FORMAS ⋮ | ETT FORSKNINGSRÅD FÖR HÅLLBAR UTVECKLING
A SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

International network grant for the SDGs

Opening Date: 11 August 2020

Application Deadline: 16 September 2020

Date of Decision: 18 November 2020

WHAT CAN YOU APPLY FOR?	WHO CAN APPLY?	HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?
Costs associated with networking with one or more global partners (outside Europe) for formulating joint project ideas for achieving the 2030 Agenda.	The main applicant must be a researcher who holds a PhD at a higher education institution or research institute.	You can apply for up to SEK 200,000 for network expenses in 2021.

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Revision history

Any changes to the call text are listed below.

Date	Change

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Description of the call

Introduction

The goals set by the UN Agenda 2030 are now only ten years away and time is limited. All countries need to support the transformation and therefore international collaboration between researchers must be strengthened. In this call Formas' aims, in collaboration with other Swedish research funding agencies, to promote *new* international collaboration by funding network grants for formulating project ideas that help to accelerate the implementation of research and innovation and achieve the SDGs.

Background

In September 2015, the UN member states adopted Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). This represents the most ambitious agreement on sustainable development ever by world leaders. Knowledge creation, innovation and transformation are its central tenets. We have no time to lose if we are to stand a chance of reaching these goals – and we only have ten years left.

The sustainability challenges know no boundaries and the SDGs are universal. All countries need to support the transformation and develop further, and international collaboration must be strengthened since global development and sustainable development are interconnected. There is a greater need to fund research that integrates different perspectives and involves researchers from different countries, including low-income and lower middle-income countries. There is also a need for research on the linkages, synergies and conflicts between different SDGs in the 2030 Agenda, and on **how** the SDGs can be achieved and how existing research can be utilised.

According to the recent government bill on Sweden's implementation of Agenda 2030 (2019/20:188), Swedish research should contribute more to achieving our global challenges through collaboration with low- and lower middle-income countries. Sweden can also highlight the importance of research collaboration with developing countries that face the greatest challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

This call for proposals is a collaboration between the Swedish Energy Agency, Forte, Formas, Sida and the Swedish Research Council, and takes place within the framework of "Intsam". Intsam is a collaborative initiative between Swedish government funding agencies with the mission to strengthen and coordinate research and innovation funding efforts with countries outside Europe. Intsam funding is vital for implementing common priority areas, such as the SDGs.

Purpose and focus

The goals set by the UN Agenda 2030 are now only ten years away and time is limited. Much research already exists world-wide and need to be implemented. Complementing and strengthening Swedish research and innovation requires collaboration among researchers around the world. This call aims to promote the following:

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- *New* international collaboration for formulating project ideas that help to achieve the SDGs.
- International collaboration that can accelerate the implementation of research and innovation, and contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

The grant must be used to establish a network around a specified project idea, with a joint research or innovation project as a goal for seeking future funding. The project idea at the heart of the network can be anything from an early-stage idea to a well-developed research question. The call description will refer to this idea as a "project idea" no matter how mature the idea is.

The grant is intended to fund networking activities only, not research and innovation projects.

The project idea should be jointly developed by all network parties, focus on mutual benefit and be based on equal collaboration.

Collaboration in the projects must be carried out with researchers in countries outside Europe, but the call has no other geographical requirements. New collaborative initiatives can be initiated, for example, with countries that have been previous beneficiaries of aid and for which collaboration now must build new forms of sustainable cooperation, or with low- and lower middle-income countries that face the greatest challenges in implementing the agenda.

The focus of the call is network projects within the areas of responsibility of all participating funders. The projects should run for one year, and you can apply for a maximum of SEK 200,000 per project. The funds may be used in part to finance expenses for parties outside Sweden. The goal is that researchers in the new networks should apply for funding for joint projects in national and international calls.

Who can apply under this call

Researchers from any discipline who hold a PhD, are active at a Swedish higher education institution or research institute, and who wish to collaborate internationally to achieve the SDGs can apply under this call. The focus of the call is network projects within the areas of responsibility of all participating funders.

Formas strives for an equitable, gender-balanced and inclusive development of society. Applicants should therefore design their project so that its results can benefit a diverse group of people.

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Before you apply

Applicant and organisation requirements

- To apply for a grant under this call, the main applicant must have obtained a PhD degree by the time the call closes.
- Participating researchers must also have obtained their PhD degree by the time the call closes. Other staff involved in the project do not need to have a PhD degree.
- The applicant must be the project manager for the application.
- Grants may only be administered by a Swedish university, college or other Swedish public organisation that meets Formas' criteria for administrating organisations.
  Who can become an administrating organisation?
- There is no upper age limit for the main applicant and participating researchers. However, researchers who are full-time pensioners are not eligible to receive funding towards salaries.

Costs that qualify for funding

When you apply for funding for a network project, you can apply for a grant to cover both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include costs for travel, salaries and equipment. Indirect costs are costs that are shared with others in your organisation, such as for administration, IT and renting of premises. Indirect costs are sometimes called overhead.

Read more about Formas' general guidelines for funding.

