

Formas Handbook 2015

– For applicants and reviewers

CONTENTS

1. NEWS	4
2. THE MISSION OF FORMAS	4
3. FORMAS ETHICAL POLICY	5
3.1 ETHICAL GUIDELINES	5
PART A – INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS	7
4. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS	7
4.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	7
4.2 INDIRECT COSTS AND SALARIES	9
4.3 PUBLIC ACCESS	9
4.4 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ACCESS ISSUES	10
4.4.1 <i>Open Access</i>	10
4.4.2 <i>Consultation on the establishment and decommissioning of databases</i>	10
4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	10
4.6 GENDER ASPECTS	11
4.7 POPULAR SCIENCE DESCRIPTION	12
5. FORMAS ANNUAL OPEN CALL	13
5.1 APPLICATION AND REVIEW	13
5.2 TYPES OF GRANTS IN THE FORMAS ANNUAL OPEN CALL	13
5.3 GRANTS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	14
5.3.1 <i>What the application for Research and Development Projects must contain</i>	14
5.4 GRANTS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH LEADERS.....	15
5.5 MOBILITY STARTING GRANTS	15
5.5.1 <i>What the application for a Mobility Starting Grant must contain</i>	17
5.6 REVIEW PANELS FOR THE FORMAS ANNUAL OPEN CALL	17
5.6.1 <i>The eight review panels</i>	17
6. FORMAS TARGETED CALLS	20
7. INFORMATION PROJECTS	20
8. CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS	20
9. URGENT GRANTS	21
10. CREATING AN APPLICATION IN FORMAS DIRECT	22
10.1 APPENDICES.....	22
10.2 PREVIEW	22
10.3 REGISTRATION AND SIGNATURE.....	22

11. FINANCING	23
11.1 TOTAL AMOUNTS APPLIED FOR IN FORMAS DIRECT	23
12. DESCRIPTION OF APPENDICES	23
12.1 APPENDIX A. RESEARCH PROGRAMME	24
12.2 APPENDIX B1 AND APPENDIX B2 BUDGET	24
12.3 APPENDIX C. CV	25
12.4 APPENDIX D. PUBLICATION LIST	26
12.5 APPENDIX G. MOBILITY STARTING GRANTS.....	26
12.6 APPENDIX I. DOCTORAL DEGREE CERTIFICATE	27
12.7 APPENDIX J. ILLUSTRATIONS.....	27
12.8 APPENDIX K. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA	27
12.9 APPENDIX L. LETTERS OF INVITATION	28
12.10 APPENDIX S. SIGNATURES.....	28
13. DECISION	28
13.1 GROUNDS FOR EARLY REJECTION OR REFUSAL OF AN APPLICATION.....	28
13.2 APPLICATIONS THAT ARE AWARDED FUNDING	29
13.3 HOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE FUNDING FROM FORMAS	29
13.4 GRANT ADMINISTRATING ORGANISATION ELIGIBILITY	29
14. REPORTING OF PROJECTS AWARDED FUNDING	30
15. MANAGING CONFLICT OF INTEREST	31
16. REVIEW PANELS	31
16.1 GUIDELINES FOR THE COMPOSITION OF FORMAS REVIEW PANELS.....	32
17. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION	33
17.1 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS – GENERAL.....	33
17.2 GENDER EQUALITY.....	34
17.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	34
17.3.1 <i>Criteria for Scientific Quality</i>	34
17.3.2 <i>Criteria for Societal Value</i>	35
17.4 THE EVALUATION PROCESS	36

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 review panel members and a description of the review process. The handbook also describes the obligations that those who are awarded funding have. Formas Handbook 2015 is valid from 10 March 2015.

1. News

News and changes for the open calls for 2015 are:

- Research and Development Projects for Young Research Leaders has changed name to Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders.
- A mean project funding size of 1 MSEK (including overhead costs) per year shall be regarded as a guideline for the project budget. Both smaller and larger projects can be granted funding. If applying for a larger project budget than 1 MSEK per year (for example for multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary projects) the applicant must clearly justify why the size of the project deviates from the mean project size. This change does not apply to funding for Mobility Starting Grants for Young Scientists.
- The review process for applications now takes place in a single step (previously two steps)

News and changes for other calls for 2015 are:

- Funding for the organising of conferences and workshops can be applied for at any time. Decisions will be made on three occasions during the year.
- Instructions and guidelines for information projects are described separately, please see the Formas website for further information.

2. The mission of Formas

Formas is a governmental tax-financed research council. Formas supports basic research and needs-driven research within the areas of the Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. The research that is funded shall be of the highest scientific quality and of relevance to the areas of responsibility of Formas.

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 irreversibly depleted or eroded, but are preserved for future generations. This necessitates that the health and welfare of people and animals, biological diversity, the environment and

viability of nature, the economy, ethics and social and cultural values are taken into consideration. Formas is responsible for promoting and funding multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, as well as international research collaboration. Formas is also responsible for disseminating information about ongoing research and the results that have been obtained in the projects that have been granted funding.

For a comprehensive description of Formas strategies and research programme, please visit the Formas website (www.formas.se).

3. Formas Ethical Policy

As a governmental, tax-financed research council Formas is accountable to the general public for all of the work that is performed and also for how this work is carried out. The Formas Ethical Policy and Ethical Guidelines are intended to provide guidance for all who participate in the activities of the research council: members of the Scientific Council, review panel members and employees of Formas. Everyone covered by our policies and guidelines are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with these policies and guidelines.

The work performed by Formas and the various bodies of Formas (i.e. representatives of Formas) must be performed in a transparent, impartial and professional manner. Decisions shall be based on best scientific and professional practices, after taking all views into consideration. Submitted documents shall be processed impartially and in accordance with the Formas guidelines.

It is not possible to anticipate every individual situation and question that may arise with regard to the review of applications and the awarding of funding. It is therefore essential the members of the Formas Scientific Council, the various bodies within Formas and the employees of Formas discuss problems and are supported by certain common and general guidelines.

3.1 Ethical guidelines

The ethical guidelines that steer the work of Formas are presented below. These are intended to provide guidance for everyone who participates in the activities of the research council: members of the Scientific Council, review panel members and Formas employees (hereafter referred to collectively as 'Members of the various bodies within Formas').

- Members of the various bodies within Formas have an official responsibility. Personal opinions or preferences must not impede an objective assessment of any matter concerning research funding, research priorities, strategies or appointments.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas must themselves assess and openly declare any associations that may be of importance to an impartial

review of research grant applications or official matters. A high standard of personal integrity is expected.

