant(s), and the applicant's record of securing non-exchequer funding.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland*

##### (b) Full proposal

The full proposal review process will consist of two stages combining both postal (Stage 1) and panel review (Stage 2).

**Stage 1 (Postal Review):** In accordance with the international peer-review process used to evaluate proposals submitted to SFI, all *eligible* proposals will be forwarded to international scientific experts for evaluation. This stage of the review will focus on the scientific excellence and not impact. Impact will be reviewed at the second stage of the full proposal review process. SFI reserves the right to return applications without review where the application does not meet the eligibility criteria. SFI Scientific Programme Managers will solicit reviews of proposals from at least three (3) peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research. The applicant may specify **up to** three referees who should **not** act as reviewers for his or her application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme. SFI shall not refer the application to any of these three reviewers. Otherwise, selection of reviewers shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

Reviews received from peers will be collated and forwarded to applicants. Applicants will then be afforded the opportunity to submit a response (equivalent to 2 pages) to reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to respond (*advance notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants*).

**During Stage 1:** The following review criteria will be applied:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigator(s), taking into account the career stage of the applicant(s), and the applicant's record of securing non-exchequer funding.*

**Stage 2 (Panel Review):** All full proposals will proceed to Stage 2 of the full proposal review process. Panels of high-level independent researchers will be convened in the broad thematic areas of biotechnology (BIO), information and communications technology (ICT), and sustainable energy and energy efficient technologies (ENERGY). Panel members will be selected with broad scientific and programmatic experience and will cover a broad range of research areas relevant to both the NRP areas and the Future Agri-Food Theme. Certain panel members with expertise in research translation and commercialisation have the responsibility of assessing the potential impact of the proposed research. In addition to briefing material, panel members will receive the full proposal, anonymous postal reviews and the applicant's response to postal reviews. Panel members will assess the inputs of the postal peer reviews and the overall merit and priority of applications. Panels will be invited to rank proposals and to make recommendations for an application to be given consideration for funding by SFI.

**During Stage 2:** The following review criteria will be applied

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research, including value for money and the potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the recent research record of the proposed investigator(s), taking into account the career stage of the applicant(s), and the applicant's record of securing non-exchequer funding.*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the proposed research's potential contribution to demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland*

SFI reserves the right to carry out pre-award site visits by international peers where required. Pre-award site visits, conducted by SFI staff, to examine infrastructure will also be a possibility, where appropriate. **Performance of applicants on previous SFI grants, as determined through site visits and/or annual reports, will be taken into consideration in the decision-making process.** *The final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.*

The identity of experts who conduct both the postal and panel review shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicants. However, decisions resulting from the evaluation will be given to the applicant, including all of the postal reviews (after Stage 1) and further panel comments, if appropriate, following the conclusion of the SFI review process. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international scientists involved in the merit review process.

SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

#### **Future Agri-Food Theme additional review criteria**

Pre- and full- proposals in the Future Agri-Food Theme will be assessed under the above criteria. The objectives of the Theme will be taken into account. The following criteria will be applied as part of the enterprise competitiveness and societal development review criterion:

- The potential impact of the proposed research, primarily on the agri-food industry
- The potential of the proposed research in preparing the Irish scientific community to compete, lead and win in relevant Horizon 2020 funding programmes, and other international funding programmes

**5. Research Integrity**

SFI places high importance on ensuring research integrity and endorses the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#). SFI has been involved with others in developing a policy statement on ensuring research integrity in Ireland. This draft statement is at an advanced stage and is likely to be adopted during the tenure of these grants.

All applicants and institutions are expected to abide by the European code of conduct for Research Integrity and the Irish policy. SFI plans to audit compliance by applicants and institutions.

**6. Ethical Issues**

Research supported by SFI must respect fundamental ethical principles.

