

CLARIFICATION as to Eligibility in response to questions

To potential applicants to the "Future Interdisciplinary Research Leaders" programme (Framtidens tvärvetenskapliga forskningsledare, FTF)

1 Postdoc (2yrs) intended to be within the same overarching SSF area as doctoral training

Please note that the wording on page 1 of the announcement, "...strong background in one discipline" (i.e. the primary area) is to be read in parallel with the wording on page 2, "The recipient of the grant should have a Ph.D. degree and at least two years of post-doctoral training within one of the areas specified above". Thus, an applicant to FTF, in order to be considered as having a strong enough background, should have his or her doctoral training and at least two years of postdoc within the same "over-arching" SSF priority area as represented by one of the four bullets on page 1. An applicant who changed fields already at the early postdoc stage should consider applying to the ordinary to the "ordinary" Future Research Leaders programme (FFL) instead.

2 Re Area when both primary area and target area are somehow Bio-related

If a prospective FTF applicant has a Bio-related primary area as well as a Bio-related component in her/his target area, the "intellectual difference" between the two should be considerable for an FTF application to work. An applicant with a background in biochemistry, for example, with a target area in bioprocess engineering, would likely not be considered to have a "different enough" case in the FTF competition despite a potential change of laboratory. Prospective such applicants are recommended to consider applying to the ordinary FFL programme.

3 Re Moving to another laboratory

Please note that applying to the new FTF programme implies that the applicant plans not only to change her or his activity to a new field of research, but also to MOVE to a different laboratory, ideally for the complete grant period.

Although a move with an accompanying change of affiliation is not explicitly stated in the announcement text, it is considered a prerequisite

- ✧ so as to enable the applicant to really "acquire high-level skills" in a different discipline, that is stated on page 1 of the announcement,
- ✧ that is reinforced by the wording on page 2, that the "recipient organisation should pursue research of the highest standard within a research area different from the one in which the grant holder has her/his primary research experience".
- ✧ Additionally, the announcement calls for a Letter of Recommendation from a *responsible senior scientist* at the "laboratory in Sweden that the applicant *plans to join*". This is to be interpreted as "not already affiliated to".

If the applicant plans to move to a different university (or research institute) altogether, it will be considered a *de facto* merit in the highly competitive selection process – as would be the case also for applicants to the "ordinary" Future Research Leaders' programme.

Potential applicants who do NOT intend to move their activities should consider the "ordinary" FFL programme instead. Interdisciplinary applications are indeed most welcome within that programme too. The difference is that FFL *does not require* changing areas. Further, the FFL programme enables inter- (and multi)-disciplinary activities in more combinations of areas. This is in contrast to the new FTF programme, where a *Bio-related* field *must* be *either* the applicant's primary area or target area.

To apply for FFL – whether instead of, or in addition to, a potential application to FTF – all you have to do is to copy what you may already have entered on the portal for FTF and paste it in to the corresponding tabs on the portal for the FFL announcement, since the "forms" are *identical*.



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

23 June 2009

Announcement

FRAMTIDENS TVÄRVETENSKAPLIGA FORSKNINGSLEDARE

Individual Grants for Future Interdisciplinary Research Leaders

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) has allocated up to four grants of a total of SEK 10 million each (incl. overhead), covering a period of five years.

Vision

The aim of the Foundation in launching this programme is to support and promote young scientists who have the potential and the ambition to become future leaders of academic and/or industrial interdisciplinary research in Sweden.

The vision of the Foundation of a future interdisciplinary research leader is a scientist of the highest standing who strives to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries and thus acquire high-level scientific skills in a research area different from her/his original one. The recipient of this grant should in addition show a potential for leadership and management, an understanding of the process of implementing research results and be prepared to at a later stage of the research career to assume responsibility for constellations larger than her/his own research group. The Foundation strongly believes that in order to successfully conduct interdisciplinary research, a researcher should have a strong background from one discipline and then, in addition, acquire high-level skills in another. As regards the concepts "discipline" and "interdisciplinarity" for this particular announcement, we refer to disciplines at the *top* level. Within SSF's remit, this translates to *medical and life sciences* on the one hand and *engineering* (incl. *information technology*) and *physical sciences* (incl. *applied mathematics*) on the other.