- Members of the various bodies within Formas shall show respect for other researchers and their work. Disparaging statements and unfounded claims in written or oral form concerning research colleagues and research groups or their research work must not be made.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas shall promote scientific credibility by objectively reviewing applications and other official matters (i.e. all submitted documents). The review of applications and other official matters must be formulated objectively and fairly and must as objectively as possible state the scientific strengths and weaknesses of the applicants and the application.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas are not permitted to make use of information provided by researchers via submission of applications or equivalent to benefit their own research or to provide scientific advantage for colleagues to the detriment of the operations of others.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas shall observe and comply with Swedish laws, EU regulations and other agreements ratified by Sweden. This applies to research and professional ethical regulations and legislation that has been established by other organisations (such as animal protection regulations, plant protection regulations, regulations concerning the spread of infection and regulations for transgenic organisms), as well as intellectual property and access issues.
- For applications that contain elements that require evaluation by an ethics review board, approval must be issued by the relevant board before the project can begin.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas should work to ensure that the research is performed in an ethically acceptable manner.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas shall be aware that the school of thought within their own scientific field may result in biased preconceptions towards different scientific approaches.
- Members of the various bodies within Formas must not participate in the review of applications or other official matters where close friendship, personal conflict or other animosities may exist. Reviews shall not be performed by researchers from the same department or, if the department is large, from the same section. Neither shall review panel members review applications submitted by their own doctoral students or visiting researchers/postdoctoral researchers.
- Close collaboration with colleagues shall also result in a panel member abstaining from reviewing the application. An absolute limit for when a collaboration with a previous doctoral student or colleague shall no longer be regarded to affect objectivity, or have a negligible effect, is impossible to determine. A general guideline may be 5 years after the collaboration has ended.

- The panel member in question must 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 must be the evaluation criteria set up by Formas. The qualifications of the applicant must be considered in relation to the corresponding qualifications of other applicants. There must be no discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity or similar criteria.

Members of the various bodies within Formas must work to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

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 funding bodies), including the Formas annual open call, targeted calls, urgent grants and calls concerning international cooperation i.e. ERA-nets and JPI: **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 1 October 2015. National and international research collaboration and industrial partners are welcome to participate in the application. Grants can be administered by a Swedish university or university college, or other Swedish public institute that fulfils the grant administrating organisation eligibility requirements of Formas. There is no age limit for applicants, but fully retired researchers cannot obtain funds for their salary from Formas.**

Grants for the organisation of conferences and workshops

The project leader is not required have a doctoral degree. Grants for the organisation of conferences and workshops can only be administered by Swedish universities, university colleges, research institutes or authorities with research undertakings.

Please note that:

- The application must contain a correctly completed application form, research programme, budget, CVs, publication lists, and other relevant appendices.

- Total project costs, divided into direct costs (excluding overheads) and total costs (direct costs plus overheads) must be included and specified in the application.
- The applicant should state whether there are specific ethical aspects that should 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, this includes blank spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes.
- Appendix S is a confirmation that the application has been accepted by the grant administrating organisation.

The funding duration for a grant awarded by Formas may vary depending on the call. Read the call text carefully.

Research and Development Projects as well as Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders are normally awarded for a funding duration of three years, while Mobility Starting Grants are awarded for a duration of 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 has been registered, the applicant must print out a signature form (Appendix S). This form 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. This signature confirms that the application has been approved by the grant administrating organisation and that the project can be carried out, and that equipment is available. This signature also implies that the cost estimation stated in the application has been approved and that, in cases where human or animal experimentation is included in the project, the necessary ethical permits have been issued (or are pending). The applicant must have discussed these conditions with the representative of the grant administrating organisation before the application is signed.

The signature form must be received by Formas (Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm) within five working days subsequent to the date of the close of the call in question.

Additions after the date of registration of the application will not be accepted. The research programme (Appendix A) is limited to 25 000 characters (including spaces and carriage returns). It is strongly recommended that the application and all of the appendices are written in English, as Formas mainly utilises international reviewers. If the research programme (Appendix A) is written in Swedish, Formas will translate it into English. The popular science description must however be written in Swedish, and the brief project description must be written both in Swedish and in English.

Applicants are advised to carefully read chapter 17 describing the evaluation criteria and the point scoring system that is used by the Formas review panels. It should be especially noted that reviews are made solely based on the information provided in the

application. Applicants are also strongly advised to place emphasis on structure and clarity in the application.

Funding 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 (or overhead costs) must be included and specified in the application according to their respective cost unit. The annual amount applied for must state the direct costs and the total costs (direct and indirect costs) per year in the application form. Further information about the amounts applied for must be described in Appendix B1 and B2 (see section 12.2).

For existing employment positions, the current salary at the time of application (including social-security contributions, LKP) must be used for each of the subsequent years. When salary for a new position is applied for, the institution's anticipated starting salary in the application year for the particular worker category must be used for each of the subsequent years. Note that Formas does not permit an annual salary increase.

All amounts must be stated in kSEK (100 000 SEK = 100 kSEK).

4.3 Public access

An application (including appendices) submitted to Formas is according to Swedish law regarded as a public document. Decisions about grants awarded are published on the Formas website.

Formas transfers information about awarded grants to the Swedish Research Council for publication in SweCRIS, a national database created by the Swedish government containing information about granted research projects. The database is intended to communicate Swedish research and make it accessible to the public and also to enable aggregated statistical analyses. Data transferred to the database includes information about the calls, information from the project application about the applicant/co-applicants, and information about the decisions made with regard to the application. Please note that personal identification numbers and contact information will not be made public. Information in the SweCRIS database may be shared with the university that is the grant administrating organisation for the grant in question. Registration in SweCRIS is voluntary, so please contact us if you do not wish to have your information transferred to SweCRIS.

If you are registered in SweCRIS you have the right to request an extract of the registered information so that you can check what information has been registered about you. The Swedish Research Council is the Controller of Personal Data responsible for handling the data within SweCRIS and is obligated to correct erroneous information if a person who is registered requests this. Contact swecris@forskning.se if you would like further 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 issues.

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 results will be available through Open Access within six months of publication. Researchers may either publish in journals with an Open Access practice or in journals 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, and do not 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 publically accessible in existing databases. The Swedish National Data Service (SND) (www.snd.gu.se) and the University of Gothenburg and SMHI Environment Climate Data Sweden initiative (ECDS)(<http://www.smhi.se/ecds>) can be consulted on issues regarding the 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 by SND is accessible to 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 databases 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 must submit Appendix K – Climate and environmental data (see 12.8).

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 must be described. This may be a matter of research that involves 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 individuals currently living or about deceased individuals where there is a risk that survivors may experience distress due to the publication of the research results) and approval has not already been obtained from an ethical review board, the applicant must present the ethical considerations that concern the project. If no ethical problems are anticipated to be associated with the research, this must also be stated and justified. The presentation must also clarify how ethical aspects will be managed and related to the ethical codes within the area.

Human and animal research

If the project includes human or animal research, approval must be obtained from an ethical review board. If such approval has not been issued at the time of submission of the application it must be obtained as soon as possible. State on the grant application form if approval has already been obtained or if it 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 approval has 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 Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans Act (2003:460), including biological material from humans, is applicable to research that involves physical intervention or is performed using a method intended to affect a human physically or psychologically. Research involving physical intervention involving 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 ethically reviewed. The Act also applies to research that is performed without the expressed consent of an individual and research that concerns sensitive personal data according to the Personal Data Act (1998:204).

