

Version 2022-05-16

Instructions for applicants for the Swedish EPA Environmental Research Grant: programme

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1. Introduction

In this guideline you find practical instructions for how to write an application for the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's (Swedish EPA) Environmental Research Grant in our application portal PRISMA. The instruction applies to grant applications for **programmes**.

The purpose of research funded by the Environmental Research Grant is to generate science-based knowledge in support of the Swedish EPA and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's (SwAM) work. According to the Swedish EPA's appropriation direction, the Environmental Research Grant will 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 the basis for international negotiation work.

The research can focus on natural science, social science and/or the humanities. We welcome both subject-specific and interdisciplinary approaches and encourage applicants to propose research with active collaboration between research and the surrounding society.

The Environmental Research Grant funding is announced in competition. Only applications received via the application management system PRISMA during the annual open call period are processed. The call is announced on the Swedish EPA's website and in the Research Unit's newsletter. Applications that do not meet the formal requirements are rejected by the Swedish EPA without processing in review panels. An application submitted to the Swedish EPA via PRISMA is considered a public document according to Swedish law. Decisions on granted research (including who has been granted funding, university, project, amount) are published on the Swedish EPA's website. Decisions are made by the Swedish EPA's Director General and cannot be appealed.

The Swedish EPA processes your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and other legislation. For further information [See here](#).

2. General instructions

2.1. Who can apply?

Eligible to apply for research funding is a person who has completed a doctoral degree no later than the last application day for the call.

The final reporting from applicants and co-applicants' previous projects, where the project period has expired, must have been received by the Swedish EPA and approved before a new application can be granted.

You do not have to be employed by the administrating organisation at the time of application, but if financed you need to be employed.

2.2 Administrating organisation

An administrating organisation is the organisation that receives and administers the research grant. Grants shall be administered by a Swedish university, college, research institute or government agency that conducts research as part of its assignment and that meets the requirements for administrating organisations.

Your organisation must be approved as an administrating organisation and have an organisational account in PRISMA. If your organisation is an approved administrating organisation with another funding agency using PRISMA, your organisation must still apply to become an administrating organisation for the Swedish EPA. You will find organisations that are approved in the application form in PRISMA. If your organisation is not included, a qualified representative can apply for an organisational account in PRISMA. The application will be processed by the Swedish EPA. We recommend that you apply early in the process as it may take time to be approved.

An approved administrating organisation must:

- be a juridical person with a Swedish corporate identity number ("organisationsnummer")
- 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 is kept updated
- not conduct financial activity. For an organisation that conducts both financial and non-financial activities, it can only be an administrating organisation if the funds are used in the non-financial activities. The accounts must be separated from each other

For your application to be valid, the administrating organisation must sign your application in PRISMA. By doing so, the organisation accepts commitment as an employer. The signing must be done within seven calendar days from the closing date for application.

2.3 Open access

Results and data from research funded by the Environmental Research Grant must be published with open access ([More information](#)).

2.4 Data management plan

If your research generates data, a data management plan must be available from the start of the project. The plan must describe how collected or created data will be handled during the project and how it will be handled when the project has ended. The data management plan should not be included in your application. Your administrating organisation certifies, by signing the application in PRISMA, that a data management plan is available when your program starts and that it is kept updated. See also requirements for the administrating organisation (section 2.2). We recommend that you use the Swedish Research Council's template for a [Data management plan](#).

3. Practical PRISMA instructions for applicants

Below are instructions for how a programme application should be written and what it should contain. Applications are made in PRISMA (<https://prisma.research.se/>).

PRISMA is a joint application system used by several Swedish research funders like the Swedish EPA, the Swedish Research Council, Formas, and Forte, allowing you to use one single account for all.

3.1 Create an account

Begin by creating a personal account in PRISMA. If you already created an account in previous applications to other funders the same account can be used when applying to the Swedish EPA.

Enter your personal information, CV as well as publications. The information can be supplemented or changed when needed. Experts reviewing applications do not have access to your account information. When filling in the application, use your account information. Since many reviewers do not speak Swedish, please use English.

Ensure that you have support for your application from your intended administrating organisation (see 2.2. Administrating organisation). The administrating organisation must sign your application in PRISMA.

3.2 Create an application

We strongly recommend you to write the entire application in English as the review panel's working language is English. If the application is written in Swedish, it may be automatically translated.

The review panel assesses the applications based on both scientific quality and practical relevance, as well as the expected benefit for the Swedish EPA and SwAM. You may benefit from reading the instructions for reviewers to get an idea of what is required in the application and what is assessed during the review ([To review](#)).

