

Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD)

Expert Assessment Guidelines

Funding excellence in innovation

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This document provides scientific and technical experts with a description of the assessment criteria and how to apply them to the assessment of applications to Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD).

1.0 What is IFD's Grand Solutions?

IFD's purpose is to advance research, development, testing and validation of innovative solutions for the benefit of growth and employment in Denmark as well as to solve societal challenges. IFD therefore invests in projects across the entire value chain, from strategic research to implementation. The annual IFD budget is around €190 million.

Grand Solutions(GS) projects are characterised by their high risk profile and focus on ambitious results with high value creation whether in the form of new knowledge, improvement of/or new processes, systems, products or solutions to societal challenges.

The project must create societal value and/or economic value in Danish public and private companies and/or for beneficiaries in society e.g. citizens, the state, regions and municipalities. It is therefore advantageous if beneficiaries of the results of the project and other key stakeholder are active participants in the development and duration of the project. A beneficiary can be an end user of the innovation, but can also be a public or private investor willing to invest in the project after IFD's involvement has ended. The breadth of GS projects means that the number and type of project participants will vary considerably from project to project. Similarly, IFD's investment will typically vary from app. €1-4 mill. The typical duration of the projects is two to five years.

The term "invest" is used about the money committed to the projects, however IFD does not require a stake in the project nor repayment. But we follow the projects closely and participate in steering group meetings.

GS projects may be applied for by public research institutions, private enterprises and other public-sector institutions. Both Danish and international partners can participate in the projects and receive investment from IFD.

Furthermore, IFD participates in other national and international calls where international expert assessments can be relevant.

2.0 GS application and assessment process

The application process is a single-phased process. The application must focus on the value creation of the project as well as the operationalisation. As value creation and operationalisation are particularly important to IFD, the application must clearly display and define the value creation, as well as show how it is measured and guaranteed.

2.1 The assessment procedure in steps

- All applications are assessed by the IFD's scientific officers. The most qualified projects are then nominated to continue the assessment process.

- > The IFD Board prioritise among the nominations.
- > Up to five scientific and technical EUREKA experts assess the qualified projects and the projects are invited to a pitch interview in IFD.
- > A consultation procedure among the applicants of the expert assessments is conducted before the interview. The consultation procedure includes according to The Danish Information Act both the assessment and the name of the expert.
- > IFD Scientific Officers nominate the most qualified projects
- > Based on the nominations the IFD Board selects the projects to invest in.

2.2 IFD Assessment criteria

Applications for Grand Solutions and International projects is assessed based on the following three main criteria:

- > Excellence - Quality of research and innovation
- > Impact
- > Efficiency and Implementation

Please note that *Implementation and Efficiency* in the assessment form covers *Efficiency of project execution* and *Implementation of results* in the application form. In the assessment of the three main criteria, particular emphasis are placed on the following aspects:

Excellence - Quality of research and innovation

- > Clear objectives in accordance with the call.
- > Clear well-argued description of the needs and challenges addressed by the project.
- > State-of-the-art (SoA) of research and innovation and quality of the question(s) investigated by the project as well as the quality of the solution and its method(s) in the project.
- > Clear description of the technological and scientific methods used.

Impact

- > The value creation in terms of growth and employment in Denmark created through knowledge based research and innovation,
- > The impact on the Danish society and/or the contribution to solving tangible societal challenges in the short, medium and long term
- > The projects ability to accommodate an unmet or latent need or to explore an opportunity.
- > The value creation for the project partners in the short, medium and long term, including commercial potential if relevant.
- > The readiness of the market/society in terms of the solution(s) of the project, including the actions undertaken to ensure a match between project solution(s) and market/society.
- > The expected value creation through innovation in other fields.

Efficiency of project execution and implementation of results

- > A clear, shared vision of the idea of the project and value creation by project partners

- > Feasibility and organisation:
 - i) Detailed risk assessment and risk management.
 - ii) Interdependencies between work packages and results, incl. quantifiable and measurable milestones and stop/go-criteria.
 - iii) Dream team with necessary qualifications, diversity and experience.
 - v) Relevant legal, ethical and regulatory aspects are considered.
- > The commitment by public and private companies including co-financing of the project.
- > Descriptions of actions undertaken to ensure that the beneficiaries implement the results or take the results to the next step.

