

Research centres for sustainability and competitiveness in the food system

Opening date: 2020-04-07

Last day of application: 2020-09-03

Date of decision: 2020-11-18

Which of Formas' subject areas do the call relate to?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment, water and ecology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food and animals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry, water use and agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings and infrastructure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spatial planning, urban and rural areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research policy and funding | |

Which of the sustainable development goals do the call relate to?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. No poverty | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Zero hunger |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Good health and well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Quality education for all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Gender equality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. Clean water and sanitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Affordable and clean energy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8. Decent work and economic growth |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Reduced inequalities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Sustainable cities and communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12. Responsible consumption and production |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13. Climate action | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 14. Life below water |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15. Life on land | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Partnerships for the goals | |

		
<p>WHAT CAN YOU APPLY FOR?</p> <p>Interdisciplinary centres for needs-driven research that strengthens the sustainability and competitiveness of the food system.</p>	<p>WHO CAN APPLY?</p> <p>Groups of stakeholders in which the principal applying organisation is a university, college or research institute. Only multi-party applications, with business-sector participation, can receive funding.</p>	<p>HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?</p> <p>A research centre can apply for a maximum of SEK 12 million per year for the initial four years.</p>



Revision history

Any changes to the call text are listed below.

Date	Change
April 28, 2020	New text about when your application and its appendices are considered as general public documents. (page 12, Who can read the application?)
June 11, 2020	New text concerning the letter of intent required from the participating partners (page 10, Requirements for applying organizations and page 19, Mandatory appendices)

Contents

Description of the call.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Background.....	5
Purpose and focus	6
Who can apply under this call.....	8
Before you apply	9
Requirements for applying organisations	9
Grant size and duration	10
Costs that qualify for funding	11
State aid regulations for companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity	12
Language.....	12
Who can read the application?	12
How to apply	13
You apply in Prisma	13
Information your application must include.....	13
Basic information	13
Description of the research centre	14
Budget and other information	16
Ethical considerations.....	18
Classifications.....	18
Appendices.....	19
After submitting your application.....	20
How does the assessment process work?	20
The applications are assessed based on the following criteria	21
Grant award decisions	22
Reporting and evaluation of the awarded centres.....	22
Open access to publications and research data.....	22
SweCRIS	23
Support and shortcuts.....	23
Webinar about the call.....	23
Contact information	23

Description of the call

Introduction

To achieve the transition to sustainable, competitive food systems and to address the challenges facing society and the food sector, long-term research and innovation efforts, pooled skills and collaboration among stakeholders with different perspectives are needed. Interdisciplinary research is needed on issues that address the interactions and dependencies within the food system and that include the three dimensions of sustainability: environmental, social and economic. Not least, integrated measures are needed that contribute to knowledge-building and skills provision for stakeholders in the food system.

To meet these needs, Formas is announcing grants to fund interdisciplinary research centres that promote sustainable and competitive food systems. The research centres must be planned, established and run jointly by academia, businesses and other parts of society. This call for proposals is thus aimed at groups of stakeholders in which the principal applying organisation is a university, college or research institute. Only multi-party applications, with business-sector participation, can be granted funding.

The research planned must address challenges in one or more of the thematic areas described in the research agenda [Towards a sustainable and competitive food system](#). Also, the research centres must work to promote knowledge-building and the provision of skills for food system stakeholders in the short and the long term. This will be accomplished by actively promoting knowledge dissemination and research impact, and by educating PhD students and, when relevant, creating interdisciplinary graduate schools.

This call is an initiative within the framework of the National Research Programme for Food and a part of the implementation of the strategic research agenda [Towards a sustainable and competitive food system](#).

Background

We are facing many major environmental, social and economic challenges throughout society. The food system¹ is central to many of these challenges. Food security, how we produce and consume food, and how we manage our waste are integral parts of the problem – but are also part of the solution. There is a major and urgent need to develop and transform the food system into a more sustainable system.

Sweden is well positioned to create a sustainable food system nationally and contribute to the development internationally. Compared with many other countries, Swedish production is of a high standard in terms of both environmental and climate considerations, animal health and welfare, and food safety. But major challenges still exist at the national level. We have a road ahead

¹ The food system encompasses the people, processes, infrastructure, institutions and services involved in the production, processing, marketing, consumption and disposal of food (FAO 2017).

of us before achieving national environmental objectives and we need to strengthen our efforts towards the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Agenda 2030. Swedish food producers and food companies represent a core part of these efforts; however, many are struggling with weak profitability and low economic growth, which risks slowing down the transition. Research and innovation are needed to discover new solutions, methods and models and to create new products, services and processes that secure sustainable food systems while helping to boost profitability.

