

## Assessment criteria for SFF-IV

Proposals submitted for funding under SFF-IV will be assessed in relation to four main criteria in both phase 1 and phase 2 of the review process:

- 1) The research
- 2) The centre director
- 3) The principal investigators
- 4) The organisation of the centre

The project description in phase 1 is limited to five pages, and the assessment must therefore focus on the basic ideas and methods of the planned research and the organisation of the centre. The project description in phase 2 is limited to 15 pages, and the assessment will review the research, methods, work plans and organisation in greater detail.

The four main criteria:

### 1) The research

- To what extent are the proposed research and objectives ambitious, with the potential to achieve ground breaking results?
- To what extent does the proposed research address important research challenges that will have a high impact on international research themes and research methods?
- To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible?

Three additional questions will be assessed in phase 2, based on the full project description:

- To what extent are the objectives beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches, development of novel methodology or development across disciplines)?
- To what extent is the proposed research methodology appropriate to achieve the goals of the centre?
- To what extent are the proposed timescales and resources necessary and properly justified?
- If the centre applies for extra operating costs (if requested total funding form RCN is more than NOK 13 Million per year), to what extent are the particularly high operating costs necessary and properly justified?

### 2) The centre director

- To what extent is the track record of the centre director characterised by the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research and research that goes beyond the state-of-the art?
- To what extent has the centre director demonstrated sound leadership of research activities, including training and advancement of early career researchers?
- To what extent is the centre director qualified to lead an initiative of this size?

### 3) The principal investigators

- To what extent are the principal investigators' track records characterised by the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research and research that goes beyond the state-of-the art?
- Does at least one of the principal investigators, in addition to the centre leader, have an accomplished track record?
- If some of the principal investigators are early career researchers, to what extent are their track records characterised by the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research and research that go beyond the state-of-the art, appropriate to their research field and career stage?
- If some of the principal investigators do not have an accomplished track record, to what extent do they have expertise of essential importance to the research and a CV documenting high-quality research?

#### **4) The organisation of the centre**

- To what extent is the successful accomplishments of the main research objectives dependent on the described research collaboration in the proposed centre?
- To what extent is the described research team and expertise optimal for the proposed research?
- To what extent are the structure, physical organisation and size of the centre optimal for the proposed research?
- To what extent is the research internationally oriented?
- To what extent is the proposed centre supported the host institution management?

Three additional questions will be assessed in phase 2, based on the full project description:

- To what extent does the centre create an environment that will attract and train research talents beyond what could be attained in the individual research groups?
- To what extent are there good plans for international mobility of researchers, contributions from top international researchers or international networks?
- To what extent do the host department and the institutions involved have or plan to acquire the required scientific and technical expertise and research infrastructures to support the group?

In phase 2, proposals will be assessed in relation to the criteria below in addition to the four main criteria. While these criteria will be weighted less than the main criteria, they must still be adequately met for a proposal to qualify for funding.

- Are the plans for popular science dissemination and involvement of any key users of the research results appropriate?
- If the scientific field is characterised by a gender imbalance, are the plans to support development of research talents of the under-represented gender towards qualification for more senior-level positions appropriate?
- Are the plans for preparing and submitting proposals to Horizon 2020 or other international funding schemes appropriate for this field of research?

Before any contracts are drawn up, projects will be checked to ensure that they maintain high ethical standards and give adequate consideration to any potential impacts (positive or negative) on the natural environment (external environment), when this is relevant.