

Formas Handbook 2014

Formas Handbook 2014

- for applicants and reviewers

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Formas' handbook for applicants and reviewers

This handbook is intended for applicants for grants and for members of Formas review panels. It contains instructions for grant applications, management of conflicts of interest, guidelines for evaluation by panel members and a description of the review process. The handbook also describes procedures and obligations for grant recipients. Formas' Handbook 2014 is valid from February 26, 2014.

1. News

Background to news and changes in Formas' annual open call 2014:

The success rate, i.e. the proportion of granted applications in Formas' annual open calls have continuously dropped from a level of about 20 per cent during the years 2001-2007 till only about eight per cent year 2013. At the same time, the total funding budget has increased with 80 per cent from 2001 to 2013. The main cause for the lowered success rate is that the average project size was nearly three times as high 2013 as compared to 2001. The number of applications has also increased, but only with 14 per cent during the same time.

The steady increase of the average size of a project implies that many excellent projects not have been funded. The success rate is so low that random effects may not be excluded.

News and changes in Formas' annual open call 2014 are introduced in order to turn this negative trend, increase the success rate and finance more excellent projects the next coming years.

News and changes in Formas' annual open call 2014 (this is not applicable for strategic calls):

- A single researcher may apply for up to 50 per cent of his or her salary in the call for Research and Development grants. This rule is not applied in the call for Research and Development grants for young research leaders. For PhD-students and postdocs within projects, 100 per cent of a full time salary can be sought for.
- A project may in total have maximum 150 per cent salary costs for project leaders, co-applicants and other staff.

- It is allowed for a researcher to have maximum one ongoing project grant (as a project leader) from any of Formas' annual open calls – project applications from researchers that already have a project grant from any of Formas' previous annual open calls will therefore be rejected before evaluation.
- A researcher that applies for grants in the call for Research and Development grants for young research leaders is not allowed to submit an identical application to the call for Research and Development grants.
- Additional applications during an ongoing project period are not allowed.
- Formas has decided on a transition rule. Project leaders with two ongoing project grants from previous annual open calls, where one ends in 2014 and the other in 2015 or later, are eligible to apply for funding in the annual open call 2014. However, the project period of the new application may only be as long as the remaining time period of the project that continues after 2014 (i.e. both project contracts should end the same year).

News and changes for other calls during 2014 are:

- The conditions for information projects have changed (see chapter 7).
- The time to apply for information projects, conferences and workshops has changed (see chapter 7).
- The grants for research visits and miscellaneous grants are discontinued.

Other news for calls during 2014

- The section about public access (section 4.3) has been extended.

2. Formas' mission

Formas is a governmental, tax-financed research-funding agency which supports basic and needs-driven research within the areas of environment, agricultural sciences and spatial

planning. The funded research shall be of highest scientific quality and of relevance to the Formas areas of responsibility.

It is part of the mission of Formas to promote sustainable development in society - a development that implies that finite resources and the environment are not consumed or degraded in an irrevocable manner, to the detriment of future generations. This presupposes that the health and welfare of humans and animals, biodiversity, the environment and the viability of nature, economics, ethics, and social and cultural values are taken into consideration. Formas has a responsibility to promote and fund multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research as well as international research collaboration. Formas also has a responsibility to disseminate information about on-going research and results from funded projects.

For a more detailed description of strategies and research programmes, please visit Formas website (www.formas.se).

3. Formas' Ethical Policy

As a governmental, tax-financed research funding agency, Formas is accountable to the public for all work that is performed, and also in which way the work is executed. Formas' Ethical Policy and Ethical Guidelines are intended to serve as guidance for everyone involved in Formas' activities; members of the Scientific Council, members of the review panels, specialist groups and reference groups, as well as the employees of the Formas secretariat. All those covered by our policy and guidelines are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with our policy and guidelines.

In all work performed by Formas and Formas' various bodies, procedures shall be accomplished in a transparent, impartial and professional manner, and all decisions should be based on best scientific and professional practice, after having considered all views. There must be no shadow of a doubt that applications and official matters are treated impartially and according to the guidelines established by Formas.

It is not possible to anticipate every individual situation and all issues that may arise in terms of assessment of applications, grant awards and other matters. It is thus necessary for members of the Formas Scientific Council, various Formas bodies, and the employees of the Formas secretariat to discuss problems and find support in certain common and general guidelines.

3.1 Ethical guidelines

Below are the ethical guidelines that direct the work of Formas. These guidelines apply to everyone involved in the activities of Formas; members of the Scientific Council, members of the review panels, specialist groups and reference groups and the employees of the Formas secretariat (hereafter collectively referred to as “Members of Formas’ various bodies”).

- Members of Formas’ various bodies have an official responsibility. Personal considerations or preferences must not impede impartial assessment of matters that concern research grants, research priorities, strategies or appointments.
- Members of Formas’ various bodies should assess and openly account for any relevant commitments which might be of significance to an impartial assessment of research applications or official matters. A high level of personal integrity is assumed.
- Members of Formas’ various bodies shall demonstrate respect for other researchers and their work. Disparaging statements or unsubstantiated claims in written or oral form concerning research colleagues/research groups or their research efforts must not be made.
- Members of Formas’ various bodies shall promote scientific credibility through objectivity in assessments of applications and other official matters. Assessments of applications and other official matters shall be objectively formulated in a fair manner, and shall as objectively as possible set out the scientific merits and weaknesses of the applicant and the application.
- Members of Formas’ various bodies should not utilize information from researchers that has been provided in applications, or corresponding manner, to benefit their own research, or create scientific advantage for them or close colleagues at the expense of other people’s activities.
- Members of Formas’ various bodies shall observe and conform to Swedish law, EU regulations and other agreements ratified by Sweden. This concerns research and rules of professional ethics and legislation established by other organisations (such as ethical rules pertaining to animals, plant protection rules, rules regarding dispersal

of infectious agents and rules for transgenic organisms), as well as intellectual property and access issues.

- It should be particularly emphasised that permission from ethical panels must be obtained prior to the commencement of research projects for applications containing elements that must be examined by such panels.
- Members of Formas' various bodies should work to ensure that research is carried out in an ethically acceptable manner and that rules are formulated that take this into consideration. Formas is responsible for communicating the need to comply with applicable rules and legislation to the applicants. Responsibility for observance of the rules rests upon the members of Formas' various bodies.
- Members of Formas' various bodies shall be aware that the culture within their own scientific field can lead to bias against deviating scientific perspectives.
- Members of Formas' various bodies shall refrain from assessing applications or official matters where close friendship, personal antagonism or other animosity may exist. Assessment should not be performed by researchers within the same university department as the applicant, or if the department is large, at the same unit. Neither should members assess applications from their own doctoral students or guest researchers/post-doctoral students.
- Close collaboration with colleagues should also result in the member abstaining from assessing the matter. It is impossible to set a finite time limit for a period after which previous collaboration with doctoral students or colleagues no longer affects objectivity, or is of a minor nature, but a suitable period is 5 years after conclusion of the collaboration.
- The member in question shall leave the meeting premises when applications are discussed in which her/his impartiality can be called into question.
- When applications and official matters are assessed, grounds for assessment should be the evaluation criteria set up by Formas. The applicant's qualifications should be placed in relation to the corresponding qualifications of other applicants. There shall be no discrimination due to gender, race, ethnicity or similar subjects.

Members of Formas' various bodies shall work to ensure that the spirit of these guidelines is followed.

PART A – INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

4. General instructions for applicants

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Research and Development grants

All research and development grants announced by Formas (alone or in cooperation with other funders) including among others: Formas annual open call, focused calls, urgent grants and calls in international cooperation i.e. ERA-nets and JPIs:

The project leader and co-applicants must have a doctoral degree. In applications for mobility starting grants, a copy of the doctoral degree certificate must be received by Formas no later than October 1st, 2014. International research collaboration and industrial partners are welcome in the applications. Grants can however only be administered by Swedish universities, university colleges, research institutes or authorities with research undertakings. There is no age limit for applicants, but fully retired researchers cannot obtain funds for their salary from Formas.