Nationally, we need to work together to strengthen needs-driven research and create environments that promote innovation in the food system. We need to work on spreading knowledge to relevant stakeholders and target groups and on implementing knowledge-building and skills development in the system more efficiently. Not least, we need to ensure a highly educated workforce for the long term.

The global challenges are not only numerous but also, extremely complex. Complex challenges cannot be tackled by individual stakeholders alone or isolated from other challenges. Research must to a larger extent be designed and formed as an integral part of the food system and address different perspectives at the same time. Also, tackling the challenges requires greater collaboration and co-creation between different disciplines and stakeholders.

This call is an initiative under the [National Research Programme](#) for Food and part of the implementation of the strategic research agenda [Towards a sustainable and competitive food system](#), developed in collaboration with higher-education institutions, the business sector, the public sector and other stakeholders. The agenda identifies four clusters of challenges – themes – and several drivers – perspectives – that aim to provide a direction for knowledge-building and innovation for sustainability and competitiveness. The National Research Programme on Food was established within the framework of Sweden’s 2017 food strategy [A National food strategy for Sweden – more jobs and sustainable growth throughout the country \(2016/17:104\)](#).

Purpose and focus

This call aims to promote research of highest scientific quality that meets the needs of new knowledge in the business sector, to enable a transitioning to a sustainable and competitive food system. It aims to promote collaborations where research questions are formulated and addressed jointly by academia/research institutes and businesses as well as other stakeholders. It also aims to strengthen the knowledge and skills development of food system stakeholders in the short and the long term. The comprehensive budget for the call and the size of each centre aim to provide stability and scope for collaboration and to build robust long-term, relevant research environments in a supporting context through co-creation.

The call welcomes applications for interdisciplinary research centres with a clearly needs-driven design. The research must address challenges in one or more of the themes outlined in the agenda [Towards a sustainable and competitive food system](#) (see Figure 1). This involves the development of **sustainable production systems** and **tasty food for healthy people and planet**, discovering and developing the drivers of **meals and the consumer**, and ensuring and competing with **innovative and safe food**.

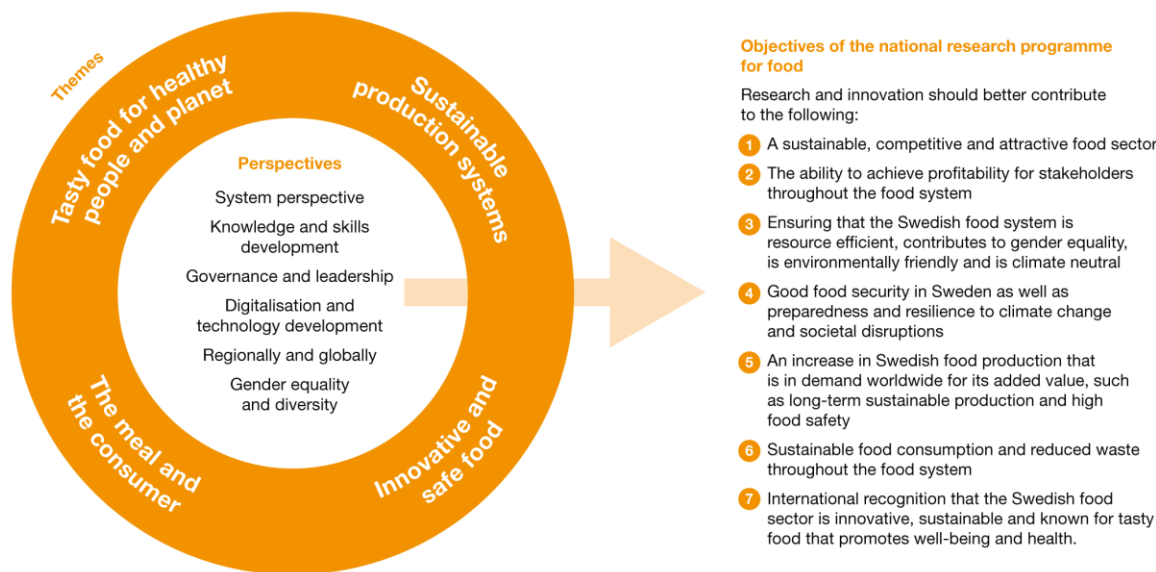


Figure 1. Themes and perspectives in the research agenda Towards a sustainable and competitive food system and objectives of the national research programme for food

The centres must also address knowledge and skills development, which is one of the perspectives in the agenda. The centres are welcome to develop and examine several of the agenda's perspectives. For example, system perspective should be part of the research activities carried out at the centre. In this context, system perspective can involve questions that address the entire food system or span several of its areas. It can also involve putting a defined project in a larger context, for example with an analysis of impacts and consequences on other parts of the system or on health, the environment or the economy.

