

Funding excellence in innovation

**INNOVATION FUND DENMARK'S
PEER ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR
GRAND SOLUTIONS 2017**



Innovation Fund Denmark

RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY & GROWTH

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Guidelines for IFD Experts 2017

This document provides Scientific and Technical Experts with description of the evaluation criteria and how to apply them to the assessment of applications to Innovation Fund Denmark's Grand Solutions.

1.0 Important things to know

1.1 What is Innovation Fund Denmark?

Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD) is a Danish organisation investing in research and innovation with a focus on solutions to specific societal challenges. IFD's main objective is to invest in research and innovation in order to generate knowledge based growth and employment in Denmark. The annual budget of the fund is around €180 mio.

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 monitor the projects closely and participate in steering group meetings.

Innovation Fund Denmark invites everyone to apply for an investment in projects along the entire value chain, whether for research projects devoted to scientific advances, development of specific expertise or to the development of products or services.

IFD has various funding instruments. The biggest funding instrument is Grand Solutions, which typically provides investments to projects from €670.000 (DKK 5 mio.) to €4 mio. (DKK 30 mio.) or more, if a unique investment opportunity occurs.

Grand Solution 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.

1.2 Cooperation with EUREKA on Scientific and Technical peer reviews

IFD and EUREKA have made a partnership in view to optimize the evaluation of IFD calls. IFD use the EUREKA Experts database to find the most appropriate experts for the applications received.

Therefore, experts who are part of the EUREKA Technical Experts database have been asked for their interest to become a Scientific and Technical Expert for the next IFD call for applications.

1.3 Innovation Fund Denmark uses a one-step application process

Starting in 2017 IFD uses a one-step application process, but has two rounds of calls. A thematic call in the spring and an open call in the fall. The evaluation process, however, include several steps of qualification before IFD's board can make the final funding decision.

The Evaluation procedure includes the following steps:

Step 1: All applications are screened by the IFD's internal scientific officers. Approximately 1/3 of the most qualified projects are then selected to continue the evaluation process.

Step 2: The qualified projects are assessed by three remote Scientific and Technical Experts.

Step 3: A hearing procedure of the applicants of the peer assessments among the applicants

Step 4: The top rated projects are invited for a pitch in IFD

Step 5: Based on the above the best projects are recommended for investment

Step 6: The Board makes its investment decision.

1.4 What the Scientific and Technical Experts do

A complete evaluation of applications to IFD's Grand Solutions depends to a large extent on the assessments performed by external Scientific and Technical Experts.

The opinions of the Scientific and Technical Experts 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.

These Guidelines are designed to provide information to Scientific and Technical Experts and aid them through the process of assessing applications to IFD's Grand Solutions applications.

1.5 The outcome must be useful and relevant

The full Expert assessment will be used as feedback to the applicants. An assessment must, hence be coherent, relevant and useful. Honesty is the key to the feedback to the applicants.

Comments will be critical in identifying potential weaknesses of the applications, which might lead to the exclusion of the application.

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 We take conflict of interest serious

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 might not be able to perform an objective evaluation.

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, we can take steps to discuss with you how to correct this situation.

Unbiased assessments are vital to the selection of the applications selected 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 peer evaluations for IFD.

- Reimbursement of all fees paid for your work performed on the application on 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”.

1.9 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 under the obligation to declare this to Innovation Fund Denmark immediately.

1.10 Documents relating to the application

Applicants, who wish to participate in IFD’s Grand Solutions calls for proposals, 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)

All of these documents are made available to the selected Experts for the purpose of assessing the project application.

1.11 Access to the applications

Access to the electronic peer report and application will after confirmed invitation be given through IFD's E-Grant system

1.12 Glossary

Grand Solutions: IFD invest 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.

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

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. These are coherent clusters of activities or tasks that together are meant to realize 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.

1.13 To do list

01. Carefully read the application including appendices
02. Rate each of the sub criteria and the summary on the 6 point scale ranging between 1 to 6:
 - 1-2 being the lowest
 - 3-4 being the average
 - 5-6 being the highest
03. Provide a summary of your thoughts beneath each point scored.
04. Double-check the content of the assessment form.

05. Upload your completed peer assessment to IFD within the dedicated timeframe

To ensure the highest quality we select peer assessments at random for quality control purposes.

If we feel for any reason that improvements are required, we will ask you to amend your evaluation. You will be required to correct and return the peer assessment to us.

