

NSF Convergence Accelerator 2023 - Supplementary instructions for Swedish applicants

Regards Swedish applicants that intend support from Vinnova and/or Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council, SRC) for participating in Swedish-American teams proposed in U.S National Science Foundation's (NSF) funding scheme: Convergence Accelerator 2023, Cohort Phase 1, *Track L: Real-World Chemical Sensing Applications*

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1 Purpose of this instruction

This document constitutes supplementary instructions for the first step in the two-step process that the US research funder National Science Foundation (NSF) uses for its funding offer in the program Convergence Accelerator 2023¹.

Here are made clear which conditions that, in addition to NSF's own, apply to the two Swedish financiers (Vinnova and the Swedish Research Council) in order to support the Swedish party/parties in project proposals that NSF proposes to offer funding.

The offer is aimed at Swedish² organizations (legal entities) or Swedish researchers who want to collaborate with American partners within the framework of NSF Convergence Accelerator 2023, where Swedish parties can be part of a team in the thematic area: **Real-World Chemical Sensing Applications (Track L)**³.

This first step in NSF's application process means that the Swedish-American project team submits a so-called "Letter of Intent" (LOI) to NSF no later than July 11 (at 17:00 local time), [in agreement with NSF's instructions](#). However, in order to be eligible for financing, the Swedish party/parties also need to submit a supplementary document to the Swedish financiers via Vinnova's e-service, no later than **July 11 at 14:00 CET**.

The purpose of the supplementary information is for Vinnova and the Swedish Research Council to be able to determine whether the application meets one or both authorities' rules for funding. It includes a web-based brief description and the following appendices (see full description in section 3):

- The same **Letter of Intent (LOI)** which has been sent till NSF
- **Supplementary information** according to the word template [at the webpage of Vinnova](#).
- **Supporting letter from the administrating organisation** (applies only to applicants for funding to Vetenskapsrådet/the Swedish Research Council).

The supplementary information must follow the instructions in this document and provide sufficient information to be able to determine the conditions for funding

¹ For complete instructions for NSF's process, applicants need to read and follow updates at the following link: [SAM.gov](#)

² Swedish here also refers to foreign organizations that have a branch or place of business in Sweden, provided that project costs can be attributed to their operations.

³ Please note that NSF funds additional areas, but that Swedish applicants can only participate in teams within Track L.

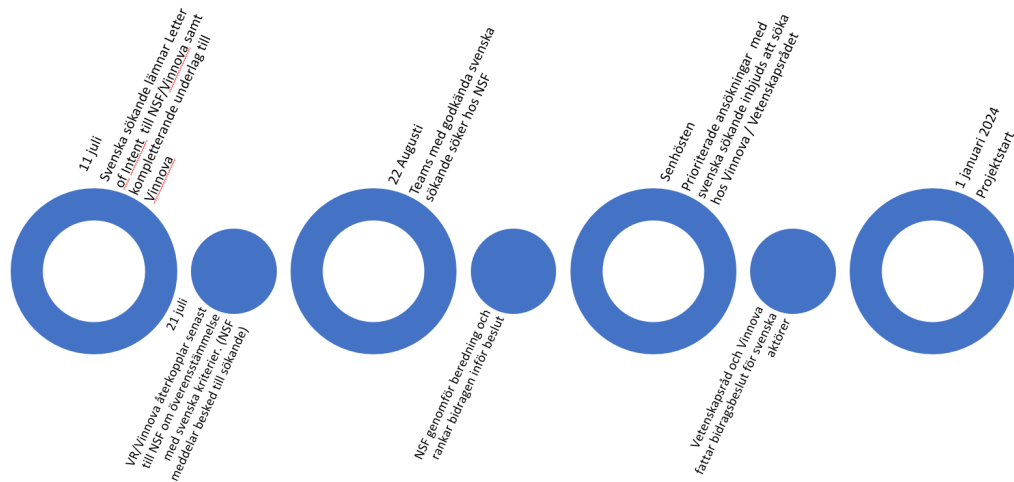
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for your intended project activities from either the Swedish Research Council or Vinnova.

