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

Rural areas and regional development

Opening Date: 30 March 2021

Application Deadline: 4 May 2021

Date of Decision: 26 October 2021

WHAT CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

Research projects that contribute new knowledge and solutions for developing rural areas and regions.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Principal applicants must have completed their PhD degree and be affiliated with a Swedish higher education institution, research institute or government agency with a research assignment that meets Formas' requirements for administrating organisations.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

You can seek funding for projects that run for up to four years. The maximum funding for a four-year project is 8 million kronor.

Revision history

Any changes to the call text are listed below.

Date	Change
April 26, 2021	The text under the section Research programme has been changed to comply with the instructions in Prisma. The description of the projects societal relevance and the projects' communication and dialogue with stakeholders can now be 8000 characters each (previously a maximum of 8000 characters for both).

Contents

Formas – Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning

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Description of the call

Introduction

The existing urban–rural divide in terms of population development, demographics, education and income, as well as access to job opportunities, infrastructure and public services, creates different conditions for living and working. Despite these common conditions and characteristics, however, no two rural areas are the same. Instead, the concept of rural area encompasses a wide variety of social, economic and environmental conditions.

More knowledge is needed about the means enabling people to live, make their livelihoods and produce goods in a sustainable way throughout the country. Research-based knowledge building on these questions can strengthen the ability of regions and rural areas to achieve sustainable development and show them how to accomplish this.

The purpose of this call for proposals is to fund research that contributes knowledge and solutions for developing Swedish rural areas and regions. The call is part of the national research programme for sustainable spatial planning and the national research programme for food. It is aimed at researchers who are affiliated with a Swedish higher education institution, research institute, or government agency that has a research assignment.

Background

A starting point for the call is that existing differences between city and country in population development, demographics, education and income, as well as access to job opportunities, infrastructure and public services, create different conditions for living and working. Rural areas in Sweden share two traits that distinguish them from cities and urban areas. First, these areas possess a unique physical environment with regard to natural and cultural landscapes, natural resources and the built environment. Second, remoteness (long distances) and, in many cases, lack of good accessibility of infrastructure and similar affect most people living in rural areas. Despite these common circumstances and conditions, no two rural areas are the same. For example, in rural areas there is a distinct difference between areas that are close to and farther away from the municipalities' central cities. The concept of rural area therefore encompasses a wide variety of social, economic and environmental conditions.

Creating opportunities for people to live and make a living in rural areas and have a good quality of life requires access to schools, healthcare, social services, businesses and jobs as well as a range of cultural and leisure activities. Well-functioning infrastructure, access to housing and a variety of food products are also needed. Functioning transport and mobility solutions for both people and goods are essential requirements for successfully developing rural areas. A vibrant countryside lays the groundwork for benefits like increased national food security and can help take the pressure off the urban housing market. A vibrant countryside is also needed to meet the need for labour in land-based industries and to enable entrepreneurship and innovation in order to create new jobs using the values of the local environment. Access to services is crucial for being able to live and work in rural areas, although the range of services can differ from those found in an urban setting.

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Food supply and land-based industries also bring an opportunity for supporting rural development. The possibility to continue farming the land is vital to the survival of rural areas. In order for the Swedish food sector to be productive, profitable, sustainable and attractive to operate in, the right conditions need to be in place and new knowledge applied.

Rural areas contribute heavily to Sweden's energy supply, raw material needs, food supply and tourism. Rural areas and regions can also contribute significantly to producing innovative new solutions to the challenges of the future which will be required for sustainable development. Research-based knowledge building can strengthen the ability of regions and rural areas to achieve sustainable development across the country and show them how.

Cities and urban areas are linked with the surrounding countryside and with each other in regional networks. Demographic shifts are taking place, both to cities and within different rural areas, along with a growing urban population. Changed demographics pose social and economic challenges. A well-functioning interplay is thus needed among cities, urban agglomerations and rural areas in order to provide public services. The pandemic we are currently facing can also have an impact on regional development and rural areas in ways that can be seen as trends but cannot yet be fully foreseen. The pandemic has brought about changes in travel habits and consumption patterns and has, to some extent, increased the importance of housing and the need for green spaces close by. It is also possible to discern changes in the perception of urban areas and rural areas.

