

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

DFG, Kennedyallee 40, 53175 Bonn / Postanschrift: DFG, 53170 Bonn

European Science Foundation
Quai Lezay-Marnesia 1
67080 Strasbourg Cedex
France

Der Präsident

Geschäftsstelle
Kennedyallee 40
Bonn – Bad Godesberg

www <http://www.dfg.de>
Telefax 0228/885-2999

Fragen beantwortet:

Anke Reinhardt
Telefon 0228/885-2588
E-Mail anke.reinhardt@dfg.de

25. August 2009
GZ: ESF

ESF Member Forum on Research Evaluation

Dear Professor Makarow,

we are pleased to propose the following Member Forum:

1. Title: ESF Member Forum on Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes

2. Proposing organisation: DFG, Information Management Section

3. Indication of other interested MOs and stakeholders:

- Health Research Board Ireland (Contact person: Brendan Curran)
- Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (Contact person: Margreet Bouma)
- Austrian Science Fund (Contact person: Rudi Nowak)
- Fonds National de la Recherche Luxembourg (Contact person: Frank Bingen)
- Research Council Norway (Contact person: Gro Helgesen)
- Swedish Research Council (Contact person: Per Janson)
- Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (Contact person: Zsuzsanna Gilyén)

4. Rationale for proposing the topic as an MO FORUM, general timelines

The Evaluation of Research programmes and funding schemes is a relatively new field. However, it has gained increased attention within a short number of years and is rapidly evolving. The methodologies used in the field of "research evaluation" evolve quickly, and public bodies have increasing reporting obligations about the funding they spend and its impact. Almost all funding organisations and research performing organisations have reacted to this by developing their evaluation capacities either by establishing in-house evaluation units and/or by entering into long-term partnership with evaluation organisations. As the ESF Road map states: "Research evaluation is a small, highly specialised field, and on a national level, there are only a limited number of actors involved in it. Therefore, the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences of evaluation strategies on an international level is especially valuable and is the prerequisite of benchmarking purposes."

Developed in response to needs from MOs in the consultations on the ESF's strategic plan, MO FORA are "output-oriented, issue-related venues for MOs, involving others as appropriate, to (exchange information and experiences) and develop joint actions". Responding to a Call for Suggestions of the ESF Governing Council in June 2006, the DFG Information Management Section proposed an "ESF Member Forum on Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes". In April 2007, the Governing Council agreed to launch the proposed Forum and issued a Call for Expression of Interest among its Member Organisations. Over 40 organisations (Member Organisations and guests) followed the Call. In October 2007, the MO Forum started its activities with the first Workshop in Berlin.

In its first phase, the ESF MO Forum on Research Evaluation has convened four times discussing various aspects of Research Evaluation.

Berlin, 22-23 October 2007 (Host: DFG): Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes: Expectations, Practices and Experiences

Rome, 31 March – 1 April 2008 (Host: INFN): Quantitative Indicators in ex-post Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes: Cases studies and Rationales, including a session on "The Use of progress and final reports in indicator-building for ex-post evaluation of funding schemes

Vienna, 7-8 October 2008 (Host: FWF): Quality of Quality Assurance. Striving for Highest Standards in ex-post evaluation

Budapest, 27-28 April 2009 (Host: OTKA): Socio-Economic Impact

As a result of its activities, the MO Forum has prepared a mapping report of current evaluation activities, highlighting differences and commonalities as well as trends in Research Evaluation.

The ESF Member Forum has been successful in exchanging practices and facilitate the networking of sciences officers engaged in evaluation. The Feedback on the MO Forum has been very positive. In course of its work, new questions were raised, which were not answered yet but deemed to be worthwhile exploring.

There is a need for the continuous exchange of information on evaluation practices and practical approaches. The ESF Member Forum on Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes is the sole dedicated platform for European research organisations that provides a continuous forum to exchange information and work together on common projects. The Eurohorcs and ESF Road Map acknowledges the work of the ESF MO Forum. The ESF Member Forum on Research Evaluation can help to implement activities within the Action 6 of the Road Map (Develop common approaches to ex post evaluation of funding schemes and research programmes).

We are therefore proposing to establish a second ESF Member Forum on the topic "Evaluation of publicly funded research". Among the wide variety of topics relevant for Research Evaluation, "Post-Grant" Evaluation (i.e. whether the funding schemes or the research programmes achieve their stated aims) has been identified as the most fruitful and promising for future interaction and collaboration between Member Organisations. The Member Forums should therefore be focused on this aspect.

Timelines:

April 2010: 1. Workshop

October 2010: 2. Workshop

April 2011: 3. Workshop

October 2011: 4. Workshop

January 2012: Publication of the Final Report

5. Outline on the envisaged aims, objectives and outputs of the Forum

Aims and Objectives:

- to exchange and document experiences with current practices
- to facilitate networking of science officers engaged in evaluation
- to regularly update, further elaborate and disseminate the report on evaluation practice
- to explore needs and possibilities for collaboration in future evaluation exercises
- to identify best practice examples in research evaluation that could possibly lead to a Guideline for Evaluation Processes

Outputs:

- a collection of recent evaluation studies, e.g. an web-based repository
- a final report on the activities and results of the MO Forum
- if possible: coordination of common activities, e.g. a comparative evaluative study (to be organized and financed by the participating Member organisations)

Organisation of the Work:

- plenary meetings will take place twice a year, the structure of the workshop will be as followed: plenary sessions on overriding topics and dedicated sessions to the two Strands.
- each workshop is prepared by a group (consisting of: Host of the next workshop, ESF Officer, Chair of the Forum, Chair of the Working Groups, volunteers) that thinks of the topic of the workshop, the structure and the speakers to be invited.
- two Working Groups are set up: Strand A: Research Funding Organisations and Strand B: Research Performing Organisations.
- ad hoc Working Groups can be set up depending on upcoming topics, and/or could look into the possibility of cooperation on a number of common concerns, for example
 - data organisation and management (including, where necessary, discussions about common formats or classification to allow better comparability),
 - organisation of training that suits the needs of organisations.
 - development of quality standards for evaluative studies on an European level.
- the Chair of the MO Forum (who comes from the proposing organisation) is part of the Steering Committee.
- permanent guests (e.g. from the European Commission and the European Research Council) and occasional guests may be invited.

6. Outline of the budget envisaged (cost and staff time):

Each Member Organisation participating in the forum will contribute with staff time and related in-kind resources. The respective officers in charge of programme evaluation will participate actively in the forum and working groups set up by the forum. The cost of their participation (e.g. in workshops) will be borne by their organisation.

The ESF will coordinate activities and support the dissemination of information. The ESF provides the Member Forum with the amount of resources needed to organise and run it, especially staff time.

The invitation of experts, if required, will be organised and funded by the ESF up to an amount of 15 000 Euro. Commissioning (pilot) studies will require funding by those partners involved.

Yours sincerely,



Matthias Kleiner