

Formas' General Terms and Conditions for Research, Development and Innovation Grants

These terms and conditions were established by the Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Formas) on 1 November 2018 and apply unless otherwise provided in a decision, specific conditions or a call description. The terms and conditions apply to grants awarded on or after 1 November 2018.

The right to obtain grant funding presupposes that Formas has received the necessary appropriations from the government.

Definitions

Administrating organisation	Legal person approved by Formas as the recipient of funds for research, development or innovation.
Project	Activities that are supported by the funds granted by Formas.
Project manager	A natural or legal person responsible for the application to Formas and for the planning and completion of the project.
Terms and conditions	All the terms and conditions that apply to the grants awarded, meaning these general terms and conditions or terms of a decision, special conditions or call descriptions.

1. Grant decisions

Formas' decision to award a grant takes effect on the day the administrating organisation and project manager accept the terms of the decision by signing their names in Formas' application system. The terms of the decision are valid up to and including the day the final report is approved by Formas and, where applicable, unused funds are returned. Notwithstanding this, Formas has the right to examine supporting documents as described in Section 5.

2. Obligations

2.1. Responsibility for conducting the research in accordance with Swedish law and applicable international regulations

The administrating organisation is responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in accordance with Swedish law and applicable international regulations.

2.2. Employer relationship and terms of employment

The project manager must be employed by the administrating organisation, unless Formas and the administrating organisation agree otherwise. If the project manager has another employer, that employer must approve the project manager's commitments.

2.3. Equipment

Except as set out in Section 4.4., the administrating organisation is the owner of equipment and any other inventory acquired for projects using funds from Formas. The equipment must be allocated to the project for the duration of the entire project.

2.4. Publication

2.4.1. Scientific journals

Project managers are responsible for publishing the project's research results in scientific journals with an international scope or making them available in other similar ways.

2.4.2. Commercial agreements and delay of publication due to patent application

Agreements with commercial or other interests must not restrict the publication of results or delay publication by more than two (2) months. However, if the purpose is to apply for patents based fully, or in part, on the aforementioned research results a delay of up to four (4) months is acceptable.

2.4.3. Open access

Project managers are responsible for ensuring that the project's research results are made available through open access within six (6) months of publication.

If publication takes place through parallel publication in open institutional repositories, then the project research results must be deposited at the time of publication and be openly accessible within six (6) months.

Formas may grant an extension of the time of deposit up to twelve (12) months, provided that the project manager can clearly document that reasonable efforts has been made to comply with the six-month publication requirement.

Open access applies to research results in scientifically peer-reviewed articles published in journals and

conference reports. The obligation to enable open access to the research results does not apply to monographs and book chapters.

If the publisher has paid an open-access fee, the publication must be published with the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC-BY).

2.4.4. Dissemination outside the scientific community

Project managers are responsible for disseminating project research results that are of general interest to people outside the scientific community.

2.4.5. Formas must be acknowledged as funding source

The project manager must ensure that Formas is acknowledged as the funding source for the research in any publications or other media communications. Original journal articles should acknowledge Formas by stating the reference number of the grant decision under the heading “Acknowledgements” or the equivalent.

2.4.6. Formas’ right to disseminate information

Formas has the right to communicate information about the research as well as copy and distribute all or parts of the research results or other activities funded by Formas, provided that it does not divulge any information that is confidential under the Public Access and Secrecy Act (2009:400).

2.5. Access to research material

At the request of Formas and for the purpose of scientific review, Formas has the right to gain access to the complete research materials related to projects it funds.

2.6. Information about other research funding

Project managers must immediately notify Formas if funds from another funding source are offered or obtained for the same purpose as that of the project. The notification to Formas must indicate the extent to which other funding sources can influence the implementation, analysis, interpretation and reporting of the project’s research results and financial conditions. It must also indicate who will retain the project’s research results. Formas has the right to change its decision to grant funds based on new information about additional outside funding for the project.

2.7. Other obligations

The administrating organisation must do the following:

- Receive and manage the awarded grant.
- As the employer of the project manager, ensure that he or she can dispose of their own and other employees’ working hours to the extent needed to complete the project according to the project plan submitted to Formas, which also includes publication of the research results.
- Ensure that the project manager and other relevant staff have access to facilities, equipment and other resources needed to complete the project.

- Ensure that the research, development and innovation conducted within the project do not have commercial ties that affect its objectivity, impartiality or transparency.
- Submit a financial report as instructed by Formas.
- Be responsible for using the funds in accordance with the conditions applicable to the funds granted and administration of project activities.

The project manager must do the following:

- Claim scientific responsibility for the project as described in the application to Formas with respect to the object and method. This responsibility includes planning and completing the project according to plan, but with any adjustments that might be needed if Formas awards a grant that is less than the amount sought.
- Make sure that all or parts of a project or other research do not start until the necessary authorisations and approvals are obtained.
- Ensure compliance with ethical principles and good research practice (cf. VR1708 Good research practice).
- Submit a scientific report according to Formas’ instructions.

3. Financial provisions

3.1. Financial reporting and accounting

Administrating organisations must report direct and indirect costs in accordance with their own accounting principles and generally accepted accounting principles.

Administrating organisations must provide the information and data requested by Formas during follow-up and evaluation of the research, development and innovation, both during and after the payout period. Statements and reports relating to the project must be submitted in the order specified in the grant decision or whenever Formas makes such a request.

