

# Stiftelsen för Strategisk Forskning

Forskning som formar vår framtid



# Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research

Established in 1994

The government

- draw up its statutes,
- appointed its board of directors,
- contributed SEK 6 billion in initial capital



# Economy

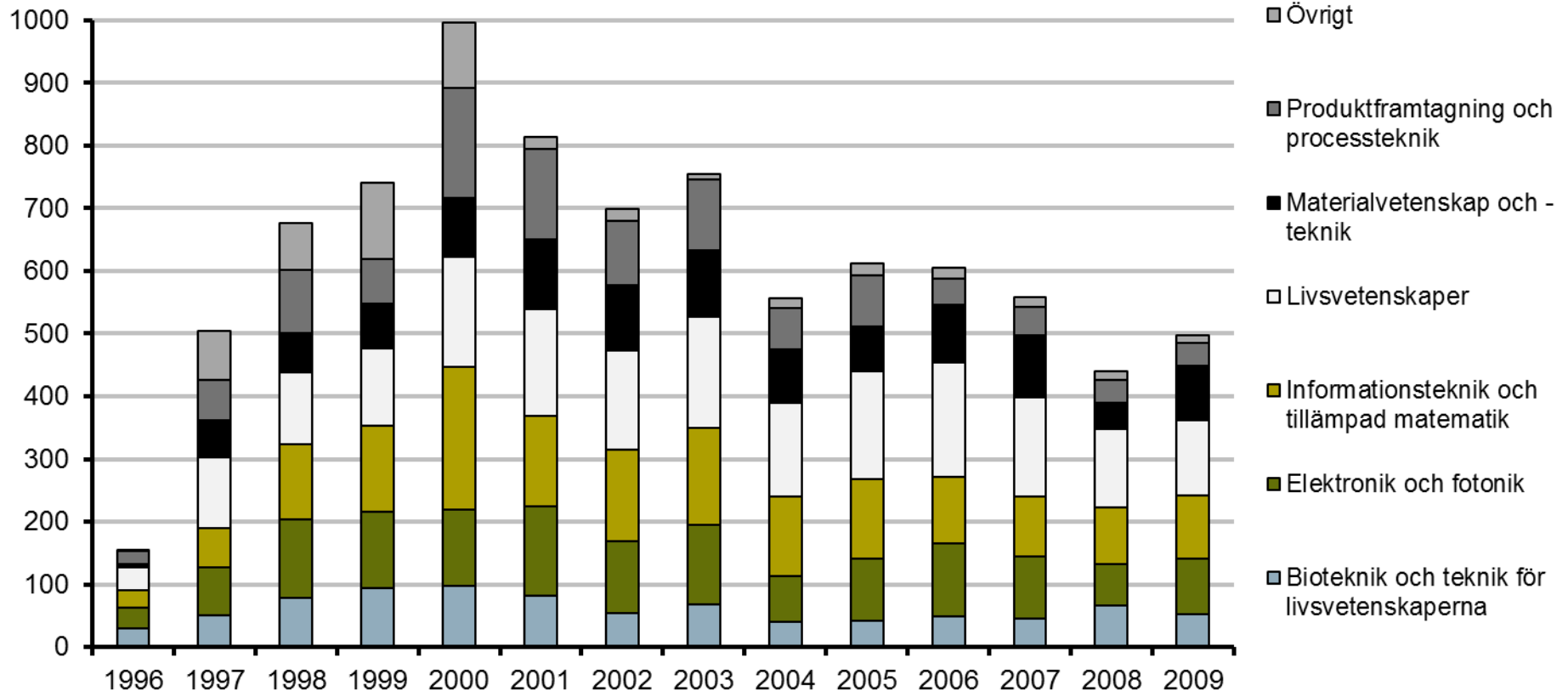
The capital is held in trust by the board through a Capital management committee.

SSF in 1994 obtained SEK 6 billion, has transferred SEK 10 billion to university researchers and has approx. SEK 9.7 billion left, out of which SEK 2.3 billion are under contract to the universities.

The annual budget for new calls is presently SEK 600 million



# Disbursements to universities per research area (million SEK)



# Researchers get less out of given amount of grant money 2011 than in 1996!

Just inflation 1996 – 2011 means that SEK 1 million in 2011 corresponds to just SEK 800 000 in 1996 currency.

However, the cost increase in universities is considerably higher than inflation:

University over-head was 12% in 1996, 35% in 2000 and now can amount to anything. (Partly compensated for by the elimination of 8% "högskolemoms")

In 1996 most PhD students were financed through "utbildningsbidrag", now they predominantly have "doktorandtjänst".



