
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

HÖG 20 – Research projects

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's university colleges and new universities to apply for funding of research projects. The research projects must be co-produced with the business sector and contribute towards renewal by the research groups and advancement at the participating companies.

Margareta Stark, Programme Manager
Margareta.stark@kks.se, 073-712 81 41

We require your application no
later than 3 p.m (15:00) on
December 11, 2020

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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 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.

Purpose and objective

Through the programme *HÖG - Research projects*, the universities and companies are given the opportunity to jointly answer a well-defined and specified research question.

The programme aims to promote development of new research areas with a potential to either develop new research environments or to renew existing research environments. The purpose is also to contribute to the development and strengthening of the competitiveness of participating companies. The programme is also intended to serve as an initial step towards other types of funding programmes at the Knowledge Foundation.

The objective is for researchers at the universities and business partners to answer a shared research question, and through this generate results that benefit both the academic and business sectors.

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 hold a doctorate or a position as senior lecturer (lektor), associate senior lecturer (biträdande lektor) or professor at the university. The project manager must be an employee at the applicant university.

The project must be carried out in collaboration with business partners (see definition below). Other collaborating partners (e.g. public agencies) may participate in the project, but their input is not counted as co-financing.

How should the funds be used?

Funding from the Knowledge Foundation should be used to pay for researchers employed at Sweden's university colleges or new universities, and direct project-related costs, e.g. cost of facilities and material.

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.

The application must present a budget that encompasses the entire project. This includes reporting on funding from the Knowledge Foundation, company resources used in the project, and any contributions from the university. The budget should present the direct costs of the project. In its funding decision, the Knowledge Foundation can reduce the budget. Costs accrued before the approved project period cannot be accepted.

Overhead costs should not be included. Such costs will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Knowledge Foundation approves the application.

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

University involvement

The project manager is responsible for the implementation of the project. It is important that the project manager can take long-term responsibility for the entire project implementation.

The application should also state who will be the project owner within the university. 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.

Business sector involvement

The business partners' contribution to the project, through in-kind initiatives and/or direct financing must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation in the application.

Projects must be co-produced with business partners. Co-production means that the academic and business sectors, from their respective perspectives, together formulate and address a scientific question/problem. The question presented in the application should be based on a problem that, if solved, will benefit the company – and, from an academic perspective, the solution to the question/problem should contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. For more information on co-production, see www.kks.se.

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 sector. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant portion of the company's revenues. The organizations 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 collaboration and have possibilities to integrate the results from the collaborations into their operations.

At least two companies, independently, must co-finance each project. There needs to be a balance in corporate co-financing to the extent that normally one company should not provide more than 70 % of the total share of corporate co-financing.

The business partners input in the project must be described and justified in the application. In 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.

If any economic or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and 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. 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 the following requirements, it will be rejected without further evaluation.

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objective of the call.
- The funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 4 million.
- At least two companies that are independent of each other must be co-producers in the project.
- Signed letter of intent from each of the co-producing companies.
- The companies must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of "business sector".
- The business sector partners' contribution to the project must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation.
- The project must include participation from business sector partners, and the project plan and budget must describe the involvement of all partners.
- The project manager must hold a doctorate or a position as senior lecturer (lektor), associate senior lecturer (biträdande lektor) or professor. The project manager must be an employee at the applicant university.
- Salaries funded by the Knowledge Foundation must go to employees at Sweden's university colleges or new universities.
- Senior researchers (PhD or position as senior lecturer, associate senior lecturer or professor) must account for at least 50% of the research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation.
- If any economic or personal links exists between the involved companies, between any company and university, or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed on the application form.
- 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 is June 1st 2021. The latest starting date for the project is December 1st 2021.
- The project duration should be 1 to 4 years.
- The application shall include parts and appendices according to the call instructions.

- The vice-chancellor, the project owner and the project manager must sign the application.

Evaluation

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

Applications that meet the formal requirements will be reviewed by an external evaluation panel. Each application will also be subject to peer review by international scientific experts. Using the findings from peer review, the external evaluation panel will jointly develop an overall assessment.

