



Guidelines for application and evaluation – Tuffo Stage 1 and Stage 2

Call 2021

English version

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Photo on cover: Helena Branzén, SGI

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1 Introduction

The Tuffo program aims to produce new knowledge that will contribute to an increased pace in the remediation of contaminated sites in Sweden, and enable the fulfilment of the environmental quality objective "a non-toxic environment". The initiative also aims to strengthen Swedish research and increase collaboration between academia, industry and society. The research program is run by the Swedish Geotechnical Institute (SGI). Tuffo has specially allocated funds for operations, knowledge dissemination and contributions to research projects within the program.

These instructions refer to those who are planning to apply for funding within the Tuffo program and to those who will evaluate the Tuffo applications. The document contains a description of the application process, the requirements for the funding application and a description of the assessment process with criteria. The instructions also describe the obligations of those who have been granted Tuffo funding. The document is valid from 2021-03-23 and until new instructions are published. For more information on current calls, please see the website www.sgi.se/Tuffo.

2 Tuffo's visions and objectives

Tuffo's vision is to contribute to meeting Sweden's environmental objectives by reducing the risk to humans and the environment caused by anthropogenic soil, groundwater and sediment pollution, as well as contributing to better utilization of natural resources.

The objectives of Tuffo are:

- increased pace of remediation actions,
- more efficient remediation,
- stronger connection between R&D and actual remediation projects,
- increased cooperation between different actors,
- stronger Swedish research environment,
- increased knowledge in the remediation business.

3 About the calls

Tuffo finances applied needs-based research, innovation and technology development in the investigation and remediation of contaminated sites. Knowledge needs are described, for example, in SGI's inventory of knowledge gaps¹. Tuffo calls can be "broad" or directed to a certain problem within the area of contaminated sites (contaminated soil, polluted groundwater and contaminated sediment). The focus of the call is described in the call text, which is published on the website www.sgi.se/Tuffo, in connection with the call.

¹ <https://www.sgi.se/sv/vagledning-i-arbetet/forenade-omraden/forskning-och-teknikutveckling/kunskapsbehov-och-effektivitetshinder/>

The annual call is a two-stage application and peer review process, including Stage 1 – Outline application and Stage 2 - Complete application. Stage 1 is open to all qualified applicants. For this a project idea and a project organization are requested. Applicants may submit several outline applications, but only one can move on to Stage 2.

The evaluation is carried out with the support of two groups, the Tuffo Stakeholders' panel, which consists of representatives of the industry and authorities, and the Tuffo Scientific review panel consisting of experienced Swedish and international researchers. In Stage 1, the Tuffo Stakeholders' panel evaluates and ranks the outline applications, and the applicants submitting the highest ranked outline applications are invited to submit full applications. In Stage 2, applications are ranked by both the Tuffo Stakeholders' panel and the Tuffo Scientific review panel. The final decision of funding is taken by SGI.

4 Eligibility criteria

This section sets out the formal requirements that must be met for an application to be considered for evaluation. Incomplete applications, or applications that do not meet the requirements in other ways, will not be processed.

4.1 Application documents

4.1.1 Stage 1

- The following instructions apply to the application: The application must be received by 15:00 on the last day of application's open period. Late applications are not considered. Supplements after the application deadline are not accepted.
- The application templates for Stage 1 should be used. The application, including attachments, should be sent as a Word file and as a PDF file to sgi@sgi.se. Enter "Tuffo / current year /" in the subject line of the email.
- The application must be correctly filled in with the specified font and font size, and must not exceed the specified amount of characters or pages.
- The application for Stage 1 must be written in Swedish.
- To be granted funding, at least 50 percent of the project's total budget must consist of co-financing (see further below under the section Finance).
- For the application Stage 1, attach the requested appendices in the specified templates (CV, publication list and list of conference contributions for the main applicant).

4.1.2 Stage 2

- The following instructions apply to the application:
- The deadline for applications is 15.00 on the last day of application's open period. Late applications are not considered. Supplements after the application deadline, except for the two signature forms (see below), are not accepted.

