



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

## **SSF Call for EU Horizon Europe Research Application Support**

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) announces SEK 10 million in a directed Call to support preparation of research applications targeting the European Union's (EU) Horizon Europe (HEU) framework program for research and innovation.

The Call aims to promote internationalization of Swedish research by stimulating increased Swedish participation in HEU Pillar 2 Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness. The HEU-projects must be of strategic relevance for Sweden, i.e., benefit the future competitiveness of Sweden.

The Call is directed exclusively towards researchers in natural science, technology or medicine at Swedish universities or research institutes that apply for a HEU Pillar 2 Project Coordinator role.

Selected projects will receive SSF-grants maximized to SEK 500 000 (incl. overheads). The grants are to be used exclusively for covering costs for salaries, travel, and consultants in direct connection to the preparation of an HEU application.

### **Background**

The Foundation shall according to its statutes promote the development of strong research environments of the highest international standard and of significance for the development of Sweden's long-term competitiveness. Furthermore, the Foundation's activities shall be distinguished by the establishment of international cooperation networks and the promotion of international mobility.

SSF's goal with this call is to internationalise Swedish research for leverage in general and to increase Sweden's benefit of the HEU research program in particular.

The Call is in alignment with the Swedish Government's Horizon Europe strategy as stated in "*En nationell strategi för svenskt deltagande i Horisont Europa 2021–2027*", where a strong and increasing Swedish HEU-participation is a key goal.

This is the 6th call from SSF in this program for HEU-application support during the HEU-period.

### **Scope**

SSF covers direct application costs for researchers employed by Swedish universities and research institutes as they apply for funding for engaging in project Coordinator roles

exclusively in projects in EU HEU Pillar 2 (Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness) in the fields of natural science, technology or medicine.

SSF will release funding upon notification by the applicant that the HEU application has been registered as an eligible HEU-application and the relevant costs have been reported to SSF. HEU-applications that are evaluated by EU as non-eligible will not receive any funding from SSF. However, SSF does not require the applications to finally be granted any HEU-funding.

## **Strategic relevance**

The applicants need to demonstrate an added strategic value to Sweden of the proposed HEU research project: How it enables future applications, products and services, or solutions to important application problems. Successful proposals are based on research visions for future impact.

The criterion of strategic relevance means that the proposed HEU-research shall demonstrate a clear vision of utilization/exploitation of the research results of benefit to Sweden in approximately 10-15 years' time.

The applicants must therefore describe the strategic relevance and impact of the proposal to Sweden in short, concrete and evaluable terms, identifying or clarifying the following:

- Put the proposed HEU-research in a national and international context when appropriate.
- Which industrial/societal needs the project address?
- How the project improves on current practices?
- Expected users of results or methods, e.g., scientific colleagues, academic workers in other fields, industry, clinics or the public sector.
- Potential applications of the planned research.
- Planned project partners and how their knowledge enhances the project.

## **Eligibility**

All the following criteria must be fulfilled for SSF to consider an application as eligible and to receive further evaluation. Non-eligible applications will be rejected.

- The applicant is currently employed to at least 50% by a Swedish university, University college or Research institute which has the capacity to assume coordination responsibility for the project during the grant period and during the period of the proposed HEU-project.
- The applicant (the person, not only his/her organisation) has during the previous five years been, or currently is, the main PI of any other granted individual research project of the amount of at least MSEK 5 in total, including all participants. This grant can come from any funding organisation: SSF, EU or other.
- The applicant must be involved in an HEU-application in the role of Project Coordinator in a Pillar 2 (Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness) Project (including partnership projects) in the fields of natural science, technology or medicine. See the HEU overview picture on the final page for more details.
- Only original (or Stage 1 in a multistage HEU evaluation) applications towards HEU Calls as already published in HEU work plans are eligible.
- The application to SSF concerns covering costs for directly working with an application towards EU HEU Pillar 2. There is no requirement on the status of the HEU-application when submitting the SSF-application.

- Eligible costs are exclusively those arising during 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025 for salaries, travel and consultants in direct connection to the HEU application. No costs for preparatory data collection, investigations, research etc. are eligible, nor are any costs outside the above date interval accepted.
- The HEU-application is of strategic relevance for Sweden as outlined above, and this is clearly described and possible to evaluate. Applications with vague or sweeping arguments on strategic relevance for Sweden will not be granted.

## Evaluation

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee consisting of generalists and specialists from industry and society. This committee will submit recommendations on which the CEO of SSF will base funding decisions.

The applications will be evaluated using the criteria Strategic relevance and Eligibility as outlined above.

## Instructions

Applications must contain the following information:

- EU HEU Pillar 2 call ID-number and Call title being targeted for the proposed future HEU-application including planned/committed partnerships.
- A clear statement that the applicant has a Coordinator role in the proposed HEU-Project.
- Strategic relevance for Sweden clearly described as outlined above.

Please note that SSF is subject to the Principle of Public Access to Official Records (*Offentlighetsprincipen*). Thus, applicants should avoid submitting material that they do not wish to be made public, e.g., information that could prevent patenting.

