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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### PROSPEKT 24

- The application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation before **15:00 on 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.**
- Funding decisions will be announced in March 2025.
- After signing of agreement, approved projects may start on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025, at the earliest, and on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025, at the latest.

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Maria Dollhopf, Programme Manager  
maria.dollhopf@kks.se, 073-712 81 36

#### **About the Knowledge Foundation**

*The Knowledge Foundation is a funder with the mission to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. The foundation funds research and competence development at Sweden's university colleges and newer universities when it takes place in collaboration with the business sector. The Foundation's calls are open to all scientific and artistic subject areas.*

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## The programme Prospekt

Today's knowledge-intensive society is in great need of cutting-edge research results and people with academic excellence. One way to meet these needs is to offer promising researchers good opportunities for an academic career. In an open, competitive allocation of research funds, where the applicant's previous research experience is often awarded, early career researchers are to a large extent outcompeted, and many of them thus early abandon thoughts of a career in academia.

However, the Knowledge Foundation sees advantages in offering promising early career researchers the opportunity at an early stage to independently pursue a research project of high scientific quality and to develop professionally, and therefore offers funding through the programme Prospekt.

### Objectives of the programme

The objective of the programme Prospekt is for an early career researcher to, in collaboration with relevant business partners, address a well-defined and delimited scientific question that contributes to the scientific development as well as creates benefits for the business sector. The objective is also for the researcher to develop professionally and qualify for a continued academic career.

### The programme's purpose and contribution to strong research and education environments

The Knowledge Foundation seeks to support the development of strong research and education environments that create value for academia, the business sector, and the society. All the Knowledge Foundation's programmes contribute in different ways to establishing and maintaining environments with a strong national and international scientific or artistic position in the long term, which also constitutes a profile area for the university. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view on strong research and education environments, go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

The specific purpose of the programme Prospekt is to develop and/or renew the research and education environment within its scientific profile area through a strategic recruitment of a promising early career researcher. Through Prospekt, the environment may also expand or strengthen its collaboration with the business sector within the profile area.

### Project design

In addition to the objective of addressing a scientific question together with business partners, the project should also allow the project manager to develop professionally and qualify for a continued academic career. Therefore, qualifying activities and career support should be included in the project design.

Qualifying activities could be, for example, teaching, participation in other research projects, duties at the department, network building, internationalisation, skills development in project management or supervision, etc. For an appropriate balance, the project manager should allocate 60–80 percent of his/her working hours to the research project and the remaining working hours to other qualifying activities (the salary costs associated with these activities are to be paid for by the university and are therefore not reported in the project budget).

As part of the career support, an academic reference group of at least three researchers<sup>1</sup> should be associated to the project. The reference group should actively assist the project manager with advice and recommendations concerning the project as well as the professional development and should therefore be on a more senior level than the applicant. For good anchoring and integration in the research and education environment, two researchers (at least one of them at 'docent' level or higher) employed<sup>2</sup> at the environment should be included. To enable an influx of new ideas and a broadened network, an external researcher employed<sup>2</sup> at another university should also be included. If the

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<sup>1</sup> The project manager's doctoral supervisor(s) may not be included in the reference group.

<sup>2</sup> The members of the reference group cannot have adjunct positions at the university ('adjungerade tjänster').

external researcher is active at a university which is not part of the Foundation's target group<sup>3</sup>, any costs for his/her participation must be financed by the applicant university.

Another factor in a career development is the opportunity to broaden knowledge, widen perspectives and establish new contacts. Therefore, the programme encourages network building during the project period. This could be done, for example, through visits or some time spent in another academic environment (at the own or another university), at a research institute or in the business sector.

## Terms and conditions

### Applicants

Sweden's university colleges and newer universities<sup>3</sup> (called *universities* in the call text) may apply. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications within all subject areas. When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is to be replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

Several universities within the Foundation's target group may collaborate in the project if this strengthens the application and the project, but only one university may be the main applicant and contracting party vis-à-vis the Knowledge Foundation.

### Participation of the university

A project manager employed at the university should be operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. To apply for funding within Prospekt, the project manager must be an early career researcher, which means that, by the closing date of the call, he/she must not have been academically active for more than three years. Thus, the project manager must have a doctoral degree with a graduation date<sup>4</sup> no earlier than 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Any deductible time<sup>5</sup> when the project manager has not been academically active may be excluded and must be clearly indicated in the CV. At the time of application, the project manager may be employed at another university, at a research institute or in the business sector, but must, at the latest at the project's starting date, be employed full-time at the university where the project will be conducted.