2.3 Documents relating to the application

Applicants, who wish to participate in IFD's call, are requested to submit the following documents:

- > Project application form including detailed project description, completed in English
- > Project timelines
- > Budget
- > CVs of key participants
- > References
- > Letters of interest (if relevant)

These documents are made available to the selected experts for the purpose of assessing the project application. The application documents and electronic expert report can be accessed via IFD's electronic e-grant system once the selected experts have accepted and confirmed their invitation to assess. For an example of the full application, click [here](#)¹. If you are interested in the current call text, it can be found here:

- [Open call](#)
- [Open Call within Social Sciences and Humanities](#)
- [Research and Innovation Solutions Aiding the Green Transition](#)
- [The Construction and Building Sector's Transition to Circular Resource Economy](#)

2.4 Glossary

Grand Solutions: IFD invests in research, innovation and demonstration projects. Grand Solutions cover the complete value chain and is defined as collaborative projects with no mandatory composition of the consortia (i.e. no requirement of having industrial and academic partners or SMEs in the projects). IFD can also fund foreign partners in the project.

National or international thematic project applications: projects within a specific thematic scientific or technical field, which are defined in a call text.

¹ <https://innovationsfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2019-12/grand-solutions-2020-ansogningsblanket.pdf>

National or international open call project applications: all types of projects regardless of sector or scientific or technical field.

Product: the outcome or result of the project may be an actual product, service or a process.

Work Package: each application is based on work packages, which are coherent clusters of activities or tasks that together are meant to realise a part of the application's overall objectives. All work packages include 100% of the work defined by the project scope and includes all deliverables – internal, external, interim – in terms of the work to be completed. The overall structure of the application and the interdependency between the individual work packages should be described separately.

3.0 Assessing for IFD as an scientific and technical expert

A complete assessment of applications to IFD depends to a large extent on the assessments performed by external scientific and technical experts. The full expert assessment will be used as feedback to the applicants. An assessment must be coherent, relevant and useful. Honesty is the key to feedback to the applicants. Comments will be critical to identify potential weaknesses of the applications, which may lead to the rejection of the application.

The opinions of the scientific and technical peers help direct investments to R&D performing enterprises and research institutions for market-oriented research and development.

The potential for value creation in Denmark of projects is considered as important as the degree of innovation and the technical merits. It is therefore vital for the scientific and technical experts to have a thorough knowledge of value creation strategies, appropriate market areas and ways to the market – regardless whether the market is the public or private sector.

3.1 Expectations to assessment of excellent quality

IFD expects excellence, both among the applications for funding, as well for the assessment process.

Experts, who do not meet the requirements, will be asked to repeat the work. IFD reserves the right to suspend any payment or financial compensation and exclusion of an expert from the peer database, if the assessment continues to be of a poor quality or not delivered within the allocated timeframe.

To ensure the highest quality, we select expert assessments at random for quality control purposes. If we feel for any reason that improvements are required, we will ask you to amend your assessment. You will be required to correct and return the peer assessment to us. If the quality issues continue to be unaddressed or if the assessment is not returned within the allocated timeframe, payment may be withheld.

3.2 Conducting the assessment

The assessment process will be conducted as a desktop assessment via our secure national data platform e-grant.

Please complete the following steps in order to complete the assessment process:

- > Login or create a profile in E-grant, [here](#)².
- > Carefully read the application including appendices
- > Rate each of the sub criteria and the summary on a 6 point scale ranging between 1 to 6
- > Provide comments to substantiate each point scored
- > Double-check the content of the assessment form
- > Upload your completed assessment to e-grant platform within the allocated timeframe

3.3 Code of Practice requirements

- > Assessments must be performed independently.
- > Assessments must be performed objectively.
- > Assessments must be performed without prejudice.
- > Sufficient time and effort is expected in the performance of the process.
- > Precise and accurate scores using the entirety of the scale available must be applied when performing the assessment.
- > Poor applications will receive 1 point.
- > Applications with excellent content, which can barely be improved should be given 6 points.
- > Scores provided, must be justified by a statement
- > Statements must be specific on the content of the application
- > Vague, generic or formulaic answers obtained from this document, other guidelines, or readily available information sources (e.g. Wikipedia) are unacceptable.
- > Confidentiality of the application must be maintained, even after the assessment procedure.

4.0 The process for the scientific and technical expert

4.1 Availability

Experts will be contacted by EUREKA to confirm their availability and willingness to participate in the assessment of applications. If a positive response is received, the specific expert will be added to the list of “eligible” scientific and technical experts.

4.2 Selection

When IFD’s Board has qualified the nominated projects, the IFD secretariat will begin matching available EUREKA experts with relevant projects based on available keyword and CV.

It is possible that one expert is selected to perform assessment of more than one application. If an expert’s workload presents a potential problem, the application will be reallocated.

It is also possible that an eligible expert receives no assessments due to a number of reasons:

- > Availability was confirmed before the applications were received – and there may not have been applications within the expert’s field of expertise.

² <https://login.e-grant.dk/>

- > Although an expert might have an excellent profile, our database may have suggested other more suitable scientific and technical experts.
- > An expert's list of keywords may not be as extensive as the CV or the CV might not be fully updated with most recent articles, work experience etc. Please note that we predominantly use the CV's in our selection process. Too many keywords within many scientific areas are not convincing.

