# Research Ireland - Gas Networks Ireland

# Innovation Challenge

*The GNI Challenge 2025*

## Call SESAME Guide

**May 2025**

**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 Lead Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by Research Ireland on, or before, the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the application prior to submission in SESAME.**

Taighde Éireann Research Ireland

Gas Networks Ireland

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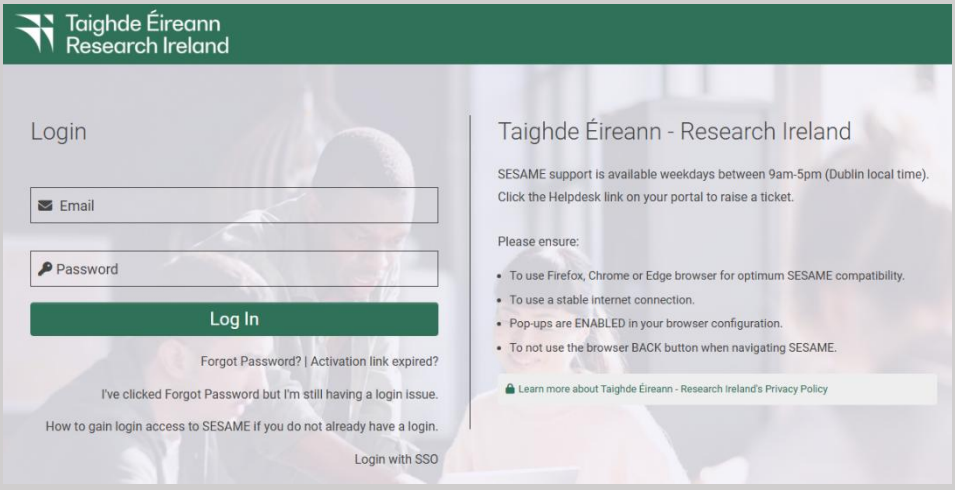
**This document (GNI SESAME Guide) provides the applicants with guidelines to complete their application on Research Ireland's Grant Management System SESAME for the Research Ireland - Gas Networks Ireland Innovation Challenge (GNI Challenge) 2025 Call. This Guide should be read in conjunction with the GNI Challenge 2025 Call Document[1], and should be referenced for filling up and submitting applications. Applications for the GNI Challenge will only be accepted through SESAME.**

Access to SESAME is granted by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access for both Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant if either or both applicants do not have a SESAME profile already. Once you have been registered by your Research Office, you will receive an email containing your Username, Password, and Access PIN.

You will need your **username** and **password** to log in to SESAME.

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.researchireland.ie/



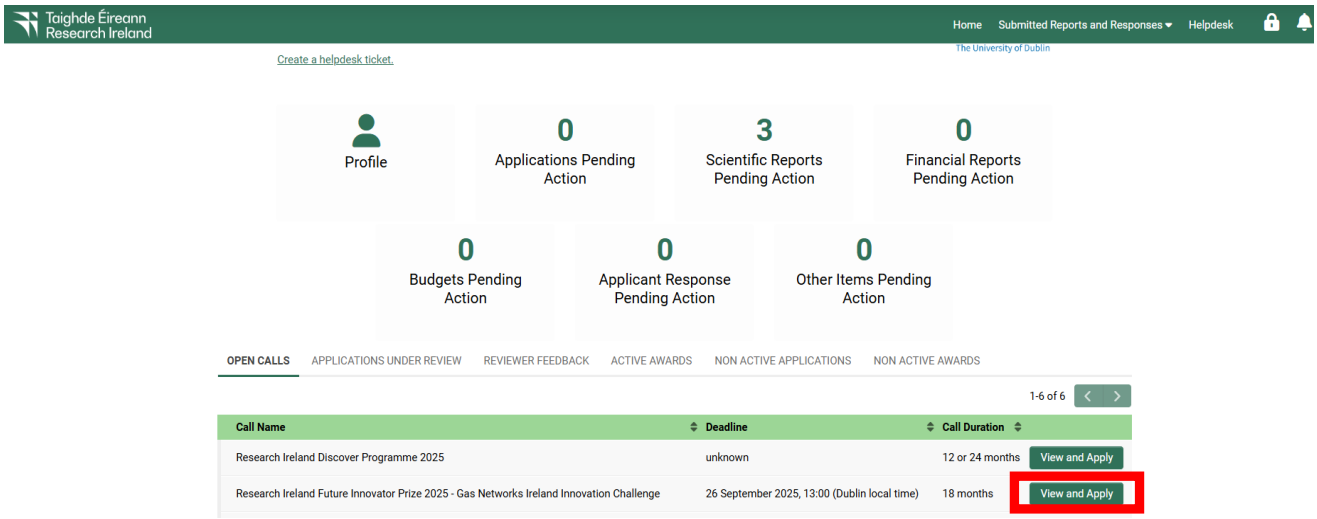

[1] Call Document:https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_call_document/

# 1 Before Starting Your Application

Before starting the application process on SESAME:

- Refer to the GNI Challenge 2025 Call Document to ensure that your team is eligible to apply.
- Please ensure that both the Lead Applicant and the Co-Applicant have an ORCID ID[2]. If you do not already have one, please go to the ORCID website and create one.
- Log into SESAME and update/create your Researcher Profile. Please note that SESAME is integrated with ORCID making it possible for you to import your publication data directly from ORCID into your Researcher Profile. For the GNI Challenge, the Lead and Co-Applicant are required to complete their Researcher Profile and link it to an ORCID ID **before an application can be submitted.**

Once you have completed these steps, navigate to your SESAME Workbench, locate the Research Ireland Future Innovator Prize 2025- Gas Networks Ireland Innovation Challenge Call and click "View and Apply" button to start the application process.




[2] http://orcid.org/

## Application Process

The application is completed in a number of steps:

- Completion of field data including text boxes and drop-down boxes.
- Uploading related documents in PDF format.
- Preparing requested budget.
- Association of additional team members, as appropriate (designated during the application process as Co-Applicant / Collaborator(s)).
- Submission – once you have completed all the mandatory sections of the application, you submit it to your Research Office for review and endorsement.

