

Note



Terms of Reference

1. Background

Innovation Fund Denmark (Danmarks Innovationsfond, hereafter IFD) has since 2014 served as an independent fund with focus on allocating grants to strategic research and technology development and innovation. Referring to the political agreement of October 3, 2013, on "Danmarks Innovationsfond", the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has launched an evaluation of IFD.

The founding of IFD in its present form took place in 2014. In 2016, IFD received and evaluated in total 3.081 applications and awarded almost 718 grants with a total sum of about 1.3 billion DKK.

The Minister for Higher Education and Science has appointed an independent international peer review panel to carry out the evaluation.

2. Purpose, target groups and use of the evaluation

The purpose of evaluating IFD is to get an in-depth and critical view of the structure, functioning and the results of IFD.

According to the purpose as stated in the law, IFD shall provide grants for strategic and challenge-driven research, technological development and innovation which contribute overall to increase the share of innovative enterprises; the share of investments by private-sector enterprises in research and development; and the share of highly skilled employees in enterprises.

Through its grants, IFD shall support the coupling of high-quality research with innovation, including cooperation on research, technological development and innovation between knowledge institutions and enterprises; Danish participation in international cooperation on strategic and challenge-driven research, technological development and innovation; and maturing of promising research results and inventions with a view to faster dissemination, use and commercialisation of knowledge.

One of the reasons for establishing IFD was to simplify the application and follow-up procedures regarding the funding of research projects.

The purpose of the evaluation is to critically consider the structure, functioning and results of IFD's funding and advisory contribution to the Danish research landscape. Hence, the evaluation shall focus on how IFD fulfils its tasks, and whether this is in compliance with the purpose laid out in the law and political agreement. The panel is expected to look into the following:

1. Whether IFD bases its allocation of grants on societal challenges and needs as well as the needs of enterprises.
2. Whether IFD meets the criteria in their stated purpose in regards to the distribution of funding

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3. Whether the instruments of IFD are coherent and coordinated with relevant funding instruments in the Danish research and innovation system (e.g. The Danish Growth Fund, EUDP)
4. Whether IFD contributes to international collaboration, international co-publications or in other ways supports the internationalisation of Danish research

By including some or all of the following:

- An analysis of grant project quality based on random samples of project descriptions
- An analysis of the receivers of grants based on register data (register analysis)
- A mapping of the structure and the organisation of IFD
- A mapping of how the funding of IFD covers the development chain of research and innovation
- A mapping of how IFD's funds are distributed in accordance with the prioritised areas
- A mapping of the application patterns before and after establishing IFD
- And other analyses/mappings that the panel finds necessary

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Based on the above mentioned the panel should give recommendations in regards to optimising the work done by IFD.

The evaluation has three main target groups. The first target group of the evaluation is the political system and the public. They will be informed about the results of the evaluation, and on this background consider how to optimise IFD's work and its role in funding research and innovation.

The second target group of the evaluation is IFD, who can use the results to sharpen its funding instruments and to develop future priorities as well as to optimise its work.

The third target group of the evaluation is the research institutions (both those who have received funds from IFD, as well as those who have not received funds from IFD, but who used to receive funds from the previous institutions). This group is one of the major stakeholders in regards to IFD, and they can use the results of the evaluation in the development of strategies and participation in policy-making.

A fourth target group might be institutions in other countries that look at IFD to learn and compare methods used in comparable countries. These stakeholders might also have valuable information in regards to an outside perspective.

3. Scope

The scope of the evaluation is the basis for grant allocation, distributed funds, the instruments and their coherence and coordination with other instruments and the international work of IFD.

4. Basis of evaluation

An independent peer review panel will assess IFD's work. The panel will base its findings and recommendations on the documentation gathered as part of the evaluation. To the extent possible, the assessment shall be in an international comparative perspective. The evaluation shall focus on how IFD fulfils its tasks as described in the law and the political agreement by looking into the elements of IFD's work.

5. Organisation

The international panel is composed on basis of the composition of the Board of Directors in IFD as stated in the law.

Hence the panel shall have a broad professional background and international experience in management and strategic planning, including funding, at research institutions. Furthermore, the panel as a whole shall have experience with technology development and innovation in the private sector.

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The panel must consist of a majority with experience from the private sector as well as a majority of internationally acknowledged researchers from different fields of research. Furthermore, the combined experience of the panel shall cover technology development and innovation, strategic and challenge-driven research, use and commercialisation of research results and financing of innovation and research.

The panel will be equipped with an independent secretariat, which will be responsible for drawing up the evaluation report on behalf of the panel.

The Ministry will provide the panel and its independent secretariat with analyses, data and information as requested. The ministry will assist the panel/secretariat in collecting data for the evaluation documentation. The panel/secretariat can be assisted in the data collection by one or several external consultants.

6. Methods of data collection

The following methods may be used to collect data:

- Interviews with stakeholders
- Desk studies
- Self-assessment by IFD
- Questionnaire surveys
- Qualitative interviews
- Analyses using register data (register analysis)
- Analyses using individual information about the researchers funded by IFD
- Samples of project descriptions to assess quality and/or placement on the development chain of research and innovation
- Other methods that the panel deems valuable in an evaluation

It should be noted that different kinds of data, surveys, interviews and analyses can also form part of the self-evaluation of IFD.

7. Reporting

The evaluation will result in a written report. The report is to contain a description and analysis of the different parts of documentation, the conclusions, assessments, and recommendations made by the panel, and an executive summary.

The panel is expected to deliver the report to the Minister for Higher Education and Science at the end of March 2019. Subsequently, the report and the relevant sub-reports will be published.

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