



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

## Call Announcement

### Industrial Doctoral Student 2021

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) is allocating SEK 30 million in a program for Industrial Doctoral Students, 2021. The grant provides funding for research and postgraduate studies for an industrial doctoral student, in collaboration between industry and academia. The grant runs for four to five years and shall result in a doctoral degree (PhD). SSF expects to fund 12 projects at SEK 2.5 million each (including indirect costs) in this call for proposals.

#### Background

Collaboration between industry and academia is important for the dissemination of knowledge and technology in society. According to its statutes, SSF shall foster the development of strong research environments with high strategic relevance, promote postdoctoral studies and collaboration between academia and industry, and encourage mobility. One instrument to achieve this is to support doctoral studies in collaboration between academia and industry.

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 the training of strategically relevant and industrial competitive PhD:s.

#### The program

The program is aimed at persons who have not yet been admitted to a doctoral studies program. The doctoral student must have at least 80 percent employment at the company for the entire period of the grant. Two qualified persons shall serve as supervisors for the doctoral student during the period of the grant – one at the higher education institution (HEI) and one at the company. The supervisors shall be well established within their respective line organizations. The supervisor at the HEI is the applicant (sends in the application and ensures that it meets the requirements) and assumes the role of project leader (responsible for reporting to SSF and to the company), if the project is granted funding. The HEI where the project leader is employed administers the grant. There shall be a mandatory designated steering group consisting of at least the two supervisors for the project.

The application shall include a project description defining the planned research and it must be formulated jointly by the company and the HEI. The project description shall also describe planned activities to foster an exchange of knowledge between the company and the HEI. The application must include letters of intent from both the HEI (department head or equivalent) and the company (research director or equivalent). Both parties shall confirm the need for the exchange and new knowledge acquisition, and ensure that the necessary practical arrangements are made for the execution of the project. The parties shall furthermore confirm that the supervisors have a mandate and time allocated for this purpose.

The industrial doctoral student does not need to be identified at the time of application but must be admitted to the doctoral program and be employed at the company before the project begins. The doctoral student shall devote the equivalent of four years of full-time work to the project, and is expected to share her or his time between the university and the company. Beyond that, up to 20% of the doctoral student's working hours can be devoted to other activities such as departmental duties if this work is funded by the HEI. During the period of the grant, the industrial doctoral student shall pursue research and postgraduate studies in science, engineering or medicine.

The HEI must be Swedish. The company must be well commercially established (economic and sustainable) and possess enough competence to both contribute to and benefit from the knowledge gained in short and long term. The company shall normally 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 questionable Personal ownership relationship between academia and business. Instead of a company, the industrial party may also be a hospital if the project involves clinical research. Industrial research institutes or similar organizations may not represent either the academic or the industrial party in this call for proposals and may thereby not partake of SSF's grants for industrial doctoral students, although they may participate in the project in other ways.

The parties are jointly responsible for framing agreements on how IPR matters and the like are to be handled between them.

The Foundation's grant is SEK 2.5 million, which is expected to cover about half of what a doctoral project normally costs. The company is expected to provide whatever additional funds are required for a successful project. The grant may not be used for supervisors' salaries, but solely for costs directly related to the student's 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 that portion of SSF's grant that is spent at the HEI, equivalent to a surcharge of 35% on the direct costs. The grant does not cover any bench fees or other unwarranted costs.

The grant shall result in a doctoral degree. 25% of the SSF-grant (i.e. 625 KSEK) will be withheld until a final report has been submitted, including a copy of the PhD certificate, and approved by SSF. If a doctorate degree has not been obtained in conjunction with a final report to SSF, this part of the grant will be withdrawn by SSF (with reservation for extensions on account of parental leave or illness).

## **Application and submission**

The main applicant is the supervisor at the HEI. The entire application, including appendices, is filed electronically at the SSF portal <http://apply.strategiska.se>. It must include a complete application form consisting of the following (in addition to what is stated in the portal):

- Research plan, including scientific state of the art
- CV and list of publications for both supervisors, the main applicant from a HEI and the co-applicant from a company
- Letters of intent from the academic party and the industrial party describing the need for the project (written by the department head or equivalent at the HEI and the research director or equivalent at the company)
- Brief description and required qualifications of prospective doctoral student (education and experience)
- Strategic relevance and expected societal impact
- Description of how intellectual property rights contractually will be handled in the project

- Budget, including specifications of overhead costs and other unspecified costs
- Description of the company with specifics 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 doctoral/licentiate student, the HEI and the supervisors.

The application should be written in English.

An applicant may only submit one application, this applies to both supervisors and the student. A main applicant who has an ongoing SSF industrial doctoral student grant is not eligible to apply if there is a grant period overlap between the two grants.

SSF always consider equal opportunity in calls for proposals.

*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.*

## Evaluation

The applications will be reviewed by a for the purpose appointed evaluation committee consisting of external experts. The following evaluation criteria will be considered:

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

For a company that participates in several applications or that already have approved SSF Industrial PhD grants, amplified requirements of the relevance criteria will apply. SSF will at maximum approve two projects per company per call for proposal.

## Timetable

- Application deadline: May 25, 2021, 14.00 CET at latest
- Decision by the SSF board: October 2021
- Project start: December 1, 2021 and not later than June 30, 2022.

## Contact at SSF:

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