

**Guideline for experts
for evaluation of
Organic RDD 3 proposals**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The guideline provides information regarding the expert evaluation of the Organic RDD 3 program.

For information on the call text the invitation of application should be consulted. Details on the structure of a proposal application are available in the invitation.

Please note that this is a relatively small call with a funding of about 2.7 million Euro. Individual applications may achieve from 34,000 up to 1,300,000 Euro with a duration of up to 4 years. This variation should be taken into account when evaluating the project proposals.

Please also note that you are only requested to evaluate the scientific quality of the proposals – you are not requested to prioritize between the proposals, and you are not required to give an opinion about the relevance of the proposals.

Evaluation Procedure

The selected scientific experts are asked to evaluate the assigned proposals in a two-step procedure:

- Individual evaluation
- Agreement on a shared evaluation report among the evaluators of each proposal

Usually there will be a panel of three experts for each proposal. Each scientific expert has to score the proposals based on the evaluation criteria indicated below as well as to provide detailed comments and make an overall assessment of scientific merit.

One expert for each proposal will be appointed rapporteur. The scientific experts in each panel will discuss the applications they have evaluated with the other evaluators and agree on a common evaluation report (prepared by the rapporteur) for each of their proposals.

About Organic RDD 3

In 2009 [ICROFS](#) developed a strategic research programme based on the extensive knowledge synthesis *Development, growth and integrity in the Danish organic sector*¹. This formed the basis of the first programme under the Green Development and Demonstration Programme (GUDP) to contribute research in order to support growth and development in the organic sector: Organic Research, Development and Demonstration Programme – [Organic RDD](#). As a new initiative, the programme should also comprise development and demonstration aspects necessary for the sector.

In 2014 and 2016 [Organic RDD 2 and 2.2](#) were initiated based on the [ICROFS Research and Development Strategy 2012. An evaluation of the Danish government's efforts within organic agriculture in 2014](#) (in Danish) demonstrated that research and development are necessary to increase the total production of organic products and raw materials. The publication [Økologiplan Danmark](#) (Organic Plan Denmark, in Danish) from 30 January 2015 states that new knowledge and technology is essential in order to achieve a doubling of the organic acreage in 2020. Therefore, the Danish government will continue its research, development and demonstration efforts within the organic area. It is further stated in [Økologiplan Danmark](#) that organic agriculture has a beneficial impact on common goods such as nature, environment, climate, health and animal welfare; however, not all effects have been sufficiently studied.

¹ Alrøe, H.F. & Halberg, N. (red.) (2008): Development, growth and integrity in the Danish organic sector. Oct. 2008. ICROFS, International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems, Foulum, Denmark. 54 p. http://www.icrof.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis_08.pdf

Focus of Organic RDD 3

The scientific/strategic basis for Organic RDD 3 is ICROFS Research and Development Strategy 2012 within organic farming and foods: [Growth, credibility and resilient systems](#), formulated by the ICROFS programme committee based on meetings with many stakeholders and scientists, as well as on the 2015 report [Økologiens bidrag til samfundsgoder](#) (Knowledge synthesis on the impact of organic agriculture on common goods, in Danish).

Organic RDD 3 calls for concrete solutions that involve both short and long term perspectives through a combination of research and development and include targeted involvement of the final users.

The focus is on single elements and /or relationships between elements referring to the following two main topics:

- Increased resource efficiency with a focus on crop production systems that collect and utilize the nutrients optimally.
- Increased resource efficiency in pork and poultry production focusing on feeding, stables and free-range systems.

Read more about the focus of Organic RDD 3 in the [call](#), page 5-6.

The projects should create concrete results that can be quantified and preferably documented in the application. There is an expectation that the projects will be commercialized, and a business plan is required.

Focus is on the entire value chain to support bridging, cooperation and sharing of knowledge between researchers, the industry, farmers and fishermen as well as players from other sectors.

The projects are encouraged to use international cooperation where this may provide added value.

CONDITIONS FOR THE EXPERTS' WORK

Experts will be entitled to a general compensation of 80 euro per proposal evaluation for the scientific experts, and additionally 50 euro for the rapporteur for each proposal. Each scientific expert will be asked to evaluate between 2 and 5 applications and be rapporteur for between 1 and 3 applications.

The identity of the experts taking part in the evaluation will be published at the end of the selection process; however, the applicants will not be able to track the experts evaluating the individual proposals.

The applicants have a legal right to receive a copy of the peer reviews and comments concerning their own application. Your name is not revealed to the applicants, only the secretariat of ICROFS' knows who reviews which applications.

IMPARTIALITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All experts are required to sign a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality when they send in their evaluation and before they get the remuneration for their work.

Confidentiality

According to Danish law, you are bound to observe professional secrecy concerning confidential information contained in the applications reviewed. We therefore ask you to treat the applications with confidentiality and destroy them after the evaluation.

The content of the applications and any related information must be kept confidential and must be used only for the evaluation. Documents should be handled and stored with due care. Experts are not allowed to discuss or disclose to outsiders (including applicants) any information concerning application documents or evaluations, nor use this information to anybody's benefit or disadvantage.

