Knowledge Foundation ✕✕

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Research Profiles 22

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding for *Research Profiles*. The programme is intended to support universities in their long-term strategic development and international profiling of selected areas of research. The aim of the programme is for universities to develop and consolidate a research profile of international excellence and high business relevance and with the capacity to continue to develop once the profile funding has ended.

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> The Knowledge Foundation requires the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 23 January, 2023.

About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation is a financier with the mission of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities that is conducted in collaboration between academia and business partners. The Knowledge Foundation´s calls are open for all scientific and artistic research fields.

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The Research Profiles programme

A research profile provides a more long-term and substantial form of support than the other programmes for research provided by the Knowledge Foundation. Instead of conducting individual research projects, universities may profile their research within a selected area of research with the support of a coherent research agenda. Therefore, a research profile could serve as a hub for continued strategic development of a research environment.

Objective and purpose of the programme

The objective of the Research Profiles programme is for the university to develop and consolidate a research profile of international excellence and high business relevance and with the capacity to continue to develop once the profile funding has ended. The purpose of the programme is to give universities an opportunity for long-term profiling and positioning of selected areas of research.

The programme´s contribution to strong research and education environments

The Knowledge Foundation seeks to support the development of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, the business sector and other parts of society. A research profile may contribute by providing long-term strength and volume in research, enabling the research environment to develop a strong national and international position within fields of research that also aligns with the university profile in research. The research strength and the long-term co-operation with business partners also create opportunities for other research efforts in co-operation with companies and stimulates university involvement in competence development at post-graduate level.

Programme design

Research Profiles is a strategic programme aimed at the university management. A research profile should be firmly grounded in the strategy of the university. An application should be preceded by a process where the university management together with the relevant research environment have actively prioritised and selected a well-defined strategic area.

A research profile is usually established within one single research and education environment, department or similar unit. Sometimes more units are involved, providing that this is compatible with a coherent and profiling agenda for the research profile.

Research environments within the *Research Profiles* programme are assumed to have come a long way in their development. Suitable environments should be cohesive, with clear scientific strengths and a proven ability to carry out research with the business sector.

The focus of the Profile Programme is on strengthening research in the selected areas. However, a viable profile needs a good connection to a relevant education portfolio. A research profile should support the establishment of integrated environments, where research and education are mutually supportive.

The personnel and recruitment plan should support the scientific ambitions and viability of the research profile. A good balance between senior and junior researchers is obviously a part of this. Doctoral researchers must account for at least 50% of the total research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation. The percentage of doctoral researchers, however, may vary over time as the profile develops.

The Knowledge Foundation finances research profiles up to a maximum of SEK 30-40 million (excluding funding for OH) over a period of 6 to 8 years. Further research grants from other funding sources should be used to strengthen the research profile.

The Knowledge Foundation has identified some success factors contributing to a sustainable profile:

- The research profile is developed from a clear view of the international research position of the research environment and how this position can be strengthened.
- There is a unifying and progressive research agenda, propelled by carefully considered research objectives that are supported by the sub-projects.
- The organisation of the research profile supports a clear and effective leadership.
- The business sector is actively involved, with companies reaping benefits for themselves, as well as contributing to the common agenda of the profile.
- Implementation of the profile and the monitoring of progress are supported by clear objectives and indicators, driving the ambitions for scientific impact.
- There are clear strategies for publication, internationalisation and the scientific positioning of the environment.

It´s recommended that the applicant considers these factors when designing the project.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and new universities[1] may apply. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all scientific and artistic research fields. When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

Universities or research environments who have no previous experience from Research profiles, are adviced to contact the programme manager well before the deadline for applications to discuss the conditions and opportunities for a research profile.

How should the funds be used?

Funding from the Knowledge Foundation could be used to finance employees at Sweden's university colleges or new universities, as well as for direct project-related costs, such as facilities costs and materials.

Budgeting of funds must comply with the instructions in the document '*General Terms and Conditions*' (go to www.kks.se).

The budget should only present direct costs of the project. Overhead costs equivalent to 20% of the project budget will be added to the funding if the application is approved.

University involvement

A project manager employed by the university should be responsible for the implementation of the project. The application should also state who will be the project owner at the university. The project owner should have staff and budget responsibility at a senior level and carry the overall responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The vice-chancellor may within this programme be project owner.

The Knowledge Foundation requires universities to provide a substantial direct co-funding for a research profile. The university will also have to provide adequate organisational and managerial support for the implementation of the project.

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[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, Karlstad 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.

