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Securing sustainable metals and minerals supply

Swedish Mining Innovation - 2022

Call for proposals within the Strategic Innovation Program for the Swedish Mining and Metal Producing Industry (Swedish Mining Innovation)

Swedish Mining Innovation is part of Vinnova's, the Swedish Energy Agency's and the Swedish Research Council Formas' joint program for strategic innovation areas. The aim with the programs within strategic innovation areas is to stimulate international competitiveness and sustainable solutions for global societal challenges.

For more information about the program, see www.swedishmininginnovation.se.

In case of any discrepancies between this text and the Swedish version, the Swedish call text applies.



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1 Summary of the call

You can apply for funding for projects that address any of the challenges defined by the Strategic Research and Innovation Roadmap (2022), see www.swedishmininginnovation.se. The Roadmap covers the branch-wide challenges of the mining and metals producing industry. Special focus for this year's call are innovations to reduce the environmental impact of mine waste including production of by-products.

The planned budget for the call is 24 million SEK.

There are three types of projects in the call:

- Pre-studies
- Full-scale Innovation projects
- Pilot and Demonstration projects (Pilot & demo)

Maximum funding for a pre-study is 650 000 SEK with a maximum funding level of 75% of eligible costs. Full-scale innovation projects, and Pilot and Demo projects have maximum funding level of 50% of eligible costs and maximum funding of 10 million SEK.

The project party applying for a grant must be a legal entity in Sweden, or foreign organizations that have a branch (filial) or establishment (driftställe) in Sweden. These include e.g. companies, public authorities (e.g. municipalities, counties), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and research organizations (universities and research institutes).

Pre-studies have a maximum duration of 8 months. Pre-studies aim to supporting the decision-making process by objectively and scientifically evaluating a potential innovation's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks and to identify the resources required to develop the innovation further. The pre-study should conclude whether or not the development of the innovation should continue. The project consortium must consist of at least two organizations. Partners that are companies must submit a letter of commitment (styrkt åtagande) with the application.

Full-scale Innovation projects and Pilot and Demo projects have a maximum duration of 3 years. The projects aim to develop and implement ideas that contribute to the realization of Swedish Mining Innovation's overall objectives through developing and testing new methods, processes or working procedures. The project consortium must consist of at least one research organization (institute or academia) and two relevant non-research organizations. Partners that are

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companies must submit a letter of commitment (styrkt åtagande) with the application.

The applications will be evaluated by international reviewers, so it is strongly recommended that proposals are written in English.

Important dates

Please note that the dates and times given are tentative. For the latest information, please visit www.vinnova.se.

Call for proposals opens May 12, 2022

Call for proposals closes November 10, 2022 at 14:00

Date of decision February 21, 2023
Earliest date for project start March 1, 2023
Latest date for project start April 1, 2023

Person to contact concerning the call's focus, content and desired effects:

Lawrence Hooey, Technology and Innovation Manager, Swedish Mining Innovation

Tel: 0920-49 36 65

E-mail: Lawrence.hooey@swedishmininginnovation.se

Person to contact concerning the assessment process, administrative, legal and other questions about the call's contents:

Pontus Westrin, Programme Manager, Vinnova

Tel: 08-473 32 51

E-Mail: pontus.westrin@vinnova.se

Contact for questions about the online application service:

Vinnovas IT-support Tel: 08-473 32 99 helpdesk@vinnova.se

Updated information on the call and link to the eServices submission portal are found at www.vinnova.se.

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2 Swedish Mining Innovation's aims and objectives

Swedish Mining Innovation aims to strengthen the Swedish mining and metal producing industry's competitiveness and sustainability by contributing to the development of a world leading industry which contributes to an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable society. The Strategic Research and Innovation Roadmap (2022)¹ describes the challenges and themes for development along the value chain for the mining and metals producing industry.