- The application template for Stage 2 should be used. The application, including attachments, should be sent as a Word file and as a PDF file to sgi@sgi.se. Enter "Tuffo / current year /" in the subject line of the email.
- The application must be correctly filled in with the specified font and font size, and must not exceed the specified number of characters or pages.
- The application for Stage 2 must be written in English, except for a popular scientific description in Swedish.
- To be granted funding, at least 50 percent of the project's total budget must consist of co-financing (see further below under the section Finance).
- For the application Stage 2, the requested appendices must be attached (Appendix A, B1, B2, C, D, E and Q). Please note that Appendices C, D and E must be submitted for both the main applicant and all co-applicant researchers.
- In connection with the application Stage 2, a Signature Form (Appendix S1) must be signed by both the applicant and the authorized representative of the project's administrating organization. The signature means:
 - o that the application is approved by the organization,
 - o that it is possible to conduct the project,
 - o that resources and equipment are available,
 - o that the cost estimate stated in the application has been approved by the applicant's organization.
- In connection with the application Stage 2, a letter of commitment from each prospective co-financer (Appendix S2) must be signed by the respective company's signatory. The signature means that the co-financing organization undertakes:
 - o to co-finance the project, provided that the project is allocated funds in the current year's call for Tuffo funds,
 - o to co-finance the project with the amounts for the specified project work packages specified in the letter,
 - o to assist the project with specified roles and tasks.
- Signature form, Appendix S1, as well as the letters of commitment for co-financing, Appendix S2, must have been received in original to SGI (Swedish Geotechnical Institute, 581 93 Linköping) within five working days after the closure of the current call. Label the envelope "Tuffo application".

4.2 Applicant

For applicants of the Tuffo calls, the following apply:

- The main applicant must have a doctorate degree and be employed by the administrating organization.

- The main applicant and all co-applicant researchers must have an employment of at least 20 percent at a research institution where the researcher carries out the intended research.
- Other staff working within the project need not have a doctorate degree.
- There is no age limit for applicants or participating researchers within a project, but full-time retired researchers cannot receive Tuffo funds for their own salary.
- Main applicants may submit several outline applications in Stage 1, but only one application can move on to Stage 2.

4.3 Administrating organization

For the Tuffo calls, the administrating organization must:

- be a Swedish university or college or other Swedish public research provider².
- be a legal person with a Swedish organization number.
- guarantee academic freedom within the scope of their assignment by allowing research problems to be freely chosen, research methods freely developed and research results freely published.
- ensure that the results of research conducted with the support of Tuffo are made openly available to other researchers as well as companies and interested public.

An administrating organization may not:

- be an organizational entity that conducts economic activities.

4.4 Project duration

The maximum project duration is three years. If there are special reasons, SGI may decide on an extension of the project time.

4.5 The project

The project's implementation and expected societal values should be described in the application. In addition, the application must state criteria below fulfilled. It is up to the applicant to describe, in the application, how and to what extent the project applied for meets these criteria. Please note that it is only what is stated in the application that will be evaluated in the review process. Our international assessors do not always know about Swedish conditions and the complexity of problems regarding contaminated sites in Sweden.

The project applied for should:

- be relevant to Tuffo's vision and objectives,
- be in line with prioritized research questions of the call (www.sgi.se/Tuffo),

² Being a research provider means that you have a documented research activity and are judged to be able to meet the commitments stated in the "Generella villkor för bidrag till forskning från Tuffo" (General Terms and Conditions for funds for research from Tuffo). These conditions stipulate, inter alia, that the project manager should be employed by the administrating organization and that the administrating organization as employer is responsible for obtaining the necessary resources for the research project.

- be connected to one or several governmental or private remediation projects, either already initiated or potential,
- focus on Swedish conditions,
- concern research or development that would not take place otherwise, i.e. it should not consider work that could be regarded as part of the investigation of a contaminated site,
- address questions that are relevant for several remediation sites,
- include participation of researchers as well as one or several relevant stakeholders/end users (e.g. authorities, consultants, contractors and facility owners),
- in addition to scientific publication, also include the dissemination of knowledge and communication to end users.

5 Economy

The application in Stage 1 only needs to contain an indicative budget. The complete organization and expected co-financing need not be confirmed in Stage 1.

The application in Stage 2 must contain a detailed budget with breakdown of respective elements in the form of salary costs for applicants and co-applicants as well as expenses. All co-financing must be stated here. Please note, that in Stage 2 of the application process it must be confirmed that you have at least 50 percent co-financing. Each prospective co-financer must sign a commitment letter, Appendix S2, for the project to be submitted in conjunction with the Stage 2 application. Specified templates must be completed and attached to the application. The total direct cost (excluding overhead costs) and the total cost (direct cost plus overhead cost) must be stated.

5.1 Co-financing

Tuffo can fund a maximum of 50 percent of eligible costs. Co-financing of at least 50 percent may refer to cash, but also costs for analyses, chemicals, leasing of machines, vehicles etc. Co-financing of salary costs can also be in-kind, based on an hourly cost with full transparency coverage but without profit. The hourly cost must be stated in the application documents. Already completed activities and expenses cannot be counted as co-financing. Nor can costs for applying for patents within the project be counted as co-financing. Please note that in Stage 2 applications it should be possible to confirm that you have at least 50 percent co-financing. In conjunction with the Stage 2 application, a letter of commitment from each prospective co-financer (Appendix S2) must be signed by the respective company signatory, see chapter 4.1.2, and sent in original to SGI within five working days after the closure of the current call.

5.2 Obligation to inform about other grants and contributions

The applicant shall inform if there are other applications to other financers regarding funding for the same or similar topics as for the proposed Tuffo project. The same applies

to grants already received from other financiers. It is important that it is clear which parts are funded by other projects and which part is being applied for within the Tuffo program.

Tuffo only allows a "brand new" project / subproject where Tuffo accounts for a maximum of 50 percent of the total cost. The other 50 percent must come from elsewhere (which could be taken from an already granted project). None of the work in the project / sub-project may be started before the Tuffo funding has been decided. This applies regardless of whether the work is to be paid for by Tuffo or by co-financing from an already granted project.

The information must indicate to what extent this other financier can influence the execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results. In addition, it should be stated who will have use of the results.

SGI reserves the right to reconsider Tuffo funding decisions based on information about other grants.

5.3 Eligible costs

Research support may only be paid to projects and applicants that meet the requirements of the EU policy state aid rules³ and the "Tuffo Regulation"⁴. Tuffo funding cannot be paid for activities that started before a decision on funding was made⁵.

For an expense to be eligible, it must:

- be factual and auditable,
- carried by project partners,
- have arisen during the project period set out in the grant decision,
- be established in accordance with the project partner's usual accounting principles and generally accepted accounting principles;
- be posted,
- be reasonable and have arisen solely for the implementation of the project.

Eligible costs must, in the project partner's account, be distinguishable from the organization's other transactions.

Eligible costs are:

- personnel costs, however with the limitation set out below,
- costs for materials, equipment and travel,
- costs for consultants, licenses etc.,
- other direct costs as well, indirect costs to the extent set out below.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651&from=EN>

⁴ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2017721-om-stod-till-forsknings-_sfs-2017-721

⁵ SFS 2017:271, 4 §

Full cost coverage is allowed, i.e. full transparency coverage, but not profit. The OH includes joint management, coordination, administration and premises. For existing employment, the salary applicable at the time of application, including social security contributions, shall be used for all subsequent years. In the case of new hires, the starting salary should be used. Annual salary increases must not be included.

Markup may be made on supplier invoices with a maximum of 8 percent on the invoices charged in the project. No markup may be made to grants that are passed on to fellow applicants within another organization or sub-consultants.