In accordance with Swedish legislation the ethical review of research must be performed by regional boards that are independent authorities. The regional boards are located in Gothenburg, Linköping, Lund, Stockholm, Umeå and Uppsala. Appeals against decisions made by these boards may be made to the Central Ethical Review Board. More information can be obtained from the Ethical Review Board website (www.epn.se). The ethical review of animal experimentation is also performed by ethical boards. Application forms are available from the Swedish Board of Agriculture website (www.sjv.se).

4.6 Gender aspects

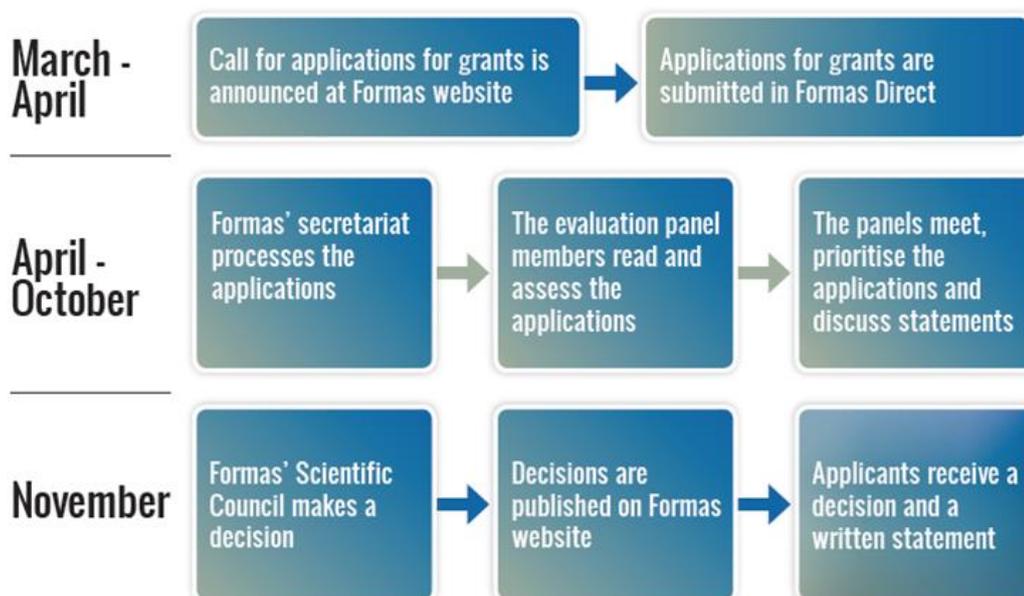
Applicants should always consider whether gender perspectives are relevant to the research questions the project will examine. If this is the case, these perspectives and the way they will be treated in the project must be described in the application.

4.7 Popular science description

A popular science description written in Swedish must be included in the application. If the project is granted funding, Formas has the right to use the popular science description for dissemination of information about the research. The popular science descriptions of projects awarded funding are published in the Formas project catalogue, which is accessible to the public on the Formas website.

5. Formas annual open call

5.1 Application and review



The illustration shows the process that is followed with regard to the Formas open call. The process is similar for most of the Formas targeted calls, but the timeline may vary depending on the type of call.

5.2 Types of grants in the Formas annual open call

The different grant types that can be applied for in the annual open call are described below. The review criteria applied by Formas for all grant types in the annual open call can be found in chapter 17. Projects awarded funding by the 2015 Formas open call are expected to be initiated during the 2016 calendar year.

A maximum of one ongoing project grant awarded in any of Formas open call is allowed per project leader. Applications from researchers who already have an ongoing project grant from any previous Formas annual open call will therefore be rejected and will not be reviewed. A project is regarded to be ongoing only during the years that funding is paid out, even if the award duration is longer.

An applicant seeking project funding in the call for Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders is not allowed to submit an identical application to the call for Research and Development Project 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. Other people participating in the project do not need to have a doctoral degree. Grants for research projects can only be administered by a Swedish university, university college or other Swedish public organisation that fulfils the grant administrating organisation eligibility requirements of Formas.

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

Grants for Research and Development projects may be used for the financing of salary for researchers, doctoral students and technical staff. A researcher may apply for up to 50 per cent of their full-time positions; for doctoral students, postdocs and technical staff funding can be sought for up to 100 per cent of their full-time position. In total a project may be awarded a maximum of 150 per cent of the full-time salary costs for the participating researchers, doctoral students and other project staff, or in other words 1.5 full-time positions. Salary for doctoral students can be awarded for up to three years.

Note that the total salary costs awarded by Formas for an individual researcher, doctoral student or other member of the project may never exceed 100 per cent of a full-time position. This also means that further funding for salary cannot be awarded for a researcher, doctoral student or other project staff member who is already receiving full salary funding from Formas. Grants for Research and Development Projects may also be used to finance 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 12.2 for further information.

For 2015 Formas has introduced a mean project funding size of 1 MSEK (including overhead costs) per year as a guideline for the project budget. Both smaller and larger projects can be granted funding. If applying for a larger project budget than 1 MSEK per year (for example for multi- or interdisciplinary projects), the applicant must clearly justify why the size of the project deviates from the mean project size.

The CVs and lists of publications for both the project leader and all project co-applicants must be included as appendices to the application. Participating researchers may be unnamed, but it is important that the work assignments for all of the people involved in the project are included in the budget section (Appendix B1 and B2). For doctoral student positions, the main supervisor must be stated in the research programme.

5.3.1 What the application for Research and Development Projects must contain

The following documents must be submitted using the web-based system Formas Direct:

- A completed application form and popular science description.

- Appendix A. The research 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. All salary costs for which funding is sought must be justified. The research tasks of all researchers who have a doctoral degree must be clearly described. Indirect costs or overhead costs must be included and specified in the application. Appendix B1 and B2 may be a maximum of two pages each.
- Appendix C. CV summaries for the project leader and co-applicants (maximum of 8000 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 8000 characters per person). Enclose each publication list separately.
- Appendix J. Figures, tables or other images that are relevant to the research programme in Appendix A. The appendix is optional (maximum two pages).
- Appendix K. Climate and environmental data. This 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 12.8 for further information.

Note that Appendix J and Appendix K must be actively selected in Formas Direct.

5.4 Grants for Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders

To be eligible to apply for a grant for Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders the applicant must have been awarded a doctoral degree two to eight years previously (for 2015 this means 1 January 2007 at the earliest and 31 December 2013 at the latest). Parental leave, illness, public service or other similar circumstance that has prevented research activities during the period following the award of the doctoral degree must be specified in the submitted CV and may constitute reason for exemption from the eight year rule. The intended grant recipient must be the stated project leader for the application.

