



Call for Proposals – Grants for Korean-Swedish Research Collaboration 2024

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, strategic research projects involving highly qualified groups in South Korea and Sweden. NRF and SSF have set aside the equivalent to MSEK 49 / GKRW 6 each to cover these Korean-Swedish collaborative projects of the highest international scientific standard.

SSF and NRF will select about 10 projects that will be supported by research grants to be used for collaborative research, joint seminars, conferences, workshops, and exchanges of individuals between the applying groups over a period of three years.

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 countries.

During a previous call ten years ago 2014, NRF and SSF funded 9 collaborative projects that at the mid-term evaluation was positively reviewed with mutual national benefits. This new 2024 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 strategic 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 academia and industry.

Prioritised areas

This call for proposals addresses strategic joint research projects of excellent science in Natural science, Engineering, and Medicine for a sustainable future development.

The call is open for proposals that, broadly defined, resides within or contributes to the development of the 12 strategic research technology fields which are agreed between NRF and SSF: Semiconductor and display; Secondary battery cell; Leading-edge mobility; Next generation nuclear energy; Leading edge bio; Aerospace and marine;

Hydrogen; Cybersecurity; AI; Next generation communications; Leading edge robotics and manufacture; and quantum.

The distribution of grants among these twelve fields 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 same 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.

For Korean PI's: Korean PI is obligated to submit the Korean version of the grant application, a process that will be outlined separately on the NRF homepage. This supplementary step is essential to ensure comprehensive project management through the Integrated R&D Information System (IRIS), aligning with the guidelines and requirements set forth by NRF.

For Swedish PI's: Swedish PI is obligated to submit the Swedish version of the grant application, a process that will be outlined separately on the SFF application portal. This supplementary step is essential to ensure the alignment with the guidelines and requirements set forth by SSF.

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 10 projects, approximately MKRW 200 / MSEK 1,63 per project, year, and country, for 3 years.

Eligible costs are:

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

For SSF/Sweden salary for senior research personnel working directly with the joint project is also eligible.

Not eligible costs are:

- Large expensive equipment.

The applying PI's must be outstanding researchers associated with a Swedish/Korean university/college or research institute. The number of co-PI's must be appropriately fitted to the project size in order for it to be judged to be feasible and not under critical. A PI (and co-PI) may appear as an applicant in no more than one application in this call.

NRF and SSF have no claims on the intellectual property rights arising from the selected projects. It is the responsibility of each PI to ensure the efficient protection and proper distribution of any intellectual property arising from the accomplishment of the joint research projects.

Application

A complete application must contain, among other data specified in the respective funding agency's portal:

- Joint research abstract (no more than one page in length).
- Joint research plan which shall include:
 - A description of the added value to be expected from the collaboration.
 - A clear description of the planned research collaboration (distribution of work and methods of implementation).
 - Responsibilities and division of role of both partners.
 - Joint budget of the joint research project, including separate budgets for both partners. A budget may include researcher mobility, joint meetings, seminars, equipment, and consumables, overhead, etc. Justification of costs shall be stated in the research plan as well as the funding requested by each applicant. Support from SSF on the Swedish side also allows costs for salaries.
 - A description of:
 - the expected outcome of the proposed project, including its relevance to industry and society.
 - the project's significance to researcher training and the development of the research environment.
 - the new or ongoing activities and specific advantages of the Korean and Swedish groups respectively, which form the basis for the proposed joint project,
 - how the project is expected to help strengthen research collaboration between Korea and Sweden over the long term.
 - A discussion of how the proposed joint project compares with other comparable activities worldwide.
- Curricula vitae of the principal investigators of both partners
- A list of ten (10) best papers of the principal investigators of both partners within five 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.strategiska.se>. The research plan and constellation of the application should be elaborated together between Korean and Swedish PI and be 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 good time before the deadline.

Evaluation

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, each national panel will meet and form a bilateral committee that will make the final prioritisation and recommendation to SSF and NRF. Please note that this process might be subject to changes.

The applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposal to the call.
- Scientific quality of the proposal.
- Quality of the project management and methodology.
- Global impact and sustainable development of the proposal.
- Quality of the consortium and good synergies between the partners.
- Mobility plan.
- Added value to be expected from the Korean-Swedish research collaboration.
- Balanced scientific contributions.

Timetable

- Last date for applications: **April 15, 2024**, (SE: 14.00 hours, KR: 18.00 hours).
- Granting decision by NRF and SSF: October 30, 2024.
- Earliest project start: November 1, 2024.

*For Korean PI's: Please be aware that the deadline for the submission of the Korean PI's application is April 15, 2024. Additionally, the Korean PI's application must undergo online approval by the host institution no later than **April 17, 2024**. Ensure timely completion of both these steps to meet the stipulated deadlines and facilitate a smooth application process.*

No additional material submitted after the deadline will be considered.

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For Swedish PI's: 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.

For Korean PI's: Note that NRF will release a separate announcement regarding the call for proposals specifically tailored for Korean researchers. This announcement will provide more comprehensive details regarding eligibility, application and review process and FAQ, including the availability of Korean versions of the application forms.
