CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Prospekt 22 – Research projects for early career researchers

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding within the programme *Prospekt*.

The programme provides an opportunity for early career researchers to independently manage a research project in co-production with the business sector. A well-defined and delimited research question with relevance for both academia and business partners should be investigated.

Maria Dollhopf, Programme Manager
maria.dollhopf@kks.se, 073-712 81 36

The Knowledge Foundation requires the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on August 26th, 2022

Contents

About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and new universities[1] with the purpose of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. The Foundation provides funding when research and education activities are conducted in collaboration between academia and business partners. The aim is to build strong and profiled knowledge environments that co-produce research and education with the business sector. The Knowledge Foundation does not identify specific research areas, and calls are open for all scientific and artistic research fields.

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 society. In different ways, all of the Knowledge Foundation's programmes are aimed at enabling environments to establish and maintain a strong, long-term, national and international scientific or artistic position which also contributes to the profiling of the university. In the view of the Knowledge Foundation, a strong environment is one that has the capacity to develop its research and education in partnership with the business sector and takes a long-term, strategic approach to its development.

Prospekt – Research projects for early career researchers

Prospekt is a programme that can be utilised by a research and education environment that aims to develop and renew itself through strategical recruitment of a promising early career researcher[2], who is given the opportunity to independently manage a research project. The programme wants to enable mobility. Therefore, the Foundation encourages applications where the project manager has conducted their doctoral studies at another university than the one where the project will be caried out. The project manager may have their current position at another university, in the business sector or at a research institute, but should when the project starts be employed at the university (within the target group of the Foundation[1]) where the project will be conducted.

Through the programme *Prospekt*, the applying research and education environment may also be able to strengthen its collaboration with the business sector, as a well-defined and delimited research question within the profile of the environment will be investigated together with relevant business partners.

Objective and purpose

The objective of the programme *Prospekt* is for an early career researcher at the university to, in collaboration with business partners, address a scientific question that

---

[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.

[2] Formal requirement on the project manager (definition of *early career researcher*) is described in the section **Who may apply?**

contributes to the scientific development and creates benefits for the business partners. The objective is also for the researcher to develop professionally, and progress so as to further their academic career.

The purpose of all the Knowledge Foundation's programmes is to build strong, business-relevant research and education environments. The specific purpose of the *Prospekt* programme is to attract early career researchers to the academic environment which will strengthen and/or renew the research.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and new universities 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.

The project manager must be an early career researcher, which means that they cannot have been academically active for more than of 3 years from the date specified on the doctoral degree certificate, until the closing date of the call (August 26, 2022). Time when the researcher has not been academically active but, for example employed in the business sector, or been on parental leave, is deducted.

How should the funds be used?

The programme *Prospekt* supports funding of a research project conducted in collaboration with the business sector. The funding from the Knowledge Foundation should primarily be used as salary funds for the project manager's working time within the *Prospekt* project.

In addition to salary costs for the project manager, expenses directly related to the project, e.g., costs for facilities and materials, can be included in the budget. The Foundation encourages the early career researcher to include appropriate leadership training during the project, which can also be included in the budget. Salary costs for additional resource(s) may be included given it is a limited activity, such as for example collection of material or tests (note that PhD students cannot be financed through *Prospekt*). Salary costs covering these additional resource(s) cannot exceed 1/3 of the salary costs for the project manager. The activities of additional resource(s) should be clearly described and justified in the project plan.

Since one of the programme's objectives is for the project manager to develop professionally and qualify for a continued academic career, it is important that the researcher is given the opportunity to do so outside the research project. This could be performed through, for example, teaching, participation in other research projects or other duties at the department, that may contribute to the career development. Therefore, it is appropriate for the project manager to spend 70 to 80 percent of their time in the research project. Time for qualifying activities <u>outside</u> the project <u>cannot </u>be financed as a part of *Prospekt* (neither by the Foundation, the university, or any other part) and must be financed by the university totally <u>outside</u> the project.

The budget in the application must refer to the entire project. It should include funding from the Knowledge Foundation as well as the contributions from business partners and

contributions from the university. Costs accrued before or after the approved project period cannot be accepted.

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General Terms and Conditions*, see www.kks.se. Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2 million SEK. The application should not include overhead costs. Such costs (20 percent) will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Foundation approves the application.

University involvement

The project manager, who should be an early career researcher (see definition above), is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. At the university, there must also be a designated project owner. The project owner, who should have staff and budget responsibility at a senior level, has responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project owner may be a head of department or another appropriate person, in accordance with the internal organization and delegation of the university.

A reference group consisting of at least three senior researchers must be linked to the project. The group should include at least two researchers (at least one of whom is a 'docent') linked to the research environment where the project manager will work, but also one researcher from another university. If the external researcher is active at a university which is not part of the Foundation's target group (se footnote 1), and if his or her participation should be paid for, this must be covered by the university hosting the project. The project manager's doctoral supervisor may not be included in the reference group. The reference group should assist the project manager with advice and recommendations concerning both the project and the project manager's professional development.