Grants for organization of conferences and workshops and for information projects

The project leader is not required to have a doctoral degree. Grants for organization of conferences and workshops can only be administered by Swedish universities, university colleges, research institutes or authorities with research undertakings. Information projects can be administered by Swedish organizations other than universities, university colleges and research institutes, as well as by the applicant personally.

Please note that:

- The application should contain a correctly completed application form, research programme, budget, CVs, publication lists, and other relevant appendices.
- The total cost of the project, divided into direct costs (excluding overhead) and total costs (direct costs plus overhead) should be included and specified in the application.
- The applicant should state whether there are specific ethical aspects to be taken into consideration.
- Previously completed projects must have been reported before a new application can be processed.
- When a maximum number of characters is specified, spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes are also included.
- Appendix S is a guarantee that the application is accepted by the university or research institute.
- In order to attach and upload appendices I, J and K they must first be actively selected in the application form.

The duration of funding awarded by Formas may differ depending on the call. Please read the call text carefully. Research and development projects and research and development projects for young research leaders are typically awarded for three years, while mobility starting grants are granted for up to four consecutive years. Salary for a doctoral student in research and development projects can be granted up to three years.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the web-based application system “Formas Direct”. When the application is completed and registered, the applicant should print out a signature form (Appendix S) which must be signed by the applicant and an authorized representative at the project site (generally the head of department) where the research will be performed. The signature implies that the application is approved by the university or research institute and that the project can be implemented, equipment will be made available, etc. at the department/institute/authority. The signature also implies that the cost estimation stated in the application has been approved and that any ethical permits, in cases where human or animal experimentation is included, have been issued (or that the permit is

pending). The applicant shall have discussed these conditions with the representative of the administrating organization before the application is signed.

The signature form must be received by Formas, Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm, **within five working days** following the closure of the particular call.

Additions after the final date of application will not be considered. The research programme (Appendix A) is restricted to 25,000 characters. When a maximum number of characters is specified, spaces and carriage returns are also included.

The recommended font for all application types is Times New Roman, and the recommended font size is 12 pt.

It is highly recommended that the application and all appendices are written in English as Formas mainly uses international reviewers. If the research programme (Appendix A) is written in Swedish, Formas will have it translated into English. If an application is translated, the applicant may not make any changes in the translated version. The popular science description must however be written in Swedish, and the brief project description must be written both in Swedish and in English. Applications for information projects may be written in English or in Swedish.

Applicants are advised to carefully read chapter 16 describing the evaluation criteria and scores used by Formas' review panels. It should be especially noted that reviews are made solely on the information given in the application. Applicants are also strongly advised to place emphasis on structure and clarity in the application.

Funds from Formas may be used for co-funding of EU-financed research projects with a similar focus.

4.2 Indirect costs and salaries

Indirect costs (overhead costs) should be included and specified in the application according to the cost unit. The amounts applied for per year should include indirect costs, but the total direct costs per year should also be entered in the application form. Further details on the amounts applied for should be described in Appendix B1 and B2 (see section 11.2).

For already existing employment positions, the current salary at the time of application (including social fees, LKP) should be used for all succeeding years. When the salary for a new position is applied for, the institution's anticipated starting salary in the application year for the particular worker category should be used for all succeeding years. Please note that

Formas does not allow yearly salary increase. All amounts should be in kSEK (SEK 100,000 = kSEK 100).

4.3 Public access

An application (incl. appendices) submitted to Formas is, according to Swedish law, an official document. Decisions regarding awarded grants are published on the Formas website. Formas transfers information from granted projects to the Swedish Research Council in order to publish it in SweCRIS, a national database formed by the Swedish government containing information on granted research projects. The database is intended to communicate Swedish research, make it public and also enable aggregated statistical analyses. Data transferred to the database includes information about calls, information from specific projects, the project leader/co-applicants, and information about decisions around the application (i.e. project period and granted sum). Personal numbers and contact details about applicants are never shown in public. Information in the SweCRIS database may be shared with the university that administers the funds for the present grant.

Registration in SweCRIS is voluntary; researchers should contact Formas if they do not wish to have their information registered. Persons registered in SweCRIS have the right to verify the information registered about them. The Swedish Research Council is responsible for handling personal data within SweCRIS and has the responsibility to correct inadequate information if a person calls for it. Contact sweccris@forskning.se for more information.

4.4 Intellectual property and access issues

When appropriate, the applicant must observe international agreements and contracts regulating access to, utilization of, and exchange of biological material for research purposes, as well as intellectual property.

4.4.1 Open Access

Research results published through Open Access on the Internet are available for anyone to read and download. Researchers who receive funding from Formas must guarantee that their research findings will be available through Open Access within six months of publication. Researchers may either publish in journals with an Open Access practice or those that

archive published articles in large public access databases. The Open Access regulations currently only apply to scientifically peer-reviewed text published in scientific journals and conference reports. The regulations do not currently apply to monographs or book chapters. Funding to cover publication costs in Open Access journals can be included in research project applications as a direct cost.

4.4.2 Consultation on the establishment and decommissioning of databases

Formas promotes improvement of the accessibility and use of existing scientific data. This can be done by making data available in existing databases. The Swedish National Data Service (SND www.snd.gu.se) at the University of Gothenburg and Environment Climate Data Sweden (ECDS www.ecds.se) at the SMHI can be consulted in issues regarding establishment and decommissioning of databases.

SND is a national strategic resource for research that conveys data of interest to several research areas; humanities, medicine, social sciences and educational sciences. The data stored at SND is at the disposal of the scientific community.

ECDS is a national strategic resource for research that generates and uses climate and environmental data.

Formas encourages researchers to contribute to these initiatives by consulting with and working together with the SND and ECDS to establish new databases, in addition to maintaining or decommissioning databases/archiving existing data in the above named research areas.

Those applying for project or equivalent funding where the collection of environmental and climate data is an important part of the research plan should submit appendix K – Climate and environmental data (see 11.8).

4.5 Ethical considerations

The applicant should always state whether the project includes specific ethical aspects. If this is the case, the ethical issues in question and the way they will be treated in the context of the research should be described. This might pertain to research involving the utilization of personal data, for example, or experiments on humans or animals.

Ethical considerations are of particular relevance to the following issues:

Research on humans and personal data (confidential data) If the project concerns research on humans or personal data (confidential information about and from living persons and deceased persons where there is a risk that survivors may feel discomfort due to the publication of research results) and approval has not been obtained from an ethical panel, the applicant must present the ethical considerations that concern the project. If no ethical problems are presumed to exist with the research, this should be indicated and justified. The presentation should also clarify how ethical aspects are managed and related to the ethical codes within the area.

Human and animal experimentation If the project contains experiments involving humans or animals, consent must be obtained from a research ethics panel. If such consent has not been obtained when the application is submitted, it should be obtained as soon as possible. Indicate in the application form if consent has been obtained or if it has been or will be applied for. When a grant is awarded, it is assumed that the university/university college/corresponding institution where the work will be carried out guarantees that consent have been obtained prior to commencement of research. The representative of the university/university College/corresponding institution confirms this by approving the application.

Central ethical review board The Act concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (2003:460), including biological material from humans, is applicable to research that involves physical intervention or is performed with a method intended to affect a human physically or mentally. Research involving physical intervention with a deceased person or research concerning studies of biological material removed from a living person or removed for medical purposes from a deceased person that can be traced to the individual involved must also be considered ethically. The Act also applies to research that is performed without the express consent of an individual and research that concerns sensitive personal data according to the Personal Data Act (1998:204).