The research centres must also contribute to the program targets of the National Research Programme for Food and thus help to achieve the long-term vision and objectives of the food strategy (see Fig. 1). The context is primarily national, with the aim of promoting Swedish strengths with global potential. When relevant, the global nature of food security and trade should be taken into account.

End user and consumer perspectives, gender equality and other social and cultural factors should be considered in the research centre's design and included in the research conducted.

The three dimensions of sustainability must be taken into account during the design of the research centre, in the research planned and in the impact potential. The relevance of the research in achieving the UN's sustainable development goals in Agenda 2030 should also be addressed.

The research centres should be planned, established and run jointly by academia, businesses and other parts of society. The research should be of the highest quality and international state of the art.

Funded centres must work in a way that is structured and adapted to the target groups in order to help build knowledge and provide skills in the short and the long term. The application should

thoroughly explain how the centre intends to operate and organise itself in order to close the gap between research and practical application and strive to build knowledge and skills.

The long-term provision of knowledge must be strengthened by educating PhD students and, when relevant, creating interdisciplinary graduate schools. PhD positions funded within the scope of this call should be developed jointly by the parties involved and create added value for collaboration in the research centre initiative. PhD students must have shared supervision and parts of the PhD project must be conducted within the business community or at another non-academic organisation. Proposed graduate schools must be interdisciplinary and bring clear added value as part of the research centre and for the long-term provision of knowledge.

The broader societal benefits, dissemination of research results and communication to a wider circle of end users must be developed within the framework of the research centre.

A research centre can be a physical or a virtual environment.

Our goal is to provide two to three major centres with a maximum funding budget of SEK 12 million on average per year over four years. The call requires co-funding of a total of 15 percent from a business and/or other non-academic party. One aim of the funding initiative is to create powerful environments that are relevant to the sustainability of the food system and the competitiveness of the business sector and that show long-term potential to continue beyond the end of the grant period. We therefore expect an increase of co-funding in order to make up a significant part of the centre's total funding in time for the application for a possible additional four years of funding.

A portfolio approach will be applied in the assessment of the applications, and Formas will seek to fund research centres that are thematically complementary rather than overlapping, also taking into account ongoing research centre initiatives funded by other research and innovation funders.

Who can apply under this call

The research centres must be created in partnership by academia, the business sector and other parts of society. This call for proposals is thus aimed at groups of stakeholders in which the principal applying organisation (the administrating organisation) is a university, college or research institute. Only multi-party applications, with partners from the business sector, can be granted funding. We also encourage other stakeholders to participate in the application, such as special interest groups, associations, municipalities and county councils, government agencies and other public organisations.

We seek interdisciplinary research centres that conduct needs-driven research that is important for both the sustainability and competitiveness of the food system. Researchers and research groups from all disciplines are welcome to apply or participate.

All parties should be actively involved from the outset in the centre's design and participate in the centre's activities and the research envisaged.

New organisational structures and collaborations are encouraged. Cross-sectoral research centres that show potential to contribute to sustainable development and transformation using skills, methods and technologies from other sectors are also welcome to apply.

The research centres are expected to pool relevant skills nationwide and create the critical mass needed for a successful research centre. International stakeholders can participate if expected that they would make a substantial contribution to the development of the sustainability and competitiveness of the Swedish food system and Swedish food sector. If this is the case, this should be described and justified in the application.

Before you apply

Note that this application procedure and the application form differs from Formas' regular calls for research projects. In this call, the main applicant is an organisation and you need organisational permissions to initiate and submit an application. See more under the heading "How to apply".

Requirements for applying organisations

The call is targeted to groups of stakeholders in which the principal applying organisation must be a university, college or research institute that meets [Formas' requirements for administrating organisations](#). The principal applying organisation becomes the administrating organisation if your application is awarded a grant. Only multi-party applications, with business-sector participation, can receive funding. Special interest groups, associations, municipalities and county councils, government agencies and other public organisations are also welcome to participate in the application.

A centre is thus composed of at least two stakeholders, but there are otherwise no requirements on the number of parties. However, the research centres are expected to pool skills in the field nationwide to create the critical mass needed for the success of the research centre.

An organisation can be the principal applicant for a maximum of two applications. An organisation can be a party in several applications.

The research centre must have a carefully planned organisation and management of the involved parties. The centre must have a leader or coordinator with a minimum activity level of 75 percent.

