FRIPRO
Granting principles

1. Background and general principles

1.1 The application review process

FRIPRO uses open-ended calls for proposals with continuous application processing for the application type Researcher Project, where researchers can submit applications at any time. Available funding for new projects is distributed in six equal decision rounds per calendar year, with allocations every other month.

The Portfolio Board for Ground-breaking Research – which has decision-making authority for FRIPRO – decides the rules for funding decisions. The Research Council's administration will make a recommendation for funding decisions for applications to be processed in accordance with the rules. The portfolio board checks that the rules have been complied with and makes decisions on allocations and rejections.

The purpose of the rules is to ensure that the allocations contribute to achieving the set objectives and budget allocations for the funding scheme. This includes a planned budget allocation to FRIPRO's three research domains, prioritisation of the quality and potential of the applications, an appropriate distribution of available funding across the three career stages in the scheme, and that priority is given to applications with a female project manager. In addition, all applications must be treated fairly, regardless of subject and topic.

Main principles for decision rounds

- Up to 75% of the funds are awarded according to grades and the project manager's gender ("FRIPRO ranking").
- The rest of the funds are used to even out
    - distribution of funding for the three application variants (*international mobility, early career* and *experienced scientists*)
    - distribution of funding to the three research domains (*humanities and social sciences* (humsam), *medicine, biology and health* (medbio) and *mathematics, natural sciences and technology* (natek))
- Eligible applications will participate in the competition for funding in 3 decision rounds.

The detailed rules are described further in this document.

1.2 FRIPRO-ranking

All FRIPRO applications are assessed by peer reviewers in accordance with four assessment criteria: *Research quality – potential for advancing the state-of-the-art* (potential), *Research quality – quality of R&D activities* (quality), *Implementation* and *Impact*. The peer reviewers set a grade from 1-7 (where 7 is best) for each criterion.

Only applications that receive a grade of 6 or 7 on all four criteria are eligible for funding in FRIPRO. The eligible applications are ranked in 24 categories according to grades and the gender of the project manager: FRIPRO ranking 1-24 (see Table 1, below).

The main principle for allocations is that applications are preferably granted from the highest FRIPRO ranking, where there are applications being processed.

In the FRIPRO ranking, the assessment criteria *potential* and *quality* are given the highest importance, and equal importance. Applications with a mark of 7 for both are ranked first (FRIPRO

ranking 1-8, marked in green in Table 1). Then there are the applications with a grade of 7 for one and 6 for the other of these two (FRIPRO ranking 9-16, marked in beige) and finally the applications with a grade of 6 for both (FRIPRO ranking 17-24, marked in grey-blue).

Implementation is considered the third most important assessment criterion. Applications with a mark of 7 are ranked ahead of those with a mark of 6 on this criterion, within each group of marks on *potential* and *quality* (for example, 1-4 in green and 5-8 in grey-blue, respectively).

Impact is considered to be the least important assessment criterion in FRIPRO. Applications with a mark of 7 are ranked ahead of those with a mark of 6 on this criterion, within each group of marks on *implementation* (for example, 1-2 in green and 3-4 in grey-blue, respectively).

When the applications are ranked equally on the basis of the four assessment criteria, those with a female project manager will be ranked ahead of those with a male candidate, in accordance with the priority set out in the calls (e.g. 1 and 2 respectively). All odd-numbered FRIPRO rankings are therefore applications with a female project manager, while the even-numbered rankings have a male.

Table 1 – FRIPRO ranking with associated grades for each assessment criterion, as well as the project manager's gender (F = female; M = male)

FRIPRO-rangering	Potential	Quality	Implementation	Impact	Gender
1	7 for both		7	7	F
2					M
3				6	F
4					M
5			6	7	F
6					M
7				6	F
8					M
9	one 7 and one 6		7	7	F
10					M
11				6	F
12					M
13			6	7	F
14					M
15				6	F
16					M
17	6 for both		7	7	F
18					M
19				6	F
20					M
21			6	7	F
22					M
23				6	F
24					M

1.3 Goals for the budget distribution

Budget distribution between research domains

The objectives of the goals for budget distribution between the research domains are to provide predictability for the sector by ensuring that the distribution between the domains is relatively stable over time and at the same time mildly shifting the funds between the domains based on the need for FRIPRO funding, calculated by the amount of funding applied for within each domain. The research domains are described in the document *FRIPRO – terminology and framework for the scheme*.

