Knowledge Foundation ><

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

PROSPEKT 23

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

In an openly competitive allocation of research funds, where the applicant's previous research experience is often awarded, early career researchers are to a high degree outcompeted. However, the Knowledge Foundation sees advantages in promising researchers at an early stage in their careers are being given the opportunity to develop by managing their own research project.

The programme Prospekt thus provides funding for early career researchers who will independently conduct a research project in co-production with the business sector, and at the same time will be provided time for supplementary academic qualifications and professional development.

In the project, a well-defined and delimited research question, with relevance for both academia and business sector, should be investigated together with business partners. For the research and education environment the programme should be seen as an opportunity to develop and/or renew within its profile area through the strategic recruitment of a promising early career researcher.

A Prospekt project thus contributes both to development and renewal at the university, and to the benefits of participating business partners.

Objective of the programme

The objective of the programme Prospekt is for an early career researcher to, in collaboration with business partners, address a scientific question that contributes to the scientific development and creates benefits for the business partners. The objective is also for the researcher to develop professionally and qualify for a continued academic career.

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.

The specific purpose of the programme Prospekt is to attract an early career researcher to the environment which will strengthen and/or renew the research. Through the programme Prospekt, the applicant 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.

Who may apply?

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities[1] 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.

In order to apply for funding within Prospekt the project manager must be an early career researcher, which means that he/she cannot have been academically active for more than of 3 years from the date

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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.

specified on the doctoral degree certificate, to the date when the call closes (8 November 2023). Time when the researcher has not been academically active but, for example employed in the business sector, or been on parental leave, is deducted. The programme wants to enable mobility and the Foundation therefore encourages applications where the project manager has conducted his/her doctoral studies at a different university than the one where the project will be carried out.

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 programme Prospekt allows 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 project. In addition to these salary costs, expenses directly related to the project, e.g., costs for facilities and materials, can be included in the budget. The Foundation encourages the project manager to include an appropriate leadership training during the project, which can also be included in the budget. Salary costs for any additional resource(s) may be included given it is a limited activity within the project (such as for example collection of material or tests, or the like), and that the costs do not 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. Note that PhD students cannot be financed through the programme.

Since one of the programme's objectives is that the project manager is given the opportunity to develop professionally and qualify for a continued academic career, it is important that the researcher is also given the opportunity to perform qualifying activities outside the project. These activities could be, for example, teaching, participation in other research projects or other duties at the department, active networking outside the university, promotion of one's own mobility, internationalisation, skills development in leadership, etc. Therefore, it is appropriate for the project manager to spend 70 to 80 percent of his/her time in the project. Time for the qualifying activities outside the project must be financed by the university.

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.

University involvement

The project manager, who should be an early career researcher (see definition above), should be responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager may have his/her 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 where the project will be conducted.

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.

An academic reference group consisting of at least three senior researchers should be linked to the project. The group should include at least two researchers (at least one of whom is at 'docent' level or above) linked to the research an education environment where the project manager will work, as well as 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), any costs for him/her must be paid for by the university hosting the project. The project manager's doctoral supervisor(s) 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 university must co-finance the project with direct funds equivalent to at least 20 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation. The co-financing from the university refers to other project-related direct costs, for example for the reference group's time in the project, costs for facilities or materials, travel costs, costs for communication, etc. The university's contributions must be clearly stated in the project plan and budget. The co-financing from the university cannot refer to salary costs for the project manager's qualifying activities outside the project (which is not included in the project budget). Please note that overhead costs are not to be included in the co-financing from the university.

Business sector involvement

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

Please note that co-financing 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.

For an appropriate level of co-production 2 to 4 companies should be participating. 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. The business partners input in the project must be described and justified in the application.

Other relevant partners, like Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group, trade associations, research institutes, public bodies, or companies that fall outside the scope of the Foundation's definition of business sector, may also participate if they strengthen the application and the project. These partners bear their own costs in the project, and these costs cannot be counted as co-financing. The contributions of all partners must be clearly described and justified in the application and signed letters of intent should be attached.

In the case of companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than SEK 10 million in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the 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 applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group.
- 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-financing companies should be 2–4 in number and must fall within the scope of the Knowledge Foundation's definition of 'business sector'.

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- 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 2 million.
- The start date of the project is 1 June 2024 at the earliest and 1 October 2024 at the latest.
- The duration of the project should be 1–2 years.
- The project manager must not have been academically active for more than 3 years after the doctoral degree, which must be clearly shown in the CV.
- The project manager should be supported by a reference group, assembled as described above.
- The contribution from business partners to the project must in total correspond to at least the same amount as requested from the Foundation. This must be presented in the budget.
- The university must provide direct resources to the project equivalent to at least 20 percent of the amount requested from the Foundation. This must be presented in the budget. _NOTE!_ _This co-financing cannot refer to salary costs for the project manager's qualifying activities outside the Prospekt project._
- 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.
- 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. 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 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[2]
- How well does the research question relate and contribute to the state of the art?
- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives of the project?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods in the project?
- How strong are the project manager's scientific qualifications for implementing the 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)?

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[2] 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 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 are the scientific questions/problems to the needs of participating business partners? To what degree are they potentially relevant to the needs of a wider business sector?
- To what extent is the research project expected to contribute to the development of participating companies? To what degree is the research project potentially expected to contribute to the development of a wider business sector?

Implementation
- Is the project plan adequate in relation to the objectives?
- How well planned and organised is the work in the project, particularly regarding work distribution and collaboration between the partners?
- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate 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?
- 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/her professionally?

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 (however, see below about doctoral degree certificates).

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.

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

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 (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, and in what way the project manager is expected to contribute to the development and/or renewal of the environment.

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 8 pages + 2 pages *Plan for professional development*, page numbered)
To be uploaded under *Project plan.*

- 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 participating business partners and potentially also to a wider business sector. Also describe the scientific objectives and methods to be used in the project.
- 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.
- 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 business partners and potentially also a wider business sector.

- 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.
- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on www.kks.se.
- 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 university has been previously rejected on a similar Prospekt 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.
- **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. The plan should also describe how the reference group will be assembled and how it will support the professional development.

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 at 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. 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 project manager, at the time of application, has not yet defended his/her doctoral thesis, but is very close to dissertation, the doctoral degree certificate may be submitted after the closing date of the call. In such a case, the dissertation date must already be set, which is certified by the university's

official decision on the dissertation being attached to the application. The date for the dissertation must be before the project start date.

Appendix 5. 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 6. 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 project manager, the project owner, and the vice-chancellor. 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.