Attachment:

Principles for priority-setting and allocation of funding under the National Financing Initiative for Research Infrastructure

Direct funding for national infrastructure is allocated via funding announcements under the National Financing Initiative for Research Infrastructure. The funding announcements are followed by an assessment and prioritisation process that gives consideration to both scientific merit and strategic relevance.

It is essential that research infrastructure projects exhibit high scientific merit to be deemed worthy of funding. The scientific review is carried out by international referees and serves as important input for the Research Council's strategic review and decision-making process. Grant applications are normally assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Quality and impact of the proposed research using the infrastructure;
- Planned ability of the infrastructure to enhance innovation in existing industries and/or newly established companies as well as the competitiveness of Norwegian industry internationally;
- Quality and national standing of the research groups in their particular field, as well as the institution's suitability as a host institution for the infrastructure;
- Interaction between new infrastructure and any existing infrastructures;
- Position of the infrastructure in the international landscape as well as in planned and existing international cooperation;
- Potential to establish international networks, and capacity to carry out high-priority research that Norwegian research groups could not otherwise conduct on their own;
- Quality of the project plans and competence of the project management team.

Grant applications for national infrastructures must satisfy the strategic requirements and guidelines set out in the funding announcements. Applications will also be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- The infrastructure must be of widespread national interest;
- The infrastructure must support strategic priorities specified in national strategies and described in more detail in the funding announcement;
- The infrastructure must promote effective task-sharing and coordination between Norwegian research groups within the relevant research areas;
- There must be plans in place to make the infrastructure accessible to users outside the host institutions;

- The infrastructure must support national industrial priorities (when relevant);
- The infrastructure must contribute to long-term competence building in research areas that are expected to be of major importance to Norway;
- The infrastructure must reflect and reinforce the host institutions' strategic plans and priorities, and there must be plans in place for funding the operation of the infrastructure once the project period is concluded;
- The infrastructure must be of relevance and benefit to Norwegian society.