On 22 March of this year, the government decided on a national strategy for sustainable regional development throughout the country for 2021-2030. The strategy sets the long-term direction of regional development policy and intends to support the transition to sustainable development in all parts of Sweden. It aims to reduce gaps and strengthen the development capacity of cities, urban agglomerations, and sparsely populated and rural areas. Environmental problems and climate change, demographic shifts and widening gaps are major challenges that run through the entire national strategy. These societal challenges, together with globalisation, digitalisation and other technological advances, will affect the development of communities.

To meet these challenges and find solutions, the strategy identifies four strategic areas.

- Equal opportunities for housing, jobs and welfare throughout the country
- Skills provision and professional development throughout the country
- Innovation and renewal as well as entrepreneurship and business development across the country
- Nationwide accessibility through digital communication and the transport system

The Swedish Rural Development Programme has been part of the EU's strategy for employment and sustainable growth for 2020. The programme, which has been extended until 2022, includes aid and funding for the environment, sustainability and innovation (Swedish Board of Agriculture, 2019. The EU programme has three overarching objectives: improve the competitiveness of agriculture, achieve sustainable management of natural resources and climate measures, and achieve a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities.

All in all, more knowledge is needed about the means enabling people to live, make their livelihoods, and produce goods in a sustainable way throughout the country. Research-based

knowledge building on these questions can strengthen the ability of regions and rural areas to achieve sustainable development and show them how to accomplish this goal. Knowledge building can enhance opportunities for promoting business development, employment and the social aspects of rural and regional development. It can also provide a better understanding of the links and interactions between urban and rural areas, and about how sparsely populated environments contribute to sustainable development and innovation in all parts of the country.

Purpose and focus

This is a broad call to fund research that builds knowledge and provides new solutions for developing Swedish rural areas and regions. The call is part of the national research programme for sustainable spatial planning and the national research programme for food.

Research is needed that can enhance opportunities for promoting business development, employment and the social aspects of rural and regional development. Research is also needed that can provide a better understanding of the links and interactions between urban and rural areas, and about how sparsely populated environments strengthen innovation and sustainable development in all parts of the country.

Research questions in the applications can address one or more of the themes and perspectives in one of the national research programmes' strategic agendas (see Figures 1 and 2). The application should have a clear focus on how the project help to develop the Swedish countryside and regions. The projects are expected to include and involve stakeholders from, for example, the public sector, business sector and civil society in a way that is relevant and appropriate to the topic at hand. International comparisons can be made and global perspectives studied as long as they are relevant for policy-making in Sweden.

Formas welcomes researchers from disciplines within science, technology, the social sciences and the humanities. This call welcomes interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects that cover multiple fields of expertise and shed light on different perspectives, thus providing a wider overview of the research topic.

The national research programmes for food and sustainable spatial planning have clear touchpoints with each other on topics like food security issues as part of spatial planning, sustainable transport and logistics solutions, consumption, policy instruments, the circular economy, digitalisation and other topics, which can be reflected in the research funded under this call.

The call addresses several themes and perspectives in the research agendas for the food and sustainable spatial planning programmes. The themes and perspectives of the two agendas are illustrated in the figures below.

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Figure 1: The six thematic areas included in the national research programme for sustainable spatial planning. The middle of the figure contains the programme's perspectives, which run through all the thematic areas. For a more detailed description of these themes and perspectives, see the agenda.

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Figure 2: The four thematic areas included in the national research programme for food. The middle of the figure contains the programme's perspectives, which run through all the thematic areas. For a more detailed description of these themes and perspectives, see the agenda.

Who can apply under this call

The call is aimed at researchers who are affiliated with a Swedish higher education institution, research institute, or government agency that has a research assignment. Principal applicants and participating researchers must have obtained their PhD degree. Formas strives for a wide range of disciplines and approaches to achieve a diversity of research perspectives and different types of knowledge. We therefore welcome applicants and projects from different disciplines, and projects that include interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary partnerships.

The projects are expected to include and involve stakeholders from, for example, the public sector, business sector, industry organisations or civil society in a way that is relevant and appropriate to the project's research question.

