

Document Information

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Terms of Reference for the 8-Year Progress Review of the SFI Research Centres 2013 Cohort

¹Should circumstances arise, SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

²Issued to the Research Centre and Panellists

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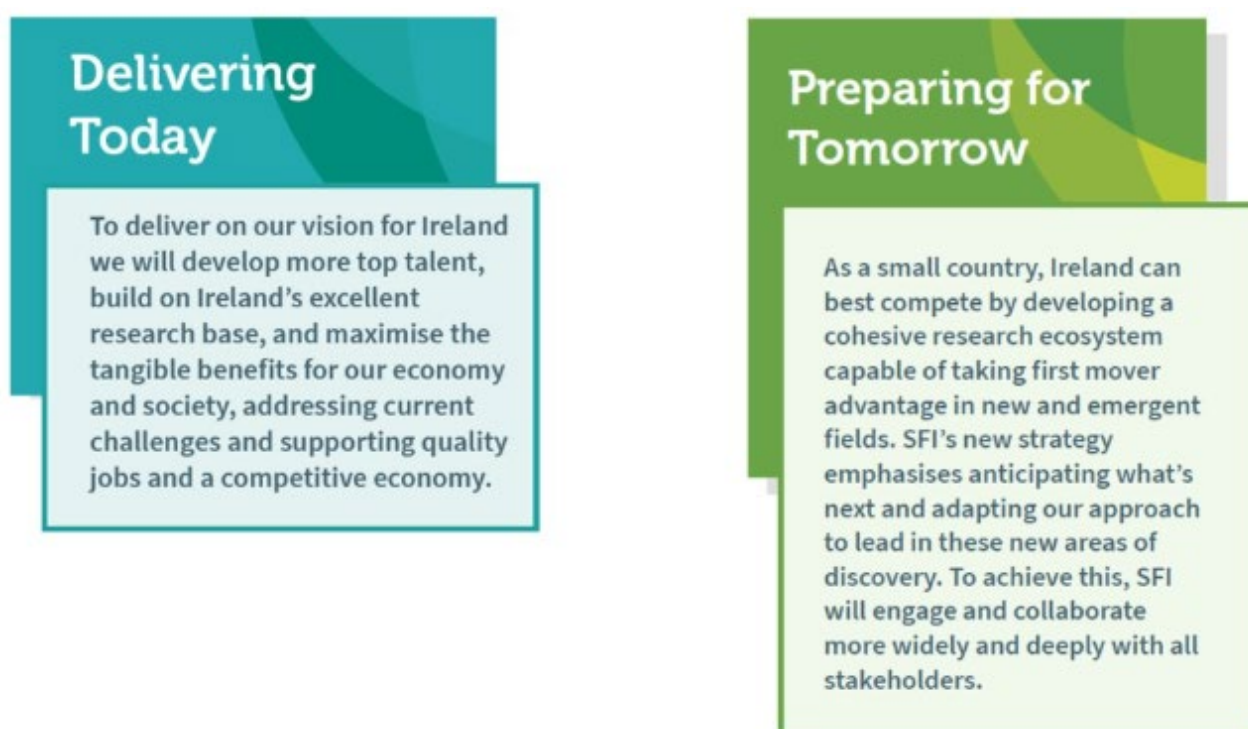
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1 Background

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research. SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The Foundation also promotes and supports the study of, education in, and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and, in particular, to the growth of the economy. SFI's 2025 strategy *Shaping Our Future*¹ aims to position Ireland as a global innovation leader in scientific and engineering research for the advancement of Ireland's economy and society.

SFI's *Shaping Our Future* strategy has two core ambitions: **Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow**:



The SFI Research Centres Programme was launched in 2012 and they play an important role in the *SFI Shaping Our Future* strategy by driving excellent research, attracting top international talent, and providing economic and societal impact. The National Development Plan 2018-2027 (Project Ireland 2040²), which is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland from 2018 to 2040, commits to further development and scaling of the network of SFI Research Centres. Impact 2030³, Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy launched in May 2022 puts research and innovation (R&I) at the heart of addressing Ireland's social, economic and environmental challenges, reaffirms the importance of Research Centres as a magnet to attract and retain investment; to encourage companies, both Irish and foreign owned, to develop their R&I activities here.

¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/09022006-project-ireland-2040/>

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/27c78-impact-2030-irelands-new-research-and-innovation-strategy/>

SFI Research Centres help link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry to:

- develop **internationally leading research** and respond dynamically to emerging opportunities,
- foster **the development of new and existing Ireland-based companies** to create innovative products leading to job creation,
- **attract industry** that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy, and
- through the integration of **research, education and public engagement**, expand educational and career opportunities in, and public understanding of, science and engineering research.

The SFI Research Centres aim to exploit opportunities in science, engineering, and technology where the complexity of the research agenda requires the advantages of scope, scale, dynamism, synergy, duration, equipment, and facilities that a Centre can provide. The consolidation of research activities across higher education institutes in SFI Research Centres aims to create a critical mass of internationally leading researchers in strategic areas which become a key attractant to industry, laying the foundation for effective and productive academic and industrial partnerships. Additionally, SFI Research Centres are expected to be excellent, relevant, sustainable, and to serve as international beacons for attracting talent and leveraging non-Exchequer funding with particular emphasis on industry and EU Framework Programmes.

17 SFI Research Centres have been funded to date, 5 which were established in 2013, and are referred to throughout the call document as the 2013 Research Centres Cohort. The 5 Centres are:

- ADAPT, the SFI Research Centre for AI-driven Digital Content Technology,
- CONNECT, the SFI Research Centre for Future Networks and Communications,
- CÚRAM, the SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices.
- iCrag, the SFI Research Centre in Applied Geosciences, and
- Lero, the SFI Research Centre for Software.

The 2013 Research Centres Cohort were funded initially for 6 years (Phase 1), and were all successful in securing Phase 2 funding for an additional 6 Years. The SFI Research Centres funded through the Phase 2 programme are expected to contribute significantly towards achieving SFI's goal, in partnership with other agencies and government departments, of developing a dynamic research centre ecosystem that can evolve to meet the changing needs of industry and society. As such, Centres funded for a second term are expected to integrate with other SFI- and non-SFI-funded Centres, where appropriate, to maximise capabilities, outputs and industry offerings.