Ethical review of research shall be performed in accordance with legislation by regional boards that are independent authorities. The regional boards are located in Gothenburg, Linköping, Lund, Stockholm, Umeå and Uppsala and appeals against their decisions may be made to the Central Ethical Review Board. More information may be obtained on the Central Ethical Review Board's website (www.epn.se).

The ethical review of animal experimentation is performed by ethical boards. The application form can be obtained from the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website (www.sjv.se).

4.6 Gender aspects

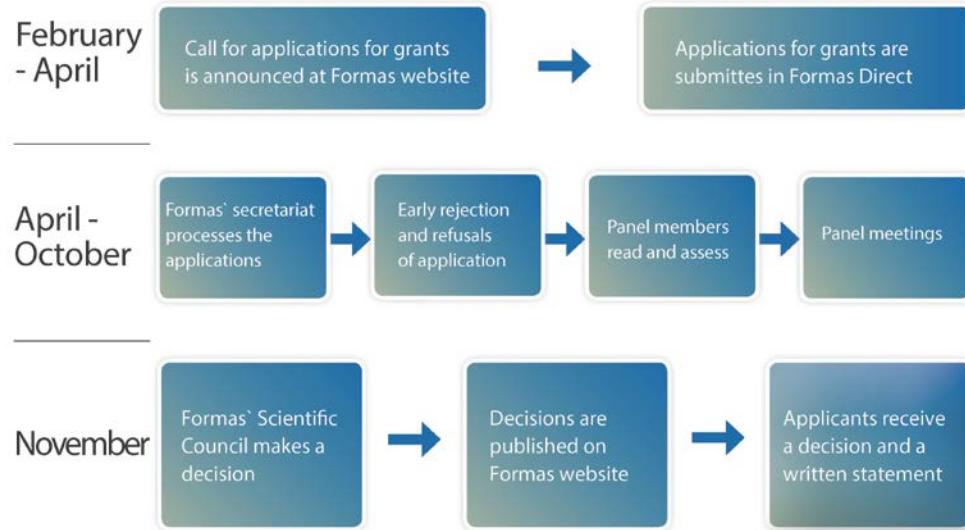
Applicants should always consider whether gender perspectives are relevant to the research questions in the project. If so, these aspects and the way they will be treated in the project should be described in the application.

4.7 Popular science description

A popular science description in Swedish must be included in the application. If the project is granted funds, Formas has the right to use the popular science description for dissemination purposes. The popular science descriptions of granted projects are published in Formas' project catalogue, available to the public on Formas' website.

5. Formas annual open call

5.1 The application and review process



In the figure the review process in Formas' annual open calls is presented. The process is similar in most of Formas' focused calls; however, the timeline can vary depending on the type of call.

5.2 Types of grants in Formas annual open call

Below, the different grant types that can be applied for in the annual open call are described. The evaluation criteria applied by Formas for all grant types in the annual open call can be found in section 16.

It is allowed for a researcher to have maximum one ongoing project grant (as a project leader) from any of Formas' annual open calls – project applications from researchers that already have a project grant from any of Formas' previous annual open calls will therefore be rejected before evaluation. Formas has decided on a transition rule. Project leaders with two ongoing project grants from previous annual open calls, where one ends in 2014 and the other in 2015 or later, are eligible to apply for funding in the annual open call 2014. However, the project period of the new application may only be as long as the remaining time period of the project that continues after 2014 (i.e. both project contracts should end the same year).

A researcher that applies for grants in the call for Research and Development grants for young research leaders is not allowed to submit an identical application to the call for Research and Development grants.

5.3 Grants for research and development projects

To be eligible to apply for grants for research and development projects the project leader must have a doctoral degree. The co-applicants must also have doctoral degrees. Other persons who contribute to the implementation of the project, i.e., doctoral students, laboratory assistants and technicians, do not need to have doctoral degrees. Grants for research projects can only be administered by Swedish universities, university colleges, research institutes or authorities with research undertakings.

Development work is defined as systematic, methodical use of research results, scientific knowledge and new ideas to bring about new products, new processes, new systems or significant improvements in those already existing (OECD Frascati manual). Joint financing (minimum 50 per cent) is a requirement for development projects.

Grants for research and development projects may involve financing the salary of researchers, doctoral students and technical staff. Researchers may apply for up to 50 per

cent of their full-time positions, while for a doctoral student or a postdoc up to 100 per cent of their full-time positions can be sought for. A project may in total have maximum 150 per cent salary costs for project leaders, co-applicants and other staff. Note that the salary amount derived from Formas funding can never exceed 100 per cent of a fulltime position, meaning that a researcher who already have funding from Formas covering a full time salary, not can be granted further funding for salary costs. For doctoral students, post docs and young research leaders, salary funding up to 100 per cent of their full-time positions may be applied for. Salary for doctoral students can be granted up to three years. Grants for research and development projects may also include financing for running costs (*e.g.* consumables, equipment under 500 kSEK, travel, conferences, publication in Open Access journals, etc.), equipment depreciation costs and premises costs. See section 11.2 for further information.

The CVs and lists of publications for both the project leader and all co-applicants must be included as appendices to the application. Participating researchers may be unnamed; however the work assignments for all persons involved in the project must be included in the budget (Appendix B1 and B2). For doctoral student positions, the main supervisor must be indicated in the research programme.

5.3.1 What to include in the applications

The following documents must be supplied in Formas Direct web-based application system:

- Completed application form and popular science description.
- Appendix A. The research programme, which is restricted to 25,000 characters including references. Note that the maximum number of characters also includes spaces and carriage returns.
- Appendix B1 and B2. Budget. All the salary costs applied for must be justified. The research assignments of all persons with a doctoral degree must be clearly described. Indirect costs or overhead costs should be included and specified in the application. The maximum length of appendix B1 and B2 is two pages, respectively.
- Appendix C. Brief CV for the project leader and co-applicants (maximum of 8,000 characters per person). Enclose each CV separately.
- Appendix D. Publication list for the project leader and co-applicants for the last eight years (maximum of 8,000 characters per person). Enclose each publication list separately.

- Appendix J. Figures, tables or other illustrations relating to the research programme in Appendix A. The appendix is optional (maximum length two pages).
- Appendix K. Climate and Environmental Data. The appendix is mandatory for all project applications concerning climate and environmental research where data collection is included as an important aspect of the project. See section 11.8 for further information.

Please note that appendices J and K must be actively selected in Formas Direct.

5.4 Grants for young researchers

5.4.1 Grants for young research leaders

To be eligible to apply for research and development grants for young researchers, the applicant must have been awarded a doctoral degree two to eight years (for 2014 this means January 1 2006 at the earliest, and December 31 2012 at the latest). Periods of parental leave, illness, military service, or other similar circumstances that have prevented research activities soon after the degree was received, should be specified in the CV and may be considered as grounds for an exception to the eight-year rule. The receiver of the grant must be the project leader. A young research leader can apply for salary costs up to 100 per cent of their full time position.

Otherwise, the same criteria and instructions for applications for grants for research projects (see section 5.3 and 5.3.1.) apply.

5.4.2 Mobility starting grants

The purpose of the mobility starting grant is to encourage young researchers who have recently been awarded their doctoral degrees to broaden their horizons and visit new research environments. It is expected that they will develop their academic careers, including learning new tools, working on research questions with a different focus and expanding their networks. The young researcher can spend 8 to 32 months at a host university or research institute, while being employed by the Swedish home university or research institute. The

host university or research institute can be in Sweden or abroad, however international visits are encouraged.

Application for a mobility starting grant can be made for 24 to 48 months, of which at least 1/3 of the total time should be spent at the home university and at least 1/3 of the total time should be spent at the host university. The visit may be divided into several periods; however the periods must be continuous and have a minimum duration of three months. More than one host university or research institute may be visited. The receiver for the grant must be the project leader. The receiver must be employed by the Swedish home university or research institute for the full time period. This can be the same university where the doctoral degree was awarded, but can also be another university.