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

Before you apply

Applicant and organisation requirements

The principal applicant and other participating researchers must hold a PhD degree. Others working in the project, such as PhD students or communicators, do not need to have a PhD degree. The principal applicant and participating researchers must have completed their PhD before the call closes.

The principal applicant must be (or, through the project, must become) associated with an administrating organisation that has been generally approved by Formas. Generally approved administrating organisations are usually Swedish universities, colleges, research institutes or government agencies with research assignments. Read more about administrating organisations.

The project can include participating researchers or other project participants who are employed by an organisation outside of Sweden. Any choice to include experts outside of Sweden should be explained in the project application. The administrating organisation is responsible for transferring funds to foreign organisations in accordance with the administrating organisation's rules and guidelines.

In this call, Formas does not grant funding to organisations engaged in economic activity. However, all types of organisations are welcome to contribute co-funding to the project. Co-funding can consist of time, money or other resources and should be reported in the budget specification.

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You can seek funding in this call even if you have an ongoing project that is being funded by Formas. However, total funding may not exceed 100% of your salary.

An individual is not allowed to be the principal applicant for more than one application in this call. However, there are no restrictions on how many applications an individual can be a co-applicant for. However, the total grant awarded must not exceed 100% of the salary for an individual.

Costs that qualify for funding

When you apply for project funding, you can apply for a grant to cover both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include costs for salaries, equipment and travel. 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.

- Grants can be used to cover salaries for researchers, PhD students and other staff.
- In addition to salary funding, grants can include funding to cover operating costs (consumables, consulting services, equipment, travel, conferences, publication in journals and open-access databases), depreciation costs for equipment, and premises costs. The maximum amount allowed for equipment and depreciation costs is a total of 500,000 kronor.
- If funds are to be transferred from the administrating organisation to another organisation involved in the project, the overhead cost of the receiving organisation can be applied to the funds transferred. Explain and report the different overhead costs in the budget specification. The total overhead for the project should be entered in the budget table.
- International collaboration. Grants from Formas can be used to fund research that is partly conducted outside Sweden, although the research must be initiated and managed from Sweden. The administrating organisation must be located in Sweden and approved by Formas, and is responsible for hiring any foreign staff or paying for activities or services outside Sweden in accordance with the administrating organisation's guidelines.
- In this call, funding is not awarded directly to private companies or other organisations engaged in economic activity. The only way to involve resources for organisations engaged in economic activity is through a procurement procedure. In such a case, the procurement must be done in accordance with the administrating organisation's guidelines and applicable legislation.

Grant amount and project duration

The project must run for a minimum of three years and a maximum of four years. You can apply for a maximum grant amount of SEK 6 million for a three-year project and SEK 8 million for a four-year project. Applications with a requested amount or project duration that does not fall within the above range will be rejected by Formas at an early stage and will not proceed to review.

The project start date is predefined in Prisma and cannot be changed. Funds for the first 12 months of the project will be paid out in 2021 (no funds are paid out in the final project year). Applicants should enter their budget in the application based on actual costs. Research project

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funding may be appropriated for one year after the end of the project. For administrative reasons, Formas can apply a payout plan that differs from the application's allocation of the budget over time. The funds obtained must be used within 12 months of the end of the project.

Language

You should write your application in English, since the review panel that will assess your application is international. If you do write your application in Swedish, a professional translator will translate into English **only** the section describing the research programme. You will **not** be able to change the translation before the application proceeds to assessment. However, the popular science description must be written in Swedish, while the abstract should be in both Swedish and English. Your budget specification and CV will not be translated. So, please write these in English, even if you write the other sections in Swedish and submit your application in the Swedish version of our application system.

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).

The popular science description and project abstracts in Swedish and English will, if the project is granted funding, be published in open-access project databases without a confidentiality review. Therefore, the contents of these fields should not contain sensitive information.

Integrate climate and environmental considerations in your project

Formas is eager to fund projects that maximise the positive and minimise the negative impacts on the environment and climate. We therefore encourage grant applicants to design their projects so that collaboration takes place primarily through online meetings and that any necessary travel takes place in a climate-smart way. We also suggest that you include measures that minimise energy use and other resource consumption, emissions and waste in project planning. However, this will not be part of the assessment of your application at this time.

Please read about Formas' own sustainability work.