Business sector involvement

Projects must be co-produced with business partners. For more information on co-production, go to www.kks.se.

The business partners' contribution to the project (preferably in-kind) must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation. In the application, the business partners' certified co-funding must cover at least the first half of the project and correspond to at least half of the total amount applied for from the Knowledge Foundation. The remaining co-funding may be reported to the Knowledge Foundation prior to the second half of the project.

The business partners input in the project must be described and justified in the application. For companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than SEK 10 million in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the conditions for co-production in the project must be very clearly described.

Please note that co-funding companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector' (go to www.kks.se). If there is any uncertainty regarding the definition, the applicant should ask the foundation for a prior notice before submitting the application.

Any economic or personal links between the involved companies, between any company and university, or between any company and individual researcher(s), must be disclosed. Any personal conflicts of interest, and the individual's various roles in the company or university must be fully described. For example, ownership of shares, board memberships, employment/consultant work should be specified.

Formal requirements

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

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objective of the call.
- The duration of the project should be 6-8 years, and the funding applied for from the Knowledge Foundation must fall between SEK 30 and 40 million.
- The application must specify co-funding from participating companies in accordance with requirements stated in the call.
- The companies must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.
- Financial or personal links must be disclosed in the application form.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions* (go to www.kks.se).
- Doctoral researchers must account for at least 50 % of the research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation.
- The earliest starting date for the project is 1st of August 2023, and the latest 1st of December 2023.
- The application must include parts and appendices according to the call.
- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation reviews the applications to determine if they comply with the formal requirements. If they do, the scientific quality will be reviewed by international experts (peer

review). The Knowledge Foundation's external evaluation panel will make a comprehensive assessment, supported by hearings with applicants. The panel will submit a recommendation to the Knowledge Foundation. Funding decisions are made by the board of the Knowledge Foundation.

Evaluation criteria

Strong research and education environments
- What is the contribution of the project for the short-term and long-term development of the research and education environment?
- To what extent is there a clear description of the research and education environment´s current situation?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition for the development of the research and education environment?

Scientific quality[2]
- To what extent is there a coherent and well-defined research agenda with good progression, also when compared to earlier research performed in the environment?
- How well is the research agenda related to an international research context?
- How clear and well designed are the scientific objectives and questions and to what degree are they supported by the research plan?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods?
- How well is the scientific expertise of the project group aligned with the research agenda?
- To what extent does the project create conditions for internationally competitive research and further profiling of the environment and the university?

Benefits to the business partners
- How relevant are the research agenda and the scientific goals in relation to the needs of the business partners?
- How well does the project as a whole promote the development of business partners and the business sector?

Implementation
- How well adopted are the participant constellation and the forms of cooperation to joint production of knowledge?
- Are the organisation and management of the research profile adequate and do they promote a clear and effective leadership?
- Is the implementation of the profile well supported by monitorable goals, suitable strategies for internationalisation, positioning and publication as well as a clear and realistic plan for recruitment/career planning?
- To what extent does the research profile connect to adjoining areas of education and support integrated research and education environments?
- May the objectives of the research profile be implemented in pace with the proposed resources?
- To what extent is there a credible risk analysis that support the ability to manage unforeseen events?

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[2] When the application concerns an artistic field of research, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

Application

Applications should be submitted via the Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se by the project manager. Please note that no additions or modifications to the application will be approved after submission.

Applications should be written in English to enable international peer review. The applicant is requested to suggest two international experts qualified to evaluate the application. The suggested experts should be free from conflict of interest.

In the application form, state the city and postal code for the place where the unit within the company that will conduct the main part of the co-production is located.

The project's main subject focus should be stated based on the Standard for Swedish classification of research subjects. For projects of an interdisciplinary nature, a maximum of three (3) different subjects can be stated.

A table of planned project participants is to be attached to the application form. From participating companies (and potentially other parties), only key members need to be entered. Attachment template for project participants ("Staff in the project") is downloaded as an EXCEL file from www.kks.se but must be converted and attached as a PDF file (ensure that the entire EXCEL sheet fits on one PDF page).

The project budget should be specified in the application form. Please note that the application should not include overhead costs.

Appendices to the application

The following appendices (as pdf-files) should be attached to the application and in the same order as below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix. Under each heading, the main characteristics of the information that the foundation expects are stated. Applicants can provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate. All body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, single line spacing.

