



The Villum Experiment Programme

Information Meeting at SDU 11/2 2022

Head of programme
Anders Smith

THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS

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Villum Experiment



Can you build a
battery from rust?

Is the conventional peer-review funding
system missing out on unconventional ideas?

Learning without a
conventional brain

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VILLUM FONDEN

- THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS:
two non-profit, private charitable foundations VILLUM FONDEN and VELUX FONDEN.
- Created in 1971 and 1981 by Villum Kann Rasmussen - the founder of VELUX and other companies in the VKR Group.
- VILLUM FONDEN is a majority shareholder in the VKR Group.



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Villum Onboarding and Family Support

Villum International Postdoc (VIPO)

3-4 yrs, DKK 1-2,5 million

Villum Young Investigator (YIP)

5 yrs, DKK 6/8 million

Villum Investigator (VIP)

6 yrs, DKK 30/40 million

Villum Experiment (VEX)

2 yrs, DKK 2 million

Villum Synergy

Initiation: 2 yrs, DKK 2-3 million
Established: 3-5 yrs, 10-20 million



*Villum Kann Rasmussens
Annual Award*
DKK 5 million

Villum Kann Rasmussen Professorship

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Villum Experiment



- Villum Experiment focuses only on the idea
- Less consensus-driven
- Open to active researchers at any career stage (beyond the PhD) and age
- Grants of up to 2 million DKK and 2 years
- Five rounds so far
- 2022 deadline: 16 March at 14.00

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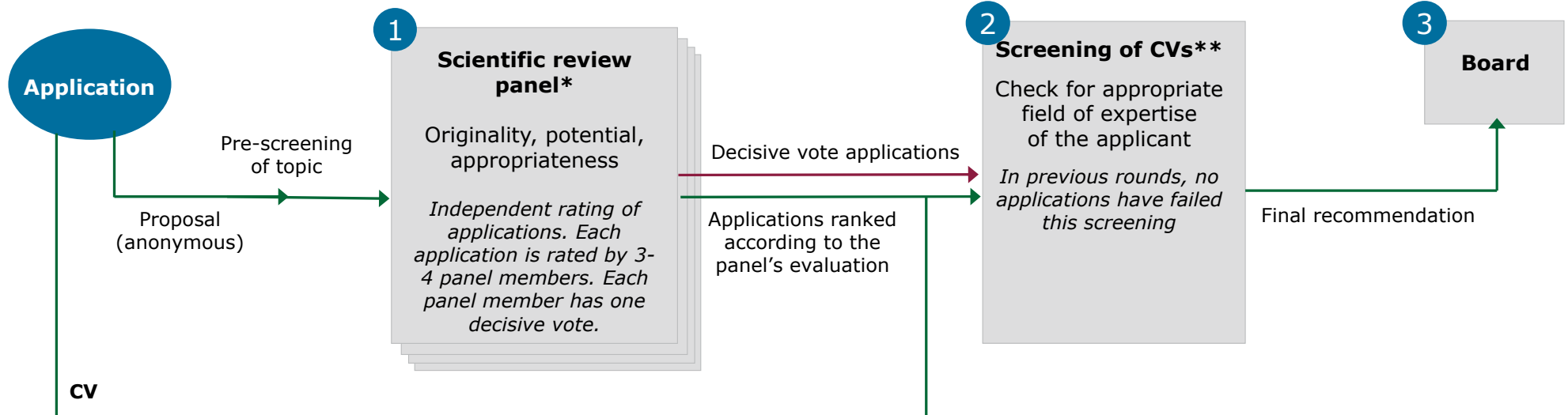
Villum Experiment



The four stages in the acceptance of a scientific idea (J.B.S. Haldane):

1. This is worthless nonsense
2. This is an interesting, but perverse, point of view
3. This is true, but quite unimportant
4. I always said so

Villum Experiment – Selection process



* 21 international researchers covering technical and natural science. The panel doesn't meet or interact.

** Members of VILLUM FONDEN's science advisory committee and the secretariat.

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Villum Experiment - Criteria



1. Originality of the idea:

The idea shows unorthodox thinking and introduces a unique approach and, if applicable, a novel hypothesis, a non-standard methodology, etc.

2. Potential impact of the idea:

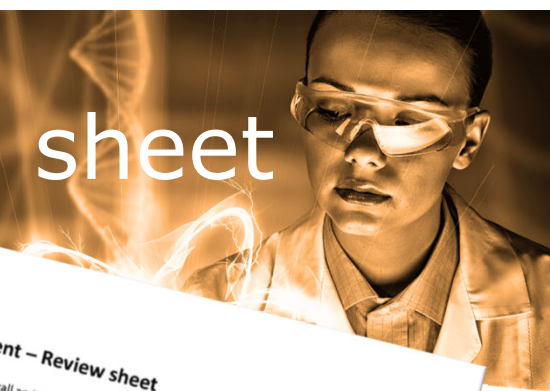
The idea holds the potential to answer a long-standing question in science, bring about a transformative understanding of a central topic, pave the way for a new research area or new method/technology or the like.

3. Appropriateness:

The idea is unlikely to be fit for conventional research project programmes.

Villum Experiment – Review sheet

- ERC-like scale:
unsuitable – very good – excellent
– outstanding
- Translated to a numerical grade:
-5, 10, 25, 50
- Final grade the average of three evaluations
- Confidence level is used as a tie-breaker



Villum Experiment – Review sheet

Please read the programme call and the Terms of Reference carefully before conducting the review. After the review process the foundation ranks the proposals according to the panel's evaluations. The panel members are subsequently asked to provide a short statement for each of the top-ranked proposals.

A: Originality of the idea
The idea shows unorthodox thinking and introduces a unique approach and, if applicable, a novel hypothesis, a non-standard methodology, etc.

unsuitable <input type="checkbox"/>	very good <input type="checkbox"/>	excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	outstanding <input type="checkbox"/>
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B: Potential impact of the idea
The idea holds the potential to answer a long-standing question in science, bring about a transformative understanding of a central topic, pave the way for a new research area or new method/technology or the like.

unsuitable <input type="checkbox"/>	very good <input type="checkbox"/>	excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	outstanding <input type="checkbox"/>
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C: Appropriateness of the proposed research for this type of programme
The idea is unlikely to be fit for conventional research project programmes.

unsuitable <input type="checkbox"/>	very good <input type="checkbox"/>	excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	outstanding <input type="checkbox"/>
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D: Overall score

unsuitable <input type="checkbox"/>	very good <input type="checkbox"/>	excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	outstanding <input type="checkbox"/>
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Short comment (optional):

Villum Experiment - Formalities



- Cannot apply two consecutive years
- Only a single PI; no co-PI's
- Budget template changed – please use the updated version!
- Remove metadata from the pdfs before submission

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Villum Experiment - Statistics



- Approx. 50 grants / 100 MDKK per year
- Success rate (2021): 13% (10% in 2020)
- Success rate SDU (2021): 8% (2 out of 26; 15% in 2019)

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Villum Experiment – Does it work?



- Ongoing study by The Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy at Aarhus University
- Preliminary findings
 - It *feels* different
 - The decisive vote is important
 - Past performance is not a predictor of success
 - Potential gender differences

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Villum Experiment – How to apply



- All information available at <https://veluxfoundations.dk/en/villum-experiment-call>
- Applications submitted through our application portal
- Deadline 16 March

