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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### RESEARCH PROJECTS 26

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 26 November 2026.**
  - Funding decisions will be announced in April 2027.
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#### **About the Knowledge Foundation**

*The Knowledge Foundation is a funder with the mission to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. The foundation funds research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and newer universities when it takes place in collaboration with the business sector. The Foundation's calls are open to all scientific and artistic subject areas.*

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## The Research projects programme<sup>1</sup>

Today's societal challenges place high demands on the utilisation and dissemination of research results, and Sweden's competitiveness and capacity for transition depend to a large extent on new knowledge being developed, tested and put into use. Research conducted in collaboration between academia and the business sector is a well-established approach for generating knowledge that is both scientifically relevant and practically applicable, and one that the Knowledge Foundation has supported for a long time. Follow-ups and evaluations also show that such projects often contribute to deeper relationships between the parties and to new collaborative initiatives.

Through the *Research Projects* programme, researchers and businesses are given the opportunity to jointly develop new knowledge that advances scientific development and contributes to development in the business sector and, in the longer term, to increased competitiveness. The programme also creates conditions for building, renewing and strengthening research and education environments at universities, in line with their long-term profiling and collaboration missions.

### Objectives and purpose of the programme

The objective of the programme is for researchers, together with business partners, to address a jointly formulated research question of high relevance to both the research field and the business sector. The projects are expected to contribute new or enhanced scientific knowledge and to generate results that are useful to the participating business partners, with the potential to also benefit a wider business sector.

The purpose of the programme is to support research and education environments at an early stage in taking steps towards establishing their research activities, while more established environments are given the conditions to further develop and/or renew their research and strengthen their role as long-term, relevant collaboration partners for the business sector and society.

### Project design

The project should be designed so that the university and at least two business partners jointly address a shared research question. The project should be designed as a coherent whole, where the project's objectives, planned activities and collaboration with the business sector are clearly aligned. Collaboration between academia and the business sector should be integrated into the design and implementation of the project, rather than consisting of parallel or stand-alone activities. The scope and level of ambition of the project should be realistically balanced in relation to the project duration, available resources and the collective competence of the project team.

The programme funds research projects, not individual positions or doctoral training appointments. Doctoral students may be included in the project team; however, the implementation of the project must be based on a collective competence that is sufficient to ensure scientific quality, capacity for implementation, and relevant collaboration with the business sector.

## Terms and conditions

### Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities<sup>2</sup> (hereafter referred to as *universities* in the call text) may apply. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all subject areas. When the

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<sup>1</sup> The programme *Research Projects* has replaced the former HÖG programme.

<sup>2</sup> Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen

application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is to be replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

Several universities within the Foundation's target group may collaborate in the project if this strengthens the application and the project, but only one university may be the main applicant and contracting party vis-à-vis the Knowledge Foundation.

## Participation of the university

The project must have a project manager who is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager should have a doctoral degree<sup>3</sup> and be employed by the main applicant university at the latest at the start of the project. At the university, there must also be an appointed project owner. The project owner, who must have staff and budget authority at a senior level at the university, is responsible for ensuring proper conditions for the implementation of the project, and for monitoring the implementation. The project owner should have the right of delegation to conclude agreements with the Knowledge Foundation. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

## Participation of the business sector and other partners

The project must be conducted in co-production with the business sector. For more information on the Foundation's view on co-production, go to [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>4</sup>.

At least two mutually independent business actors should co-finance the project. Clarification of the criteria for co-financing business actors can be found on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>5</sup>.

The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation. For an appropriate balance in the co-production, a single business actor may not account for more than 70 percent of the total co-financing.

All co-financing business actors must attach signed letters of intent describing expected results and benefits of the participation, as well as how the collaboration in the project will take place. The letters of intent must also clearly describe the organisation's financial and resource conditions for meeting the obligations described in the project plan and budget.

Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group as well as other relevant partners, who cannot be counted as co-financing business actors, may participate in the project if they strengthen the application and the project. These partners should also attach signed letters of intent where the contributions to the project are described and motivated, but they bear their own costs in the project, and these costs cannot be counted as co-financing.

Any connections, such as financial or personal links, between for example participating partners, between any partner and university, or between any partner and individual project participant(s), must be stated and clarified in the application form and the project plan. Any dual roles must be clarified and will be reviewed by the Knowledge Foundation. Specify, for example, company connections, share ownership, board positions, employment, or consulting activities.