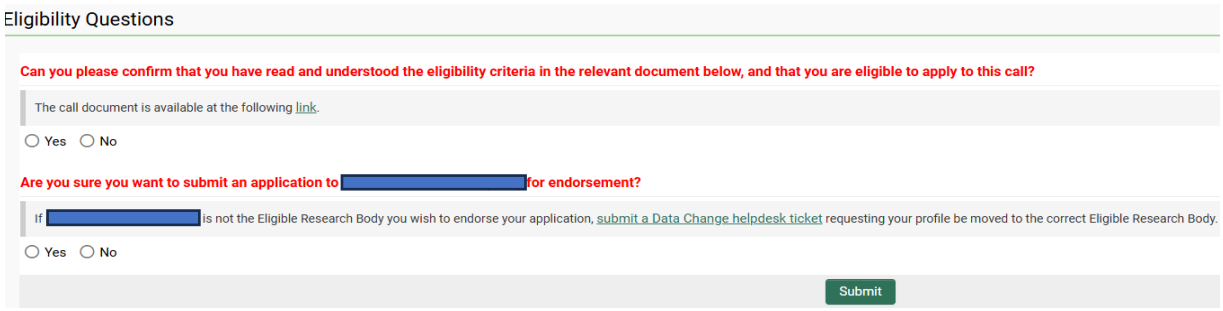
You should carefully follow the instructions below to complete the various sections of the application. Please note that some sections of your application must be completed directly in SESAME, and others are completed by uploading PDF documents to SESAME.

- All **text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in **Aptos font**, with minimum **font size of 11**, and at least single line spacing.
- 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.
- Please note you must click “Save Draft” before you can upload documents, prepare budget and associate Co-Applicants and Societal Impact Champion. Clicking “Save Draft” after uploading documents will make these visible in the application form.
- Uploads for the GNI Challenge call include Curricula Vitae for the core applicant team; Team, Challenge, Solution, & Societal Impact document; References; Budget Justification document; and Letters of Support.
- Applicants must use the templates provided on the call website.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted and will be redacted from the application before review.
- **File sizes** of attachments should be **less than 2 GB**.
- Applicants and Co-applicants must complete all mandatory Researcher Profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without completing these fields.

## 2 Eligibility Questions

Lead Applicants are required to complete the eligibility question upon commencing an application to the GNI Challenge call (see Section 5 of the Call Document[3] for eligibility details).

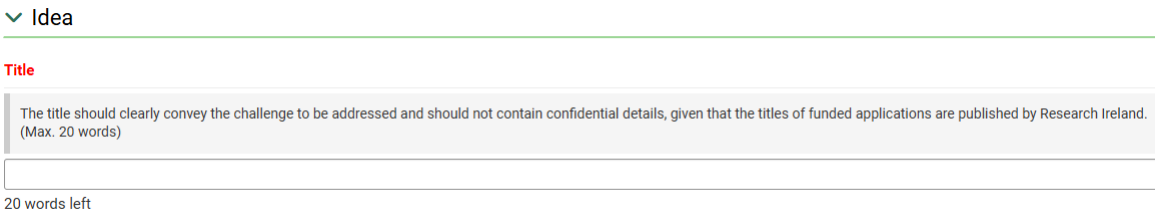
**Please note that the Lead Applicant completes the eligibility question on behalf of the Core Team.**




## 3 Application Summary/Idea

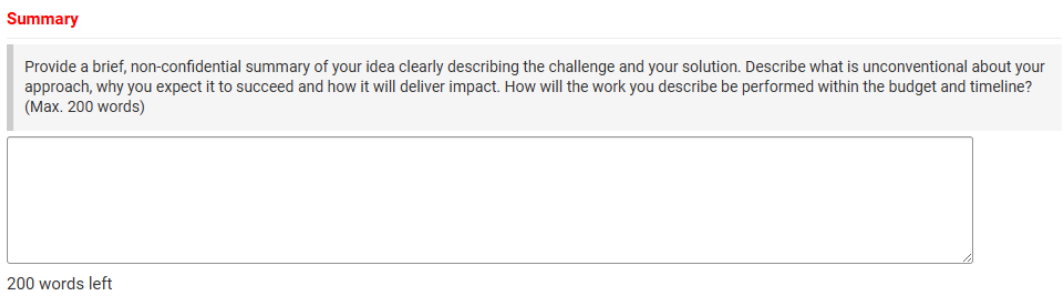
- **Title**

  The title should clearly convey the challenge/problem to be addressed and should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded applications are published by Research Ireland.




- **Summary**

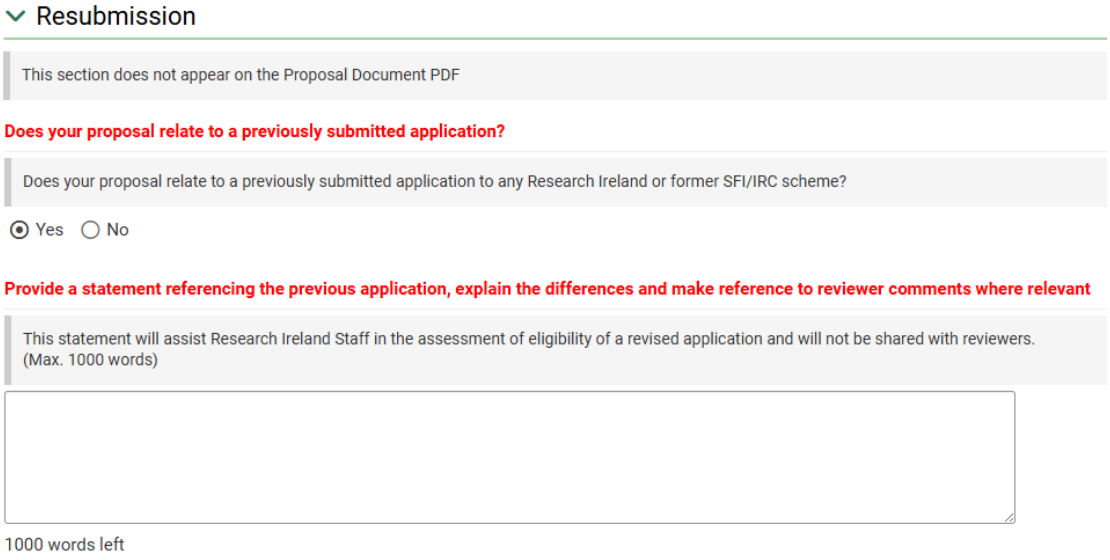
  Provide a brief, non-confidential summary of your idea clearly describing the challenge/problem and your solution. Describe what is unconventional about your approach, why you expect it to succeed and how it will deliver impact. How will the work you describe be performed within the budget and timeline?