Furthermore, in line with a current directive from its parent government department, research funded by SFI must not comprise any component of the following:

- Research intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer
- Research using human embryonic stem cells or tissues

Applicants must ensure that the proposed research **respects all national rules and procedures**. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify if their proposed research requires ethical approval. Where ethical approval is required, applicants must inform SFI ([investigators@sfi.ie](mailto:investigators@sfi.ie)) and may be requested to provide further detail. Ethical approval must be obtained from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

**7. Non-Compliance**

Full Proposals will only be accepted through the SESAME Award Management System. Proposals not in compliance with any details specified in this document or in the [SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants](#) will not be eligible for a grant and will be **returned without review**.

**8. Confidentiality**

Science Foundation Ireland takes all reasonable steps to ensure that information provided in the application is treated as confidential subject to submission to the members of its committees and merit review and to any obligations under law.

**9. Progress Reporting Requirements**

SFI has stringent requirements for the reporting by applicants on the grants that it makes. Applicants that fail to comply with these reporting requirements run the risk of having their grant payments suspended. Each year, on the anniversary of the grant start date or on a date decided in advance by SFI, SFI must receive from each recipient of an SFI Investigators Programme grant, an annual report that summarises the progress and achievements of the grant to date. Submission of annual reports is through SESAME; Investigators Programme 2013 awardees will be notified through SESAME of the guidelines in relation to reporting.



Progress against the objectives set out in the Investigators Programme 2013 call for proposals will be evaluated using both annual reports and progress site reviews. Each objective with expected outputs is discussed in turn below:

- *To support excellent scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact.*

In the annual report, awardees are asked to report on scientific progress and strategic impact. Awardees are asked to outline their key research highlights and to report on all refereed journal and conference publications directly supported by the Investigators Programme grant. This support must be acknowledged in all publications as “This work was supported by a research grant from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) under its Investigators Programme 2013, grant number 13/IA/#####”. If the grant is made under the Future Agri-Food Theme, the support must be acknowledged as “This work was supported by a research grant from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and Teagasc under the Investigators Programme 2013 Future Agri-Food Theme, grant number 13/IA/#####”. If the research is also funded by other bodies, for example as a result of future successful grant applications to Horizon 2020, publications must acknowledge “This work was supported in part by a research grant from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) under its Investigators Programme 2013, grant number 13/IA/#####”.

SFI funding has produced high quality high impact publications which have resulted in Ireland rising to the top 20 in international bibliometric rankings of repute. SFI’s Agenda 2020 sets a target for Ireland to remain in the top rankings. SFI’s expectation is that the grants made in the Investigators Programme will contribute significantly to this target. In the annual report, awardees are asked to describe the impact their research is making to the Irish economy and society and to report on impact related metrics such as invention disclosures, patents and spin-out companies that are linked to their research activities.

- *To increase the average research income secured by Ireland based PIs from international funding entities such as the EU and in doing so reduce the number of researchers that rely on SFI for the majority of their funding:*

A key purpose of the Investigators Programme is to build capacity, expertise and relationships so as to enable researchers to compete in funding programmes such as ERC and Horizon 2020. SFI’s expectation is that the Investigators Programme will provide the support necessary to researchers to develop their research to a level where they can compete successfully for international funding. In line with the objectives of SFI’s Agenda 2020, SFI strongly encourages that its funding be leveraged to achieve funding from other funding sources. Similarly SFI expects that Ireland based researchers will obtain research funding from as wide a range of sources as possible. In the annual report awardees are asked to report on the funding opportunities that they have pursued and won.

- *To increase the level of leadership roles held by Ireland based PIs in major European Initiatives, in particular Horizon 2020*

In addition to competing for international funding, a key purpose of Investigators Programme 2013 is to build capacity, expertise and relationships so as to enable researchers to lead proposals to major funding programmes, in particular Horizon 2020.

## **SFI Investigators Programme**

In the annual report, awardees are asked to report on their role in any applications made to the Horizon 2020 and any other major EU initiatives.