Swedish Mining Innovation seeks a broad range of stakeholders to collaborate to develop their innovation capacity and create new solutions that contribute to the goals of sustainable development in Agenda 2030², within the frame of the Strategic Research and Innovation Roadmap and the call's focus areas.

2.1 Focus areas of the call

The call is open to any applications which address challenges described in the Strategic Research and Innovation Roadmap. The scope of the call covers the full value chain including exploration, mining and metals production. However, in order to balance Swedish Mining Innovation's portfolio, projects in following areas will be prioritized:

- Mine waste management, mine closure and remediation to improve sustainability and reduce environmental impact.
- Characterization and processing chains from ores and wastes that both reduce the environment impact of the wastes produced and recover new bi-products hitherto unrecovered.

Vinnova decides which projects will receive financing based on the independent experts ranking and the recommendation of Swedish Mining Innovation's Steering Board based on contribution to the balance in Swedish Mining Innovation's project portfolio, in particular focus areas above, and total budget of the call.

Projects are expected to contribute to the development of an equal society by providing both women and men equal parts of the funding, influence and activities in the projects and by the projects' results benefiting both women and men. To assist you in preparing your application, Swedish Mining Innovation has a digital program which provides guidance and ideas about how to integrate

² Agenda 2030 - de globala hållbarhetsmålen som drivkraft för innovation | Vinnova

¹ https://www.swedishmininginnovation.se/roadmap/

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gender equality aspects into your project³. You can also find further information from Vinnova⁴.

3 Who may apply?

This call for proposals is aimed at consortia where companies, universities, research institutes and other relevant stakeholders contributing to Swedish Mining Innovation's objectives can be included.

Pre-studies can be applied for by a minimum of two organizations that can be any combination of research and/or non-research organizations⁵.

Partners applying for Full-scale innovation projects or Pilot and Demo projects must consist of at least one research organization (institute or academia) and two other relevant non-research organizations.

Project consortia covering the entire innovation chain from idea to end-user/market are considered positively as well as consortia with organizations traditionally working in industries other than mining and metal extraction, so that more groundbreaking innovations can be created through new approaches. Involvement of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) is strongly encouraged.⁶

The project party applying for a grant must be a legal entity in Sweden, or foreign organizations that have a branch (filial) or establishment (driftställe) in Sweden⁷. Foreign organizations without a branch or establishment in Sweden are welcome to participate as a party in projects, but cannot receive funding from Vinnova. It is important in the application to justify the value of the foreign organization's contribution to the Swedish mining sector. Even for a foreign organization, which is a partner in the project but is not eligible for funding from Vinnova, it is possible to include their contribution to projects as co-financing (i.e. in-kind or own funds), with the same rules on eligible costs as for Swedish organizations. Note that the project coordinator must be a Swedish legal entity.

³ Information on accessing the digital program is at: www.swedishmininginnovation.se/calls/

⁴ https://www.vinnova.se/m/jamstalld-innovation/

⁵ Research organizations include universities and research institutes; non-research organizations include companies, NGOs, and public bodies such as counties.

⁶ For the definition of SMEs, see the User Guide at <u>smedefinitionguide_en.pdf</u> (europa.eu)

⁷ To be eligible for a grant, the costs of the project must be attributable to the branch's or establishment's operations.

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4 What do we fund?

4.1 Project types eligible for funding

You can apply for funding for the following types of projects:

- Pre-studies
- Full-scale Innovation projects
- Pilot and Demo projects

Pre-studies will be ranked separately from Full-scale and Pilot and Demo projects. Swedish Mining Innovation intends to finance projects with a spread between the various project types.

4.1.1 Pre-studies

Pre-studies, maximum duration of eight months, aim to support the decision-making process by objectively and scientifically evaluating a potential innovation's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks and to identify the resources required to develop the innovation further. The pre-study should conclude whether or not the development of the innovation should continue. The pre-study's project TRL must start at a minimum of 3 and end at a maximum of 7 (see the appendix for a description of TRL). The project partners must consist of at least two organizations. Companies must provide a letter of commitment (styrkt åtagande). The maximum funding for a pre-study is 650 000 SEK.