To ensure scientific quality, the centre must engage scientific experts with relevant documented qualifications. A scientific advisory group, preferably of an international nature, should be associated with the centre but this is not a requirement.

The centres must also ensure access to relevant expertise in order to fulfil the purpose of the call to actively promote knowledge and skills development and to communicate about the research centre and its activities.

An agreement between project partners must be set up during the first year the research centre is established.

A written statement specifying the support and commitment of the host organisation must be attached to the application (letter from the president, dean or equivalent). Similarly, a letter of intent from participating parties must be attached to the application. The letter of intent must be signed by the Head of Department, director-general, CEO or equivalent. See also “Mandatory appendices”.

The call requires co-funding from the business sector or non-academic parties who together will contribute at least 15 percent of the total finances, either in cash or in-kind (see also “Budget and other information”). We expect that co-funding will increase over time.

Companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity that wish to apply for funding from Formas are covered by [state aid regulations – for companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity](#); see also “Costs that qualify for funding”. Sole proprietorships may not be granted funding in the call or participate as a party to projects that are applying for a grant from Formas. Companies that do not have a Swedish corporate identity number cannot be granted funding as a research centre party in this call.

Formas’ grants can be used to finance certain parts of activities that are conducted outside Sweden, but the research should be initiated and led from Sweden. The administrating organisation must be located in Sweden and approved by Formas, and is responsible for employing foreign staff or, if necessary, reimbursing costs for activities or services outside Sweden in accordance with the administrating organisation’s guidelines.

Funded research centres are expected to participate in seminars and dialogue with other centres and (potential) graduate schools, as well as conferences and networks within the framework of the National Research Programme on Food, in order to create synergies and platforms for learning and knowledge exchange.

Grant size and duration

Funds are sought for a four-year period (48 months), with the possibility of an extension of up to four years. The application must thus specify a programme plan for four years but have a longer (eight-year) perspective. To be able to receive continued funding, a supplementary application will be requested at the end of the first four-year period. A possible extension is dependent on the reporting and evaluation (see also “Reporting and evaluation of the awarded centres”), and budget must be available within the National Research Programme on Food.

The project start is 1 December 2020 in Prisma. This is the default date in the application and cannot be changed. However, the budget in your application must state how you plan to use the funds, and applicants should record the budget based on how the actual costs are expected to be incurred for each financial year. For administrative reasons, Formas can use a payout plan that differs from the application’s allocation of the budget over time.

A research centre can apply for up to SEK 12 million per year on average, of which funding for graduate schools can total a maximum of SEK 2 million per year. The call requires co-funding

from non-academic partners, who together should contribute the equivalent of at least 15 percent of the total finances.

It is possible to apply for more than SEK 12 million one year as long as the amount sought in another year is lower. It is not possible to apply for fewer than four years or apply for more than SEK 48 million in total.

Applications with a requested amount or project duration that is not within the above range or does not reach the minimum level of co-funding will be rejected by Formas at an early stage and will not proceed to review.

Costs that qualify for funding

The parties can apply for a grant to cover both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include costs for salaries, equipment and travel directly attributable to the centre's activities. Indirect costs are costs that are shared with other business activities in your organisation, such as for administration, IT and renting of premises. Indirect costs are also referred to as overhead costs.

Grants can be sought to cover costs associated with establishing and completing the centre, such as for example coordination, research activities, and knowledge and skills development activities. This can involve salary funding for coordinators, researchers and PhD students, technical staff or subcontractors (maximum corresponding activity level in the project), operating costs (for example, consumables, premises costs, travel, conferences, publication in open-access journals and databases) and depreciation costs for equipment (maximum of 5 percent of the sought budget).

The total amount of salary received for an individual researcher, PhD student or other participant must correspond to the level of activity in the research centre initiative and must not exceed 100 percent of a full-time position. This means that additional salary funding cannot be granted to researchers, PhD students or other staff who already receive grants or contributions with full salary funding. Please also note that Formas does not grant funds for annual salary increases, other than in accordance with any agreed pay scale for PhD students. Researchers who are full-time pensioners cannot receive funding for their own salary.

Salaries for PhD students can be granted for up to four years. PhD positions funded within the framework of the research centre should be designed jointly by the parties involved and should include elements performed by a business or other non-academic party. We also require co-supervision at the business or other non-academic organisation.

Funds up to SEK 2 million per year can be sought for the administrative tasks of setting up and running interdisciplinary graduate schools associated with the research centre. There must be a clear purpose and added value of the graduate school and its establishment within the framework of the research centre.