A programme application is performed in two stages. Stage 1 is a pre-proposal submission. We invite the applicants to describe the programme with a specified consortium and a schematical proposal of the content of the programme and the sub-projects. In Stage 2 a full application should be submitted.

The programme consortium requirements

The programme shall consist of a consortium led by a programme coordinator who is also the main applicant. Information registered in the pre-proposal stage 1 is binding except for minor changes that can be granted during stage 2.

In Stage 1, the following is registered:

- Coordinating project – including the appointed programme coordinator (main applicant), programme communicator and programme administrator;
- Programme description - overall research question, description of coordination and communication;
- Sub-projects - title, scientific aims, sub-project leaders and sub-project participants (including other participants);
- Justification - scientific and societal relevance.

Requirements for an application in Stage 1 (pre-proposal):

- A pre-proposal must be registered in PRISMA.
- The consortium shall consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of eight sub-projects, one of which shall be the coordinating project.
- The programme coordinator may only lead the coordinating project.
- The programme coordinator, sub-project leaders and the programme communicator must be affiliated to approved administrating organisations.
- A programme communicator and a programme administrator must be included in the coordinating project but do not need to be named.
- The consortium must contain sub-projects led by sub-project leaders from at least four different universities or research institutes.
- Sub-project leaders may only lead one sub-project.
- Participating researchers and other participants may participate in several sub-projects.
- Registration as a sub-project leader, participating researchers and/or other participant in Stage 1 is considered binding with exception to changes that are allowed between Stage 1 and 2 (see below).

Requirements for an application in Stage 2 (full application):

Only minor changes are allowed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 as follows:

- The full application must be registered in PRISMA. Texts from Stage 1 are available for continuation in PRISMA.
- The programme coordinator must be the same as in Stage 1.
- A maximum of two sub-project leaders may be replaced.
- The focus of the sub-projects should be the same for the two stages.
- A maximum of one sub-project may be deleted and a new sub-project may be added.
- Minor budget redistributions are approved.
- All changes made between Stage 1 and 2 must be justified.

The programmes finally financed should be prepared to engage in a dialogue with the authorities about possible adjustments.

Below is a description of the individual tabs and text boxes with instructions for what to include under each tab in the application. Mandatory information is marked with an asterisk (*) in PRISMA.

You are advised to check the application regularly under the *Check and register* tab to see where mandatory information is still missing. You can also preview the application and the layout with the *Preview, View application button* (pdf).

Tab: Descriptive information

Applicant's contact details

Fill in the programme coordinator's email address and telephone number. The contact information is only used by the Research Unit at the Swedish EPA.

Specify how you received information about the call.

Programme information

Fill in the Swedish and English programme title. It is an advantage if the title is short and powerful, easy to understand, easy to remember and communicate in different contexts.

Abstract and popular scientific description

Include abstracts in English and Swedish and a popular scientific description in Swedish.

Project time

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

Classifications

Select the national subject codes that best suit your programme. They are codes according to Statistic Sweden's standard for Swedish division of research subjects. Also, select the environmental quality objectives and generational goals that best fit your application.

Tab: Project description

Ethical considerations

Stage 1 and 2: If an ethical review is required for the research, this must be stated here. Report which possible ethical issues are affected and how these will be addressed in the research. This may include animal experiments or research where personal data will be used. If applicable, you must present an animal experiment ethics permit upon request.

Programme description

Describe your programme in text boxes within six criteria: 1. Aims and expected results, 2. Methods, 3. Practical relevance, 4. Communication, 5. Management and budget, and 6. Competence. This description will differ between Stage 1 and 2. In Stage 1, the main applicant registers a brief sketch which can then be further developed in Stage 2. In Stage 1, there will be one form for the overall programme. In Stage 2, there will be one form for the coordinating project and one for each sub-project.

The forms allow a given number of characters. If the maximum number is exceeded, the application cannot be registered. You may upload figures and tables within each tab.

Programme application, Stage 1

In Stage 1, it is mainly the programme coordinator who writes the application. Sub-project leaders register as participating researchers.

1. Aims and expected results

Describe the overall scientific aims and objectives of the proposed programme. Briefly describe research questions and hypotheses. Briefly associate the expected results to the background theory. Briefly describe the aims and the main research questions for each sub-project. Briefly describe how each of the sub-projects contributes to the overall programme aims.