- *To increase the number of ERC grants secured by Ireland based PIs*

SFI acknowledges the excellence of researchers funded by the ERC and a key target of SFI's Agenda 2020 is to increase the number of ERC grants made to Ireland based researchers. In the annual report, awardees are asked to report on any applications made to the ERC Starting Investigator and Advanced grants.

- *To maintain Ireland's top 20 position in international bibliometric rankings through an increase in the number and quality of journal publications*

In the past, Principal Investigator Programme grants have resulted in high quality, high impact publications which have resulted in Ireland rising to the top 20 in international bibliometric rankings of repute. SFI's expectation is that grants made in the Investigators Programme will contribute significantly to this target.

- *To support the winning of top tier international prizes (e.g. Nobel prize, Fields Medal, European science prize, Lasker etc) by an SFI funded researcher/team*

SFI's Agenda 2020 sets a clear target for an SFI funded researcher to win a top tier international prize by 2020. The expectation is that such an award will be won by a researcher supported by the Investigators Programme. In the annual report, awardees are asked to report on all scientific awards received during the reporting period.

- *To support those researchers returning to active academic research through the ICA Programme after a prolonged absence*

Applicants to the Investigators Programme 2013 may choose to be evaluated under the SFI Investigator Career Advancement (ICA) criteria which are less stringent than non-ICA applications. ICA awardees are asked to report on progress in the same way as other Investigators Programme awardees. In the annual report, the ICA awardees should emphasise how their grant has enabled them to transition back to academic research following an extended absence.

- *To foster and support collaborations with significant research entities and industry*

As discussed previously, a key purpose of the Investigators Programme is to build research capacity, expertise and relationships. In the annual report, awardees are asked to report on all academic and industrial collaborations supported during the reporting period.

## **Progress Reporting for the Future Agri-Food Theme**

The objectives of the co-funded Theme are:

- To strengthen research and innovation in Ireland's agri-food sector through the convergence of a broad range of disciplines and technologies so as to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability in line with the targets set out in Food Harvest 2020.

## SFI Investigators Programme

- To contribute to the strategic research opportunities identified in NRP Area H: Food for Health and Area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing and to deliver on the actions identified by the Prioritisation Action Group implementation plan.
- To prepare the Irish scientific community to compete, lead and win in relevant Horizon 2020 funding programmes and other relevant international funding programmes.
- To offer scientists in a wide range of disciplines the opportunity to find new outlets and applications for their work.

The annual report used for Future Agri-Food is the same as that used for the Non-Themed grants. The same academic, scientific and impact outputs are measured. The expectation is that there will be a strong contribution to the Theme objectives above.

A key goal of Food Harvest 2020 is the increased dissemination of knowledge and transfer of technology to the agriculture and food sectors. Awardees will be asked to provide details of how agricultural knowledge and information systems and established channels for food industry innovation were used during the reporting period.

### Programme Evaluation

SFI routinely carries out programmatic reviews to assess how successful a programme has been and whether the programme has produced a significant return on investment. This is carried out using tools such as the annual census, annual reports, site visits, on-line surveys and bibliometric analyses to gather the requisite information. The reporting section describes how the outputs from the annual reports will be used to evaluate progress against the objectives set out in the Investigators Programme 2013. In addition, SFI will evaluate the contribution of the Investigators Programme 2013 to a number of relevant key performance indicators (KPIs), as set out in SFI's Agenda 2020. Many of these KPIs overlap with the objectives of Investigators Programme 2013. For example:

- *Ireland's place in international bibliometric rankings of repute should remain inside top 20 over period to 2020;*
- *The winning of a prestigious international prize (e.g. Nobel Prize, Fields Medal, European Science Prize, Lasker Prize) by an SFI funded researcher/team by 2020;*
- *The number of European Research Council grants secured by SFI researchers will exceed Ireland's juste retour level of 1.06% by 2016;*
- *The research income secured by SFI researchers from international funding entities such as the EU will double the average figure secured between 2008-2011, to €120m by 2020;*
- *The funding profile of SFI researchers; reduce to 30% the proportion of SFI researchers that rely on SFI for the majority of their funding by 2020;*
- *The level of leadership roles in major European initiatives, in particular, Horizon 2020, will exceed the level of investment by Ireland into Horizon 2020.*