The budget for this call must include only the costs of networking activities, such as travel expenses for people involved in the project and for organising meetings and workshops or similar activities for developing cooperation. Funding for salary costs may only be sought for shorter periods for conducting activities like planning and conducting meetings or workshops, and must be justified in the budget specification. You cannot apply for a grant to fund research in this call.

Funds may partly be used to finance expenses for participating partners outside Sweden. The administrating organisation is responsible for ensuring that the transfer of funds to foreign organisations and the use of these funds is in accordance with the administrating organisation's rules and guidelines.

Grant amount and project duration

You can apply for a maximum grant amount of SEK 200,000 for a project. The maximum project period is one year. The funds can be used for up to six months after the project ends. Applications that exceed the maximum amount or have a project duration longer than one year will be rejected at an early stage and will not proceed to review. The application's budget must indicate how the funds will be used in the project.

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Language

We recommend that you write your application in English. Read more about the <u>language in your application to Formas</u>.

Who can read the application?

According to Swedish law, your application and its appendices are considered as general public documents once they have been submitted to us. This means that anyone can request and read your application. Before we disclose any applications, we always conduct a confidentiality assessment, but we can only hide information as legislated for in the Public Access and Secrecy Act (2009:400).

How to apply

You apply in Prisma

You apply for a grant in Formas application system, Prisma. In Prisma, you must create a personal account where you will add the information you need for your application. Organisations applying for funding must also have an account.

Information your application must include

Your application must include a clear description of the project under the following sections.

Basic information

- Number of months for which the application applies
- Project title in **Swedish** and **English** (maximum 200 characters including spaces)
- Popular science description in **Swedish** (maximum 4,500 characters including spaces)
- Abstract in **Swedish** and **English** (maximum 1,500 characters each including spaces)

Project description

- **Aim and objective** (maximum 5,000 characters, including spaces). Describe the aim and objective of the project and why it is important to conduct the project. Motivate how this new collaboration will help to achieve the 2030 Agenda SDGs.
- **Implementation and network** (maximum 5,000 characters including spaces). Describe how you will use the grant to develop the network and initiate collaborations that can lead to research and innovation projects that contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Motivate which partners and other actors you expect will be involved and how they are relevant to achieving the project's aim and objective.
- **Description of the potential societal relevance of the project idea** (maximum 5,000 characters including spaces). Describe the potential societal relevance of the project idea.

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Explain how your project idea can help to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Also describe the stakeholders and target groups whom you expect to benefit from the results.

- **References.** List the in-line references pertaining to the above sections in a separate field (maximum 4,000 characters including spaces).

Budget

You report the project budget in Prisma. The budget should include:

- **Salaries, including social security contributions for each project participant**
  Funding for salaries may only be sought for shorter periods for conducting activities like planning and conducting meetings or workshops, and must be justified in the budget specification. You can apply for funding to cover salaries for researchers, PhD students, meeting facilitators and technical staff. Social security contributions should be included.
- **Activity level in the project**
  Activity level refers to the percentage of full-time service a project participant contributes.
- **Operating costs**
  Examples of operating costs are travel and overhead for planning meetings and workshops, including online meeting tools.
- **Premises**
  You can apply for funding for the cost of premises if this is not already included as overhead in the project's budget.
- **Indirect costs**
  When you specify the overhead costs in the application, do so according to the practice of the college, university or public administration that will manage the funds. Formas does not grant funding for overhead costs that you write off for premises.
- **Budget specification**
  In your own words, explain the budget. State the total amount per organisation if several organisations are applying for a grant.

Ethical considerations

You must describe the relevant ethical issues and how they should be managed. Examples include research that uses personal data, or experiments on humans or animals. Even if you do not expect your research to involve ethical concerns, you should state that this is the case in your application and explain why.   A description of animal and human testing should be given in separate fields, using a maximum of 4,000 characters including spaces in each field.

Report any ethical considerations

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Classifications

Formas uses project classifications in analyses and supporting documentation on an overall level. The classifications are made when the applicant states the subject area, SCB codes and at least one sustainable development goal the project can contribute to.

- **Subject area**

  Select the project's subject area and add a sub-heading.

- **SCB code**

  Select at least one SCB code with two sub-levels that together form the entire code.

- **Keywords**

  Select at least one and a maximum of three keywords describing the project. Choose what best represents your project, even if it does not entirely match the field you work in.

- **Sustainable development goals**

  Select a minimum of one and a maximum of three sustainable development goals (SDGs) that best fit your project. When selecting more than one goal, specify the goals in priority order. The goal that is most relevant to the project should be stated in the first box. As the meaning of the goals is sometimes narrower than what the title indicates, we encourage you to follow the link and read in more detail about the goals you intend to specify to ensure that the intended research contributes towards achieving that particular goal.

  More information about the meaning of the goals

Administrating organisation – the organisation receiving the grant

An administrating organisation is the organisation that receives the grant money from Formas when a grant is awarded. Applicants under this call must be administrating organisations that are approved by Formas.

Who can become an administrating organisation?