[3] Call Document: https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_call_document/

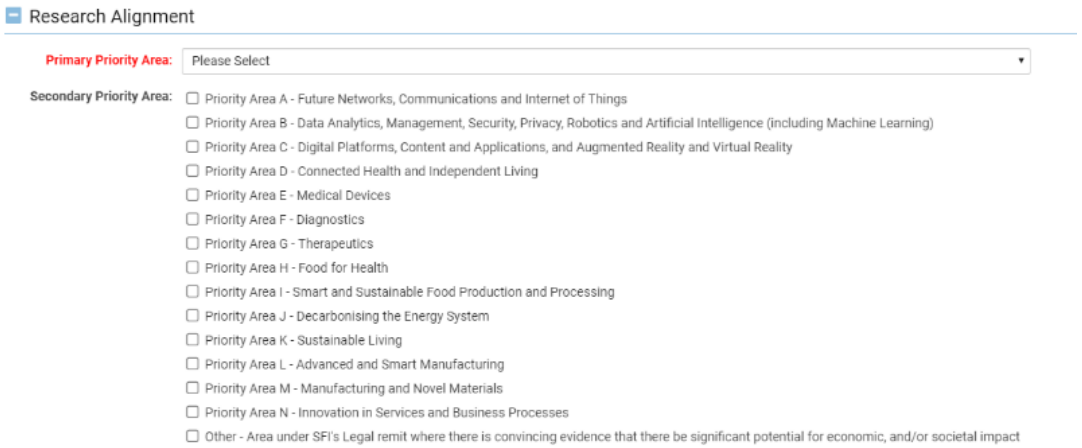
- **Resubmission Statement**

  As part of an application to Research Ireland, a declaration must be provided as to whether a new submission relates to a previously submitted application to any Research Ireland scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining any differences must be provided referring to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist Research Ireland in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See Research Ireland's Resubmission policy for further details.[4]




- **Research Alignment**

  Select one of the Primary Priority Areas, from the drop-down menu, to which your application aligns, and which best describes the proposed research. It is also possible to select a Secondary Priority Areas that the research will be relevant to.




[4] Resubmission Policy

- **Research Area (Primary)**
  Select a primary Research Ireland research area, from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.

- **Research Area (Secondary)**
  Select a secondary Research Ireland research area, from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary Research Ireland research area already selected best describes the proposed research.

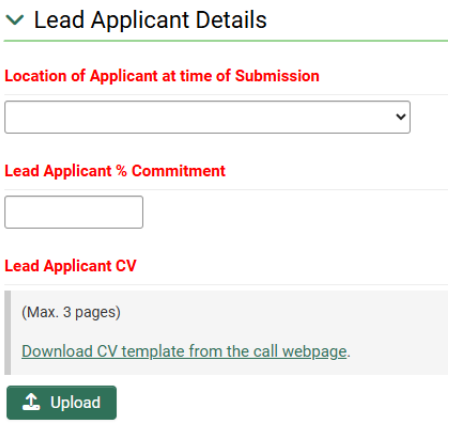
# 4 Core/Applicant Team Details

## 4.1 Lead Applicant Details

**Prior to completing this section of the application form, please ensure that you have completed the mandatory SESAME researcher profile information, including Year of PhD (or equivalent degree).**

- **Lead Applicant CV (Upload, max. 3 pages)**
  A three-page CV of the Lead Applicant is required. Please use the CV template (MS-Word) **provided on the GNI Challenge 2025 Call webpage**[5]. After completing the template, convert it to PDF format before uploading it to SESAME.

Please click Save Draft after uploading the CV to make it visible in the application form.

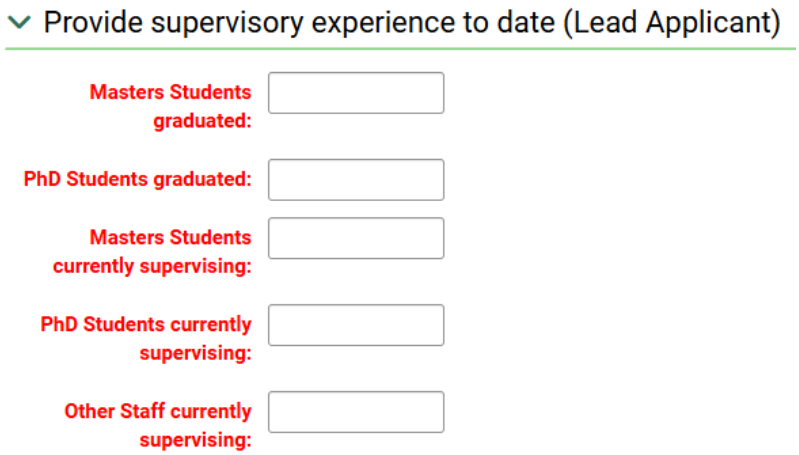



**Note:** % Commitment to Project **-** Given the objectives and timelines of the GNI Challenge, applicants should ensure that their time commitment is appropriate for the highly competitive nature of the programme.

[5] CV template: https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_cv_template_final/

- **Lead Applicant supervisory experience**

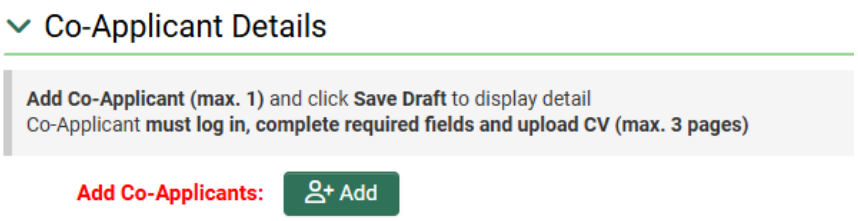
Please fill in all the mandatory fields marked in red under the Lead Applicant Details section.