Formas will reject new grant applications from project managers who did not submit a final financial report as described in Section 3.3. or 4.2. for previously completed projects.

The grants may not be used for scholarships unless the decision indicates otherwise.

3.2. Payout period and availability period

Formas’ decision indicates the period during which project funds will be paid out (payout period) and how long the funds can be used (availability period). Unless otherwise indicated in the decision, funds may be used for up to one (1) year after the end of the payout period. If there are special reasons, and subject to a request, the availability period may be extended. Such an application must be submitted before the end of the availability period but after the end of the payout period by both the administrating organisation and project manager in Formas’ application

system. The application for an extended availability period must include a justification for the special reasons, the amount of funds not yet spent and an outline of how the project will be completed. An extension of the availability period is not possible for every call, even if special reasons exist.

Project funds must be spent on completing the project as specified in the funding application, but with any adjustments that might be needed if Formas awards a grant that is less than the amount sought. In addition, the funds must be spent in a way that is consistent with the terms of the decision. More substantial changes to the appropriation of the funds require a written substantiation from both the administering organisation and the project manager. Such a request must be made in conjunction with the need for a change. After a re-evaluation and within the framework of the grant award decision, Formas may allow changes.

3.3. Final financial reporting

The administering organisation must submit a final financial report no later than three (3) months after the end of the availability period. Formas rejects new applications for funding from project managers if the administering organisation has not submitted a final financial report within the stated time for previous projects managed by the project manager.

Formas may determine that the final financial report be submitted on another date. Such a decision will indicate the new final report date and will be communicated to the administering organisation at least three (3) months prior to this date.

If the project is terminated early, special provisions apply as described in Section 4.2.

3.4. Returning excess funds

Unused funds specified in the financial report must be paid back as instructed by Formas within thirty (30) days of receiving the instructions.

Excess funds corresponding to a maximum of half a price base amount may be retained and used for research purposes that are similar to those of the original grant. If the unused amount exceeds half a price base amount, then the entire excess amount must be paid back.

4. Early termination of projects

4.1. Obstacles to completion

4.1.1 Difficulties in completing the project

If the project cannot be completed according to plan within a reasonable amount of time, the administering organisation must immediately inform Formas. The same condition applies if equipment for which funds were granted cannot be acquired. In this case, the administering organisation must also indicate how the project will be affected by the lack of such equipment. Formas and the administering organisation must, after consulting with the project manager, agree on how to manage the situation.

4.1.2. Changed circumstances for project managers

If a project manager is no longer able to complete a project, the administering organisation must immediately inform Formas. After a request by the administering organisation, Formas can review the request to replace the project manager.

Decisions on continued funding or project completion are taken after consultation with the administering organisations and, where possible, with project managers. If the reason for the change is that the project manager will become employed by another authorised administering organisation, then Formas can decide that the project should have a new administering organisation and continue to be run by this new organisation using the same project manager. Prior to such a decision, the relevant administering organisations must be consulted to determine the conditions for the change.

4.2. Final financial reporting

If Formas decides to discontinue the payment of a grant, or if projects are abandoned for any other reason, then a final financial report must be submitted no later than three (3) months after the day on which Formas, the administering organisation and project manager agree that the project will be terminated or one of these parties takes such a decision.

4.3. Returning unused funds

The administering organisation must pay back any funds to Formas that were not used for costs incurred no later than thirty (30) days after Formas receives the final financial report.

4.4. Equipment

In the event of early termination of a project Formas can decide, in consultation with the relevant administering organisations, that equipment purchased with project funds must be handed over to Formas or another administering organisation.

4.5. Project termination costs

If Formas decides to discontinue grant payments for reasons other than breach of conditions, then Formas and the administering organisations must agree on how to finance, within reason, any termination costs.

5. Audits

Formas or anyone appointed by Formas (such as an auditor) has the right to review the financial records and reports related to the funded projects, during the course of the project or after it is completed. For this purpose, administering organisations must, at their own expense, give the auditors full transparency into the project by providing copies of all supporting documents related to project expenses and revenue. This right is valid for ten (10) years beginning on the decision date of the grant award, but for a minimum of five (5) years after submission of the final report to Formas.

6. Breach of terms and conditions

6.1. Request to meet conditions

If the conditions for the awarded grants have been breached and this breach can easily be remedied, Formas may request the administrating organisation to meet these conditions within a specified period of time. In such cases, Formas may request an action plan from the administrating organisation stating the action to be taken to meet the conditions and the deadline for taking action. Formas will determine whether to approve the action plan or suspend the allocation of funds.

6.2. Discontinuation of grant payments

Formas can discontinue grant payments, in whole or in part, under any of the following circumstances:

- An administrating organisation or project manager provides incorrect information, omits important information, or in any other way causes the funds to be received unduly or in excess.

- For any reason, funds were granted unduly or in excess and the grantee should have been aware of this.
- Failure to report, during the course of the project, any new circumstances affecting the project.
- There are commercial relationships that affect the objectivity, independence or transparency of the project.
- Reporting has not been done in accordance with Formas' instructions.
- Financial irregularities have been detected.
- Research misconduct or other unethical conduct has been detected.
- A project manager, through his or her actions or for any other reason, proves to be clearly unsuitable for planning and completing a project funded by Formas.
- The terms and conditions for the awarded grant have not otherwise been met.

Formas is entitled to temporarily suspend grant payments during an ongoing investigation into unethical conduct or for any other reason that represents grounds for discontinuation of grant payments.