Current Irish government policy mandates that the majority of public research funding is aligned with areas identified in the [report](#) of the National Research Prioritisation (NRP)

## **SFI Investigators Programme**

Steering Group published in 2012. SFI's Agenda 2020 sets a key target for investment into the NRP areas:

- *The proportion of SFI expenditure in the areas identified in the 2012 Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group, and/or in areas of demonstrable potential economic impact for Ireland, and/or in areas of significant partnership with major research entities and/or to support the development of young researchers: 100% by 2015.*

A key eligibility criterion of Investigators Programme 2013 is that applicants must be working in research areas that are aligned with either the 14 NRP or 6 platform science and technology (PST) areas. The two exceptions to this criterion are ERC grant holders and applicants applying under the Future Agri-Food Theme. The Future Agri-Food Theme is implicitly aligned with two of the NRP areas, namely Area H: Food for Health and Area I: Sustainable Food Production and Processing. Therefore the majority of the Investigators Programme 2013 investment will be in the areas identified in the 2012 Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group.

A key purpose of the Investigators Programme is to support collaborations and partnerships between academia and industry. One of the key objectives is to support excellent science that has potential impact. The expectation is that the outputs generated from Investigators Programme 2013 will contribute towards the following KPI targets;

- *The proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licences and spin outs recorded by Enterprise Ireland that are linked to SFI research: By 2020 double the 2011-2015 average*
- *The percentage of SFI trainees moving to industry as a first destination will be 50% by 2020.*

The "Future Agri-Food" component of Investigators Programme 2013 is contributing towards this KPI:

- *A measureable increase in joint funding instruments with key agencies (Irish and international) and companies aligned to Agenda 2020.*

### **10. Progress Site Reviews**

Each recipient of an SFI Investigators Programme grant will be subject to progress review assessment in the form of a site review performed by international peer reviewers during the period of the grant. The outcome of such a review will be taken into consideration in the assessment of future applications to the Foundation. As stated in the SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants, the Foundation reserves the right to terminate a grant if, in the reasonable opinion of the Foundation, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.

## ***SFI Investigators Programme***

### **11. Intellectual Property management**

Practices adopted should be in accordance with national guidelines, particularly the recently released [Putting public research to work for Ireland](#) document. Refer to the SFI IP management guidelines [webpage](#) for further details.

### **12. Questions**

FAQs:

[Click here to view FAQ](#)

For all additional queries please contact: [investigators@sfi.ie](mailto:investigators@sfi.ie)

## Appendix A: Applicant/Co-Applicant CV Template

To be used for pre-proposal and full proposal applications to the SFI Investigators Programme 2013 Call

**5 PAGES MAX:**  
**Section 1 (max. 2 pages) + Section 2 (max. 3 pages)**

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### SECTION 1 – Required Details (up to 2 pages maximum)

#### NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

#### CAREER PROFILE (Education and Employment)

#### HISTORY OF MENTORING AND SUPERVISION

*Please include numbers of current and completed MSc and PhD students, directly under your supervision, as well as details of previous and current post-doctoral staff.*

#### INNOVATION/COMMERCIALISATION ACTIVITY (e.g., relevant industry collaborations, invention disclosures, patents, spin-outs)

*Please distinguish between patents applied and under review versus patents granted*

#### OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE

*Please include details of key achievements including measures of esteem, invited presentations, principal scientific activities and responsibilities, as well as a statement demonstrating the applicant's accomplishments as an independent PI.*

**SECTION 2 – Publication Listing (up to 3 pages maximum)**

**FULL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS (or up to maximum space allowed)**

**Please fill in the table including the total number of publications and categorize that number according to the additional categories below.**

Total Publications #	Senior author publications #	Journal Articles #	Reviews #	Book Chapters #	Books #	*Conference associated publications #	Other #
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\*classified into peer reviewed conference papers and edited conference proceedings where appropriate as per discipline

Please **highlight below with an asterisk** each of your senior author publications (as per the eligibility criteria).