- **Please note that under the GNI Challenge, core teams must consist of 2 members.**
- **In addition to the Team Lead, all applications must include a Team Co-Lead (to be entered as a Co-Applicant).**
- **Both Lead Applicants must use the CV Template provided on the call website.**
- **Applicants are responsible for inputting the correct team configuration and this will be not checked automatically as part of the submission process.**

## 4.2 Co-Applicant Details

To associate a Co-Applicant to a proposal, the Lead-Applicant will **enter the Co-Applicant's surname and SESAME PIN (Research Ireland) into the draft proposal**. This will allow the Co-Applicant access to the draft proposal. Please note that **you can only assign a Co-Applicant once you have saved a draft of your application**. Until then, the buttons to assign individuals will not be visible.

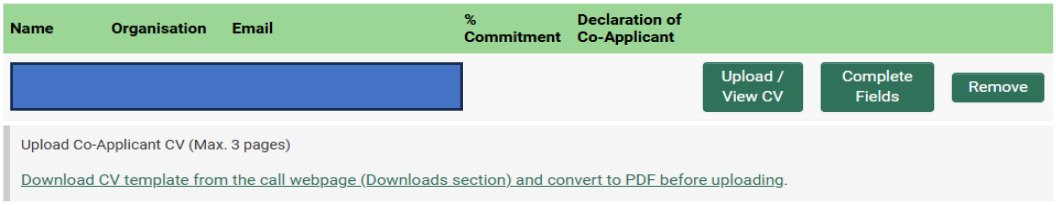


Following this, the Co-Applicant must log in and complete all the mandatory fields in their profile and in the GNI Challenge application before the Lead Applicant can submit the application to the Research Office.

**Note: SESAME does not permit two individuals to concurrently modify a proposal.**

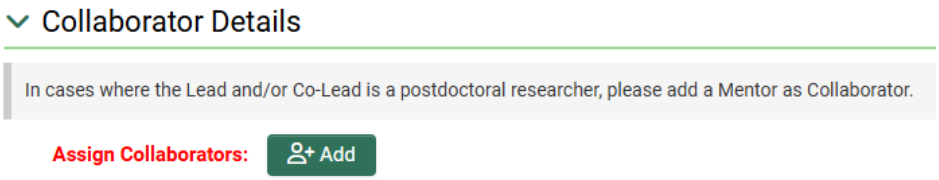
Co-Applicant and/or the Lead Applicant may choose to complete fields or upload documentation that are common to both applicants (e.g., summaries, uploads, etc.); however, only the Lead Applicant can submit an application.

**Co-Applicant CV (Upload, max. 3 pages)**
A three-page CV of the Co- Applicant is required. **Please use the CV template provided on GNI Challenge webpage**. After filling in the template, please convert it to PDF format and upload it to SESAME. Please click Save Draft after uploading the CV to make it visible in the application form.



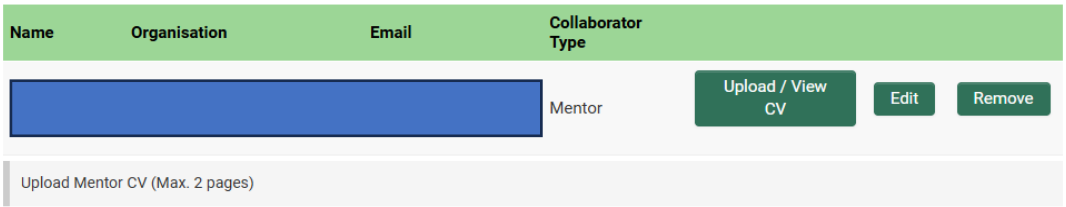

## 4.3 Mentor Details

In case where any or both of the applicants are postdoctoral candidates, an academic mentor must be nominated on the application. The mentor should be an established researcher from the same Host Research Body endorsing the postdoctoral researcher.




Applicants must also provide the mentor's CV and their Letter of Support with their application. See Section 8 of the call document[6] for further details.

Once Applicant inputs Mentor's details, please Save Draft. This will enable fields for uploading the CV:




[6] Call Document: https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_call_document/

# 5 Main Body of Proposal

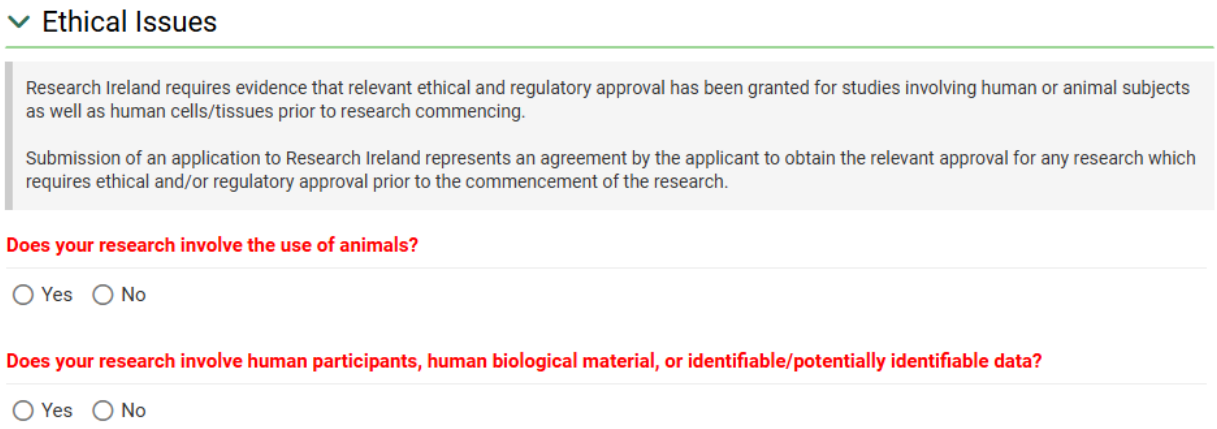
## 5.1 Ethical Issues

- **Use of Animals**

Please indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned.

