Knowledge for a sustainable and competitive food system

Opening Date: 21 September 2020

Application Deadline: 5 November 2020

Date of Decision: 14 April 2021

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

☒ Climate change   ☐ Environment, water and ecology

☒ Food and animals   ☒ Forestry, water use and agriculture

☐ Buildings and infrastructure   ☐ Spatial planning, urban and rural areas

☐ Research policy and funding

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

☐ 1. No poverty   ☒ 2. Zero hunger

☒ 3. Good health and well-being   ☐ 4. Quality education for all

☐ 5. Gender equality   ☒ 6. Clean water and sanitation

☐ 7. Affordable and clean energy   ☒ 8. Decent work and economic growth

☒ 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure   ☐ 10. Reduced inequalities

☐ 11. Sustainable cities and communities   ☒ 12. Responsible consumption and production

☒ 13. Climate action   ☒ 14. Life below water

☒ 15. Life on land   ☐ 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions

☐ 17. Partnerships for the goals

WHAT CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

Knowledge syntheses within the specified thematic areas that strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of the food system.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The principal applicant must have completed their PhD.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

Applicants can apply for a maximum of SEK 1.5 million. Projects run for one year.

Revision history

Any changes to the call text are listed below.

Date	Change
October 14, 2020	Clarifications regarding project duration under the section "Grant size and duration" at page 8.
October 29, 2020	Correction of date for application deadline.

Contents

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Description of the call

Introduction

Achieving the transition to a sustainable and competitive food system requires integrated measures that help to develop the knowledge and skills of food system actors. Such measures will also help to address the challenges facing society and the food sector[1] and to fulfil the three dimensions of sustainability: environmental, social and economic. This has been identified in the strategic research agenda *Towards a sustainable and competitive food system*.

To meet these needs, Formas is announcing grants to fund knowledge syntheses that promote sustainable and competitive food systems. Projects should compile the state of the art within Sustainable aquatic food production or Consumer behaviour and consumer choice in order to make it available and develop the knowledge and skills of food system actors in the short and the long term. This call for proposals is aimed at individual researchers and the principal applicant must have completed their PhD. It is important to link the project to an industry, a business sector or society at large in order to meet people's needs for upskilling and to anchor the project with relevant actors.

Your knowledge synthesis should address one of the two areas described under "Purpose and focus". The areas have been identified in the strategic research agenda and designed in cooperation with businesses and universities.

The call takes place within the framework of the national research programme on food and is part of the implementation of the programme's strategic research agenda.

Background

We are facing many major environmental, social and economic challenges throughout society. The food system[2] is central to many of these challenges. Food supply, how we produce, distribute and consume food, and what we do with our waste are a fundamental part of the problem – as well as part of the solution. There is a major, 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 developments internationally. Compared with 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 long way to go towards achieving national environmental objectives and we need to shift our efforts to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Agenda 2030. Swedish food companies represent a core part of these efforts. However, many companies in the sector are struggling with weak profitability and low growth, which risks slowing down the transition. Research and innovation are needed to

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[1] The food sector refers to companies operating within the food system.
[2] The food system encompasses the people, processes, infrastructure, institutions and services involved in the production, processing, marketing, consumption and disposal of food (FAO 2017).

discover new solutions, methods and models and to create new products, services and processes that secure sustainable food systems while helping to boost profitability.

Today, the food sector consists of many small and medium-sized enterprises. The major corporations, with the largest research and innovation capacity, are largely foreign-owned and mainly conduct research, development and innovation activities outside Sweden. Because so few players in the Swedish food sector are involved in research and innovation, they struggle to identify research needs and to absorb and translate new knowledge into new values. The OECD notes that the links between basic research, applied research, producers and advisory companies are weak in primary production. This results in the sub-optimal use of knowledge and thus the need to strengthen these links.

Nationwide, we must therefore work together to enhance needs-driven research and create environments that promote innovation in the food system. We must 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 must improve workforce skills for the long term.