The activities must be covered by funding basis for feasibility studies (Genomförbarhetsstudie). A description of the funding basis can be found in Vinnova's table of funding levels for government funding⁸. SMEs have added flexibility in terms of maximum funding level, see section 5.

4.1.2 Full-scale Innovation Projects

Full-scale innovation projects have a maximum duration of 3 years. Full-scale Innovation projects may apply for up to 10 million SEK funding. The innovation project's TRL must start at a minimum of 3 and end at a maximum of 7 (see the appendix for a description of TRL). Activities must be covered by the funding basis for industrial research ("Industriell forskning") according to Vinnova definitions for state aid rules. If the project meets the criteria for effective collaboration (faktiskt samarbete), the funding level limits for individual companies may be increased⁹. SMEs have added flexibility in funding level, see section 5.

⁸ Stödnivåer, definitioner m.m. för bidrag enligt Vinnovas stödordning

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The projects aim to develop and implement ideas that contribute to the realization of Swedish Mining Innovation's overall objectives. The focus of the project is to increase the TRL by acquiring new knowledge and skills to develop new or greatly improved product, process or service. This can include, for example, the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems and to pilot operations, or development of components in complex systems that require validation.

The project consortium must consist of at least one research organization and two other relevant non-research organizations.

4.1.3 Pilot and Demonstration projects

Pilot and Demo projects have a maximum duration of 3 years. Pilot and Demo projects may apply for up to 10 million SEK in funding. The projects aim to develop and implement ideas that contribute to the realization of Swedish Mining Innovation's overall objectives through demonstrating and testing new methods, processes or working procedures. The Pilot and Demo project's TRL must start at a minimum of TRL 5 and go to maximum TRL of 7. Activities must be covered by the funding basis for experimental development ("Experimentell utveckling"). If the project meets the criteria for effective collaboration (faktiskt samarbete) the funding level limits for individual companies may be increased SMEs have added flexibility in funding level, see section 5.

The project's activities can include prototype design, demonstration, pilot work, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments such as corresponds to realistic operating conditions, where the primary purpose is to make additional technical improvements to products, processes or services that are not yet fixed. This may include development of a commercially usable prototype or a pilot project that is necessarily the final commercial product and which is too expensive to produce to be used only for demonstration and evaluation.

The project consortium must consist of at least one research organization and two other relevant non-research organizations.

4.2 Eligible costs

Vinnova's financing is through grants. Grants given by Vinnova to businesses and other organizations that conduct commercial activities are regulated by the rules

¹⁰ Stödnivåer, definitioner m.m. för bidrag enligt Vinnovas stödordning

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governing state aid¹¹. The rules include, for example, which costs are eligible and how much can be covered by grants.

5 Funding available for the call

5.1 Funding available for the call

The budget of this call for proposals is 24 million SEK.

5.2 Funding level by project type

Pre-studies may apply for up to 650 000 SEK funding of eligible costs at a maximum funding level of 75% for the overall project.

Full-scale Innovation projects and Pilot and Demo projects can apply for up to 10 M SEK funding of eligible costs. Both full-scale projects, and pilot and demo projects have maximum 50% funding level for the overall project.

5.3 Individual funding level limits by type of organization

Organizations that take part in their non-economic operations (icke-ekonomiska verksamhet) may receive grants with up to 100% of eligible costs. Organizations that take part in their economic activity have funding level limits according to state-aid rules. For large companies, the limits are shown in Table 1 below. If the project meets the criteria for effective collaboration (faktiskt samarbete), the maximum funding level for individual companies may be increased for full-scale, and pilot & demo projects. Note that the overall project funding level is limited to 75% of eligible costs for pre-studies, and 50% for full-scale and pilot and demo projects.