- **Research Involving Human Participants, Biological Material, or Identifiable Data**

Applicants must indicate whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Selecting "Yes" will lead to further questions that the applicants will need to carefully consider as and if appropriate. Further details can be found on the Research Ireland Policy webpage.[7]




## 5.2 Sex/Gender Dimension in Research

In this section, articulate the considerations of biological sex and/or social gender variables in your research programmes. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues[8] for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your proposal.

**DO NOT** include information on how you have or will address gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in the body of the proposal and/or in your CV, as appropriate.

Please consider the following questions when completing this section:

- Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
- Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

You will be prompted to provide further details to explain your response after selecting "Yes" or "No".

[7] Policies - Research Ireland
[8] Guidance on Ethical and Scientific Issues

### Sex/Gender Dimension in Research

In accordance with the External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme.
Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant application.

Do not include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in the body of the proposal and/or in your CV, as appropriate.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

- Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
- Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

If the answer is yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal. If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.

**Is sex as a biological variable and/or gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?**

○ Yes ○ No

## 6 Budget

The Budget section should be used to provide a summary of the budget (direct costs) and resources you will need to complete the planned work. Given the phased nature of the GNI Challenge programme, it will not be possible to provide significant details in relation to requirements for the Seed Phase. As such, the requested budget and resources for the Seed phase should be indicative and be based on what you currently envisage. Please consult the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy (GBP)[9] and the GNI Challenge Call Document for more information.

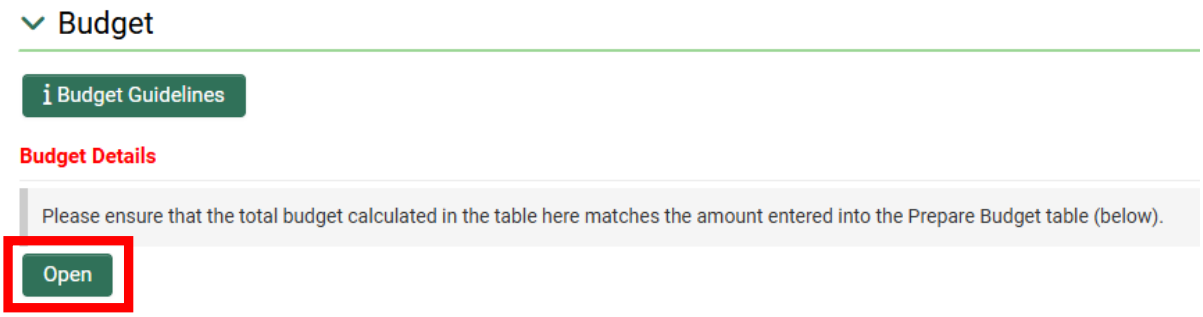
### 6.1 Completing the SESAME Budget Section

To complete the Budget section, you must fill in the **Budget Details** table and the **Total Requested Budget** table (**Prepare Budget**) and upload the **Budget Justification** document (pdf, max 2 pages).

Please note that **you are required to complete two budget tables**, as described below. It is recommended that you first complete the Budget Details and, when finalised, enter the totals for each category (Staff, Equipment, etc) into the Budget Table. Please note that although this is an 18-month award, at this stage, it is sufficient to enter the totals into Year 1 (the budget profile will be corrected at the point of award). The totals for each category and the overall requested budget must match in the two budget tables in order for you to submit your application.

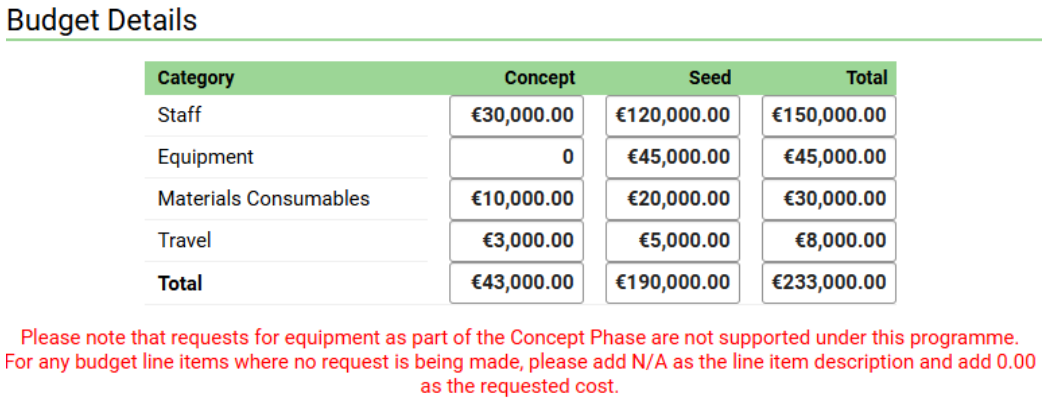
[9] https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/

- **Guidelines for Completion of Budget Details:**




- Under **Budget Details**, click on "Open".
- To add line items to both CONCEPT and SEED sections, click on the "+" symbol under each category.
- To remove line items, click on "x" symbol to the right of each line item.
- Click "Save" and "Close".
- Prior to submission, a budget may be edited any number of times.
- Please see the GNI Challenge Call Document for guidelines on how to complete your budget.

Below you can find screenshots of the Budget Details summary table, as well as detailed breakdown tables for Concept and Seed Phase requests.



