

Stavanger Center for Innovation Research

Call for research proposals

Introduction

New ideas and concepts are the key to prosperity and to the wealth and wellbeing of nations, regions and individuals. As the world becomes more globalized, the advanced, high-wage economies must rely on their applied inventiveness to maintain their future prosperity. There is also growing expectations that a large public sector should offer improved services. Innovation has become a major field of study in economics, management, sociology, science and technology, and history. The University in Stavanger and IRIS (International Research Institute if Stavanger) have therefore decided to establish a joint center for innovation research. The main research theme is “Transforming city regions” with a particular focus on the region’s enterprises, institutions, and its management and innovation systems. Realizing that most innovation processes take place in organizations, studies of the micro foundations and management of these processes in enterprises and the public sector are essential.

The Stavanger region is presently undergoing radical transformation processes and offers great opportunities for high quality research on innovation processes. Transforming the region from a prominent oil and gas cluster to a modern energy cluster is a great concern and implies both historical as well as forward looking studies. The city region’s position as a European capital of culture in 2008 raises the question of the role of culture and the experience industries’ potential to support diversity and creativity as drivers of innovation. The links between cultural identity and regional development deserves special attention. The region’s dependence on the petroleum industry raises the issue of developing new and sustainable clusters, diversifying into renewable energy or other related industries. Expectations to the public sector as provider of services are steadily on the rise, and calls for research both from an efficiency perspective as well as innovative products and services.

So, in various ways the Stavanger region stands out as a testing ground or a laboratory for new ideas, innovation models and mechanisms for strategic regional transformation processes. This is why we have decided to use the experience and the challenges facing this region as the empirical framework and basis for this call for research proposals. The research to be carried out should, however, also be of relevance to regional transformation in other parts of the world. Comparative studies will therefore be of particular interest, along with papers addressing the special opportunities and challenges of the Stavanger region. The effect of globalization on these transformations is a central issue.

Research proposals

Based on the research program for the center, we invite applicants to compete for research projects. Innovations are stimulated by a diversity of individuals and perspectives. Project proposals should be written by multidisciplinary teams collaborating with well reputed international researchers. In addition to the international

transfer of expertise, the research team should be organized to facilitate transfer of knowledge between senior and junior researchers.

The research proposals should be limited to maximum ten pages and submitted by September 1 2008. The project must be concluded with a paper to be presented at the center's first international conference in June 2009 with a subsequent international publication. The maximum limit for a project is NOK 1 mill, and up to ten proposals will be accepted. All proposals should be written in English. The proposals will be academically evaluated by the international panel and awarded by the board of the Center. Applications should be sent to the Director of the Center martin.gjelsvik@iris.no.

The format of the applications should be in line with the standard formula used by the Research Council of Norway.

The following criteria will be applied in the evaluation process:

Relevance

Give a brief description of how the project is relevant in relation to both the research program and regional challenges or strategies. How can the project contribute to descriptions and understanding of innovation processes and thereby enable regional individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance their capabilities to innovate. The relevance may be associated with the Stavanger region in particular as well as the region as a more abstract concept constituting processes of identity and meaning formation. Are there any comparative aspects in time or space that will be studied in order to place the regional experience in a wider context?

Project management, organization and collaboration

Describe the composition of the project team and its academic and professional qualifications to accomplish the goals of the project. Give an account of the intended implementation and collaboration in the project. In particular this account should describe how national and international partners are expected to enhance the quality of the project and its contribution to the ambitions of the center. The project manager has a doctoral degree and is employed at either UiS or IRIS. Non academic partners are welcome in the project teams, as well as academic partners in particular from institutions with a strategic relationship with UiS or IRIS.

Research quality and renewal

Describe the objective of the project, its research methodology, and its contribution to disciplinary renewal and originality. Give the reason for the selected methods and indicate how they can inform the issues or hypotheses to be addressed in the project. Indicate how the multidisciplinary approach may offer new insights. Describe how the theoretical perspectives are associated with the regional capacity to innovate.

Project plan and budget

Give a brief progress plan including the main activities and milestones. The plan must convincingly indicate how the project is to be implemented within the constraints of

resource and time limits. The budget should indicate a credible use of resources related to the main activities.

The objective of the center

The objective of the center is to achieve a well reputed international status and to qualify as a Norwegian Center of Excellence within the auspices and management of the Norwegian Research Council. Indicate the intended contribution of the research proposal to this objective, and describe how the research proposal could be included in or further developed into a more comprehensive portfolio of projects which could serve as a basis for a future center of excellence.