Under the conditions of funding provided by SFI to the Research Centres, the Research Centres undergo Progress Reviews every two years. For the Centres established in 2013, their fourth 2-year Progress Reviews, i.e. their 8-year Reviews, are due to take place in 2023. A Review Panel of 6–8 distinguished scientists, engineers and individuals with significant commercialisation and translational/applied experiences will be convened to evaluate each of the 2013 Research Centres. One member of the Review Panel will also hold specialist Education and Public Engagement (EPE) expertise. This Terms of Reference document for the 8-year Progress Reviews has been developed to provide guidance to the Review Panel who will review the progress on the Research Centre award. This document will also provide guidance to the Research Centre Directors, Research Centre Teams (co-PIs, FIs, Operations staff), Research Office staff, Vice-Presidents/Deans of Research (VPDoR) and University Presidents/Provosts and relevant SFI staff in order to prepare for the Progress Review Visits.

More information on the SFI Research Centres can be found here: <https://www.sfi.ie/sfi-research-centres/>

2 Objectives of the 8-Year Progress Review

The purpose of the 8-year Progress Review is to allow SFI to evaluate the quality of the Research and EPE activities, to assess progress on the implementation of the 6-year Review Panel recommendations, and to evaluate the Centre's performance in achieving Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Phase 2 Cost-Share targets.

The specific objectives of the review are to evaluate the:

- I. Quality of the research carried out by the Centre in Phase 2 to determine if it is scientifically excellent.
- II. Education and Public Engagement (EPE) Programme.
- III. Centre's performance against its cost-share and KPI targets and assess the Centre's management of the SFI budget.
- IV. Centre's implementation of the 6-year review recommendations.
- V. Effectiveness of the Research Centre leadership, organisational and governance structures.
- VI. Impact arising from Centre activities in the last 2 years.
- VII. Centre's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID impacted Period considered is H1-2020-H1-2021 inclusive).

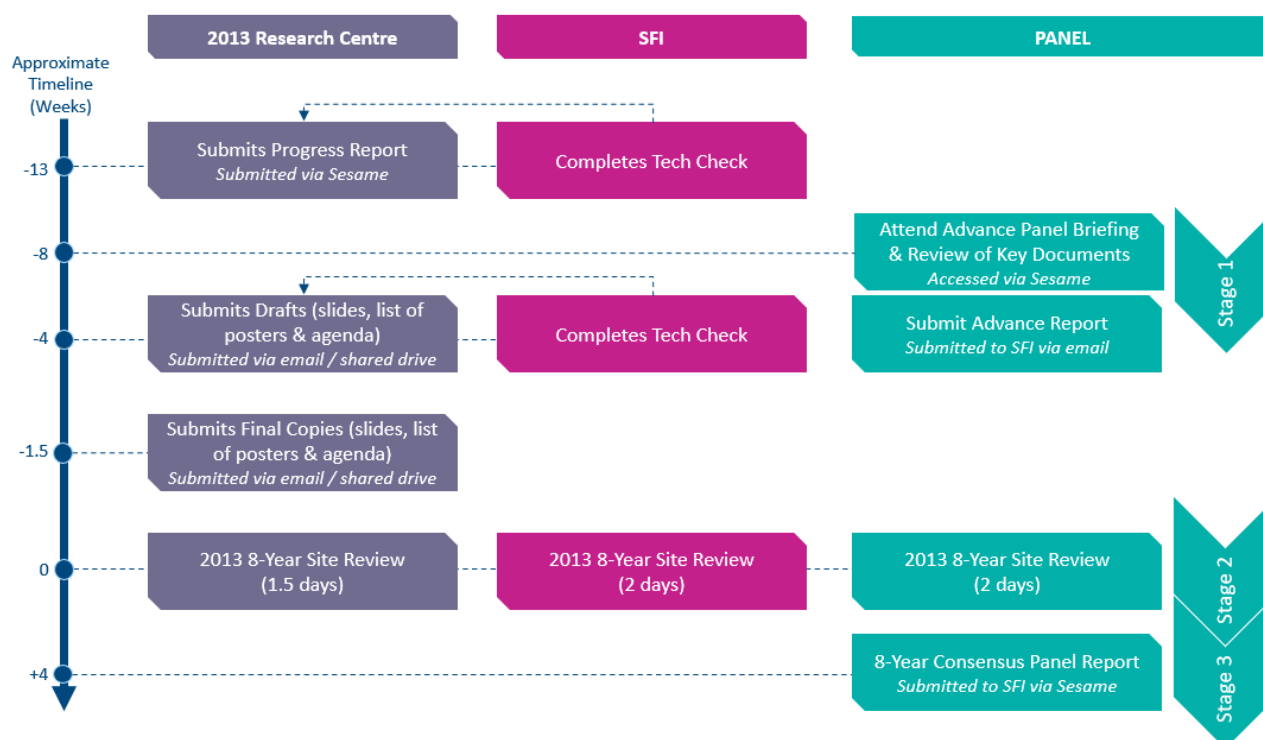
3 Progress Review Process Overview

The Research Centre 8-Year Progress Review is made up of a number of stages:

- **Stage 1:** Advance Panel Briefing (Zoom), Document Review & Preparation of an Advance Report.
- **Stage 2:** Briefing Dinner and 2-day Site Review.
- **Stage 3:** Consensus Panel Report Completion (post Site Review).

The Site Review will take place at the host institution of the Research Centre, or another suitable location in Q1-Q2 2023. Each Centre will determine the location of their Site Review. The attending SFI team and Review Panel meet the evening before for a Briefing Dinner.