Please enter a detailed breakdown of the CONCEPT phase below:

| Staff | Total |
|---|---|
| Staff 1 | €10,000.00 |
| Staff 2 | €10,000.00 |
| Staff 3 | €10,000.00 |
| | €30,000.00 |

| Materials and Consumables | Total |
|---|---|
| materials 1 | €5,000.00 |
| materials 2 | €5,000.00 |
| | €10,000.00 |

| Travel | Total |
|---|---|
| travel | €3,000.00 |
| | €3,000.00 |

Please enter a detailed breakdown of the SEED phase below:

| Staff | Total |
|---|---|
| Staff 1 | €30,000.00 |
| Staff 2 | €40,000.00 |
| Staff 3 | €50,000.00 |
| | €120,000.00 |

| Equipment | Total |
|---|---|
| equipment 1 | €40,000.00 |
| equipment 2 | €5,000.00 |
| | €45,000.00 |

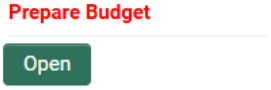
| Materials and Consumables | Total |
|---|---|
| materials 1 | €10,000.00 |
| materials 2 | €10,000.00 |
| | €20,000.00 |

| Travel | Total |
|---|---|
| travel 1 | €5,000.00 |
| | €5,000.00 |

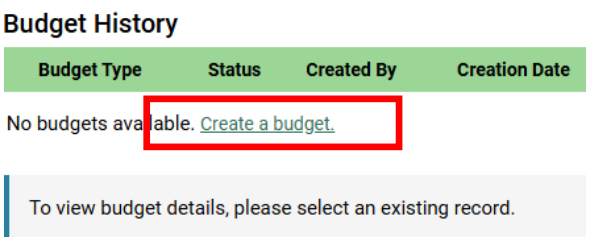
Save Clear

After completing the **Budget Details Table**, you are asked to fill in the total requested amount for Concept and Seed Phase. Click “Open” next to the **Prepare Budget** header and click to create a new budget within a popup window. Select the requested draft budget and click "Open Budget" to edit the budget worksheet.

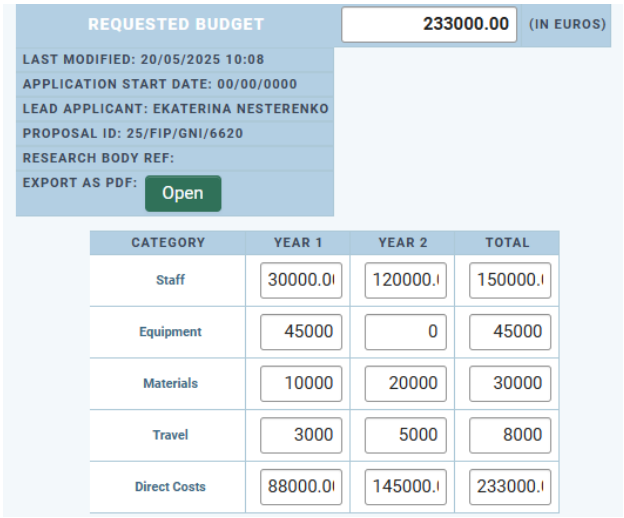
- **Guidelines for completion of Budget Table ("Prepare Budget"):**
  - Go to **Prepare Budget** section and click "Open".

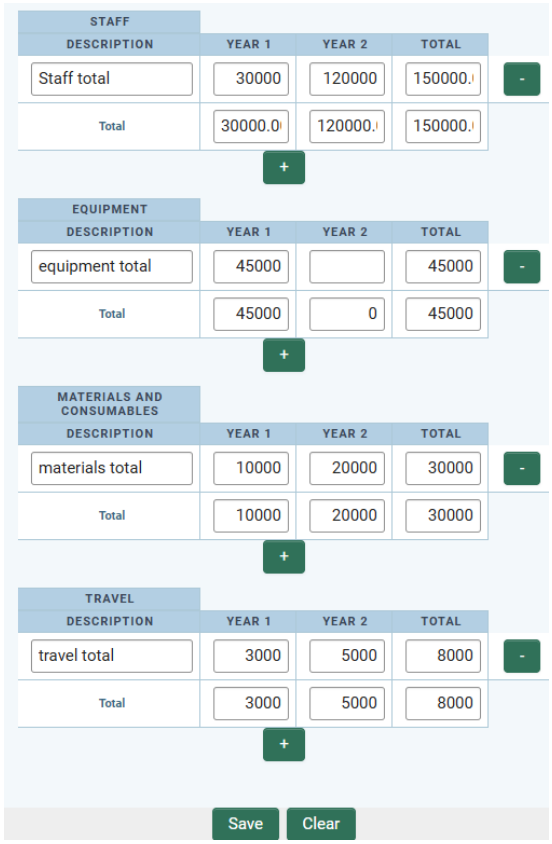



  - In the pop-up window click Create a Budget.



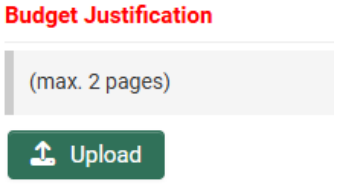
- Select the Requested Draft budget and click "Open Budget" to edit the budget worksheet.
- For each category (Staff, Equipment, etc), please enter the total requested budget in Years 1 and 2. This must correspond to the total amount for this category in the Budget Details Table.
- To add the total, click on the "+" symbol under the budget table.
- To remove line items, click the "-" symbol to the right of each line item.
- Click "Save" and "Close".
- Prior to submission, the budget may be edited any number of times.
- Ensure the category totals are the same on both budget tables.




## 6.2 Budget Justification

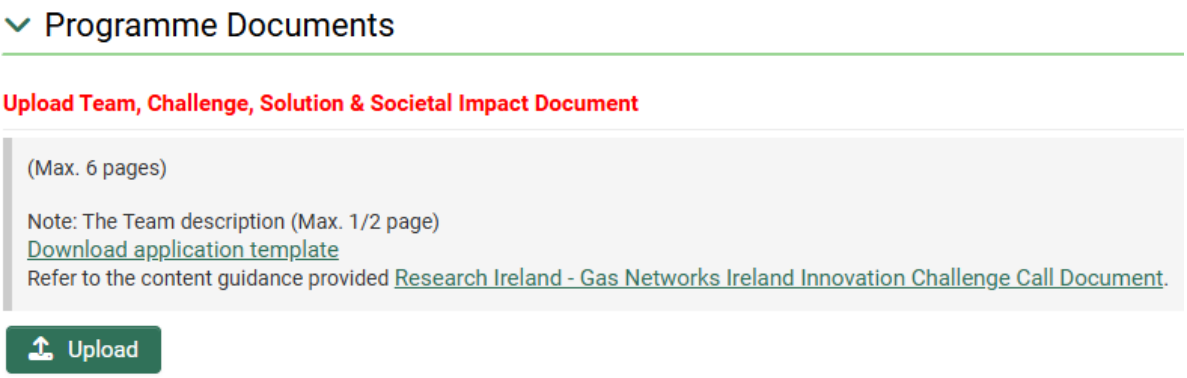
After completing the budget tables, please upload the Budget Justification PDF document (max 2 pages).