To be eligible to apply for a mobility starting grant the applicant must have been awarded a doctoral degree within the previous three years (for 2014 this means January 1 2011 at the earliest and October 1 2014 at the latest). Please note that a copy of the doctoral degree certificate must be received by Formas no later than October 1 2014. Periods of parental leave, illness, military service, or other similar circumstances that have prevented research activities soon after the degree was received, must be specified in the CV and may be considered as grounds for an exception to the three-year rule.

The following can be applied for (Appendix B1 and B2):

- The applicant's salary at the home university/research institute according to the applicant's current salary or the corresponding starting salary at the home university/research institute.
- Overheads and premises costs according to the practices at the home university/research institute. Running costs and costs for equipment will not be granted.

Formas will cover travel expenses for return tickets (at least for one roundtrip journey) for the applicant and accompanying family members. Formas will add a standard sum depending on *i*) the costs of living in the host country and *ii*) the number of accompanying family members. This standard sum is based on figures given by Swedish Agency for Government Employers (Arbetsgivarverket).

The application for a mobility starting grant should be organised in the same manner as a regular grant application, with a research programme for up to four years. Appendix G (a template that should be downloaded from Formas Direct) is mandatory and includes a

description of how the project and the research environments at the host and the home universities will contribute to the applicant's development, as well as the travel plan. In addition, letters of invitation from the home university and the host university (Appendix L) must be included.

The following documents must be supplied in the Formas Direct web-based system:

- Application form, including a popular science description.
- Appendix A. Research programme comprising a maximum of 25,000 characters, including references. Note that the maximum number of characters also includes spaces and carriage returns.
- Appendix B1 and B2. Applicant's salary, overheads and premises costs.
- Appendix C. Applicant's brief CV (maximum of 8,000 characters).
- Appendix D. Applicant's list of publications (maximum of 8,000 characters).
- Appendix G. Description of how the project and the research environments at the host and the home universities will contribute to the applicant's development and a travel plan.
- Appendix I. Copy of diploma or doctoral degree certificate.
- Appendix J. Figures, tables or other illustrations relating to the research programme in Appendix A, is optional (maximum length of two pages).
- Appendix K. Climate and Environmental Data. The appendix is mandatory for all project applications concerning climate and environmental research where data collection is included as an important aspect of the project. See section 11.8 for further information.
- Appendix L. Letters of invitation from home university and host universities. A letter of invitation from the home university, *i.e.* certification from the home institution. The letter of invitation should contain a statement regarding the planned research as well as confirmation that necessary facilities and resources will be available. A letter of invitation from the host organisation, *i.e.* certification from the host institution(s). The letter of invitation should contain a statement regarding the planned research as well as confirmation that necessary facilities and resources will be available.

Please note that appendices I, J and K must be actively selected in Formas Direct.

5.5 Review panels in the annual open call

The applicant may suggest two review panels in order of priority from the scrollable list in the application form. For cases where Formas secretariat considers the competence for evaluation of an application to be higher in another than the two suggested panels, the application may - after contact with the project leader - be transferred. Information regarding how applications are evaluated is found in chapter 16.

5.5.1 The eight review panels

All panels evaluate basic and needs-driven research within Formas' areas of responsibility. The review panels are problem-oriented and broadly defined in order to encompass Formas' areas of responsibility. Each panel comprises both active researchers and stakeholders qualified to assess potential societal value, however, the researchers are in majority. The panels have the expertise to review natural and social sciences as well as research in health, technology and humanities within Formas' areas of responsibility. The panels are also able to review interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research.

Below, a few examples of problem areas evaluated in each panel are described.

1. Climate change

- Climate models and processes in and between land, water, air and biota
- Effects of climate change on ecosystems, primary sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, reindeer husbandry) and the society
- Adaptation of the society and the primary sectors to climate change, and measures to mitigate climate change
- Ethical and burden sharing issues, the significance of practices, attitudes, values and life styles

2. The natural environment

- Biological and geo-chemical processes and ecosystem structures, functions and dynamics
- Human impacts on species, ecosystems and ecosystem services, and human dependency on ecosystems
- Measures to prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Understanding and interpretation of the natural environment and human needs for the nature, including in its historical contexts
- Institutional opportunities for, and impediments to, the maintenance and management of ecosystems

3. Use of natural resources

- Production of primary products and services from the primary sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, reindeer husbandry and tourism) – development in a sustainable direction
- Multifunctionality and sustainable value creation in the primary sectors
- Owner and user issues, management and multi-level governance
- Conflicts and democratic processes

4. Resource-efficient products and processes

- New products, materials and processing of primary products from the primary sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and reindeer husbandry)
- Recycling of materials and other means of saving resources
- Processed foods
- Institutional opportunities for, and impediments to, promoting sustainable development
- Governance and organisation of product chains and trading systems
- Ethical and burden sharing issues, the significance of practices, attitudes, values and life styles

5. Environmental pollution

- Source identification and transport of pollutants from the technosphere to humans and the environment
- Mobility, distribution, and fate of pollutants in the environment
- Methods for identification and quantification of pollutants
- Effects of pollutants in the environment and on human and animal health, including combination effects (“cocktail effects”)
- Technical and institutional opportunities for, and impediments to, reduction of pollutant emissions

6. Food and animal welfare

- Food safety and risks in production and consumption
- High quality food for a healthy diet
- Factors influencing, and methods for measurement and guarantee of animal welfare
- Animal infections and diseases, spread and methods for diagnosis and treatment
- Inquiries within animal production, as animal breeding and genetics, nutrition and housing.

7. Urban and rural development

- Sustainable development of urban and rural areas
- Interrelations between urban and rural areas – local, regional and global processes
- Democratic and efficient methods for planning, management and change
- Good environment and increased quality of life in housing, services, work and leisure
- Interaction between social, ecological and technical systems

8. The built environment

- Energy- and resource efficiency in new and existing buildings
- Sustainable planning-, construction- and facilities management process
- Good indoor environment regarding health and comfort
- Environmental impacts from buildings and districts
- The user's values and needs
- System aspects – architecture, technology, function, economy, behaviour
- Integration of environmental aspects and sustainable development in the building sector

6. Formas focused calls

In the focused calls, the rules and conditions that are applied in Formas' annual open call may not be prevailing. The applicant is advised to read the call text for the actual call carefully. The eligibility criteria for applicants (4.1) and Formas' criteria for review (chapter 16) always apply, however, in focused calls further amendments may be added. For each focused call, a review panel with competences to cover the areas in the call is formed. The composition and mission of Formas' review panels are described in chapter 15.

The most common review process is that all members of the panel read and assess all applications submitted to the call. The panel then discusses and prioritizes all applications at a panel meeting. The decision of funding is made by Formas Scientific Council.

When focused calls are in collaboration with international research funders, additional rules and conditions may apply. However, the eligibility criteria for applicants to Formas (chapter 4) always apply.

7 Grants that can be applied for twice a year

7. 1 Information projects

Formas should, according to its instruction, “be responsible for communication about research and research results as well as popularisation of the research funded by the council”.

Grants for information projects can be applied for on two occasions per year. The information applications are assessed and prioritised by a review panel consisting of experienced communicators and subject matter experts. This review panel will assess the choice of topic and method (the communication channel), the competence of the applicant, and the level of concern for the chosen target group. When needed, the panel can engage external reviewers with expertise within the chosen topic or method.

Formas welcomes innovative information projects where the topic and communication channel are in focus. Received application should clearly describe:

- The choice of topic and why it is urgent
- In what way the project is linked to Formas' subject areas
- Choice of target group(s) and channel for the communication activity
- The research and researchers discussed within the project
- Purpose and goal of the communication activity

- How the level of goal achievement will be evaluated.

The application must contain a well-argued presentation of the chosen topic, as well as an in-depth discussion of the choice of communication channel and why that particular channel is fitting for the topic and the target group. The application should also contain a description of the target groups, and a marketing plan. Clear details and a motivation of how the grant from Formas will be used should be stated in the application (appendices B1 and B2). The total budget for the project should be presented, not just the part that is applied for from Formas.