Confidentiality must also be maintained after the evaluation process has been completed.

Impartiality and conflicts of interest

According to Danish legislation it is highly important that reviewers are not in any way biased in relation to an application. The experts are expected to be independent, impartial and objective. Proposals can only be evaluated by experts with no conflicts of interest. The experts are required to declare to ICROFS any issues that could be considered as a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may arise if the approval or rejection of the proposal may in any way benefit or harm the expert, for example in a professional, financial, or personal way. In the case that an expert becomes aware of actually having a conflict of interest after he/she started to evaluate the application, the expert has to inform ICROFS as soon as possible. Cases of conflict of interest and disqualifications are decided by ICROFS at application level, i.e. an expert having a conflict regarding one proposal can still be an active panel member but cannot evaluate the application where he/she has a conflict.

A conflict of interest is generally regarded to be present in the following cases:

- The expert has specific personal or financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation/project
- The expert is affiliated with the same research group as an applicant.
- The expert has/had close collaboration with an applicant (or the research group of the applicant) (past three years), e.g.
 - co-authored/published articles with the applicant
 - been involved in the same project or group as the applicant or was otherwise involved in the publication of the results
 - been a superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant
- The expert has a close friendship with or animosity towards the applicant or a member of the research group of the applicant
- The applicant is a relative to the expert
- If other circumstances might give rise to doubts concerning the impartiality of the expert.

If the expert is in doubt, he/she should consult ICROFS.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The experts will receive the list of applicants to check whether they have a conflict of interest. Access to the full proposals is only given after the expert has viewed the consortium composition and declared any conflict of interest.

As mentioned above, the evaluation consists of two steps:

- 1) an individual evaluation
- 2) a common evaluation report (written by the rapporteur)

Please contact ICROFS if you don't feel your area of expertise matches at least one of the assigned proposals. However, since we have very diverse applications you are not expected to be an expert in exactly the field of all the proposals. We aim to have at least one expert within the field of the application, whereas the two other experts may be more general experts in the area or even broader in organic agriculture and food systems.

The proposals will be made available at ICROFS' website, where you can login and download them after you have received your login information.

Criteria for evaluation of the proposals

The scientific experts must rank and score the proposals in the excel sheet provided, based on the following criteria for **scientific and/or technological excellence**:

Quality of the project (threshold 3 out of 5)

- Sound concept, and quality of objectives
- Progress beyond the state-of-the-art
- Quality and effectiveness of the scientific and technological methodology and associated work plan

Quality of the research group (threshold 3 out of 5)

- Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants
- Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance)

The experts have to distribute 0-5 points for each criterion. The interpretation of the numeric scores is the following:

- 0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information
- 1 Poor. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2 Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses
- 3 Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements could be relevant
- 4 Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible
- 5 Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor

A score below the threshold of 3 for any of the two main criteria indicates that the proposal should not continue to the selection process. For scores below 3 a reason should be given.

Steps and deadlines of the evaluation process

Each expert must send their individual evaluation sheets to ICROFS (icrofs@icrofs.org) no later than 10th August 2016. When all evaluations from each panel have been received, ICROFS will send them to all experts in the panel.

After the individual evaluation, the scientific experts who have evaluated a particular proposal need to agree on a final evaluation report (written by the rapporteur), which summarizes the results of the individual scientific evaluations for each proposal.

The rapporteur should send a draft evaluation report to the other experts in the group with cc to ICROFS (icrofs@icrofs.org) no later than 17th August 2016.

Discussions on the common evaluation report have to be organized by the scientific experts themselves, by online or telephone meetings or, if nothing else is possible, by email conversations. ICROFS' secretariat will not be involved. If the scientific experts have different opinions, these may be reflected in the common report, but still, the experts must come to a shared overall, final judgement.

In the final evaluation report a score must be given for each of the two main criteria (Quality of the project and Quality of the research group). The final evaluation scores may be found by taking the mean of the individual scores, or be based on the arguments posed in the expert discussion and presented in the report. If a proposal fails to reach the threshold (if the score is below 3) for one of the main criteria, a clear and consistent reason should be given, indicating where the problem is in regard to the sub-criteria.

The rapporteur must send the final evaluation report to ICROFS (icrofs@icrofs.org) with cc to the other experts in the group no later than 25th August 2016.

TIME SCHEDULE

The planned schedule and activities for the expert evaluation process are listed in the table below:

ACTION	SCHEDULED
○ Experts receive list of applicants and check for conflicts of interest	22 June 2016
○ Experts submit the declaration of impartiality and confidentiality to ICROFS	29 June 2016
○ Experts receive the applications	1 July 2016
○ Individual evaluation	from 4 July to 10 August 2016
○ Rapporteurs write the draft evaluation report	10-17 August 2016
○ Expert panel members agree on final evaluation report	17-24 August 2016
○ ICROFS receives the final evaluation reports	25 August 2016

ICROFS

For inquiries, replies and submissions, please use the ICROFS email: icrofs@icrofs.org

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