



Call

A circular economy for the whole society

Application deadline: 22 August 2019

Date of decision (preliminary): 20 November 2019

FORMAS

ETT FORSKNINGSRÅD FÖR HÅLLBAR UTVECKLING

A SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A circular economy for the whole society

Application Deadline: 22 August 2019

Date of Decision: 20 November 2019

Revisions

Changes in the call text after the date of publication will be specified here.

Date	Change
2019-05-23	The word "trend" is changed to "development" on page 3.

Contents

Description of the call	3
Introduction	3
Background	3
Purpose and focus.....	4
Before you apply	5
Projects that qualify for funding	5
Grant amount and project duration.....	5
Language.....	5
Who can apply	5
State aid.....	6
How to apply	6
You apply in Prisma.....	6
Information your application must include	7
Assessment of applications	10
Relevance.....	10
Potential.....	10
Implementation	10
Organisation/Stakeholders	11
How does the assessment process work?	11
Grant award decisions	11
Reporting for granted projects	11
Who can read the application?	11
Support and shortcuts	12
Contact information	12

Description of the call

Introduction

The transition to a circular economy is an important part of the development towards a sustainable society since reuse, remanufacturing and recycling contribute to the long-term use of materials and other resources. An extended material lifespan helps to reduce waste and its negative effects and to reduce “unnecessary” extractions of natural resources. This contributes to remaining within the planetary boundaries, which in turn contributes to improved conditions for a sustainable society. This applies to both bio-based and non-bio-based resources. In recent years, major investments have been made in research, development and innovation to increase knowledge and enable a more circular economy. However, the linear economy still dominates society.

Formas hereby announces grants to fund research that increases knowledge about how circular economies and resource flows can be implemented for a more sustainable society. The call provides opportunities for research into the conditions for, and the effects of, circular solutions in different sectors and on different scales in communities.

The call is geared towards funding projects that aim to facilitate the implementation of circular innovations in a concrete way and to analyse their consequences for society, in the short and long terms. This can be done by, e.g., doing one or both of the following:

- Highlight, describe, calculate or otherwise analyse the consequences for society of one or more circular innovations and solutions. The consequences can be for the short term, long term or both.
- Describe the conditions – for example, regulatory or physical – that must be created in order to implement circular innovations in society in a way that contributes to greater sustainability and state how this will be achieved.

The project should be based on one or more circular solutions and/or initiatives, identify one or more target groups, and describe how these groups will be involved in the work and take part of the results.

Background

The circular economy aims to promote circular resource flows. Basically, this means using our resources in a sustainable way and ensuring that products, materials and resources remain in the economy for as long as possible. The circular economy is an important aspect of resource efficiency and resource management, so it also involves preventing and minimising waste. Materials and resources should be kept in circulation for as long as is reasonable to avoid ending up in landfills or being incinerated unnecessarily, so that no more virgin resources than necessary are extracted. Increased reuse and recycling has grown in importance as the standard of living improves worldwide and more and more people can have a lifestyle that is increasingly resource-intensive. In the light of these developments, the topic of circular economy and its development has attracted considerable attention in a growing number of countries in terms of national strategies, action plans and investment in research and development. In particular, the EU has

developed the Circular Economy Action Plan, which describes how the EU should pave the way towards a circular economy. Like many other initiatives, the plan focuses mainly on technology and entrepreneurial considerations.

However, the circular economy is not sustainable in itself. Nor is it a single goal. Instead, it is a means which, if properly implemented, can help to increase sustainability – providing that it takes all dimensions of sustainability into consideration including environment, economy and social sustainability.

A large part of the research and development related to the circular economy focuses on process and technology development, business models, and policies and governance to promote such a development. The economic benefits of circularity are often estimated from the perspective of business economics. But one consideration at least as important for the circular economy to promote sustainable development is the benefit it brings to society in a broader sense as well as its social sustainability aspect. For example, this can mean that a circular solution favours several different stakeholders and target groups in several different ways without their counteracting other sustainability initiatives and measures.

Many calls for proposals and other types of investments in the circular economy have so far focused on new materials and products, technology for manufacturing and recycling, and to some extent how policies and instruments can be used to advance the circular economy and new types of business models. Much less has been done in the way of describing how to implement these different solutions in practice, as well as the effects they have on the environment, the labour market, the economy, social aspects of society and more. In this area, Formas considers that there are key gaps we would like to close through this call.