The applicant's experience of communicating research based information should be documented in the submitted CV. It is not required that the applicant has academic qualifications or is associated to a university, but there must be researchers attached to the project.

Formas cannot give continuous grants to running costs for communication activities. Nor give grants to development of teaching materials.

Information project applications can be written in English or Swedish and must include the following documents:

- A completed application form and popular science description.
- Appendix A. Information programme, which is limited to a maximum of 25,000 characters (including references). Please note that the maximum number of characters also includes blank spaces and carriage returns.
- Appendix B1 and Appendix B2. Budget. Descriptions of the employment of each of the project participants for whom salary funding is sought must be provided and justified. All additional costs must also be clearly described and justified (maximum of two pages for each).
- Appendix C. CV summaries for the project leader and participating researchers (maximum of 8000 characters per person).
- Appendix D. Publication lists, or other reference material, for the project leader and participating researchers (maximum of 8000 characters per person).
- Appendix J. Illustrations relevant to the information programme in Appendix A, is optional (maximum of two pages).

7.2 Conferences and workshops

Formas may contribute to funding conferences and workshops (called “meetings” below) within Formas’ areas of responsibility. The meeting must have a high level of scientific quality, assured by a scientific board or similar. Priority is given to meetings organized in Sweden. The grant may cover travel and accommodation costs for a limited number of primarily foreign participants. The grant may also contribute to organizational costs (*e.g.* meeting venue). Salary costs for organisers or invited speakers/participants are not funded.

A doctoral degree is not required for applications for grants to organise meetings.

The application should contain:

- information about the meeting’s scientific objective(s)
- preliminary programme
- description of the scientific committee
- a list of invited speakers
- expected number of participants
- time and place
- a detailed budget with an explanation of how the costs have been estimated and distributed amongst different funding sources.

The standard figure for the grant is up to 200,000 SEK for a larger conference (more than 200 participants) and up to 30,000 SEK for a smaller workshop (less than 30 participants).

When a grant has been awarded, a representative from Formas is expected to be invited to attend the meeting. Furthermore, it is expected that the organizer advertises the meeting in a suitable manner. Support from Formas should be duly acknowledged.

The following documents should be included in the application:

- Application form, including budget and popular science description.
- Appendix A. Description of the meeting, a maximum of 25,000 characters, including references.

- Appendix B1 and B2. Budget. Calculations for the costs of the event and how these costs are distributed between different funding sources must be stated. Maximum length two pages, respectively.
- Appendix C. Brief CV for the project leader and co-applicants (maximum of 8,000 characters per person).
- Appendix J (figures, tables or other illustrations) is optional (maximum two pages).

Formas' secretariat evaluates applications concerning conferences and workshops. When relevant, the applications described above are evaluated by external reviewers. The review of uncomplicated cases is often completed within six weeks, while applications requiring external review take longer time.

8. Urgent grants

The aim of urgent grants is to give researchers opportunity to deal with suddenly arisen research questions (*e.g.* connected to extreme events such as storm-felled forests, inadequate building structures that have collapsed under the pressure of snow, emissions of environmentally hazardous compounds after an accident, or other special circumstances that requires a direct initiation of the study) or to utilize transient material. Urgent grants are normally given for a maximum of one year and the urgency of the project should be explicitly explained and verified in the application. Otherwise, the same criteria and instructions apply as described for applications for grants for research projects (section 5.3).

Formas' secretariat evaluates applications concerning urgent grants. When relevant, the applications described above are evaluated by external reviewers.

The review of uncomplicated cases is often completed within weeks, while applications requiring external review take longer time.

9. How to create an application in Formas Direct

To create an application in Formas Direct a user account is needed. Please note that you can contact Formas IT administrator if you have forgotten your password or need help with your

user account. When such an account has been created, log in to Formas Direct and choose “New application”. Then follow the steps below to complete the application.

Complete the basic information concerning type of grant and call for applications on the first page. Choose “Continue” and complete the rest of the form. If a doctoral student is involved in the project, please tick the appropriate box in the Budget section in the form (applicable only for some calls). **Do not forget to save often.** For more detailed assistance on the various fields, click on the heading of each field.

9.1 Appendices

To attach appendices to the application, choose the “Appendices” button. Please note that in order to attach appendices I, J and K you **actively** have to **select** these appendices **in the application form** first.

To attach appendices to the application, choose “Appendix” in the drop-down list and browse for your document by clicking on “Browse”. Upload the document by clicking on “Save”. The document will be uploaded to the server, and if it is not in PDF-format, it will be converted. The appendix will then be displayed in the list “Attached appendices”. The name of the document and a PDF icon will be shown when conversion and/or uploading is complete. Repeat this for all the documents you would like to attach. It is possible to attach more than one appendix of the same kind, *e.g.* the two budget appendices (B1 and B2), several CVs (appendix C), several publications lists (appendix D), and the template and letters of invitation for mobility starting grants (appendix G and L). To attach more than one document of the same kind, repeat the procedure above for all the documents to be uploaded. When conversion and uploading is completed, click on the “Back” button.

If you have the possibility to convert the files into PDF-format before uploading, the process is faster.

9.2 Preview

In order to ensure that the application looks correct, it is possible to preview it in PDF format. To do so, choose the “Preview” button. Please observe that the preview of the document should not be sent to Formas.

9.3 Registration and signature

When the application is completed, it must be registered in Formas Direct. In order to do this, save the application and choose “Register”. Read and follow the instructions. In order to register the application, choose “OK”. If you wish to cancel, choose “Cancel”. A form in PDF format (appendix S) will be created for signature at registration. Appendix S should be signed by the project leader and an authorized representative of the university/university college/research institute and the original sent to: **Formas, Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm**. Appendix S must be received by Formas within five working days after the closure of the call. Note that once the application is registered no changes or complements can be made.

10. Finances

10.1 Amounts applied for in Formas Direct

Applicants should indicate two amounts per year in the Formas Direct application form; the total direct costs (excluding overhead costs) and the total costs (total direct costs plus overhead costs). All amounts should be in kSEK (SEK 100,000 = kSEK 100). No letters, full stops or commas may be used in the fields for amounts. If the amount is SEK 0, leave the field empty.

To summarise and motivate the budget the applicant should upload two appendices as part of the application; Appendix B1 (calculation table) and B2 (a text description of maximum 2 pages). Appendix B1 (a template Excel file) can be downloaded from Formas Direct. Follow the guidelines in section 11.2.

For already existing employments, the current salary at the time of application (including social fees) should be used for all succeeding years. For new employments, the starting salary at the university/research institute should be used for all succeeding years. Please note that Formas does not allow yearly salary increase. All amounts should be in kSEK (SEK 100,000 = kSEK 100). A project may in total have maximum 150 per cent salary costs for project leaders, co-applicants and other staff.

11. Description of appendices

Please note that all appendices are not applicable to all types of grants. The recommended font for all appendices is Times New Roman and the recommended font size is 12 pt. When a maximum number of characters is specified, spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes are included.

11.1 Appendix A. Research programme

The research programme, appendix A, should be attached to all applications.

The research programme is restricted to 25,000 characters. Note that when a maximum number of characters is specified, spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes are included. For focused calls, the number of characters may differ from the above, please see instructions in the particular call text.

Appendix A should comprise a complete description of the intended research, including (when relevant) the bullets below.

- Specific objectives and aim of the proposed research project
- Overview of the research area, including key references
- Project description and a summary of the project's organization
- A description of theory, method and performance
- Plan for scientific deliverables
- A description of the societal value of the research
- Plan for communication with stakeholders/end users
- A brief description of existing basic equipment that is relevant to the project
- A brief description of national and international collaborations that are relevant to the project
- Affirmation that international agreements and rules will be complied with
- Ethical considerations
- Gender aspects

- For doctoral student positions, the main supervisor should be indicated

Please note that applications will be evaluated according to Formas evaluation criteria (described in section 16). It is thus highly recommended to address these issues in the application.

