Swedish EPA Environmental Research Grants

Instructions for applicants - research programme

Content

1. Introduction

This instruction guides applicants to apply for research programmes from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency´s (Swedish EPA) Environmental Research Grant. Here you find practical instructions on how to write an application in the application portal PRISMA.

The purpose of funding research with the Environmental Research Grant is to generate scientifically based knowledge in support of the Swedish EPA and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's (SwAM) environmental work. According to the Swedish EPA's appropriation letter, the grant may be used to fund research in support of the Swedish EPA and SwAM´s work on the environmental quality objectives, implementation of the climate policy framework, the Environmental Code and as a basis for international negotiation work. The research can be within natural science, social science, or humanistic science. We welcome subject-specific and interdisciplinary programmes. We would like the applicants to suggest research with active collaboration between the scientific community and society.

The Swedish EPA announces the Environmental Research Grant call once a year. The research areas in question are based on the Agencies' inventory of new knowledge needed for their environmental work.

The assessment of applications is based on scientific quality, relevance, and expected usefulness for the Swedish EPA and SwAM's future environmental work. Time and communication plans, the applicant´s competence, as well as project costs and plausibility are also considered in the assessment. More information on the review process is available on the Swedish EPA's webpage "Att granska" (In Swedish, with links to instructions for reviewers in English). It is recommended to read the review criteria to understand the requirements of applications.

The Swedish EPA processes your personal data to administer research applications in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). For more information about the Swedish EPA's handling of personal information, see https://www.naturvardsverket.se/hantering-av-personuppgifter (in Swedish)

2. General instructions

Research funding from the Environmental Research Grant is announced in open calls. The call is announced on the Swedish EPA´s website and in the Research Council´s information mail (in Swedish). Applications must be written in the application portal PRISMA. Applications which do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected by the Swedish EPA, prior to consideration in the review panel.

An application submitted to the Swedish EPA is considered a public document according to Swedish law. Information on granted research projects is published at the

Swedish EPA's website, including information on names, affiliations, project titles and grants. The Swedish EPA supplies information on awarded grants to SweCRIS, a national database of funded research established on behalf of the Swedish government. Link: https://www.swecris.se/en_us/

Results from research funded by the Environmental Research Grant shall be published with open access. More information: https://www.kb.se/samverkan-och-utveckling/oppen-tillgang-och-bibsamkonsortiet/open-access-and-bibsam-consortium.html

If your project generates data, you should have a data management plan in place at the start of the project. The plan must describe how collected or created data will be handled during the project time and how it will be taken care of afterwards. You should not include a data management plan in your application. Your administrating organisation certifies that a data management plan will be available when you start your project and that the plan will be maintained. See also requirements for the administrating organisation (section 2.2). We recommend the Swedish Research Council's proposal and template for a data management plan: https://www.vr.se/english/applying-for-funding/requirements-terms-and-conditions/producing-a-data-management-plan.html.

2.1. *Who can apply for research funding?*

To apply for grants from the Environmental Research Grant you must have completed a doctoral degree no later than the last application date for the call.

If the main and co-applicants have granted research funding from the Swedish EPA within earlier calls, a final report from funded projects should have been submitted and approved to be considered for funding within this call.

2.2. *Administrating organisation*

An administrating organisation is the organisation receiving and administrating the research grant. Grants from the Environmental Research Grant are to be managed by a Swedish university, college, research institute or government agency conducting research as part of their mandate and meeting the requirements for administrating organisations.

To be able to apply for the Environmental Research Grant, your organisation must be approved as an administrating organisation and have an organisational account in PRISMA. You find organisations approved in the application form in PRISMA. If your organisation is not listed, an authorised representative may apply for an organisation account in PRISMA, which will then be assessed by the Swedish EPA. Make sure you have support for your project from your administrating organisation. An approved administrating organisation shall:

- Be a legal entity with a Swedish corporate registration number.
- Conduct documented research activities and fulfil the general conditions for research grants.
- Guarantee academic freedom within the assignment.
- Ensure that the results are openly accessible to other researchers, the Swedish EPA, SwAM, other authorities, companies, and the public. Ensure that a data management plan is available and maintained.
- Not conduct any economic activity. Organisations that conduct economic and non-economic activities can only be approved to be an administrating organisation if funds are used only in non-economic activities. Business accounts must be separated from each other.

For your application to be valid, the administration organisation must sign your application in PRISMA and thereby approve their commitment as an employer. This must be done within 7 calendar days from the last application date.

