



STIFTELSEN för  
STRATEGISK FORSKNING

## ***Announcement***

### **The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF)**

**announces a**

**call for proposals in the area of**

### ***Clinical research – use of National Quality Registers<sup>1</sup>***

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research announces a total of SEK 100 million (SEK 20 million per year during five years) in a national call for proposals for problem- or application-driven research projects of the highest international scientific standard with the aim of developing research in the above-mentioned area of strategic relevance for the Swedish society and its biotech and biopharma industry. The area is further defined and discussed below.

Selected research projects will be supported by framework grants (“rambidrag”) in the range of SEK 4 - 6 million per year (incl. overhead) to be used for salaries, supplies etc. according to the needs of the projects over a period of five years. Funding during the two last years will be dependent upon a successful mid-term evaluation.

<sup>1</sup> for further information about National Quality registers see  
[http://www.kvalitetsregister.se/web/Kvalitetsregister\\_startida.aspx](http://www.kvalitetsregister.se/web/Kvalitetsregister_startida.aspx)

## ***Clinical research – use of National Quality Registers***

### *Background*

Advanced clinical research with scientific exchange between academia, health care and industry is a prerequisite for quality-driven healthcare and a strong biotech, bioinformatics and pharma industry. In an international perspective, one of the most important competitive advantages of Swedish clinical research is the access to National Quality Registers and other health care registers. Some of the distinctive advantages of quality registers are that patients are not selected, the numbers are large and the findings represent what happens in daily clinical practice.

Some of the quality registers have already produced world-leading clinical, epidemiological and translational research. This has been ascribed to the exceptional combination of complete national coverage of information, possibilities to perform long-term follow-ups, linkage to other registers with a dramatic increase in the amount of information (e.g. to study co-morbidity, long-term safety and socioeconomic interactions) and the potential involved in linkage to biobanks and use of biotechnological advances. Very few other countries, if any, have the corresponding possibilities to use health care registers for advanced research.

### *Aim*

The aim of this initiative is to stimulate and strengthen collaborative research with the ultimate objective of developing and/or evaluating methods for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease, thereby improving patient care and health.

The projects should be based on relevant clinical problems and diseases where Swedish National Quality Registers are available and used. This may include an integration with biobanks and suitable experimental and clinical approaches. Expertise in data processing would therefore be valuable.

This collaborative research should also facilitate the exchange of knowledge between basic and applied medical sciences, society and industry.

### *Importance for society and industry*

The increasing demands on scientific documentation on effectiveness and safety of new treatments when introduced in routine clinical practice will need large-scale collection of data, preferably on a national scale. If Sweden succeeds in fully utilising the "natural resource" that National Quality Registers combined with other registers offer, Swedish clinical and translational research will have great opportunities not only to be in the international academic frontline, but also to make a strong imprint on health and on life science industry. Within the framework of quality registers, cost-effective methods to perform clinical trials and implementation studies are being developed. There are already numerous examples of how research based on Swedish quality registers has been directly translated into changes and quality improvement in routine clinical practice.

*Personalised medicine* is increasingly in focus for the diagnostics and pharma industries. New biotechnological advances make it possible to develop therapies that are specifically designed to comply with the needs of the single patient, maximizing the likelihood of beneficial effects and minimizing risks. Also, individuals at particularly high risk for disease may be identified and preventive measures may be more targeted than today. Access to large, well-characterized patient cohorts in the Swedish National Quality Registers, and linkage of registers to collections of biological material will make a major contribution to the development of personalized medicine.



### **Priorities according to strategic relevance**

The objective of the Foundation for Strategic Research is to support research in order to strengthen Sweden's future competitiveness. When the priority research areas supported by different research funding organisations are compared, the areas supported by the Foundation are positioned between those supported by the Swedish Research Council and those supported by VINNOVA, as shown in the diagram below. The Foundation interprets "strategic relevance" by giving a number of examples where research can be of use\*. The practical definition of strategic relevance, which will be used in the process of selection of applications, is that proposals should have a clear potential for exploitation in Sweden within a time span of 5 – 15 years after termination of the research project. Furthermore, applications assessed as being better able to contribute to Sweden's future competitiveness will be given higher priority.