11.2 Appendix B1 and B2. Budget

Appendix B1 (an Excel template that can be downloaded from Formas Direct) is a calculation table for displaying the budget for the requested funding. In appendix B1 the applicant should enter all direct costs (exclusive of VAT) together with percentage for overhead costs under 4 categories (according to the SUHF model):

1. Salaries
2. Running costs
3. Depreciation costs for equipment
4. Premises costs

The percentage for overhead costs should be entered for each item according to the model for cost units used at the research organisation. Overhead costs are not permitted on equipment depreciation costs or premises.

When the applicant fills in the columns direct costs and overhead a calculation of total costs will be made automatically by default formulas. The per year total amount applied for (*direct costs excluding overhead costs and total costs including overhead costs*) should be transferred to the application form.

Appendix B2 (maximum length 2 pages):

In this appendix all salaries and other costs should be motivated. Description of the total budget for the project, including financing from other sources, should also be described in appendix B2. The work effort in per cent of full time of all involved researchers with a doctoral degree should be indicated, even if funds for their salaries are not being applied for. All other costs applied for should be clearly motivated, such as participation in conferences, publication in Open Access, etc.

For already existing employments, the current salary at the time of application (including social fees) should be used for all succeeding years. For new employments, the starting salary

at the university/research institute should be used for all succeeding years. Please note that Formas does not allow yearly salary increase. All amounts should be in kSEK (SEK 100,000 = kSEK 100). A project may in total have maximum 150 per cent salary costs for project leaders, co-applicants and other staff.

Costs for travel to attend conferences and for research trips shall be included in the research application and specified in appendix B1 and B2.

11.3 Appendix C. CV

CVs should be provided for the project leader and for all co-applicants. The CV should comprise a maximum of 8,000 characters per person. Note that the maximum number of characters includes spaces and carriage returns. Note that the list of publications is presented separately in Appendix D. The following must be specified unless otherwise stated in the call for applications:

- Doctoral degree (year, discipline/scientific field, title of dissertation as well as supervisor)
- Post-doctoral visits (year and placement)
- Senior lecturer expertise (year)
- Current post, duration of appointment and the amount of time for research in the post
- Previous employment and duration of employment
- Parental leave, etc.
- Awards and special commissions
- Persons who have completed their doctoral degree for whom the applicant has been the main supervisor (name and year)
- Persons who have completed their doctoral degree for whom the applicant has been deputy supervisor (name and year)
- Mentorship of post-doctoral fellows (name and year)
- Experience of communicating results with stakeholders/end users

11.4 Appendix D. List of Publications

The project leader's and the co-applicant's publications over the last eight years should be set out in the list. The project leader's and the co-applicant's publications should be compiled in separate lists, maximum of 8,000 characters per person. Note that the maximum number of characters includes spaces and carriage returns. Organize the publications under the following headings:

- Peer reviewed articles in international journals
- Peer reviewed books, book chapters and conference proceedings with international coverage
- Non peer-reviewed publications with international coverage
- Articles in regional or national journals
- Books and book chapters in Swedish
- Reports in Swedish
- Popular science articles/presentations
- Personally developed and generally accessible computer programs
- Presentations at conferences (the applicant should specifically note if she/he was invited as keynote speaker)

11.5 Appendix G. Mobility starting grants

Appendix G should include a template that is downloaded from Formas Direct. The template includes:

- The applicant's name and information on accompanying family members.
- Contact information for the head of department at the home university/organisation (Dean/Chair/Vice-Chancellor).
- Contact information for the responsible researcher at the host organisation.
- Travel plan. Time for the visit to the host organisation – Indicate the dates when the visit to the host institutions is planned to begin and to end. The period can be up to

32 months long. The visit may also be divided into several periods, but the shortest period is three months per visit.

- A description of how the project and the research environments at the host and the home universities will contribute to the applicant's development.

11.6 Appendix I. Doctoral degree certificate

Please note that you need to actively choose appendix I in the application form in order to attach this as an appendix. This appendix (maximum two pages) may be used to include

- a copy of the doctoral degree certificate for mobility starting grants

11.7 Appendix J. Illustrations

Please note that you need to actively choose appendix J in the application form in order to attach this as an appendix. If there is a need for figures, tables or other illustrations in the research programme, these should be placed in this appendix. Illustrations in the research programme shall be referred to this appendix. Maximum length is two pages.

11.8 Appendix K. Climate and environmental data

Please note that you need to actively select appendix K in the application form in order to attach it as an appendix.

Appendix K is mandatory for all applications concerning climate and environmental research where data collection is included as an important aspect of the project. The information given will provide support for the review of the application. Formas may issue separate conditions for the publication of data based on the appendix and may award financial support for this. Please note that Swedish universities, university colleges and other authorities are responsible for the safe storage of data collected during their operations. Financial support for data storage that may be regarded to be within the responsibility remit of these authorities may not be included in the application.

Data must be published within a reasonable time and made accessible via relevant national and/or international organisations for data publication.

The data publication plan template available from Environment Climate Data Sweden (ECDS - www.ecds.se) shall be used.

11.9 Appendix L. Letters of invitation

This appendix (maximum two pages) can include

- Letters of invitation for research visits
- Letters of invitation from home university and host universities (Mobility starting grants)

11.10 Appendix S. Signatures

A signature form (Appendix S) is automatically generated when the application is registered. This must be submitted in paper format and signed by the applicant and an authorised representative of the university or the authority administering the funds (note that these cannot be the same person). The original version should be sent to: **Formas, Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm**. The form must be received by Formas within five working days following the closure of the call. Appendix S is a guarantee that the full application has been accepted by the university or research institute.

12. Decisions

Decisions are made by the Formas Scientific Council based on the review panels' recommendations. Decisions on grants are not subject to appeal.

The project leaders of approved applications receive a decision notice by regular mail along with the review panel's final written statement. The project leaders of declined applications receive an e-mail notice of the decision along with the panel's final written statement. Decisions are also published on the Formas website.

The status of an application is shown on the Formas Direct website. Applicants can log in and view the current status of all their applications.

Decisions on grant applications which can be applied for consecutively are notified by regular mail.

12.1. Reasons for early rejection of an application

Each year Formas rejects a number of applications due to formal errors and/or incompleteness in terms of required information in the application form or attachments. Reasons for rejecting an application due to formal errors are the following:

- The applicant does not have a doctoral degree (not valid for information projects)
- The date of doctoral exam does not lie within the stipulated time span of the call (valid for e.g. grants for young research leaders and mobility starting grants)
- The receiver of the grants for young research leader or mobility starting grant is not the main applicant
- The administrating organizations not eligible to receive funding from Formas
- Appendix S is not correctly signed
- Previously completed projects have not been reported in time

Applications for projects outside of the responsibility areas of Formas will be rejected.

The rejection of these types of applications can be decided before the Formas Scientific Council's final decision meeting.

12.2 Applications granted funding

Applicants granted funds must return the contract within three months of receiving notification of the decision. The contract must be signed by the head of department, or corresponding person, and the applicant.

When grants for conferences and workshops have been awarded, a representative from Formas is expected to be invited to attend the meeting. Furthermore, it is expected that the organizer advertises the meeting in a suitable manner. Support from Formas should be duly acknowledged.

12.3 How to acknowledge a grant from Formas

Publication of results from Formas-funded projects must clearly state that Formas has contributed funding. The acknowledgement should mention Formas in the following manner: "The Swedish Research Council Formas" or "Forskningsrådet Formas".

13. Reporting of granted projects

All approved projects must be reported in Formas electronic system Formas Direct.

The main applicant for granted projects must submit a financial report and a scientific report by the date stated in the contract. The scientific report should include a description of the scientific achievements, as well as a popular science summary. Grants below SEK 25,000 usually only require financial reports, however if a scientific report is required, this is stated in the decision notice.