The programme *Prospekt* supports funding of a research project, and the host university must in this context contribute with direct resources to the project corresponding to at least 20 percent of the amount applied for from the Foundation. If, for example, 1 million SEK is applied for from the Foundation, the university must contribute with direct resources corresponding to at least 200,000 SEK. These direct resources should <u>not</u> cover for the project manager's salary for time related to qualifying activities outside the *Prospekt* project (which is not included in the application budget). Instead, this refers to co-funding from the university related to other project-related direct costs, for example for the reference group's time in the project, costs for facilities and materials, travel and educational costs, costs for communication, etc. The university's co-funding should be included in the budget and described in the application.

Business sector involvement

The project must be conducted in co-production with business partners. This means that the academic and business partners, from their different perspectives, together must formulate and address a jointly formulated question. The question presented in the application should be based on a relevant problem that, if solved, will benefit the business partners, but also, from an academic perspective, will contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

By *business sector*, the Knowledge Foundation refers primarily to the private business sector. 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 companies in the private business sector. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant portion of the company's revenues. The companies must primarily produce goods or services and may not be solely administrative enterprises.

The organizations must have operations in Sweden to the extent that their engagement will generate value for the co-production and have possibilities to integrate the results from the co-production into their operations in Sweden. For companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than 10 million SEK in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the company's prerequisites for contributing to the project in accordance with the project plan and budget, must be very clearly described.

For an appropriate level of co-production, the participation of 2 to 4 companies is recommended within *Prospekt*. In exceptional cases co-production can take place with only a single company, but only if the scientific relevance in the project still can be ensured. In such case, this must be specifically justified.

The business sector's contribution to the project must be described and justified in the application. Also, signed letters of intent from each of the co-producing companies should be added. The letters should briefly describe the company's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as the motives and value for participation in the project. The business partners' contribution to the project must in total correspond to at least the same amount as that applied for from the Knowledge Foundation. If, for example, 1 million SEK is applied for from the Foundation, the business partners must in total contribute with resources corresponding to at least 1 million SEK.

Other collaborating partners (e.g., public agencies, research institutes or other universities) may participate in the project, but their contribution does not count as co-funding.

If any financial or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and the university, or between any company and individual researcher, this must be disclosed. The project plan must clearly indicate any personal conflicts of interest, and the individuals' various roles in the company or university must be clearly described. Specify, for example, share ownership, board positions, employment, or consulting activities.

Formal requirements

The 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 objectives and purpose of the call.
- The application shall include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.
- The applying university should belong to the target group of the Foundation.
- The project duration should be 1 to 2 years.

- At the closing date of the call, the project manager should not have been academically active for more than 3 years, which must be clearly shown in the CV.
- Maximum funding from the Knowledge Foundation is 2 million SEK.
- The university must provide direct resources to the project corresponding to at least 20 percent of the amount applied for from the Foundation. This must be presented in the budget. <u>NOTE!</u> This contribution cannot cover the project manager's salary for time outside the research project within *Prospekt*.
- The project manager should be supported by a reference group, see above.
- The application must include the business partners' participation, and the project plan and budget must describe the involvement of all partners.
- Co-funding business partners must fall within the Foundation's definition of business sector.
- The contribution from business partners to the project must in total correspond to at least the same amount as that applied for from the Foundation. This must be presented in the budget.
- Signed letter of intent from each of the co-producing companies should be added.
- Any financial or personal links between the involved companies, between any company and university or between any company and individual researcher(s), must be disclosed on the application form, see above.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General terms and condition*, see www.kks.se.
- The earliest starting date for the project is 2023-01-01. The latest starting date for the project is 2023-04-01.
- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, the project owner, and the project manager.

Evaluation[3]

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation will review the applications to determine if they comply with the formal requirements.

If the application complies with the formal requirements, it will be subject to peer review by international scientific experts. An external evaluation panel will conduct an overall evaluation based on the findings from peer review and the evaluation criteria below. In the evaluation of *Prospekt* applications, special emphasis is placed on the criteria related to the project manager's professional development, underlined below. Funding decisions are made by the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation, based on recommendations from the external evaluation panel.

No additions or modifications to the application will be approved after submission of the application (however, see below about doctoral degree certificates).

Evaluation criteria

Strong research and education environments
- To what extent is there a clear description of the research and education environment's current situation, as well as its challenges?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition and plan for the development of the research and education environment?
- What is the added value of the project for the short-term and long-term development of the research and education environment?
- <u>To what extent is the early career researcher expected to contribute to the development and/or renewal of the research and education environment?</u>

Scientific quality
- How well does the research agenda relate and contribute to the state of the art?
- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives of the research project?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods in the research project?
- How strong are the project manager's scientific qualifications for implementing the research project?
- To what extent is the research project expected to generate high-quality results (for example in the form of scientific publications or artistically accepted works)?

Benefits to the business partners
- How relevant is the scientific question/problem in relation to the needs of participating business partners?
- To what extent is the research project expected to contribute to the development of participating companies?