The process with approximate timelines is illustrated at a high-level here:



4 Stage 1: Advance Panel Briefing (Zoom), Document Review & Preparation of an Advance Report

4.1 Advance SFI-Panel Briefing

Approximately 8 weeks before the review, SFI will host a Panel Briefing over Zoom to brief the panel on the review process and its objectives, including the following points:

- Key information regarding SFI.
- SFI strategies and policies including, but not limited to, DORA compliance and State Aid.
- Introduction to the SFI Research Centre programme and objectives.
- Information on the impacts, KPIs, cost-share funding models and linked awards.
- Guidelines on the Progress Review process and logistics.
- Other relevant information related to the review process.

4.2 Documentation Review

Following the Advance Briefing, each Reviewer will be granted access to the documentation listed below via SESAME (SFI's Grants and Awards Management System). On logging in to SESAME, Reviewers will be asked to review and agree to the following:

- Reviewer Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement.
- SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct.
- Understanding of Unconscious Bias.

We request the panel to review the following documentation as part of the review process:

#	Key Document	Description
01	8-Year Review Terms of Reference (this document)	The terms of reference document describes the 8-Year Review, including details such as the context, agenda, the review process.
02	SFI Briefing Slides	The briefing presentation shared by the relevant (Scientific Programme Manager) SPM to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFI-validated Cost-Share & KPIs (validated up to H1-2022, and in the case of EPE participation up to H2-2021). Link to relevant SFI Policy website(s).
03	Reviewer Advance Report Template	This report should be completed by each reviewer in advance of the Site Review and used to capture any initial impressions and/or raise any concerns across each review section. This report follows the format of the Consensus Panel Report that will be jointly completed by the Panel at the end of the Site Review.
04a	8-Year Research Centre Progress Report (submitted ~3 months prior to Review)	The Progress Report submitted by each SFI Research Centre provides an update on the progress of the SFI Research Centre, allowing for effective oversight and support by the Foundation. It is a key document provided to the Review Panel ahead of the Progress Reviews covering the period since the previous Progress Review.
04b	8-Year Research Centre Progress Report Appendix I – Research Activities (submitted as a separate document to the Progress Report)	This Appendix to the Progress Report provides an outline of the Research Activities of the Centre.
04c	EPE Annual Operational Plan (submitted April 2022)	The purpose of the Annual EPE Operational Plan is to outline the Centre’s planned EPE programme of activities and evaluation methods for the coming year. The progress made against the plan is reported in the subsequent Progress Report.
05	6-Year Review Consensus Panel Report	The previous Consensus Panel Report completed by the Panel at the 6-Year Review.
06	Revised workplan (if relevant)	If a Centre received reviewer feedback previously on changes to their proposed work-plan, a revised work-plan is to be included.

Additional supporting documentation can be made available to the Review Panel on request, and a detailed list of the type of documents that can be made available upon request can be found in the Appendix under section: “Additional Documentation that can be made available to the Panel”.

4.3 Advance Report Preparation

Each Panel Member will be asked to complete an Advance Report prior to the Site Review. Please allow approximately 1 day for the preparation of this report. This report is similar in structure to the final Consensus Panel Report, and a copy of the Consensus Panel Report Template can be found in the Appendix under section “Templates”. In preparation of the Site Review the Panel are asked to:

- Review the key documentation provided via SESAME (SFI’s Grants and Awards Management System).
- Thoroughly consider each section of the Advance Report, noting key elements/thoughts in each section in preparation of the Site Review.
- Compile a comprehensive list of key questions to be shared with the Centre in advance of the review.

The Panel Member’s Advance Report, including questions, are to be returned by each Panel Member to SFI approximately 4 weeks before the review. Key questions will be collated and forwarded to the Centre Director approximately 3 weeks before the review to allow the Research Centre time to address the questions either in their review presentations or in a short written response to the panel in advance of the Site Review.

5 Stage 2: Briefing Dinner and 2-day Site Review

5.1 Agenda

A final agenda will be shared with the Panel, approximately 1 week in advance of the Site Review. An example of a typical agenda is presented here, but please note that the agenda times may be modified marginally to suit the needs of the individual Research Centre.

Briefing Dinner		
18.00-21.00	Briefing Dinner <i>SFI and the Panel will meet for dinner the evening before to discuss the review process and the programme for the site visit.</i>	
Day 1:		
8.00-8.10	Welcome from Governance Chair <i>Can be streamed via Zoom</i>	Main Room (All)
8.10-8.15	Welcome by SFI (Process Chair)	Main Room (All)
8.15-9.00	SFI Research Centre Overview incl. Q&A (Centre Director)	Main Room (All)
<i>Break</i>		
9.15-12.30	Research Programme Overview (PI – Workstream Leads) incl. Q&A <i>To include progress on platform, targeted, spoke and Centre-to-Centre projects</i>	Main Room (All)
12.30-13.00	SFI-Panel Discussion	Private Room
<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-14.15	Poster Session (PhDs / MScs or Postdoctoral Researchers) <i>Each panel member attends a Poster Session (3 presenters per group of posters)</i>	Main Room (or suitable poster specific room)
14.15-16.00	Research Programme Overview (PI – Workstream Leads) incl. Q&A <i>To include progress on platform, targeted, spoke and Centre-to-Centre projects</i>	Main Room (All)
<i>Break</i>		
16.30-17.30	SFI-Panel Discussion	Private Room
17.30-18.00	Director(s) / Co-PIs Discussion with the Panel	Main Room / Private Room
19.00-21.30	SFI – Panel Evening Dinner	
Day 2:		
8.00-8.30	Breakfast – SFI-Panel Discussion	Private Room
8.30-9.00	Institutional Support – Discussion of Key Issues with the Host Research Body (VPDoR) <i>Can be streamed via Zoom</i>	Private Room
9.00-10.00	EPE Programme Review incl. Q&A	Main Room (All)
10.00 -11.00	Centre Impact incl. Q&A.	Main Room (All)
<i>Break</i>		
11.15-11.30	SFI-Panel Discussion	Private Room
11.30-12.30	Industry Partner Session <i>Can be hosted via Zoom</i>	Private Room
12.30-13.30	Director (s) / Co-PIs Discussion with the Panel <i>Incl. final summary on RC leadership, organisational & governance structures; KPI, Cost-Share & Budget Performance; Centre Specific Response to COVID & close out any remaining panel questions.</i>	Main Room / Private Room
<i>Lunch</i>		
14.00-18.00	Consensus Panel Report Write-Up	Private Room

5.1.1 SFI – Panel Briefing

On the evening before the Site Review, SFI and the panel will meet for a Briefing Dinner, during which the Research Centres programme and Site Review process will be discussed.