State aid regulations for companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity

Private companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity that want to apply for grants from Formas must follow specific regulations on state aid. The regulations are based on the principle of EU law, which states that aid to private enterprises normally distorts competition but that certain exemptions are allowed.

The aid intensity that Formas can offer depends on the size of the organisation and the type of activities in the project. The organisation's size is assessed using the EU definition of small and medium-sized enterprises. Activities will primarily be assessed on the basis of Article 25 of the General Block Exemption Regulation EU 651/2014.

Note that sole proprietorship businesses cannot be granted funding under this call or participate as a party to projects that are applying in Formas' calls. Companies that do not have a Swedish corporate identity number cannot be granted funding as a research centre party in this call, but can participate in-kind.

The Formas website contains more information about [state aid regulations](#).

Language

We recommend that you write your application in English, since the review panel that will assess your application is international. If an application is written in Swedish, only the research centre description will be translated into English for assessment. In such cases, it will not be possible for applicants to view or make linguistic adjustments to the application after it is translated. However, the popular science description must be written in Swedish, while the abstract should be in both Swedish and English. Budgets, budget specifications, CVs, lists of publications and other attachments will not be translated.

We recommend that you use size 12 Arial font.

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 our application system, Prisma. For all parties, the application must be completed by the principal applying organisation (the administrating organisation).

If the person who will enter the information needed for the application does not have organisational permissions, he or she must have a personal account in Prisma and be invited to the application by the organisational account manager.

Please note that only the person with organisation/manager permissions can register (submit) an application. So, make sure that the person who is authorised to register and submit the application is available when the application must be submitted, in good time before the call closes.

Plan ahead and fill out your application well in advance before the call closes. If mandatory fields do not have the required information filled in when the application is submitted, it will not be possible to submit the application. It is possible to register an application and then return to it later and register it again any number of times before the call closes. Once the call is closed, you cannot submit or add information to the application.

The call closes on 3 September 2020 at 14.00 CET. All applications must be registered before this deadline. No additions or post-registrations are allowed (unless specifically requested by Formas).

[Apply for a personal account in Prisma](#)

[Apply for an organisation account in Prisma](#)

Read more about [how to apply in Prisma](#) on our website.

Information your application must include

The application must contain a description of the research centre for four years, but with an eight-year perspective. To receive continued funding, a supplementary application will be requested at the end of the first four-year period.

Note that the maximum number of characters or file size for multiple entries in the application has been expanded compared with many other Formas calls.

The application must include a clear description of the research centre under the following sections.

Basic information

- Number of months applied for: 48 months

- Start month: 1 December 2020. Note that the centre’s start date is pre-selected in Prisma and cannot be changed, since funds for the first 12 months will be disbursed in 2020.
- Title of the research centre in Swedish (maximum 200 characters including spaces).
- Title of the research centre in English (maximum 200 characters including spaces).
- Popular science description in Swedish (maximum 3,000 characters including spaces). The popular science description should be able to be used in Formas’ project database, which allows the general public and the media to see which projects Formas has funded.
- Abstract in Swedish (maximum 1,500 characters, including spaces). A clear and concise description in Swedish of the research centre and its potential to contribute to a sustainable, competitive food system.
- Abstract in English (maximum 1,500 characters, including spaces). A clear and concise description in English of the research centre and its potential to contribute to a sustainable, competitive food system.

Description of the research centre

Read the background and the purpose and focus of the call carefully. Also take note of the evaluation criteria under “How does the assessment process work?” before completing the description. Address all the criteria in your application and keep in mind that the application should specify a business plan and strategy for four years but have a longer (eight-year) perspective.

You must describe the following elements in the application:

Vision and goals (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe your vision and goals for the research centre in the short and long terms, and how this relates to the purpose and objectives of the call. Be clear about the challenges your research centre addresses and which themes from the strategic research agenda [*Towards a sustainable and competitive food system*](#) it addresses. Also state which of the agenda’s impact goals the centre intends to contribute to achieving.

Describe the strategic significance and added value of the research centre for the food system’s sustainability and competitiveness, as well as how the centre responds to the need for new knowledge in the business sector, the public sector and/or civil society for transitioning to a sustainable and competitive food system. It should be clearly explained the contribution the research centre will make to the transition as well as the expected impact and the importance for businesses and the wider society.

Describe how your research contributes to sustainable development environmentally, socially and economically and the to the UN’s SDGs in Agenda 2030.

Activities (maximum 40,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe the scientific value of the planned research and how it relates to state of the art (including key references listed in separate fields), as well as the importance of the research centre to the research area or areas.

