2026-11-11

Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research

SSF Call for
EU Horizon Europe Research Application Support

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) announces a directed call of SEK 10 million to support the preparation of research applications to the European Union's Horizon Europe (HEU) Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The call aims to promote the internationalisation of Swedish research by encouraging increased Swedish participation in HEU Pillar 2: Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness. The HEU projects must be of strategic relevance to Sweden, meaning that they should contribute to Sweden's future competitiveness.

The call is directed exclusively to researchers in natural sciences, technology or medicine at Swedish universities or research institutes who are applying for the role of HEU Pillar 2 Project Coordinator.

Selected projects will receive SSF grants of up to SEK 500,000, including overheads. The grants may be used only to cover salary, travel and consultancy costs directly related to the preparation of an HEU application.

Background

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

Through this call, SSF seeks to strengthen the internationalisation of Swedish research and increase Sweden's benefit from the HEU research programme.

The call is aligned with the Swedish Government's Horizon Europe strategy, as set out in *En nationell strategi för svenskt deltagande i Horisont Europa 2021–2027*, in which strong and increasing Swedish participation in HEU is a key objective.

This is SSF's ninth call for HEU application support during the HEU programme period.

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Scope

SSF covers direct application costs for researchers employed by Swedish universities or research institutes who are applying for funding to take on Project Coordinator roles in EU HEU Pillar 2 (Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness) projects only, and in the fields of natural sciences, technology or medicine.

SSF will release funding once the applicant has notified SSF that the HEU application has been registered as eligible and that the relevant costs have been reported to SSF. HEU applications evaluated by the EU as ineligible will not receive funding from SSF. However, SSF does not require the HEU application to be awarded funding.

Strategic relevance

Applicants must demonstrate the added strategic value to Sweden of the proposed HEU research project, including how it may enable future applications, products, services or solutions to important application-related challenges. Successful proposals should be based on research visions with clear potential for future impact.

Strategic relevance means that the proposed HEU research must present a clear vision for the utilisation or exploitation of research results for the benefit of Sweden within approximately 10–15 years.

Applicants must therefore describe the proposal's strategic relevance and impact for Sweden in concise, concrete and evaluable terms, addressing the following points:

- Place the proposed HEU research in a national and international context.
- Identify the industrial or societal needs that the project addresses.
- Explain how the project improves on current practices.
- Describe the expected users of the results, such as scientific colleagues, researchers in other fields, industry, healthcare, clinics or the public sector.
- Describe potential applications of the planned research.
- Describe the planned project partners and explain how their expertise strengthens the project.

Eligibility

All the following criteria must be met for SSF to consider an application eligible for further evaluation. Ineligible applications will be rejected.

- The applicant is employed at least 50% by a Swedish university, university college or research institute that has the capacity to assume coordination responsibility for the project during the grant period and the period of the proposed HEU project.
- Within the past five years, the applicant—not merely their organisation—must have served, or currently serve, as principal investigator for another funded individual research project with a total budget of at least SEK 5 million across all participants. The funding may come from SSF, the EU or another funding organisation. The above must be clearly stated in the application.

- The applicant must be involved in an HEU application as Project Coordinator for a Pillar 2 (Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness) project, including partnership projects, and in the fields of natural sciences, technology or medicine. See the HEU overview figure on the final page for further details.
- Only original applications, or Stage 1 applications in a multi-stage HEU evaluation, submitted to HEU calls already published in HEU work programmes are eligible.
- The SSF application must concern costs directly related to preparing an application to EU HEU Pillar 2. There is no requirement regarding the status of the HEU application at the time the SSF application is submitted.
- Eligible costs are limited to salary, travel and consultancy costs incurred between 1 January 2027 and 31 December 2027 in direct connection with the HEU application. Costs related to preparatory data collection, investigations, research or similar activities are not eligible. Costs outside this period will not be accepted. Costs must relate only to the HEU-call described in the SSF-appplication.
- The HEU application must be of strategic relevance to Sweden, as outlined above, and this relevance must be clearly described and possible to evaluate. Applications with vague or general arguments regarding strategic relevance to Sweden will not be granted.

Evaluation

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee consisting of generalists and specialists from industry and society. The committee will recommend which applications to fund, with the final decisions made by the CEO of SSF.

Applications will be evaluated according to the criteria for strategic relevance and eligibility outlined above.

Instructions

Applications must contain the following information:

- The EU HEU Pillar 2 call ID number and call title targeted by the planned HEU application, including planned or committed partnerships.
- A clear statement confirming that the applicant will serve as Coordinator of the proposed HEU project.
- A clear description of the strategic relevance to Sweden, as outlined above.

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

Applications must be submitted via the SSF online portal at: https://strategiska.se/apply no later than **2 March 2027 at 14:00** (2:00 pm CET).