The project leader in this call can apply for salary equating to 100 per cent of their full-time position.

Otherwise, the same criteria and instructions described for applications for grants for Research and Development Projects apply (see sections 5.3 and 5.3.1).

5.5 Mobility Starting Grants

The purpose of the Mobility Starting Grant is to encourage researchers who have recently been awarded their doctoral degrees to visit new research environments. It is expected that they will develop their academic careers by learning new tools, working

on research issues with a different focus and expanding their networks. The researcher can spend from 8 to 32 months at a host university or research institute whilst being employed by the Swedish home university or research institute. The host university or research institute may be located in Sweden or abroad, however international visits are encouraged.

An application for a Mobility Starting Grant can be made for between 24 to 48 months, of which at least 1/3 of the total time must be spent at the home university and at least 1/3 of the total time must be spent at the host university. The visit may also be divided up into several periods, but these periods may not have a shorter duration than three months. More than one host university or research institute may be visited. The intended grant recipient must be the stated project leader for the application. The intended grant recipient must be employed by a Swedish home university or research institute for the full time period. This may 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 2015 this means 1 January 2012 at the earliest and 1 Oct 2015 at the latest). Please note that a copy of the degree certificate must have been received by Formas no later than 1 October 2015. Parental leave, illness, public service or other similar circumstance that has prevented research activities during the period immediately following the award of the doctoral degree must be specified in the submitted CV and may constitute reason for exemption from the three year rule.

The following may 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.
- Overhead costs 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 the travel expenses for return journeys (at least for one roundtrip journey to the host university) for the applicant and accompanying family members. Formas will add a standard sum depending on i) the cost of living in the host country and ii) the number of accompanying family members. This standard sum is based on figures provided by the Swedish Agency for Government Employers (Arbetsgivarverket).

Mobility Starting Grant applications should be structured in the same way as standard grant applications, with a research programme for up to four years. Appendix G (the template that must be used, available for download 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 a travel plan. In addition, letters of invitation from the home university and the host university must be included (Appendix L). Projects awarded funding by the 2015 Formas open call are expected to be initiated during the 2016 calendar year.

5.5.1 What the application for a Mobility Starting Grant must contain

The following documents must be submitted using the web-based system Formas Direct:

- Application form, including a popular scientific description.
- Appendix A. The research 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. The applicant's salary, overhead costs and premises costs.
- Appendix C. The applicant's brief CV (maximum 8000 characters).
- Appendix D. The applicant's publication list (maximum 8000 characters).
- Appendix G. A description of how the project and research environment at the host and home universities will contribute to the applicant's development, as well as a travel plan.
- Appendix I. A copy of the diploma or doctoral degree certificate.
- Appendix J. Figures, tables or other images that are relevant to the research programme in Appendix A. The appendix is optional (maximum two pages).
- Appendix K. Climate and environmental data. This 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 12.8 for further information.
- Appendix L. Letters of invitation from the home and host institutes. The appendix must include an invitation from both the home and host organisations. The letters of invitation should include statements about the planned research, in addition to an assurance that the necessary facilities and resources will be made available to the applicant.

Note that Appendix I, J and K must be actively selected in Formas Direct.

5.6 Review panels for the Formas annual open call

The applicant may suggest up to three review panels in order of priority from the scrollable list in the application form. In cases where Formas considers the competence for evaluation of an application to be higher in another review panel than in the three panels suggested, the application may be transferred to another review panel - after consultation with the project leader.

5.6.1 The eight review panels

All of the review panels evaluate basic and needs-driven research within the areas of responsibility of Formas. The review panels are problem-oriented and broadly defined in order to encompass the areas of responsibility of Formas. Each panel comprises both active researchers and users of the research results who are qualified to assess potential

societal benefit. Researchers comprise the majority. The panels possess the expertise required to review natural and social sciences as well as research within the areas of health, technology and the humanities within the areas of responsibility of Formas. The panels are also able to review multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

Some examples of the problem areas that are evaluated by each review panel are provided below.

1. Climate change

- Climate models and processes in and between land, water, air and biota.
- Effects of climate change on ecosystems, the agricultural science sector (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, reindeer husbandry) and on society.
- Adaptation of society and the agricultural science sector to climate change, in addition to 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 geochemical processes, ecosystem structures, function and dynamics.
- How human activities impact species, ecosystems and ecosystem services, as well as human dependency on ecosystems.
- Measures to prevent loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Understanding and interpretation of the natural environment and human needs for nature, including historical contexts.
- Institutional opportunities and obstacles for conserving and managing the ecosystem.

3. Use of natural resources

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

4. Resource-efficient products and processes

- New products, materials and the processing of raw materials from the primary sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and reindeer husbandry).
- Recycling of materials and other measures to conserve resources.
- Refining and processing of food.
- Institutional opportunities and obstacles for promoting sustainable development.
- Governance and the organisation of product chains and trade systems.

- Ethical and burden-sharing issues, the significance of practices, attitudes, values and life styles.

5. Environmental pollution

- Sources of environmental pollutants and the transport pathways of pollutants from the technosphere to humans and the environment.
- Spread, enrichment and transformation in the environment.
- Methods for identifying and quantifying environmental pollutants.
- Effects of pollutants in the environment and effects on human and animal health, including combination effects.
- Technological and institutional opportunities and obstacles for reducing pollutant emissions.

6. Food and animal welfare

- Food safety and risks in production and consumption.
- High quality food as the basis for a healthy diet.
- Factors that influence, and methods that measure and assure, animal welfare.
- Animal infections and diseases, spread and methods for diagnosis and treatment.
- Issues within animal production, such as animal breeding and genetics, nutrition and housing.

7. Urban and rural development

- Interplay between urban and rural, local, regional and global processes.
- Spatial planning and the political aspects of sustainability.
- Ecosystems and health, housing, services, infrastructure, employment and leisure.
- Interactions between technological, ecological, social, cultural and economic aspects.
- Democratic and efficient planning and management methods.

8. The built environment

- Energy- and resource efficiency in new and existing buildings.
- Sustainable planning, construction and management processes.
- Good indoor environments for health and comfort.
- Environmental impacts from buildings and districts.
- The values and needs of the user.
- System aspects – architecture, technology, function, economy and behaviours.
- Integration of environmental aspects and sustainable development in the building sector.

6. Formas targeted calls

The rules and conditions that apply for the Formas annual open call may not necessarily apply for targeted calls. The applicant is advised to read the call text for the actual call carefully. The eligibility criteria for applicants (chapter 4) and Formas evaluation criteria (chapter 17) always apply, but additional criteria may be added for targeted calls. A review panel with expert knowledge of the subject area is appointed for each targeted call. The composition and tasks of the Formas review panels are described in chapter 16.

The review process for targeted calls is similar to the process that applies for the Formas annual open call. When targeted calls are announced in collaboration with international research funders, additional rules and conditions may apply. However, the Formas eligibility criteria for applicants (chapter 4) always apply.