Appendix 1. The project and the host research and education environment (maximum 2 pages)
To be uploaded under "Description of host research and education environment and project contribution"

This appendix should be written jointly by the head of the research and education environment and the project manager. Start from the group or environment where the project has its closest context. Design the description based on the following headings:

1.1. Added value of the project for the research and education environment(s)
Describe how the project will contribute to the development of the research and education environment. Connect to the purpose and the goals of the call. It must be made clear in what way the project entails added value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment, especially projects with the same project manager.

1.2. The research and education environment(s) in which the project will be conducted
Describe the environment´s current situation and ambition.

   a. **Current situation** with results from the past five years (area of activity and direction of research and education within the environment, personnel composition, scientific production, development of educations, funding, collaborative and business partners etc.)
   b. **Ambition** (set goals to further develop the environment)

Appendix 2. Project plan (maximum 50 pages).
To be uploaded under 'Project plan"

If a similar research profile application from the university has previously been rejected, this must be stated along with comments on how the issues previously raised by the evaluation panel are handled within the current application.

a. Purpose and objective of the research profile *(approx. 5 pages)*

- Describe the purpose of the research profile and briefly motivate its significance to
  - the strategies of the university (and how the profile is given priority by university management),
  - scientific renewal and national/international positioning,
  - business sector needs and developments,
  - adjoining education at the university.
- Specify and briefly motivate the goals and KPI:s planned to guide the work in the profile.

b. Research plan *(approx. 20 pages including publication list)*

- Present and motivate a research plan for the entire profile (objectives and research issues, methodological issues, resources, timetables etc.). Describe the structure of the research plan and how it will be held together.
- Explain how the research plan is positioned in relation to state-of-the-art and current developments in relevant research areas and how it will contribute in this context.
- Describe how the profile is connected to earlier research(results) in the research environment(s) as well as its contribution to the renewal and positioning of research.
- List the three most relevant publications for each researcher and briefly comment on how the publications are relevant to the profile.

c. In-depth description of initial sub-projects within the research profile *(approx. 9 pages)*

- Give a thorough description of at least two initial research projects within the profile. Describe the scientific questions and methods, forms of co-production and how preliminary results will generate benefits to both industry and academia.
- Explain how the initial sub-projects play an important role in developing the research profile, and how they support the scientific objectives of the profile.

d. Co-production of knowledge by the parties involved *(approx. 9 pages)*

- Describe and motivate the relevance of the profile to the business sector.
- Describe the companies' involvement in the profile, their needs and benefits, and how their participation will support the scientific ambitions of the profile.
- Describe the experience and ability of the environment to perform research with companies and the specific forms of co-production intended for the profile.

e. Organization and management *(approx. 5 pages)*

- Describe the planned organization and administrative and scientific leadership of the profile. Explain how these are related to the organization and management of the research environment(s) involved and other relevant parts of the university.
- Present the goals and strategies for internationalization, scientific positioning and scientific publication.
- Present a recruitment and career plan for the research profile.
- Present a risk analysis regarding the research profile.

f. Budget comments *(1-2 pages)*

- Describe and comment on the funding plan for the profile and how the Foundation, the university and companies will contribute. Give reasons for the chosen level of co-financing from the university.
- Briefly comment on and motivate the project budget. Describe to what extent salary costs are related to personnel not yet hired by the university.

Appendix 3. Qualifications (CVs) (max 2 pages per person).

To be uploaded under 'Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call'.

Include CVs of key individuals in the project, both from the university and business partners (CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be taken into account).

Appendix 4. Letter of intent

To be uploaded under 'Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call'.

Signed letters of intent from each co-producing business partner, covering at least the first half of the profile. The letters should briefly motivate and describe each company's interest in the project, the expected benefits for the company, and the company´s contributions to the project. Letters of intents should be signed either physically or by an e-signature using eg. GetAccept, ebox or similar services.

Appendix 5. Signatures (use template from www.kks.se).

To be uploaded under 'Attachments in accordance with the call and in the same order as stated in the call'.

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 implementation of the project according to the project description. The project owner and the vice-chancellor assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will give support according to the project description. A template for signatures can be downloaded from www.kks.se. The template should be signed either physically or by an e-signature, using eg. eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar services.

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on January 23rd, 2023.
- Any applications failing to comply with formal requirements will be rejected in February 2023.
- International experts will review the scientific quality of the applications.
- An external evaluation panel will evaluate the applications in March/April 2023. Hearings will be conducted with applicants before the final evaluation.
- The external evaluation panel will submit its recommendation to the Knowledge Foundation in April 2023.
- The Knowledge Foundation board will render a decision in May 2023.
- Granted projects may after agreement signing commence between 1st of August and 1st of December 2023.