Table 1. Funding level limits for individual large companies

	Large companies
Pre-study	50%
(Genomförbarhetsstudie)	
Full-scale Innovation project	50%
(industriell forskning)	(+15% faktiskt samarbete)
Pilot & Demo project	25%
(experimentell utveckling)	(+15% faktiskt samarbete)

¹¹ Regler för bidrag | Statligt stöd till ekonomisk verksamhet | Vinnova, What costs are eligible are summarized in "Vinnovas allmänna villkor för bidrag" and described in more detail here: "Anvisning till stödberättigande kostnader".

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A number of options have been added to encourage SME participation^{12.} SMEs have the same funding bases available as large companies with the potential adjustments where effective collaboration exists, see Table 2. SMEs may also be eligible for de minimis support (stöd av mindre betydelse). In addition, the funding basis for newly started companies may be applicable. Read the description of the eligibility requirements and the respective funding bases carefully¹³.

Table 2. Funding level limits for small and medium-sized companies

-	Small companies	Medium-sized companies
Pre-study	70%	60%
(Genomförbarhetsstudie)		
Full-scale Innovation project	70%	60%
(industriell forskning)	(+10% faktiskt	(+15% faktiskt
	samarbete)	samarbete)
Pilot & Demo project	45%	35%
(experimentell utveckling)	(+15% faktiskt	(+15% faktiskt
	samarbete)	samarbete)
Any project type:		
De minimis funding (Stöd av	100%	100%
mindre betydelse)		
Aid for start-ups (Nystartade	100%	NA
företag)		

6 Prerequisites for the application to be assessed

For a proposal to be eligible for assessment the following requirements must be met:

- ✓ The project partners must be legal entities.
- ✓ Project partners that apply for funding must be Swedish legal entities, or foreign organizations with a registered branch (filial) or establishment (driftställe) in Sweden¹⁴. The project coordinator must be a Swedish legal entity.

¹² For definition of SME (SMF, små och medelstora företag) see https://www.vinnova.se/sok-finansiering/statligt-stod/

¹³ Stödnivåer, definitioner m.m. för bidrag enligt Vinnovas stödordning

¹⁴ A Swedish legal entity refers to a Swedish-registered organization including a subsidiary of international companies, however not a foreign organization's registered branche (filial) or establishment (driftställe); for foreign organizations, eligible costs covered by Vinnova funding must be attributable to the Swedish-registered branch or establishment.

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- ✓ For innovation projects and pilot and demo projects, the consortium must consist of at least one research organization (institute or academia) and two other relevant organizations that are not research organizations.
- ✓ All proposals must include letters of commitment (styrkt åtagande) from partners that are companies.
- ✓ Proposals for Full-scale innovation projects and Pilot and Demo projects can apply for a maximum funding level of 50 percent of the project's eligible costs.
- ✓ Pre-study proposals can apply for a maximum funding level of 75 percent of the project's eligible costs.
- ✓ Proposals must include everything requested in Section 9.
- ✓ Maximum project duration is 8 months for pre-studies, and 36 months for both Full-scale innovation projects, and Pilot and Demo projects.
- ✓ The project proposals should address at least one of the focus areas (see 2.1) or other area in the Strategic Research and Innovation Roadmap¹⁵.

7 Assessment of proposals

7.1 Assessment criteria

Each application is assessed by the independent evaluators according to the criteria below. Full-scale innovation projects and pilot and demo projects are expected to have detailed work plan, dissemination and implementation plans, and defined KPIs (key performance indicators). Pre-studies should describe clearly how the pre-study contributes to the next stage of development and expected impact areas of the innovation.