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How to apply

You apply in Prisma

You apply for a grant in our application system, Prisma. In Prisma, you must create a personal account where you will add the information you need for your application.

Information your application must include

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

Basic information

- Number of years for which the application applies.
- Project title in **Swedish** (max. 200 characters including spaces).
- Project title in **English** (max. 200 characters including spaces).
- Popular science description in **Swedish** (max. 4,500 characters including spaces). If the project is awarded a grant, the popular science description will be published in open-access project databases without a confidentiality review. The contents of this field should therefore not contain sensitive information.
- Abstract in **Swedish** (max. 1,500 characters including spaces).
- Abstract in **English** (max. 1,500 characters including spaces).

  Project abstracts for awarded projects will be published in open-access project databases without a confidentiality review. Therefore, the contents of these fields should not contain sensitive information.

Research programme

Read the background and the call's purpose and focus carefully before you write the project description. Also take note of the assessment criteria under "How does the assessment process work?". Address all the criteria in your application. You must describe the following components in your application:

- **Goals and purpose** of the project, and a background description containing an overview of the research area, and the project's relevance to the purpose and focus of the call (max. 7,000 characters including spaces)
- **Project description**, that explains how the research question and the composition of the project team are aligned with the purpose and focus of the call; and the project's in developing the research field, current research and other ongoing research in similar fields. You should also state and explain the methodology, implementation, plan for scientific publication, and plan for disseminating the results including the initial research review. The method must be systematic and science-based. Explain the project plan including the

resources and expertise required to carry out the work. Include a schedule. (max. 15,000 characters including spaces).

- **Description of the project's societal relevance.** This involves how the project addresses important societal or sectoral issues within the call's focus, how it can promote sustainable development, how the project relates to the theme or themes of the national research programme for sustainable spatial planning or the national research programme for food and how it takes into account the needs of different stakeholders and/or users**.** (maximum 8,000 characters including spaces)

- **A description of how communication and dialogue** are planned with relevant stakeholders and/or users during the project. (max. 8,000 characters including spaces)

- **References.** (max. 5,000 characters including spaces).

Budget

You report the project budget in Prisma. Note that you should also write the budget and budget specification in English; any Swedish budget specification will **not** be translated but will instead be assessed as is by the international review panel. In Prisma, write out the total amount you are applying for in kronor using digits. For example, 1 million kronor should be written as: 1 000 000 kronor.

The budget should include the following:

- **Salaries, including social security contributions** for each project participant (i.e., researchers, PhD students and other staff with whom you will have an employment relationship).
The total amount of the salary for a single researcher, PhD student or other staff must not exceed 100 percent of full-time employment. This also means that someone who is already receiving full salary funding from any other funder cannot receive additional funding for salary.

  Researchers who are full-time pensioners cannot receive funding for their own salary.

- **Percent of salary** refers to the percentage of the applicant's full-time salary that corresponds to their salary in the project.

- **Activity level in the project** refers to the percentage of a full-time position that the participants contribute. It indicates whether the applicant is contributing in-kind or other funding to complete the project.

- **Operating expenses** include, for example, consumables, travel, conferences and publication in journals and databases that apply open access. They can also include research services, technical expertise, consultancy services and equivalent services purchased or licensed from external players on market terms and used exclusively for the project. These purchased services must be reported excluding value-added tax (VAT). Specify operating costs in accordance with practices at the administrating organisation.

- **Equipment and depreciation costs**. Specify equipment and depreciation costs if relevant to the application. The total maximum amount you can be granted for equipment and equipment depreciation costs is 500,000 kronor.

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- **Premises.** You can apply for funding for the cost of premises if this is not already included as overhead in the project's budget. Specify premises costs in accordance with the applicable practices at the administrating organisation.
- **Total amount sought/Subtotal** refers to costs already entered in the previous budget tables, which will be automatically transferred to these items.
- **Indirect costs** refer to overhead costs. When you specify overhead costs in the application, you should do so in accordance with the administrating organisation's practices. If funds are to be transferred from the administrating organisation to another organisation involved in the project, the overhead cost of the receiving organisation can be applied to the funds transferred. Explain and report the different overhead costs in the budget specification. The total overhead for the project should be entered in the budget table. Formas does not grant funding for overhead costs that you write off for equipment or premises.
- **Other costs** refer to funds that have not been sought but are relevant for completing the project. One example is co-funding from partners. Also specify whether the project will receive funds from other sources.
- **Total cost** refers to a budget summary.