Please underline the name of the PI (and co-PIs if applicable) on each publication listed.



## Appendix B: Investigators Programme Pre-Proposal Checklist

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS</b>
<b>Eligibility Questionnaire</b>	Select 1 of 4 alternatives (Section 4.5, Step 1)	Choose 1
	Confirm eligibility	complete appropriate questions
<b>Proposal Summary</b>	Title	Up to 30 words.
	Total funding requested	Budget is indicative
	Duration	36, 48 or 60 months
	Justification of alignment with selected NRP Area/Theme	Max. 250 words
	Research categorisation areas	Choose 2
	SFI legal remit category	Choose 1
	Justification for SFI legal remit	Max. 250 words
<b>Lead Applicant details</b>	ICA: Short statement detailing eligibility etc.	upload document
	Percentage time commitment	
	CV – use template provided	Max. 5 pages
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
<b>Co-applicant details</b>	Percentage time commitment	
	ICA: Short statement detailing eligibility etc.	upload document
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
	CV – use template provided	Max. 5 pages
<b>Collaborator(s) details</b>	Name/Contact details etc.	
<b>Main Body of Pre-Proposal</b>	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
	Research Description and Impact Statement	Max. 5 pages
	References	Max. 2 pages
<b>Expired, Current or Pending</b>	Expired, Current & Pending Funding	
<b>Support of Applicants</b>	Indicate scientific overlap	Max. 600 words

**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 lead applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.**

## Appendix C: Investigators Programme Full Proposal Checklist

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS</b>
<b>Proposal Summary</b>	Title	Up to 30 words.
	Total funding requested	Budget is indicative
	Duration	36, 48 or 60 months
	Select 1 of 4 alternatives (Section 4.5, Step 1)	Choose 1
	Select 'NRP'/PST'/not applicable' option as appropriate (Section 4.5, Step 2 (i))	
	Justification of alignment with selected NRP Area/Theme	Max. 250 words
	Research categorisation areas	Choose 2
	Select appropriate SFI legal remit	Choose 1
	Justification for SFI legal remit	Max. 250 words
<b>Lead Applicant details</b>	ICA: Short statement from pre-proposal	
	ICA: copies of relevant supporting docs, see Section 4.5, Step 3(ii)	
	Percentage time commitment	
	CV – use template provided	Max. 5 pages
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
<b>Co-applicant details</b>	Percentage time commitment	
	Summary info – publication/ supervisory	
	CV – use template provided	Max. 5 pages
	ICA: If applicable, documentation should be provided as detailed above/in call	
<b>Collaborator(s) details</b>	Name/Contact details etc.	
	CV for <b>each</b> official collaborator	Max. 2 pages
	Letter of support for <b>each</b> official collaborator	
<b>Main Body of Full Proposal</b>	Keywords	Max. 15
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
	Impact statement	Max. 3 pages
	Research description	Max. 15 pages
	References	Max. 5 pages
<b>Expired, Current or Pending Support of Applicants</b>	Expired, Current & Pending Funding	
	Indicate scientific overlap	Max. 600 words
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by HEI	Max. 1 page
<b>Proposed Budget</b>	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table
<b>Budget Justification</b>	Outline the justification for the requested costs <b>Future Agri-Food:</b> Provide division of costs, see Section 4.3	Max. 2 pages
<b>Letters of Support</b>	Official collaborators, including industry	
	Host Research Body of the lead applicant	
	Host Research Body of co-applicant if in a different Research Body	
<b>Excluded Reviewers</b>	Up to 3 individuals may be excluded	

**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 lead applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.**