



# Announcement

## 6<sup>th</sup> German-Swedish Call for Proposals for joint R&D projects by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

**Project applications and national funding applications will be accepted until September 18<sup>th</sup> 2025**

### 1. Scope

Vinnova and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) intend to support joint German-Swedish research and development projects (R&D projects) in order to develop innovative products, processes or technical services from all technology and application areas. Funding will be available for R&D projects in which new products, technical services or processes will in subsequent steps generate sustainable solutions with high market potential.

In Germany, funding is provided through the Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM). In Sweden, funding is provided through Vinnova.

Vinnova, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, and AiF Project GmbH, ZIM project management agency on behalf of the BMWK, will assist the project partners with basic information during the submission of project proposals, in the evaluation and in the implementation phase. All results will be announced by March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

### 2. Call Structure

The call invites partners to present joint proposals for R&D projects until September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 according to the following procedures used by Vinnova and ZIM, specified in attachments (Sweden) and the ZIM Guidelines (Germany).

#### 2.1. Financing

Eligible project participants from Germany and Sweden will finance their costs from the funding schemes applicable for this call set by Vinnova and the German funding programme ZIM and complementarily from their own resources. Provision of funding from one funding agency will neither indicate that funding from the other funding agency will be provided, nor bind the other national scheme in its provision of funds to the eligible project participants.

## 2.2. Minimum requirements

Project results will have to contribute to the development of commercial products, processes and / or technical services, which are based on the international state of the art. The project proposals have to comply with the following guidelines:

- The partners must include at least one Swedish and one German SME.
- Participation of further research organisations and other companies are welcome as additional partners or subcontractors according to each country's funding schemes.
- Companies and/or research organisations from other countries may also participate. These partners' participation is neither funded by Vinnova nor ZIM. They have to be included into the Proposal Application Form
- The project should focus on the development of new products, technical services or processes which will in subsequent steps generate sustainable solutions with high market and commercialisation potential.
- The project should have an obvious advantage and differentiated value proposition resulting from the cooperation between the participants from the two countries (e.g. increased knowledge base, commercial leads, access to R&D infrastructure, new fields of application, etc.).
- Project duration should in principal not exceed 2 years and should not begin later than May 31<sup>st</sup> 2026.
- The project should demonstrate a balanced technological contribution by the participants from both countries and must be equally significant to all participants.
  - In a project with two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 70% of total person months to the project.
  - In a project with more than two cooperating partners, no partner may contribute more than 50% of total person months.
  - All research organizations involved in the consortium may altogether not contribute more than 50% of the total person months.

Any partner whose cooperative R&D project is consistent with the aforesaid criteria may apply to the present announcement in accordance with the national laws, rules, regulations and procedures in effect.

## 3. Submission

Between the opening of the call on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and the call deadline on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 all participants must file one short common proposal in English language (Proposal Application Form), legally signed by all organisations participating in the project. The documents have to be submitted electronically to Vinnova via the e-service "Intressentportalen" <https://portal.vinnova.se> (Swedish applicants) at the latest at 14.00 CET on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2025 and to [zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de](mailto:zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de) (German applicants).

A Consortium Agreement that regulates the terms of cooperation between all partners (also in English) must be in place between the German and Swedish stakeholders within the project consortia when applying for the joint project. The existence of such an agreement must be confirmed in the project description at the time of application.

The minimum requirements for the Consortium Agreement are:

- Naming of all project partners
- Description of the project aims, scope, role division and differentiation of the subprojects of the partners including their working plans with person months (for this the common application proposals can be declared as part of the agreement)
- A clause that provides for all partners to be informed if third parties are involved in the project
- Regulation of intellectual property rights (background and foreground)
- Basic regulation of joint commercialization and apportioning of benefits
- Joint final reporting is to be done according to the regulations set by ZIM and Vinnova
- If research organisations from Germany are involved, a passage has to be included that allows them to publish their own results without duty to obtain consent from the other partners.

The Consortium Agreement (called Project Agreement in Vinnova's terminology) shall be consistent with Vinnova's and ZIM's terms and conditions for funding.

The Proposal Application Form as well as additional country-specific information and requirements are available at [www.zim.de/schweden](http://www.zim.de/schweden) and at Vinnova's homepage for this call [www.vinnova.se/sok-finansiering/hitta-finansiering/](http://www.vinnova.se/sok-finansiering/hitta-finansiering/)

In addition to the common proposal, project partners who want to apply for funding within this call must submit a national application according to the respective rules (see below).

### 3.1 Sweden

A description is pre-defined in the standard call text. The project plan required by Vinnova ("Projektbeskrivning") can be submitted either in Swedish or in English. For information and instructions see Vinnova's webpage for this call. Applications must be submitted to Vinnova no later than 14:00 CET on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### 3.2 Germany

Each German project partner submits an individual ZIM application to AiF Projekt GmbH. Every German SME, in accordance with the relevant EU regulations, as well as medium-sized companies with less than 500 employees (full-time equivalents), which carry out R&D for the development of innovative products, processes or technical services, are eligible to apply. Other medium-sized companies with less than 1,000 employees are eligible to apply for funding if they cooperate with at least one German SME (in accordance

with EU regulations) whose project is funded. Research and technology organizations are eligible to apply as cooperation partners of eligible companies.

Detailed criteria for submitting applications and the ZIM application form can be found on the ZIM website ([www.zim.de](http://www.zim.de)); you may also contact AiF Projekt GmbH directly as described below. The application must be written in German and comply with the regulations of the ZIM guideline.

Current notice:

The federal budget for 2025 has not yet been adopted at the time of publication of this call for proposals. The approval of positively evaluated project applications is therefore subject to the German Bundestag's decision on the 2025 budget.

### 3.3 Decision and project start

It is expected that applicants will receive the decision regarding their grant by their national funding organizations on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026. If funding is granted, the project is to be started by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026 at the latest.

## Contact

The national funding organisations Vinnova in Sweden and AiF Projekt GmbH in Germany will be available to supply all interested parties with all relevant information. Consultation with the national funding organizations is highly recommended at an early stage.



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