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University, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm University of the Arts, Swedish Defence University, Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Södertörn University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Skövde, University West, Örebro University.

<sup>3</sup> Doctoral degree on scientific or artistic grounds, alternatively employment as a senior lecturer, associate senior lecturer, or professor.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/what-does-the-business-sector-mean/>

## Project duration

The project duration should be 1–4 years. Projects may start no earlier than 1 June 2027, and no later than 1 December 2027.

## Financial framework and budgeting

The programme refers to the funding of a research project conducted in collaboration with the business sector. The amount to be requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed the sum of SEK 4 million.

The funds from the Foundation should primarily be used for salary costs related to working time within the project for the project manager and other project participants employed by the applicant university(ies). In addition to salary costs, other direct costs arising within the project at the applying university(ies) can be included in the budget.

Information on approved costs and instructions for budgeting of funds are available in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, which can be found on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>6</sup>. The application should not include overhead costs (OH). An OH surcharge of 20 percent will be added by the Foundation if the application is granted.

## Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system *SBS Manager* via [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>7</sup>. Supplementing the application after the closing date of the call is not possible.

## Appendices to the application

The following appendices (as PDF files) should be attached to the application 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. However, applicants may provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate based on the direction of the call.

Application appendices must be written in English to allow for international peer review (however, letters of intent may be written in Swedish).

Note that all body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, single line spacing, and normal margins (2,5 cm for all margins).

### Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)

Maximum 2 pages. If a project is applied for jointly by several research and education environments, all environments must be described according to the instructions below (the appendix may be extended by a maximum of half a page per additional environment). To be uploaded under *Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the research and education environment(s)*.

All the Knowledge Foundation's programmes contribute in different ways to supporting the development of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, the business sector, and society. Therefore, all projects applied for must be situated within a context in which they contribute to strengthening the development and profile of the research and education environment. In this way, the environment can also become a long-term and valuable partner for the

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/apply-and-report/>

business sector. For more information on what the Knowledge Foundation means by strong research and education environments, and how such an environment can be defined, go to [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>8</sup>.

This appendix should be based on the group (research and education environment) within which the project will be conducted and should be prepared jointly by the management of the research and education environment and the project manager.

*1.1. The research and education environment(s) where the project will be conducted*

Briefly describe the research and education environment in which the project will be conducted. Tailor the description to what is most relevant in relation to the programme and the project.

*1.2. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)*

Describe the ambitions and objectives of the research and education environment for becoming a stronger environment.

Justify how the project will contribute to the environment's desired development in the short and long term.

Describe in what way the project adds value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment.

## **Appendix 2. Project plan**

Maximum 12 pages (excluding references). Page numbered. To be uploaded under *Appendix 2. Project plan*.

### *Scientific quality*<sup>9</sup>

- Describe and justify the scientific objectives of the project and/or the research questions to be addressed, and how they relate and contribute to the current knowledge frontier.
- Describe and justify the scientific methods that will be employed.
- Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project, and if so, how these perspectives are included (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>10</sup>)

### *Benefits to the business sector*

- Describe how the scientific objectives and/or research questions relate to the needs of the business sector and how the co-production will take place.
- Describe the expected results and effects of the project, and how these are expected to generate benefits for the participating business partners, as well as a wider business sector.

### *Implementation*

- Describe the implementation of the project and include a timetable, risk analysis, publication plan or equivalent. Specify any sub-goals and work steps as well as the activities of the various actors.
- Describe and justify the project's organisation, management, and staffing. Account for the competence, role, and work contributions of key personnel, including individuals from participating partners, as well as the desired competence profile for staff yet to be recruited. The description should relate to information provided in the budget, the appendix *Staff in the project*, and CVs.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/>

<sup>9</sup> When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is to be replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>11</sup>).
- Describe and justify the costs included in the budget table so that it is clear what the costs consist of, why they are relevant to the project, and which partner will cover the cost. If the co-financing from the participating business partners includes substantial cost items that do not constitute working time, these must be justified.

### Appendix 3. Project participants

Appendix template for project participants (*Staff in the project*) is downloaded as an Excel file from [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>12</sup>, but must be converted and attached to the application as a PDF file (ensure that the entire Excel spreadsheet fits on one PDF page). To be uploaded under *Appendix 3. Staff in the project*.

Enter information on all planned project participants from the university (or universities) in the table. From other participating partners, only key participants need to be entered. For all participants, the estimated actual extent of their work contribution must be specified.