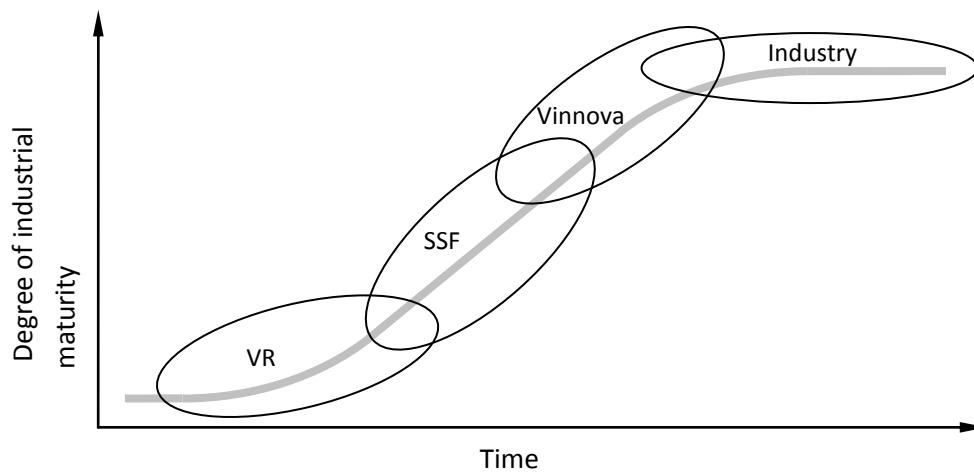


Fig 1. The areas of priority of Swedish research funding organisations

\* The Foundation's policy documents define use as consisting of:

- the ability of internationally high-class research settings to attract unique competence and international investment into the country
- people with graduate educations who through their broadened and enhanced research training are attractive for employment, primarily in industry and society but also in the universities and colleges
- research the results of which can serve as a basis for the development of existing enterprises or the founding of new ones
- improved quality of life through new job opportunities, better working conditions and better health
- research that is a focus for international cooperation, through which knowledge that is of interest to Swedish industry can be gathered.'

**Eligibility**

Applications should be submitted by the scientific coordinator of the proposed research project (the main applicant), who must be a prominent scientist prepared to assume scientific responsibility for the project for the duration of the grant period. The main applicant must be affiliated with either a university/university college or a public or private non-profit research institute. At least one of the applicants must work at a Swedish university/ university college. Each scientist can submit only one application as a main applicant in this call. A scientist that already is a main grant holder of a framework grant from SSF cannot apply in this call.

All proposed projects should be based on reliable collaboration between two and four research groups with different types of relevant complementary scientific expertise, or proposed by one large group which in itself contains the relevant complementary competence. Selected research projects will be supported by five-year framework grants in the range of SEK 4-6 million per year (incl. 35% overhead) for each project. Funding during the two last years will be dependent upon a successful mid-term evaluation.

A maximum of 25% of the grant may be used for salary for the main applicant and/or the co-applicants, but only to cover up to a maximum of 25 % of the salary of each applicant.

The Foundation does not require any co-funding.

The projects should be based on a clinical problem and at least one of the applicants must have clinical expertise and experience.

Industrial representatives as well as public authorities and organisations may participate as collaborating partners but will not be funded by the grant.

**Selection and decision procedure**

The applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Scientific originality, strengths, weaknesses, and feasibility of the research plan
- Quality of the applicants' previous scientific accomplishments, international experience, and networks
- Strategic relevance to Swedish society and industry and importance of the proposed research

The application process takes place in a one-step procedure. An Evaluation Committee, including scientific experts from Sweden, will perform a first selection where the full proposals are assessed with respect to what extent they are in line with the aim, their strategic relevance and the choice of research problems. These selected proposals will then be evaluated by international scientific experts.

The results of the scientific evaluations and the assessments of the strategic value of the projects will be taken into account by the Evaluation Committee in arriving at a final recommendation to the Governing Board of the Foundation.



***Instructions for application and submission***

The full proposals must be written in English and submitted via the electronic application system of the Foundation at <http://apply.stratresearch.se> which will open on 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2010 for this call. The applications must be submitted by no later than **2 pm (Swedish time) on 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2011**. The final granting decision is planned to be taken during late spring 2011 and the grants will then be available from July 2011.

The full proposals will include:

- a research plan with the final objective (including the scientific expertise of the applicants, and a plan for how the suggested constellation of collaborating research groups will work in an effective way and who will be responsible for different parts of the project)
- a clear description of the strategic relevance for Sweden of the proposed project (including a preliminary plan for future exploitation, 10-15 years from now, of the research results)
- a budget plan (containing information about the actual work that the applicants intend to do in the project).

Detailed instructions for the application will be available on the electronic portal.

No additional material submitted after the deadline will be considered.

Please also note that the Foundation is subject to the principle of public access to official records (*Offentlighetsprincipen*). Avoid submitting information on details that could prevent patenting.

***Contact person at SSF***

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