# Challenge 1.

How should SSF use its capital?

Higher spending/year = larger number of grants/year *but* also to shorter life length of the foundation;

Less spending/year = longer life time of the foundation *but* fewer grants

How large should a grant be?

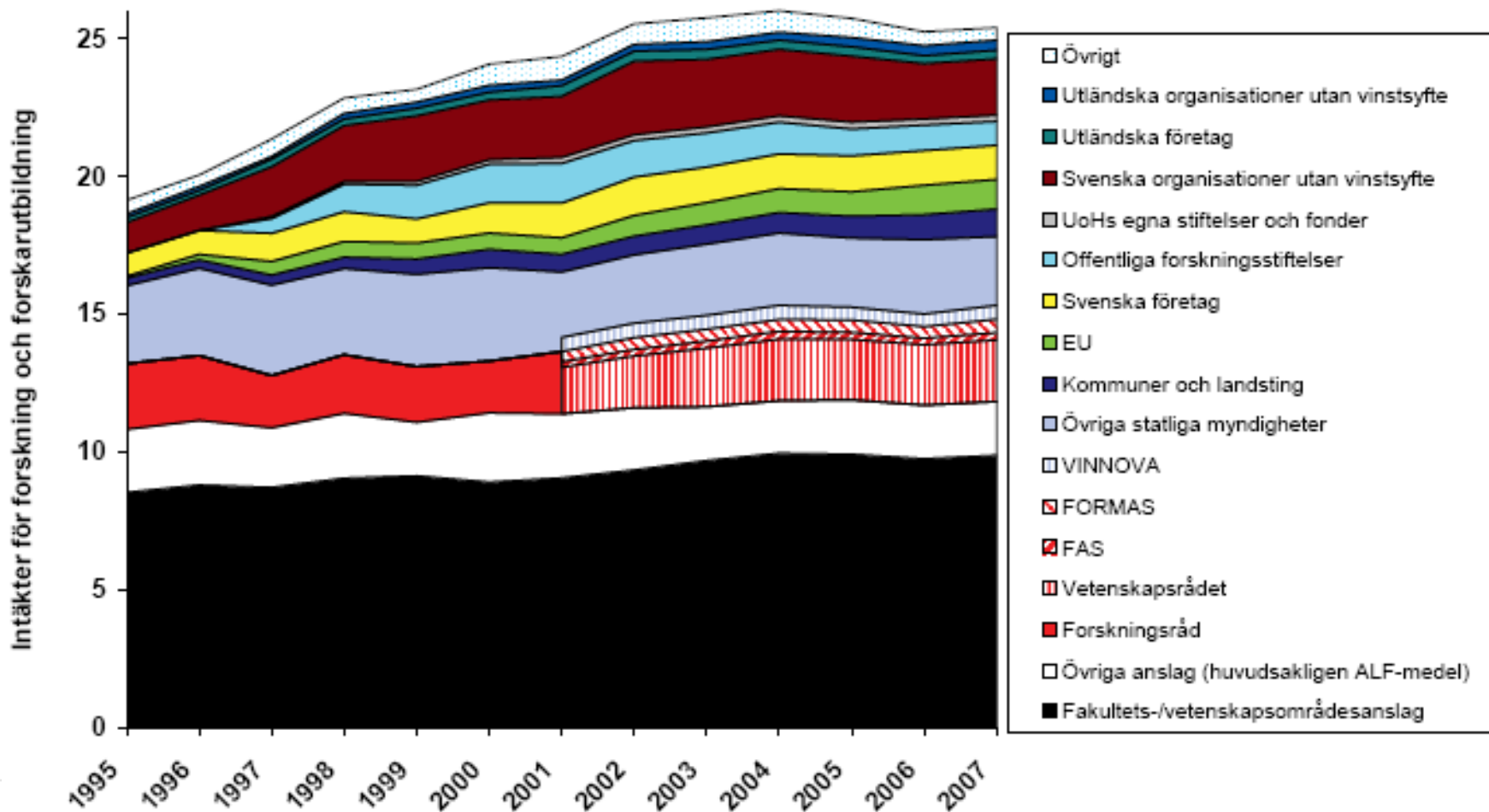
The SSF board has scrutinized these questions based upon modelling experiments carried out by Stockholm School of Economics.

