
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Synergy 18

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for Synergy funding. The Synergy programme aims to provide an important tool to help new universities to profile and develop their activities through building internationally competitive research programmes while addressing well-defined questions/problems of relevance to the business sector.

If you have questions about the call, please contact:

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**We require your application
no later than 3 p.m. (15:00)
on 1 February 2019**

**For the purpose of a planned
information meeting we
welcome a notification of
interest by 8 November 2018**

For technical support, contact:

info@kks.se

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About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities¹ with the purpose of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. We provide funding when activities are conducted in collaboration between academic staff and business sector partners. The aim is to build strong and profiled knowledge environments that co-produce research and education with the business sector.

The Knowledge Foundation will therefore also evaluate whether project proposals will contribute to the establishment of such integrated research and education environments.

Background of the programme

Synergy is a programme that encompasses sub-projects complementing each other in responding to a more complex research question.

The synergy of the programme thus means that several sub-projects will help to answer a key question. In addition to this synergy, there may be other synergies, such as between different academic disciplines or between the various participating companies, but it is not these synergies this call addresses.

Purpose and objective of the programme

The programme aims to serve as an important tool for new universities seeking to focus on research based on a defined core question.

The programme's objective for the projects is to deliver answers to a well-defined question/problem (core question) of relevance for a business sector.

¹ Blekinge Institute of Technology, Swedish Defence University, The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences GIH, Dalarna University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Halmstad, Jönköping University, Kristianstad University, University of Skövde, University West, Karlstads University, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal Institute of Art, Royal College of Music, Stockholm University of the Arts, Södertörn University and Örebro University.

Programme design

A special feature of *Synergy* is that a single (1) core question serves as the coordinating factor. It is to this core question that the sub-projects in a Synergy project must contribute to an answer. These sub-projects must be deemed to be both sufficient and necessary to answer the core question. The Synergy Programme opens up for questions that may require expertise from several different scientific disciplines.

- In a Synergy project a core question serves as the coordinating factor.
- The core question determines the design and objectives of the different sub-projects.
- The sub-projects must be deemed to be both sufficient and necessary to answer the core question.
- A Synergy project must not be within one (1) subject area

A Synergy project should span 3 to 4 years, and the grant will be in the range 6-12 million SEK. Total funding requested from the Knowledge Foundation must, at least, be matched by business sector contributions. However, each individual sub-project in Synergy does not need to meet this requirement.

The project manager plays an essential role in Synergy. Hence, evaluating potential project managers will be given particular attention. The Synergy project manager may also serve as project manager for a sub-project.

An application for Synergy must include a description of the synergy work as a project in its own right, and at least 3 distinct and defined sub-projects. Their relative size and location in time (within a given time frame) should also be clarified.

Who may apply?

The programme is open for Sweden's university colleges and new universities. The applicant, i.e. the vice chancellor, is responsible for the application, not the individual researcher or research group.

How should the funds be used?

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se).

The Synergy grant application must present a budget (appendix form) consisting of a total budget, as well as a budget for the synergy work and a budget for each sub-project.

The funds applied for should not include overhead. This will be calculated and included in the grant upon approval of the application by the Knowledge Foundation.

University involvement

The Knowledge Foundation welcomes, but does not formally require, co-financing from the university. Any co-financing by the university must comply with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se).

Business sector involvement

Projects must be co-produced with business partners. Co-production means that the academic and business partners together, and from their respective perspectives, must formulate and address a scientific question/problem. For more information on co-production, see www.kks.se.

By “business sector”, the Knowledge Foundation refers primarily to private companies. The concept, however, may include companies under public ownership that are active in competitive markets and where the company finances its operations in the same manner as private companies. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant part of the company’s revenues. None of the organisations may be solely administrative enterprises. Primarily they must produce goods or services. The companies must operate in Sweden to the extent that their input provides value for co-production and they have the potential to integrate the results from co-production into their organisation here.

At least two independent (non-affiliated) companies must co-finance each Synergy sub-project. The co-financing should be balanced between the participating companies. Overall, the business partners must contribute resources to the Synergy project that, at least, correspond to the funding

requested from the Knowledge Foundation. However, each individual sub-project does not need to meet this requirement.

As regards companies with fewer than 10 employees or less than SEK 10 million in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), their capacity for co-production in the project must be very clearly described.

If any economic or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and the university, or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed. The project plan must clearly indicate any personal conflicts of interest, and the individual's various roles in the company or university must be fully described.

Formal requirements

An application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. If the application does not meet the following requirements, it will be rejected without further evaluation.

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objective of the call.
- If any economic or personal links exists between the involved companies, between any company and the university, or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed on the application form. For example, ownership of shares, board memberships, employment/consultant work should be specified.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se).
- The earliest starting date for the project: 2019-09-01. The latest starting date for the project: 2019-11-01.
- Senior researchers (PhD) must account for at least 50% of the research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation.
- The application must specify the co-financing from participating companies in accordance with the requirements established in the call for proposals. This must be presented in the budget as well.
- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation will review the applications to determine if the application complies with the formal requirements. The Knowledge Foundation's external evaluation panel reviews Synergy proposals. The individual Synergy sub-projects are peer reviewed by international experts. The external evaluation panel will conduct a hearing with those applicants found to have the fundamental prerequisites to implement a Synergy project. Thereafter, an overall assessment is completed and the panel submits its recommendation to the General Manager of the Knowledge Foundation.

Funding decisions are made by the board of the Knowledge Foundation based on recommendations from the General Manager.