3. Practical instructions for applicants

Below you will find instructions on how a research application for funding should be written and what it should contain. Add your application to the application portal PRISMA: https://prisma.research.se/Start

3.1. *Create account*

Create a personal account in PRISMA. Enter your personal information, CV, and publications.

PRISMA is a mutual application portal used by the Swedish EPA, the Swedish Research Council, Formas and Forte among others, and you will only need one and the same account for all research funders. If you already have a PRISMA account, it will work for applying to the Swedish EPA.

You enter your information and you may add or change the information if needed. The reviewers do not have access to the information in your account. Filling in and completing the application, you must add the information needed for the grant you are applying for. Since many reviewers are non-Swedish speaking researchers, we ask you to use English throughout the total application.

You need not be employed by the administrating organisation at the time of your application, but the administrating organisation must sign your application in PRISMA.

3.2. *Requirements - the programme consortium*

The programme shall consist of a consortium. A consortium shall consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of nine sub-projects, one of which shall be the coordinating project. The consortium must contain sub-projects from at least

four different universities or research institutes. Information registered in the pre-proposal step 1 is binding. Only minor changes are allowed during step 2.

The following participant roles and information are mandatory:
• Coordinating project – including the appointed programme leader (main applicant), programme communicator and programme administrator,

• Programme description - overall research question, description of coordination and communication,

• Subprojects - title, scientific goals, subproject leader and project participants (including other participants),

• Justification - scientific and societal relevance.

Approved amendments of the pre-proposal in step 2
A few changes are allowed between the pre-proposal (Step 1) and the full application (Step 2). Programme leader and lead communicator *must not* be replaced between Step 1 and 2. The focus of the subprojects must not be changed. Approved changes between Step 1 and Step 2 are:

• A maximum of two subproject managers may be replaced.
• A maximum of one subproject may be deleted and a new subproject may be added.
• Minor budget redistributions are approved.

3.3. Write an application

A programme application is performed in two steps. Step 1 is a pre-proposal submission. We invite the applicants to introduce a programme description with a specified consortium and a schematical proposal of the programme sub-projects. In Step 2 a full application shall be submitted.

The programme consortium
The programme shall consist of a consortium. A consortium shall consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of nine sub-projects, one of which shall be the coordinating project. The consortium must contain sub-projects from at least four different universities or research institutes. Information registered in the Step 1 pre-proposal is binding. Only minor changes are allowed during Step 2.

In Step 1, the following is registered:
• Coordinating project – including the appointed programme manager (main applicant), programme communicator and programme administrator.
• Programme description - overall research question, description of coordination and communication.

- Subprojects - title, scientific goals, project leader and project participant (including other participants).
- Justification - scientific and societal relevance.

Requirements for application in Step 1:
- A pre-proposal must be registered in PRISMA.
- The programme coordinator shall be the main applicant.
- The programme coordinator may only lead the coordinating project.
- A lead communicator and an administrator must be included in the coordinating project.

Subproject leaders may only lead one subproject.
- Programme managers, sub-project leaders and the leading communicator must be affiliated to an approved fund manager with a Swedish organization number.
- Registration as a sub-project leader, participating researcher and/or other participant in Step 1 is considered binding (with exception to changes that are allowed between Steps 1 and 2).

Participating researchers and other participants may participate in several sub-projects

Headings in Prisma

Here follows a description of the headings in the application form in Prisma and instructions for what to be filled in under each heading. An asterisk (*) in the application form denotes that the information requested is mandatory.

Tip: Check the application in the portal regularly as you fill in the application, use the Check and register heading. This will inform you if mandatory information is missing. You may also preview the layout with the Preview button, Show application (pdf).

Descriptive information
Step 1: Register a Swedish and an English project title, preferably short and catchy, easy to understand, and communicate in different contexts. Fill in an abstract in English.

Step 2: Keep the abstract in English and add a summary and a popular science description in Swedish.

The duration of the programme is five years, and this has been pre-specified in PRISMA.

Select SCB codes which are national subject codes according to Statistics Sweden's standard for division of research topics. In addition, tick the Environmental Quality Objectives and the Generational Goals that you address.

Project description

Ethical considerations

Step 1 and 2: If an ethical review is required for the research it must be stated here. Report which possible ethical questions are of concern and how these will be dealt with in the research work. This may include animal experiments or research when personal data needs to be used. Upon request from the Swedish EPA an ethical permit for involving for example animals in the research should be presented.

