Danish National Research Foundation
www.dg.dk

Evaluation Practices
Presentation at ESF member forum
"Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research programmes"
Berlin, October 2007
Presentation outline

Brief intro: What is the DNRF?

What are the DNRF evaluation practices?

What have we learned so far?

What are the future plans for DNRF evaluation practices?
The Foundation was established in 1991 with a capital 267 million euro.

Act on the Danish National Research Foundation:

“The Foundation’s aim is to strengthen the advancement of Danish science by financing internationally recognized and outstanding research”
The position of the Foundation within the Danish Advisory and Funding System for Research and Innovation

- **“Bottom-up principle”**
  - researcher initiated
  - Danish Council for Independent Research
  - Project driven
  - Short term horizon
  - Small scale funding
  - Long term horizon
  - Large, flexible grants
  - Monitoration and evaluation

- **“Top-down principle”**
  - Politically prioritised
  - Danish Council for Strategic Research
  - Project driven
  - Short term horizon
  - Small scale funding
  - Long term horizon
  - Large, flexible grants
  - Monitoration and evaluation
Primary instrument: Centre of Excellence program (CoE)

Criteria for becoming a Danish National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence

- Ambitious research plan of high scientific quality
- Research activities should be focused endeavours
- Clear organisational structure
- Research at international level
- Optimal settings for research training
- Association with a university or other research institution with basic research activities
- One centerleader
- Large, flexible 5 year grants with low administration, for a maximum of 2 funding periods
Main grant awarding principles

- The primary criteria for granting of funds is the **quality** of the research projects applied for.

- Researchers from **all areas** can apply.

- Applications must be the result of a researcher initiated **bottom-up** process.
The Selection process

CALL

Preparation of outline proposals

1st Board processing

Selected applicants prepare final applications

2nd Board processing

Peer review of full applications

Contract Phase

Inauguration of centres
The Selection process

Deadline for full applications

For each application a panel of 3-4 international peers is identified

The international peers are chosen following the counselling rendered by national and international research grant-awarding organisations (Danish research councils, ESF, NIH, NSF)

The applicant is heard on the composition of the panel

Each member of the panel produces a written peer review of the application. Thus, 3-4 written peer reviews are collected for each application.

The applicant is heard on the reviews with an option to comment on them
Centre of Excellence Life Cyclus

- Call for outline proposals
- Call for full proposals
- Centre start
- Mid-term evaluation
- 10 yr evaluation
- Potential embedding at the host institution
- Annual follow-up meetings
Midway Evaluation

- Panel of 3-4 international peers per centre

- Self-evaluation report

- New 5 year research plan

- Sitevisit

- Individual Terms of Reference for each centre panel

*Writing of evaluation report at the Foundation*
Monitoring

- Follow-up meetings annually with board members, director and research consultant from DNRF and entire centre staff

- Annual reporting from centres
10 year evaluations

- Written peer reviews
- Collected reports and data from 10 annual reports, and bibliometric analyses
- Interview with centre leaders
DNRF Evaluative processes

- To select each CoE
- To monitor output from each CoE
- To decide to continue or terminate CoE
- To assess output of a CoE after maximum funding period

Evaluation processes on individual centre level

- Improvement of the Centre of Excellence program
- Improvement of the DNRF instruments to achieve its aim

Evaluation processes are an instrument to organisational development
Use of Evaluation knowledge

- How can we generalise from evaluation processes on individual centre level to the overall DNRF Centre of Excellence program?

Data on individual centre output  Development of best practice for CoE program
Use of evaluation knowledge

DNRF overall aim:
To strengthen the advancement of Danish science

The centre of excellence program

Single DNRF centre output
Measurement of effect of a CoE grant

OUTPUT:

Quantitative data

Qualitative data
Ten year evaluation 2006/2007

- Quantitative output on quality indicators
- Qualitative focus on organisational frame
Lessons learned from 10 year evaluation

_Evaluation_

- *new knowledge on relation between organisational frame and scientific output?*

**Best performing centres differ** - but some points of similarity:

- equal ratio between senior and junior researchers to secure generational shift
- high level of ph.d. students
- clear management structure
- international coorporation
Future expectations for evaluations

**A: Evaluation practices on individual centre level:**

Quantitative data collected systematically for each CoE annually

Qualitative assessment by international peers and annual qualitative self-reporting

**B: Further studies to evaluate CoE program:**

Structured qualitative study of centre leaders experiences with the organisatorical frame of a DNRF Centre of Excellence...
Research quality, relevance, originality, and focus
- Progress, breakthroughs,
- Research plan coherence
- International standing

New research plan
- Originality
- Ambition
- Novel ideas

Organisation, leadership, and core workers
- National and international cooperation
- Recruitment and guests
- Research education
- Publications

Social value
- Public outreach
- Cooperation with public and private enterprise