The implementation time and the deadline for reporting projects are stated in the contract.

Please note that previously completed projects must have been reported in order for a new application to be processed.

More detailed information on how to report the project when it is finished can be found on the Formas website.

PART B – INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWERS

14. Management of conflicts of interest

All reviewers engaged in reviewing applications for Formas must read The Ethical Policy (section 3). Panel members cannot have own applications evaluated by the panel they are member of, neither as project leader nor as co-applicant. If a member wishes to apply for funding from Formas and there is no other relevant panel, the panel member will be replaced. The member must inform Formas as soon as possible, preferably two months prior to the closing date of the call.

A fundamental requirement for work performed by review panels is impartiality. Provisions related to conflicts of interest can be found in sections 11 and 12 in “The Administrative Procedures Act” (1986:23). A conflict of interest is considered to exist in the following cases:

- The issue concerns the member or someone close to the member, or if the outcome of the matter can be expected to entail particular benefit or damage for the member or anyone close to the member.
- The member or someone close to the member is a deputy for or is active at the same university department or company as the applicant, or is a deputy for someone else who can be expected to receive particular benefit or damage from the outcome of the matter.
- The member has an ongoing or recently concluded close collaboration with the applicant. Reasons for conflicts of interest may also exist if there is any particular circumstance that can affect confidence in a member’s impartiality in the matter. Examples might be friendship, enmity and economic dependency.

Members of review panels are obliged to ensure that conflicts of interest will not arise, and to declare on their own initiative if there are circumstances that might be considered to influence their standpoint. In the event of a conflict of interest, the member shall refrain from participating in the administration and assessment of the application in question, and shall leave the room when discussions regarding the application take place. During panel meetings, minutes concerning conflicts of interest shall be kept.

15. Review panels

Review panel members

The members of the review panels in Formas annual open call are appointed annually by Formas.

Supported by the Formas secretariat, the chair is responsible for assessment being made in accordance with Formas' general mandate, research strategy, rules concerning conflicts of interest, guidelines for application review and what is otherwise good ethical practice (Formas Ethical Policy). The vice chair supports the chair in her/his work and steps in when the chair is unable to lead efforts.

Term of appointment

In the panels that evaluate Formas' annual open call it is possible to be member for a continuous period of four years, though the appointment must be renewed each year. Chairs and vice chairs may serve an additional year. When five years have elapsed following a concluded period, a person may be appointed again as a member of one of the Formas review panels. Formas aims at replacing the members of the review panels gradually, so that only a minority of the panel is replaced each year.

15.1 Guidelines for the Composition of Formas Review panels

- Review panels comprise a chair, a vice-chair and a suitable number of panel members for the call. By suitable is meant the number of panel members necessary to satisfy the competence requirements for the review of the applications submitted in response to the call. It is expected that between eight and eighteen panel members will be required in addition to the chair and vice-chair.
- The panel members have the mandate to evaluate both the scientific quality and the relevance to the responsibility areas of Formas. Each panel member's principal mandate will however be either to evaluate scientific quality or relevance. The principal mandate of the individual panel member is determined by the Formas Secretary General in consultation with the responsible research officer.

- The chair of the review panel is a researcher of professorial level competence, with broad subject knowledge, experience of working strategically and with insight into the value of the research for societal sustainable development.
- A user of the research is appointed as vice-chair. The vice-chair should have broad knowledge of the issue of value to the user and benefit to sustainable development, as well as significant experience of working strategically.
- The majority of panel members are active researchers who have been selected as panel members of the review panels primarily because of their competence to evaluate the scientific quality of the applications. If possible, the majority of panel members should be active outside of Sweden and as a minimum have qualifications equivalent to associate professor. Researchers should have broad subject knowledge and possess the ability to work strategically.
- A minority of panel members are users in society who have been selected principally because of their competence to evaluate user value/societal benefit. They may be active either within Sweden or outside of Sweden.
- The users should have documented research experience, e.g. a PhD qualification, previous review experience or experience of strategically compiling knowledge. Users should have an overview of societal short-term and long-term knowledge requirements and have experience of working strategically.
- The review panel as a whole should be able to evaluate applications within the panel's entire subject area, and be able to evaluate basic research and needs-driven research, as well as user and societal values. The final decision regarding the composition of the respective evaluation panels will not be made until applications have been received, to ensure that the panels possess the necessary expertise to evaluate the applications. When necessary, external reviews may be included as a supplement to a panel review.
- Each review panel should have an equal gender distribution with a minimum representation of 40 per cent of each gender.

- The gender distribution of chairs and vice-chairs in Formas' review panels should be equal.

16. Guidelines for evaluation

16.1 Evaluation of applications – general

The mission of Formas is to promote and support basic research and needs-driven research within the areas of the Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. Funded research should be of the highest scientific quality and of relevance to the areas of responsibility of Formas. Formas may also fund development projects to a limited extent.

Applications within the annual open calls are assessed with respect to the evaluation categories Scientific Quality and Societal Value. These categories include criteria for assessing the scientific quality of the applications, the competences of the applicants, and the relevance of the research for society. The criteria for scientific quality are always of utmost importance, while the criteria for societal value, under certain circumstances, can be given lower weighting in the overall grade. This is applicable for basic research, where it can be difficult or inappropriate to fulfil the criteria of societal value. The applicant must, in such cases, present clear arguments as to why the societal value criteria cannot be fulfilled.

Applications within focused calls should be assessed with respect to the evaluation criteria stated in the call text. If no criteria are given, the criteria within the evaluation categories Scientific Quality and Societal Value should be used.

Applications should be assessed in an objective and impartial manner. Reviewers should observe the instructions and directions that the applicant has received for preparation of the application.

16.2 Gender equality

There shall be no discrimination due to gender in the processing of applications. The scientific quality and relevance of applications have precedence over the equality aspect, though in equal assessments, precedence will be given to the under-represented gender. The panel should also take care that the gender distribution among the proposed projects does not deviate in a significant and unwarranted way from the gender distribution among the

applications. When an applicant's scientific production is evaluated, only years in which research has actively taken place are considered, which means that time spent on parental leave or military service, for example, will be disregarded.

16.3 Evaluation criteria

16.3.1 Criteria of Scientific Quality

Research question

- Scientific significance of the aim
- Originality, innovativeness and boldness of the aim, theories and/or hypotheses
- Potential for scientifically significant outcomes
- Aim in line with the call for applications

Clarifications:

- Multi- and interdisciplinary approaches should be considered advantageous when appropriate to the research question
- Gender perspectives, class, ethnicity or other social categories should be included when appropriate to the research question

Method and performance

- Feasibility and adequacy of scientific methods
- Innovativeness and boldness of methodology
- Concrete and realistic work plan
- Concrete and realistic plan for scientific deliverables
- Coordination of project and research group
- Suitability of multi- and interdisciplinary approaches
- Ethical considerations

Clarifications:

- Feasibility and adequacy of scientific approaches and methods should receive primary consideration

Scientific competence

- Quality of scientific publications
- Ability to carry out the project according to plan
- Adequate experience of project management
- National and international activities, including projects, networks, assignments, commissions of trust, and participating at or arranging workshops or conferences
- Strength and competitiveness of the research team

Clarifications:

- Quality of scientific publications should be assessed taking into account the standards within each scientific field
- When several researchers collaborate, assessment of scientific competence is made both of each researcher separately and of the research group collectively
- For starting mobility grants, strength and competitiveness of the research environment should be assessed for the home university and the host university

16.3.2 Criteria of Societal Value

Societal value of research question

- Research question addresses important societal issues and/or issues of importance for Formas' sectors
- Project may, in a short-term or long-term perspective, contribute to sustainable development
- Awareness of stakeholder/end user needs when designing the project
- Aim in line with the call for applications

Clarifications:

- Awareness of stakeholder/end user needs may comprise references to e.g. directives, environmental objectives and strategies, and discussions with relevant stakeholders/end users

Communication with stakeholders/end users

- Description of relevant stakeholders/end users
- Concrete and realistic plan for communicating results with relevant stakeholders/end users
- Experience and ability to communicate research results with stakeholders/end users

Clarifications:

- Stakeholders/end users should be regarded in a wide sense as actors outside the scientific community who can benefit from research outcomes or facilitate future use in society
- Communication with stakeholders/end users may take different forms and be on different time scales depending on the research question at hand

It is important that each criterion is addressed in the application; reviews are made solely on the information given in the application. Applicants are also strongly advised to place emphasis on structure and clarity in the application.

