



SSF Strategic Mobility, 2020 – Grants for personal mobility between academia, research institutes, and industry

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research has allocated SEK 15 million for a strategic mobility programme covering a period of two years. Each grant within the programme covers the salary of a researcher during an exchange service period of four to twelve months in another sector than the one in which the person is currently active. During the exchange period, the visiting researcher shall conduct strategic research within one of the Foundation's spheres of responsibility.

Introduction

Personal mobility between different sectors in society is an important factor for disseminating knowledge and technology. Swedish (academic and industrial) researchers generally have good international contacts and also usually have first-hand experience from working abroad. However, mobility between industry and academia is more limited. Inhibiting factors behind this may be employment conditions and differing views on qualifications in academia and industry, respectively. In the USA there is an established system of leaves of absence, sabbaticals, aimed at stimulating renewal based on personal mobility. Only limited funding is available in Sweden today for such purposes.

Purpose

The Foundation has a strategic mission to fund research of the highest quality that contributes to Sweden's future competitiveness. According to its statutes, the Foundation shall also promote "the mobility of researchers internationally and between universities, institutes and companies". The target group of this call is well-established individuals in academia, research institutes and industry who can be expected to return to their original appointment after a limited period of exchange service in a sector in which the person is not currently active. The purpose of the programme is to increase personal mobility, knowledge transfer, and cross-fertilization between sectors.

How the programme works

The programme is aimed at promoting individuals who wish to both acquire and contribute relevant knowledge in another sector and subsequently return to the sector where they are presently employed. University, research institutes or industrial researchers who do an exchange as visiting researcher in the other sector are eligible for this programme. Even if the mobility is normally performed within Sweden, it may also be spent in another sector abroad, and it is likewise possible to invite a foreign visiting researcher from another sector to Sweden if it is justified how this contributes to the development of Swedish competitiveness.

Applicants from research institutes are eligible on the same terms as applicants from universities. Applicants from hospitals and government agencies are eligible on the same terms as applicants from the industrial sector. Thus, the allowed mobility exchanges in this program are as follows: Academia or research institute to/from industry, hospital or government agency.

During the exchange period the visiting researcher must conduct strategic research within one of the Foundation's areas; natural sciences, engineering, and medicine. Applicants must be well established in their current position and should have tenured posts or such appointments that they can be expected to return to their present position (i.e. not researchers under short-term contracts, persons with temporary positions, or the like).

The duration of the project shall correspond to four to twelve months full-time work. The exchange service may, however, be divided into different periods and it is also permissible to work part-time, but not for more than during a period of two years. Visiting researchers with part-time exchanges of 25% or less (e.g., one day a week) will be judged having lower migration value than those who devote more time to the exchange service (e.g., half-time during a period of two years or full-time for one year).

The application must include a project description, which key persons the grant holder will cooperate with, and what other funding, if any, is available. The application must also include declarations of intent from both exchange sector parties. Both of these parties must confirm the need for the exchange and ensure that the necessary practical arrangements are in place for the execution of the project. The application must also state the conditions of employment for the visiting researcher during the exchange, i.e. whether he/she will be on sabbatical from his/her current post and employed for a fixed term by the host organization, or whether another solution is envisioned. This has a bearing on which party that is going to administer the grant. The parties and the visiting researcher are together responsible for making agreements on how IPR matters and the like are to be handled among them.

The visiting researcher can apply for funding for all of his/her salary during the stay and a small amount for other expenses. The maximum possible grant amounts to MSEK 1.5 including overheads, of which no more than kSEK 100 for other costs. Indirect costs are only permitted when the host organization is a Swedish university, university college, or a research institute, regardless of which organization that is administering the grant (and thereby pays salary). By "host organization" is meant the organization where the visiting researcher will carry out the project.

Funds may not be used for purchasing equipment and the like. In the case of university researchers who will do exchange service in industry, part of the grant can be used for repatriation upon their return to academia. The repatriation grant may only be applied for by university researchers who intend to do a exchange in industry for at least 12 consecutive months at a minimum of 80 percent of full-time. A repatriation grant may be applied for including overheads, but no more than kSEK 500.

Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated by a specially composed evaluation committee consisting of external experts. The following criteria will be taken into account:

- The visiting researcher's qualifications and potential for disseminating and exploiting knowledge between different sectors
- The host environment's potential for meeting the needs of the visiting researcher
- Mutuality/engagement in the declarations of intent from both sector parties
- The strategic relevance of the proposed exchange service for Sweden
- The quality of the proposed project
- That there are no inappropriate financial or personal dependencies between the parties and the visiting researcher

Instructions

The applicant (PI) is the visiting researcher who wishes to carry out the exchange. The entire application, including appendices, is filled out electronically at <http://apply.strategiska.se> and must include a complete application form consisting of (in addition to what is stated in the portal):

- Description of the home environment and how it will be strengthened by the exchange
- Description of the host environment and how it will be strengthened by the exchange
- Personal motivation for making the exchange
- Declaration of intent from the two sector parties
- Applicant's CV
- Budget
- Project description

The deadline for applications is 14:00 pm on 10 September, 2020. The earliest project start is 1 January 2021. Please write the application in English.

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.

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