CALL FOR PROPOSALS

AVANS 23

Mini/Maxi

- Deadline for application is **15:00 on 8 November 2023.**
- Decisions will be communicated to applicants in March 2024.
- After signing the agreement, approved projects may start 1 June 2024 at the earliest and 1 November 2024 at the latest.

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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.

Contents

The programme Avans

In order for Sweden to continue being a competitive country with high innovation skills, the courses and the programmes offered at the universities and university colleges (further referred to as universities in the call text) must be of high quality, research-based, and relevant for the labour market. To achieve this, both the universities and the business sector needs to be involved in the development and implementation of educational activities.

With the programme Avans, the Knowledge Foundation wants to give the universities the opportunity to work with business partners to develop degree programmes that are both research-based and relevant for the business sector. This kind of collaboration will create mutual benefits that strengthen the courses and programmes offered at the universities and contribute to the provision of competence within the business sector.

Objective of the programme

The objective of the Avans programme is for the university to work with business partners to develop or further develop second cycle study programmes that addresses the competence needs of the business sector. The objective is also to contribute to the ability of the university to establish and/or develop educational collaboration with the business sector.

The purpose of the programme and its 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 society. In different ways, all 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. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view on strong research and education environments, go to www.kks.se.

The specific purpose of the programme Avans is to integrate the academic environment's research and education activities and to contribute to provision of competence within the business sector.

Programme versions

To effectively match the needs and conditions of the applicant research and education environment, the programme is offered in two versions – *Avans Mini* and *Avans Maxi* (further referred to as *Mini* and *Maxi* in the call text). The versions differ in terms of scope (credits), number of co-producing companies, project duration, funding amount and requirements regarding student recruitment and marketing.

Avans Mini is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners wants to further develop a pre-existing degree programme by developing one or several courses.

Avans Maxi is aimed at environments who together with relevant business partners wants to develop a new degree programme or wants to make a total renewal of a pre-existing degree programme.

	Mini	*Maxi*
Project duration	1 year	3 years
Scope of courses to be developed	7.5–15 credits	45–120 credits
Maximum funding	SEK 500,000	SEK 2 million
Minimum of co-producing companies	2	5

Project design

The projects will involve universities, companies, and possibly other relevant partners, working closely together to define competence needs and jointly develop or further develop second cycle study programmes.

- Degree programmes that can be developed or further developed are master's programmes or the second cycle level (year 4-5) in programmes resulting in a professional degree.
- The scope of courses to be developed should be 7.5–15 credits (*Mini)* or 45–120 credits *(Maxi)*.
- The content of the courses will be developed in co-production with the business sector and any other contributing partners, to ensure they satisfy the competence needs of the business sector (read more in the section *Participation of business sector and other partners*).
- The project proposals should describe how the planned courses relate to the research conducted within the environment.
- The recruitment of students is a critical factor that should be a key focus. The project proposals should outline how marketing and student recruitment will be handled.
- The projects should have a particular focus on pedagogical development to strengthen the sustainability of the degree programme.
- The developed courses/degree programme should be part of the university's regular course offering and its quality should be assessed and approved by the university's internal decision-making body.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities[1] may apply. The applicant's organisation must be a university with degree-awarding powers, master's degree or higher[2], for the subject area addressed by the application. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all scientific and artistic fields. When the application concerns an artistic field, 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.

How should the funds be used?

The funds from the Knowledge Foundation should be used for the development of courses/degree programmes. The Knowledge Foundation's funds may not be used for course implementation.

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, go to www.kks.se.

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.

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[1] Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen 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

[2] Degree-awarding powers at master's level or higher is required to ensure that good conditions prevail for a close connection between research and education within the subject area.

University involvement

The Knowledge Foundation welcomes, but does not formally require, co-funding from the university. Please note that overhead costs are not to be included in the co-funding from the university.

A project manager, who must have a PhD and be employed by the main applicant university, should be responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager must have relevant experience to run the project – for example previous course responsibility or pedagogical development work. The application should also state who will be the project owner at the university. The project owner, who should have staff and budget authority at a senior level at the university, has responsibility for ensuring proper conditions for implementing and monitoring the project. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

Participation of business sector and other partners

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

The projects require a defined and sufficiently comprehensive engagement from partners within the business sector, to ensure the relevance of the courses. Within *Mini,* at least two companies must participate and within *Maxi,* at least five companies must participate. Please note that participating companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of business sector (go to www.kks.se for more details). The applicant should contact the programme manager well in advance if there is any uncertainty regarding the definition. To broaden the scope of the project and include knowledge about general developmental issues within a business area, trade associations or other relevant partners may also contribute to the project. The participating companies and possible other partners should bear their own costs related to their contributions in the project.

The participating partners will contribute, among other things, by identifying competence needs, developing educational content, and offering experience from practical challenges. The involvement of the business sector and other partners, for example through workshops, reference groups, steering groups, etc., should be clearly detailed in the project description.

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, and 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 objective and purpose of the call.
- The application must include parts and appendices according to the call.
- All body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, single line spacing.
- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group and have degree awarding-powers at master's level or higher for the subject area.
- The project manager must hold a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university.
- Participating companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.