5.1.2 Centre Presentations and Discussions

The focus of Day 1 is to assess:

Objective I. Quality of the research carried out by the Centre in Phase 2 to determine if it is scientifically excellent

- Presentations should go into detail on the research programme and progress made in platform and targeted projects, as well as the pipeline between them.
- Centres should incorporate, as appropriate, presentations on the progress of all relevant Centre Spoke Awards or US-Centre-to-Centre awards. The SPM will provide further guidance for specific Multi-Centre Spokes.
- References to data management practices, research methodology and training that supports research integrity, should be included where appropriate.

The presentations and discussions on Day 2 are to focus across the remaining objectives:

Objective II. EPE Programme & Strategy

- Overview of the Centre's EPE strategy.
- Details of how the EPE programme is developed and delivered both with and by the Centre's research community.
- The achievements against the EPE operations plan, in terms of outputs and outcomes.
- Progress against expected tangible benefits and impacts of the EPE activity.
- Evidence that EPE is embedded in the culture of the Research Centre should be highlighted, for example, indication of participation levels across the Research Centre team. It is recommended that the work of the EPE Advocate (i.e. the leadership voice for EPE) and EPE Champions⁴ are highlighted.
- Presenters during Day 1 should also speak to EPE activities that they and their team have delivered.

Objective III. Centre's performance against its Cost-Share and KPI targets and the Centre's management of the SFI budget

- KPI Performance to Date and Future Plans
During the Site Review, Research Centres are permitted to present more recent progress, including outputs achieved up to the date of the Site Review.
- High-level Budget Overview
- Cost-Share Performance to Date and Future Plans
During the Site Review, Research Centres are permitted to present more recent progress, including cost-share achieved up to the date of the Site Review.

⁴ EPE Champions are identified as those who participate in five or more EPE activities, who lead or significantly participate in the development and/or delivery of EPE strategy and/or activity. They often act as role models, inspiring others to participate.

- Discussion with Industry Partners

This session is an opportunity for the Panel to have a discussion with a selection of industry partners one at a time focusing on their involvement in Centre activities and how the Centre is meeting their needs. Industry partners chosen should represent different areas of activity and different types of enterprise (e.g. MNCs and SMEs). (Based on feedback from previous reviewers SFI recommends 2 industry partners, with a maximum of 3). Centre staff or representatives will not be present during this session. No presentation should be made during this session.

Objective V. Research Centre leadership, organisational and governance structures

- Overview of the Centre's organisational and governance structures
- Student, Early Career Researcher Supports
- Institutional Support (VPDoR(s) only present)

VPDoR of the host Research Body must be present for this discussion. Other VPDoRs may also be invited to attend the session at the discretion of the Research Centre. This session is an opportunity for the panel to discuss the institutional support that the Research Centre has received from the host Research Body and partner Research Bodies involved. Centre staff or representatives will not be present during this session. No presentation should be made during this session.

- Centre's Management in response to COVID-19

Objective VI. Centre Impact

- Centre's impact stories and pathways to achieving impact objectives.
- Centre's contribution to the national and global COVID-19 crisis (if relevant).

Throughout the review the following objective will be integrated across the presentations / discussions where relevant:

Objective IV. Implementation of the 6-year review recommendations

- Integrated into the presentations where relevant and can be discussed more thoroughly if required at the Director/Co-PI Private Discussions with the Panel.

5.1.3 Report Writing Session

The afternoon of Day 2 will include a 3-hour closed report writing session for the Review Panel, the purpose of which is to gather scores and main observations to support completion of the final report. This will be completed through an online shared document. SFI request that the Panel Members note the following:

- Prior to the report writing closed session, any unclear and/or outstanding questions to the Centre should be fully addressed.
- The Academic Chair will lead the Panel's discussion on the scores for each section of the report.
- A 1-hour conference call may be scheduled post the review to approve the final Panel Report, if necessary.

The Consensus Panel Report includes sections to reflect the objectives of the Progress Review. Each section will include a narrative and a score indicating the degree of progress (narrative only for COVID-19 section). The narrative should include recommendations for alterations to future Centre activities where weaknesses or risks are identified. SFI may request that an unsatisfactory score in any section is accompanied by further recommendations for alterations, including potential reductions in Centre budgets.

The Panel Report is broken down into 9 sections:

- i. Research / Scientific Programme
- ii. Education and Public Engagement Programme
- iii. Research Centre performance on Cost-Share, KPIs and Budget management
- iv. Implementation of Recommendations from the 6-year Progress Review
- v. Research Centre Leadership, Management and Governance
- vi. Centre Impact
- vii. Centre’s response to COVID-19 pandemic
- viii. Executive Summary
- ix. Reviewer Feedback for SFI

And the following scoring rubric is used against each section:

Score	Description
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.

5.2 Site Review Attendees

The following sections outline the attendees for the Site Review.

5.2.1 SFI Research Centre Attendees

The following personnel from the Centre must be in attendance:

- Centre Director(s)
- Centre Manager

- Operations Team
- Co-Principal Investigators (PIs)
- Funded Investigators (FIs) who are delivering presentations
- Spoke award leader (if relevant)
- Post-doctoral researchers and PhD/MSc students who are presenting during the poster session or who are delivering other presentations
- Chair of the SFI Research Centre Governance Committee for the opening address (*Can be streamed via Zoom if necessary)
- Vice President/Dean for Research (VPDoR) (or equivalent) from the host Research Body must be present at the institutional support session on Day 2 of the review at a minimum. VPDoRs from additional Research Bodies may also attend in addition, and the choice of which Research Bodies are represented is up to the Centre. **NB:** If a VPDoR is also a PI/FI in the Centre, he/she will not be permitted to represent the institution at the review. In this case, the VPDoR must nominate a suitable replacement from their Research Body to attend the meeting in their place.
- Selected industry partners for the industry discussions (*Can be streamed via Zoom if necessary)

Please note that any additional participants not mentioned on the list can be discussed with your SPM in advance of the review. The following personnel may additionally attend the Site Review:

- FIs not delivering presentations (all FIs must be invited to attend the Site Review, and attendance of as many FIs as possible is advisable to address questions that may arise)
- Postdoctoral researchers and PhD/MSc students not delivering presentations/posters
- Representatives from the US and NI Centres from a US-Ireland Centre-to-Centre partnership award
- Technical collaborators (if space permits)
- Other Centre research staff and students

We ask that all leading members of the Research Centre (Centre Directors, Co-PIs, and Ops Team Member Leads) attend all the main review sessions (Welcome, Introduction, Research Programme, EPE, Impact).