2. Methods

Briefly describe the overall programme structure in a schematical work plan, including a brief motivation of each sub-project topic and of the number of sub-projects. Describe briefly how the sub-projects will interact. Describe transdisciplinary approaches. Briefly describe the methods and explain the novelty of the planned research. 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. Describe the practical relevance and usefulness of the results for the Swedish EPA, SwAM and other stakeholders and end users in a short- and long-term perspective.

4. Communication

Create a communication plan using the template at the Swedish EPA's website and upload the file as a pdf – choose the template for Stage 1. Based on the communication plan, briefly motivate how communication will be coordinated between sub-projects and how main target groups, stakeholders and end users will be involved.

5. Management and budget

Create a time plan in the template on the Swedish EPA's website and upload the file as a pdf – choose the template for Stage 1. Based on the time plan, briefly motivate the organisation, management, and coordination of the programme including the efforts of the programme coordinator, communicator, and administrator. Fill in the budget templates in PRISMA. Briefly motivate the overall budget and provide an overview of how budget and time are to be allocated among the sub-projects.

6. Competence

Describe the experience and competence of the programme coordinator, the communicator, and the administrator. Briefly describe the competence of the sub-project leaders. Indicate earlier experience in collaborating with stakeholders and end

users. CV:s are added for the programme coordinator, the communicator and the sub-project leaders using the Prisma CV module. List other participants, both researchers and stakeholders, within each sub-project team. Other participants CV's are uploaded as a pdf; maximum one page per participant.

References

Fill in your reference list here. References are written in running text within criteria 1.-6.

Full programme application, Stage 2

After a review of the pre-proposal, the applicants who proceed to Stage 2 are invited to register a full-scale application. At that time, the overall coordinating project and the sub-projects are developed. In Stage 2, all participating researchers can contribute to formulating the application in PRISMA. The programme coordinator is responsible for the coordinating project. Sub-project leaders are responsible for the sub-projects.

1. Aims and expected results

Coordinating project: Develop and deepen the overall scientific aims and objectives of the programme based on the pre-application (Stage 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.

Sub-project: Describe the sub-project'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 sub-project will contribute to the overall aims of the programme.

2. Methods

Coordinating project: Develop the research plan based on the pre-proposal (Stage 1) with a description of sub-projects and work packages. Motivate the planned sub-projects and work packages and explain any deviations from the pre-proposal. Describe how the sub-projects 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 sub-projects are interconnected to answer research questions and hypotheses in relation to the overall programme aims.

Sub-project: Describe the overall sub-project 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 (Stage 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 relevant for the Swedish EPA, the SwAM, and other relevant authorities. Explain how the programme will contribute to 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.

Sub-project: Describe how the sub-project's priority target groups, stakeholders, and end users are involved. Describe the sub-project's contribution to the overall practical relevance of the programme for the Swedish EPA, SwAM and other relevant authorities. Explain how the sub-project will contribute to meeting the environmental quality objectives, the generation goals, the global goals for sustainable development, and other societal goals. Explain in detail how the sub-project 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-proposal (Stage 1). Use the template at the Swedish EPA's website and upload the file as a pdf – choose the template for Stage 2. 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 sub-projects.

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

5. Management and budget

Coordinating project: Develop the pre-proposal (Stage 1) with a detailed description and motivation of the organisation, management, and coordination of the programme. Develop the description of the roles of programme coordinator, programme communicator, and administrator. Describe the other participants in the coordination part. Create a detailed time plan for the coordinating programme and for all sub-projects. Use the template on the Swedish EPA's website and upload the file as a pdf – choose the template for Stage 2. Describe how the time is distributed between sub-projects. Justify the total budget and describe in detail how the budget is divided between sub-projects divided into salaries, running costs, expenses, and indirect costs.

Sub-project: Describe and motivate the sub-project's organisation and implementation. Describe the roles of all participants in the sub-project team. Create a detailed time plan

and insert into the overall schedule of the programme. Use the same template as in the coordinating project. Justify the time schedule and describe how the time is distributed between different tasks. Describe the sub-project 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. The Swedish EPA and SwAM will appoint representatives to the reference group when the programme is financed. Regular contact should be maintained with the reference group.

6. Competence

Coordinating project: Describe the experience and competence of the programme coordinator, the programme communicator, and the entire coordination team. Describe how the competence within the coordination team will interact with the competence in the sub-projects. 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 registered for all participants in the coordination team. Use the CV module in PRISMA.

Sub-project: Describe the experience and competence of the sub-project leader and the entire sub-project team. Describe and motivate how the competences will contribute to completing the sub-project and the programme. Describe experience of collaborating with stakeholders and end users. A CV must be registered for the entire sub-project team. For participating researchers use the CV module in PRISMA, for other participants attach the CV's in a pdf, maximum one page per participant.

