SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research announces grants for

Research Infrastructure Fellows

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research announces the availability of a total of SEK 240 million in grants in a national call for proposals directed towards research infrastructure that meet the highest international scientific standards and strengthen present or future Swedish-based industry and society. This initiative has a focus on infrastructure supporting research within the SSF's priority areas.

SSF:s selected Research Infrastructure Fellows will be supported by grants of SEK 15 million for a period of 5 years (incl. overheads) to be used for salary, research infrastructure tools, and running costs. After two and a half years, a programme committee will make site visits to follow up the implementation of the grant, which may affect funding for the remaining period.

Background

Research infrastructure resources such as large research facilities, centres for expensive equipment and instruments, coordinated labs, test-beds, and knowledge collections (such as data banks) have ever ever-increasing importance for research and are a prerequisite for top-notch performance in many fields. Research infrastructure resources are tending to get larger and more complex, and are inherently beyond the sole control of a single research group or even a university department. Long-term and large investments as well as demanding operations are usually a characteristic feature of many infrastructures. Sweden has an impressive research infrastructure, where easy access and efficient use are vital to national competitiveness in research and development. Key persons of different kinds – often outside a classic academic path – play an extremely important role for the successful development and use of research infrastructures. The present five-year SSF programme is intended to contribute to the development of research infrastructures and to its support and user-accessibility, as well as to enhance career paths for specialists within academia.

Scope of the present call

The objective of this call is to promote key persons committed to research infrastructures. These persons are essential to the operation and methodological development of the infrastructures, but also to the training and supervision of users at the infrastructures. The call is thus typically aimed at persons who have chosen another career path than the classic academic tenure track and are instrumental for the research community and the future development of important new research tools, such as machine directors, beam-line scientists, laboratory or centre directors.

According to the statutes of the Foundation, research infrastructure of concern for the present call should support the natural sciences, engineering and medicine, promote the development of strong research environments of the highest international standards, and enhance Sweden's future competitiveness.

Furthermore, the Foundation prioritises research within the following areas:
- Bioengineering
- Computational Sciences and Applied Mathematics
- Information, Communication and Systems Technology
- Life Sciences
- Materials Science and Technology

which means that these areas will be given priority over infrastructure supporting other areas.

Eligibility

The research infrastructure must be hosted by a Swedish university and must be prioritised by the vice-chancellor of the university, involving long-term scientific goals, funding and use. It must be of broad national interest and provide a basis for world-leading research. It is a requirement that the infrastructure is or will become an open-access facility, i.e. open to scientists from all universities and research institutes, and preferably also be accessible to users from industry and other countries. This open access may, however, be limited by quality screening of user project proposals. It is regarded as a merit if the infrastructure offers e-access to users. The price charged for user access should be limited to actual cost.

The proposal must be submitted by the applicant who will become the Research Infrastructure Fellow if the application is approved. The Research Infrastructure Fellow must be employed by a Swedish university or a university college.

Each application must be co-signed by the vice-chancellor of the university and by the head of the host's infrastructure unit/department/centre/facility who underwrites the applicant's employment. Each university may only be represented in a maximum of three (3) applications, as a host university, in this call. Furthermore, each key person may only be represented in one (1) application as main applicant.

Applications that fail to comply with these conditions will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the main applicant to check the proposal for compliance with the rules before submission.

Proposal and submission

A complete application must contain, among other data specified in the portal:
- Description of the research infrastructure and its national (and, where applicable, international) role and competitiveness
- Description of the state of the art within the area concerned

- Description of technical and/or method development that the applicant will be engaged with at the infrastructure during the SSF grant period
- Details of the relevant expertise of the main applicant (and CV)
- Description of how the infrastructure fits in with the host university's strategy for research infrastructure and how/if it relates to the Swedish Research Council's "Guide to research infrastructures", or equivalent
- Description of the organisation of the infrastructure and the intended role and competence development plan of the applicant within the infrastructure, beyond the support period of SSF
- Description of the accessibility of the infrastructure and the number of potential users from different sectors and areas, including e-access
- A budget section including as primary items the salary cost of the applicant (up to 100%), running costs and instrument/module add-ons, refurbishing or method development related to the project
- Detailed account of the expected strategic significance of the project, presenting a vision of utilisation or commercial exploitation of the results in Sweden during the project's lifetime and/or up to 10 years after completion of the SSF project
- A Letter of Intent (LoI) signed by the vice chancellor of the university and by the head of the infrastructure unit/department/center/facility. Additional LoIs may be required if the key person is employed by a different organisation (deployment for work off-site at the infrastructure - "secondment").

The proposal must be written in English and submitted via the web portal of the Foundation at: http://apply.stratresearch.se. Note that it is necessary to consult the portal in order to get a complete picture of all particulars required for submission. Please log on to the portal well in advance of the deadline. Please also submit the application in good time before the deadline. When the application has been submitted, the system will indicate whether any data fields are missing. As long as this is done before the application deadline, it is possible to submit and re-submit as many times as necessary.

All applications must be submitted by **14:00 hours (2:00 pm CET) on 29 January 2015**. No additional material will be considered after this deadline.

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, for example information that could prevent patenting.

Evaluation

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee including experts from academia, industry, and from international research infrastructure resources.

The applications will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Conformity to scope and eligibility as outlined above, including: definition of infrastructure, university priorities, accessibility (by different type of users), and e-access
- Scientific quality: originality, strengths, weaknesses, level of technical advancement and method development, degree of interdisciplinarity, and feasibility of the research infrastructure project
- Strategic relevance to Swedish academia, industry and/or society, and impact of the proposed project
- Qualifications of the applicant (key person), previous technical or scientific achievements, international experience and networks, and leadership/management of research infrastructure teams.

Proposals that offer coordination of research infrastructure in given fields are prioritised over competing local ones.

Time schedule

October 2014   Programme announcement
29 January 2015, 2:00 pm CET   Deadline for submission of full proposal
October 2015   Final decision by Governing Board
January 2016   Project start

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