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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

# Research profiles 14

The Knowledge Foundation invites Sweden's new higher education institutions (HEIs) to apply for funding of research profiles. The programme is intended to be an essential tool to help HEIs further profile, develop, and cultivate their activities, through the establishment of an internationally competitive research environments in well-defined areas of knowledge relevant to the business sector.

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If you have questions about the call, please contact:

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**We require your notification  
of interest no later than  
17 November 2014.**

**We require your application  
no later than 3 p.m. (15:00)  
on 26 January 2015**

For technical support, contact:  
[info@kks.se](mailto:info@kks.se)

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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

On eight occasions, the Knowledge Foundation has offered new HEIs the possibility to apply for funding to develop research profiles. In total, the Knowledge Foundation has awarded just over 750 million SEK through the programme. Business partner companies have co-financed the profiles with at least matching sum. The Knowledge Foundation's evaluations show that the individual research profiles generally achieve the objectives that the Knowledge Foundation established for the programme, i.e. they have produced favourable results and contributed to the development of HEIs and business partners. Given this background, the Knowledge Foundation once again invites HEIs to apply for funding to develop research profiles.

## Purpose and objective of the programme

The programme aims to an essential tool to help HEIs further profile, develop, and cultivate their activities.

The programme's objective is to help HEIs systematically, and over a longer period, develop and establish internationally competitive research environments in well-defined areas of knowledge relevant to the business partners and the business sector. Hence, the research profile is expected to maintain activities after the funded programme ceases.

## Programme design

Research profiles is a strategic programme targeted at leaders of strong research groups. An important starting point for the programme is to precede the application with an internal process where the leadership of the HEI has actively prioritised and selected a limited strategic area. A condition is that the research environment identified has received previous and ongoing grants from the Knowledge Foundation and from other research funding sources.

The Knowledge Foundation finances research profiles with between 30-40 million SEK over a period of 6 to 8 years. In addition there will be a sum to cover overhead (OH) costs corresponding to 20 % of the direct costs. All funding from the Knowledge Foundation must be used for research, a clear majority going towards senior researcher time. The percentage of senior researchers may vary over time depending on career planning and strategic recruitment for the research profile.

The research profile grant will serve as a hub for continued strategic development of a strong and sustainable research environment. Hence it is important for the environment attract further research grants from other funding sources to reinforce and complement the Knowledge Foundation's investment.

## Who may apply?

The call for proposals is intended for Sweden's new higher education institutions (HEIs). The vice-chancellor is responsible for the application, not the individual researcher or research group.

A research profile is a major undertaking. In some cases where an HEI has multiple profiles there is the possibility to submit a maximum of two applications.

**HEIs that plan to apply for funding must contact the programme manager as soon as possible during early spring. The reason is to plan a meeting with the HEI to discuss the conditions for a research profile. Thereafter, a notification of interest and the final application can be submitted in accordance with this call for proposals.**

## How should the funds be used?

Budgeting of funds must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see [www.kks.se](http://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.

The Knowledge Foundation finances research profiles up to a maximum of 30 million SEK (excluding funding for OH) over a period of 6 to 8 years.

The programme is intended to finance the development of a research environment. The funds must be used for research, mainly senior researcher time.

Knowledge Foundation funds may be used to finance research only at new HEIs.

The application must include a budget describing the planned utilisation of the funding requested (appendix format).

## HEI involvement

The Knowledge Foundation requires that HEIs provide direct co-financing for the research profiles. The application must describe the HEI's planned co-financing of the research profile over time. The HEI's co-financing must be in accordance with the instructions presented in the document *Guidelines on Approved Expenditures* (see [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)).

HEIs must also supply the organisational support, to ensure that the research profiles will achieve the objectives presented in the application.

Evaluation of HEI involvement focuses on the economic and organisational support provided by the applying HEI.

## Business sector involvement

The application must present the planned co-financing of the research profile by the business partners, corresponding to at least 15-20 million SEK, i.e. full co-financing for the first half of the profile. The remaining co-financing is reported to the Knowledge Foundation prior to the second half of the profile period.

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. 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 organisation here.

For information on co-production, see [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

## 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.
- 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](http://www.kks.se)).
- The application must be preceded by a notification of interest in accordance with requirements presented in the call.
- The earliest starting date for the project: 2015-09-01. The latest starting date for the project: 2015-11-01.
- The application must specify the co-financing from participating companies in accordance with requirements presented in the call.
- The vice-chancellor must sign the application.
- No HEI may submit more than two applications

## Evaluation

The secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation reviews the applications to determine if the application complies with the formal requirements. International experts review the scientific quality of the project (peer review). The Knowledge Foundation's external evaluation panel will meet the applicants at a hearing. Thereafter, the panel will submit a recommendation to the general manager of the Knowledge Foundation. Funding decisions are made by the board of Knowledge Foundation, based on the recommendations from the general manager.

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

### Evaluation criteria

#### **Scientific quality:**

- To what extent is there a progressive research agenda that provides the conditions for establishing an internationally competitive research environment?
- To what extent are the scientific objectives realistic and clear?
- Are the scientific objectives/ambitions relevant during the period of funding from the Knowledge Foundation?
- How appropriate is the composition of the proposed research group in relation to the scientific objectives?

**Benefits to the business partners:**

- To what extent are the needs of the business partners identified and clearly described in proposed area of research?
- To what extent is there a clear and relevant connection between the research agenda and the needs of business partners?

**Expected results and effects:**

- How and to what extent does the proposed research profile lead to the realisation of an internationally competitive research environment?
- How and to what extent does the proposed research profile promote the development of the business partners?
- How and to what extent does the establishment of the research profile contribute to the HEI's further development and profile?

