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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### **FORSKNINGSPROFILER 23**

- Deadline for notice of interest is **12 October 2023**.
- Deadline for application is **15:00 on 1 February 2024**.
- Decisions will be communicated to applicants in June 2024.
- After signing the agreement, approved projects may start on 1 August 2024 at the earliest and on 1 December 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.*

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## **The programme Forskningsprofil**

The programme provides substantial and long-term support for the implementation of a coherent research agenda. A total of SEK 40 million for a period of 8 years could be requested from the Knowledge Foundation. Including co-funding from companies and university, a research profile includes resources equivalent to at least SEK 100 million. A research profile is intended to serve as a hub for the development of a research area driven by either one research environment or by some environments in collaboration.

## **Objective of the programme**

The objective of the programme Forskningsprofil is to support research agendas of high scientific quality and business relevance with the capacity to strengthen the national and international position of research environment(s) and the profiling of the university.

## **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, see [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

The specific purpose of the programme Forskningsprofil is to give universities an opportunity for long-term profiling and positioning of their research and research environments in selected areas.

## **Project design**

Forskningsprofil is a strategic programme aimed at the university management. A Forskningsprofil project (research profile) should be firmly grounded in the strategy of the university. The university management should prioritise and together with the relevant research environment select and define the area in which one wishes to position itself.

A research profile is usually established within one single research and education environment, department, or similar unit. It is also possible that several units collaborate, provided this is compatible with a coherent and profiling agenda for the research profile.

The primary focus of a profile project is on strengthening research, but a sustainable profile should also have a clear connection to relevant education.

The composition of personnel competence involved in the research profile should clearly support the scientific ambitions. There should be a good balance between senior and junior researchers involved. A research profile should be supported by a recruitment and career plan.

The Knowledge Foundation funds research profiles up to a maximum of SEK 30-40 million (excluding costs for OH) over a period of 6 to 8 years. Applications should clearly indicate the ambition and ability to add further research grants from other funding sources to strengthen and extend the research profile.

The Knowledge Foundation has from previous projects identified some success factors in the planning and implementation of a profile project:

- The research profile is developed from a clear view of the international scientific position of the research environment and how this position can be strengthened.

- There is a unifying scientific agenda, and its progression is propelled by carefully considered research objectives and sub-projects that all together contribute to goal fulfilment.
- The organisation of the research profile supports a clear and effective leadership.
- Co-production includes both clear contributions from individual companies and opportunities for companies to contribute more comprehensive to the project implementation, and to benefit from other partner companies' participation.
- Implementation and monitoring of the profile 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 is recommended that the applicant considers these factors when designing the project.

### Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities<sup>1</sup> may apply. 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, but only one university may be the main applicant and contracting party vis-à-vis the Knowledge Foundation.

The programme Forskningsprofilen is aimed at universities with well-established research environments who have clear ambitions for the future. Suitable environments should be cohesive, with clear scientific strengths and a proven ability to carry out research with the business sector.

### Notice of interest

Universities planning to apply for a profile project must submit a non-binding notice of interest to the foundation by **12 October 2023** at the latest. Notice of interest is to be made in the form of an email to [info@kks.se](mailto:info@kks.se). In the attached Word file of no more than two pages, it is stated which research environment(s) are affected as well as the planned focus and planned business partners of intended project(s). This information is not assessed by the foundation. The notice of interest also must state whether:

- The university wants to apply for two or more research profiles within the present call,
- The application may lead to more than two profile projects being conducted at the same time within a university, or more than one profile being conducted at the same time within the same research environment,
- The application may lead to a research environment starting a new profile project within one year after the end of a previous project within the Forskningsprofilen programme.

In the situations stated above, the university must specifically justify why the planned use of the Forskningsprofilen programme is reasonable and most suitable for the continued development of the environment(s) concerned. Based on this, the foundation will inform applicants whether the foundation is willing to accept planned applications by **20 October 2023** at the latest.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

## How should the funds be used?

Please observe that researchers holding a doctoral degree must account for at least 50 percent of the total research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation. The percentage of such researchers, however, may vary over time as the profile develops.

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](http://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.

## University involvement

The university must co-fund the profile project with direct funds equivalent to at least 50 percent of the amount (excluding costs for OH) requested from the Foundation. The university's contributions must be clearly stated in the project plan and budget. Please note that overhead costs are not to be included in the co-funding from the university.

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, 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. Within the Forskningsprofiler programme, the vice-chancellor may be project owner. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person.

## Business sector involvement

The project must be co-produced with business partners. For more information on co-production, go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

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](http://www.kks.se) for more details). The applicant should contact the programme manager well in advance if there is any uncertainty regarding the definition.

The business partners' contribution to the project, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation in the application (excluding costs for OH). The business partners input in the project must be described and justified in the application.

The co-funding certified by business partners in the application may cover only the first half of the project, provided that it corresponds to at least half of the total amount applied for from the Knowledge Foundation. The co-funding for the second half of the project will, in this case, be reported and certified by business partners in connection to the mid-term report and review of the project. The amount requested for from the Knowledge Foundation in the application, however, should always be the total amount for the whole duration of the project.

