

# Terms of Reference for the evaluation of the societal impact of the National Research Centre for the Working Environment, 2020-2023

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Ledelses- og kommunikationsse-  
kretariatet  
LMT

## 1. Background and Purpose

The current evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the executive order on evaluation of government research institutes. The Danish National Research Centre for the Working Environment's (NFA) core tasks include research and related activities such as dissemination of research, education of researchers, and counseling of and service to the authorities.

The evaluation concerns the societal impact of NFA's consulting to and services rendered to the authorities as well as policy and workplace-oriented research dissemination. In parallel, a separate evaluation will be carried out to assess the academic impact of NFA's research, research dissemination, and education, focusing on the research results achieved by NFA during the evaluation period.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess, learn from, and improve NFA's institutional performance. The evaluation should infer judgment against the highest international standards within occupational safety and health research as evaluation standard.

NFA defines its societal impact as the occupational, health-related, political, social, and/or economic improvements that are wholly or partially, directly or indirectly, influenced by NFA's research and research results.

The evaluation of NFA's societal impact will be conducted as a peer review of NFA's strategy, initiatives, and documentation, with the aim of providing recommendations and improvements for NFA's ongoing strategy and derived actions. The evaluation can draw on the extensive evaluations of NFA's societal impact on decision-makers and practitioners that NFA has conducted in the evaluation period.

More specifically, the planned evaluation of the societal impact aims to:

- Describe and assess the design, organization, and implementation of NFA's strategy to create societal impact from its research, research dissemination, as well as consulting to and services delivered to the authorities.

- Provide recommendations for how NFA can enhance its strategy, organization, and implementation efforts to strengthen its societal impact. The recommendations should include a description of the required resources and the feasibility of the proposals presented in the evaluation.

The target audiences for NFA's policy-oriented impact (upstream) are primarily the Danish Ministry of Employment, the Danish Working Environment Authority, the Employment Committee of the Parliament (BEU), labor market stakeholders, other relevant authorities in Denmark (e.g., the Danish Health Authority, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, and the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment), and international institutions with significant influence on Danish regulations (OECD, EU, EU-OSHA).

The target audiences for NFA's practitioner-oriented impact (downstream) are primarily the so-called "knowledge brokers" that work in or provide services to public and private enterprises, including work managers, occupational safety and health representatives in the legally mandated occupational safety and health organizations, union representatives, internal HR and occupational health consultants, occupational health coordinators, external occupational health advisors, consultants in employer-, sector- and employee organizations, instructors in occupational safety and health education, industry associations for occupational safety and health, and supervisors from the Danish Working Environment Authority. Managers and workers in workplaces are a secondary target audience.

The evaluation should cover the key impact pathways needed to ensure that the key stakeholders are aware of, and use NFA's research results to create positive societal changes. The evaluation is expected to address at a minimum NFA's:

- Institutional-, dissemination-, and research-to-practice (R2P) strategy,
- Organization and institutional structures including incentives,
- Practices for evaluating and documenting societal impact,
- Internal capacity-building to strengthen societal impact,
- Strategic initiatives for implementation including communication, stakeholder collaboration, funding applications etc.

The evaluation covers the period 2020-2023.

## **2. Evaluation Approach**

In sum, the evaluation of NFA's societal impact is organized as a peer-review evaluation carried out by experts in societal impact. It should evaluate NFA's strategy, actions, and documentation related to creating societal impact with the aim of providing recommendations and improvements for NFA's ongoing strategy.

The evaluation should be based on existing documentation produced by or for NFA, as well as data collection from stakeholders within and around NFA.

The evaluation should be presented in a report that includes a description and assessment of NFA's performances as well as recommendations for improvements.

The evaluation panel should consist of international and national experts with in-depth knowledge of research dissemination (including digital communication), research application, and societal impact of application-oriented research. The panel should be composed so that it among its members possess at a minimum:

- In-depth knowledge of best international practices for creating societal impact from practice-oriented research.
- Experience in mapping impact pathways for both upstream and downstream impact.
- Familiarity with key topics and stakeholders within the field of occupational safety and health and the Danish labor market model.

The panel should be independent of the Danish Ministry of Employment, including NFA. NFA's board appoints the panel based on recommendations from the Innovation Fund Denmark.

### **3. Evaluation Tasks**

The evaluation should address, among other things, the following questions:

#### *Design*

- Are NFA's strategies adequate to strengthen NFA's societal impact activities?
- How can NFA's strategies and institutional structures be improved to enhance the societal impact of NFA's research?
- How can NFA improve its internal capacity-building to strengthen NFA's societal impact activities?

#### *Organization*

- Is NFA's organization of the R2P effort adequate to enhance the societal impact of NFA's research?
- How can NFA strengthen its organization to enhance its work on improving societal impact?
- What leadership measures can NFA implement to enhance its work on improving societal impact?

#### *Implementation*

- Are NFA's implementation initiatives adequate to enhance its work on improving the societal impact of NFA's research?
- What additional initiatives can NFA implement to improve societal impact?
- How can NFA's documentation practices be strengthened to create the best possible conditions for learning in relation to societal impact?

### **4. Background Material**

NFA provides the necessary background material, which - as a starting point – includes:

- NFA's by-laws
- Evaluation reports on scientific and societal impact for the period 2014-19 and the board's follow-up statements (2021 and 2022)

- National occupational safety and health strategies for the evaluation period
- National strategy for occupational safety and health research
- NFA's strategy for 2020, 2021-2023, communication strategy and research-to-practice strategy
- NFA's research programs for 2020-2023
- NFA's goals and performance management contracts for 2020-2023
- NFA's annual reports and annual statements for the evaluation period
- NFA's management information on societal impact
- NFA's scientific articles and conference papers on societal impact
- NFA's impact cases
- NFA's documentation reports on impact investigations 2020-2023
- External report on upstream impact in 2022 and associated methods description
- Method descriptions of in-depth interview surveys
- Process diagrams for application processes
- Minutes from follow-up group meetings, etc.
- Data from research management information system (Pure)

## **5. Procedure**

An independent academic consultant will assist the evaluation panel during the visit to NFA and in the preparation of the evaluation report.. NFA provides practical assistance to the evaluators, such as facilitating contact with relevant stakeholders, arranging meetings, and providing relevant documentation.

## **6. Completion**

The evaluation should be presented in the form of a report that includes a summary of conclusions and recommendations, no later than October 1, 2024. The evaluation should also include an overall conclusion on the evaluation of societal impact and academic impact.

The detailed timetable for the process will be agreed upon with the evaluators once they are appointed.

## **7. Funding**

The expenses for the evaluation will be covered by the Danish Ministry of Employment.