The present conclusion is that a spending of 500 – 600 million/year should allow SSF to continue financing university research at a meaningful level for at least another 15 years. Target for grant size: SEK 1.5 – 2 million/year/senior scientist



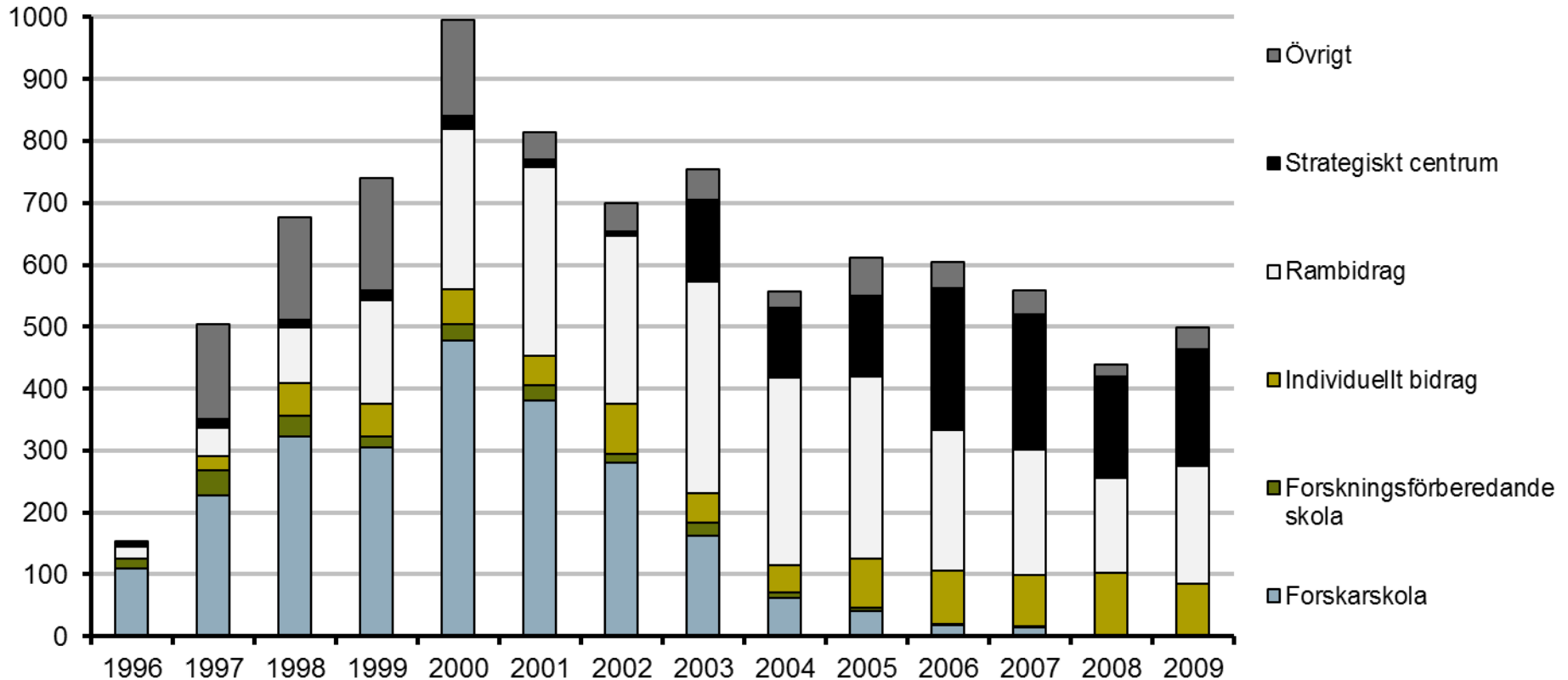
# Funding of university research

miljarder kronor



# Funding per program form

Utbetalt per bidragsform (Mkr)





# Challenge 2

During the second half of the 1990ths, many scientists got used to that SSF had very large resources for grants, e.g. in 1997, SSF was the single largest external granting organization in Sweden, larger than the Swedish Natural Research Council.

*Ad hoc* applications were received, evaluated and surprisingly often granted by the SSF board.

The situation is now quite different. SSF grants account for 4% of external grants to universities and applications are only recognized within public calls.

The challenge for SSF is to get scientists, especially the recipients of large grants in the 1990ths to understand this new situation.



# According to SSF's statutes

SSF shall support research within Natural Sciences, Engineering Sciences and Medicine,

The supported research should be scientifically excellent and it should strengthen Swedish competitiveness,

SSF shall focus grants to establish research centres or research areas of international standing in close connection to universities,

SSF should support collaboration between universities and industry within areas of particular interest to the latter.



# Challenge 3

SSF is the target of a lot of critical views from the research community in Sweden. We are advised to work in the same way as Vetenskapsrådet (VR), that seems to be their favourite model for a research funding organization.