Programme description

This description will differ between Step 1 and 2. In Step 1, the applicant registers a brief sketch which can then be further developed in Step 2.

Describe your programme in text boxes within six different subheadings:
1) Objectives and expected results, 2) Methods, 3) Practical relevance, 4) Communication, 5) Management and budget, and 6) Competence. References are given in text and with a reference list in a special text box 7 at the end of the project description. The text boxes allow a given number of characters, if the maximum number is exceeded, the application will not be registered. Within each text box, it is possible to upload figures and tables.

It is strongly recommended that the programme description is written in English since the applications are reviewed by international experts and the working language in the Review Panel is English. If the application is written in Swedish, it may be translated mechanically or by a professional translator without special knowledge in the research area.

Note that the Review Panel will assess the applications based on both scientific quality and practical relevance for the Swedish EPA and SwAM's environmental work and in the greater perspective of the total environmental work in society. It will be useful to read "Att granska" (In Swedish, with links to instructions for reviewers in English). to gain information about what is assessed during the review.

Programme application, Step 1

In Step 1, it is mainly the programme coordinator who writes the application in a sketch form. Subproject leaders register as participating researchers. In the programme description, the content has been organized within six subheadings plus references to enable a more uniform structure of the applications.

1) Aims and expected results

Write the overall scientific aims and objectives of the proposed programme. Describe research questions and hypotheses in short. Briefly associate the expected results to the background theory. In short, describe the aims and the main research questions for each subproject. In brief, describe how each of the subprojects contributes to the overall

programme aims.

2) Methods

In brief describe the overall programme structure in a schematical work plan, including a brief motivation of each subproject topic and of the number of subprojects. Describe briefly how the subprojects will interact. Describe transdisciplinary approaches. Describe the methods in short and explain the novelty of the research planned. Explain how the proposed programme work plan fits to the call.

3) Practical relevance

Identify the prioritized target groups, stakeholders, and end users. Briefly indicate how stakeholder involvement is planned. Explain in a few words how the programme will be novel in terms of practical relevance, and how the results will benefit the stakeholders and end users in a short- and long-term perspective. and end users in a short- and long-term perspective.

4) Communication

Based on the communication plan briefly motivate how communication will be coordinated between subprojects and how main target groups, stakeholders and end users will be involved.

5) Management and budget

Based on the time plan briefly motivate the organization, management, and coordination of the programme including programme coordinator, administrator, and communicator. In short motivate the overall budget and provide an overview of how budget and time are to be allocated among the subprojects.

6) Competence

Describe the experience and competence of the programme manager, the administrator, and the communicator. Briefly describe the competence of the subproject leaders. Indicate earlier experience in collaborating with stakeholders and end users. CV:s are added with the Prisma CV module - for programme manager, communicator and subproject leaders including the most recent and relevant merits. List other participants, both researchers and stakeholders, within each subproject team.

7) References

List the references you have used in programme description.

Programme application, Step 2

After a review of the pre-proposal, the applicants who proceed to Step 2 are invited to register a full-scale application. In Step 2, the programme coordinator/leader develops the sketch for the overall coordinating project, in addition, a project description is registered for each subproject. In Step 2, all participating researchers can contribute to formulating the application. The programme coordinator is responsible for the coordinating project. Subproject manager is responsible for his/her respective subproject.

1) Aims and expected results

Coordinating project: Develop and discuss the overall scientific aims and objectives of the programme based on the pre-application (step 1). Describe research questions and hypotheses in detail. Describe background theory and expected results. Describe how the aims and the most important research questions for each subproject will contribute to the overall aims of the programme.

Subproject: Describe the subproject's scientific aims and objectives. Describe research questions and hypotheses in detail. Describe background theory and expected results. Describe how the aims and the most important research questions in the subproject will contribute to the overall aims of the programme.

2) Methods

Coordinating project: Develop the research plan based on the pre-proposal (step 1) with a description of subprojects and work packages. Motivate the planned subprojects and work packages and explain any deviations from the pre-proposal. Describe how the subprojects interact and support the main aims of the programme. Describe transdisciplinary approaches in detail. Describe planned methods and explain how the programme will be innovative in terms of scientific methods. Explain in what way the proposed methods for both the coordination part and within the mix of subprojects are interconnected to answer research questions and hypotheses in relation to the overall programme objectives.