This call is an initiative under the national research programme on 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 provide a direction for knowledge-building and innovation for sustainability and competitiveness within the food system (Figure 1).
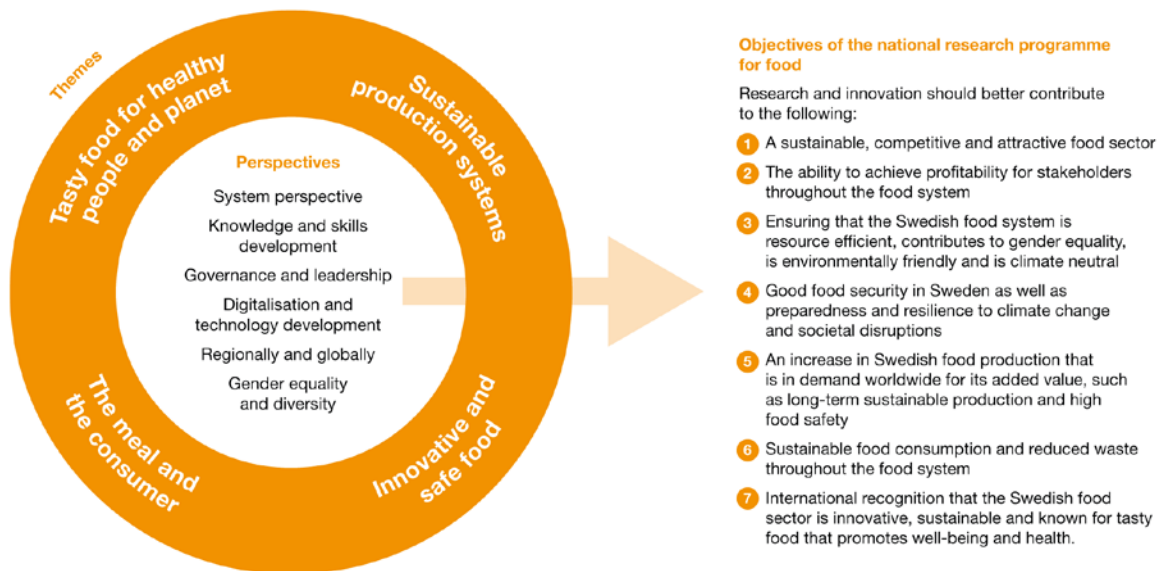

Figure 1. Themes and perspectives of the strategic research agenda "Towards a sustainable and competitive food system" and objectives of the national food research programme.

To better understand what influences consumer food choices, what drives changes in behaviour and how consumers can contribute to a more sustainable and competitive food system, existing knowledge and research must be compiled.

About awarded projects

We expect the project to result in a policy brief or similar as well as a brief report on the main results in Swedish for relevant target groups. In addition, the results can also be published in scholarly journals. Formas will provide more instructions for the brief report, which might be published on the Formas website. Communicating and disseminating the knowledge that emerges from the synthesis work are important aspects of the project.

Formas aims to fund four to five syntheses, with a maximum budget of SEK 1.5 million per review. Projects run for one year.

Who can apply under this call

The call is aimed at researchers who hold a PhD, but the focus of the knowledge synthesis should be firmly anchored with a food sector player or in a community that can make use of the review.

We are looking for knowledge syntheses that reveal the current state across different areas of the food system. Researchers from any discipline are welcome to apply or participate.

Before you apply

Requirements for applying organisations

The call is aimed at individual researchers and the principal applicant must have completed their PhD. The administrating organisation must be a university, college or research institute that meets Formas' requirements for administrating organisations.

A principal applicant can only be awarded funding for one project.

The administrating organisation must be located in Sweden and approved by Formas.

Principal applicants are expected to participate in activities under the national research programme on food in order to provide learning and knowledge exchanges within the food system.

Grant size and duration

Funds are sought for a one-year period. Due to technical limitations it is in Prisma only possible to add a timeline during 2021. It is however possible to have a project that runs also during parts of 2022. A timeline with correct dates should be added in the project plan. For granted projects this will be adjusted in Prisma at a later stage.

The budget in your application must state how you plan to use the funds.

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Applications whose theme is not within one of the stated thematic areas will be rejected by Formas in the early stages and will not proceed to review.

Costs that qualify for funding

Grants can be sought to cover costs associated with the knowledge synthesis and dissemination of results. This can involve salary funding for researchers and communicators, operating expenses (for example, consumables, premises costs, travel, conferences, publication in open-access journals and databases), and depreciation costs for equipment (a maximum of 5 percent of the sought budget).

Applicants can apply for funding for both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include costs for salaries and travel that are directly attributable to the project. Indirect costs are costs that are shared with other business operations in your organisation, such as for administration, IT and renting of premises. Overhead costs are considered indirect costs.

The total amount of salary received for an individual researcher, PhD student or other participant must correspond to the level of activity in your project 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.

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 project 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. Budgets, budget specifications, CVs, lists of publications and other attachments will not be translated. The popular science description must be written in Swedish, while the abstract should be in both Swedish and English.

Please use an Arial 12-point 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).

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How to apply

You apply for a grant in our application system, Prisma. The application must be completed by the principal applicant. The principal applicant must have an account in Prisma. Read more about how to create an account and apply in Prisma on our website.

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 5 November 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.