Scope

According to its statutes the Foundation shall promote the development of strong research environments of the highest international standards with a view to enhancing Sweden's future competitiveness by supporting basic as well as applied research in natural science, engineering and medicine. The Foundation is also expected to support interdisciplinary projects and programmes. Currently, the Foundation prioritises such research that can be applied in the following areas:

- Biotechnology, drug discovery and development, bioengineering
- Systems, information and communication technologies
- Materials development
- Manufacturing technologies

This new programme is open to young scientists from Sweden as well as from other countries. The recipient of the grant should have a Ph.D. degree and at least two years of post-doctoral training within one of the areas specified above.

The grant is intended for five years of innovative interdisciplinary research at a Swedish research organisation – university or public or private non-profit research institute – of the choice of the grantee. The recipient organisation should pursue research of the highest standard within a research area different from the one in which the grant holder has her/his primary research experience. Further, if the applicant's scientific background is in a Bio-related area (as illustrated in the first bullet above), the recipient environment should be active in one of the other SSF priority areas or the other way around.

The grant is primarily intended for building a research group around an interdisciplinary project and maximum of 50 % may be used to cover the recipient's own salary.

The grantees will participate in a leadership training programme jointly with the grantees of the programme "Future Research Leaders". Participation in this leadership programme is mandatory.

Out of each grant, SEK 300 000 will be withheld at SSF to be used by the grantee for commercialization of results from the project.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be born in 1970 or later. (This is valid even though adjustment for parental leave after the PhD may be made as stated below).
- Applicants must have obtained their PhD degree within the period 1 January 2004 – 31 December 2006. The only exception is for applicants with a degree date before 1 January 2004 who, upon request, can submit documentation for parental leave *after* the PhD that effectively corresponds to the difference in dates.
- Applicants currently working outside Sweden must be prepared to work full-time at a Swedish research organisation.
- Applicants may apply to the two programs "Future Interdisciplinary Research Leaders" and "Future Research Leaders". However, if successful within both programmes, the applicant subsequently will have to choose which one to join. Please observe that the requirements for the two respective programmes differ from one another.

Selection procedure

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

1. The proposals will be reviewed by national expert panels. The plan is to select about 10 proposals to continue to the second step.
 2. The selected proposals will be reviewed by international reviewers with broad experience and recognition. Based on the reviews, an Evaluation Committee will select a number of applicants to be invited to interviews.
 3. The highest-ranked applicants will be interviewed with regard to leadership, including aspects pertaining to the management of interdisciplinary projects, and
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potential impact of the proposed research. The Board of SSF will make the final granting decision based on recommendations by the Evaluation Committee.

Justification (evaluation reports) for the rejection of proposals will be provided only for applicants participating in the second step.

Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be applied in the selection process:

- Scientific quality, originality and feasibility of the proposed research, with special regard to the combination of areas and contribution to the “recipient” field.
- Scientific track record and potential of the applicant to successfully continue to develop in the “new” field
- Leadership potential and management skills of the applicant
- The applicant’s understanding of the “new” field, overall network and proposed measures to foster interdisciplinary collaboration
- Strategic relevance of the proposed research to Swedish industry and/or society at large and potential for utilisation of the results of the proposed research
- Innovation potential, experience and communication skills of the applicant

International research experience is a merit. The Foundation strives for a reasonably equal balance between female and male grantees.

Submission of proposals

The proposal shall be written in English and submitted via the Foundation’s electronic application portal: <http://apply.stratresearch.se>, by no later than **2 pm on December 1, 2009**. The application portal will open September 7, 2009. The proposal shall, among other information specified in the portal, include:

- Research plan, including motives for changing fields, for the choice of recipient organization and for measures to underpin interdisciplinary collaboration
 - Scientific track record
 - Strategic relevance
 - Leadership philosophy with due regard to managing interdisciplinary projects
 - Curriculum vitae
 - List of selected publications
 - Present and pending grants
 - Indicative budget, including co-funding (if existing) from the recipient organisation
 - Letters of Recommendation; One letter shall be written by a scientist established outside Sweden and one letter by the senior scientist responsible for the laboratory in Sweden that the applicant plans to join. Neither of them should be a former thesis supervisor of the applicant
 - PhD diploma
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No additional material will be accepted after December 1. Note that this also includes letters of recommendation – and the fact that these shall not be provided separately from the recommender but make up part of the application as such.

Preliminary time schedule

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| • September 7, 2009 | Application portal open |
| • December 1, 14.00 hours, 2009 | Application deadline |
| • January - April, 2010 | Expert panels review |
| • April - July, 2010 | International review |
| • August - September, 2010 | Evaluation committee review |
| • Week 40 (4-8 October), 2010 | Interviews with the highest-ranked applicants |
| • December 2010 | Decision by the SSF Board |
| • January 2011 | Earliest project start |

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.