Goal: 90 % of the available budget for the decision round follows the distribution of the available budget in the previous decision round and 10 % follows the distribution in the amount applied for in new applications for consideration in the current decision round.

If the distribution in the previous and current decision rounds is equal, the target will entail equal success rates for the three domains.

The variation from the target shall be a maximum of 4.0 percentage points. This gives a target window of ± 4.0 percentage points for each research domain.

Budget distribution between application type variants

The purpose of the goal for budget distribution between the application type variants is to contribute to a desired distribution of FRIPRO's funds across the three career stages for which the scheme is announcing funding.

Goal: Equal success rate for the three variants.

Variation from goal:

- For *Researcher Projects for Experienced Scientists* and *Researcher Projects for Early Career Scientists*: The success rate must be a maximum of 10 % below the success rate for the other, and a maximum of 30 % below the success rate for *Three-year Researcher Project with International Mobility*.
- The success rate for *Three-year Researcher Project with international mobility* must be a maximum of 10 % below the success rate for the other two variants.

1.4 Equalisation mechanisms

FRIPRO uses four equalisation mechanisms when selecting applications for funding. The equalisation mechanisms are intended to contribute to achieving the set objectives for budget allocation, cf. 1.3.

1. *Minimum requirements for application type variants:* At least one application for each variant must be granted in each decision round, provided that there is a qualified application of each variant.
2. *Budget distribution between research domains:* equalisation to contribute to the desired budget distribution between FRIPRO's three domains.
3. *Budget allocation between application type variants:* equalisation to contribute to the desired budget distribution between FRIPRO's three career stages – the three application type variants *Researcher Projects for Experienced Scientists*, *Researcher Projects for Early Career* Scientists and *Three-Year Researcher Project with International Mobility*.
4. *Budget distribution between peer groups:* mild equalisation between the peer reviewer groups in which the applications are grouped for peer review.

Equalisation mechanisms 2-4 are used at the same time both to limit the research domains and variants to which the next application may belong when preliminary allocations deviate too much from the budget allocation target, and to prioritise applications where there are several applications to choose from (see Chapter 3).

In addition, we use an equalisation mechanism to contribute to even competition throughout and across years, which means that qualified applications participate in the competition for funding three times, in the same way as newly assessed applications.

2. Rules for recommendations and decisions for funding of applications

The following rules apply to decisions on funding for Researcher Project applications to FRIPRO:

1. Non-qualified applications are rejected *en bloc*. Project managers for applications with a mark below the applicable submission restriction limits, are given a submission restriction period.
2. Up to 75 % of the available budget for the decision round is allocated to applications in FRIPRO ranking 1-16 (Table 1), based on the FRIPRO ranking only. This is done by granting *en bloc* for all applications in one and one FRIPRO ranking group from 1 onwards, until there is no funding for all the applications in a group. Within this group, the *standard application prioritisation in FRIPRO,* section 4, is used for the selection of the last application(s) until 75 % of the funding has been used up. (See Chapter 3, below.) There is no requirement for a research domain or application variant (points 1-3 of the standard application prioritisation) – nor if the budget distribution between research domains and/or application type variants goes beyond its target windows.
3. If at least one application for each application type variant has not already been approved in the decision round, equalisation mechanism 1 is used (see section 1.4). The top-ranked application of the missing variant(s) is granted. If there are several applications of the same variant within this ranking, the *standard application prioritisation in FRIPRO,* section 4, is used, where only the variant in question is permitted.
4. The remaining budget for the decision round is allocated to one application at a time using *the standard application prioritisation in FRIPRO*. The budget distribution and success rates for the application type variants are recalculated after each application is approved.
5. Qualified applications that have not been granted and that have participated in three rounds of decisions are rejected.
6. Qualified applications that have not been granted, and that have participated in one or two decision rounds, will not receive a decision, and will be included in the competition for funding in the next decision round.

