Guidelines on the Management of Research Centres

This policy document has been adopted by the KTH President (Reference number V-2022-0046) and is effective from 1 April 2022. The governance document regulates the governance of, and the activities at, the Centre where KTH is the principal and KTH’s participation as a party in the Centre with another principal. The Research Support Office (RSO) within the University Administration (GVS) is responsible for supervision and responding to matters concerning the governance document.

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1. Different types of Centres

A Centre is a way of organising and conducting collaborative research between KTH and other parties for a limited period of time. A Centre must be based on an agreement on collaborative research (often referred to as a Centre Agreement) which governs the parties’ mutual commitments, terms and conditions, rights and obligations to conduct collaborative research, and governs the Centre’s organisation, management, and overall governance.

A *Centre* distinguishes itself from *project-based collaborative research* primarily by not being guided by a pre-determined project plan. In a Centre, the projects to be carried out are decided successively in stages on the basis of an agreed research plan. Quite often a Centre has funding from a national research funder or funding from other external parties. A Centre may alternatively be established without external funding, when there is a need for collaboration in a research area.

At KTH, the following types of Centres may be located:

1. The term **Research Centre** is used both as a collective designation and as a specific term for Centres without funding from national research funding bodies, where the parties jointly design their own research plan and the Centre form is needed to establish a regulated structure for research cooperation. It may also involve, on behalf of a central government research funder, primarily managing the assessment and selection of project proposals for a recommendation to decisions vis-à-vis these.
2. The term **Competence Centre** is used for Centres that are long-term funded by national research funding bodies, where the research funder uses this term in the invitation to submit proposals. The more or less specified research programme is developed in the application together with the Centre’s other parties. Centres with central government funding to conduct activities in the strategic research area´s (SRA´s) are also included here.

Research Centres and Competence Centres are to be most prevalent at KTH.

1. The term **Resource Centre** is used for Centres whose task and responsibility is to operate, coordinate, or highlight opportunities for use in research infrastructures together with parties. The financing model is described in the respective agreements.
2. The term **Network Centre** is used for Centres whose function is to develop and maintain a network of stakeholders to build a project portfolio in a specific research area. The financing model is described in the respective agreements.
3. The term **Node** is used when the main Centre is established at another university and has underlying nodes that are themselves organised as research Centres with other parties.
4. The term **Interim Centre** is used as a designation for the Centre of a “trial character,” where the relevance of a Centre in the research area is tested for a limited period of not more than three years. The financing model is described in the respective agreements.
5. Establishment of the Centre
   1. Fundamental starting points for the establishment of the Centre

A Centre can be established on the basis that an application to a national research funder’s invitation to submit proposals for funding of a Centre has been granted, or on the initiative within KTH based on a need to further develop a research area and its funding in collaboration with other parties. Before setting up a Centre, the following applies.

A Centre must:

1. Organisationally belong to one of KTH’s Schools.
2. Be led by a Steering Group. Under the Steering Group, the activities of the Centre are to be led by a Director. Where not all parties are represented in the Steering Group, there must be a General Meeting of the Parties established.
3. Profile itself in the Centre’s communications as a Centre active at KTH, where the other participating parties must be made visible in a consistent manner.

In addition:

1. KTH’s personnel within the Centre must always be employed at a School (i.e. cannot be employed by the Centre as such).
2. Centre Agreements must always be negotiated by KTH’s in-house business lawyers. (However, this does not apply to Network Centres, which otherwise fulfil criteria 1-4 above.)
   1. Request to establish a Centre

For all types of Centres, it is the Head of School who must make a request to establish a Centre. A request must contain the following information:

1. The Head of School’s confirmation (specific template to be used) that (1) resources will be available, based on the granted application if the Centre is funded by national research funding or based on concept description if the Centre is financed in another way, and that (2) the Centre is reported separately organisationally in accordance with KTH’s financial administration regulations. It must also be stated that an agreement on operational support will be drawn up between the Centre and the School.
2. Period of operation of the Centre.
3. Where applicable, the request for co-financing from the KTH President. The KTH President decides matters concerning co-financing in each individual case.
4. Information about KTH’s other funding and other resources, such as “in-kind.”

The request is to be submitted to the Research Support Office in the University Administration (GVS).

* 1. Preparation of proposals for a decision on the establishment of a Centre

The Research Support Office (RSO) prepares the proposal for a decision based on the request submitted.