At the university, there must also be an appointed project owner. The project owner, who must have staff and budget authority at a senior level at the university, is responsible for ensuring proper conditions for the implementation of the project, and for monitoring the implementation. The project manager and the project owner should not be the same person. For an optimal fulfilment of the objectives within Prospekt, it is important that the project manager receives active and adequate support from the project owner.

### Participation of business sector and other partners

The project must be conducted in co-production with the business sector. For more information on the Foundation's view on co-production, go to [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

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<sup>3</sup> Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm University of the Arts, Swedish Defence University, Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Södertörn University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Skövde, University West, Örebro University

<sup>4</sup> The date of the degree is the date on which the degree certificate was issued. For Swedish doctoral degrees, it is the date registered in 'Ladok'. For foreign doctoral degrees, it is the date on which the doctoral degree was awarded by the university, usually verified by a stamp.

<sup>5</sup> Work in the business sector, parental leave, long-term illness (sick leave or care of children/close relative), military service, positions of trust in political organisations, trade unions or student organisations. Unemployment or vacation does not count as deductible time.

At least two mutually independent business actors should co-finance the project. Clarification of the criteria for co-financing business actors<sup>6</sup> can be found on the Foundations' homepage ([www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)).

The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least the same amount as requested from the Knowledge Foundation. For an appropriate balance in the co-production, a single business actor may not account for more than 70 percent of the total co-financing.

All co-financing business actors must, in the application, clearly demonstrate that the organisation has adequate conditions to fulfil the obligations described in the project plan and budget. Therefore, they must attach signed letters of intent where the contributions to the project are described and motivated. Specified co-financing must also be certified in the letters of intent (see also instructions for *Appendices to the application* below).

Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group or other relevant partners, that cannot be counted as co-financing business actors, may participate in the project if they strengthen the application and the project. These partners should also attach signed letters of intent where the contributions to the project are described and motivated, but they bear their own costs in the project and these costs cannot be counted as co-financing.

Any connections, such as financial or personal links, between for example participating partners, between any partner and university, or between any partner and individual project participant(s), must be stated and clarified in the application form and the project plan. Any dual roles must be clarified. Specify, for example, company connections, share ownership, board positions, employment, or consulting activities.

### **Project duration**

The project duration should be 2-3 years.

### **Financial framework and budgeting**

The programme Prospekt refers to the funding of a research project conducted in co-operation with the business sector. The amount to be requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed the sum of SEK 2 million. The funds from the Foundation should primarily be used for salary costs related to working hours within the project for the project manager employed at the applicant university. In addition to salary costs, other direct costs<sup>7</sup> arising within the project at the applying university can be included in the budget.

Within Prospekt it is also possible to include the cost of an appropriate project management or supervisor training in the budget under a separate budget post. Salary costs for any additional project participant (in addition to the project manager) may be included, given that the work effort constitutes a limited part of the project (e.g. collection of material, testing, etc.), and that the total cost does not exceed 1/4 of the salary costs for the project manager. The work effort should be clearly described and justified in the project plan and the person should be listed in the appendix *Staff in the project*. Costs associated with network building can be included under appropriate budget posts, such as travel expenses.

Budgeting of funds must follow the instructions presented in the document *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation* (found on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)). The application should not include overhead costs (OH). An OH surcharge of 20 percent will be added and included in the agreement proposal if the application is granted by the Foundation.

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<sup>6</sup> Criteria for co-financing business actors have been updated prior to the call 2024.

<sup>7</sup> See *General terms and conditions for projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation*, found on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

## Application

The application should be submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system *SBS Manager* ([www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)). Supplementing the application after the closing date of the call is not possible (however, see under *Appendix 4* for doctoral degree certificates).

### Appendices to the application

The following appendices (as PDF files) should be attached to the application in the same order as below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix. Under each heading, the main characteristics of the information that the Foundation expects are stated. However, applicants may provide supplementary information that is deemed appropriate based on the direction of the call.

The appendices of the application must be written in English to enable international peer review (letters of intent may, however, be written in Swedish).