The evaluation process does not allow for any additions or modifications of the applications.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality

Synergy

- How well does the core question address relevant, cutting-edge research?
- How well does the scientific question/problem in each sub-project address the objective of the Synergy project?

Per sub-project

- How strong is the knowledge about relevant research? How well does the scientific question/problem address this?
- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods?
- How is the level of scientific expertise in the project group?

Benefits to the business partners

Synergy

- How relevant is the core question in relation to the needs of the business partners?

Per sub-project

- How do business partners benefit from their participation in the individual sub-projects?

Expected results and effects

Synergy

- To what extent is the Synergy project expected to contribute towards positioning the research at the university?
- To what extent is the Synergy project expected to contribute to development and renewal of the research area?
- To what degree will the Synergy generate scientific results of good quality (e.g. scientific publications)?
- To what degree is the Synergy project expected to contribute to the development of an integrated research and education environment.

Implementation

Synergy

- How well is the core question defined.
- How clear are the objectives of the project.
- Project management capacity?
- Is the overall project plan realistic?

Per sub-project

- How clear is each individual sub-project formulated on the basis of being necessary to answer the key question?
- How well planned and organised is the work of the sub-projects, with particular focus on the expected contributions of the different sub-projects?
- How well does the budget reflect the project plan?

Notification of interest

University Colleges and new universities that intend to submit an application for funding of a Synergy project are invited to submit a notification of interest.

- The notification of interest should be sent to info@kks.se no later than 2018-11-08.
- All who have submitted a notification of interest will be invited to information meeting at the Knowledge Foundation on November 22.

Application

Applications are submitted via the Foundation's website, www.kks.se.

The application should state who will be project manager. The project manager is responsible for the implementation of the project. The application should also state who within the university is project owner. The project owner, who should have staff and budget responsibility at a senior level, has the overall responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project owner may be a department head or another appropriate person, in accordance with the institution's internal organization and delegation.

Signatures from the project manager, the project owner and the vice chancellor are required. The project manager's signature means that she or he is prepared to take responsibility for the described implementation according to stated project plan. The project owner and the vice chancellor assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description. Applications should be written in English to enable international peer review of Synergy and its sub-projects.

To facilitate evaluation of the application with the help of scientific experts the applicant must in an appendix propose the names of at least

- one international expert for the core question of the Synergy;
- one Swedish expert for the core question of the Synergy;
- one international expert for each sub-project
- and, finally, one Swedish expert for each sub-project.

The applicant must assert that suggested experts are free from conflict of interest.

The appendices must include the following:

a) Project host environment (1-2 pages)

Describe the Project host environment, including both research and education, clearly outlining its current situation, its aspirations and the way forward.

The description should include the following headings (each heading entails both education and research)

- The host environment's overarching profile and focus
- Main results of the past few years
- Personnel composition (number within each employment category)
- Funding (internal, external and from industry)
- Collaboration partners (academic and non-academic)
- Aspirations and strategy
- Development needs and challenges

b) The Project's contribution to the research and education environment (0,5-1 page)

Describe the value of the proposed Synergy project by demonstrating how the project will support the development of the host environment.

c) Description of Synergy (not exceeding 30 pages)

1 Synergy project's core question (approx. 2 pages)

- Describe the core question for Synergy and its relevance to business partners.
- Explain and justify the contribution of the different sub-projects towards answering the core question.

2 Overall project plan (max 3 pages)

- Present the project plan (incl. timetable) for the whole of the Synergy project and describe how the implementation of the various sub-projects relate to the whole and the answering of the core question.

3 Objectives (max 1 page)

- Present the objectives of the Synergy project.
- Present the objectives of the sub-projects and how these objectives relate to and support the objective of the Synergy project.

4 Organisation, strategy, risk analysis (approx. 5 pages)

- Describe the organisation of the Synergy project (project management, steering committee, administration, and scientific leadership).
- Describe the organisation and scientific management of relevant research environments. If the Synergy project involves more than one (1) research environment, these should also be described.

- Describe how the Synergy application fits in with the strategy of the university.
- Describe the co-financing, over time, of the Synergy project and sub-projects by the university, business partners, and the Knowledge Foundation.
- Present a risk analysis.

5 Presentation of sub-projects (max 18 pages, approx. 6 pages per sub-project, incl. list of publications)

- Describe the research in the respective projects in relation to corresponding research in Sweden and abroad.
- Present project plans for the individual projects (question/problem, methods, resources, timetable, etc.).
- List the publications that the applicant wishes to refer to. Maximum of 3 publications per researcher.
- Describe the relevance of the sub-projects to the business sector(s). Describe the companies' inputs, needs, and benefits.
- Describe how co-production between the companies and university will take place.

d) Qualifications (appendix)

- Include CVs from key individuals in the project, from both the university and the business partners (max 2 pages per person, including relevant publications in the area).
- Note in particular that the Synergy project manager's previous experience from assignments as project manager must be made clear.

e) Project budget (appendix form, only the Foundation's appendix form will be accepted)

f) Peer reviewers, see page 9 (max 1 page) (appendix)

g) Signatures from the University (appendix form)

- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager.

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the expression of interest no later than 2018-11-08.
- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2019-02-01.
- Soon thereafter, all applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. In February the General Manager of the Knowledge Foundation will decide whether an application should be rejected due to non-compliance with formal requirements.
- International experts will review the scientific quality of applications during the spring of 2019.
- After an initial evaluation by an external evaluation panel, a hearing will be held in May 2019.
- Thereafter, the external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the General Manager of the Knowledge Foundation.
- In June 2019, the Knowledge Foundation's Board of Directors will render their decision.