



Call for Proposals – Grants for Korean-Swedish research collaboration

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) and the National Research Foundation of the Republic of Korea (NRF) launch a joint programme with the purpose of stimulating collaborative, focused research projects involving highly qualified groups in Korea and Sweden. NRF and SSF have set aside the equivalent to MSEK 30 each to cover these Korean-Swedish collaborative projects of the highest international scientific standard.

SSF and NRF will select about 9 projects that will be supported by research grants to be used for joint seminars, conferences, workshops and exchanges of individuals between the applying groups over a period of six years. Funding during the three last years will be conditional on a successful mid-term evaluation.

Introduction

SSF and NRF have together identified potential positive synergies with a common research programme between Sweden and Korea, considering the innovative strengths and complementarities of the research areas in both countries¹.

During a workshop in June 2013, NRF and SSF presented samples of high quality research from each country and noted a high potential for mutual benefits with a common collaborative research programme.

The programme aims at giving leading researchers in Sweden and Korea a venue to initiate, and reinforce, strong and lasting links between the two countries by means of focused research projects. The ensuing strengthened contacts and enlarged networks in Sweden and Korea are expected to give added value also to other, non-participating, actors in academy and industry.

Prioritised areas

This call for proposals addresses focused research projects directed towards three main areas, each encompassing three sub-areas of interest for both Korea and Sweden.

The call is open for proposals in the following areas

- Biomedical Engineering:
 - Bioimaging
 - Biosensors
 - Bioinformatics
- Materials Sciences:
 - Surfaces, layers and thin films
 - Low-dimensional materials and nanomaterials
 - Metals and alloys
- ICST:
 - Systems architecture and systems technology
 - Embedded and autonomous systems
 - Electronics and photonics

The distribution of grants among the three main areas above is expected to be approximately equal, although the final distribution will ultimately depend on the scientific quality of the proposals.

Financial support and eligibility

In this call a Korean principal investigator (PI) and a Swedish PI must submit a common grant application, describing the proposed collaborative research project, the prospected individuals that will take part in the project, and a budget. The application is submitted to NRF from the Korean PI and to SSF from the Swedish PI, in parallel. The application shall be written in English.

Support for expenses of the Korean researchers will be provided by NRF under the contract and routines of NRF, and support for expenses of the Swedish researchers will be provided by SSF under the contract and routines of SSF.

Funding is preliminary planned to be provided according to:

- 9 projects, approximately k€ 68 per project, year and country, for 3 years
- 7 projects continue after mid term evaluation, approx k€ 68 per project, year and country, for another 3 years

On the Swedish (SSF) side, the following applies regarding costs:

According to the above, the grant corresponds to approximately MSEK 0,6 per year for three to six years.

Eligible costs are:

- *Joint seminars, conferences, workshops*
- *Exchanges of individuals (including salaries during exchanges)*
- *Salaries for postdocs and PhD:s, actively working with the collaboration project*
- *Costs for relevant consumables up to a small fraction of the grant.*

Not eligible costs are:

- *PI salary*
 - *Equipment*
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The PI:s must be outstanding researchers associated with a Swedish/Korean university/college or research institute. A PI may appear as main applicant in no more than one application.

Application

A complete application must contain, among other data specified in the portal:

- A project description, including how collaboration will be carried out, with clear statements of what the roles of each Swedish and Korean researcher will be in the project;
- A description of the expected outcome of the proposed project, scientifically as well as in terms of its relevance for industry and society;
- A description of the on-going activities and specific strengths of the Swedish and Korean groups, respectively, which form the basis for the proposed joint project;
- A description of the expected added value from the proposed joint project, including how the competence, technology and other resources in the different groups complement each other;
- A description of how the project is expected to help strengthen research cooperation between Korea and Sweden in the longer term;
- CV:s for both the Korean and the Swedish PI:s
- A maximum of 15 selected references to publications from both PI:s in the past 5 years

The proposal must clearly describe the state of the art within the area of research and describe the strategic relevance of the project, in terms of how it will be utilised, or the competitive advantages for which it will help building the base for, in the Swedish and Korean societies.

The application must be submitted to NRF, according to the NRF routines, and to SSF via the portal at: <http://apply.stratresearch.se>. The research plan and constellation of the application should be elaborated together between Korean and Swedish PI and identical in both in both the Korean and the Swedish application.

To get a complete view of all data required for submission it is necessary to consult each funding agency portal for submission, or similar. Please log on to the portal in due time before the deadline.

Evaluation

Preliminarily, the applications will be evaluated in two steps. First, national evaluation panels will review the applications in the respective countries. These preliminary reviews will be exchanged between SSF and NRF. Second, three persons from each national panel will meet and form a bilateral committee (i.e. 6 persons) and make the final recommendation. Note that this process might be subject to changes.

NRF and SSF will jointly decide on the grants following the review process.

The applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Conformity to the scope as outlined above
- Scientific quality; originality, strengths, weaknesses, interdisciplinarity, and feasibility of the research plan

- Qualification of the applicants, previous scientific accomplishments, international experience, and networks
- Strategic relevance to industry and/or society and importance of the proposed research
- Added value from the bilateral collaboration

Time table

- Last date for applications: **September 30, 2014, 14.00 hours.**
- December, 2014. Granting decision by NRF and SSF.
- Earliest project start: December, 2014.

No additional material submitted after the deadline will be considered.

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Contact person at SSF: Joakim Amorim, joakim.amorim@stratresearch.se, +46 8 505 81 665

Note that SSF follows the principle of public access to official records. For this reason, do not submit material that you do not want to become public at present, e.g. detailed information that could prevent possible patenting.

References:

ⁱ See also report from Swedish government agency “Growth analysis”: *Forskningspolitik och internationalisering*
– *Sydorea- Landrapport, Tillväxtanalys*, Report no.: WP/PM 2011:40, Dnr.: 2011/118