



SWEDISH FOUNDATION *for*  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH

12 August 2019

## **Call for Research Project Proposals**

# **SSF Sweden-Taiwan Collaborative Research Framework Projects**

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF) announces SEK 30 million for one to three framework project(s) each involving 4-6 research groups from Sweden and Taiwan for a period of 5-6 years. The call aims to stimulate bilateral collaborative interdisciplinary research of the highest international quality within the areas of Natural Science, Engineering Sciences or Medicine, for the betterment of society.

### **Background**

SSF recognizes the accelerating scientific and technological development in East Asia with large market opportunities. Correspondingly, SSF has established bilateral research cooperation with Japan and South Korea. In order to further strengthen Sweden's position in this dynamic region, it is strategic to promote research exchange also with Taiwan.

### **Scope**

This call aims to stimulate bilateral collaborative, interdisciplinary research within natural and engineering sciences or medicine, of relevance to present or future industry and to society. The research must be based on a deeply intertwined collaboration between teams of Swedish and Taiwanese researchers, including exchange.

The selected project(s) will be supported by a grant of maximum SEK 10-30 million for a period of 5-6 years to be used for salaries, research equipment, travel, and running costs according to the needs of the project. Funding for the last 2-3 years will be contingent upon a successful midterm evaluation.

Research areas included in this call that are considered strategic, alone or in combination, are:

- Information, Communication, and Systems Technologies (ICT)
- Life Sciences with a focus on Technologies and Bioengineering
- Materials Research with a focus on new and better functionality and Production.

The project should be based on problem-, challenge- or application-driven research that meet the highest international scientific standards.

### **Strategic relevance**

Strategic relevance is defined here as positive impact on society. The successful project could, for example, provide future enabling technologies for applications, products and services, or medical treatment. Correspondingly, the proposal should meet a significant research challenge and project the utilisation/exploitation of the research results on a 10-15 year horizon. Graduate student training, pre-doc and post-doc exchange as well as secondments of senior researchers between the partner's institutes will also provide impact for industry, clinics and the larger society. This includes providing measures of effectiveness for translation and innovation.

Three percent of the grant is earmarked from SSF for activities towards utilisation efforts of the research results. These funds are only available for the Swedish researchers. It is recommended that the PI:s involve partners that can support such innovation and exploitation activities, like a university innovation office, already at the formulation stage of the proposal.

### **Eligibility**

All projects must be based on an active (existing or newly created) collaboration between, two or three senior Swedish applicants and two or three senior Taiwanese applicants with relevant complementary scientific expertise. The applicants from each country should be from different research group(s), preferably from different departments or universities in the respective country for added interdisciplinary and exchange value. All applicants should take active part in the project and their activities should be at least partly financed by the project budget. In this call the administrative organisation (the Swedish organisation receiving the grant) may transfer maximum 25% of the grant to the Taiwanese applicants' organisations to cover research expenses on their side. The project may be reinforced by grants from the Taiwan side.

The proposal must be submitted by a main applicant, employed to at least 50% by a Swedish university or university college, who has the capacity to assume coordination responsibility for the project during the entire grant period. The applicants must be employed by a Swedish or Taiwanese university, university college, university hospital, or by a public or private non-profit research institute. At least two of the applicants must be employed by a Swedish university or university college.

While project participation from industry, public authorities or other relevant organisations is a positive criterion, such participants cannot be funded by the SSF grant, but may participate on their own budget.

The proposed budget should be a total of maximum MSEK 30 million during five to six years (including overhead). A maximum of 25% of the grant may be used for salary for the main applicant and/or the co-applicants, but only to cover up to a maximum of 25% of the salary of each applicant. Junior participants (PhD students, postdocs or other junior researchers) may be funded by 100% of the salary. A maximum of 10% of the grant may be used for covering cost of expensive equipment and other research infrastructure.

Please note:

- each applicant is allowed to be represented in one application as a main applicant.
- each applicant is allowed to be represented in one application as a co-applicant.
- any one person is allowed to have maximum two SSF-framework grants simultaneously (with an overlap in time of up to three years) as a main applicant.

Proposals not conforming to these conditions will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the main applicant to inform all the co-applicants and to check the proposal for compliance with the rules before submission.

## **Proposal and submission**

The proposal must be written in English and submitted via the SSF application portal at: <http://apply.strategiska.se>. Note that in order to get a complete view of all data required for submission it is necessary to consult the portal. Please log on to the portal well in advance of the deadline. Please also submit the proposal in due time before the deadline. When the proposal is submitted, the system will reject it if some data field is missing. As long as this is done before the application deadline it is possible to submit and re-submit as many times as necessary.

A complete proposal must contain, among other data specified in the portal, a clear purpose statement, a full description of the research plan and full details of the relevant expertise of the participating groups as well as the planned exchange. It should contain a clear account of the strategic significance of the research in the medium to long term, including a plan for utilisation/exploitation efforts that should commence in parallel with the research activities, already from day one in the project.

Each proposal shall clearly describe the state of the art within the area(s) addressed. It is also important for the proposal to give a clear picture of the resources available and to demonstrate that the proposed constellation of research groups will be effective in view of its objectives.

A Letter of Intent from the Head of the main applicant's department is compulsory.

All proposals must be submitted by **14:00 hours (2:00 pm CET) on December 3, 2019**. No additional material will be considered after this deadline.

## **Evaluation**

Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of generalists and specialists from industry, academia, and research institutes, using the following criteria:

- Conformity to the scope and eligibility as outlined above,
- Scientific quality; originality, strengths, weaknesses, degree of internationalisation and interdisciplinarity, and feasibility of the research plan,
- Strategic relevance, with clear purpose and potential impact of the proposed research to Swedish industry and/or society,
- Qualifications of the applicants and composition of the research team, including exchange and gender balance; previous achievements (science, innovation and entrepreneurship), international experience and networks, and leadership/management of research teams.

## **Timetable**

- Last date for proposals: December 3, 2019, 14:00 CET at the latest
- Decision by the SSF Board: Spring 2020
- Project start: Mid 2020

No additional material submitted after deadline will be considered.

Please note that the Foundation is subject to the Principle of Public Access to Official Records (Offentlighetsprincipen). Thus, applicants should avoid submitting material that they do not wish to be made public, e.g., information that could prevent patenting.

## **Contact persons at SSF:**

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