Describe the planned research activities (including preliminary deliverables) along with their structure, theory, method and implementation. Address the degree of innovation and originality, and describe your interdisciplinary approach. Provide an overview of the work packages, their relationship to each other and their timetables, and a risk assessment related to this.

Describe how the centre plans to address real-world impact, implementation and application of results. State the stakeholders who the centre will collaborate with to promote impact, utilization of research and competitiveness.

Also describe how you will communicate about the research centre and how it will communicate its work and through which channels, with a well thought-out, goal-oriented plan.

Finally, also state the potential of the research centre to promote inclusion of different groups in society in terms of factors like gender, social or cultural background, functional variations or age.

Contribution to knowledge and skills development (maximum 40,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe how the research centre intends to build knowledge and skills among stakeholders in the food system both in the short and long term, in a way that is structured and adapted to your target groups.

Briefly describe the planned PhD projects, their purpose, objectives and plan for implementation. Describe the approach to leadership and ties to non-academic organisations, as well as the synergies and added value of the project within the research centre.

Describe the plan for any interdisciplinary graduate school, and its theme, purpose and added value in the research centre. Describe the organisation, management, scope and planned activities.

Organisation and stakeholders (maximum 30,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe how the roles and skills of national stakeholders will be leveraged in the composition of the group in order to achieve the centre's vision and goals. Clearly describe the stakeholders involved and their roles. You should clearly state how different specialisations complement each other.

Describe how the centre will be organised and its leadership, and how you plan to achieve an effective, cohesive organisation.

Describe the role of the research centre and its context and network to demonstrate its added value, interaction and synergies with other relevant stakeholders, networks and nodes, nationally and, if relevant, internationally.

Describe how its organisation ensures that the centre maintains scientific excellence in research and international state of the art.

Also reflect on the composition of the centre (key persons) based on gender and other social categories, as well as the distribution of influence among women and men.

This part of the application should also state how the research centre, its activities and the involvement of stakeholders will evolve over time in order to achieve long-term robust and successful environments.

References

List the in-line references pertaining to the above sections in a separate field (5,000 characters including spaces).

Budget and other information

The principal applying organisation records the budget of each participating organisation in the application according to how the actual, identifiable costs are expected to be incurred for each year of operation (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4). Note that the grant funds covering the first 12 months will be paid to awarded research centres in 2020, after which the funds will be paid monthly in 2021 through 2023. Funds may also be used in 2024, but no new funds will be disbursed that year.

The call requires co-funding from non-academic partners who should contribute the equivalent of at least 15 percent of the total finances. Co-funding is defined as the ratio between self-finance + other private financing, and total finances. Co-funding can consist of cash or in-kind contributions, such as working hours, infrastructure or other resources, and should be stated in the budget.

State the budget for the research centre in Prisma. Write out the total amount you are applying for in Swedish kronor. For example, SEK 1 million should be written as: 1 000 000.

Information about the principal applying organisation and each project party

The following is mandatory information that must be completed for each party in the centre. This information should be collected and filled in by the principal applying organisation in Prisma.

- Name of the organisation
- Corporate identity number
- Address, postal code, city, country
- Annual turnover (the total sales or turnover of the higher education institution, research institute, company or organisation during the previous fiscal year), stated using digits. Example: 3 500 000.
- Balance sheet total (the sum of either the assets page or liabilities and equity from the company's or organisation's balance sheet), stated using digits. Example: 5 500 000.
- Number of employees
- Contact person
- E-mail of contact person

- Name of the workplace, address, postal code, city and country where most of the work will be carried out.

Costs

–Personnel costs

Funding can be sought to cover salaries for researchers, PhD students and technical staff, for example. Social security contributions should be included. Eligible staff expenses at businesses and other organisation that engage in economic activity may total an average of SEK 800 per hour at the most. Higher education institutions or research institutes are not subject to this limitation. Formas does not grant funding for annual salary increases. You can therefore apply for funding for salaries that apply at the time of the application, but not for funding to cover salary increases. For any current job positions, you must state the salary in effect at the time of the application submission. This will then apply to all subsequent years in the project. For new job positions you must state the starting salary at the administrating organisation. For PhD students, salary increases are allowed in accordance with any agreed pay scale. 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.

–Equipment, buildings and land

The maximum amount you can be awarded for equipment and equipment depreciation costs is a maximum of 5 percent of the requested budget.

–Costs for consultants and licenses, etc.

For consultant fees and licencing costs to be eligible, they must be purchased or licensed from external providers on market terms, and their services and scope must be stated in the research centre description.

–Other direct costs incl. travel expenses

Other direct costs can include the cost of consumables, travel, conferences and publication fees for open-access journals and databases.