Tuffo funding may not be used for scholarships or educational grants. It must also not be used to cover the cost of applying for patents within the project.

6 Supporting documents for the application and templates

The call for tender consists of:

- Announcement text that is unique to each call (see www.sgi.se/Tuffo). This may include formulations that delineate or further define the actual call compared to what is stated in "Guidelines for application and evaluation - Tuffo Stage 1 and Stage 2 year / current year / year call". The announcement text also shows the last application date for Stage 1 and Stage 2, respectively.
- Instructions for applicants and evaluation - Tuffo Stage 1 and Stage 2 year / current year / year announcement (this document), is available as a PDF file for download.
- In Stage 1, outline application, the following template should be used:
 - o Tuffo - Announcement / current year / - Outline application Stage 1, which also includes templates for CV, publication list and list of conference contributions.
- In Stage 2, full application, the following templates should be used:
 - o Tuffo - Call / current year / : Application Stage 2
 - o Appendices
 - A. Time & action plan
 - B1. Costs applied for from Tuffo
 - B2. Total costs & funding
 - C. CVs
 - D. Publication lists
 - E. Lists of conference contributions
 - Q. Competence
 - S1. Signature form
 - S2. Letter of commitment from co-funding partners

All the announcement documents are available on the website www.sgi.se/Tuffo. The templates are Word or Excel files available for download.

7 Ethical considerations

The applicant should always indicate whether there are specific ethical aspects of the project. If so, the current ethical issues, and how they should be handled in the research work, must be reported. The main applicant (administrating organization) is responsible for ensuring that research conducted with awarded grants meets the terms and conditions set out in Swedish legislation and is conducted in accordance with good research practice.

8 Decisions and contracts

Granted projects are published on the website www.sgi.se/Tuffo. Decisions are notified to applicants by e-mail as follows:

- Stage 1, granted: Decision is notified via email.
- Stage 1, rejection: Decision with justification is notified via email.
- Stage 2, granted: Decisions with justification, contract documentation and General conditions for funding from Tuffo, will be notified via e-mail. Contract documentation is sent in the original by regular mail.
- Stage 2, rejection: Decision with justification is notified via email.

Decisions cannot be appealed⁶. The project can only start when the contract is valid.

8.1 Payment and financial requirements

The financial resources are given as grants, which prerequisites that state funds for this purpose have been paid to SGI. The research funds are paid to the main applicant's administrating organization. The main applicant is responsible for the distribution and payment of funds to any co-applicants. When a contract is signed 75 percent of the grant awarded is paid. The remaining 25 percent is paid after approved final reporting. Funds can be withdrawn in case the project is not carried out according to the application and contract.

9 Reporting of projects

Updated project information (how the project proceeds in time and financially, as well as results achieved) must be provided at least once a year upon request. In addition to scientific publications, all projects must be finalized in Swedish in a final report written in Tuffo's report template.

⁶ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2017721-om-stod-till-forsknings-_sfs-2017-721

All projects, if SGI requests this, must also be reported during the project period on at least one occasion that Tuffo arranges and when the project is completed. In total, two compulsory meetings during the project period must be apparent in the budget.

Costs for reporting and participation in project reports shall be included in the project budget. Reporting requirements are specified in the contract based on the need for knowledge dissemination and follow-up of the project.

10 Availability of results

Scientific articles and reports reviewed via peer review should be published with Open Access so that the research results are free to read and download from the Internet. Articles must, no later than six months after publication in a journal, be archived in an open archive or published in web-based journals that apply Open Access. The cost of publishing with Open Access should be included in the research application budget as a direct cost. The following three variants are acceptable alternatives for meeting the requirements: Open Access Gold (publication in open scientific journals), "parallel" publication (in addition to publishing in a traditional journal, a copy is freely available in an open archive) and hybrid (the journal offers Open Access for individual articles for a fee).

11 Approval of completed project

Final reporting shall be made no later than the time specified in the concluded contract. Allocated but unused funds must be repaid in connection with this. Upon approval, the remaining 25 percent of the project budget is paid.