---

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

Implementation
- Is the project plan adequate in relation to the objectives?
- How well planned and organized is the work in the project, particularly regarding work distribution and collaboration between the partners?
- How well is the budget justified in the project plan?
- How appropriate and realistic is the time and activity plan and the risk analysis?
- To what extent is the project (including the professional development plan) expected to provide an opportunity for the project manager to develop and position him or her professionally?

Application

Applications are submitted via the Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se by the project manager. This is important as the applicant's account is connected to the project and reporting of the project.

Signatures from the project manager, the project owner and the vice-chancellor are required. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. 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.

The abstract, project plan and CV for key individuals in the project must be in English to enable international review.

In the application form, enter the city and postcode for the place where each participating company will conduct the main part of its co-production (i.e., not necessarily the place for the head office).

One Swedish and one international peer with extensive knowledge within the research field, and without known conflicts of interest, should be suggested.

The project budget is filled out directly in the application form. 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.

Appendix 1. Description of host research and education environment and project contribution (may not exceed 3 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. The nature and scope of the description and the development plan will vary depending on the stage the environment has reached in its development journey. For example, new or early-stage environments do not need to

report results going back five years if this is not feasible. Instead, these should describe the results relevant to the current situation of the environment.

1.1. The research and education environment (or environments) in which the project will be run

Describe the environment in terms of the parameters that best illustrate the ambition, current situation, challenges, and plan.

a) **Ambition** - what is to be achieved in the ongoing development of the environment, objectives?

b) **Current situation** - area of activity, research groups, research focus, education focus, staff composition, funding, collaborative and business partners, etc., and results for the last five years (scientific output, development of courses, capacity building, funding, etc.).

c) **Challenges** - what are the most important development needs that must be addressed for the development of the environment? Take into account education, research, and collaboration with the business sector.

d) **Plan** - how is the ambition to be achieved, strategy?

1.2. Added value of the project for the research and education environment

Describe how the proposed project adds value for the research and education environment and enhances its development in line with the stated ambition and plan. Indicate in particular how the project will help to strengthen and/or develop the research and/or education concerned, and the cooperation with the business sector. Also describe how the project will add value given previous and ongoing projects, and in what way the project manager is expected to contribute to the development and/or renewal of the environment.

Appendix 2. Project plan (may not exceed 8 pages + 2 pages Plan for professional development, see below.)

To be uploaded under 'Project plan'. The project plan should be entirely page numbered.

- Describe the scientific questions/problems to be addressed in the project, and how they relate and contribute to the state of the art. Also describe how the scientific questions/problems relate to needs of the business sector. Also describe the scientific objectives and methods to be used in the project.

- Describe expected results and effects and how they contribute to the development and/or renewal of both the project manager and the university, as well as participating companies.

- Describe in what way the project manager is suitable to manage the project. Also describe how the project will be practically implemented in a way that clarifies how the collaboration between partners will take place, the contribution of each partner, and how the competencies and contributions of each partner complement each other in the project. Work contributions from key individuals in the project must be described, including company individuals.

- Describe and justify all costs for all partners in the budget. It should be clear what the costs consist of, why they are relevant to the project, and how they have been calculated.
- Include a schematic time and activity plan. Also include a brief risk analysis regarding the project's ability to be carried out according to plan.
- If the applicant previously has been rejected a *Prospekt* project, and now applies again, this should be indicated along with comments on how the previous views of the external evaluation panel are handled in the current application.
- **Plan for professional development** (maximum 2 pages). Add the Professional development plan at the end of the Project Plan under a separate heading. Describe how the project manager's professional development and possibility to become an independent researcher is supported by the project and other qualifying activities outside the research project. These qualifying activities could be other tasks within research or education, active networking outside the university, promotion of one's own mobility, internationalization, skills development in leadership, etc. The plan should also describe how the reference group will support the professional development.

Appendix 3. Qualifications (may not exceed 2 pages per person)

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

CVs with relevant information about key individuals in the project, also key company individuals, should be added. CVs exceeding 2 pages per individual will not be considered in the evaluation.

Appendix 4. Copy of the projects manager's doctoral degree certificate

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

If the applicant at the time of the application has not yet received a doctoral degree certificate, but will do so in a short time, the certificate may be added later. In such a case, this must be clearly stated in the application and certified by an appropriate body or person at the examining university.

Appendix 5. Letter of intent (may not exceed 1 page per company)

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 of the co-producing companies should be added. The letters should briefly describe the company's commitment, role, and contribution, as well as motives and value for participation in the project. The letters of intent should either be signed manually or electronically signed by for example eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems. Letters of intent without correct signatures will not be considered.

Appendix 6. Signatures from the university (appendix form)

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

The application must be signed by the project manager, the project owner, and the vice-chancellor. Download the appendix template from the Foundation's website, www.kks.se. The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically signed by for example eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems. Applications without correct signatures will not be considered.

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2022-08-26.
- All applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be rejected.
- International peers will review the scientific quality of applications.
- The external evaluation panel will submit its recommendation to the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation.
- The CEO of the Knowledge Foundation will render a decision in November 2022.
- Granted projects may commence after agreement signing, earliest by 2023-01-01 and latest by 2023-04-01.