–Indirect costs

Higher education institutions and research institutes may charge a markup for indirect costs according to the applicable full-cost pricing method. Other project parties may charge a markup for indirect costs of up to 30 percent of their eligible staff expenses. Formas does not grant funds for overhead on costs that you write off for equipment or for premises.

Funding

There are four types of funding an applicant can specify in the application:

1. Applied funding from Formas: Indicates the amount requested from Formas under the call. The amount cannot exceed the total costs. If the amount sought is less than the total costs, the remaining amounts will be automatically calculated and reported under “Self-funding”.
2. Other funding (public): If Formas or another public funder contributes funding for related research projects.

3. Other funding (private): If another private company or organisation contributes funding to the project.
4. Self-finance: If the project party provides its own funding in the centre, it is automatically calculated in the self-funding field.

Justification for staff expenses in budget

Here you specify the average hourly cost for budgeted staff expenses. Staff expenses refer to salaries including social security contributions and other mandatory charges associated with salaries. (Maximum 500 characters including spaces.)

Budget specification

Here, the principal applying organisation adds additional written information about the budget. This should include a justification for overhead costs according to the practices of the higher education institution or research institutes that is the project party. Other project parties may charge a markup for indirect costs of up to 30 percent of their eligible staff expenses. Formas does not grant funding for overhead costs that you write off for equipment or premises. You also specify any consultancy costs and the scope of the consultant's participation. Also specify which project parties will pay for the consultancy costs. Applicants are asked to be clear in describing all costs in relation to the specific activities at the research centre. If the establishment of a graduate school is included in the centre application, a description of the financing of this must be clear. Please note that a maximum of SEK 2 million per year can be applied for funding of a graduate school. (Maximum 9,000 characters including spaces.)

Optional budget appendix

Since the characters for the budget specification is limited there is a possibility to also attach a single appendix explaining the budget for the research centre and the participating parties (maximum size 4 MB).

Ethical considerations

The principal applying organisation should specify whether there are specific ethical concerns in the research centre. If so, you must describe the relevant ethical considerations and how they will be managed. Examples include research that uses personal data, or experiments on humans or animals. (Maximum. 4,000 characters including spaces.) [Read more in Formas general instructions.](#)

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 that the centre can contribute to. Also, since this is a call within the framework of the National Research Programme for Food and part of the implementation of the strategic research agenda Towards a Sustainable and Competitive Food System we ask you to also indicate which of the themes and perspectives of the agenda that your research address.

- **Subject area**

Select the subject area for the centre and add a sub-heading.

- **SCB code**

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

- **Sustainable development goals**

Choose at least one and a maximum of three of the SDGs that best suit the centre's research and other activities. When selecting more than one goal, specify the goals in priority order. The goal that is most relevant to the centre's activities should be stated in the first box. Read an explanation of these goals on the [UN Development Programme website](#).

- **Keywords**

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

- **Themes and perspectives in the research agenda [Towards a Sustainable and Competitive Food](#)**

Please indicate which of the themes and perspectives that your research centre address. The categorization should be based on the direct purpose of your research centre and planned research activities as well as the expected application of your results. Please observe that your research centre must address one or more of the themes in the agenda and that the perspective Knowledge and skills development is mandatory to include in this call. Additional perspectives are optional to address.

Appendices

Mandatory appendices

- You must append to your application a statement from the principal applying organisation that confirms the hosting, the priority and relevance of the research centre to the organisation and that the necessary resources are made available (maximum size 4 MB). This statement must be signed by the president or equivalent.
- A letter of intent from participating parties (academic and non-academic) proving the organisation's active participation and involvement in the research centre initiative, as well as any co-funding, must be attached to the application as a single PDF attachment (maximum size 4 MB). The letter of intent must be signed by the president, Head of Department, director-general, CEO or equivalent.
- The CV for participating parties is added to the application as a single PDF attachment (maximum size 10 MB). We recommend a maximum length of two A4 pages for each CV. It is therefore not possible to link to CVs that are already uploaded to Prisma, which is often possible in grant calls for research projects. This is done to enable an equal assessment of applications and CVs from different types of organisations.

A CV should include:

- Education

- Employment
- Other relevant qualifications that serve as proof of the participating parties' skills and expertise.
- A list of the parties' publications, when applicable, is attached by the administrating organisation as a PDF (maximum size 4 MB). Specify which party the list of publications applies to.

Optional appendices

If figures, images or tables are needed to describe the centre's activities, these can be uploaded as "Appendix J: Illustrations". This appendix is optional. A maximum of one PDF attachment of 8 MB can be uploaded.