# 7 Research Proposal Documents

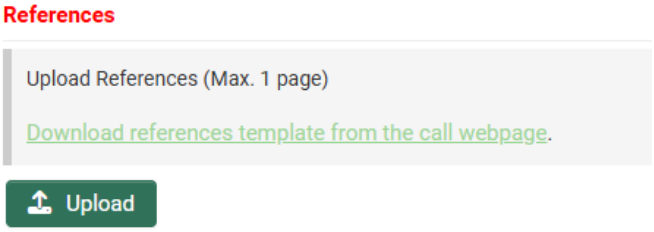
## 7.1 Team, Challenge, Solution & Societal Impact (Upload, max. 6 pages)

In this section, describe the team, the challenge and solution. Please use the template[10] provided on the GNI Challenge Call webpage and refer to the Call Document[6] for details on expected content. Note that the section describing the Team composition must not exceed half-page in length. Once completed, please convert it to PDF format before uploading it to SESAME.

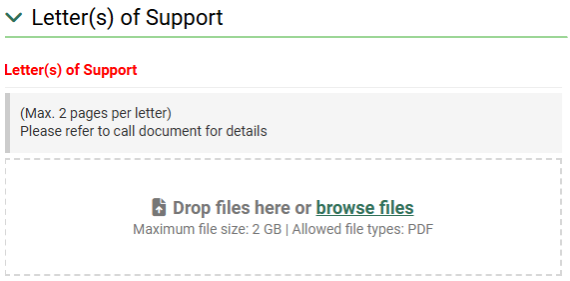



## 7.2 References (Upload, max. 1 page)

Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research may be provided in a separate one-page PDF document. Please use the template[11] provided on GNI Challenge webpage.




# 8 Letters of Support (Uploads; max. 2 pages for each letter)




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

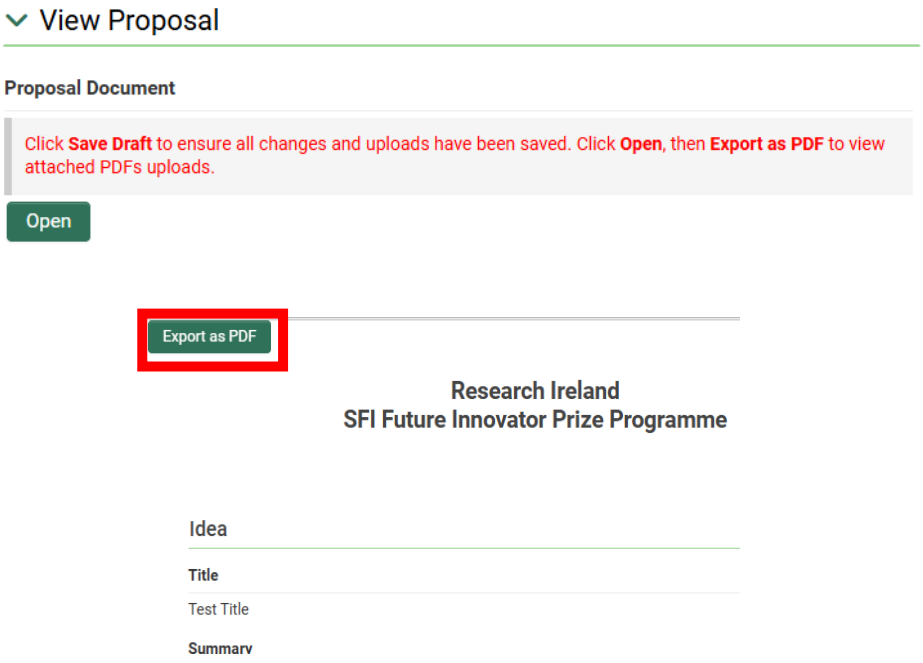
[10] https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_application_form_template_final/
[11] https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/gas-networks-challenge/gni_challenge_reference_list_template_final/

- A Letter of Support from the **Host Research Body of the Team Lead and the Team Co-Lead.** Requirements for this Letter are outlined in Section 8 of the Call Document.
- Where any applicant is a **postdoctoral researcher**, a Letter of Support from the proposed Mentor must be provided. For further requirements please refer to Section 8 of the Call Document.

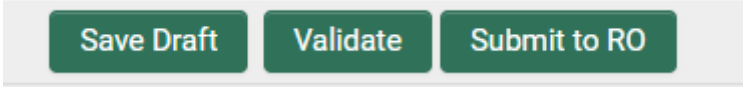
**NOTE:** No additional Letters of Support may be included at the application stage. Any additional/unsolicited Letters of Support will be removed from an application.

## 9 Application Preview

You should view the PDF of your application prior to submission to verify content of your application. Make sure to click "Save Draft" before opening PDF document to ensure all changes are updated. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that the maximum page lengths are not exceeded.

