Funding Criteria

(Revised and approved by the board on 1 November 2022)

Preliminary remark: this document is deducted from the funding policy and the funding strategy and conducts the assessment of external project applications and serves as a guideline for external reviewers and the writing of the secretariat statement.

1. Impact potential

The foundation aims to create as much change as possible with its project funding which will create impact in the long term. The impact potential therefore is the essential element in the selection process.

The assessment of the impact potential assumes that the project is completed and successful in achieving its proposed scientific aims. To define and assess impact potential three criteria are taken into consideration: relevance, potential for change and transfer potential. These three criteria are defined below and are not mutually exclusive.

1.1. Relevance

The relevance of a project is high if:

- The project addresses a neglected important topic that is within the range of the foundation's strategic funding areas.
- There is a substantial need for the produced knowledge in the scientific community or with relevant stakeholders.
- The expected results will provide a relevant and beneficial effect for a target group or on an environmental issue.
- The project contributes to solve this problem in a sustainable (lasting) way.

1.2. Potential for change

We see the potential for change if the project:

- introduces new methods or approaches, especially inter- and transdisciplinary ones.
- aims to establish a new solution.
- strives to remove obstacles like bottlenecks or barriers to progress in research.
- causes a change of mind in the research community.
- introduces inter- or transdisciplinary issues.
- raises awareness and acceptance in a targeted group.
- fosters the implementation of research / implements an application
- creates leverage (e.g. through a high degree of innovation, by involvement of other partners, causing additional fundings, rising awareness etc.).
- provides clear and understandable criteria to determine the impact of the project.

1.3. Transfer potential / dissemination

- Is there potential to disseminate the results inside and outside academia?
- Is there awareness about the needs, interests, information channels and habits of the target groups?
- Does the proposal include a viable dissemination plan that is appropriate for the scope of the project and tailors dissemination efforts to that audience?
- Will the project results raise awareness and be used within the discipline / in other disciplines / in the broader society?
- Is there a potential that the results of the project are applied and multiplied in- and outside academia?

2. Project Quality

2.1. Novelty and originality[1]

- Is the project original, novel and innovative? For example, does the project challenge existing paradigms or practice instead of repeating them?
- Is the addressed topic outside-of-the box? / Created in an interdisciplinary context?
- Is there a potential for the creation of new outside-of-the-box knowledge, exciting new ideas, new fundamental questions and approaches?
- Does it use novel technologies / methodologies?
- Is it an innovative application of existing methodologies / technologies in new areas?
- Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

2.2. Approach

- Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
- Is the project plan appropriate to the aims of the project?
- Has the PI addressed potential problems and alternative strategies if applicable?
- Is the research question addressed by using new perspectives in an interdisciplinary way?
- Does the application define clear criteria and goals to measure scientific success and impact?

2.3. Probability of success/ Risk

- What is the probability that the project will be successful? Which risks have to be considered?
- Are there clear criteria to determine the scientific success of the project?

[1] European Peer Review Guide, p. 28

- Please evaluate the probability of success. This is the only place where this question should be addressed. Other criteria should be evaluated under the assumption that the project aims are achieved.

3. Resources

3.1. (Scientific) competence of the project lead (PI and co-PIs)

The foundation is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment: DORA.

- *Please don't use journal-based metrics (e.g., the Journal Impact Factor) in this assessment but focus on scientific content.*
- *Please use the full variety of research outputs when assessing impact and quality of scientific outputs of the project team (i.e., scientific content of research articles, data, software, IP and research capacity building) and also consider the influence on policy and practice.*

- Is the project lead (PI and Co-PIs), well suited to guide, manage and conduct the project?
- If somebody in the project lead is in the early stages of independent careers or in a new research field, do they have the appropriate experience, training and/or mentoring?
- Do the research outputs of the PI (and Co-PIs) demonstrate accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?

3.2. Leadership competence of project lead (PI and co-PIs)

- Is the project lead thinking outside-of-the box / beyond today's common thinking in the community?
- Is the project lead willing and able and has the network to transfer the project related output in- and outside academia? Or is the project lead able to initiate and support such a process?
- Is there experience and a track record in communicating to audiences in- and outside academia?
- Is the project lead willing and able to initiate an application / a multiplication of the project-related output in- and outside academia?
- Is the project lead willing and able to exploit the potential of the project?
- If the project is collaborative or multi-PI, do they have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organisational structure appropriate for the project?

3.3. Environment

- Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical and human resources available to the project lead adequate for the proposed project?
- Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, study populations, or collaborative arrangements?
- Will the project benefit from a communication office or department?
- Does the management of the organisation support the project?

3.4. Collaboration

- Are all necessary / any supporting disciplines involved in the cooperation?
- What type of collaboration is it (national, international, within one university, between different universities, involvement of target group)?
- Is the collaboration adequate to the research questions?
- Is the cooperation appropriately organised and budgeted? (E.g. is there a plan when and how involved collaboration partners will come together and share their knowledge and discuss conclusions?)

3.5. Budget

- Is the budget adequate? Are there any recommendations for a budget modification?
- Is the contribution of the Velux Stiftung crucial for the success of the project and necessary to support this project or are there other possible funding partners?

4. Proposal: approval or rejection

Please decide whether you would approve or reject the project considering the above criteria. An application does not have to be strong in all criteria to be approved.

Zürich, 1 November 2022

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replacing the version dated 3 November 2020.