- Signed letters of intent from each of the participating companies should be attached (at least two companies within *Mini* and at least five companies within *Maxi*).
- The funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 500,000 *(Mini)* and SEK 2 million *(Maxi)*.
- The duration of the project should be a maximum of 1 year *(Mini)* or 3 years *(Maxi)*.
- The start date of the project is 1 June 2024 at the earliest and 1 November 2024 at the latest.
- Any financial or personal links must be clearly stated in the application.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, go to www.kks.se.
- The vice-chancellor, project owner and the project manager must sign the application.

Assessment

The application will be reviewed by the secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation to ensure that it complies with the formal requirements. If these are met, 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.

Assessment criteria

Strong research and education environment
- To what extent is the project expected contribute to 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[3]
- To what extent does the planned courses relate to the research conducted within the environment?
- To what extent will the project contribute to pedagogical development?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project? If considered relevant, are the perspectives appropriately included in the project design and content?

Benefits to the business partners
- To what extent does the planned courses relate to identified competence needs?
- To what extent is the companies' planned involvement adequately and sufficiently comprehensive?
- To what extent will the project contribute to establish and/or develop educational collaboration with the business sector?

Implementation
- How clear and adequate are the objectives of the project?
- How well is the recruitment of students and marketing of the degree programme planned?
- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate project implementation?

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

- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?
- To what extent is the activity and timetable well designed and realistic? Is the budget clearly presented and explained, and are the costs reasonable in relation to the project content?

Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system (www.kks.se). Supplementation of the application after the closing date of the call is not possible.

Applications may be written in either Swedish or English.

In the application form, applicants should indicate the project title with the programme version applied for: 'Avans Mini: [Project Title]' or 'Avans Maxi: [Project Title]'.

In the application form, the project's main subject focus is 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 selected.

The project budget should be entered directly in the application form and should not include overhead costs (OH).

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.

A table of planned project participants is to be attached to the application form. From participating companies (and potentially other partners), only key participants 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 (make sure that the entire Excel spreadsheet fits on one PDF page).

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, however applicants can provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate based on the direction of the proposal.

NOTICE: 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's contribution to the research and education environment (may not exceed 2 pages, see below for more information if the project is planned in collaboration between several environments).

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. When a project is planned in collaboration between several environments all environments shall be included, however, the appendix may only be extended by half a page per additional environment. Start from the group or environment where the project has its closest context. Design the description based on the following headings:

1.1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment

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 (or environments) 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 and objectives for the further development of the environment.

Appendix 2. Project plan (may not exceed 7 pages (*Mini*), or 10 pages (*Maxi*), page numbered)

To be uploaded under *Project plan.*

- **Introduction and objectives**

  General presentation of the projects and its objectives and purpose.

  If the university has been previously rejected on a similar Avans project application, and reapplies, this must be stated along with comments on how the previous assessment group´s aspects are handled within the current application.

- **Partners and organisation**

  Describe and explain the participating project partners and their respective roles, contributions, and anticipated benefits. Describe and explain the management and organisation of the project and the expertise and involvement of key individuals.

  Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on www.kks.se).

- **Co-production and benefits for the business sector**

  Describe the competence needs that will be addressed in the planned courses and how they are of importance for participating companies and other partners. Specify how the business sector and eventual other partners will be involved and collaborate in the various parts of the project and the planned activities to ensure that the study programmes address the competence needs in the business sector. Describe how the project intends to contribute to the establishment and/or development of educational collaboration with the business sector.

- **Planned courses and pedagogic development**

  Describe the course content (as far as known at the time of application) and their significance to participating partners. Specify how the courses relates to the research conducted within the environment.

  Describe the pedagogic development that will be implemented to strengthen the sustainability of the degree programme. Specify how pedagogical learnings and experiences generated in the project will be apprehended.

  Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project design and content, and if so, how these will be included (more information on www.kks.se).

- **Student recruitment**

  Within *Maxi*, describe how the project will handle student recruitment and marketing. Include an assessment of the number of expected students.

  Within *Mini*, describe how the developed courses can be used in marketing of the pre-existing degree programme. Describe how student recruitment is handled today.

Within both *Maxi* and *Mini*, the recruitment process should be supplemented by an external analysis, an analysis of possible students and a plan for the continuation of the programme.

- **Implementation and budget**

  Specify the planned activities and include a timetable. Indicate how the funding is distributed between the various partners and parts of the project. Comment on and explain the budget in relation to the project content.

Appendix 3. Qualifications (may not exceed 1 page per person)

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

Attach CVs for individuals crucial for the implementation of the project. Include merits of relevance in relation to the project using the following selection of headings (more information on www.kks.se):

- **Degrees**
- **Positions**
- **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 contributions, and implementation of research results.
- **Teaching:** the full diversity of academic teaching, training and supervision activities, education development including open teaching resources.
- **Cooperation:** with academia, business and other societal actors including communication efforts
- **Leadership:** project management, activity development, assessment assignments, centre management, department assignments, etc.

Appendix 4. Letters 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 must be attached. Each letter of intent must include the company's:

- needs and motives for participation,

- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project,

- expected results and benefits of participation.

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

Appendix 5. Signatures (template)

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 vice-chancellor, the project owner, and the project manager. 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.

Appendix template is downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.kks.se. The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by for example eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems.