



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Call for Proposals

SSF industry-oriented Postdoc

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) announces SEK 15 million in this call for proposals for Industry-oriented Postdoc (IPD) funding. The grant provides funding for postdoctoral research for an individual that has a PhD degree awarded within the last five years, in close collaboration between industry and academia. The grant covers a period of one to three years. SSF intends to fund maximum 10 projects of maximum SEK 1,5 million each (including indirect costs), which has to be at least 30 percent co-funded by industry.

Aim

The purpose of the program is to contribute to needs-driven excellent research within SSF's areas of activity, to foster cross-fertilization between academia and industry and to contribute to training of strategically relevant industrial researchers.

This Call complements other intersectorial programs at SSF, including Strategic Mobility, Industrial PhD, Research Institute PhD, Sabbatical, and Adjunct Professor.

Eligibility

The grant provides funding for research within natural science, engineering or medicine for a young research fellow, in close collaboration between industry and academia. Two qualified persons shall serve as contact points for the IPD during the entire grant period – one at a higher education institution (HEI) and one at a company. These contact points shall be well established within their respective organizations and together with the IPD they constitute the steering group for the project.

The main applicant is the IPD who will be employed by the HEI and the IPD is responsible for reporting to SSF. The IPD must have a PhD awarded no later than December 31, 2026. An estimated dissertation date is to be specified in the research plan. The HEI where the IPD is employed administers the grant. The HEI must be Swedish. The IPD must be employed to at least 50 percent at the HEI.

The co-applicants are the contact points at the company and HEI, respectively. The company must be commercially sound with respect to the responsibility for the IPD's work

over several years and possess enough competence to both contribute to and benefit from the knowledge gained in the project over short and long term. The company shall preferably be registered in Sweden or close enough to Sweden that the exchange is feasible and can be justified strategically for Sweden. Furthermore, there must be no ownership or other conflict of interest between the concerned actors in the academia and industry. Hospitals, Industrial research institutes or similar organizations may not represent the academic or the industrial party in this call for proposals.

The length of the project shall be one to three years and the project must be at least 30 percent co-funded by the company. The IPD is expected to share her or his time between the university and the company at an approximate 50/50 ratio. An applicant may only submit one application, this applies to both main applicant and co-applicants. A main applicant who has an ongoing SSF industry-oriented postdoc grant is not eligible to apply if there is a grant period overlap between the two projects.

The grant

The SSF grant amounts to maximum SEK 1.5 million, roughly corresponding to SEK one million per year, including co-funding, and depending on the length of the applied project. The project must be at least 30 percent co-funded by the company (of the SSF grant, in cash and/or in kind), and the IPD must spend time on-site at the company, embedded in its R&D activities. The grant may not be used for salaries of the co-applicants, but solely for costs directly related to the IPD project. Representatives of the parties shall attest at the time of application that they agree on the total cost of the project and how the costs are to be shared between them. Indirect costs (overheads) are only permitted for the part of the grant that is spent at the HEI, equivalent to a surcharge of 25 percent on the direct costs. The grant does not cover any bench fees or other unwarranted costs.

The parties and the IPD are together responsible for making agreements on how IPR matters and the like are to be handled among them. The estimated earliest possible project start date is January 1st, 2027, but no later than June 30th 2027.

Proposal and submission

All applications must be submitted by 14:00 hours (2:00 pm CET) on September 8, 2026. No additional material will be considered after this deadline.

The application shall be written in English and is submitted by the main applicant via the SSF application portal: <https://strategiska.se/apply>. The application must include (in addition to other information specified in the portal):

- Research plan, including scientific state of the art (max 8 pages). It must be formulated jointly by the IPD and the co-applicants and include planned activities between the company and the HEI.
 - CV and list of publications for all three applicants.
 - Letters of intent from both the academic and the industrial party, describing the commitment for the project, written by the department head (or equivalent) at the HEI and the research director (or equivalent) at the company. Both parties shall ensure that the necessary practical arrangements are in place. In addition, it
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should be certified that the co-applicants have the support and time allocated for this purpose.

- Strategic relevance and expected societal impact in a 10-15-year time frame.
- Description of how intellectual property rights contractually will be handled.
- Budget.
- Description of the company with details such as corporate ID number, number of employees, net/gross turnover, business activities and a link to webpage.
- Description of any dependencies (current or former) between the company, the IPD, the HEI and the co-applicants.

Note that all Foundation records are open to the public (offentlighetsprincipen). For this reason, do not send material that may not be made public at the present time, for example because it might risk future patenting.

Evaluation

The applications will be reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of external experts from both academia and industry. The following evaluation criteria will be applied:

- Scientific quality of the proposed research project
- Strategic relevance and expected industrial/societal impact
- Mutuality (regarding needs and commitment) in the declarations of intent from both parties
- The qualifications of the applicants
- Relations, e.g. that there are no financial or personal dependencies between the company, the IPD, the HEI and the co-applicants.

SSF has the aim of allocating a balanced number of grants between its research areas, whilst maintaining the excellent level of scientific quality and strategic relevance.

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

For a company that participates in several applications or that already have approved SSF Industry-oriented Postdoc grants, amplified requirements of the relevance criteria will apply. SSF will at maximum approve two projects per company in each call for proposals.

Time schedule

- April, 2026 Call for proposals opens
- September 8, 2026, 14.00 CET Application deadline
- December, 2026 Decision by the SSF board
- January 1 – June 30, 2027 Project start.

Contact at SSF

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