Only project proposals that receive a positive statement from Vinnova/The Swedish Research Council and NSF are allowed the opportunity to submit a complete project proposal in NSF's second stage. This statement will be communicated via NSF no later than July 21.

(A decision notice will also be sent to applicants via Vinnova's e-service later during the summer).



For successful applicants in NSF's second stage, the full project proposals to be financed by the Swedish financiers will, upon notification, be sent the documents into the respective systems at Vinnova and/or the Swedish Research Council.

Questions

Maria Öhman, Vinnova
08-473 3189, maria.ohman@vinnova.se

Lena Renner, Vetenskapsrådet
08-546 44 040, lena.renner@vr.se

Vinnovas IT-support:

Questions regarding Vinnova's e-service to send in the information
08-473 32 99, helpdesk@vinnova.se

2 What can Vinnova / the Swedish Research Council finance?

2.1 Project proposals within the NSF Convergence Accelerator 2023

Swedish parties can be part of a team within Convergence Accelerators's **Track L: Real-World Chemical Sensing Applications**.

From NSF's description:

"The overarching goal of Track L: Real-World Chemical Sensing Applications is to develop novel energy-efficient and miniaturized or portable biological and chemical sensors for tangible applications. The track builds on a wide range of foundational knowledge and advances in olfaction, biosensing, and chemical sensing to undertake the challenging steps of transforming these scientific discoveries into practice. It serves as a platform for convergent teams to develop tools, technologies, and applications to address challenges aligned to chemical sensing".

2.2 Budget available for funding of Swedish parties

The Swedish funding organizations have set aside a total of SEK 7.6 million for all granted projects within the funding effort, of which:

- 2.6 million are earmarked for applicants who fulfill the eligible criteria of Vetenskapsrådet/**Swedish Research Council**, see the eligible criteria specified under 2.3
- SEK 5 million from **Vinnova** can finance eligible project costs for all types of legal entities. Vinnova's contribution is thus not tied to a particular natural person.

Applicants do not need to choose a single funding organisation, but need to state whether they are entitled/eligible to receive funds from Vinnova and/or the Swedish Research Council and provide the requested information that shows this.

2.3 These can participate in the funding offer

For applicants considering funding from Vinnova applies the following:

- ✓ Project participants applying for grants are Swedish legal entities⁴.
- ✓ Key resources in the project (as PI / co-PI / senior scientists) are employed by the project partner at the latest at the start of the project⁵.

For applicants considering funding from Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council applies the following:

- ✓ The applicant for a project grant must be an individual researcher together with their organisation (a Swedish higher education institution (HEI) or another Swedish organisation that fulfils the [criteria for administrating organisations for grants from Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council](#)). Please note that researchers from organisations (in general business companies) that are not approved administrating organisations cannot get funding of Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council.
- ✓ The applicant must hold a Swedish doctoral degree or an equivalent foreign degree, awarded no later than the deadline for this call (11 July 2023). For applicants with Swedish doctoral degrees, the award date listed in Ladok applies.
- ✓ You do not have to be employed by the administrating organisation at the time of application, but you must be employed at the start of and throughout the grant period and any further additional availability period. The employment must equal at least 20 per cent of a full-time equivalent.
- ✓ Your administrating organisation must confirm that they will employ you (according to the specifications above) in the support letter that is included in the application.

2.4 Activities and costs for which it is possible to apply for funding

Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council and Vinnova do not have the same regulations for which types of costs that can be financed, and how large part of the costs that can be covered. Therefore, the applicants also are requested to state in the template which type of costs that are expected to be incurred.

Also note that Vinnova and the Swedish Research Council use different concepts

⁴ Swedish here also refers to foreign organizations that have a branch or place of business in Sweden, provided that project costs can be attributed to their operations.