16.4 Scoring

The scores (0-10) are intended to support review panel reviews and ranking, as well as to be a tool in the discussions and the final ranking of applications at the panel meeting. The scores (0-10) are not communicated to the applicant, *i.e.* they are part of the working documents of each panel. However, a summary grade (A, B or C) for each of the evaluation criteria is communicated to the applicants.

Review panel members should strive to use the whole scale when scores are set for each of the five assessment criteria. Within focused calls other scores may be used.

| | | | |
|--|------------------|---|--------------|
| <p>Used as a summary grade for the five evaluation criteria and for the overall grade for applications discussed at the panel meeting. Communicated to the applicants.</p> <p>Scientific Quality/Societal Value</p> | | <p>Scores used in individual assessment of applications by review panel members for each of the five evaluation criteria. Not communicated to applicants.</p> | |
| A | Excellent/High | 10 | Outstanding |
| | | 8 | Excellent |
| B | Good/Medium | 6 | Very good |
| | | 5 | Good |
| | | 4 | Acceptable |
| C | Insufficient/Low | 2 | Poor |
| | | 0 | Insufficient |

In addition to the summary grade for each of the five criteria, applications discussed at the panel meeting (*i.e.* assessed in step 1 and 2) will also receive an overall grade (A, B or C). Applications only assessed in step 1 (and not discussed at the panel meeting) will receive the following overall grade.

X = not evaluated in step 2

It should be noted that the five criteria may have different weightings compared to the overall grade. Thus, the overall grade should not be an “average” of the scores for the five criteria. The criteria for scientific quality are always of utmost importance, while the criteria for societal value, under certain circumstances, can be given lower weighting compared to the overall grade. This is applicable for basic research, where it can be difficult or inappropriate to fulfil the criteria of societal value. The applicant must, in such cases, present clear arguments as to why the societal value criteria cannot be fulfilled.

16.5 The two-step evaluation procedure – in practice

Indication of competence and conflicts of interest

Before the evaluation of applications begins, all panel members should, for all applications assigned to the review panel, declare his/her competence to review each application and any conflicts of interest.

The competence to review applications is indicated on three levels:

3 = higher competence

2 = medium competence

1 = lower competence

Designation of reviewers to each application

The Formas secretariat will designate four reviewers for each application. The four reviewers should be the panel members with the highest competence to review the application at hand.

One of the four reviewers is assigned to be the rapporteur. The rapporteur is responsible for compiling the final written statement of the panel (to be sent to the project leader) and also for giving a brief description of the application at the panel meeting. Note that only applications forwarded to the second step of the evaluation phase are discussed at the panel meeting.

External reviewers

In cases where all panel members have indicated low competence to review an application, or if such an assessment is required for other reasons (for example conflicts of interest) external reviewers are used. These can be either from another of Formas' review panels or may be an external reviewer. The proposal is still reviewed by four panel members, but the external reviewers' assessment(s) should be used as a guide. No scores are given in an

external review, only a written assessment. The principles for conflicts of interest also apply to external reviewers.

The first evaluation step

The aim of the first evaluation step is to select the best applications, which will be assessed more thoroughly during the second step.

The reviewer reads their assigned applications and gives scores (0-10) on the five evaluation criteria (both for scientific quality and societal value) and provides brief comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each application. The comments are mandatory and are used to facilitate the discussion at the panel meeting and to help the rapporteur to compile the final written statement. The scores and comments at this stage are the panel's working material and will not be communicated to the applicant.

Ranking of all applications in five priority groups

After review and scoring is made for all applications, the reviewers rank their assigned applications and distribute them into five equally large priority groups. The aim of the ranking is twofold. First, it enables the reviewers to weigh together the scores given for each evaluation criteria into an overall evaluation of the application. Second, the ranking is intended to standardize the reviewers' different use of the scoring scale. In order to achieve this standardization, each priority group must contain 20 per cent of the reviewer's assigned applications. Priority group 1 (20%) containing the applications with the best ranking, priority group 2 (20%) containing the applications with the second best ranking, etc., down to the applications with the poorest rank in priority group 5 (20%).

How applications are taken forward from the first step to the second step

For each application, the priority group numbers (one from each of the four reviewers in the first review step) are added and multiplied, thus creating a sum and a product (see the table below). All applications are then sorted according to the sum and the product, from low to high the best ranked applications are those with low sums and products. The best ranked applications are forwarded to the second step review. The review panel will agree on the number of applications forwarded to the second step. The number of applications selected for the second step is 20-30 per cent of all applications assigned to the review panel.

However, the panel can agree to increase this number as long as the work load in the second step is still reasonable. The table below illustrates how the procedure works.

| Priority group by reviewer 1 | Priority group by reviewer 2 | Priority group by reviewer 3 | Priority group by reviewer 4 | Sum of priorities | Product of priorities |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 |
| 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 20 |
| 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 20 |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 24 |
| 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 32 |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 36 |
| 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 40 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 625 |

The table shows an example on how applications are forwarded from the first to the second review step. White fields indicate that the applications are forwarded to the second step. Light grey fields indicate that the review panel, after discussion, can choose to forward the applications the second step.

Preparation for the second review step

The Formas secretariat will designate four additional reviewers to each application. In the second step, all applications are thus reviewed by eight panel members.

The second review step

The reviewers read their assigned applications and give scores (0-10) on the five evaluation criteria (for scientific quality and societal value) and provide brief comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the applications. The comments are mandatory and are used to facilitate

the discussion at the panel meeting and to help the rapporteur to compile the final written statement. The scores and comments at this stage are the panel's working material and will not be communicated to the applicant.

Panel members who reviewed the application in the first step may change scores and comments if necessary.

The panel meeting

The panel meets in order to determine the final ranking of the second step applications. During the meeting, each application will be briefly presented by its rapporteur. Scores and comments given by the panel members are used as a starting-point for the discussion that follows.

The applications are eventually given overall grades (A, B or C) and are ranked in three categories according to the different types of grants:

- Research and development projects
- Grants for young research leaders
- Mobility starting grants

Each grant type has its own budget. The final ranking for research and development projects will be made at the panel meeting. The panel should assess whether the budget is reasonable and if the applied funding corresponds to the activities described in the research plan. The panel may also decide on budget revisions. The final ranking for grants for young research leaders and mobility starting grants will be made at a meeting of all review panel chairs and vice chairs. The final ranking for these two grant types is based on the overall grade and ranking made by the individual panels.

Final written statement

All project leaders receive a final written statement as feedback from the review panel. Feedback is provided solely at the discretion of Formas and is intended to summarize the review of the application by the panels. The final written statement includes three parts:

- A summary grade (A, B or C) for each of the five evaluation criteria
- Brief written comments (max 850 characters)

- An overall grade for the entire application. For applications not evaluated in the second step, the overall grade will always be “X – not evaluated in step 2”. Applications evaluated in the second step will receive the overall grade A (excellent application), B (good application) or C (weak application).

For applications evaluated in the second step, the final written statement should reflect the discussion at the panel meeting and should take into consideration the opinion of the whole panel. For the applications not forwarded to the second step, the rapporteur prepares a draft version, which the other reviewers approve at the panel meeting or by electronic means.