

Terms of reference for the international evaluation 2020 of the scientific impact of the National Research Centre for the Working Environment (NFA)

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Management Secretariat
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1. Background and purpose

This evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the executive order on evaluation of government research institutes.

NFA's core tasks are research and the affiliated tasks dissemination of research results, education of researchers and counselling of and service to the authorities. The evaluation covers the scientific impact of research, academic dissemination of research results and education of researchers. A separate evaluation will be carried out of the societal impact of NFA's research, dissemination of research results as well as counselling of and service to authorities. The chairmen of the two evaluation panels will ensure the coordination between the two evaluations.

The purpose of the evaluation is

- to evaluate the scientific quality and relevance of NFA's research, dissemination of research results¹ and contribution to education of researchers
- to give specific recommendations with respect to how NFA may strengthen its research quality, relevance and scientific impact on research, dissemination of research results and contribution to education of researchers.

Scientific quality, relevance and impact are pivotal in ensuring that authorities, working environment professionals and workplaces can make as much use as possible of NFA's research and dissemination of research results – and thereby ensuring societal impact.

The evaluation and recommendations are requested in relation to each research areas and to NFA as a whole.

The evaluation covers the period 2014-2019.

¹ Dissemination of research results means academic dissemination to peers, other researchers and experts, e.g. in networks, expert groups and at conferences.

2. Form and participants

Research and education of researchers are evaluated by an international panel of highly acknowledged international researchers who cover NFA's core research areas 'psychosocial working environment', 'musculoskeletal disorders and physical working environment', 'occupational accidents and safety culture', 'chemical working environment', and the cross-sectional research area 'seniors'. Moreover, the evaluators must be experienced in research management as well as in user-oriented research for users at societal and enterprise level.

The panel must be independent of the Ministry of Employment and NFA.

The panel is appointed by the Board of Governors of NFA after nomination by the Innovation Fund Denmark.

3. Scope and main tasks

The evaluation must address the following questions:

Research

- Is the research quality of a high standard and scope when compared to similar national and international research groups?
- To what extent is the research focused on solving scientifically relevant and prioritized working environment issues?
- To what extent is the research relevant for the specific needs of authorities and workplaces?
- Do researchers have sufficient knowledge, systematics and methods on how to involve stakeholders and target groups in research ?
- To what extent are NFA's research topics and project portfolios - fund applications as well as grants - in line with and prioritized according to overall formal requirements, such as national strategies and NFA's own strategies and research programs?
- To what extent has the NFA succeeded in finding new financing opportunities?
- To what extent have scientific networks with important research groups at universities and other research institutions in Denmark and abroad been relevantly and sufficiently developed?

Dissimination of research results

- Do the researchers participate to a sufficient *extent* and in the *most relevant* conferences and other forums of international knowledge sharing and scientific debates?
- Do the researchers participate to a sufficient extent in international research collaboration during work on specific projects?

Education

- Does NFA to a sufficient extent contribute to the education of undergraduates/postgraduates and PhDs within the working environment field, and thereby also to future working environment researchers?
- Does NFA to a sufficient extent contribute to lectures and seminars at Danish universities, at NIVA-courses (Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health), at other seminars etc.?

4. Background material

The NFA will provide the necessary background material such as:

- The NFA's by-laws
- The international evaluation from 2014 and the follow-up statement from the Board of Governors of NFA
- The national working environment strategies for the evaluation period
- NFA's strategies, research programs and performance management contracts for the evaluation period
- Data on NFA's portfolio of fund applications and grants during the evaluation period
- NFA's annual reports and accounts for the evaluation period

5. Procedure

An independent academic consultant will assist the evaluation panel during the visit to the NFA and in the preparation of the evaluation report. The secretarial assistance to the evaluators will be independent of the NFA and the Ministry of Employment.

The NFA will organize site visits to the NFA and will provide practical assistance to the evaluators.

6. Time schedule

The evaluation report must be submitted to NFA in English no later than 1st February 2021 and include a Danish version of summary and recommendations.

The details of the time schedule will be discussed with the evaluators when the panel has been appointed.

7. Financing

The evaluation will be financed by the Ministry of Employment