# INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWING RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING APPLICATIONS – FIRI 2019 PANEL

## CONTENTS

## 1 ROLE OF EXPERTS AND THE ACADEMY OF FINLAND

The Academy of Finland funds cutting-edge and innovative research aiming at significant scientific breakthroughs. Funding decisions for the development and upgrading of research infrastructures at universities and research institutes are made by the Finnish Research Infrastructure (FIRI) Committee. The decisions are based on peer review and panel ranking, but factors related to science policy may also influence the decisions.

## 2 EXPERT PANEL MEETING

Before the panel meeting takes place, each application is assigned to at least two panel members who then prepare draft reviews. All draft review reports will be made available to the panel members before the meeting.

At the meeting, the panel will review all applications assigned to it and also rank them. The panel prepares one joint panel review report on each application based on the discussions and the draft reviews. The panel review report is written by the reviewer marked as number 1. Academy staff will assist the panel in preparing the panel review reports. The panel members have access to all applications assigned to the panel, barring conflicts of interest (see below).

## 3 REVIEW AND RANKING

To review applications, please use the online services available via the Academy's website (see the document "How-to guide for reviewers").

WRITTEN REVIEWS: Evaluative comments are particularly valuable to the FIRI Committee. After the funding decisions have been made, the applicants get access to the panel review report on their own application. The review also provides the applicant with important feedback. Reviewers should therefore:
- give evaluative comments rather than descriptive phrases (avoid copying text from the application directly)

- write comments under each sub-item
- write coherent phrases (in passive) that can be used, if agreed, as such in the panel review report.

NUMERICAL EVALUATION: The consistency between the numerical rating and the written comments is particularly important. Please rate the application, both sub-items and overall rating, using this scale:

> 6 = outstanding: Demonstrates exceptional novelty and innovation. Potential to substantially advance science at global level. High-gain project that may include risks.
> 5 = excellent: Extremely good in international comparison – no significant elements to be improved.
> 4 = very good: In general sound but contains a few elements that could be improved.
> 3 = good: In general sound but contains important elements that should be improved.
> 2 = fair: Contains flaws. In need of substantial modification or improvement.
> 1 = poor: Severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application.

Finally, you are asked to give your final rating and overall assessment of the application including the strengths and weaknesses as well as possible additional comments. Please note that the final rating should not be a mathematical average of the sub-ratings. It is important to comment both on the strengths and the weaknesses of the application.

Two review forms
There are two separate review forms: one for Call 1 applications and another for Call 2 applications. Both forms have the same basic structure. The difference is that new RI initiatives are not yet expected to be mature. However, they have to present a clear and reliable action plan that shows how they will reach maturity as a RI.

Roadmap categories
As a result of the FIRI midterm evaluation (2017), the RIs on the FIRI Roadmap have been divided into four categories depending on their performance. Very advanced RIs (category A) will be evaluated more lightly than the other RIs. Development needs based on the midterm evaluation are asked to be reviewed for Advanced RIs (category B) and RIs under observation (category D). Promotion of science will be reviewed for Promising, Under Observation and Non-roadmap RIs (categories C, D and F).

These are the assessment targets of the different categories:

| Assessment targets in FIRI 2018 call | Roadmap infrastructures | | | | E. Other international memberships | F. Non-roadmap |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | A. Very advanced | B. Advanced | C. Promising | D. Under observation | | |
| Level of advancement | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Promotion of science | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Development needs identified | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| | | | | | | |
| Eligibility to apply in FIRI 2018 call | | | | | | |
| 1) Roadmap and membership | Eligible | Eligible | Eligible | Eligible | Eligible | Non-eligible |
| 2) New initiatives | Non-eligible | Non-eligible | Non-eligible | Non-eligible | Non-eligible | Eligible |

The review forms comprise five sections and an overall assessment. The sections are divided into sub-sections as follows:

| Call 1: RIs on FIRI roadmap and RIs related to Finnish memberships | Call 2: New RI initiatives and other non-roadmap RIs |
| --- | --- |
| Relevance of RI | |