**Implementation:**

- To what extent does the participant constellation (business group and academics) of the research profile facilitate the joint production of knowledge?
- To what extent is the organisation and management (administrative and scientific) of the research profile aligned with the focus on academic legitimacy and practical implementation?
- To what extent is there a clear and realistic plan for future recruiting and career planning?
- Can the objectives of the research profile be implemented in pace with the proposed resources?
- To what extent is there a credible risk analysis in the application regarding the ability to manage unforeseen events?

The objectives of the profile initiative cannot be achieved without a research group of sufficient size and where researchers and postgraduate students have reached different stages in their careers. Size is one of the prerequisites that must be met to create a strong research environment. In many instances, a

problem-orientated and broad scientific approach relevant to the business partners and connected to basic education should provide favourable conditions for developing a dynamic research profile.

Earlier profiles have, to some extent, focused on doctoral education, which is a vital part of building a strong environment. Investment in senior positions is important to long-term survival and development. Hence, the Knowledge Foundation aims to achieve a higher percentage of postdoctoral and senior fellowships in relation to doctoral students. This can be balanced during the funding period so that in the final phase the profile has a higher percentage of senior fellowships than when it started.

## Notification of interest

Higher education institutions (HEIs) that intend to submit an application must notify the Knowledge Foundation via a *notification of interest*. The notification of interest is a prerequisite for later submitting a complete application.

The notification of interest must not exceed 6 pages and must be received at [info@kks.se](mailto:info@kks.se) no later than 2014-11-17.

The notification of interest must be written mainly in Swedish and contain the following:

- The research orientation of the research profile.
- The research profile's alignment with the strategy and development of the HEI.
- The business group's involvement, motives, and qualifications for participating in the research profile. Companies intending to participate in the research profile must be listed.
- The English name of the research profile, approximately five keywords, and an abstract with a maximum of 200 words.

The notification of interest provides the basis for the Knowledge Foundation's applications review process. This is particularly important when recruiting international experts to evaluate the applications. To facilitate peer recruitment, the applicant is requested to suggest two international experts, (non-Swedish) (associate professor level or higher) qualified to evaluate the final application. The Knowledge Foundation will contact and appoint appropriate experts.

A notification of interest does not serve as the basis for evaluating a project.



The vice-chancellor must sign the notification of interest.

## Application

The Knowledge Foundation uses an online application process. Applications are submitted via the Knowledge Foundation's website, [www.kks.se](http://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 Knowledge Foundation's website, [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se), or from the application portal.

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

In addition to the pages of the form, the application must include 5 appendices, whereof 3 must be entered in special forms.

The appendices should be organised as follows:

### **1. Description of the research profile (max 50 pages)**

#### *1.1 Objective of research profile (approx 3 pages)*

- Formulate overarching and specific objectives for the research profile.

#### *1.2 Establishment of the research profile (approx 8 pages)*

- Describe the current organisation and administrative and scientific leadership of the research environment, followed by a description of the organisation and administrative and scientific leadership of the proposed research profile.
- Describe how the research profile fits in with the strategy of the HEI.
- Describe the co-financing of the research profile by the HEI, business partners, and the Knowledge Foundation over time.
- Present a risk analysis regarding the construction of the research profile.
- Present a recruitment and career planning plan for the profile.

#### *1.3 Research (approx 20 pages including publication list)*

- Describe the research in relation to the research area in Sweden and internationally.
- Describe the research environment's main results during the past 3 to 5 years.

- Present a research plan for the entire period and the specific research projects (e.g. objectives, issues, subject areas, and methodology questions) during the first 3 to 4 years of the research profile.
- List the publications that the research environment wishes to include. No more than three publications per researcher.

*1.4 Co-production of knowledge by the parties involved (approx 10 pages)*

- Describe the relevance of the business partners to the research environment. Describe the companies' involvement, needs, and benefits regarding the research environment.
- Describe how co-production between companies and the HEI has taken place in the research environment and the projected nature of future collaboration.

*1.5 Two initial projects within the Research Profile (approx. 10 pages)*

- Give a thorough description of two initial research projects within the research profile. Describe the scientific questions, co-production, methods and preliminary results that generates usefulness for both industry and academia. Give a final description of on how the scientific projects plays an important role in setting up the research profile at the HEI.

**2. Qualifications**

- Include the CVs of key individuals in the project, both HEI and business partners (max 2 pages per person including relevant publications in the area).

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

**4. Company appendix with signatures (appendix form)**

- The planned co-financing by companies to start the research profile must be presented in the appendix. The participating company's general manager or official representative must sign the appendix.

**5. Signatures from the HEI (appendix form)**

- The vice-chancellor must sign the application.

Information regarding technical support is available through the Knowledge Foundation website.

## Timetable and decisions

- HEIs that plan to apply for funding must contact the programme manager as soon as possible during early spring.
- The Knowledge Foundation must receive the letter of intent no later than 2014-11-17.
- The Knowledge Foundation must receive your application no later than 3 p.m. (15:00) on 2015-01-26.
- As soon as the Knowledge Foundation receives the applications, the forms will be reviewed. During February the general manager will render a decision on whether an application must be rejected for failing to meet the formal requirements.
- International experts will review the scientific quality of applications during the spring of 2014.
- Hearings with applicants will be conducted during the spring 2015.
- After the hearing and evaluation meeting, the external evaluation panel will submit its final recommendation to the general manager of the Knowledge Foundation.
- The Knowledge Foundation Board/general manager will render a decision regarding financing in June 2015.