	Assessment criteria (equal weighting in the three main criteria, bullet points are for guidance and not assessed individually)		
	Potential		
1	 The project's relevance for the National Strategic R&I roadmap¹⁶, scientific quality and contribution to Sweden's innovation capacity How well the project contributes to sustainable development The project's commercialization or implementation potential including global impact The project's contribution to a gender equal societal development 		

¹⁵ www.swedishmininginnovation.se/roadmap/

¹⁶ www.swedishmininginnovation.se/roadmap/

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2 Implementation

- The quality of the project's organizational structure, methods, work plan, resource allocation, deliverables and budget
- How well gender equality aspects have been integrated in the project plan
- Quality of the communication plan

3 Stakeholders

- The expertise and relevant experience of the individual project members
- The expertise within the consortium as a whole, coverage of relevant value chain and partners' innovative strength to implement the results or continue to the next stage of development.
- How well the team (key persons) is composed regarding gender distribution, as well as the distribution of power and influence between women and men
- Relevance of international partners (if any)
- Other stakeholders engaged in the project

7.2 Assessment process

The assessment process is designed to identify the best proposals with reference to the assessment criteria. The assessments of the applications will be performed by a group of evaluators appointed by Vinnova and comprised of both Swedish and international independent experts working under confidentiality.

The prestudies will be ranked in one list, and the full-scale and pilot & demo projects in another list. The following summarizes the evaluation and decision-making process:

- **1.** Proposal and all required forms are to be submitted via Vinnova's eServices portal.
- **2.** Proposals that do not fulfil the formal requirements will be rejected without further motivation.
- 3. Proposals that meet the formal requirements will be assessed by external national and international independent experts. Their assessment may include a short video interview with the project leader for Full-scale Innovation projects, and Pilot and Demo projects. The evaluators rank the proposals and give recommendations as to which projects should be funded.
- 4. Vinnova decides which projects will receive financing based on the independent experts ranking and the recommendation of Swedish Mining Innovation's Steering Board, taking into account also contribution to the balance in Swedish Mining Innovation's project portfolio and focus areas, and total budget of the call.
- 5. Applicants are notified of the decisions.

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8 Decisions and Conditions

8.1 Vinnova's decision

How much each party in the project is granted is stated in the decision. For companies, grants may be awarded under Article 25 of Commission Regulation No 651/2014 ("GBER"), for feasibility study (genomförbarhetsstudie), industrial research (industriell forskning) and experimental development (experimental utveckling) respectively.

Grants may also be awarded under Article 22 of GBER to participating start-ups (nystartade företag). Small and medium-sized companies may also be eligible for de minimis grants (stöd av mindre betydelse) in accordance with Commission Regulation No 1407/2013.

For organizations taking part in their non-economic operations, grants may be given in accordance with the Ordinance (2009:1101) with instructions for the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems.

The basis for support for each participant will be stated in the decision and also governs which costs are eligible.

Vinnova's decision to accept or reject an application cannot be appealed.

8.2 Conditions for granted funding

Vinnova's general terms and conditions for funding apply to this call for proposals¹⁷. The terms and conditions include rules for project agreements, conditions for payment, follow-up, reporting and use of results. Scientific publications must be published with open access according to Vinnova's instructions¹⁸.

As the call for proposals is made within the framework of strategic innovation program the following special terms and conditions apply:

• The project should be represented by at least one project partner at conferences and other activities arranged within the Swedish Mining Innovation program, up to 2 times per year for Full-scale, and Pilot and Demo projects; 1 time per year for pre-studies.

-

¹⁷ Terms and conditions are found on Vinnova's website, together with help to understand and meet the conditions: https://www.vinnova.se/en/apply-for-funding/rules-for-our-funding/terms-and-conditions-for-our-funding/

¹⁸ Anvisning för öppen tillgång till vetenskapliga publikationer

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- For information about the project and for each publication of project results, it must be stated that the work has been carried out within the Strategic Innovation Program Swedish Mining Innovation, a joint program from Vinnova, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.
 - Annually and when the project submits its final report to Vinnova a summary of the project progress or final results shall be sent to Swedish Mining Innovation program office via e-mail. The summary may be shared and published freely and should not contain any confidential or otherwise sensitive information. See https://www.swedishmininginnovation.se/projectleaderroutine/ for the template and other information for project leaders.

