



STIFTELSEN för
STRATEGISK FORSKNING

TYPES of GRANTS

SSF's fundamental work form is to issue open calls for proposals for research grants, which are awarded in competition. In order for SSF to approve a research grant, the research must be scientifically excellent and strategically relevant, i.e. utilizable in Sweden. The research must lie within the areas of responsibility for SSF (natural science, engineering and medicine). An application must also fall within the criteria's in effect of the particular call for proposals. Applicants must be employed or be able to be offered employment at a Swedish university or a Swedish research institute. This is a normative, but not exhaustive description of grant types, pending decisions by the Board .

Strategic Research Centres

A strategic research centre is characterized by the fact that several independent research groups at a university, research institute and companies collaborate multidisciplinary to solve an important research problem under the strong, unifying leadership of a centre director. The director is assisted by a steering group and a scientific advisory group. Examples of centers are IRC (Industrial Research Centers), ARC (Agenda 2030 Advanced Research Centers) and MRC (Multi-disciplinary Research Centers).

Applications are evaluated with regard to the scientific quality and strategic value of the research programme, the composition of research groups, the envisioned organization for the centre in relation to how the research problem is intended to be solved, the scientific competence of the main applicant and co-applicants, and the leadership qualities of the main applicant. Another very important evaluation criterion is the added value of the proposed centre compared with the equivalent individual projects. Funding period: about 5 – 10 years including mid-term evaluation. Grant level: about MSEK 7 – 17 per year.

Framework grants

A number of researchers from a large research group or from a few independent research groups, co-located or at different universities or institutes, collaborate to solve an important research problem. One of the researchers is the main applicant and is responsible for coordinating the scientific activities within the project. If the main applicant is active at a research institute, at least one of the co-applicants must work at a university. In some cases, SSF appoints a programme committee consisting of experts from both academia and industry who follow and support the projects in the programme.

Applications are evaluated with regard to the scientific quality and strategic relevance of the research programme, the composition of research group(s) in relation to the research problem, and the scientific competence and complementarity of the main applicant and the co-applicants. Funding period: about 4 – 6 years. Grant level: about MSEK 4 – 7 per year. Sometimes the projects are subjected to mid-term evaluation.

Individual grants

An individual researcher at a university or research institute applies for funding for an individual project or for his research group. One example of such a programme is: Future Research Leaders.

Applications are evaluated with regard to the scientific quality and strategic value of the research programme, and the scientific competence of the applicants Funding period: about 3 – 6 years. Grant level: about MSEK 1 – 3 per year.

Mobility grants

Grants to promote mobility between sectors, universities, countries and disciplines. Examples of such programmes are Strategic Mobility, where a researcher at a university or a company applies for funding for his/her salary as a visiting researcher at a company or a university, Industrial Doctoral Student, FID (Research Institute Doctoral Student), A-Pro (Adjunct Professor) and Sabbatical.

Applications are evaluated with regard to the scientific quality and strategic relevance of the project, the visiting researcher's competence, the host environment's potential for meeting the needs of the visiting researcher, and mutuality in the declarations of intent by the parties involved. The financing period is normally 1 - 5 years and the grant level is between MSEK 0.5 - 3.

Co-funded grants

SSF cooperates fairly regularly with other research funding bodies in joint calls for proposals in co-funded research programmes. A prerequisite for SSF's participation in such a joint project is that the research programme lies within an area that is prioritized by SSF and that the diverse experience and competence of the different research funding bodies provides added value for the research programme. Responsibility for such a programme may rest with SSF, but it may also rest with another funding body.

Joint research programmes may vary widely in character. The grants within such programmes may therefore be equivalent to a Strategic Research Centre, a framework grant or an individual grant, depending on the programme. Evaluation of applications, funding period and grant size therefore differ between different joint research programmes.

Bilateral programs

SSF's international policy is above all to lower the threshold for researchers to collaborate with democracies in Asia. Bilateral programs are developed on an ad hoc basis and with great selectivity. SSF has offered together with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Israel. The order of magnitude for an international program is often around MSEK 30 for a dozen collaborative projects.

Information grants

Only in exceptional cases can SSF award grants for information activities. To be considered for grants, these activities must have a potential to improve Swedish research, competitiveness or society. They may also be information activities directed at children and young people or teachers that could lead to a better future recruitment base for Swedish universities and companies. Furthermore, recipients of such grants are normally non-profit organizations and organizations that do not receive substantial government funding.

Infrastructure aid

SSF can contribute to an increased and more efficient utilization of the infrastructure of research. Such aid can be given in the form of a suitable type of grant, for example a framework grant, for the purpose of involving new user groups, or a mobility grant to make the infrastructure more accessible. Aid may also be targeted at individuals with unique competence who choose a research engineer type of career rather than a professorial career, for example a beam-line scientist or the like. This promotes neglected career paths and fosters interdisciplinary research and cooperation between different institutes of higher education and research fields. To qualify for a grant from SSF, research conducted at, or with the aid of, the infrastructure must lie within SSF's priority areas. SSF's role should further be to offer infrastructure aid openly to qualified researchers from all institutes of higher education, from other countries and preferably also to users from industry, so-called "open facilities". Examples of programs are RIF (Research Infrastructure Fellows) and ITM (Instrument Technique and Method development). Grant level for RIF is approximately MSEK 15 and for ITM approximately MSEK 3, per project.

Graduate School

Grants to Graduate Schools or Research Schools mobilise and coordinate graduate studies within a specific research area. Characteristics for Graduate Schools are cohesive graduate education under a formalised organisation, targeted research programme, developed cooperation with other universities, industry and international, organised curriculum with enhanced mentorship. Grants to Graduate Schools are typically of the order of MSEK 100-300 for 5-10 years.

Escape risk

Over the course of the years, SSF has received applications from universities and colleges for funds to prevent leading researchers from leaving Sweden after receiving attractive offers from abroad. If a university applies for funds on behalf of a researcher so that he/she will be attracted to stay in Sweden, the documents included with the application must include a description of the university's own commitments to the researcher, the researcher's complete CV and list of publications, a detailed account of his/her research funding, a detailed research plan and documentation verifying that the researcher has a concrete offer from a foreign employer. In order to obtain aid from SSF, the researcher in question must be among the top 10% of researchers within a broad scientific field (described by a five-digit code in a Swedish standard for classification of research topics). Aid from SSF may be SEK 5 – 10 million for 5 years, provided that the institute of higher education in question matches this amount.