4.3 Assignment

IFD's assessment of applications is a very lean process, with only 100 days from application to decision.

When IFD has chosen EUREKA experts for the eligible projects, access to the assigned application will be provided through the secure website www.e-grant.dk. To get access an e-grant profile has to be created (see Section 3.2).

For each project assessment, an email will be forwarded confirming the work and invitation to access the documentation through the secure website. The website will provide information on the deadline by which the completed expert assessment form must be submitted.

4.4 Timeline

- > Assessment must be performed in accordance with the expectations of quality outlined previously.
- > Assessments must be performed in English. Expert assessments must be completed within 10 working days (two calendar weeks). However, we will reserve the right to invite experts to provide assessment with a shorter deadline, in these cases the short deadline will be highlighted.

There are 3000 experts of multiple nationalities in the database – unfortunately, it is not possible to take your personal or national holidays into consideration.

If, for any reason you are called away for a few days, or are no longer available to perform the assessment; please let us know immediately, so that we can plan for alternative arrangements to everyone's benefit.

4.5 Expert remuneration

The remuneration per assessed project is 225€ and will be conducted by EUREKA.

The EUREKA Secretariat and IFD will contact you once you are selected for project assessment. You will have to sign the Master Service Agreement (MSA) and Statement of Work (SoW) which includes all instructions related to invoicing. Please make sure you have provided the EUREKA Secretariat with signed MSA and SoW. Payments cannot be processed without the completed and signed documents.

The EUREKA Secretariat strive to process the remunerations as soon as possible and within 30 days after the expert assessment has been approved by IFD. However, please be aware that due to the occasional high workload processing may take longer.

4.6 We take conflict of interest seriously

We need you to declare with honesty, if there is any reason, in accordance with the IFD's Operational Checklist for Conflict of Interest, why you cannot or may not be able to perform an objective assessment.

Occasionally, it is not clear whether a conflict exists prior to the assessment invitation. Please inform us immediately when you become aware of the conflict of interest, so that we can take steps to discuss with you how to correct this situation.

Unbiased assessments are vital to the selection of the projects for funding. An expert may be disqualified in case of a failure to report a conflict of interest and the following steps may be taken:

- > Exclusion from future expert assessments for IFD.
- > Reimbursement of all fees paid for your work performed on the application for which you have been disqualified.
- > Relevant partners in the affected projects must be informed.
- > Other relevant institutions, including the EUREKA Secretariat, will receive information on the disqualification.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to send us an email at peer@innofond.dk with the subject "question regarding conflict of interest".

4.7 When is there a conflict of interest

According to the Danish Public Administration Act the following circumstances might introduce a conflict of interest if:

- > You have a specific personal or economic interest in the outcome of the case.
- > You are related to or closely connected to a person, who has a personal or economic interest in the outcome of the case, or who represents a person with such an interest in the outcome of the case.
- > You have previously - in the same case - represented a person with a personal or economic interest in the outcome of the case, for example by supplying advice/guidance to the development of the project in question or to the application.
- > You are part of the management of or have close connections to a company, association or other legal person who has a specific interest in the outcome of the case.
- > If you, when processing an appeal regarding control or inspection of other public authority, have been directly involved in a decision or implementation of actions causing the appeal.
- > Other circumstances that could raise doubt of your impartiality.

If you discover that your assigned application has raised a conflict of interest, you are obliged to declare this to IFD immediately.

5.0 Legal, confidentiality and information security

According to Danish legislation (The Danish Information Act), the peer assessment must be sent to the applicants for consultation, and the applicant is entitled to comment on the assessment.

Please be advised that according to the Danish rules on public access to documents, IFD are required to disclose the names of the persons involved in the peer assessment. However, applicants are informed that such information is confidential and should not be disclosed to third parties.

The contents of the application including all of the applicant's personal data are strictly confidential and should not be accessible by other persons than the reviewer who has committed to confidentiality obligations, and must therefore not be disposed of or disclosed after completion of the assessment process. Confidentiality must be maintained after the peer assessment process has been completed.

The public can request access to documents used in the assessment process in accordance with Danish legislation. However, there are some limitations in this respect, thus each request for access to documents will be specifically reviewed by IFD.

5.1 The responsibility of the scientific and technical experts

The scientific and technical experts are responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the assessment process, during and after completion of the assessment. In cases of a breach of the confidentiality, IFD reserves the right to suspend any remuneration or compensation and in serious cases to undertake legal actions.

5.2 Information Security

The application will be available via a secure website (www.e-grant.dk). An e-grant-user must be created and thereafter log in with username and password. Your assessment must also be submitted via e-grant. We do not accept assessments via e-mail.