5.2.2 SFI Staff & Other Attendees

In addition to the SFI SPM responsible for the Research Centre, other representatives from SFI may attend the review; including (but not limited to) the supporting Scientific Programme Officer (SPO), an EPE Team Representative, the Head of Research Centres and the Director of Science for the Economy.

5.3 Review Roles

5.3.1 Role of Academic Chair (Review Panel Member):

Before the review, SFI will request a Panel Member to act as Academic Chair. The role is to:

- Ensure the Site Review procedure is followed and required outputs are achieved.
- Ensure the review schedule stays within the planned time requirements.
- Ensure everyone on the Panel is involved and given an opportunity to speak.
- Ensure international benchmarking of research progress.
- Ensure a fair hearing is given to every presentation.
- Submit the final Consensus Panel Report and ensure it is a true reflection of the Panel's questions, discussions, and the presentations at the review.

5.3.2 Role of Process Chair (SFI Staff Member):

- To primarily act as the facilitator between the Research Centre and the Panel Members.
- To manage the scope of the review.
- To ensure the Panel are presented with adequate information to complete the Panel Report.
- To ensure that PIs are given the opportunity to present progress on awards to date.

6 Stage 3: Follow-up to Site Review

6.1 Review Panel

The Review Panel can be provided with additional time to remotely complete the Consensus Panel Report, and SFI can arrange a one-hour follow-up teleconference post the Site Review to approve the Final Consensus Panel Report if required. The chair will submit the final Consensus Panel Report via SESAME.

6.2 SFI Post Site Review Follow-Up

When the Consensus Panel Report has been completed, a covering letter highlighting the pertinent points of the Progress Review, along with final recommendations, will be prepared by SFI. Following approval, the outcome of the Progress Review, covering letter and Consensus Panel Report are delivered to the SFI Research Centre Director, Governance Chair, Centre Manager and Vice-President/Dean of Research of the Host Institution(s).

6.3 Research Centre Post Site Review Follow-Up

The Centre Director, as lead investigator, is given 4 weeks in which to submit a response to the reviewers' recommendations and commentary. A feedback meeting between the Centre Director, Centre Manager and SFI will take place once this response is submitted to facilitate further discussion on the outcomes and recommendations from the Progress Review. SFI may arrange additional post-review meetings with key Centre stakeholders (e.g. Governance Committee Chair, VPDoRs) as necessary.

6.4 Post-Review Communications Meeting

Separately, a Post-Review Communications Meeting will be held between SFI (SPM & SFI Comms Team) and the Centre (Centre Director, Manager & Comms Team) to discuss the Centre's recent and planned communications activities. This meeting will take place ideally one month after the Site Review. The purpose of this meeting is for the Centre to relay the key communications successes over the last two years, and to talk through future plans, resources, identify any areas for improvement or increased focus, and to discuss any supports the SFI Communications team can provide. The date of the meeting, as well as further detail on its format, will be decided in communication with the SFI SPM.

Appendix

Appendix I: Research Centre Guidance

Agenda

The Agenda Template will be shared with each Centre by their SPM. The template agenda provides guidance on session timings, and some modifications may be made to suit the specific needs of the Research Centre in consultation with the relevant SPM. Please note that:

- Private panel discussions scheduled in the agenda must not be altered,
- 50% of the time must be allocated to main room presentations and 50% of the time must be allocated to Q&A; and
- The allocation for private discussion sessions between the Panel Members, SFI and Centre Director/Co-PIs across the two days.

The agenda should be finalised with your SPM no later than 1.5 weeks before the date of the Site Review. SFI may request a modification to the format of the review if deemed appropriate.

Presentations Requirements from the Research Centre (unless otherwise agreed with your SPM)

Please see Section 5.1 for guidance on the expected content for the main room presentations. The Academic Chair may need to cut presentations short if they exceed the allotted time. As a rule of thumb, the number of slides should be limited to 1 slide per minute in each presentation, and please allow 50% of the allocated time for Q&A. Timings of the presentations should be strictly adhered to according to the final schedule.

Please note, in advance of the Progress Review the validated KPI results up to H1-2022 and in the case of EPE participation up to H2-2021 will be provided to the Review Panel. Research Centres are permitted to present more recent progress at the Site Review, including outputs or achievements that occur right up to the date of the Site Review, but any data not yet validated by SFI should be clearly labelled as such.

SFI will send the aggregated anonymised key questions from the Panel's pre-review reports to the Centre. These questions should be addressed by the Centre at the Site Review, or if preferred by the Centre, a short document answering these questions can be provided to the panel on the evening before the Site Review.

Q&A Sessions

Following each presentation there will be a Q&A session where Panel Members can ask questions. The Academic Chair will invite the Panel to ask questions during this session.

Poster Session

Feedback from the recent virtual reviews, have resulted in a change to the poster session as follows:

- Please locate posters into groups of 3, up to a total of 24 posters to be reviewed.
- One Panel Member will be assigned to each group to discuss with 3 PhD/MSc or postdoctoral researchers their research as presented in the poster and their experience of being part of the Research Centre.
- No PIs should be present at the poster session.