Additional special terms and conditions may be added for specific projects.

If you do not comply with Vinnova's terms and conditions, you may be liable for repayment. This also applies if you have been granted funding incorrectly or with an excessive amount.

9 How to apply

Applications are to be submitted electronically via the web-based application submission system (eServices portal) which can be accessed at Vinnova's website. The following documents are also to be uploaded¹⁹:

- **Project description (Projektbeskrivning)** using the template
- **Project summary (Projektreferat)** using the template, maximum two A4 pages
- Letters of commitment (styrkt åtagande), using the template, from partners that are companies including SMEs. This is required for all applications that include companies as partners.
- **CV for key persons** in the project team (at least one person per project partner). Maximum of three A4 sized pages per CV. No template is available.
- If the proposal is a continuation of a project previously granted funding within Swedish Mining Innovation a summary of the content and results should be attached to the proposal (max. 2 pages). It should be clear in the

¹⁹ Templates for the project description, project summary and letter of commitment are available on Vinnova's call's webpage.

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proposal what was done in the previous project and how the proposed project will continue this work. No template is available.

- Verification for SMEs (modellförsäkran)²⁰.
- De minimis certificate where applicable²¹.

If you do not receive a confirmation by email within 24 hours of submitting the proposal please contact Vinnova.

When submitting the proposal, the project summary (projektreferat) should be submitted in Vinnova portal and also be emailed to the Swedish Mining Innovation Program office Lawrence. Hooey@swedishmininginnovation.se. The project summary can be shared and published freely and should therefore not contain any confidential or otherwise sensitive information.

The applications will be evaluated by international reviewers, so it is strongly recommended that proposals are written in English.

After the submission deadline, no changes can be made to the proposal unless requested by Vinnova.

10 Who can read the proposal

Applications received by Vinnova become public documents but Vinnova does not release data of individual business or operating conditions, inventions and research results in cases where it can be assumed that the individual could suffer damage if the information were to be made public.

Documents sent to the organization responsible for the strategic innovation program (Swedish Mining Innovation Program Office) are not covered by the same secrecy rules as Vinnova. Documents sent to the Swedish Mining Innovation Program office should not contain confidential or sensitive information.

 $[\]frac{^{20}}{\text{https://www.vinnova.se/contentassets/03d3665164c14b46a854b76bfb3c6055/mall-modellforsakran-smf.pdf}}$

²¹ https://www.vinnova.se/globalassets/huvudsajt/sok-finansiering/gora-ansokan/dokument/intyg-om-stod-av-mindre-betydelse-juli--19.docx

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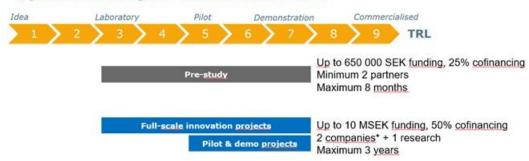
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Appendix 1 - TRL

Swedish Mining Innovation uses the following TRL:

- TRL 1 basic principles observed
- TRL 2 technology concept formulated
- **TRL 3** experimental *proof of concept*
- TRL 4 technology validated in lab
- **TRL 5** technology *validated* in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- **TRL 6** technology *demonstrated* in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 7 system prototype demonstration in operational environment
- **TRL 8** system complete and qualified
- **TRL 9** actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

Open Call Project TRL Levels 2022



^{*2} companies or other non-research actors such as NGOs, Public sector etc.

Example funding project: Pre-study

Applied for: 650 000 kr funding. Max 75% funding (25% cofinance)

Minimum total project budget: $650\ 000/0,75 = 866\ 667\ kr$

Minimum cofinancing: $866\ 667 - 650\ 000 = 216\ 667\ kr$