No additional material may be added to a submitted application unless requested by SSF.

Evaluation results are expected within one month of the application deadline.

Successful applications will receive SSF funding of up to SEK 500,000.

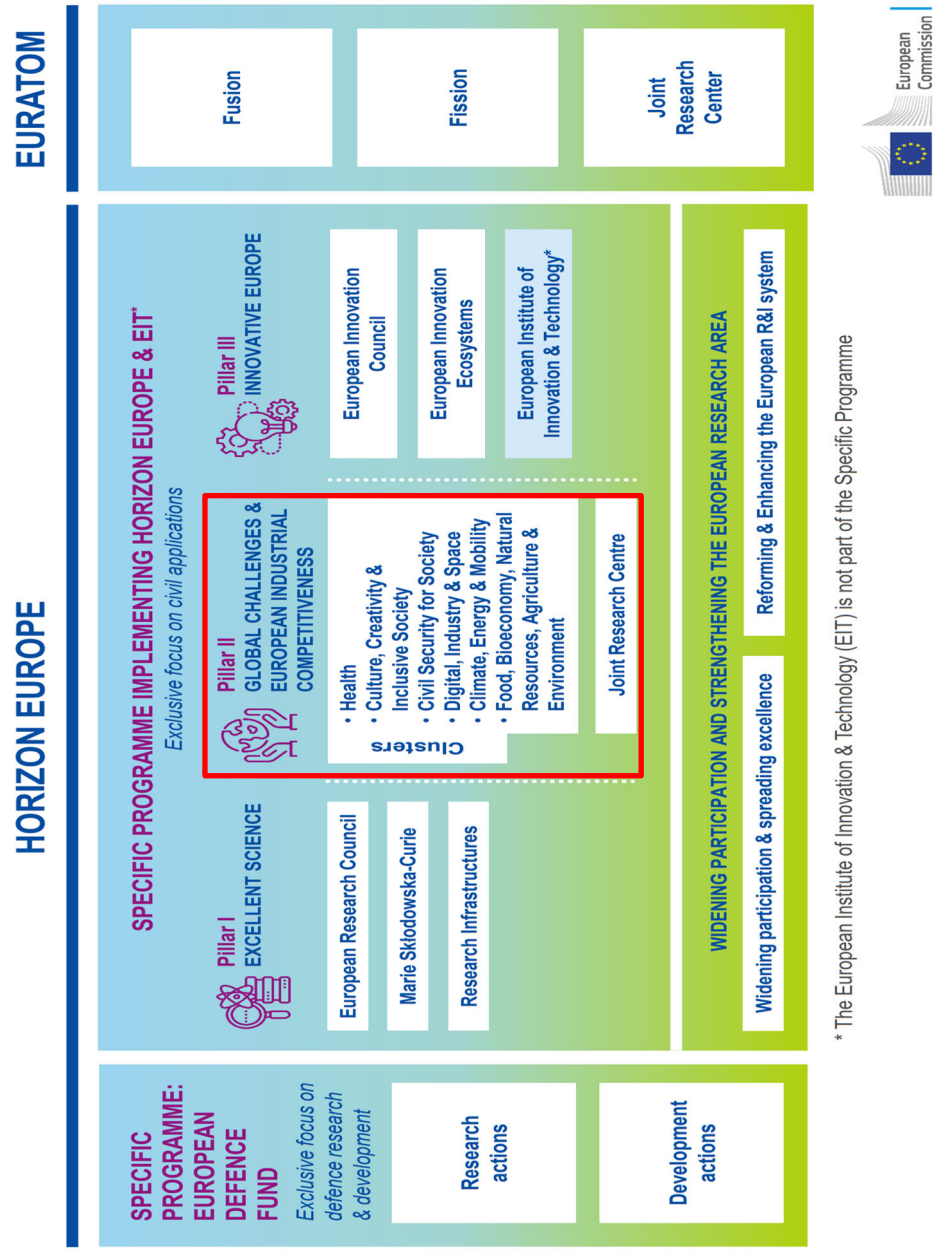
SSF will release the funding after receiving a report via the SSF portal's annual report form, including:

- A report of relevant costs.
- A report of the project work and results.
- The application ID number of the submitted EU HEU project application.
- A statement that the HEU application has been deemed eligible by the EU.

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Overview of the EU Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme 2021–2027 (HEU). Applicants to this SSF call must be involved in an HEU application as Project Coordinator for a Pillar 2 project within Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness and in the fields of natural sciences, technology or medicine. Only original applications, or Stage 1 applications, submitted to HEU calls already published in HEU work programmes are eligible. The parts of HEU eligible under this SSF call are marked by a red rectangle in the figure above. Please note specifically that applications to ERC, MSCA and EIC calls are not eligible under this SSF call.