7. Information projects

Information projects will be described separately from 2015 onwards. See the Formas website for further information.

8. Conferences and workshops

Formas can award grants towards the costs of organising conferences and workshops (called “meetings” below) within the areas of responsibility of Formas. The meeting must have a high level of scientific quality, which must be assured by a scientific board/committee, which must exist and be stated in the application, in addition to the organising committee. Meetings organized in Sweden are prioritized. The grant may be used to cover travel and accommodation costs for a limited number of participants, primarily participants from other countries. Funding from Formas may also be used to support organisational costs (e.g. for the meeting venue). Salary costs for organizers or for invited speakers/participants are not covered.

A doctoral degree is not required in order to apply for funding to organise meetings.

The application must include:

- Information about the scientific purpose of the meeting.
- The preliminary programme for the meeting.
- A description of the scientific committee.
- A list of the invited speakers.
- The anticipated number of participants.
- The time and place of the meeting.
- A detailed budget describing how costs have been calculated and categorized as different financial posts.

The guideline amounts for grant funding are a maximum of SEK 200 000 for a larger conference (more than 200 participants) and a maximum of SEK 30 000 for a smaller workshop (fewer than 30 participants).

When funding is awarded for a meeting it is expected that a representative of Formas is invited to attend the meeting. It is also expected that the arranger announces the meeting in a suitable manner and clearly acknowledges that Formas has provided funding for the event.

The following documents must be included in the application:

- Application form, including the budget and a popular science description.
- Appendix A. Description of the meeting, not exceeding 25 000 characters, including references.
- Appendix B1 and Appendix B2. Budget. Cost calculations for the event and how these costs are divided between the different funding sources must be stated (may not exceed two pages each).
- Appendix C. CV summaries for the project leader and co-applicants (maximum of 8000 characters per person).
- Appendix J (Figures, tables and other illustrations) is optional (may not exceed two pages).

Formas reviews applications for conferences and workshops. Where relevant the applications are also evaluated by external reviewers. Applications may be submitted throughout the year and decisions are made on three occasions each year. See the Formas website for information about current application deadlines for the respective decision occasions.

9. Urgent grants

The aim of urgent grants is to provide researchers with the opportunity to address research issues that arise suddenly (e.g. issues associated with extreme events such as storm-felled forests, inadequate building structures that have collapsed under the pressure of snow, emissions of environmentally hazardous substances following an accident, or other special circumstances that require immediate study) or to utilize material that is available temporarily. Urgent grants are normally awarded for a maximum duration of one year and the urgent nature of the project must be specifically explained and confirmed in the application. Otherwise, the same criteria and instructions described for applications for grants for Research and Development Projects apply (sections 5.3).

Formas reviews applications for urgent grants. Where relevant the applications are also evaluated by external reviewers.

Review of straightforward cases can often be completed within six weeks, while applications that require external review take longer time.

10. Creating an application in Formas Direct

A user account is required to create an application in Formas Direct. Please note that you can contact the Formas IT administrator if you have forgotten your password or need help with your user account. When an account has been created, log in to Formas Direct and select "New application". Fill in the basic information about the grant type and the call on the first page. Select "Continue" and then fill in the remainder of the form. Do not forget to save frequently. For detailed help with the various fields, click on the title of the respective field.

10.1 Appendices

To attach an appendix to the application, select the "Appendix" button. To attach appendices I, J and K you must first **actively select** these appendices in the **application form**.

Then select "Appendix" in the drop down menu and scroll to the appendix that you wish to attach by clicking "Browse". Attach the document by clicking "Save". The document will then be uploaded to the server and if it is not already in PDF format it will be converted to PDF format. The attachment will then be displayed in the "Attached appendix" list. The name of the document and a PDF icon will be displayed when the conversion and/or upload is complete. Repeat this procedure for the other documents you wish to attach. It is possible to attach more than one appendix of the same type, e.g. two budget appendices (Appendix B1 and Appendix B2), several CVs (Appendix C), several publication lists (Appendix D), as well as template forms and letters of invitation for Mobility Starting Grants (Appendix G and L). Repeat the procedure described above to attach several appendices of the same type until all of the documents have been uploaded. When the conversions and uploads are complete, click "Return".

The process is quicker if you have the possibility to convert the files into PDF format before uploading.

10.2 Preview

To check that the application looks correct, it is possible to preview the application in PDF format. To do this select the "Preview" button. Please note that the preview version of the application should not be sent to Formas.

10.3 Registration and signature

When the application is completed, it must be registered in Formas Direct. To do this, save the application and select "Register". Read and follow the instructions. Click "OK" to register the application. Click "Cancel" to cancel the registration. When the application is registered a form in PDF format is generated for signature (Appendix S).

Appendix S must be signed by the project leader and an authorized representative of the grant administrating organisation, and the original must be sent to:

Formas, Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm.

Appendix S must be received by Formas no later than five working days after the closing date of the call. Please note that no changes or additions can be made after the application has been registered.

11. Financing

11.1 Total amounts applied for in Formas Direct

Applicants must enter two amounts per year in the Formas Direct application form; the total amount of direct costs (excluding overhead costs) and the total costs (direct costs plus overhead costs). All amounts must be stated in kSEK (100 000 SEK = 100 kSEK). Do not enter any letters, decimal points or decimal commas in the amount fields. If the amount is 0 leave the field empty.

To summarise and provide justification for the budget the applicant must attach two appendices to the application: Appendix B1 (calculation table) and Appendix B2 (a written description not exceeding two pages). Appendix B1 (an Excel file template) can be downloaded from Formas Direct. Follow the guidelines described in section 12.2.

For existing employment positions, the current salary at the time of application (including social-security contributions) must be used for each of the subsequent years. For new employment positions the starting salary at the university/research institute must be used. Formas does not permit an annual salary increase. All amounts must be stated in kSEK (100 000 SEK = 100 kSEK). Note that a project in the annual open call can in total be awarded a maximum of 150 per cent of a full-time position for the participating researchers, doctoral students and other project staff.

For 2015 Formas has introduced a mean project funding size of 1 MSEK (including overhead costs) per year as a guideline for the project budget. Both smaller and larger projects can be granted funding. If applying for a larger project budget than 1 MSEK per year (for example for a multidisciplinary project) the applicant must clearly justify why the size of the project deviates from a mean project size.

12. Description of appendices

Note that not all appendices apply for every application type. When a maximum number of characters is specified, this includes blank spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes.

12.1 Appendix A. Research programme

The research programme, Appendix A, must be attached to all applications.

The research programme is limited to a maximum of 25 000 characters. Note that when a maximum number of characters is specified, this includes blank spaces, carriage returns, headings and footnotes. For targeted applications the number of characters may differ from the maximum stated above. Always follow the instructions provided in the call text.

Appendix A must contain a complete description of the intended research, including the following points (when relevant).

