
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

HÖG 14

- Research Projects at New Higher Education Institutions

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's new higher education institutions (HEIs) to apply for funding of research projects. The research projects must be co-produced with business and contribute towards advancement and renewal by the research groups and participating companies.

If you have questions about the call, please contact:

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We require your
application no later than
3 p.m. (15:00)
on 12 June 2014

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About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research at Sweden's 16 new universities and HEIs¹ for the purpose of strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. We provide funding when research is conducted in collaboration between academic researchers and business sector partners.

Background of the programme

Through the HÖG programme (Research Projects at New Higher Education Institutions), the HEIs and companies are given the opportunity to jointly answer a well-defined and specified research question. The Knowledge Foundation has been engaged in the formation and development of research groups and research environments since its first call for proposals in 1995. The programme has been announced annually, and last year we received 67 applications, of which 15 were awarded funds. Five of the incoming applications were rejected because of formal reasons.

Purpose and objective of the programme

The programme aims to promote the establishment and development of new research areas and future research groups and contribute to developing and strengthening the competitiveness of participating companies. Also, the programme aims to create opportunities to foster close collaboration between the academic and business sectors. The programme is intended to serve as an initial step towards other types of programmes at the Knowledge Foundation.

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

Who may apply?

The call for proposals is intended for Sweden's new higher education institutions (HEIs). Only Sweden's new HEIs may apply. The applicant, i.e. the project manager, must be a PhD at a new HEI. The project must be carried

¹ Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Halmstad, Jönköping University, Kristianstad University, University of Skövde, University West, Karlstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Södertörn University, Örebro University

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

How should the funds be used?

Funding from the Knowledge Foundation may be used only to pay for researchers employed at new HEIs and direct project-related costs, e.g. cost of facilities and material.

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

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

The funds applied for should not include overhead. This will be calculated and included in the proposed contract upon approval of the application.

Business sector involvement

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

At least two companies, independently, must co-finance each project. There needs to be a balance in corporate co-financing to the extent that normally one company should not provide more than 70 % of the total share of corporate co-financing. Regarding new research groups, which have not been funded by the Knowledge Foundation previously, it is possible for a single company to be involved in the project if the amount requested falls below SEK 1.5 million.

By “business sector”, the Knowledge Foundation refers primarily to private companies. The concept, however, may include companies under public ownership that are active in competitive markets and where the company finances its operations in the same manner as private companies. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant part of the company’s revenues. None of the organisations may be solely administrative enterprises. The companies must operate in Sweden to the extent that their input provides value for co-production and they have the potential to integrate the results from co-production into their organisation here.

In companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than SEK 1 million in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the conditions for co-production in the project must be very clearly described.

If any economic or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and HEI, 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 HEI must be fully described.

Formal requirements

An application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. If the application does not meet the following requirements, it will be rejected without further evaluation.

- The project must be in line with the purpose and objective of the call. This means, e.g. that the application must present a well-defined research project.
- If any economic or personal links exists between the involved companies, between any company and HEI, or between any company and individual researcher(s), this must be disclosed on the application form. For example, ownership of shares, board memberships, employment/consultant work should be specified.
- Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se)
- The earliest starting date for the project: 2015-02-01. The latest starting date for the project: 2015-05-01.
- The project should cover 1 to 3 years.
- The project manager must hold a doctorate.
- Salaries funded by the Knowledge Foundation must go to employees at Sweden’s 16 new HEIs.
- Of the funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation, PhD-level researchers in the project should be allocated more time than non-PhD

personnel; the reason being that the Knowledge Foundation aims for a higher percentage of post-doctoral and senior researcher time at the new HEIs.

- The project must include participation from industry, and the project plan and budget must describe the involvement of all partners.
- The business partners' contribution to the project must correspond to at least the same amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation, as presented in the budget.
- At least two companies that are independent of each other must be co-producers in the project (exception for new research groups, see above).
- The companies must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of "business group".
- The vice-chancellor, the department head/equivalent, and the applicant must sign the application.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation reviews the applications to determine if the application complies with the formal requirements. An external evaluation panel then conducts the first-round evaluation of the applications. The evaluation panel decides whether the applications can be assessed in relation to the four evaluation criteria listed below.

Applications that do not meet the formal requirements or cannot be assessed in relation to the respective criteria, are rejected. The remaining applications are subject to peer review by international scientific experts.

At its second meeting the external evaluation panel, using the findings from peer review, jointly develop a final, overall assessment, priority, and recommendation for a decision. This is based on the aspects and criteria presented below. Funding decisions are made by the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation, based on recommendations from the external evaluation panel.

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

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality:

- How does the application relate to the state-of -the-art? How well does the scientific question/problem address this?
- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods?

- How high is the level of scientific expertise in the project group?

Benefits to the business partners:

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

Expected results and effects:

- To what degree will the project generate scientific results of good quality (e.g. scientific publications)?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to development and renewal of the research group and research area? If applicable, the development of the HEI?
- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to the development of participating companies?

Implementation:

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

The project is evaluated as a whole based on all of the criteria presented. Please note that high scientific quality is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for awarding research funds. Company participation must be an integrated part of the project.

Application

The Knowledge Foundation uses an online application process. Applications are submitted via the Foundation's website, www.kks.se.

To use the online application service, applicants must create a user account or use a pre-existing account with the Knowledge Foundation.

Application documents consist of electronic forms and appendices that can be uploaded online. Special forms must be used for some appendices. The forms can be downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.kks.se, or from the application portal.

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

To facilitate peer recruitment, the applicant is requested to suggest two international (non-Swedish) experts qualified to evaluate the final application.

The appendices are as follows:

1. Project plan (max 12 pages) including:

- Scientific questions/problems that contribute to the development of the research group and participating companies. A description of the scientific method, i.e. how the questions will be answered.
- A description of the expected results and effects of the project that address the needs of the research group and the companies.
- A description of how the project will be implemented, e.g. describing the contributions of the respective partners and how they complement each other's expertise. The work of the fellows covered by the budget, including those from the company, must be described. Implementation may be described by, e.g. presenting the timetable and possible objectives of the project and by dividing the project into work components that specify the activities performed by different participants.
- A description of and reasons for costs presented in the budget, indicating, e.g. what equipment or material is included, why it is relevant to the project, and how the costs have been calculated. This also includes co-financing from the companies.

2. Qualifications, CVs (max 2 pages/person) for relevant project staff.

- CV with relevant information about those participating in the project, including experts from companies (CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be considered in the evaluation).

3. Project budget (appendix form, only the Foundation's appendix form can be accepted).

4. Signatures (appendix form)

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive your application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2014-06-12.
- The first meeting with the evaluation panel will take place during September.
- Decisions following the initial review will be made in September. Applicants whose projects are rejected will be notified.

- International experts will review the scientific quality of applications during October and November.
- The external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the CEO of the Knowledge Foundation in December.
- The Knowledge Foundation's CEO will render a decision on financing and notify the applicants in December 2014.
- The project may commence after the decision is made, earliest 2015-02-01.