
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

ProSpekt 14

Research projects for early career researchers

The Knowledge Foundation invites early career researchers to apply for funding of research projects at Sweden's new higher education institutions (HEIs). The research projects must be conducted in co-production with the business sector. The projects will strengthen early career researchers in their development towards becoming independent researchers and will contribute towards development and innovation among 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 29 January 2015**

For technical support, contact:
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About the Knowledge Foundation

The Knowledge Foundation finances research at Sweden's new universities and HEIs 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

In a competitive system that promotes the applicants work life experience, early career researchers are often eliminated by the competition. The Knowledge Foundation recognises the advantages of giving early career researchers the opportunity to independently manage their own research projects that will contribute towards professional development. Through the ProSpekt programme, the Knowledge Foundation aims to create opportunities for promising early career researchers to independently manage research projects.

Purpose and objective

The ProSpekt programme gives researchers the opportunity to investigate a limited and well-defined research question. The objective is to enable early career researchers to develop into independent researchers and contribute towards development and innovation among participating partner companies. This will be achieved by providing opportunities for promising early career researchers to independently manage research projects in co-production with business partners.

Who may apply?

This call for proposals targets higher education institutions (HEIs). The applicant, i.e. the project manager, must be an early career researcher, which means that on 29 January 2015 (the closing date for applications) he or she has been academically active for a maximum of 3 years.

The Knowledge Foundation encourages mobility and especially welcomes applications from researchers who received their doctorate from an HEI other than the one applying to host the project. The Knowledge Foundation emphasizes that early career researchers may apply for funding even if they are currently employed at a university other than the proposed host-HEI, in

the business sector or by industrial research institutes. When the project begins, however, the researcher must be employed by the proposed host-HEI.

The project must be co-produced with business partners (see definition under “Business sector involvement”). Other collaborating partners (e.g. public agencies, research institutes, and other HEIs) may participate in the project, but their input does not count as co-financing.

How should the funds be used?

Applications for funding from the Knowledge Foundation should not exceed 2 million SEK, excluding overhead costs(see below).

Funding from the Knowledge Foundation should primarily be used to finance the salary of the applicant, i.e. the early career researcher. We encourage the applicant to also engage outside the ProSpekt project in teaching, participation in other research projects or other duties at the department that can contribute to the career development. This however cannot be included in the ProSpekt project in which it is appropriate that the applicant spends 70-80 % of full time.

In addition to salary costs expenses directly related to the project, e.g. costs for facilities and materials, can also be included in the budget. The Knowledge Foundation encourage the early career researcher to include appropriate leadership training during the project, which can be included in the budget. Salary costs covering an additional resource can be included given it is a limited activity, such as for example collection of material or tests. Note that PhD students cannot be financed through ProSpekt. Salary costs covering this additional resource/s cannot exceed 1/3 of the salary costs for the early career researcher. The limited activity should be clearly stated in the project plan.

The application must present a budget that covers the entire project. This includes information on funding from the Knowledge Foundation, partner company resources used in the project, and 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 comply with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se).

The application should not include the added amount for overhead costs. This will be calculated and included in the proposed contract if the Knowledge

Foundation approves the application for funds.

HEI involvement

The HEI must contribute resources to the project corresponding to 20 % of the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation. If 1 000 000 SEK is requested from the Knowledge Foundation then the HEI must contribute resources corresponding to 200 000 SEK.

A reference group including at least two researchers (at least one of whom is an associate professor) with ties to the research environment where the applicant will work must be connected to the project. The applicant's doctoral supervisor may not be included in the reference group. Applicants who have received their doctorate from the same HEI where the proposed project will be conducted must include an additional researcher (except the two from the host HEI) from another HEI in the reference group.

The reference group provides the researcher with advice and recommendations concerning the project and contributes to the researcher's professional development. Time used for the reference group may in part be included as part of the HEI's co-financing.

Business sector involvement

The business partners' contribution to the project must correspond to at least the same amount as that which is requested from the Knowledge Foundation.

By "business sector", the Knowledge Foundation refers primarily to the private business sector. 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 companies in the private business sector. Hence, public subsidies or fees may not constitute a significant portion of the company's revenues. None of the organizations may be solely administrative enterprises. Primarily they must produce goods or services. 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 organizations here.

Projects must be co-produced with business partners which means that the academic and business actors together, and from their respective perspectives, must formulate and address a scientific question. 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

should contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. For more about co-production, see www.kks.se.

The co-financing companies must be active in Sweden, and their scope and direction must enable collaboration with other partners. In companies with fewer than 10 employees and/or less than 5 million SEK in annual turnover (based on the most recent annual report), the conditions for co-production in the project must be very clearly described.