In addition to the request, the following supporting documentation must be collected:

1. Proposals for the Chair and members of the Centre’s Steering Group and term of office (the proposal is to state the organisation of the Chair and the respective member). The proposal for a Steering Group must have been prepared with all parties. The composition of the Steering Group is governed in 4.3.1.
2. Proposal for the Director and term of office (see also section 4.4). The proposal for the Director must be approved by the Head of School.

If the request relates to the establishment of funder-financed centres (Competence Centres), the following supporting documentation must also be collected:

1. Centre Agreement for signing. If the Centre Agreement is under negotiation, this must be stated and a decision on the signing of the Centre Agreement will be done later. The agreement must normally be signed by interested parties within three months of the decision on the formation or before the end date set by the research funder.
2. The funder’s decision and the approved application for funding (including the activities plan and first-year estimate of financial resources and expenditures).

Where the request relates to the establishment of Centres with funding only from parties or network Centres, the following supporting documentation must also be collected:

1. Centre Agreement for signing. If the Centre Agreement is under negotiation, this must be stated and a decision on the signing of the Centre Agreement will be done later. The agreement must normally be signed by interested parties within three months of the decision on the formation or before the end date set by the research funder. For Network Centres, the requirement for a Centre Agreement may be waived if a written reasonable explanation and justification is provided.
2. A concept description developed by the intended Director in cooperation with stakeholders/parties where the purpose and goals of the Centre are clarified and which parties KTH will collaborate with. The concept description must include proposals for the activities plan and research plan along with the estimated costs and expected financial resources from the funder(s).
   1. Decision

The KTH President decides on matters relating to the establishment of the Centre.

1. Participation in the Centre with external ownership or leadership
   1. Request for participation as a party in the Centre with external ownership or leadership

For all participation in a Centre with external ownership or leadership, the Head of School must make a request to participate in the Centre.

A request must contain the following information:

1. The Head of School’s confirmation (a specific template is to be used) that resources will be available for KTH’s participation, based on the granted application if the Centre is to be funded by a national research funder or based on a concept description if the Centre is funded in another way.
2. Proposal for a member(s) who will represent KTH in the Centre’s Steering Group.
3. Proposal for a researcher in charge (who must be employed at KTH).
4. Where applicable, the request for co-financing from the KTH President. The KTH President decides matters concerning co-financing in each individual case.
5. Information about KTH’s other funding and other resources, such as “in-kind.”
6. For Centres that have been granted funding in the invitation from a central government research funder to submit proposals, the application for the granted project must be included as an appendix to the request. For Centres that have been established by other means, a concept description for the first year of operation of the Centre is to be included as an attachment.

The request is to be submitted to the Research Support Office in the University Administration (GVS).

* 1. Preparation of proposals for decision

The Research Support Office (RSO) prepares the proposal for a decision based on the request submitted.

In addition to the request, the following supporting documentation must be collected:

1. Centre Agreement for signing. If the Centre Agreement is under negotiation, this must be stated and a decision on the signing of the Centre Agreement will be done later.
   1. Decision

The Vice President for Research decides on KTH’s participation in the Centre with external ownership or leadership. (May not be delegated to another party.)

1. The Centre’s activities and management
   1. Set of rules for activities

During the Centre’s period of operation, its activities are to be governed by the Centre Agreement and KTH’s internal regulations. It follows from the latter that decisions and agreements relating to the Centre’s ongoing day-to-day activities, such as project agreements to conduct a project within the framework of the Centre’s activities, including research agreements, are to be signed in accordance with KTH’s Rules of Delegation in effect at the respective time. An exception is if research funding in the funding terms and conditions requires that individual project agreements be entered into with funders after the Steering Group’s decision on the recommendation.

* 1. General Meeting of the Parties

The General Meeting of the Parties is the highest decision-making body of the Centre. The General Meeting of the Parties includes all parties and is to be prepared to express their views on the Centre’s organisation and activities. If the Centre’s Steering Group consists of members from all parties, there is no need to establish a General Meeting of the Parties, and in such case the Steering Group will then have the tasks and responsibilities as set out in 4.2.1.

The Vice President for Research is to represent KTH at the Centre’s General Meeting of the Parties. The tasks and responsibilities can be delegated to the Head of School or another appropriate authorised person.

A representative of KTH is to chair the General Meeting of the Parties of the Centre, where KTH is the principal.

In cases where all parties are not represented in the Steering Group, the General Meeting of the Parties is to be held at least in connection with the establishment and winding-up of the Centre.