- Each poster presenter should prepare a short 5-min brief to describe their research presented in the poster, and be able to speak to their work and Centre activities they have taken part in (including EPE activities).
- SFI staff members will be available during this session to assist with any queries.
- Please note that one of the Review Panel members will be an expert in EPE. EPE content is welcome in all presentations in the poster session; however, a minimum of 3 presentations are required to focus specifically on this topic. This could be, for instance, on the EPE activities that the PhD students / postdoctoral researchers have created, developed or participated in.

Logistics

Main Room: A suitable seminar room or meeting room will be required for the duration of the Site Review. The room should comfortably accommodate the panel of up to 8 international experts, up to 5 members of SFI, and the Research Centre team. From previous experience, a U-shaped arrangement of the tables has worked well, at which the Panel, the SFI SPM, a subset of the RC Leadership Team and Presenters sit, with additional seating around the room for other attendees as shown in Figure 1. It is preferable to have a large table (s) rather than individual student-style desks if possible.

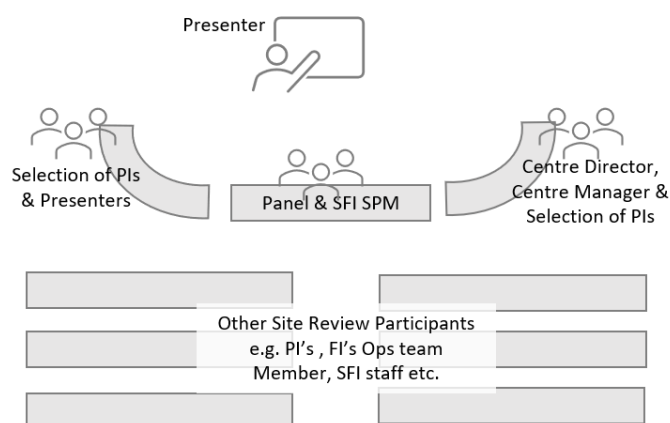


Figure 1 Suggested Main Room Layout

Private Room: SFI also request the use of a Private Room located close to the Main Room to accommodate at a minimum the Review Panel and the 5 members of SFI, set-out in a rectangular conference room layout. For various sessions throughout the Site Visit, the Panel will be working in closed session and will be using laptops to write the Consensus Panel Report. As such, extension-leads and international adaptors should be available in both rooms to allow for the use of 10+ laptops, and Internet access should also be available.

The “Director (s) / Co-PIs Discussion with the Panel” sessions can be held in either the Main Room or the Private Room.

Catering

Please arrange for water, tea & coffee to be available in the seminar room at all times. Additional snacks should be provided at scheduled breaks according to the final agenda. Please provide a buffet-style lunch (including vegetarian options) with options to sit down to eat and relax (e.g. possibility to bring food into the Main / Private Rooms). On Day 2, a continental style breakfast should be provided. SFI will organise evening dinners for the attending SFI staff and the Panel.

Submitting files to SFI:

If email is prohibitive due to large file sizes, Centres can share their files with SFI via a shared drive such as Google Drive or One Drive. The SPM must be able to download and save the files from this location.

Timeline Checklist

Research Centres are required to submit the following key documents by the requested submission deadlines:

- Progress Report and revised workplan (if relevant) to be submitted as per SESAME Deadline (~13 weeks prior to Site Review).
- Draft copies of the Agenda, Presentation Slides and List of Poster Titles and Presenters to be submitted 4 weeks prior to the Site Review.
- Final copies of the Agenda, Presentation Slides and List of Poster Titles and Presenters to be submitted 1.5 weeks prior to the Site Review.
- A brief document answering the reviewers' questions can be provided 48 hours before the start date of the Site Review.

Appendix II: SFI Financial Review Procedure

Prior to the Site Review, the SFI Finance team will analyse the following for each 2013 Research Centre up to end of H1-2022:

- The Expenditure Report
- The Consolidated Industry Partner Cost-Share Reports for the Centre
- The Individual Industry Partner Cost-Share Reports for the Centre
- The Consolidated Competitively and Non-Competitively awarded Non-Exchequer, Non-Commercial (NE-NC) funding.

The above reports will be checked in detail by SFI Finance to ensure the following:

- The reports are compiled correctly and reflect all active and completed Platform and Targeted projects for each Centre.
- That the cash amounts received, and in-kind amounts received have been accurately reported and can be traced to the Research Body bank account.
- The values placed on the In-kind contributions are fair and reasonable, have been signed as 'received' by the Centre and the Research Bodies in the period under review and can be traced to the Individual Industry Cost-Share reports where applicable.
- That overheads received from industry partners which have been diverted directly to the Centre activity have been correctly accounted for.
- For Competitive NE-NC commitments, the SFI Finance team will review the reported commitments against the appropriate audit evidence (e.g. relevant grant agreements) as required to verify that the awarded grants are live and that overheads received from these sources, which have been diverted directly to the Research Centre activity, have been correctly accounted for.
- Non-competitive NE-NC received will be verified by tracing these transactions to the Research Body bank account and reviewing the associated supporting documentation.

Appendix III: Additional Documentation that can be made Available to the Panel

During the Progress Review, the Panel may request additional information from SFI to aid them in their review. Please find examples of the type of documentation that can be made available to the Review Panel upon request. If the requested material is required to be sourced by the Centre, the additional information will need to be provided as soon as possible, and it should be emailed to the relevant SPM in SFI.

Other Documentation that can be made available	Description
Relevant Call Document(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SFI Research Centres Phase 2 Call document</i> • <i>Spokes Call document (specific to Spoke)</i> 	The call document provides information about the funding programme and information for applicants on how to prepare and apply for these programmes.
Proposals including Workplans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Centre Phase 2 Proposal</i> • <i>Spoke award proposal/s (if relevant)</i> • <i>US-Ireland Centre-to-Centre proposal/s (if relevant)</i> 	The original Proposal Documents from the Centres for each award type.
Previous Research Centre Annual / Progress Reports	Each year a Centre submits either an Annual Report or a Progress Report. The Annual/Progress Report provides SFI with an update on the progress of an SFI Research Centre, allowing for effective oversight and support by the Foundation.
Research Centre's written response to 6-year panel review recommendation	Following the Progress Review and the release of the Panel Consensus Report, SFI asks each Centre to consider the key recommendations outlined and provide a written response to the Panel Report. This Centre Response from the last Progress Review can be made available to the current panel if required.
Guidance document on Cost-Share and KPIs	Cost-Share Guidance KPI Guidance
KPI & Cost-Share Data Sets	For example, a distinct list from SESAME can be extracted to list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding diversification, including status of CRA's • Validated publications, etc
Research Centre most recent financial reports	If deemed necessary Finance Teams can share the financial reports if requested as listed in the Finance Process Overview
SFI Research Centres management and governance requirements	These documents could include, the Guidance provided on the SFI website, the Centre Letter of Offer (LoO), and / or the Research Centre Partnership Agreement (RCPA).
Other area relevant specific government documents	Examples could include the National IP Protocol, National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, HEA National Review of Gender Equality etc.