Subproject: Describe the overall subproject structure and work plan (preferably divided into work packages), the scientific methods and outline how the methods will be implemented. Explain in what way the methods are appropriate and contribute to the overall programme. Describe transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary approaches as applicable.

3) Practical relevance

Coordinating project: Develop the pre-proposal (Step 1) and describe how priority target groups, stakeholders, and end users of the programme will be involved. Describe how the results of the programme will be useful and practically relevant for the Swedish EPA, the SwAM, and other relevant authorities. Develop the programme's relevance for meeting environmental quality objectives, generational goals, the global goals for sustainable development and other societal goals. Explain in detail how the programme will be innovative in terms of practical relevance. Explain how the results will benefit stakeholders and end users. State this from a time perspective, e.g. the significance both today and in the future.

Subproject: Describe how the subproject's priority target groups, stakeholders, and end users are involved. Describe the subproject's contribution to the overall practical relevance of the programme for the Swedish EPA and SwAM. Develop the subproject's relevance for meeting the environmental quality objectives, the generation goals, the SDG's and other societal goals. Explain in detail how the subproject will be innovative in terms of practical relevance. Explain how the results will benefit stakeholders and end users. State this from a time perspective, e.g. the significance both today and in the

future.

4) Communication

Coordinating project: Develop the communication plan from the pre-application (Step 1). Motivate and describe the programme's coordinated communication, including communication objectives and the main dissemination channels for the activities planned. Describe how the communication is adapted for priority target groups, stakeholders, and end users. Describe how the communication is coordinated between the subprojects.

Subproject: Describe how the subproject contributes to the programme's overall communication activities. Describe how the prioritized target groups, stakeholders, and end users are reached with communication. Motivate the subproject's contribution to the communication plan (attached by the coordinator as a separate file).

5) Management and budget

Coordinating project: Develop the pre-proposal (Step 1) with a detailed description and motivation of the organisation, management, and coordination of the programme. Develop the description of the roles of programme coordinators, leading communicators, and administrators. Describe the other participants in the coordination part. Present a detailed schedule for the coordinating programme and for all subprojects. Describe how the time is distributed between subprojects. Justify the total budget and describe in detail how the budget is divided between subprojects divided into salaries, running costs, expenses, and indirect costs.

Subproject: Describe and motivate the subproject's organisation and implementation. Describe the roles of all participants in the subproject team. Insert a detailed schedule into the overall schedule of the programme. Justify the schedule and describe how the time is distributed between different tasks. Describe the subproject budget in detail and how the budget is divided into salaries, running costs, expenses, and indirect costs.

The programme will establish a reference group that includes relevant administrators at the Swedish EPA and SwAM, as well as other stakeholders. Regular contact should be maintained with the reference group. In general, we advise *to avoid* contacting and naming administrators and investigators at the Swedish EPA and SwAM during the application process to avoid conflicts of interests as these people may participate in the Review Panel. The Swedish EPA and SwAM will later appoint representatives to the reference group for the approved programme.

6) Competence

Coordinating project: Describe the experience and competence of the programme coordinator, the leading communicator, and the entire coordination team. Describe how the competence within the coordination team will interact with the competence in the subprojects. Describe and motivate how the competences will contribute to completing the programme. Describe in detail the experience of collaborating with applied businesses, stakeholders, and end users. A CV must be attached to all participants in the coordination team.

Subproject: Describe the experience and competence of the subproject manager and the

entire subproject team. Describe and briefly motivate how the competences will contribute to completing the subproject and the programme. Describe experience of collaborating with stakeholders and end users. A CV must be attached for the entire subproject team.

7) References

List the references that have been used in the programme and subproject descriptions.

Changes of the pre-proposal

Approved amendments are found under *section 3.2*. All possible changes between Step 1 and Step 2 must be justified.
In Step 2, there will be one form for the coordinating project and one for each subproject. Under programme description, follow the subheadings and describe as follows in each text box:

Programme application Step 1 and Step 2

Heading: Time and communication plan

Step 1+2: Here you should upload a time plan and a communication plan for the programme. In Step 1 a general template is used and in Step 2 a detailed template is used. In both Step 1 and Step 2, the time and communication plan is filled in by the coordinating project, but all subprojects are included. You will find the templates at the Swedish EPA website [Instruktioner for sokande](#) (in Swedish with templates in English).