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|---|---|
| 1.1 How is the RI positioned in the national and international research environment? | 1.1 How does/will the RI facilitate scientific excellence in terms of scientific results, breakthroughs and scientific progress and renewal? |
| 1.2 How is the RI engaged in national or international collaborations that can significantly contribute to the success of the project? | 1.2 How is the RI/will the RI be positioned in the national and international research environment? |
| 1.3 What is the added value of the RI for science and education at a national and/or international level? | 1.3 Does the RI fill a certain gap in the national or international RI landscape? |
| 1.4 Can the RI be used by user communities from different research fields? | 1.4 How is the RI engaged in national or international collaborations that can significantly contribute to the success of the project? |
| 1.5 How do/will host organisations support the RI? How well is the project aligned with the research strategies of the organisations? | 1.5 What is/will be the added value of the RI for science and education at a national and international level? |
| 1.6 How does the RI facilitate scientific excellence in terms of scientific results, breakthroughs and scientific progress and renewal? | 1.6 Can the RI be used by user communities from different research fields? |
| | 1.7 How do/will host organisations support the RI? How well is the project aligned with the research strategies of the organisations? |

Feasibility of RI

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.1 How is the life cycle of the RI described? Does the RI have an exit plan? | 2.1 How is the life cycle of the RI described? Does the RI have an exit plan? |
| 2.2 Is the project plan clearly presented and realistic? Are potential risks and problem areas acknowledged, and how are alternative approaches being considered? | 2.2 Is the project plan clearly presented and realistic? Are potential risks and problem areas acknowledged, and how are alternative approaches being considered? |
| 2.3 What is the user profile? Is the RI continuously used by excellent researchers and research groups? | 2.3 Does the project plan show maturity of the concept in order for the RI to develop into a national or international RI? |
| 2.4 Good research practices. Are there ethical issues concerning the structure and methods of work at the RI or in its guidelines for using the RI? | 2.4 What is the user profile? Is the RI continuously used by excellent researchers and research groups? |
| 2.5 Does the RI offer feasible guidelines, practices or incentives/demands for researchers in order to support open access and open research data? How does the RI provide open access to users (access may require approval of a research plan and reasonable user fees)? How | 2.5 Good research practices. Are there ethical issues concerning the structure and methods of work at the RI or in its guidelines for using the RI? |
| | 2.6 Does the RI offer feasible guidelines, practices or incentives/demands for researchers in |

| | |
|---|---|
| does the RI inform of access possibilities? How are the management, storage, use and rights of ownership of the research data planned?<br><br>2.6 How does the RI respond to the development issues specified by the FIRI 2017 midterm evaluation panel? | order to support open access and open research data? How does the RI provide open access to users (access may require approval of a research plan and reasonable user fees)? How does the research infrastructure inform of access possibilities? How are the management, storage, use and rights of ownership of the research data planned? |

**Feasibility of finances**

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Are the overall expenses appropriate and well planned?<br><br>3.2 How will the RI be sustained after the project period? | 3.1 Are the overall expenses appropriate and well-planned?<br><br>3.2 How will the RI be sustained after the project period? |

**Management and competence of personnel**

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.1 Are the project management, resources and division of labour for the maintenance, services and user support appropriate and well planned? Are the merits and scientific expertise of the principal director (coordinator) and other key persons appropriate and sufficient for the RI? What are the merits of the principal director and other key persons in terms of managing the RI? Does the personnel have adequate expertise for maintenance, service provision and user support? How is the training and development of the personnel taken care of? | 4.1 Are the project management, resources and division of labour for the maintenance, services and user support appropriate and well planned? Are the merits and scientific expertise of the principal director (coordinator) and other key persons appropriate and sufficient for the RI? What are the merits of the principal director and other key persons in terms of managing the RI? Does the personnel have adequate expertise for maintenance, service provision and user support? How is the training and development of the personnel taken care of? |

**Impact of RI**

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.1 What kind of added value does the RI generate for society at large or for innovation activities, business and the economy? Can the project produce new innovations, business activities or other societal benefits?<br><br>5.2 How does the RI support education and researcher training? Does the RI enhance mobility? | 5.1 What kind of added value does the RI generate for society at large or for innovation activities, business and the economy? Can the project produce new innovations, business activities or other societal benefits?<br><br>5.2 How does the RI support education and researcher training? Does the RI enhance mobility? |

**Overall assessment**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6.1 Assess the main strengths and weaknesses of the RI project. You may also provide additional comments and suggestions. | 6.1 Assess the main strengths and weaknesses of the RI project. You may also provide additional comments and suggestions. |

Ranking

After the panel has completed the review of applications in the panel meeting, it is also asked to rank them. The ranking is made based on the review – no additional criteria are used.