Note that all body text in Appendices 1 and 2 must follow the format font Arial, font size 11 pt, and single line spacing.

**Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the research and education environment(s)** (may not exceed 2 pages, see instructions below if several environments apply jointly)

To be uploaded under *Appendix 1. The project's contribution to the research and education environment(s)*.

This appendix should be written jointly by the head of the research and education environment and the project manager. If a project is applied for jointly by several environments, all environments must be described. However, the appendix may only be extended by a maximum of half a page per additional environment. Emanate from the group or environment where the project has its closest context. Frame the description based on the below headings.

#### **1.1. The project's contribution to the development of the research and education environment(s)**

Describe how the project will contribute to the development of the research and education environment and its activities. The connection to the objectives and purpose of the call must be clearly stated. It must be made clear in what way the project adds value in relation to previous and ongoing projects within the environment.

#### **1.2. The research and education environment(s) where the project will be conducted**

Describe the environment's current status and ambition.

**a) Current status** and results over the past five years (area of activity and direction for related research and education within the environment, staff composition, scientific production, development of educations, funding, collaborative- and business partners etc.)

**b) Ambition** and objectives for the further development of the environment.

**Appendix 2. Project plan** (may not exceed 8 pages + 2 pages *Plan for professional development* to be inserted at the end of the Project plan under a separate heading)

To be uploaded under *Appendix 2. Project plan*. The project plan must be page numbered. Any references (in legible font size) must be included within the page limit.

- Describe the scientific question to be addressed in the project, and how it relates and contributes to the current state-of-the-art.
- Describe the scientific objectives of the project and the methods to be used to achieve them.
- Account for whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project, and if so, how these perspectives will be included (more information on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)).

- Describe the scientific competence of the project manager in relation to the project content.
- Describe how the scientific question relates to needs of the participating business actors, and to what extent it is possibly applicable to a wider business sector.
- Indicate how the research project is expected to contribute to the development of participating business actors, and to possible development in the wider business sector.
- Describe how the project will be practically implemented and how the planned implementation will lead to the fulfilment of the project objectives.
- Describe how the work in the project is planned and organised so that the work distribution of the partners is clarified, and also in what way the collaboration between the partners will take place.
- Describe and justify the project's organisation, management, and staffing. Account for the competence, role, and work contribution of key individuals, including individuals from participating partners. The description should relate to information provided in the budget, the appendix *Staff in the project*, and CVs.
- Account for how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group (more information on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)).
- Describe and justify the costs included in the budget so it is clear what the costs consist of, why they are relevant for the project, and which partner will cover the costs.
- Include a schematic time and activity plan. Also include a brief risk analysis regarding the project's ability to be carried out according to plan.
- If the university has previously been rejected on a similar Prospekt application, and now reapplies, this must be stated along with comments on how the assessment panel's previous remarks are being considered in the current application.
- **Plan for professional development.** Describe how the professional development of the project manager and the possibility to become an independent researcher is promoted by the project: Describe the career development objectives and the qualifying activities that will lead to the fulfilment of the objectives. State the composition of the reference group, how the collaboration will take place, and how the group will support the research project as well as the professional development.

### **Appendix 3. Staff in the project** (appendix template)

To be uploaded under *Appendix 3. Staff in the project*.

Attach a table of planned project participants. From co-producing partners, only key participants need to be entered. Appendix template for project participants (*Staff in the project*) is downloaded as an Excel file from [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se), but must be converted and attached as a PDF file (make sure that the entire Excel spreadsheet fits on one PDF page).

### **Appendix 4. Qualifications** (may not exceed 1 page per person)

To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Attach CVs for all individuals in the project group who are crucial for the implementation of the project, which within Prospekt also includes the members of the reference group.

The Foundation applies a broadened review of merits and advanced assessment of research and researchers (more information on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se)). All academically active participants should therefore present a selection of the merits and experiences that are the most relevant to the project and the programme form. *For example*, emanate from the following categories:

- **Degrees**
- **Positions**

- **Research output:** select at most ten (10) research results/outputs. In addition to scientific publications, this could be for example: documented artistic merits, instrumental- or product development, data set, software, patent, process- or policy development, as well as implementation of research results.
- **Educational activities:** pedagogical qualification including, for example, teaching, training and supervision, education development including development of open teaching resources and learning objects (learning and teaching materials).
- **Cooperation:** with academia, the business sector, or other societal actors, as well as communication efforts.
- **Management:** project management, activity development, assessment assignments, centre management, department assignments, granted funding.