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 motivation and prerequisites for co-financing the project according to project plan and budget must be clearly stated.

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.
- Co-funding companies must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.
- Signed letters of intent, with detailed co-financing, from each of the co-producing companies should be attached.
- The funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 40 million.
- The university must co-fund the project with direct funds equivalent to at least 50 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation.
- Researchers holding a doctoral degree must account for at least 50 percent of the research time financed by the Knowledge Foundation.
- The duration of the project should be 6–8 years.
- The start date of the project is 1 August 2024 at the earliest and 1 December 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*, see [www.kks.se](http://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 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. As a supplement to the written application, a hearing will be held with representatives from the project. Funding decisions will be made by the Foundation's board after recommendation by the external assessment panel.

### Assessment criteria

#### Strong research and education environment

- To what extent is the project expected to 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<sup>2</sup>

- To what extent is there a coherent and well-defined research agenda that provides adequate focus and progression to the project?

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

- How well is the research agenda related to an international research context?
- To what extent are scientific objectives, questions and methods clear and well chosen, creating conditions for research of high scientific quality?
- To what degree will the project entail scientific excellence and/or a stronger national and international position of the environment(s) in line with the university's ambitions?
- 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

- How relevant is the research agenda in relation to the needs of participating business partners?
- To what extent can the project be expected to contribute to the development of participating business partners and the business sector?

#### Implementation

- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate project implementation? How clear and adequate is the recruitment and career plan?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?
- How well adopted are the project's participant constellation and the chosen forms of cooperation for joint production of knowledge?
- To what extent are the organisation and management of the project fit for purpose?
- How well is the implementation of the project supported by monitorable goals and indicators as well as suitable strategies and plans?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the development of synergies between research and education?
- How realistic is the project plan in relation to proposed resources and how well justified is the budget?
- To what extent is there a credible risk analysis that supports the ability to manage unforeseen events?

### Application

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

Applications should be written in English to enable international peer review.

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](http://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 30 pages, the project plan must be page numbered in its entirety)

To be uploaded under *Project plan*.



**a. Purpose and objective of the research profile** (approx. 2 pages)

- Describe the purpose and overall focus of the project and briefly motivate its connection and significance to the environment(s), to the university and to the business sector. Describe also how the project will create synergies with adjoining education.
- Describe by means of goals and key performance indicators (KPI) what is to be achieved by the project. Clarify the current level of achievement and the target values to be reached halfway through the project and at the end of the project.

**b. Research agenda** (approx. 15 pages, including references)

- Present a research agenda for the whole duration of the project and give a more detailed description of the subprojects to be conducted during the first 3-4 years (scientific goals and research questions, methods, participation from the university and business partners, time plans, expected results etc.). Describe how the different parts of the research agenda will be connected and how the agenda is held together over time.
- Clarify how the research agenda relates to state-of-the-art and what its contribution will be.
- Describe how the project is connected to previous research(results) in the research environment(s) as well as its contribution to the renewal and positioning of research.
- 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](http://www.kks.se)).
- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)).

**c. Co-production with the business sector** (approx. 4 pages)

- Describe in what way the focus of the project implies good business sector relevance.
- Describe how the project is related to the needs and benefits of partner companies, how companies will be involved in the project, and how their participation will support the scientific ambitions.
- Describe the experience and ability of the environment to conduct research in cooperation with companies, and how the cooperation between university and companies should be performed within the project.

**d. Supporting strategies and plans** (approx. 5 pages)

- Present a strategi for how the project will result in a stronger national and international position for the environment within the chosen research domain (profiling and positioning of research, publication, development of national/international cooperation etc.). Connect to goals and indicate priorities, as well as key activities and methods.
- Present a funding strategy explaining ambitions and main efforts intended to obtain complementary funding and enable the continuation of research efforts in the chosen direction after the end of the project.
- Present and motivate a recruitment and career plan for the project<sup>3</sup>.
- Present a risk analysis for the project<sup>4</sup>.

**e. Management and organisation** (approx. 3 pages)

- Describe how the project will be organised, manged, and followed up. Explain how the project will relate to the organisation and management of the university.

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<sup>3</sup> In tabular form with comments in running text.

<sup>4</sup> In tabular form. Risk assessments for both probability and consequences should be specified on a scale 1-4 (4 highest value). Risk values for the two factors are multiplied to provide an aggregated risk value for each risk.

**f. Budget comments** (*approx. 1 page*)

- Describe and comment on the funding plan for the project and how the university, the business sector and the Foundation will contribute over time.
- Briefly comment on and motivate the cost items in the project budget.

**g. Any connection to earlier profile (application)** (*may not exceed 1 page*) – *only if applicable*

- If the university has been previously rejected on a similar Forskningsprofilers project application, and reapplies, this must be stated along with comments on how the previous assessment panel's aspects are handled within the current application.
- If the university has an ongoing profile project or has in recent years finished another profile project within the same research environment, it should be explained how the new application will bring substantial renewal in relation to earlier profile project(s).

*In applications with this section included, the project plan may be stretched to a total of 31 pages.*

**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](http://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,
- co-financing (total amount must be stated).

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 [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se). The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by for example eduSign, GetAccept, ebox or similar systems.