Purpose and focus

The purpose of this call is to promote the development of a circular society through increased knowledge about all types of societal aspects of the circular economy and about how the transition to a circular economy can take place in a way that is also sustainable for society. With the call Formas wants to contribute to a broader view of how a circular economy can come to benefit more parts of the society, one that can have synergies with other sustainability efforts from a social, economic or environmental perspective.

The projects should be based on one or more innovations, solutions or initiatives aimed at promoting a circular economy and helping to increase knowledge of their societal impact.

Projects can, for example, explore direct and indirect effects, beneficial effects, and effects on the environment, the labour market, the economy and social aspects of society. Other topics that fall within the scope of the call can include comparative studies, studies of regulations and legislation, and other preconditions that must be in place in society to facilitate development, as well as other topics relevant to the general aim of the call.

There is currently no uniform definition of the term “circular economy”. Companies, researchers, politicians, societal stakeholders and others often use different definitions. For this reason, Formas does not define the concept under this call; this way, we do not risk excluding any aspect of the circular economy that is important in the context of the call. Formas leaves it to the applicant to

describe and explain why the chosen topic constitutes an important part of the circular economy for society.

The call is broad and does not target any particular sector, resource flow, material or product type. Instead, applicants are invited to choose, describe and explain their choice of circular solution whose socio-economic benefits we lack sufficient knowledge of today.

Before you apply

Costs that qualify for funding

When you apply for project funding, you can apply for grants to cover both direct and indirect costs.

Direct costs include salary costs associated with the project's implementation, equipment and travel. The total salary amount for a single person must not exceed 100 percent of a full-time employment. In this call Formas does not award grants for writing articles, commercialisation, product or technology development, or marketing.

Indirect costs are costs that are shared with others in your organisation, such as for administration, IT and renting of premises. Indirect costs are sometimes called overhead.

Grant amount and project duration

You must apply for a minimum of SEK 250,000 and a maximum of SEK 1 million per calendar year for a maximum of two years. The project must run for a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of two years. The project must start in 2019.

Applications where the total amount applied for exceeds SEK 1 million per year *or* a maximum of 2 million for two years will be rejected.

Language

You may write your application in Swedish or English.

Who can apply

Research practitioners (universities, colleges, research institutes and government agencies with research assignments), public-sector players (municipalities, county councils/regions and other government agencies) and trade organisations can apply for funding under this call.

Stakeholders engaged in economic activity, such as municipal companies, private companies and public organisations, can be included in the project as a party and can also apply for funding under the call. Formas applies state aid rules to organisations engaged in economic activity; see below under the heading "State aid".

Applicants do not need to have a doctorate degree, but the projects must be clearly linked to research, which is why previous experience of similar work must be reported, and the application must show how the scientific quality of the project is secured.

It is not permissible to be the principal applicant for more than one application in this call.

There is no requirement that several organisations must participate in the project organisation and have both research practitioners and public-sector players. It is up to the project to put together the most suitable consortium, which will influence the assessment of the implementation and organisation criteria (see p. 10 for an explanation of these assessment criteria). However, a maximum of five project parties is allowed.

Formas strives for an equitable, gender-balanced and inclusive development of society. This means that applicants should design the project so that its results can benefit a diverse group of people and should consider the gender distribution and different backgrounds of project members. Applicants should also consider the distribution of power and influence within the project.

Co-funding is not required for this call.

State aid

Private companies and other organisations engaged in economic activity that want to apply for grants from Formas must follow specific regulations on state aid. The regulations are based on the principle of EU law, which states that aid to private enterprises normally distorts competition but that certain exemptions are allowed.

The aid intensity that Formas can offer depends on the size of the organisation and the type of activities in the project. The organisation's size is assessed using the EU definition of small and medium-sized enterprises. Activities will be primarily assessed on the basis of industrial research, experimental development or aid for process innovation or organisational innovation.

In addition, de minimis aid can also be a possible basis for granting aid. For projects in which this might be the case, Formas will ask the applicant to fill in a special form after the project is awarded funding.

The Formas website contains [more information about state aid](#).