* + 1. Tasks and responsibilities

The General Meeting of the Parties of the Centre is to decide:

* on a strategic plan and on a communication strategy for the Centre’s activities.
* on proposals for the KTH President for additional or withdrawing parties, extension or closure of the Centre.
  1. Steering Group
     1. Composition

The Steering Group is to have between five and nine members who represent the Parties. Women and men must be equally represented, unless there are exceptional reasons why this is not possible.

A representative of KTH is to be the Chair of the Centre where KTH is the principal, unless otherwise stated in the Centre Agreement or by other preconditions that KTH has approved.

Unless otherwise stated in the terms and conditions for financing, national funders may not be part of the Steering Group. These may be given the right of attendance and expression at the Steering Group meetings (see 4.3.3).

* + 1. Tasks and responsibilities

The Centre’s Steering Group directs the activities and is responsible for the development of the Centre in accordance with the strategic plan decided by the General Meeting of the Parties pursuant to 4.2.1 and for the overall governance of its activities based on the frameworks and terms and conditions set by the funder’s requirements and Centre Agreement.

The Steering Group is to:

* Decide on the activities plan and communication plan for each financial year. (May not be delegated to another party.)
* Decide on the annual estimate of financial resources and expenditures within the framework of the funds made available to the Steering Group from KTH and each party. (May not be delegated to another party.)
* Decide on research projects to be financed by the Centre within the framework of the Centre Agreement. (May be delegated to the Director.)
* Decide on the adoption of the Annual Report with its financial statements, plus decisions concerning other documented follow-ups (see also section 4.4 about the Director). (May not be delegated to another party.)
* Responsible for ensuring that the activities are conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations as well as in accord with KTH’s internal governing documents and other decisions.
* Establish the self-assessment report referred to in Sections 5 and 6 and decide on proposals to extend the Centre’s period of operations or to terminate the Centre’s activities. (May not be delegated to another party.)
* Responsible for the winding-up of the Centre (see 6.6).
* Decide, where applicable, to establish a management team and appoint deputy director on the suggestion from the Director.

If the Centre’s Steering Group consists of members from all parties, there is no need to establish a General Meeting of the Parties, and in such case the Steering Group will also have the tasks and responsibilities as set out in 4.2.1.

The Steering Group should:

* For Centres that have external funding greater than SEK 7 million per year, establish an International Advisory Board. The purpose of the committee is to promote excellence and quality.
  + 1. Meetings

The Steering Group deals with its tasks and responsibilities at meetings. The Steering Group is to meet at least twice a year. The Steering Group decides on the right of attendance and expression of other persons at the Steering Group’s meetings.

* + 1. Quorum to make decisions

The Steering Group has a quorum enabling it to make decisions when at least one-half of the members are present. Decisions are made by a simple majority, unless agreed otherwise between the Parties to the Centre. In the event of an equally divided vote, the Chair will have the deciding vote. Minutes of the Steering Group’s decisions are to be maintained.

* + 1. Decision to appoint the Chair and other members

The Vice President for Research makes the decision to appoint, extend assignments, and terminate assignments as Chair and as a member of the Steering Group, with the limitations that may result from financing conditions or contractual terms. (May not be delegated to another party.) Before making a decision, the Vice President for Research is to consult with the Head of School.

* 1. Director

The Centre’s activities are to be led by a Steering Group. Under the Steering Group, the activities are led by a Director who must be employed at KTH (with a placement within a School). The Director represents KTH.

* + 1. Tasks and responsibilities

The Director is to:

* Be the rapporteur at Steering Group meetings, provide the Steering Group with supporting documentation for decisions, and implement the Steering Group’s decisions.
* Have the responsibility for the annual reporting of its operational activities and statement of financial activities (SOA) to the Steering Group, the Head of School, and the funder(s).
* Ensure that the Chair of the General Meeting of the Parties convenes a meeting of the General Meeting of the Parties.
* Submit proposals for the management team and deputy director to the Steering Group (if applicable). The proposal must be in accordance with the Centre Agreement. The other Schools at KTH that participate in the Centre’s activities are to be represented in the management team.
* Responsible for dialogue on future evaluations of the Centre with the Vice President for Research or an administrator at the Research Support Office within the University Administration (GVS).
* Responsible for conducting a dialogue with the Vice President for Research and Head of School for the Centre’s planned extension or closure and the preparation of the related self-assessment report in accordance with sections 5.1 or 6.2 (see also 4.3.2).
* Responsible for preparing, in consultation with the Steering Group, the supporting documentation to a request for the extension or termination of the Centre’s period of operation.
* Responsible for ensuring that the Centre’s communications is up-to-date and complies with KTH’s internal rules for web publishing, graphic profiles and brand, etc.