11.1 Delay and recovery

Any delay must be approved by SGI, otherwise SGI reserves the right not to pay out the remaining 25 percent of the grant. If there are severe delays or the project has not been carried out according to the application and contract, this is counted as breach of contract. Funds already paid out may then also be recoverable.

12 Public access to information and personal data handling

A grant application, with accompanying appendices, submitted to SGI is regarded as a public document under Swedish law. Decisions on grants awarded are posted on Tuffo's web page. The results of projects financed under Tuffo, such as reports, developed methods, etc. will also be public. Final reports will be published on Tuffo's website.

By applying for a grant, the applicant also agrees that in connection with the decision, SGI may publish information about grants awarded, information about the project and the names of applicants / contributing researchers. Applications received are public documents.

Information on how SGI handles personal data can be found on our web.

ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is an international, open register where researchers can freely and without charge create an identifier, a unique ID number. The purpose of the service is to facilitate the identification of authors globally when publishing scientific literature. As of the 2020 call, ORCID needs to be specified for at least the main applicant for Tuffo's grant application, since this information is needed when reporting to SweCRIS, see also section 12.1.

12.1 Reporting to SweCRIS

SweCRIS (Current Research Information System) is a national database for compiling research funders' distribution of grant funds to Swedish recipients. SweCRIS is administered by the Swedish Research Council on behalf of the Government and aims to provide a simple picture of a researcher's contribution to Swedish research regardless of research financier, and to simplify the reporting of research funding data to beneficiary organizations. SGI has had an agreement with SweCRIS since 2019 and will, according to the agreement, supply data for the projects that have been granted Tuffo funding.

The information provided to SweCRIS is:

- Full name and e-mail address for the main applicant
- ORCID for main applicant
- Fund manager / Coordinating organization
- Organization type (eg. university or college)
- Grant type
- Subject Classification
- Project information - title, project description and active project years

All project information, except ORCID and e-mail address of the main applicant, that have been reported to SweCRIS is open to the public through the SweCRIS website (www.swecris.se).

13 References to Tuffo

When disseminating results, it should be clear that the research was conducted with the support of Tuffo. In this recognition, Tuffo should be mentioned in one of the following ways:

- "Tuffo (Technology Development and Research of contaminated sites) - a research and development program run by the Swedish Geotechnical Institute."
- "Tuffo - a research and development program run by the Swedish Geotechnical Institute."
- "Tuffo - A research and innovation program on contaminated sites managed by the Swedish Geotechnical Institute."

14 Evaluation of applications

The evaluation is based on Tuffo's objectives and stated requirements, as well as the direction of the call (www.sgi.se/Tuffo). It is done in two stages, where Stage 1 includes an outline application and Stage 2 a complete application. The outline applications received are assessed on the basis of the potential and credibility of the idea in relation to the objectives of Tuffo and the direction the call. The applications in Stage 2 are assessed on the basis of the scientific quality of the research execution, the quality of the entire implementation, the competence of the project group and the societal benefit and effect that the project results are expected to lead to.

The evaluation is carried out with the support of two groups, Tuffo Stakeholders' panel, which consists of representatives of the industry and authorities, and Tuffo's Scientific review panel, which can consist of both Swedish and international experienced researchers. The Stakeholders' panel assesses the Stage 1 applications, i.e. the outline applications. The applications that proceed to Stage 2 are assessed by both groups. Formal decision on awarding grants is made by SGI. The guideline for how many outline applications, which will go on to Stage 2, is that the total applied budget for these projects corresponds to roughly the double available budget for the current call.

14.1 Conflict of interest

Fundamental in the evaluation of applications received is impartiality. Provisions governing conflict of interest can be found in sections 16 and 18 of "The Administrative Procedures Act"⁷.

Below are some circumstances when there is a risk of conflict of interest. In such cases, the members of the review panel involved should contact the Tuffo secretariat to discuss whether the circumstances in question may be a situation with a risk of conflict of interest.