Fill in the template that applies to programmes (select Step 1 or Step 2) and upload as pdf files. Make sure that the entire plan is included in a readable way. The plans must provide an overall picture of all activities, further information on how to fill them in can be found under the heading Project description, subheading 5) Management and budget, and 4) Communication.

Heading: Budget and resources

Under this heading, you must enter costs for the programme and any other financing of the programme. Enter amounts in the thousand kronor.

For personnel costs person, type of service and percentage of full-time must be stated. For other costs, the running costs are specified such as laboratory work, field work, materials and equipment costs (the appropriation does not finance unreasonably expensive equipment), laboratory analyses and travels. The project's costs for planned communication efforts and publication with open access shall be stated. If the project consists of different sub-studies, this should be illustrated in terms of budget. Indirect costs that the university charges must be specified. There is no upper limit for indirect costs, however, indirect costs for all co-applicants from each university must be specified and justified in the budget.

Minimal environmental and climate impact and maximum environmentally friendly

profile should always be pursued. Any travel should have as little impact on the environment as possible and be carried out in a cost- and time-efficient manner. Trains and local public transport should be used as much as possible. The administrating organisation must have routines that ensures that relevant environmental requirements are set in connection with the organisation's purchase of goods and services.

In subheading 5) Management and budget, justify the budget in words. The budget is part of the assessment. Please note that a budget specification in Swedish will not be translated into English. The budget specification will be assessed in the review process.

Heading: Other funds
Here, you should enter the funding that are sought and granted from another funders (of relevance to programme and subprojects you are applying for). If similar applications, or parts of it, as the one sent to the Swedish EPA are granted, this must be notified as soon as possible to the research officer responsible for the call.

Heading: Administrating organisation
Specify the administrating organisation by using the drop-down lists.

The home institute of the project leader is the organisational manager's organisation, from where the programme is to be conducted. Usually, it is the institution or unit of the coordinating organisation, where the project manager will be employed during the period of the granted programme.

If you do not find your home institute in the drop-down lists, contact your organisation's administrative manager. You will not be able to complete the registration of your application if information on administrating organisation and residence is missing.

Heading: Participants
Under this heading, the coordinating partner invites any participating researchers as well as the administrator and communicator to the application. Participating researchers must be linked to an approved organisation and register their own accounts in PRISMA.

The main applicant can engage both PhD and non-PhD participants depending on the task that needs to be done. Foreign researchers may be invited if appropriate for the research if it is justified why their competence is needed in the programme.

Participants are invited using the email address associated with the person's PRISMA account. It is possible to invite people who do not yet have an account in PRISMA, but for them to be able to participate in your application, they must register their own personal accounts. You will not be able to register the application until all participants have accepted your invitation.

Once a participating researcher has accepted your invitation, you can give she or he permission to edit the application. If you have unanswered invitations, you must delete them - otherwise it is not possible to register the application.

Other participants are those who work at an organisation that does not meet the requirements for an administrating organisation, i.e. a Swedish university, college, research institute or authority conducting research as part of its mission. Other participants are registered by the programme- or subproject leaders in the project description and the budget. CVs for other participants are uploaded as a pdf file (see heading: CV other participants).

Heading: CV
Under this heading, you retrieve your relevant CV information from your personal account in PRISMA. Principal applicants and participating researchers must add their own CV information to the application. The programme coordinator may remind participating researchers to add their CVs to the application.

You may add information from your CV in your profile to the application by clicking Edit next to your name. Click Add for the entries you want to add to the application. The entry moves to the right and the Add button is converted to Delete. This means that the information you previously entered in My Profile has now been added to the application form itself. You may also navigate to your CV details if you need to add new information.

Heading: Publications
Under this heading, you retrieve relevant publications from your personal account in PRISMA. You can add information from your publication list to your profile to the application by clicking Edit. You can also navigate to your publication list if you need to add new information.

Main applicant and participating researchers must add their own publications to the application. The main applicant may remind participating researchers to add their publications to the application.

Heading: CV for other participants
Other participants outside the academy may have postgraduate education and perform research, but at an organisation or company that is not approved as an administrating organisation. If the project involves staff from non-approved administrating organisation, the main applicant can add them as other participants. Other participants do not need to register an account in PRISMA.

The role of other participants enables transdisciplinary research projects, e.g. research in collaboration with businesses or other non-academic actors.

The other participants' CVs are attached as a pdf file (by the programme- or subproject leaders). Maximum a one-page CV per participant. Click on the folder button and locate

the pdf file on your computer to upload the file to the application in PRISMA.