## 4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS

In Finland, according to the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), research plans, abstracts, progress reports and reviews are confidential documents. Application documents should therefore be handled and stored with due care and confidentiality.

As a reviewer, you are not allowed to disclose any information concerning application documents or reviews to outsiders, nor are you allowed to use this confidential information to your own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage. You may not reveal to outsiders that you are assessing the research plan of a particular researcher. If you are contacted by anyone, including the applicant, who has questions about the application or reviews, please advise them to contact the Academy of Finland.

Once the review has been completed, you are required to destroy all application documents and any copies made of them, or to return them to the Academy. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the review process has been completed. Reviews are confidential documents, but applicants will have access to the panel review report review on their own application after the funding decisions have been made.

After the funding decisions have been made, the Academy of Finland will publish a list of names, current positions and institutions of all individual reviewers and panel members used in the call. In addition, the applicants will see the names of all panel members in the panel review report. If requested, the names of reviewers giving the draft reviews will also be disclosed (Finnish Act on the Openness of Government Activities).

## 5 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As a reviewer you are required to declare any personal interests according to the criteria below. You must disqualify yourself if you can in any way benefit from the approval or rejection of the application. You must also disqualify yourself in the following circumstances:

- You have collaboration with the applicant (e.g. you have co-authored and published an article or manuscript with the applicant in the past three years; you have been involved in the preparation of the application; or you are involved in the publication or application of the results).
- You have been a superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant in the past three years.
- You are currently applying for the same post as the applicant.
- You are currently applying for funding from the Academy from the same funding instrument.
- The applicant is a close person to you. A close person is:
  a) your spouse (also *de facto*), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise close to you (e.g. fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also *de facto*)
  b) a sibling of your parent or his/her spouse (also *de facto*), a child of your sibling, or your previous spouse (also *de facto*)
  c) a child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of your spouse as well as their spouses (also *de facto*), or a child of a sibling of your spouse
  d) or a half-relative comparable to the above-mentioned persons.

You are also disqualified if your impartiality may be endangered in any other way, or if you feel that you have a conflict of interest and are therefore disqualified to review the application.

If you identify any conflicts of interest, please notify the Academy as soon as possible.

## 6 DECLARATION FOR THE REVIEWER TO ACCEPT

Please acknowledge that by accepting the task of a reviewer you guarantee not to disclose the information you receive as reviewer and not to use it for anybody's benefit or disadvantage as stipulated in section 4 above (Confidentiality and ethics). Further, you affirm that you will immediately notify the Academy if you have a conflict of interest in one or more applications.

## APPENDIX

### Time schedule
- August 15: deadline for online submission of your draft reviews. NB! All draft reviews must be submitted before it is possible to combine them and make them available to panel members.
- August 20: combined draft reviews will be available to all panellists
- September 4: arrival in Helsinki
- September 5–6: panel meeting in Helsinki

### Expert fee
The Academy will cover your travel costs, flights in economy class and accommodation during the panel meeting. We will also pay a modest compensation of 360 euros per panel day, minus applicable taxes and pension premium (approximately 40% in total). In addition, a fee will be paid for each draft review submitted to the Academy: 50 euros for a single PI application and 75 euros for a consortium application (no deductions).

### Decision-making by FIRI Committee
After receiving the panel review reports, the FIRI Committee will make the funding decisions. The decisions are mainly based on the peer review, but factors related to science policy may also influence the decisions. Examples of such factors are the economic, environmental, societal and technological impacts of research infrastructures.