However, it is clear from our statutes that we cannot work that way. We have to fulfill a number of criteria that are not applicable to VR, ERC etc.

We also have to argue for that collaboration between universities and industry can be highly effective and give rise to results that the universities have difficulties to achieve on their own. Our way of working complements that of VR and is quite often very fruitful.



# SSF usually has to focus on subareas within each call

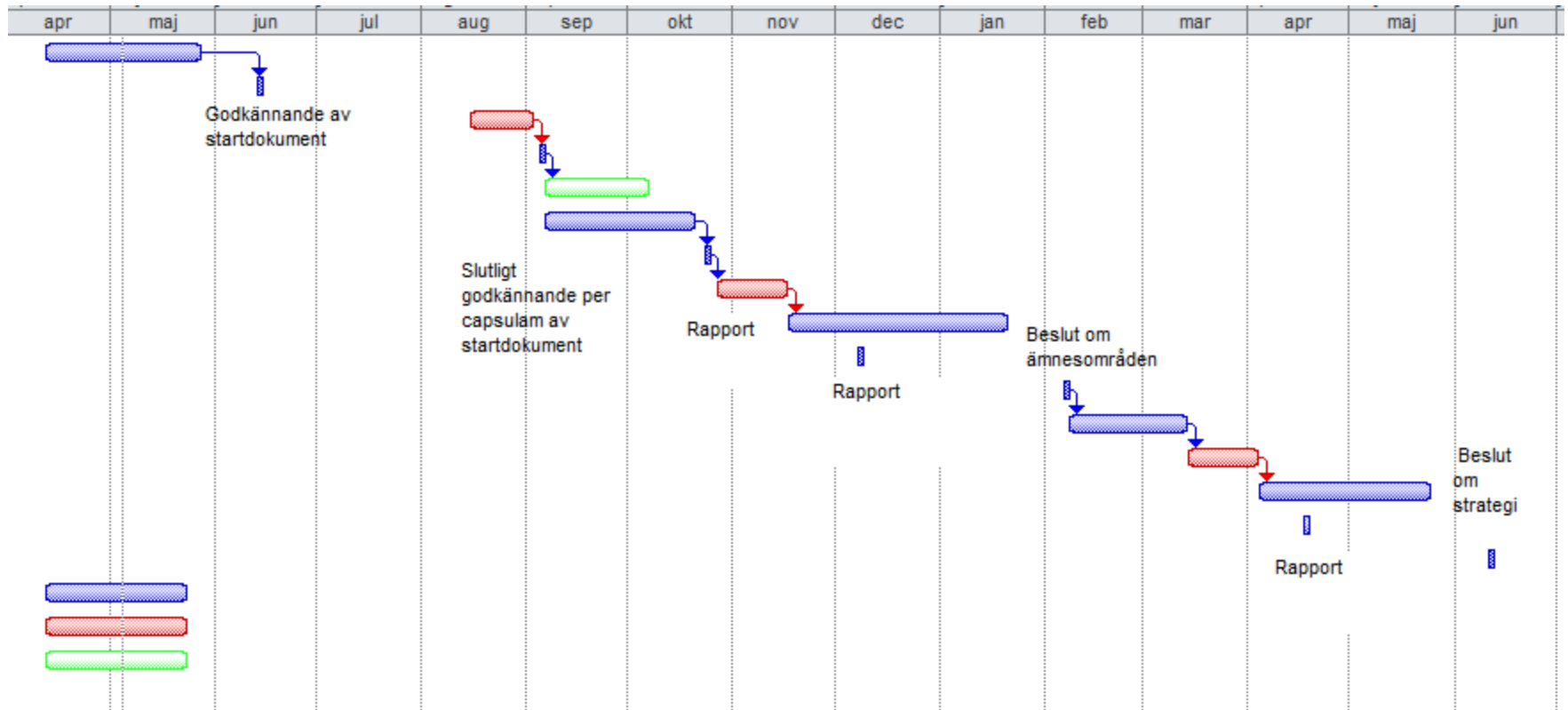
At present, SSF in 2007 set aside SEK 65 million/per year for "group-grants" (rambidrag) within microelectronics. A group-grant amounts to SEK 20 – 35 million over 5 years. Calls are announced every 2.5 year. Accordingly, a normal call of SEK 163 million might result in 6 to 8 grants depending on size.

SSF strives to avoid success rates below 10%. The reason is that we want that the most low-ranked successful application should be recognizably better than the most high-ranked non-successful application.

Therefore, we need to limit the number of applications by focussing our calls on subareas within all areas. And these subareas have to be identified in an accepted strategic process.



# SSF-strategy 2012 - 2017



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