⁵ Vinnova therefore does not allow project employment, or the equivalent, solely as a result of received financial support.

and definitions to describe different types of costs. It is therefore important to read the more detailed descriptions in the support documents referred to.

Your application must not include costs for purposes that are already financed by the Swedish Research Council, Vinnova or any other financier. Overlap with other grants or applications may affect your granted grant amount or be a reason for us to reject your application.

2.4.1 This applies to financing from Vinnova

Vinnova's funding is through grants that are covered by a regulatory framework for support with public funds. These regulations control, among other things, the types of costs of the project participants that may be covered by grants. The **types of costs** that can be covered by grants, and how they may be calculated, are described in [Vinnova's general terms and conditions for grants](#), and in more detail in sections 2 and 4 of the document [“Instruction to eligible costs”](#).

In short, the following categories of costs may be eligible:

- personnel costs (gross salary and actual additional costs corresponding to actual time spent in the project)
- costs of equipment, land and buildings (based on the depreciation period and the extent/time they are used)
- costs of consultants and licenses etc. (which is only used in the project)
- other direct costs (e.g. consumables and travel, including stays at research facilities)
- indirect costs (based on overheads such as regular business premises)
Universities may calculate indirect costs according to the full cost principle they apply. Other organizations may calculate and add actual indirect costs up to a maximum of 30% of their eligible personnel costs.

The **types of project activities** that are approved in this funding offer shall be covered by either Fundamental research (grundforskning), Industrial research (industriell forskning) or Experimental development (experimentell utveckling) [as defined in Article 25 in the European Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 651/2014 \(GBER\), see number 84-86 \(page 24-25\)](#).

If an organization that carries out economic activity (here: company) intends to apply for a grant in this funding effort, it can only be financed by Vinnova. According to the rules on state aid, this grant can only constitute a certain percentage of the company's total eligible cost in the project. The remaining eligible costs must be financed by the company itself. The grants from Vinnova will be awarded in accordance with Sec 9 of the Ordinance (2015:208) on

research, development and innovation, i.e. as aid to research and development projects under article 25 of the European Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 (GBER). In this specific funding offer, Vinnova admits that the following share of applicant companies' eligible costs are sought in grants:

Type of research activity	Large Enterprise	Medium Enterprise	Small Enterprise
Fundamental Research	50 %	60 %	70 %
Industrial Research	50 %	60 %	70 %
Experimental development	25 %	35 %	45 %

Grants to research organizations (universities, higher-education establishments and institutes) and public entities participating with their non-economic activities are not subject to state aid rules. Grants from Vinnova to such entities will be awarded in accordance with the Ordinance (2009:1101) with Instruction to the Swedish Innovation Agency.

Each Swedish party in the team is responsible for ensuring that the grant received does not exceed the level of support permitted for them according to the rules for state aid.

An organization can be granted funds from Vinnova for participation in several project teams.

2.4.2 This applies for funding of the Swedish Research Council

Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research funds mainly basic research conducted by researchers at approved Swedish administrating organisations (the webpage with the general conditions applying for funding of Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council grants can be found [here](#)).

You may only submit one application for this grant under this call and you may only be part of one team. Further information about the grants you may apply for during the same year are shown in on the page [Several grants simultaneously](#). Applications within this calls belong to “Research Project Grant with focus”.

Costs and grant amounts

You can apply for a grant for all types of project-related costs, such as:

- salaries (including your own salary), however no more than corresponding to the person's activity level in the project.
- premises
- running costs (such as consumables, travel including stays at research facilities, publication costs and minor equipment)
- depreciation costs

The grant amount includes cover of indirect costs as a percentage of the direct costs, according to the model used by your administrating organisation. Grants must not be used for scholarships. If a doctoral student participates, project funds may not be paid out as salary during teaching or other departmental duties.