- Select your administrating organisation in Prisma and add your project's department or institution.
- Prisma contains a default list of approved administrating organisations.
- A registered application is automatically sent to the administrating organisation after the call is closed. The administrating organisation then has seven business days to digitally sign the application.
- The administrating organisation is responsible for transferring part of the grant to any co-applicant project partners. This funding must be transferred, not invoiced.

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Participants

- The main applicant invites participating researchers.
- A participating researcher is a researcher **who holds a PhD** and is considered a co-applicant for the project.
- You can also have participating administrators who are **not** involved in the project but who help you fill in the application form.
- Each participant must have created a user account in Prisma.
- The main applicant invites people to participate in the application process by searching for their given name, surname and email address in Prisma (note that exact spelling of names and email addresses is required).
- Note that invited participating researchers must transfer their CVs and publications in the application so that the main applicant can register the application when it is completed. See the next section, "CVs".

CVs

This is how you add CVs to your application.

- The project manager retrieves the information from his or her personal account in Prisma.
- Participating researchers add their CV details from their profile to the application in Prisma themselves.
- Applicants should review in good time that their CV in Prisma is complete and up-to-date.
- If participating researchers have not filled in the required fields correctly, the main applicant will not be able to complete registration of the application.
- Participants who are not co-applicants are not able to attach CV information. Instead, their qualifications for the project should be described in the project description.

The following CV information should be added to the application.

- **Education**. Postgraduate, undergraduate and graduate level.
- **Employment history.** Current employment and major relevant prior positions, postdoctoral stays, postgraduate exchanges that are relevant for the research, and any significant gaps in the research (such as parental leave, illness, military service or political duties).
- **Qualifications and merits:**
  - **Associate professorship.**
  - **Supervised students:** Current employment and major relevant prior positions, postdoctoral stays, postgraduate exchanges that are relevant for the research, and any significant gaps in the research (such as parental leave, illness, military service or political duties).
  - **Grants received in competition**: Specify the most relevant ones (maximum 10).
  - **Awards and distinctions**: Specify the most relevant ones (maximum 10).
  - **Other merits:** Here, the main applicant and participating researchers can give a brief summary of all their publications (maximum 800 characters including spaces), as well as other merits relevant to the application, such as experience of documented collaboration and research communication (maximum 10).

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- **Intellectual property**: For example, patents and open source software that you have developed (maximum 10).

List of publications

The main applicant and participating researchers should list up to ten of their most relevant publications. The publications should be linked from the applicants' personal profiles in Prisma.

Appendices

Appendix for illustrations. If you need figures, tables or images to describe the project, you can upload them as attachments here. A maximum of one PDF attachment of 4 MB can be uploaded. Please note that a CV should **not** be attached as an appendix.

After submitting your application

We first verify whether your application falls within the scope of the call. If it does, it continues on to a review panel for assessment. If it does not, it is rejected.

How does the assessment process work?

Applications will be assessed by a review panel that is qualified to cover the current theme in the call. Applications are assessed based on their contents. It is therefore important to write the application as clearly as possible and include all important and relevant information. Each application is read and assessed by several members of the panel. The review panel is composed of active researchers and individuals outside academia with the expertise necessary to evaluate the relevance of the research as well as the collaborating funders in this call.

In order to enable high-quality projects with a breadth within the scope of the call, a portfolio perspective will be sought.

The applications are assessed based on the following criteria on a scale of 1-7, where 1 is the lowest and 7 is the highest.

Assessment criteria
Project idea

- The objective of the project idea is clear, logical and aligned with the objective of the call.
- The challenge addressed by the project is important to solve and contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- The project idea is innovative in some dimension and can significantly alter the state of knowledge.

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Implementation

- Project planning and proposed activities are appropriate in relation to the objective and expected results.
- The timetable and budget are reasonable in relation to the project's implementation and expected results.
- Ethical considerations are described clearly, and the applicant's plan for managing them is appropriate.

Network and competence

- The proposed cooperation and collaboration developed in the project are appropriate in relation to the aim and objective of the project idea.
- The network has the competence and experience required to develop the project idea and complete the project.
- The multi- and inter-disciplinary research approaches, and the partner collaboration, are clearly explained and carefully considered.

Societal relevance

- The project idea addresses significant challenges in the implementation of Agenda 2030.
- The project and the project idea have the potential to contribute to gender equality or other diversity.
- In the project's design, relevant consideration is given to the needs of stakeholders or users.

Grant award decisions

Formas' Scientific Council is expected to reach a decision on 18 November 2020 concerning which projects are granted funding. Decisions will be announced the following day at the latest on Formas' website and later sent via email from Prisma. Grant award decisions cannot be appealed.

Reporting for granted projects

Each project that is awarded funding must submit a report to Formas containing a financial report and a report on the project results in accordance with the decision. Read more about the reporting requirements on the Formas website.

Formas may impose requirements on how projects must be reported in terms of content and results to enable distribution and application. In such cases, the award decision will contain more information about this. Formas may also require you to **participate** in conferences and similar events in order to create synergies and platforms for learning and knowledge sharing.

How to report expenses and results

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Support and shortcuts

• Prisma

• Prisma's user support

• Ethics policy

Contact information

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