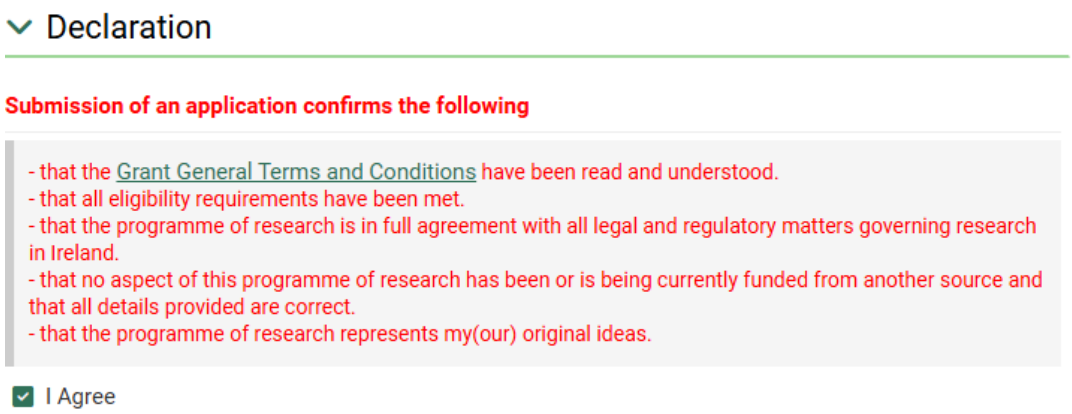



To check that required fields have been completed prior to submission, click "Validate". Validation will also automatically occur when "Submit to RO" is selected. However, it is important to note that there is no system validation on multiple upload file fields, including for example Letters of Support. The number of documents required may vary depending on each application.

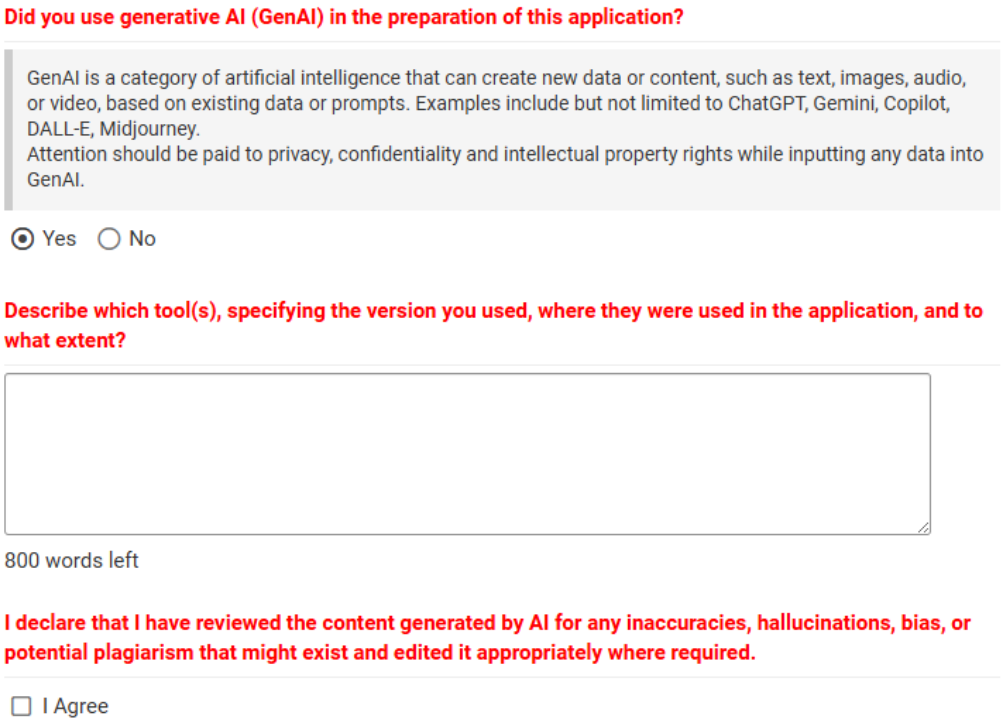


## 10 Applicant Agreement to Terms and Conditions

Submission of an application confirms acceptance of and agreement with the Research Ireland Terms and Conditions of Research Grants; that the applicant meets eligibility requirements; that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland; that no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source; and that all details provided are correct.




Please note a new field, mandatory for completion for **all** applications to Research Ireland. You are asked to declare if any generative AI was used in the preparation of the application, and if it was utilised, a description of tools, their versions and an extent to which they were applied **must** be described. In this case, you are also asked to confirm that application was reviewed for any accuracies, hallucinations, bias, or potential plagiarism.



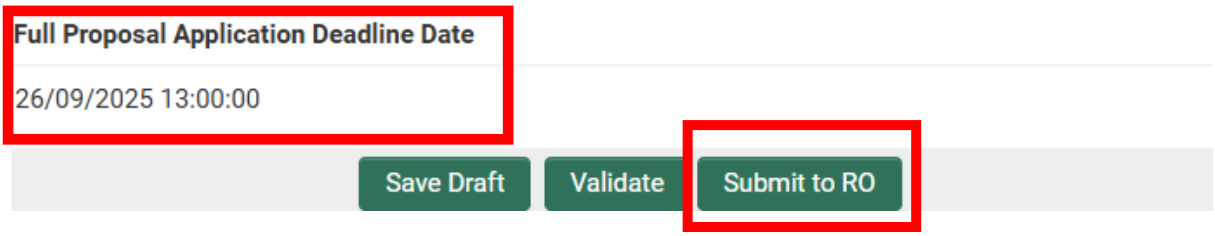
## 11 Research Body Approval

For an application to be accepted, **it must be authorised for submission by the host research body of the lead applicant**. It should be noted that Research Body submission of an application confirms that the Research Ireland Grant General Terms & Conditions have been read and understood. Submissions may only be made by an authorised representative of the Research Body of the Lead Applicant.

**As Applicant, please ensure that sufficient time for the Research Office review and authorisation is provided and follow internal guidance/timelines.**

## 12 Proposal Submission

Once you have filled in the application fully, previewed the PDF, and agreed with the Research Ireland terms and conditions, click on "Submit to RO". **A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Lead Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Research Office to Research Ireland**. The Full Proposal Application Deadline below is for the Research Body to submit endorsed application.




Applications **must** be received by Research Ireland no later than **13:00 (Dublin Local Time) on 26 September 2025**.

Once submitted by the host Research Body to Research Ireland through SESAME, an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

Please contact the Research Office well in advance in order to obtain registration details for SESAME and to become familiar with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

**Please note that after the submission deadline, applications can no longer be submitted in SESAME.**

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, the status of a proposal (e.g., where a proposal is pending Research Office approval or is under review at Research Ireland) is displayed in SESAME.