- If the person involved in the review process, or any person related to this person, can be affected by the decision to a not insignificant extent.
- An ongoing close collaboration with applicants in a case; for example, being a deputy or representative, doctoral and supervisor relationship, management and employee relations, co-authorship of books and articles or joint research.
- Recently ended close collaborations with applicants in a case may lead to conflict. In some situations, even close collaborations that have been concluded during the last five years can also lead to conflict of interest.
- Belonging to the same department or company as the applicant.
- The applicant evaluates in another context, competence, research grant application, department or subject that applies to the member of the review panel.

⁷ SFS 2017:900

If conflict of interest exists, the panel member must abstain from processing and reviewing the application in question and must leave the meeting room during discussions concerning the application. Meeting notes detailing conflicts of interest will be kept during panel meetings.

14.2 Evaluation criteria – Stage 1

14.2.1 Societal value

In order for the project to lead to societal value, the research question, which is intended to be resolved, needs to be of sufficient relevance. In addition, the expected result should produce effect and have sufficient scope and utility. The societal value criterion consists of these three parts:

Relevance

- a) How well does the research question meet Tuffo's objectives set out in section 2?
- b) How well does the research question meet the direction of the call and the requirements (see www.sgi.se/Tuffo)?
- c) Does the research question/project meet the Tuffo relevance requirements specified in section 4.5?

Expected results

- a) Does the project solve the stated research question?
- b) How can the expected results make a difference, in the short or long term, for the remediation of contaminated areas in Sweden, and in relation to Tuffo's and the procurement objectives?
- c) Do the indicators or measures of effect stated in the application indicate, partly, that the project is leading towards the objectives of Tuffo and partly whether the project has succeeded?

Expected scope and utility

- a) Is there potential for the expected results to reach the target groups and to make them useful?
- b) Do the results have the prerequisites for being used in several remediation projects in addition to the specific object to which the application relates?

14.2.2 Quality

In order for the research to be of high quality, the competence of the project team must be high. In addition, research must be conducted in such a way that it is quality assured. The quality criterion therefore consists of the two parts, competence and implementation. The assessment of quality differs slightly between the different application stages, where the Stage 1 application is more general and the Stage 2 application is more detailed. Note that the complete project organization does not need to be confirmed in Stage 1. The assessment in Stage 1 is made regarding the main applicant's competence and CV and the potential of the intended project's organization. Also note that in Stage 1, the

implementation will be assessed in a general way, as only a comprehensive plan is required. The main evaluation of scientific approach and implementation is done in Stage 2.

Competence

- a) Does the intended project group consist of relevant actors and does the group have the potential to solve the research question raised?
- b) Does the main applicant have appropriate scientific competence and project management experience?
- c) Has the main applicant experience of communication and utilization of research results?

Implementation

- a) Are approaches and methods selected appropriate and feasible?
- b) Is the budget realistic and reasonable in relation to the scope of the project?
- c) Is there a plan for how the results should be taken care of, disseminated and utilized?

14.3 Evaluation criteria – Stage 2

Tuffo's objective is to make a significant contribution to better and more efficient remediation work, so that we can deal with contaminated areas faster and more sustainably and thereby reduce the risks to the environment and human beings. The Tuffo funding applications and the results need scientific quality assurance by peer review. In addition, to achieve Tuffo's objectives, the results must be able to provide substantial impact and be applicable in remediation projects. Important in the evaluation of the applications is therefore the benefit and effect that project results, in the short or long term, are expected to lead to. A project that delivers high scientific quality but cannot be expected to lead to, or substantially contribute to, Tuffo's objectives has a little chance of being allocated funding by Tuffo. The reviewing process and the evaluation criteria have been designed to reflect these expectations on the applications and the projects.

As in the evaluation of Stage 1 outline applications, Stage 2 applications are also evaluated for societal value and quality. The assessment of quality differs somewhat between the various application stages, as the Stage 1 application is more an overview and the Stage 2 application is more in-depth.