- Specific aims and objectives of the proposed research project.
- Overview of the research area, including key references.
- Description of the project and summary of the project's structure.
- Description of theories, methods and performance.
- Plan for scientific publication and dissemination of information.
- Description of the societal value of the research.
- Plan for communication with stakeholders/end users.
- Brief description of existing basic equipment relevant for the project.
- Brief description of national and international collaborations relevant for the project.
- Confirmation of compliance with international agreements and regulations.
- Ethical considerations.
- Gender aspects.
- For doctoral students the main supervisor should also be stated.

Note that the application will be evaluated according to Formas evaluation criteria (described in section 17). It is therefore strongly recommended that all of these criteria are explicitly and clearly addressed in the application.

12.2 Appendix B1 and Appendix B2 Budget

Appendix B1 (an Excel template that can be downloaded from Formas Direct) is a calculation table for reporting the budget for the funding that is being applied for. The applicant must enter in Appendix B1 all direct costs (exclusive of VAT) in the following categories (according to the SUHF model):

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

4. Costs for premises

The percentage amount for overhead costs must be stated in accordance with the model for the cost units used by the university/research organisation. Formas does not permit overhead costs to be included in equipment depreciation costs or costs for premises.

When the applicant fills in the columns for direct costs and overheads a calculation of total costs will be made automatically using a default formula.

The total amount applied for per year (direct costs excluding overhead costs and total costs including overhead costs) must be transferred to the application form.

Appendix B2 (maximum 2 pages):

All salary costs and other costs must be included in this appendix and justified. A description of the total budget for the project, including financing from other sources, must also be described in appendix B2. The percentage work contribution of all of the researchers involved in the project who hold a doctoral degree must be stated, even if funds for their salaries are not applied for. All other costs applied for must be clearly explained, such as participation in conferences, publication in Open Access, etc.

For existing employment positions, the current salary at the time of application (including social-security contributions) must be used for each of the subsequent years. For new employment positions the starting salary at the university/research institute must be used for each subsequent year. Note that Formas does not permit an annual salary increase. All amounts must be stated in kSEK (100 000 SEK = 100 kSEK). Note that a project in the annual open call can in total be awarded a maximum of 150 per cent of a full-time position for participating researchers, doctoral students and other project staff.

Formas has also introduced a mean project funding size of 1 MSEK (including overhead costs) per year as a guideline for the project budget. Both smaller and larger projects can be granted funding. If applying for a larger project budget than 1 MSEK per year (for example for a multidisciplinary project), the applicant must clearly justify why the size of the project deviates from a mean project size.

Costs for travel to participate in conferences and for study visits must be included in the research application and specified in Appendix B1 and Appendix B2.

12.3 Appendix C. CV

CVs must be submitted for the project leader and all co-applicants. The CV for each person may be a maximum of 8000 characters. Please note that the maximum number of characters also includes blank spaces and carriage returns. Note that publication lists are submitted separately in Appendix D. The following must be specified unless stated otherwise in the call text:

- Doctoral degree (year, discipline/scientific field, title of dissertation and supervisor).
- Postdoctoral research visits (year and placement).
- Senior lecturer/associate professor experience (year).

- Current employment, duration of appointment and the amount of time for research in the position.
- Previous employment and duration of employment.
- Parental leave etc.
- Awards and special commissions.
- Students who have completed their doctoral degree for whom the applicant has been the main supervisor (name and year).
- Students who have completed their doctoral degree for whom the applicant has been a co-supervisor (name and year).
- Mentorship of postdoctoral fellows (name and year).
- Experience of disseminating results to stakeholders/end users.

12.4 Appendix D. Publication list

The publications of the project leader and co-applicants over the past eight years must be stated in the list. Separate lists, not exceeding 8000 characters per person, must be compiled for the project leader and each of the co-applicants. Please note that the maximum number of characters also includes blank spaces and carriage returns. Organise the publications according to the following category headings:

- Peer-reviewed articles in international journals.
- Peer-reviewed books, book chapters and conference reports 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 publically accessible computer programs.
- Presentations at conferences (the applicant must specifically state if she/he has been an invited speaker).

12.5 Appendix G. Mobility Starting Grants

Appendix G must comprise a template that is downloaded from Formas Direct. The template contains:

- The name of the applicant and information about accompanying family members.

- Contact information for the head of department at the home university/organisation (Head of Department/Dean/Chair/Vice-Chancellor).
- Contact information for the responsible researcher at the host university/organisation.
- Travel plan. Period of the visit to the host organisation – state the dates that the visit to the host university is planned to begin and end. The duration may be up to 32 months. The visit may also be divided into several periods, but the shortest time is three months per visit.
- A description of how the project and research environment at the host and home universities will contribute to the applicant's development.

12.6 Appendix I. Doctoral degree certificate

Please note that you must actively select Appendix I in the application form in order to attach this as an appendix. This appendix (not exceeding two pages) may be used to attach a copy of the doctoral degree certificate. This appendix only applies to Mobility Starting Grant applications.

12.7 Appendix J. Illustrations

Please note that you must actively select Appendix J in the application form in order to attach this as an appendix. If there is a need to show figures, tables or other illustrations in the research programme, these should be placed in this appendix. Reference should be made to this appendix for illustrations in the research programme. This appendix may be a maximum of two pages.

12.8 Appendix K. Climate and environmental data

Please note that you must actively select Appendix K in the application form in order to attach this as an appendix.

Appendix K is mandatory for all project applications concerning climate and environmental research where data collection is included as an important aspect of the project. The information submitted will be part of the review of the application. Based on this appendix Formas may issue specific conditions for data publication and may award funding for this. Please note that Swedish universities, university colleges and other authorities are responsible for the safe storage of data collected as part of their activities. Funding to enable data storage that can be regarded to be within the responsibility remit of these authorities must not be included in the application.

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

The form for the publication of data that is available from the ECDS (Environment Climate Data Sweden - www.smhi.se/ecds) must be used.

12.9 Appendix L. Letters of invitation

This appendix (not exceeding two pages) may comprise:

- Invitations from the home university/organisation and host university/organisation (Mobility Starting Grants).
- Letters of intent (please refer to the call text)

12.10 Appendix S. Signatures

A signature form (Appendix S) is automatically generated when the application is registered. This must be submitted in paper format and must be signed by the applicant and an authorised representative of the grant administrating organisation (please note that this cannot be the same person). The original must be sent to:

Formas, Box 1206, 111 82 Stockholm.

The form must be received by Formas no later than five working days after the closing date of the call. Appendix S is a confirmation that the entire application has been accepted by the grant administrating organisation.

13. Decision

Decisions are made by the Formas Scientific Council based on the recommendations of the review panels. Decisions about grant awards are not subject to appeal.

The project leaders of awarded applications will receive notification by regular mail, together with the written statement of the review panel. The project leaders for applications that have been rejected will be notified of the decision by email. The decisions will also be published on the Formas website.