- **Budget specification** explains the budget in words. State how the grant amount you are applying for will be distributed each year, as well as the total amount per organisation if several organisations are applying. Provide a brief justification for all salaries and other expenses. A description of the total project budget, including funding from other sources, should also be included. All other costs must be clearly justified, such as costs for participating in conferences, publication fees for open-access publications and data, and similar. The budget specification is part of the application assessment. If you are writing in Swedish, please note that **a budget specification in Swedish will not be translated** and that it will be part of the international review panel's assessment documentation.

Ethical considerations

You should specify whether or not there are specific ethical concerns in your project. If so, state what these ethical concerns are and how you plan to manage them. Examples include research that uses personal data or research involving experiments on humans or animals. If you do not have ethical concerns, you still need to confirm this in your application.

If you are conducting research on people, human tissue or are processing sensitive personal data, you must obtain ethical approval from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. If you are conducting an animal experiment, you also need to obtain ethical approval. You can apply for approval through the Swedish Board of Agriculture's online service.

You should state in your application whether or not you have obtained ethical approval. If you have not obtained such approval and you are awarded a grant, you must obtain it before the described studies begin.

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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 at least one and maximum of three subject areas and add a subheading.
- **SCB code (research subject):** Select at least one and a maximum of three research subjects and two sub-levels that together form the entire code.
- **Keywords:** Enter at least one and a maximum of three keywords describing the project.
- **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 SDG, specify them 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. [Read more information about the meaning of the goals.](link)

Administrating organisation – the organisation receiving the grant

In this call, only applicants who have an approved administrating organisation for all types of calls can submit an application. Prisma contains a default list of approved administrating organisations.

- • Select your administrating organisation from the dropdown list.
- • Select your domicile from the dropdown list.

An administrating organisation is the organisation that receives the grant from Formas.

Project participants

- The principal applicant invites participating researchers.
- A participating researcher is a researcher who **holds a PhD** and who is considered to be a co-applicant for the project. Participating researchers must have obtained their PhD degree by the time the call closes. This must be stated in their CV (see the "CVs" section below). Note that licentiate degrees or other research expertise that is equivalent to a doctoral degree does not count as a PhD degree. PhD students cannot be participating researchers.
- All participating researchers must have created their own user account in Prisma.
- The principal applicant invites those who will participate in the application by searching for their first and last names and e-mail address in Prisma.
- Note that invited participating researchers must accept the invitation to become a participating researcher and transfer their CVs and publications to the application so that

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the principal applicant can **register** the application when it is ready. See the next section, "CVs".

CVs

- The principal applicant retrieves the information from their personal account in Prisma.
- The participating researchers themselves add their CV details from their profile to the application in Prisma. Participating researchers must have a PhD, which should be stated in the CV.
- 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 principal 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 research programme.

The following CV information should be included in 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:
- **Lectureships**
- **Supervised students**: PhD students, postdocs, graduate thesis students; add either as an individual person or as a group. When adding a group, enter the total number for each category. When adding an individual person, name the most relevant ones (max 10).
- **Grants received in competition**: Specify the most relevant ones (max. 10).
- **Awards and distinctions**: Specify the most relevant ones (max. 10).
- **Other qualifications, including summary of publications:** Here, the principal applicant and participating researchers should provide a brief summary of their publications during the past five years as well as the total number of publications if the applicant's active research period exceeds five years (max. 800 characters including spaces).

  This summary should include the following:
  - The number of publications of various types, such as articles in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, books and other monographs, conference papers and popular science contributions.
  - Any citation metrics should be given, excluding self-citations, and the database they are retrieved from.
  - The summary should **not** contain information about the H-index, the journal impact factor, or any other type of metric used to rank publishers or journals.

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- Under "Other qualifications," you can list other qualifications that are relevant to the application, such as any popular science publications or proven experience of collaboration and research communication (max. 10).

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

List of publications

The principal 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. You must present the publication summary in Prisma under "Other qualifications".

