



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

2024-04-17

## Call for proposals

### FRAMTIDENS FORSKNINGSLEDARE

#### Individual Grants for Future Research Leaders

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) announces up to 16 grants, SEK 15 million each (incl. overhead), covering a period of five years. The present Call concerns the 9<sup>th</sup> generation of Future Research Leaders since the program started in the year 2000, yielding over 150 alumni scholars.

#### Aim and Vision

The program is intended to be an outstanding vehicle for supporting and promoting young scholars who have the aptitude to become future leaders of academic and/or industrial research in Sweden.

The Foundation's vision of a future research leader is a young individual of the highest scientific and pedagogical standing who, in addition, displays a potential for leadership and management. This researcher shows an ambition to implement research results and is prepared at a later stage of the career to take responsibility for complete academic environment and constellations larger than her/his own research group.

#### Scope

According to its statutes, the Foundation supports research in the natural sciences, engineering and medicine, promoting the development of strong research environments of the highest international standards and enhancing Sweden's future competitiveness.

This programme is open to young scientists from Sweden as well as from other countries. Grantees must intend to work full-time at a Swedish research organisation – Higher Education Institution, Research Institute or large-scale research infrastructure. The grant is primarily intended for building a research group at a research organisation chosen by the grantee. The accepting organisation must offer a tenure-track position for the grantee, such as junior lecturer/professor or corresponding post. Up to 25 per cent of the grant may be used to cover the scholar's own salary, but not more than 25 per cent of the salary. To promote academic mobility, applicants with a Swedish PhD are encouraged to locate their research to a department or group other than the one where their PhD was awarded.

The grantees commit to participate in a *mandatory* leadership training programme, which will claim 20 full meeting days plus a two-week study travel abroad, as well as time for preparation, follow up and tasks in between meetings.

Indirect costs (overheads) are limited to a maximum of 25 percent surcharge on the direct costs. Out of each grant, SEK 450 000 (3 per cent) will be reserved by SSF to be claimed by the grantee for exploitation activities of results from the project.

## **Eligibility**

Applicants must have obtained their Swedish doctoral degree or an equivalent foreign degree within the period 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020, according to the date on the PhD Diploma. The rolling window of 4 – 7 years after PhD degree is set to limit the number of applications each round. It is only allowed to apply once to the Future Research Leader Call during one's career. The potential of each applicant is assessed, irrespective of their present career stage (i.e. early or late in that time window).

Adjustment for documented post-doctoral parental leave, sick leave and/or for post-doctoral clinical internship (AT) can be applied on the time window, if the PhD is further back in time than the above. Parental leave can only be accounted for up to maximum one year per child.

## **Evaluation procedure**

The proposals will be reviewed in a three-step procedure:

1. All proposals are reviewed by national expert panels. The intention is to select around 60 proposals which continue to the second step.
2. Selected proposals are reviewed by international experts with broad experience. Based on the reviews, an evaluation committee selects a reduced number of applicants to be invited to interviews.
3. The selected applicants are interviewed by a hearing group with regards to leadership potential and aptitude for teaching and curriculum management. Leadership potential is a veritable criterion in the selection process.

The evaluation committee and the hearing group will present a suggestion to the SSF Board of applicants to be granted. The SSF Board then makes the final granting decision.

Evaluation reports for the rejection of proposals will be provided only for applicants reaching the second step in the process.

The aim is to allocate a balanced number of grants for each research area of SSF, whilst maintaining the level of scientific quality and strategic relevance.

The foundation strives for an equal gender distribution in the awarded grants. Underrepresented gender will be used as a boundary condition when applications are of otherwise equivalent quality.

## Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be applied in the selection process:

- Qualification and potential of the applicant, including pedagogical skills, engagement in curriculum or other scholarly development, experience of international collaboration, mobility and innovation
- Scientific quality of the research plan, including originality and feasibility
- Strategic relevance of the proposed research to Swedish industry and/or society and potential for exploitation and impact of the results of the proposed research
- Leadership potential, communication, and management skills of the applicant.

## Submission of proposals

The proposal shall be written in English and submitted via the Foundation's electronic application portal: <http://apply.strategiska.se>, by no later than **2 pm on August 26, 2024**.

The proposal shall, among other information specified in the portal, include:

- Scientific track record
- Research plan
- Strategic relevance
- Leadership philosophy, including pedagogical merits
- Curriculum vitae
- List of selected publications
- Present and pending grants
- Indicative budget
- Letters of Recommendation; One letter shall be written by a scientist established outside Sweden and one letter by a scientist established in Sweden. Neither of them should be a former thesis supervisor of the applicant.

No additional material will be accepted after the application deadline. Note that this also includes letters of recommendation, which must be submitted together with the application by the applicant. Reference submitted separately will not be considered.

For the selected projects, the corresponding host organisations must confirm in the contract that a tenure-track position will be offered to the grantee in order for the grant to be issued by SSF.

## Preliminary time schedule

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|--------------------------------|---|
| • April 2024                   | Call opens                                    |
| • August 26, 14.00 hours, 2024 | Application deadline                          |
| • September – November 2024    | Expert panels review                          |
| • December 2024 – January 2025 | International peer review                     |
| • February – March 2022        | Evaluation committee review                   |
| • Week 15 (7–11 April) 2025    | Interviews with the highest-ranked applicants |
| • June 2025                    | Decision by the SSF Board                     |
| • August 2025                  | Earliest project start                        |

The next Call is planned to take place in 2027.

**Contact at SSF**

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*Please note that the Foundation 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.*