#### **Appendix 5. Doctoral degree certificate**

To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

A copy of the degree certificate for the project manager's doctoral degree must be attached. If the project manager at the time of application has not yet defended his/her doctoral thesis – but is very close to dissertation – the doctoral degree certificate may be submitted after the closing date of the call. In this case, the dissertation date must have been set by the university, which should be certified by attaching the university's official decision on the dissertation to the application. The date for the dissertation must be before the start date of the project.

#### **Appendix 6. Letters of intent** (approximately 1 page per partner)

To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

Signed letter of intent from each of the participating partners must be attached. Each letter of intent must include:

- needs and motives for participation,
- contributions and participation in the implementation of the project,
- expected results and benefits of participation, and
- total contribution (primarily through in-kind contributions). In projects where co-financing is required, the total amount must be stated.

Letters of intent should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

#### **Appendix 7. Signatures from the university** (appendix template)

To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

The application must be signed by the project manager and the project owner. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. The project owner assures through his/her signature that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

Appendix template for signatures is downloaded from the Foundation's website, [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se). The signature appendix should either be signed manually or electronically by, for example, eduSign, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

## **Preparation and assessment**

The application will be reviewed by the secretariat of the Knowledge Foundation to ensure that the formal requirements are met. If these are met, an assessment of the project's scientific quality will be performed by international scientific experts (peer review). Thereafter, an external assessment panel



will conduct an overall assessment based on the assessment criteria below. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's CEO after recommendation by the external assessment panel.

### Formal requirements

The application must meet the following requirements before the Knowledge Foundation will consider it for evaluation. Applications that do not meet the requirements, will be rejected for formal reasons.

- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group.
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed at the applicant university at the starting date of the project.
- The project manager must not have been academically active for more than 3 years after the doctoral degree, which must be clearly shown in the CV.
- The application must include appendices according to the call instructions.
- At least two business actors must co-finance the project.
- Co-financing business actors must fulfil the criteria set by the Knowledge Foundation.<sup>8</sup>
- The business actors' total co-financing, primarily through in-kind contributions, must correspond to at least the same amount as requested from the Knowledge Foundation.
- Signed letters of intent from all participating partners should be attached. Specified co-financing should be certified in the letters of intent from co-financing partners.
- Funds requested from the Knowledge Foundation may not exceed SEK 2 million (excl. OH costs).
- The duration of the project should be 2-3 years.
- Projects may start on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025, at the earliest, and on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025, at the latest.
- The application must be signed by the project owner and the project manager.

### Assessment criteria

#### *Strong research and education environment*

- To what extent is the project expected to contribute to the short- and long-term development of the research and education environment?
- To what extent is there a clear description of the research and education environment's current status?
- To what extent is there an adequate ambition for the development of the research and education environment?

#### *Scientific quality<sup>9</sup>*

- How well does the research question relate and contribute to the current state-of-the-art?
- How clear and realistic are the scientific objectives of the project?
- How clear and relevant are the scientific methods in the project?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of whether sex and gender perspectives are relevant in the project's scientific content and in the design of the project? If considered relevant, are these perspectives appropriately included?
- How appropriate is the project manager's scientific competence in relation to the project content?

#### *Benefits to the business partners*

- How relevant is the scientific question to the needs of participating business actors, and to what extent is it possibly applicable to a wider business sector?
- To what extent is the research project expected to contribute to development of the participating business actors, and to possible development of a wider business sector?

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<sup>8</sup> More information on [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se).

<sup>9</sup> When the application concerns an artistic research domain, the concept *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call.

*Implementation*

- Is the project implementation adequate in relation to the project objectives?
- How well planned and organised is the work in the project, particularly regarding work distribution and collaboration between the partners?
- How well on an aggregated level are the merits and experiences of the project group fulfilling the requirements for an adequate project implementation according to the project plan?
- To what extent is there an adequate description of how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group?
- How well is the budget described and justified in the project plan, and is the project plan realistic in relation to available resources?
- How appropriate and realistic is the time and activity plan and the risk analysis?
- To what extent is the research project and other qualifying activities (described in the professional development plan), and the collaboration with the reference group expected to promote the project manager's professional development and the possibility to become an independent researcher?