Appendix

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 completing your application

You can make changes to your registered application, de-register it and register it again up until the call closes at 14:00 CET on Tuesday, 4 May. After that, the status of your application will change from "registered" to "completed". No changes can be made to a completed application. You are also not able to make any additions through, for example, an email or by phone. Your application will be assessed as is.

Your completed 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.

Verification of the application

First, Formas verifies that the application meets the procedural requirements set out in the call. If the application does not meet the procedural requirements, it is rejected.

The following requirements will be verified in this call:

- The administrating organisation has signed the application. This must be done within seven calendar days after the call closes.

- The application's focus falls within Formas' areas of responsibility.

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- The focus of the application falls within the call's areas.

- The application is complete and contains all mandatory information.

- The requirements for project managers, project participants and organisations under "Applicant and organisation requirements" are met.

- The principal applicant responsible for other projects or activities funded by Formas has submitted the reports requested by the stated deadline.

Read more about why some applications are rejected early.

How does the assessment process work?

All applications are assessed by an external review panel based on the contents of your application. 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 as well as individuals outside academia with the expertise necessary to evaluate the relevance of the research. The review panel is appointed by Formas.

Discrimination is prohibited in the assessment of applications. The scientific quality and relevance of the proposed research take precedence over aspects of gender equality in the awarding of funding. But in cases where applications have the same assessment scores, the underrepresented sex is given preference.

Read more about Formas' assessment process.

The applications are assessed based on the following criteria.

Criteria for scientific quality:

- **Scientific research question**

- Scientific relevance of the purpose

- The purpose is in line with the call's purpose and focus

- Originality and novelty of purpose, theory and hypotheses

- Possibility of scientifically significant results

- **Methods and implementation**

- Feasibility, suitability and novelty value of the scientific method

- The work plan is well-defined and realistic

- Coordination of the project and research team

- Appropriateness of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, if these are chosen

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- The budget is reasonable in relation to the project's implementation

- The publication and communication plan is well-defined and realistic

- **Scientific excellence**

- Scientific quality of publications

- Qualifications for implementing the project are appropriate

- Supervisory experience

- Project management experience

- National and international activities, including projects, networks, assignments, honorary assignments, and participation in or arranging workshops or conferences

- Interest, experience and ability to communicate the research and research results with stakeholders and users

- Strength and competitiveness of the research team

Criteria for societal relevance:

- **Potential real-world impact of the research question**
- The research question addresses important issues in society or a sector covered by the call
- The purpose is in line with the call's purpose and focus
- The project has the potential to help achieve sustainable development in the short or long term, and nationally, internationally or both.
- In the project's design, applicants consider the needs of stakeholders and/or users.

- **Communication with stakeholders or users**
- A description of relevant stakeholders or users
- A concrete and realistic plan for (a) the project's involvement of relevant stakeholders or users and (b) the project's plan for communicating the research and its results with the stakeholders or users.

All the criteria must be addressed in the application, and we advise applicants to clearly relate their application to these criteria. We also strongly advise applicants to clearly and accurately organise and formulate their applications, as the review is based solely on the information contained in the application.

Grant award decisions

The Formas Research Council expects to decide which projects will be awarded funding on 27 October 2021. 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.

Formas – Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning

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Reporting for granted projects

All awarded projects must submit a report to Formas containing financial and project results within three months of the end of the availability period. For projects longer than 18 months, an annual financial statement must also be submitted to Formas each year. Also, a project status report must be submitted after 18 months. The reports are submitted in Prisma.

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.

Open access to publications and research data

Results of research funded by Formas must be published using open access.

Open access to research results and data

If you receive funding from us, you must have a data management plan for the data produced in the project.   This plan does not need to be submitted to Formas, but should be presented on request. We recommend that you follow the proposal developed by Science Europe on what a data management plan should contain. For more information about the proposal, see the Practical Guide to the International Alignment of Research Data Management.

SweCRIS

Formas shares information about awarded grants to SweCRIS, a national database of grant-funded research that was instituted by request of the government.

Support and shortcuts

- Good to know before you apply

- Ethics policy

- Formas' assessment process

- Sustainability at Formas

- The sustainable development goals

- Conflict of interest policy

- Prisma

- Prisma's user support

- How it works

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