The Director has the responsibility to keep the Head of School and administrator of the Research Support Office within the University Administration informed of the Centre’s development on an annual basis by providing a written Annual Report.

The Director is to call on administrators at the Research Support Office within the University Administration on matters that require a decision by the Vice President for Research.

* + 1. Decision to appoint the Director

The Vice President for Research makes the decision to appoint, extend assignments and terminate assignments as Director for established Centres. (May not be delegated to another party.)

1. Extension of a Centre’s period of operation
   1. Preparatory work for s possible extension of the period of operation

For the purpose of extending the period of operation of a Centre, the Director of the Centre is to prepare a self-assessment report in accordance with the template provided by the Research Support Office (RSO). The report is to be determined by the Steering Group and submitted to the Vice President for Research, Head of School and the Research Support Office no later than three months before the end of the period of operations.

The first paragraph does not apply where the Centre is to be evaluated by a research funder. In such a case, the Centre’s Director has the responsibility for submitting the evaluation to the Vice President for Research, the Head of School, and the Research Support Office for their information.

* 1. Request for an extension

The Head of School requests an extension of the Centre’s period of operation. The Director prepares the supporting documentation (see also the Director’s tasks and responsibilities in section 4.4.). A request must contain the following information:

* Organisational affiliation of the Centre.
* The confirmation by the Head of School that promised resources according to the request will be available, and be reported separately organisationally in accordance with the financial administration regulations.
* The Steering Group’s confirmation of proposals for an extension.
* Proposal for a new period of operations for the Centre.
* Where applicable, the request for co-financing from the KTH President. The KTH President decides matters concerning co-financing in each individual case.
* Accounting for KTH’s other funding and other resources, such as “in-kind.”

The request is to be submitted to the Research Support Office in the University Administration (GVS).

* 1. Preparation of proposals for decision

The Research Support Office (RSO) prepares the proposal for a decision based on the request submitted.

In addition to the request, the following supporting documentation must be collected:

1. Centre Agreement for signing. If the Centre Agreement is under negotiation, this must be stated and a decision on the signing of the Centre Agreement will be done later. For network Centres, requirements for consortium agreements may be waived, but must be justified.
2. Proposal for the activities plan along with the estimated costs and expected financial resources for a new period of operations.
3. Proposals for the Chair and members of the Steering Group and the term of office of members of the Steering Group. The proposal must be confirmed by the parties.
4. Suggestions for the Director and their mandate period time (see section 4.4).
5. The self-assessment report referred to in section 5.1.
   1. Decision

The Vice President for Research decides on the extension of the period of operations for the Centre. (May not be delegated to another party.)

1. Closing of a Centre

All Centre activities are limited in time. Any closure of a Centre must be made by a decision of the KTH President, irrespective of whether the Centre is to be closed at the end of the period of operations, in advance of any planned closure, or for other reasons.

* 1. Time for the closure

A Centre with external funding must be wound-up before the end of funding.

If, for any reason, a Centre has not had active activities for a period of more than one year or has completely ceased its activities, the Centre must be closed.

* 1. Preparatory work for winding-up

In preparation for the closure of a Centre, the Director must prepare a self-assessment report according to the template provided by the Research Support Office. The report is to be determined by the Steering Group and submitted to the Vice President for Research, Head of School and the Research Support Office no later than three months before the end of the period of operations.

The first paragraph does not apply where the Centre is to be evaluated by a research funder. In such a case, the Centre’s Director has the responsibility for submitting the evaluation to the Vice President for Research, Head of School and the Research Support Office their information.

* 1. Request to close a Centre

Any closure of a Centre must always be made via by request from the Head of School of the School where the Centre is organisationally domiciled.

The request is then to be submitted to the Research Support Office.

* 1. Preparation of proposals for decision

The Research Support Office prepares the proposal for a decision based on the submitted request for closure.

Before the closure, any assets must be clarified and any commitments remaining. The remaining financial resources from KTH’s co-financing that are not attributed to commitments are to be returned to the KTH President.

* 1. Decision

The KTH President decides the matter concerning the closure of a Centre.

* 1. The Centre is to be to wound-up

The General Meeting of the Parties, or the Steering Group where all parties are represented in the Steering Group, is responsible for the closure of the Centre.

Upon the closure of a Centre, its name must be removed from the list on KTH’s website and the organisational unit at KTH will be disbanded.

The Director informs all parties involved in the Centre that the Centre’s activities have been concluded.

The Director reports to the Head of School when the Centre has been closed