Appendix IV: Acronyms

Acronym	Descriptor
EPE	Education and Public Engagement
FI	Funded Investigator
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LoO	Letter of Offer
PI	Principal Investigator
R&I	Research and Innovation
RC	Research Centre
RCPA	Research Centre Partnership Agreement
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SPM	Scientific Programme Manager
SPO	Scientific Programme Officer
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and maths
VPDoR	Vice President/Dean for Research

Appendix V: Templates

The following templates will be provided by the Spoke SPM as part of the Progress Review:

Template	Shared With
Agenda Template.xlsx	Research Centre via email
Reviewer Advance Report Template.docx	Individual Panel Members via SESAME
Consensus Panel Report Template.docx	Panel (reviewers to work on a single document) via SharePoint

A PDF copy of the Consensus Panel Report Template is included here for reference.

Consensus Panel Report

SFI Research Centre

8-Year Progress Review - 2013 Cohort

Site Review Dates: TBC

Consensus Panel Report

The Panel Report includes sections to reflect the specific objectives of the 8-Year Progress Review, which are to evaluate the:

- I. Quality of the research carried out by the Centre in Phase 2 to determine if it is scientifically excellent.
- II. Education and Public Engagement Programme.
- III. Centre's performance against its cost-share and KPI targets and assess the Centre's management of the SFI budget.
- IV. Centre's implementation of the 6-year review recommendations.
- V. Effectiveness of the Research Centre leadership, organisational and governance structures.
- VI. Impact arising from Centre activities in the last 2 years.
- VII. Centre's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID impacted Period considered is H1-2020- H1-2021 inclusive).

Each section will include a narrative and a score indicating the degree of progress (narrative only for COVID-19 section). The narrative should include recommendations for alterations to future Centre activities where weaknesses or risks are identified. SFI may request that an unsatisfactory score in any section is accompanied by further recommendations for alterations, including potential reductions in Centre budgets.

The panel report is broken down to 9 sections:

- i. Research/Scientific Programme
- ii. Education and Public Engagement Programme
- iii. Research Centre performance on Cost Share, KPIs and Budget management
- iv. Implementation of Recommendations from the 6-year Progress Review
- v. Research Centre Leadership, Management and Governance
- vi. Centre Impact
- vii. Centre's response to COVID-19 pandemic
- viii. Executive Summary
- ix. Reviewer Feedback for SFI

i. Research/Scientific Programme

Please assess the scientific excellence of the SFI Research Centre's research programme and the scientific work undertaken. Take into consideration the key documents for the review and the Centre's presentations at the progress review.

As part of your response, consider the following questions:

- *Based on the approved proposal and work plan, is the Centre on the correct track in delivering their objectives and targets?*
 - *What are the most important breakthroughs that the Research Centre made?*
 - *Has the Centre achieved research excellence and leadership in its area?*
 - *Are platform research projects seeding or adding value to targeted projects with industry partners?*
 - *Has the Centre benefitted from collaborating with other SFI Research Centres and any other international or national centres?*
 - *Are there components of the research programme that should be removed or expanded?*
-

In providing your responses to the above points, please provide commentary on the following aspect:

- Platform projects
- Targeted projects with industry partners
- Pipeline of Platform to Targeted projects

Narrative on Research/Scientific Programme:

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Please comment on the Research Centre’s progress on **each** Spoke and/or US Centre-to-Centre award, where relevant. In your answer, please include specific commentary on:

- Progress on research objectives
- Impact of objectives
- Quality and appropriateness of the collaborations
- Centre integration
- Strategic benefit and added value to the Research Centre

<i>Narrative on [Spoke/Centre-to-Centre Awards]:</i>

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre’s research/scientific programme from the following list:

Score	Description	
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.	
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.	
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.	
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.	
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.	
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.	
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.	
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.	
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.	

ii. Education and Public Engagement Programme

Please comment on the SFI Research Centre's EPE programme and progress. Take into consideration key documents for the review and the Centre's presentations at the progress review.

As part of your response, consider the following questions:

- *Is there a Centre-wide culture of responsibility for EPE?*
 - *The EPE KPI is purely a quantitative measure designed to increase participation of researchers in EPE activity within the Centre. It was never intended to address qualitative aspects of the EPE Programme. The panel is tasked with assessing and commenting on the qualitative aspects of the EPE Programme.*
 - *The definition of an EPE Champion is broader than just participation. An aspect of the EPE programme may feature EPE champions¹ – is there evidence of any champion work within the Centre?*
 - *Is there a strategic approach to EPE within the Centre? Is the purpose/vision for EPE activities clear?*
 - *Is there evidence of a logic modelling approach to the EPE plan? How is the Centre performing against their EPE operational plan?*
 - *How is the Centre engaging all its research community in delivering the public engagement plan?*
 - *What components are being used to engage with the public?*
 - *Are there aspects of the EPE programme that could be improved through a shift in focus?*
 - *Is there evidence of applying best practice / the body of knowledge in the component parts of the EPE programme?*
 - *Is it clear how the EPE programme is evaluated and leads to impact?*
 - *Is there any evidence of applying learning or evaluation from EPE activity to research strands?*
-

¹ Champions are identified as those who participate in five or more EPE activities, who lead or significantly participate in the development and/or delivery of EPE strategy and/or activity. They often act as role models, inspiring others to participate.