3. Standard application prioritisation in FRIPRO

The standard application prioritisation in FRIPRO uses a combination of FRIPRO ranking, equalisation mechanism 2-4 and random sampling.

1. Requirements regarding research domain for the application being granted:
   a. If the budget shares for all research domains is within the limits of variation, there are no restrictions on the research domain for the application being granted.
   b. If the budget shares for one research domain is below the lower limit for variation, the application being granted must be in this research domain, provided that there is at least one such qualified application.
   c. If the budget shares for two research domains are below the lower limit for variation, the application that is granted must be in one of them, provided that there is at least one such qualified application.
   d. If the budget share for a research domain is above the upper limit for variation, the application that is granted must *not* be in this research domain, provided that there is at least one qualified application within another research domain. This also applies if there are two disciplines that are beyond their limits.
2. Requirement for application type variant for the application being granted:
   a. If the success rates for all variants are within the variation limits, there are no restrictions on the variant for the application being granted.
   b. If the success rate for one variant (A) is below the lower limit for variation relative to at least one other variant, the application being granted must be this variant (A). The prerequisites are that there are several research domains to choose from in accordance with equalisation mechanism 2 (point 1, above) and that there is at least one such qualified application.
   c. If the success rates for two variants are below the lower variation threshold for the third variant, the application being granted must be one of the two, provided that there is at least one such qualified application.
   d. If the success rate for one variant is above the upper limit for variation for at least one other, the application being granted shall *not* be this variant, provided that there is at least one qualified application for another variant.
   e. If the success rates for two variants are above the upper limit for variation for at least one other variant, the application that is granted must be the third variant, provided that there are several research domains to choose from.
3. Together, the two requirements provide at least two permitted research domain-variant combinations from which the next application to be granted can be selected.
4. Among qualified applications for consideration, the highest FRIPRO ranking with at least one application with a permitted research domain-variant combination is chosen (within the 75 % rule, all research domain-variant combinations are allowed). The application is awarded among applications with this FRIPRO ranking (the "permitted FRIPRO ranking") and among permitted research domain-variant combinations. If there is only one such application, this application is granted. If there are several applications to choose from, they are prioritised using the following prioritisation method:
   a. Among permitted research domains, priority is given to the research domain that is the most percentage points below its target for budget share. The research domain that is the most percentage points above its target is prioritised last. If two are equally far above or below their goals, they are given equal priority. The same applies if all three are at their targets.
   b. Within each research domain, the permitted variants are prioritised by prioritising the variant with the largest percentage deviation *below* the target first, and the one with the largest percentage deviation *above* the target being prioritised last. If the success rates

for two variants is equally far above or below the success rate for the third, they are given equal priority. The same applies if all three variants have the same success rates.

c. The two points above give a number of research domain-variant combinations in decreasing priority.
d. An application is granted among those with the highest priority research domain-variant combination found in the permitted FRIPRO ranking.
e. If there are several applications to choose from, the applications will be prioritised according to the preliminary success rates for the peer reviewer groups in which they have been assessed – from lowest to highest.
f. If there are several applications to choose from, simple random selection is used.

4. General rules

1. Success rates and budget distributions are calculated for the five previous decision rounds plus preliminary applications recommended for funding in the current round.
2. Percentages are calculated with one decimal place. Deviations are calculated based on this.
3. Funding amounts are calculated in whole thousands of Norwegian kroner.
4. The last approved application in a decision round *can* cause a research domain and/or variant to go beyond its target window(s).
5. The last approved application in a decision round *may* exceed the available budget for the round if:
    - the application contributes to correcting a research domain and/or variant outside its target window(s); *and*
    - The remaining available budget covers at least 75 % of the maximum amount applied for the variant in question in the call.