References

Fill in your reference list here. References are written in running text within criteria 1.- 6.

Tab: Time and communication plans

Stage 1 and 2: Upload a time plan and a communication plan here. In Stage 1 a general template is used and in Stage 2 a detailed template is used. You find the templates at the Swedish EPA's website ([Time and communication plans](#)). Fill in the correct tab in the templates (choose programme Stage 1 or Stage 2) and upload the file as a pdf. In Stage 2, the time and communication plans are filled in by the coordinating project, but all sub-projects are included.

Make sure that the entire plan is included and can be read. The plans should provide an overall view of all activities. Further information on how to complete the templates can be found under the tab Programme description, criteria 5. Management and budget and criteria 4. Communication. The templates should be written in English.

Tab: Budget and resources

Stage 1 and 2: Under this tab you should enter programme costs and any other financing. Enter amounts in SEK rounded off to the nearest thousand. The budget should reflect the coordinating project and all sub-projects.

In criteria 5. Management and budget, the budget is justified in words. Note that the budget specification will be assessed in the review process and therefore also should be written in English. A budget specification in Swedish will not be translated into English.

Personnel costs

For personnel costs, type of service and percentage of full-time must be stated for all participants involved in the programme. If a participant will work without salary state 0 in costs.

Other costs

For other costs, running costs are specified, such as laboratory work, field work, analyses, travel as well as materials and equipment costs. The call does not finance unreasonably expensive equipment.

Minimal environmental and climate impact and maximum environmentally friendly profile should always be pursued. Any travel should have as little environmental impact as possible and be carried out in a cost- and time-efficient manner. If possible, use trains and local public transport. 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.

The project costs for planned communication efforts and publication with open access are stated.

Total cost for project

Specify the indirect costs such as university charges. Open by pressing Edit and state the indirect costs per year. 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.

Other funding

Please, enter funding from other funding organisations (applied for and/or granted) of relevance for your Swedish EPA application. If such application is funded the Swedish EPA research officer must be notified.

Tab: Administrating organisation

Specify the administrating organisation by using the drop-down lists (See 2.2 on Administrating organisation).

The project site is the organisational unit where the programme (or equivalent) will be based. Usually, you as a programme coordinator will be employed at the department or unit of the administrating organisation during the programme period.

If you do not find your project site in the drop-down list, contact your organisation's administrative manager. If not filled in, you will not be able to complete the application.

Tab: Participants

Here, the programme coordinator invites any participating researchers, the programme communicator, and the administrator to the application. Participating researchers must be linked to an approved organisation and register their own personal accounts in PRISMA.

The programme coordinator may engage both PhD and non-PhD participants depending on the tasks. Researchers with international affiliation/employment may be invited if their tasks and competences are motivated.

A participating administrator is a person who may help you enter and edit information in the application. The person does not have to be part of your project.

A participant is invited using the e-mail address associated with the person's PRISMA account. It is possible to invite people who do not yet have an account in PRISMA, but they must register their own personal accounts to be able to participate in your application. 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 grant her or him permission to edit the application. Unanswered invitations must be deleted before the application can be registered.

Other participants (See the tab *CV other participants*) are those who work for an organisation that does not meet the requirements for an administrating organisation (see 2.2 Administrating organisation). Other participants are stated in the programme description and the budget. CVs for other participants are uploaded as a running file in pdf (see tab: *CV other participants*).

Tab: CV

Partners within the academy (college / university / research institute) must use the CV module in PRISMA to attach a CV. For partners outside the academy - see the tab *CV other participants*.

You retrieve your relevant CV information from your personal account in PRISMA. The programme coordinator and all participating researchers must add their own CV details 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 a Delete button. This means that the information you previously entered in My Profile has now been added to the application. You may navigate to your CV details if you need to update information by pressing *Go to my profile*. The CV requirements are less for Stage 1 than for Stage 2.

Tab: CV other participants

Other participants outside the academy (college / university / research institute) may or may not hold postgraduate education or work in research, but at an organisation, company or authority that is not approved as an administrating organisation. If the programme involves staff from a non-approved administrating organisation, the programme coordinator can add them as other participants. Other participants do not need to register an account in PRISMA.

The role 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 running file in pdf; maximum one-page per participant. Click on the folder button and locate the pdf on your computer to upload the file in PRISMA.

Tab: Publications

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

The programme coordinator and the participating researchers must add their own publications to the application. The programme coordinator may remind participating researchers to add their publications to the application.