Narrative on Education and Public Engagement Programme:

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre’s EPE programme from the following list:

Score	Description
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.

iii. Research Centre performance on Cost Share, KPIs and Budget management

Please comment on the SFI Research Centre's performance against their KPI and Cost Share targets, as well as the Research Centre budget management.

- *How has the Centre performed against its KPI targets?*
- *Has the Centre been effective in attracting cash and/or in-kind contributions from industry partners?*
- *Has the Centre been successful in attracting funding from non-exchequer, non-commercial sources?*
- *What is the likelihood of the Centre achieving its Phase 2 cost share targets?*
- *Has the Research Centre managed its budget effectively?*
- *Has the budget been appropriately allocated across the different research and non-research activities of the Centre?*

Narrative on Research Centre performance on Cost Share, KPIs and Budget management:

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre's performance on Cost Share, KPIs and Budget management from the following list:

Score	Description	
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.	
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.	
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.	
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.	
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.	
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.	
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.	
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.	
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.	

iv. Implementation of Recommendations from the 6-year Progress Review

Please comment on the SFI Research Centre's progress on implementing the recommendations from the 6-year review.

- *Research/Scientific Programme*
- *EPE Programme*
- *Research Centre Team, Execution and Delivery*
- *Impact*
- *Commercial/funding performance*
- *Research Centre Budget*
- *Transition to Phase 2*
- *Any other recommendations received from the 6-year review*

Please find details of the 6-year recommendations in the 6-year Consensus Panel Report, provided in your briefing documents. The Research Centre's progress against these recommendations is presented in the Progress Report, "Responses to Recommendations".

Narrative on Implementation of Recommendations from the 6-year Progress Review:

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre’s implementation of the recommendations from the following list:

Score	Description
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.

v. Research Centre Leadership, Management and Governance

Please comment on the ability of the SFI Research Centre to effectively manage and execute its activities. This includes the effectiveness of the management team, quality and commitment of investigators, robust governance, transparent and effective management of the Research Centre, as well as access to sufficient facilities, equipment, and support from the Centre's partner institutions. Take into consideration key documents for the review and the Centre's presentations at the progress review.

As part of your response, consider the following questions:

- *Is there an operationally effective management structure and organisation in place?*
 - *Is the Centre Director leading the Centre team effectively?*
 - *Is the Centre operating as a truly national Centre?*
 - *Are the co-PIs engaged and working as a team?*
 - *Has the Centre effectively attracted, recruited, and trained key personnel?*
 - *Has the Centre executed effectively and efficiently the programme strategy & management for both scientific and EPE?*
 - *Is there evidence of EPE experience and leadership in the team? If there are gaps, what partnerships are proposed to ensure engagement expertise?*
 - *What is the Centre's strategy for improving gender balance within the team?*
 - *Is the Centre being effectively supported by the involved Research Bodies?*
 - *Are there any infrastructural issues (space, refurbishment, equipment, support services, etc.) that need to be addressed?*
-

Narrative on Research Centre Leadership, Management and Governance:

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Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre's leadership, management, and governance from the following list:

Score	Description	
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.	
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.	
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.	
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.	
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.	
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.	
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.	
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.	
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.	

vi. Centre Impact

Please comment on the tangible benefits and impacts being made by the SFI Research Centre. Take into consideration key documents for the review and the Centre's presentations at the progress review.

As part of your response, consider the following questions:

- *Has the Research Centre achieved the proposed impacts outlined in the original proposal?*
 - *Has the Centre's strategy for pursuing impact been effective?*
 - *Has the Centre successfully demonstrated impact in any of the following areas:*
 - *Societal and Economic Impacts*
 - *International Engagement*
 - *Public policy, Services and Regulations*
 - *Health and Wellbeing*
 - *Environmental*
 - *Professional Services*
 - *Human Capacity*
-

Please consult with SFI's detailed guidance on 'Types of Impact', which can be found by clicking this [link](#). It is worthwhile to note that some projects may have more immediate impacts, while others may be long term. Impact may also be difficult to measure, hence you should cross reference results attained by the Research Centre against KPI targets, since these can be used as "indicators" of different kinds of impact.

Narrative on Centre Impact:

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the SFI Research Centre's impact from the following list:

Score	Description	
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.	
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.	
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.	
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.	
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.	
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.	
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.	
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.	
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.	

vii. Centre's response to COVID- 19 pandemic

Please comment on the SFI Research Centre's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *Has the Centre contributed towards the national/global response to the COVID crisis, or realised new opportunities?*
 - *Has the Centre taken adequate steps to mitigate risks and challenges associated with the global COVID-19 crisis?*
-

Narrative on Response to COVID- 19 pandemic:

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viii. Executive Summary

Please provide a summary of the key conclusions of the progress review. Take into consideration commentary in the other sections of the report and provide recommendations for the SFI Research Centre for the future.

As part of your executive summary, please provide narrative for each of the following points:

- *Overview*
 - *Strengths and weaknesses of the Centre's performance*
 - *Associated awards (where relevant): (1) Spoke awards and (2) US-Ireland Centre-to-Centre awards*
 - *Progress on the implementation of 6-year review recommendations*
 - *Significant issues raised during the review*
 - *New recommendations for the Research Centre, and SFI, to consider*
-

Overall Summary:

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Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Key Recommendations:

Select the description that best matches your assessment of the Research Centre’s overall performance from the following list:

Score	Description	
5.0	Outstanding with no deficiencies.	
4.5	Outstanding in many regards with no serious deficiencies.	
4.0	Strong with no serious deficiencies.	
3.5	Strong in many regards with some deficiencies.	
3.0	Moderate with some deficiencies.	
2.5	Moderate in many regards with many deficiencies.	
2.0	Weak with many deficiencies.	
1.5	Weak in many regards with many critical deficiencies.	
1.0	Wholly inadequate with many critical deficiencies.	

ix. Reviewer Feedback for SFI

SFI requests feedback of expert reviewers on the progress review process, briefings provided, documents received, or any other aspect of your experience as reviewers. We take this feedback into account to continuously improve our internal process as well as the SFI Research Centres programme.