The budget for Swedish participation is limited to max 2 600 000 kronor for funding from Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council. If you apply with more than one participant in the same team, the total amount has to be divided.

3 How to submit your supplementary information

To apply, you fill in a web-based form in Vinnova's e-service for applications. There you also upload **the attachments below**:

- **Letter of Intent:** According to NSF's template [downloaded from their website](#).
- **Supplementary information:** According to the template that is [downloaded from Vinnova's webpage](#).
- **Letter of Support from the administrating organisation (applies only to applicants that consider funding from Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council).** The letter of support (no specific template) shall confirm that the applicant will be employed at the start of and throughout the grant period and any additional availability period. The employment must equal at least 20 per cent of a full-time equivalent. The formal letter of support from your administrating organisation shall be signed by the head of the home department or equivalent where you will be doing your research. Your (the applicant's) name shall be stated clearly, as well as the name and function/position of the person writing the letter of support. Please note that **all applicants who plan to apply for funding from Vetenskapsrådet/the Swedish Research Council need to submit a letter of support.**

No additional material may be attached to the proposal.

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Please note that the assessment process at NSF will be performed by international non-Swedish speaking evaluators. **Our strong recommendation is therefore that all information is written in English.** If the proposal is written in Swedish, it will be translated without your co-operation.

The complementary information must be submitted to Vinnova through the eService at **latest July 11, 2023, 14:00 CET.**

When the proposal period has expired, any complementary can only be made at the request of Vinnova or Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council.

The information will be read by the staff working with the initiative at Vinnova's and Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council's. All work under a duty of confidentiality.

Proposals submitted to Vinnova become public documents, but Vinnova does not disclose information about the individual's business or operational conditions, inventions and research results if it can be assumed that any individual suffers

4 Further information on decisions from Vinnova and the Swedish Research Council if NSF recommends to approve a full proposal

Within the framework of the available budget and the different boundary conditions that the authorities have for funding, Vinnova and Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council will make their own decisions about supporting Swedish applicants in accordance with NSF's recommendation for decision.

The proposals financed by Vinnova and/or Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council will, in connection with the decision, need to provide additional documentation regarding the Swedish party's commitment.

This information is either identical to the complete application to NSF, or a document of equivalent scope regarding the Swedish applicant's commitments. The application's Swedish contact person will receive instructions on how this process will take place, either through Vinnova's e-service or through Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council's Prisma system.

Vinnova's general terms and conditions for grants apply to the awarded grants.

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Current terms can be found on our website, along with help to understand and comply with the terms⁶.

The general terms and conditions of Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council apply for all grants Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council award⁷.

If the application is granted funding, the complete application may be handled by Vinnova or Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council or both Vinnova or Vetenskapsrådet/Swedish Research Council.

Proposals submitted to Vinnova and the Swedish Research Council become public documents.

The main rule is that the general public is entitled to partake of these, according to the principle of public access to official documents. This also applies to applications that are rejected, or recalled by the applicant. The Swedish Research Council does not have the option to classify as secret information in applications received relating to individuals' business or operating circumstances, inventions or research results. This means that the starting point is that such information is official and may be disclosed when we receive a request to disclose an official document. Before you submit your application to the Swedish Research Council, you therefore need to decide whether publication of information in your application may affect the opportunity for you or others to make beneficial use of inventions or research results, including any impact on the preconditions for a patent application or other commercialisation. If you then consider that some information is not suitable for making public, then that information should not be part of your application to the Swedish Research Council.

Vinnova does not disclose information about the individual's business or operational conditions, inventions and research results if it can be assumed that any individual suffers.

⁶ Current terms can be found on our website, along with help to understand and comply with the terms: <https://www.vinnova.se/en/apply-for-funding/rules-for-our-funding/terms-and-conditions-for-our-funding/>

⁷ <https://www.vr.se/english/applying-for-funding/requirements-terms-and-conditions/terms-and-conditions-for-our-grants.html>