The status of an application is always displayed in Formas Direct. The applicant can log in and check the current status of the application.

Decisions for urgent grant applications, information projects and for the organisation of conferences and workshops are notified by regular mail.

13.1 Grounds for early rejection or refusal of an application

Applications that clearly do not lie within the areas of responsibility of Formas, or applications that contain eligibility requirement faults, as well as applications that are incomplete, i.e. applications for which mandatory information is lacking from the application form or appendices, will be rejected without being reviewed. Decisions about such applications are taken by the Formas Secretary General.

Eligibility requirement faults may be:

- The applicant does not have a doctoral degree (this does not apply for information projects and for applications concerning the organisation of conferences or workshops).
- The date of doctoral degree does not lie within the stipulated time span for the call (applies e.g. for Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders and Mobility Starting Grants).
- The grant administrating organisation lacks eligibility to administer funding from Formas.
- Appendix S is not signed correctly.
- Previously funded projects have not been reported within the set time limit.
- The project leader has existing project funding from a prior Formas open call.

13.2 Applications that are awarded funding

Applicants who are awarded grants must return the contract within three months of receiving notification of the decision. The contract must be signed by the head of department, or equivalent, and the applicant.

When funding is awarded for conferences or workshops it is expected that a representative of Formas is invited to attend the meeting. It is also expected that the arranger announces the meeting in a suitable manner and clearly acknowledges that Formas has provided funding for the event.

13.3 How to acknowledge funding from Formas

When publishing results from projects funded by Formas it must be clearly acknowledged that Formas has contributed project funding. Formas should be acknowledged as follows: "The Swedish Research Council Formas" or "The Research Council Formas".

13.4 Grant administrating organisation eligibility

The grants awarded by Formas can only be administered by a Swedish university or university college, or by another Swedish public organisation that fulfils the grant administrating organisation eligibility requirements of Formas (previous called the administrating body).

14. Reporting of projects awarded funding

Reporting of all projects awarded funding must be submitted using the Formas electronic system Formas Direct.

The project leader for projects awarded funding must submit a financial report and a scientific report no later than the final date stated in the contract. The scientific report must include a description of the scientific achievements, as well as a popular science summary in both Swedish and English. The award duration and the final date for submitting the project report are stated in the contract.

Please note that previously completed projects must have been reported before a new application can be processed.

More detailed information about how project reports must be submitted following project completion can be found on the Formas website (www.formas.se).

PART B – INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWERS

15. Managing conflict of interest

All of the reviewers involved in evaluating applications on behalf of Formas must read the Formas Ethical Policy (Section 3) before embarking on their assigned task. Panel members cannot have own applications evaluated by the panel they are member of, neither as project leader nor as co-applicant. If a panel member wishes to submit a grant application to Formas and no other relevant review panel exists, that review panel member will be replaced. Review panel members must notify Formas as soon as possible of the possibility that they may intend to submit an application.

A fundamental requirement of the work carried out by the review panels is impartiality. Provisions governing conflict of interest can be found in sections 11 and 12 of “The Administrative Procedures Act” (1986:23). Conflict of interest is regarded to exist in the following instances:

- The matter concerns the panel member or a person close to the panel member, or the outcome of the matter can be expected to result in significant advantage or disadvantage for the panel member or a person close to the panel member.
- The panel member or a person close to the panel member is a representative of, or works at, the same department or company as the applicant, or is a representative of another party for whom the outcome of the matter may result in significant advantage or disadvantage.
- The panel member has an ongoing or recently completed close collaboration with the applicant. There is also conflict of interest if any other particular circumstance exists that may influence the credibility that a panel member is impartial in the matter. Examples of such circumstances are friendship, rivalry or financial dependence.

Members of the review panels are obligated to take conflict of interest into account and on their own initiative report if there may be any circumstances that may be regarded to influence their opinions. If conflict of interest exists the panel member must abstain from processing and reviewing the application in question and must leave the meeting room during discussions concerning the application. Meeting minutes detailing conflicts of interest must be kept during panel meetings.

16. Review panels

Review panel members

Members of the review panels for the Formas annual open call are appointed each year. For targeted calls a review panel is appointed that has the competence to encompass the subject area in question. The review panels are announced on the Formas website after they have been appointed.

The panel chair and vice-chair, supported by Formas, are responsible for ensuring that the work of the review panel is carried out in accordance with the general mandate of Formas, the regulations governing conflicts of interest, the guidelines for review of applications and otherwise in accordance with good ethical practice (Formas Ethical Policy). The vice-chair acts as chair when the chair is not able to lead the work.

Terms of appointment

It is possible to be member of a review panel for a Formas annual open call for a continuous period of four years. Panel membership appointment must however be renewed each year. The chair may serve for an additional one year term. When five years have elapsed after a previously concluded term, a person may again be appointed as a member of a Formas review panel. It is the intention of Formas that the members of the review panels should be replaced successively, so that only a minority of panel members are replaced each year.

16.1 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 reviewing the applications submitted in response to the call.
- The panel members have the mandate to review both the scientific quality and the societal relevance within the responsibility areas of Formas. The primary mandate of each individual however is either scientific quality or relevance.
- The chair is a researcher who has professorial level competence, has a broad knowledge of the subject area, has experience of strategic work and has insight into the societal value of the research from a sustainable development perspective.
- The appointed vice-chair is a representative of the users of the research results. The vice-chair must have a broad knowledge of the user value and societal value of the research from a sustainable development perspective, as well as having significant experience of strategic work.
- The majority of panel members are active researchers, within or outside of Sweden, who have been selected to become members of the review panels primarily because of their competence to review the scientific quality of the applications. The researchers must have a broad knowledge of the subject area, must be at least a senior lecturer/associate professor, and must be able to work strategically.
- A minority of panel members are users who have been selected to become members of the review panels primarily because of their competence to review the user value/societal benefit. They may be active within or outside of Sweden.

- The users should have documented experience of research, e.g. by possessing a doctoral degree, previous review experience or strategic development experience. The users must have an overview of the short-term and long-term needs of society and have experience of strategic work.
- The review panel as a whole must be able to evaluate applications within the panel's entire subject area, i.e. the panel must have a subject-wide coverage and be able to evaluate basic research and needs-driven research, as well as user and societal benefit. The final decision regarding the composition of the review panels is not made until the applications have been received. If necessary external expert reviewers may be recruited to supplement the competence of the review panels.
- Each review panel must have a balanced gender distribution with each gender having at least 40 per cent representation.
- The chair and vice-chair in the Formas review panels must together constitute a balanced gender distribution.

17. Guidelines for evaluation

17.1 Evaluation of applications – general

The mission of Formas is to promote and support basic and needs-driven research in the areas of the Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. The research that is funded shall be of highest scientific quality and relevant to the areas of responsibility of Formas from a national and international perspective. Formas may also support development projects to a limited extent.