Information your application must include

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

Basic information

- Number of months applied for (the maximum is 12 months).
- Start month: The default date in Prisma is 1 January 2021.
- Title in Swedish (maximum 200 characters including spaces).
- Title 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 were granted funding.
- Abstract in Swedish (maximum 1,500 characters including spaces). A clear and concise description in Swedish of the knowledge synthesis, target group for the review, 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 knowledge synthesis, target group for the review, and its potential to contribute to a sustainable, competitive food system.

Project description

Read the background and the purpose and focus of the call 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 of why the chosen research area and thematic focus are needed (max. 7,000 characters including spaces).

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- Project description, including structure, method, implementation, and plan for scientific publication and dissemination of the results of the knowledge synthesis. You must use a systematic, scientific method. Also describe and justify here how the project will use the resources and experts necessary for implementing the project proposal. Include a timetable (max. 15,000 characters including spaces).

- Description and justification of the potential societal benefits of the project, who the relevant stakeholders/users are, and how you intend to communicate the project results with these stakeholders (max. 8,000 characters including spaces).

References

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

Budget and other information

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 technical staff). Formas does not grant funding for annual salary increases. This means that you can apply for funding to cover salaries that are valid at the time of application only, but not to cover salary increases. The salary applied for applies for each year in the project. For new job positions, you must specify the starting salary at the administrating organisation. The total amount of the salary for a single researcher, PhD student or other staff must not exceed 100 percent of full-time employment. It also means that someone who already has full salary funding from any funder cannot receive additional salary funding. 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. Specify operating costs in accordance with practices at the administrating organisation.

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

- **Premises.** You can apply for funding to cover 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 applied/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. 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 to publications and data, etc. 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

Fill in only when relevant for the implementation of the project. You must describe the relevant ethical issues and how they should be managed. Examples include research that uses personal data, or experiments on humans or animals. Maximum 4,000 characters including spaces. Read more about ethics in *Report any ethical considerations*.

Classifications

Formas uses project classifications in analyses and supporting documentation on an overall level. The classifications are made by the applicant indicating the subject area, SCB codes and at least one global sustainable development goal (SDG) that the knowledge synthesis can help achieve.

- Subject area

  Select the subject area of the knowledge synthesis and add a sub-heading.

- SCB code

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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 focus of the knowledge synthesis. When selecting more than one SDG, specify them in priority order. State the SDG that is most relevant to the project activity in the first box. Read an explanation of these goals on the [UN Development Programme website](#).

- Keywords

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

Administrating organisations

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

Prisma contains a default list of approved administrating organisations. Select your administrating organisation in Prisma and add your project's department or institution. A registered application is automatically sent to the administrating organisation after the call is closed. The administrating organisation then has seven business days to digitally sign the application.

Participants

The *principal applicant* invites participating researchers. A *participating researcher* is a researcher holding a PhD who is considered to be a co-applicant in the project. It is also possible to have *participating administrators* who are not involved in the project, but who help you fill out the application form. Each participant must have created a 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 you must use the exact spelling of names and email addresses. Also note that invited participating researchers must transfer their CVs and publications to the application so that the principal applicant can register the application when it is completed. See the next section, "CVs".

CVs

The project manager retrieves the information from his or her personal account in Prisma. Participating researchers themselves add CV information from their profile to the application in Prisma. 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.

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Appendix for illustrations

If you need figures, tables or images to describe the project, you should attach them as appendices. You can upload an appendix up to 4 MB in pdf format. Note that a CV should not be attached as an appendix.

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 will proceed to assessment by the review panel. 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 three reviewers.

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

Application criteria for assessment

All the criteria mentioned below must be addressed in the application, and applicants are encouraged 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.

Criteria for scientific quality:

- Research question
- Methods and implementation
- Scientific excellence

Criteria for societal relevance:

- Potential societal benefit and real-world impact of the research topic
- Communication with stakeholders and users

Read more about our assessment criteria.

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Grant award decisions

The Formas Research Council expects to decide which projects will be awarded funding on 14 April 2021. Decisions will be announced the following day at the latest on Formas' website and communicated via Prisma. Grant award decisions cannot be appealed.

Reporting for granted projects

Each project that is awarded funding must submit a report to Formas containing a financial and a scientific report in accordance with the decision, three months after the end of the appropriation period.

Read more about reporting requirements on the Formas website.

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. Read more about our requirements for open access to research results and data.

In addition, projects receiving funding must develop a data management plan for the data produced in the projects. The plan should not be submitted to Formas, but the project manager should be able to present the plan on request. We recommend that you follow the proposal developed by Science Europe on what a data management plan should contain. You can read more about the proposal in the Practical Guide to the International Alignment of Research Data Management (pdf)◲

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

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