If the quality issues continue to be unaddressed and if the peer assessment is not returned within the allotted timeframe, payment may be withheld.

2.0 How Innovation Fund Denmark selects, assigns and work with Scientific and Technical Experts

2.1 Availability

Experts will be contacted before the submission deadline for applications to find out if they are available and willing 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.

NB: Please note you only have 5 working days to respond to the invitation

In the invitation letter, experts who accept the invitation will be recommended to update hers/his keywords and CV.

2.2 Selection

After the submission deadline, IFD will filter out the ineligible applications and begin to select projects, which will be assessed by external peers. This work is performed by IFD’s project officers lead by our internal Scientific Officers. When IFD’s board has approved the selection, the Fund will begin matching available Scientific and Technical Experts with relevant projects. In order for us to identify the three most suitable Scientific and Technical Experts from the eligible list, the approved phase 1 applications will be read thoroughly and a search of the database will be made by using keywords and phrases from the application. For insurance, one or two reserve Scientific and Technical Experts will be identified.

It is possible that one peer is selected to perform evaluation of more than one application. If an expert’s workload presents a potential problem, this application will be reallocated to the reserve expert instead. It is also possible that an eligible expert receives no evaluations due to a number of reasons:

- Availability was confirmed before the applications were received – and there may not have be an invitation for any application within your field of expertise.
- 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 might 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 key words within many scientific areas are not convincing.

2.3 Assignment

IFD's evaluation of Grand Solutions applications is a very fast process. We have an evaluation window measure in weeks.

A few days upon application deadline access to the assigned application will be provided through the secure website www.e-grant.dk. To get access an e-grant user has to be created. We will create the profile for all the invited experts but you have to complete the profile with banking details etc. You can find the guidelines Annex 2, Guidelines to E-Grant.

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 Peer Assessment Form must be received by the IFD.

2.4 Performing the work

Evaluations must be performed in accordance with the expectations of quality outlined previously. Evaluations must be performed in English.

- For up to three applications, peer assessments must be completed within 10 working days (two calendar weeks)
- If assessment is performed on more than three applications, Innovations Fund Denmark will contact you to make specific arrangements.

There are many experts of multiple nationalities – unfortunately, it is not possible to take your personal- or national holidays within the countries into consideration.

If, for some 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.

We will follow up on the work made a week upon revival of the application to make sure that everything is going well and the peer assessment work is progressing.

If an expert cannot be reached or the assessment is not provided within the allotted timeframe, withdrawal of the invitation to assess might be necessary in order to seek an alternative peer – usually one of the reserve experts originally identified.

2.5 Delivery

Empty or incomplete peer assessment(s) will not be accepted.

IFD performs quality verifications on the Expert Assessment Forms submitted by Scientific and Technical Experts.

If the quality of the assessment is not considered to be of a satisfactory level, the Scientific and Technical Expert will be requested to provide amendments and to re-submit the Expert Assessment Form. Subsequently, if the quality of the Expert Assessment Form continues to be considered not satisfactory, or the Scientific and Technical Expert fails to re-consider the evaluation, IFD reserves the right to suspend any payment or financial compensation.

It is important to have a system where decisions are respected, endorsed and beyond reproach. Therefore it is vital that IFD ensures that the quality of the assessments produced is of the highest quality

2.6 Legal, Confidentiality etc.

According to Danish legislation, the peer assessment must be sent to the applicants for a hearing, and the applicant is entitled to provide a comment on the assessment.

Please be advised that according to the Danish rules on public access to documents, IFD will be required to disclose the names of the persons involved in the peer assessment. However, applicants are being informed that such information is confidential and should not be transferred 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 the assessment process has been completed. Confidentiality must be maintained after the peer assessment process has been completed.

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

2.7 The responsibility of the Scientific and Technical Experts

The Scientific and Technical Expert is responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the evaluation process, during and after completion of the evaluation. In cases of a breach of the confidentiality, IFD reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation and in serious cases to undertake legal actions.

3.0 Information Security

3.1 Electronic submission of application documents

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 review must also be submitted via e-grant.

3.2 Peer payment

The financial compensation per project assessed is 225€ per application.

We strive to process the payments soon as possible and within 30 days after the expert assessment has been accepted. However, please be aware that due to the occasional high workload it may take longer.

3.3 Registration of banking details in E-grant

In order to receive the payment, experts will be asked to register their banking details in e-grant. Registration can be performed at www.e-grant.dk. A Guide to registration has been forwarded to all invited peers.