Applications within the annual open calls are assessed with respect to the evaluation criteria Scientific Quality and Societal Value. In total there are five criteria, addressing the scientific quality of the applications, the competences of the applicants, and the relevance of the research for society. All of the criteria must be addressed in the application and applicants are encouraged to clearly and specifically relate the application to these criteria. The applicant is encouraged to be thorough with the structure and clarity of the application, as the review will be based solely on the information provided in the application.

The criteria for scientific quality and societal value should be given equal importance. The applicant is recommended to explicitly relate the proposed research project and the questions to be addressed to a wider perspective and to describe the relevance this can have for society, both nationally and internationally, in the short and long term. The applicant is responsible for objectively and concretely discuss these aspects in the application in such a way that the reviewers can assess whether the proposed research

and its results relate well to the societal value as described in the evaluation criteria. Please note that in cases where the application concerns basic research, where societal value might be difficult to describe, the applicant should present **explicit and clear arguments** as to why the societal value criteria cannot be fulfilled. Such applications may nonetheless be awarded funding, provided that the basic research described is of the highest scientific quality. However, an application that only fulfils the criteria of highest societal relevance cannot be awarded funding.

Applications in targeted calls should be reviewed based on the evaluation criteria stated in the specific call text. If no additional criteria are stated, Formas standard criteria for Scientific Quality and Societal Value are applied.

Applications should be assessed in a factual and impartial manner. The reviewers must take into account the instructions and directions that the applicants receive in the call text.

17.2 Gender equality

There shall be no discrimination due to gender in the processing of applications. The scientific quality and relevance of the application takes precedence over the equality aspect, but in cases of equal assessments priority shall be given to the under-represented gender. The review panels should also try to assure that the gender distribution among the main applicants of the projects nominated to be granted funding does not deviate in a significant and unwarranted way from the gender distribution of the main applicants of all applications submitted. When the scientific productivity of an applicant is evaluated, only years in which research has actively taken place should be taken into consideration. This means that period of parental leave, illness or public service must be disregarded.

17.3 Evaluation criteria

17.3.1 Criteria for Scientific Quality

Research question

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

Clarifications:

- Multi- and interdisciplinary approaches should be considered advantageous when appropriate for the research question
- Gender perspectives, class, ethnicity or other social aspects 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 the project and the research group
- Suitability of multi- and interdisciplinary approaches
- Ethical considerations
- Fairness of the budget in relation to the structure of the project and the anticipated results

Clarifications:

- Fairness 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 project plan
- Adequate experience of project management
- National and international activities, including projects, networks, assignments, honorary commissions, participation in or organisation of workshops and conferences
- Strength and competitiveness of the research group

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 the individual researchers and the collective competence of the group.
- For Mobility Starting Grants the strength and competitiveness of the research environment should be assessed for the home and the host university.

17.3.2 Criteria for Societal Value**Societal value of research topic**

- The research question addresses important societal issues and/or issues of importance to the areas of responsibility of Formas, nationally and/or internationally.

- The project may, over a short-term or long-term perspective, contribute to sustainable development nationally and/or internationally.
- Stakeholder/end user needs have been taken into account in the design of the project.
- The objectives are consistent with the call. In the open call this means that the application lies within the areas of responsibility of Formas.

Clarifications:

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

Communication with stakeholders/end users

- Description of relevant stakeholders/end users.
- Specific and realistic plan for the involvement of relevant stakeholders/end users in the project and for the dissemination of results to these parties.
- Experience and ability to communicate research results to stakeholders/end users.

Clarifications:

- Stakeholders/end users must be regarded in a broad sense as actors outside the scientific community, nationally as well as internationally, who can benefit from the research results or facilitate their future use in society.
- Communication with stakeholders/end users may take different forms and have different time scales depending on the research topic addressed, but should include different forms of dialogue with stakeholders and the dissemination of research results to those who will make use of the results.

17.4 The evaluation process

Assessment of competence and conflict of interest

Before the evaluation work begins, all panel members assess their own competence to review each of the applications allocated to the review panel. They also assess if any conflict of interest situation exists.

Competence to review the applications is made using a three level scale:

3 = higher competence

2 = medium competence

1 = lower competence

Allocation of reviewers for each application

Formas appoints four reviewers for each application. These are the panel members who have the highest competence to review the application. One of the reviewers is

appointed the rapporteur. The rapporteur is responsible for briefly summarising the application at the review panel meeting and for compiling the written statement of the review panel.

External reviewers

External reviewers are used in cases where not enough panel members have sufficient competence to review an application. The external reviewers may be panel members from another Formas review panel. The application is still reviewed by four members of the review panel, but the assessment of the external reviewer or reviewers is used as a guide. When an external review is carried out, scores and a written assessment are made for each of the review criteria. The Formas conflict of interest principles apply also to external reviewers.

Scoring scale

The reviewers read the applications they have been allocated, award scores for the evaluation criteria for Scientific Quality and Societal Value, and write brief comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each application. These comments are mandatory and are used to facilitate the discussion at the review panel meetings and as an aid to the rapporteur in the compilation of the written statement to the applicant. The scores and comments at this stage constitute the working material of the review panel and are not communicated to the applicant.

The review panel members award scores for each of the evaluation criteria according to the following scale:

- 7 – **Outstanding.** The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are insignificant.
- 6 – **Excellent.** The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.
- 5 – **Very good.** The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 4 – **Good.** The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements could be possible.
- 3 – **Acceptable.** While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
- 2 – **Poor.** The application addresses the criterion in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 1 – **Insufficient.** The application fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

Review panel meeting

Each review panel meets to discuss and rank the applications in their respective panel. The scores and comments of the review panel members are used as the basis for the subsequent discussion.

The applications are ranked according to the various types of grants:

- Research and Development Projects
- Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders
- Mobility Starting Grants for Young Scientists

The Formas budget for Research and Development Projects is allocated among the eight review panels based on the amount of applications received, which means that the review panels can make a final ranking of these applications at the review panel meeting.

For the two grant types Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders and Mobility Starting Grants, the budget is a joint collective budget for all review panel groups. Each review panel ranks the applications for the respective grant type. Afterwards the chair and vice-chair of each review panel make a joint overall ranking of the applications for these grant types, based on the rank that was agreed at each of the respective review panel meetings.

For applications nominated to receive funding (this applies to applications for Research and Development Projects and to Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders) the review panels assess whether the budget that has been applied for is reasonable in relation to the activities described in the research plan and the anticipated results from the project. Each review panel also has the task of adhering to a mean project funding size of 1 MSEK (including overhead costs) per year for the Research and Development Projects and the Research and Development Projects for Future Research Leaders that are nominated for funding. This means that the review panel has the mandate to decide whether the budget should be reduced for these grant types.

Final written statement

All project leaders receive a written statement as feedback from the review panel. The written statement comprises:

- A score for each criteria
- An overall score
- Short written comments