14.3.1 Societal value

To reach societal benefit, the research question to be solved must be relevant. In addition, the expected result must have an impact and must also be universal and applicable. The criterion of societal value therefore comprises four sub-criteria, and the description how these criteria are evaluated is described below. In Stage 2, the societal value is evaluated thoroughly by the Stakeholders' panel and briefly by the Scientific review panel.

Relevance - Tuffo

- a) How important is the proposed project for the objective and requirement of the call (see www.sgi.se/Tuffo).
- b) Does the proposed project have the potential to meet the objectives of Tuffo (section 2)?
- c) Do the proposed project and Tuffo's relevance requirements (section 4.5) agree?

Expected impact

- a) Can the indicated indicators or efficacy measurements demonstrate that the project has been successful?
- b) Is there a potential for the expected results to make a difference for the remediation of contaminated areas in Sweden, in the short and long term?
- c) Can the indicated indicators or measurements demonstrate that the project is in line with Tuffo's objectives, the objectives of the call and meets Tuffo's relevance requirements (section 4.5)?

Expected universality and applicability

- a) How will the results be applied and have an impact?
- b) How universal and applicable are the results expected to be?
- c) How effectively will end-users be reached?
- d) How likely is it that the project results can/will be able to be used in several remediation projects?

Coordination and dissemination of results

- a) Are the project organization's (including all participants involved in the project) accumulated competence relevant and is there right and sufficient experience to be able to implement the project and achieve the direction of the call, as well as Tuffo's objectives and requirements?
- b) How is the project group's overall experience used to achieve the project objectives?

14.3.2 Research Quality

In order for the proposed research project to be of societal value, it needs high research quality. As criteria to ensure this, the scientific competence of the project group, relevance of the research question and the method and performance is evaluated in the Tuffo Stage 2 applications. The criterion of research quality therefore comprises those two sub-criteria, and the description of how these criteria are evaluated is described below. In Stage 2, the quality is evaluated thoroughly by the Scientific review panel and briefly by the Stakeholders' panel.

Method and Performance

- a) Is the scientific approach appropriate and feasible?
- b) Is there a concrete and realistic plan for the scientific implementation?

- c) Does the proposed project have great news value, both in terms of scientific and societal impact?
- d) Is there a concrete and realistic plan for the dissemination and implementation of results, both to the target groups and the national/international scientific community?
- e) Is the budget realistic and reasonable in relation to the scope of the project?

Competence

- a) What experience of conducting research projects, do the main applicant and co-applicant researchers have?
- b) What experience, of communicating research results to stakeholders outside of the academia, do the main applicant and co-applicant researchers have?
- c) What individual scientific quality do the main applicant and co-applicant researchers' publications hold? What other merits do they hold?

14.4 Scoring scale and comments

At the evaluations, each member of the review panel scores the applications based on the evaluation criteria. In addition, each evaluator writes brief comments about the strengths and weaknesses of each application. The comments are mandatory and are used to facilitate discussion at panel meetings and to help compile the written statement in the grant decisions.

In Stage 2, the applications are reviewed by both the Scientific review panel and the Stakeholders' panel. The Scientific review panel meets first and, at its meeting, the Stakeholders' panel receives the overall result of the Scientific review panel assessment as the basis for its discussion. The individually set scores, written comments, and discussions at panel meetings constitute the panel's work material and are not communicated to the applicant.

In the evaluation, scores are set according to the 6-point scale below:

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

In Stage 1, the Stakeholders' panel awards scores for each of the sub-criteria for societal value quality according to the 6-point score scale. For the two quality criteria (competence & methods) a combined score is awarded according to the same scale.

In Stage 2, the Scientific review panel members award scores for each of the sub-criteria for quality and give a combined score for the four societal value criteria according to the 6-point score scale. The Stakeholders' panel, on the other hand, awards scores for each of the sub-criteria for societal value according to the 6-point score scale and for the quality criteria a combined score is awarded according to the same scale.



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