To achieve an adequate level of co-production, the participation of 2 to 4 companies is recommended for each project. In exceptional cases co-production may involve only a single company in the project, but it is particularly important in these cases to establish the project's scientific relevance.

If any economic or personal links exist between the involved companies, between any company and HEI, or between any company and individual researcher, this must be disclosed. The project plan must clearly indicate any personal conflicts of interest, and the individuals' 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:

- The project must be in line with the general objective and direction of the call for proposals.
- The project must include the participation of business partners, and the project plan and budget must describe the involvement of all partners.
- The project should run for? 1 to 2 years.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation should not exceed 2 million SEK. If funding is awarded, an additional 20 % will be added to cover overhead costs.
- The earliest starting date is 2015-06-01, and the latest is 2015-09-01.
- The project manager may not have been academically active for more than 3 years, which must be clearly shown in the CV.
- The HEI must contribute resources to the project corresponding to 20 % of the amount requested from the Knowledge Foundation. This must be presented in the budget.
- The applicant is required to have a reference group (see above).

Applicants who have received their doctorate from the same HEI where the proposed project will be conducted must include an additional researcher (except the two from the host HEI) from another HEI in the reference group.

- The contribution to the project by business partners must correspond to at least the same amount as that requested from the Knowledge Foundation. This must be presented in the budget.
- Any economic or personal conflicts of interest must be disclosed (see above).
- Business partners who are co-financers must fall within the Knowledge Foundation's definition of "business sector".
- The costs presented in the budget must be in compliance with the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see www.kks.se).
- The HEI's vice chancellor, department head/equivalent, and the applicant must sign the application.

Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation reviews the applications to determine if they comply with the formal requirements. Comments are then solicited from international scientific experts (peer review). Using the peer review as a base, the external evaluation panel conducts a comprehensive final evaluation, establishes priorities, and makes recommendations for a decision. This is done based on the aspects and criteria presented below. In evaluating ProSpekt applications, the focus is on the applicant's potential. Hence, the criterion concerning the applicant's development (underlined below) is given greater weight in the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality

- How well 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 strong are the applicant's scientific qualifications for implementing the project?

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 extent is the project expected to contribute to the professional development and ambition of the applicant to become an independent researcher?
- 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 the development of participating companies?

Implementation

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

Funding decisions are made by the General Manager of the Knowledge Foundation, based on recommendations from the external evaluation panel.

The evaluation process does not allow for additional material to be submitted after the dead-line for application submissions.

Application

The Knowledge Foundation uses an electronic (online) application process. Applicants must log in to the Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se fill in the application forms, including attachments, and submit the application online to the Knowledge Foundation.

Applicants must create a user account to submit an application. A user account enables applicants to log in to the application service. Applicants may use a pre-existing account with the Knowledge Foundation if they have one.

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 Knowledge Foundation's website, www.kks.se, or from the application portal.

Applications should be written in English to enable international scientists to review and evaluate the project.

To facilitate the evaluation of applications by scientific experts, each application should suggest two independent, international (not Swedish), reviewers having qualifications equivalent to at least a senior

lecturer/associate professor in the field addressed by the application. Note! The applicant should not contact the suggested experts in advance since the Knowledge Foundation staff will contact these individuals directly (as/if) needed.

The appendices are as follows:

1. Project plan (max. 10 pages) including:

- Scientific questions/problems that contribute to the development of the applicant and participating business partners.
- A description of the expected results and effects of the project that address the needs of the applicant, the research area, and the business partners.
- 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 persons covered by the budget, including those from the business partners, must be described.
- A description of and rationale 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 business partners.

2. Plan for professional development (max 2 pages) describing how the project contributes to the applicant's professional development and ambitions to become an independent researcher. A description of how collaboration with the reference group will work.

3. Description of the research group (max. 1 page) within which the project is based.

4. Project budget (appendix form, only the Knowledge Foundation's form will be accepted).

5. Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages per person): CV containing relevant information about participants in the project, including business participants.

6. Copy of the applicant's PhD certificate

7. Signatures (appendix form)

Timetable and decisions

- The Knowledge Foundation must receive your application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2015-01-29.

- The Knowledge Foundation's secretariat will review all applications for compliance with the formal requirements. The General Manager makes the decision to reject an application for failing to comply with the formal requirements.
- International experts will review the scientific quality of applications during February and March.
- The external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the General Manager of the Knowledge Foundation during spring.
- The Knowledge Foundation's General Manager will render a decision on financing and notify the applicants at latest in May.
- The project may commence after the decision is made, earliest 2015-06-01.