Funding decisions are made by the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation, based on the recommendation from the external evaluation panel.

No additions or modifications to the application will be approved after submission of the application.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality²

- How does the application relate to the state-of-the-art? 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 high is the level of scientific expertise in the project group?²

Benefits to the business partners²Fel! Bokmärket är inte definierat.

- How relevant is the scientific question/problem in relation to the needs of participating companies?

Expected results and effects²

- To what degree will the project generate scientific or artistic results of high quality (e.g. scientific publications/documentated artistic research)?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to development and renewal of the research group and research area?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to development of participating companies?
- When deemed relevant; How will the project contribute to the development of an integrated research and education environment?
- Considering the expected results, is the investment appropriate?

Implementation

- Are the parts of the project plan adequate in relation to the project objectives?

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

- How well planned and organised is the work of the project, particularly as regards relevant work distribution among the partners?
- How well does the budget reflect funding needs outlined in the project plan?

The project is evaluated as a whole based on all of the criteria presented. Please note that high scientific or artistic quality is a necessity, but not alone a sufficient condition for research funding to be granted. Correspondingly, companies' participation must be an integral part of the project.

Application

Applications are submitted via the 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 respective signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

Abstract, the project plan and CV's for project staff from the university should be written in English to enable international peer review.

To facilitate peer recruitment, the applicant is requested to suggest two international experts qualified to evaluate the application. The applicant must assert that suggested experts are free from conflict of interest.

The project budget is filled out in the application form. Note that the application should not cover overhead costs.

The following appendixes (as pdf-files) should be attached to the application and in the same order as below:

1. Description of project host research and education environment (may not exceed 2 pages)

To be uploaded under 'Host research and education environment'.

Describe the current academic environment, its research and education activities so the current position and future plans are shown. What is the environment's development needs, strategies and ambitions regarding research and education in collaboration?

The description should include the following headings:

- Current position and development needs,
- strategies and ambitions,
- main results of the past few years,
- staff composition,
- financing,
- collaboration partners (academic and non-academic).

2. The Project's contribution to the research and education environment (may not exceed 1 page)

To be uploaded under "Host research and education environment".

Describe the strategic value of the proposed project by demonstrating how the project will support the development of the academic environment in line with the university's aspirations for collaborative research and education.

3. Project plan (may not exceed 12 pages)

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

- Describe and motivate the scientific/artistic research question that will be addressed and the scientific/artistic methods that will be employed, including how the research question relates to the state-of-the-art.
- Describe the expected results and effects of the project and how these relate to the needs of the research group and the companies.
- Describe how the project will be implemented, e.g. the contributions of the respective partners and how they complement each other's expertise. The work of the fellows covered by the budget, including those from the company, must be described. Also indicate how much time, financed by the Knowledge Foundation, which consists of senior researchers. Implementation may be described by, e.g. presenting a timetable, risk analysis, possible objectives of the project and work components that specify the activities performed by different participants.
- Describe the rationale for costs presented in the budget (salaries, equipment, materials etc.) and how the costs have been calculated. This also includes co-financing from the companies.

4. 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".

CV with relevant information for relevant project staff, including experts from companies. CV's exceeding 2 pages will not be considered in the evaluation.

5. Letter of intent

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

Signed letter of intent from each of the co-producing companies that briefly justifies the company's interest in the project and expresses the intention to participate in the project if funds are granted from the Knowledge Foundation.

6. 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".

The application must be signed by the project manager, the project owner and the vice-chancellor. Applications without signatures will not be considered.

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive your application no later than December 11, 2020 at 3 p.m. (15:00).
- The applications will be reviewed for compliance with formal requirements. The CEO of Knowledge Foundation decides on any rejections due to formal errors and applicants will be notified of formal rejections no later than mid-January 2021.
- International experts will review the scientific quality of applications during January and February 2021.
- The external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation in April.
- The Knowledge Foundation's CEO will render a decision the beginning of May, by the latest.
- Granted projects may commence after agreement signing, earliest 2021-06-01 and latest at 2021-12-01.