Applications must be submitted to the SSF online portal at: <http://apply.strategiska.se> before the deadline: **October 15, 2025, by 14:00 hours** (2:00 pm CET)

No additional material can be added to a submitted application unless asked for by SSF.

**Evaluation results are expected within 1 month of deadline.**

Successful applications will receive SSF-funding of maximum SEK 500 000.

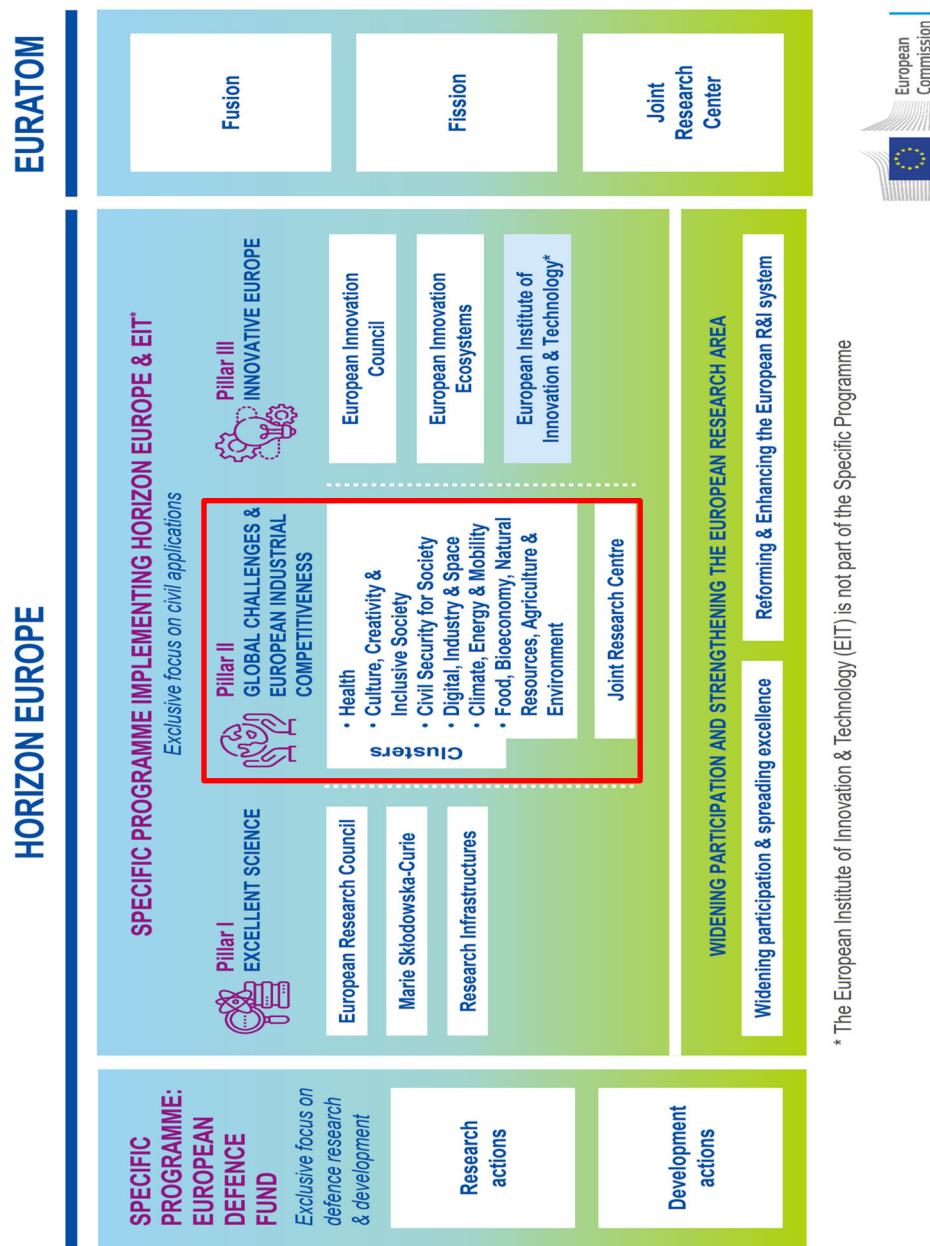
SSF will release the funding after receiving a report through the SSF-portal annual report form, including:

- Report of relevant costs.
- Application ID number of the submitted EU HEU Project application.
- Proof that the HEU-application is considered as eligible by EU.

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Overview of the EU Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme 2021-2027 (HEU). The applicants to the present SSF-call must be involved in an HEU-application in the role of Project Coordinator in a Pillar 2 (Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness) Project in the fields of natural science, technology, or medicine. Only original (or Stage 1) applications towards HEU Calls as already published in HEU work plans are eligible. Targeted HEU-parts that are eligible for the present SSF-call are marked by a red rectangle in the picture above. Note specifically that applications towards ERC, MSC and EIC calls are not eligible in the present SSF-call.