### Appendix 4. Qualifications

Maximum 1 page per person (with the exception of the project manager, whose CV must not exceed 2 pages). To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Attach CVs for all individuals listed in Appendix 3 *Staff in the project*, except for those who have not yet been recruited.

The Foundation applies a broadened review of academic merits (more information on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>13</sup>). Thus, all academically active participants should present a selection of the merits and experiences that are most relevant to the project and the programme form. *For example*, emanate from the following categories:

- **Education and degrees**
- **Employment and assignments**
- **Research output:** select at most ten (10) research results/outputs. In addition to scientific publications, this could be for example: documented artistic merits, instrumental or product development, data set, software, patent, process or policy development, as well as implementation of research results.
- **Teaching:** pedagogical qualification including, for example, teaching, training and supervision, education development including development of open teaching resources and learning objects (learning and teaching materials).
- **Cooperation:** with academia, business sector, or other societal actors, as well as communication efforts.
- **Management:** project management, organisational development, assessment assignments, centre management, department assignments, granted funding.

### Appendix 5. Letters of intent

Approximately 1 page per partner. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Signed letter of intent from each of the participating partners must be attached. Each letter of intent must include

- expected results and benefits of the participation

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/gender-equality-perspective-an-added-value-for-research-and-innovation/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/broadened-review-of-academic-merits-and-advanced-assessment/>

- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project
- ability to contribute in accordance with the project plan and budget

Letters of intent should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

### Appendix 6. Signatures from the university

Appendix template for signatures is downloaded from [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>14</sup>. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

The application must be signed by the project manager and the project owner. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. The project owner assures through his/her signature that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description. The project owner should have the right of delegation to conclude agreements with the Knowledge Foundation.

The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, eduSign, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

## Preparation and assessment

The application will be reviewed by the secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation to ensure that the formal requirements are met. If these are met, an assessment of the project's scientific quality will be performed by international scientific experts (peer review). Thereafter, an external assessment panel will conduct an overall assessment based on the assessment criteria below. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO after recommendation by the external assessment panel.

### Formal requirements

The following requirements must be met for the application to be considered for evaluation by the Knowledge Foundation. Applications that do not meet the requirements, will be rejected for formal reasons.

- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group.
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree<sup>15</sup> and be employed by the university at the latest at the start of the project.
- The application must include appendices according to the call instructions.
- At least two business actors must co-finance the project.
- Co-financing business actors must fulfil the criteria set by the Knowledge Foundation.<sup>16</sup>
- The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation. A single business actor may not account for more than 70 percent of the total co-financing.
- Signed letters of intent from all participating partners must be attached.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 4 million (excl. OH costs).
- The project duration must be 1–4 years.
- Projects may start no earlier than 1 June 2027, and no later than 1 December 2027.
- The application must be signed by the project owner and the project manager.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/documents/>

<sup>15</sup> Doctoral degree on scientific or artistic grounds, alternatively employment as a senior lecturer, associate senior lecturer, or professor.

<sup>16</sup> More information on the Foundation's website: <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/what-does-the-business-sector-mean/>.

## Assessment criteria

### Contribution to the development of the research and education environment<sup>17</sup>

- To what extent are there clear and relevant descriptions of the current state of the research and education environment, as well as its ambitions and objectives for strengthening the environment?
- How well justified is the project's contribution to the desired development of the research and education environment in the short and long term?

### Scientific quality<sup>18</sup>

- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives and/or research questions?
- How well do the scientific objectives and/or research questions relate and contribute to the current knowledge frontier?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods?
- How appropriate is the project group's scientific competence in relation to the project content?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project? If so, are these perspectives adequately included?

### Benefit to the business sector

- How relevant are the scientific objectives and/or research questions to the needs of the participating business partners?
- To what extent is the project expected to generate benefits for the participating business partners?
- To what extent is the project expected to generate benefits for a broader industry or sector?

### Implementation

- To what extent is the project plan clearly presented and its content appropriate in relation to the project's objectives?
- How well is the budget described and justified in the project plan and is the project plan realistic in relation to available resources?
- How appropriate is the project's organisation and management?
- How well do the combined merits and experiences of the project group fulfil the needs of the project implementation?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?

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<sup>17</sup> In cases where several research and education environments submit a joint application, the assessment criterion applies to each of the environments.

<sup>18</sup> When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.