**VolkswagenStiftung (VWS): Distributed Peer Review**

Interview Protocol

**Target population:**

* Applicants:
  + successful and unsuccessful
  + across different disciplines
  + across different levels of seniority
  + try to maintain a rough gender balance
* Panel members
* VWS staff (including those who were not involved in the process but may have views) - 5 max

n = 20-30 interviews planned

Interviews to be conducted in English

| Questions - applicants |
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| Introduction: what is your role and discipline/area of work?  *[NB check beforehand whether they were successful or not]* |
| *Thinking first about the traditional panel process:*  What knowledge do you have of the panel process?  What are your typical expectations of/concerns about the panel process? |
| *And now thinking about the DPR process that you took part in:*  What were your initial expectations/perceptions of the DPR process?  What concerns did you have? (prompts: scooping, bias, workload disciplinary fit)  Have they been addressed/how do you feel about them now?  How do you perceive these to compare with similar concerns about the panel process? |
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| *Thinking about the time commitment for DPR:*  Was time spent on reviewing as part of the DPR reasonable?  Did it vary between proposals?  Was the number of proposals you reviewed appropriate? |
| Was the disciplinary fit of the proposals you reviewed appropriate? |
| *Thinking now about the criteria and scoring:*  How easy was it to understand the criteria? |
| How did you allocate your scores – which criteria were most important?  How did you deal with uncertainty about what score to give? |
| *Now moving on to think about the part of the process when you, as an applicant, received your decision and feedback:*  How easy was it to understand the feedback you were given?  How useful/constructive was the feedback?  How much/what kind of feedback is appropriate? |
| *And finally some more general questions about the process:*  Do you feel overall that the DPR process was fair? (i.e., that your proposal received a fair evaluation) |
| What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of DPR vs panel?  How does this compare with other funding application processes?  Would you participate again?  How would you improve the process? |
| Do you think this approach has a future? (e.g., replacing panel, running alongside, being used in certain circumstances) |
| Can you suggest any other innovative approaches to peer review that might be introduced in future? |

| Questions - panel members |
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| Introduction: what is your role and discipline/area of work? |
| Could you talk me through the panel process - what happens?  How much time is typical per proposal? |
| What are your general perceptions of the panel process in terms of effectiveness - i.e., how well do you feel it typically works? |
| How did you allocate your scores – which criteria were most important? |
| Was there much disagreement among the panel; how did you resolve this? |
| How much feedback is appropriate? |
| Do you feel overall that the panel process was fair? (i.e., that proposals received a fair evaluation and the best research was selected overall) |
| Do you feel that the proposals selected via DPR were appropriate? |
| What were your initial expectations/perceptions of the DPR process? |
| What concerns did you have about the DPR process?  Have they been addressed/how do you feel about them now?  How do you perceive these to compare with similar concerns about the panel process? |
| What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of DPR vs panel? |
| Do you think this approach has a future? (e.g., replacing panel, running alongside, being used in certain circumstances) |
| Can you suggest any other innovative approaches to peer review that might be introduced in future? |

| Questions - VWS staff |
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| Introduction: what is your role and discipline/area of work? |
| What are your general perceptions of the panel process in terms of effectiveness - i.e., how well do you feel it typically works? |
| What were your initial expectations/perceptions of the DPR process? |
| What concerns did you have about the DPR process?  Have they been addressed/how do you feel about them now?  How do you perceive these to compare with similar concerns about the panel process? |
| How much/what kind of feedback is appropriate? |
| Do you feel overall that the panel process was fair? (i.e., that proposals received a fair evaluation and the best research was selected overall) |
| Do you feel overall that the DPR process was fair? (i.e., that proposals received a fair evaluation and the best research was selected overall) |
| Do you feel that the proposals selected via the panel were appropriate? |
| Do you feel that the proposals selected via DPR were appropriate? |
| What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of DPR vs panel? |
| How well do you think DPR could be applied for other organisations and in other contexts? |
| Do you think the DPR process has led/leads to more novel or innovative proposals being funded? |
| Do you think this approach has a future? (e.g., replacing panel, running alongside, being used in certain circumstances) |
| Can you suggest any other innovative approaches to peer review that might be introduced in future? |

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