After submitting your application

We first verify whether your application falls within Formas' areas of responsibility and the scope of the call. If it does, it continues on to a review panel for assessment. If it does not, it is rejected. Your application can also be rejected if it contains procedural errors or is incomplete, meaning that it lacks the necessary information in the application form or appendix.

How does the assessment process work?

All applications are assessed by an external international review panel. 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.

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. Each application is read and assessed by at least four reviewers. Grant applicants from the top-ranked applications will be invited to Formas' premises at the end of October (20-21 October 2020, preliminarily) where the review panel will interview the project parties.

The review panel will use a portfolio approach in its assessment of the applications. Formas strives to fund research centres that are complementary rather than overlapping, also taking into account ongoing research centre initiatives funded by other research and innovation funders.

Discrimination, such as on the basis of sex, is prohibited in the assessment of applications.

The applications are assessed based on the following criteria

Note that the evaluation criteria differ from the criteria described on Formas' website. The application must address all the criteria, and we advise applicants to clearly relate their application to these criteria. Each criterion will be scored by the review panel on a scale of 1–7, where 1 is the lowest and 7 is the highest. All criteria are equally important.

Relevance

- Consistency in scope and direction in relation to the purpose and objectives of the call
- Expected contributions to selected themes and overall impact targets for the National Research Programme on Food and *Towards a sustainable and competitive food system*
- Planned research activities in relation to international state of the art
- Meets the long-term, strategic needs of industry, public-sector stakeholders and civil society for the transition to a sustainable and competitive food system
- Relevance for environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development and to the SDGs in Agenda 2030

Potential

- Scientific quality, degree of innovation, originality and interdisciplinary approach
- Long-term impact and solutions that contribute to the transition to sustainable and competitive food systems
- Build the knowledge and skills of food system stakeholders in the short and long terms, including the potential of interdisciplinary graduate schools when relevant
- Potential to improve the inclusion of different groups in society in terms of factors like gender, social or cultural background, functional variations or age
- The research centre's added value, collaborations and synergies with other relevant stakeholders, networks and nodes

Implementation

- Quality and reasonableness of the research activity plan, including PhD positions and graduate school when relevant
- Appropriate plan for implementation and application of results
- Well-developed, targeted plan for developing the knowledge and skills of food system stakeholders in the short and long terms
- Well-developed, targeted plan for communicating the centre's activities
- Timetable and budget in relation to project structure and expected results
- Vision and strategy support robust, long-term centre operations

- Scope and value of synergies and interaction with other national and international stakeholders, networks and nodes

Organisation and stakeholders

- Leadership and organisation in the centre in relation to the composition of stakeholders, planned activities and set objectives
- Access to the expertise, resources and experience of the parties and how they complement each other
- Pools skills nationwide (academia/institutes, businesses and/or public-sector organisations) for running a successful centre
- Composition (key persons) based on gender and other social categories, and distribution of influence between women and men (organisational and financial)
- Ambition level and commitment from participating parties (academia/institutes, businesses and/or public-sector organisations)
- Ability to disseminate, use and develop the knowledge and ideas generated

Grant award decisions

Formas' Research Council is expected to reach a decision on 18 November 2020. Decisions will be announced the following day at the latest on Formas' website and communicated via Prisma. Grant award decisions cannot be appealed.

Reporting and evaluation of the awarded centres

All awarded research centres must submit both a financial and an operational report to Formas in accordance with the contract signed following a decision. The centres will be evaluated after three and five years of operation, respectively. A detailed description of how the evaluation will take place is set out in a separate evaluation plan, which will be annexed to the award decision. The follow-up serves to track and support the research centre's progress on the goals stated in the purpose and direction of the call, and also serves as decision support for future evaluations. The evaluations after Year 3 and Year 5 form the basis for continued funding.

Read more about the [reporting requirements](#) on Formas' website.

Formas may specify how the centres should report content and results in order to enable dissemination and real-world impact. 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 from research funded by Formas must be published using open access. Read more about our requirements for [open access to research results and data](#).

The research centres that are granted funding must develop 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](#)¹³.

By signing our grant terms and conditions, you certify that a data management plan will be available before the research begins and that it will be maintained.

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

- [Prisma](#)
- [Prisma's user support](#)
- [Ethics policy](#)

Webinar about the call

[On Friday April 17 at 10.00-11.30 there will be a webinar about the call with the opportunity to ask questions.](#) The webinar can also be accessed afterwards.

On May 14 (preliminary date), another webinar is planned with the ambition to contribute to match-making between actors interested in the call.

Contact information

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