How to apply

You apply in Prisma

Formas has developed its application process and associated system support for this call. **Please read the instructions carefully, even if you have previously applied for a grant from Formas.**

Applications for grants under Formas' Circular Economy call for proposals should be submitted online in the [Prisma application system](#). The organisation behind the project (the coordinating project party) must have an organisation account in Prisma. In addition, the project manager

must have a personal account in Prisma. Participating organisations and individuals do not need to have an account in Prisma for this call.

Applicants from generally approved administrating organisations in Prisma (universities, colleges, research institutes)

In most cases, universities, colleges and research institutes already have an organisation account in Prisma and can then use those existing accounts. Project managers at these organisations apply for funding through their personal account in Prisma.

Applicants from non-generally approved administrating organisations (companies and other organisations)

If the coordinating project party does not already have an account in Prisma, an appropriate representative should apply for an organisation account on the Prisma website in good time before the application is submitted. It can take up to a few weeks for an organisation account to be approved. Indicate in the justification for the application that you are applying under Formas' Circular Economy call and state whether the coordinating project party is a higher education institution, research institute, non-profit association, private company, etc. If the manager of the organisation account should also be the project manager, then no personal account needs to be connected to the application. If another person is supposed to be the project manager, that person must also have a personal account in Prisma.

If the coordinating project party has an account in Prisma but is not a generally approved administrating organisation with Formas, it must notify research administrator Kerstin Röver.

To be able to submit the application, the organisation must specify its domicile. To choose a domicile, such a structure must be created in the organisation account. [More information.](#)

Coordinating project party

A coordinating project party is the organisation that receives the grant money from Formas when a grant is awarded. A registered application is automatically sent to the person responsible for the coordinating project party's organisation account after the call is closed. That person then has one week to digitally sign the application.

Information your application must include

In addition to basic information, the application you submit in the Prisma application system must include a clear description of the project under the following headings:

Abstract in Swedish (max. 2,000 characters including spaces)

A brief and clear description of the project's purposes and goals, as well as content and implementation. Include the impact that the project can have on practical use.

Abstract in English (max. 2,000 characters including spaces)

A brief and clear description of the project's purposes and goals, as well as content and implementation. Include the impact that the project can have on practical use.

A project description in PDF format (max. 10 pages, font size 11-12)

The project description should be uploaded as a PDF attachment and should clearly describe the project based on the assessment criteria set out on page 10. Justify the project on the basis of the circular solution that underpins the project, and its role and significance for societal benefit. Describe and justify the choice of project parties, their role, and how you will leverage their expertise and the interests of other target groups. Also describe the implementation including activities and timetable. This project description is mandatory.

Appendix for tables, figures, illustrations, etc. (PDF, max. 4 pages)

If images, tables, figures, etc. are needed, they should be uploaded as PDF attachments. This appendix is not mandatory.

Budget

The project's budget is specified in Prisma, broken down by project party. The coordinating project party sets its own budget as well as the budget for each participating project party in Prisma, if any.

Costs should be itemised and specified according to the following cost types:

Costs:

- Staff expenses: Eligible staff expenses for companies and other organisations conducting economic activity may be estimated at a maximum of 800 kronor per hour. Universities, colleges or research institutes are not subject to this limitation.
- Equipment, land and buildings
- Consultancy and licensing costs, etc.
- Other direct costs including travel
- Indirect costs: Overhead costs. Universities, colleges and research institutes may charge a mark-up for indirect costs according to the applicable full-cost pricing method. Other project parties may charge a mark-up for indirect costs of up to 30 percent of their eligible staff expenses.

Funding:

There are four types of funding an applicant can specify in the application:

- Requested grant from Formas: Indicate the amount requested from Formas under the call
- Other aid (state): Indicate if available
- Other aid (private): Indicate if available
- Self-funding: If the project contributes its own funding, this is calculated and displayed in the field for self-funding. Self-funding is optional for this call.

Justification of the budget applied for

Justify the requested budget for each participating project party. State and justify staff expenses and describe other costs. Max. 2,000 characters, mandatory field.

Classifications

Formas uses project classifications in analyses and supporting documentation on an overall level. The classifications are made by the applicant, who states the subject area, SCB codes and at least one global sustainability goal the project can contribute to.

- **Subject area**

Select the project's subject area and add a sub-heading.

- **SCB code**

Next, select at least one SCB code with two sub-levels that together form the entire code. Select at least one and a maximum of three keywords describing the project. Choose what best represents your project, even if it does not entirely match the field you work in.

- **Keywords**

Enter three keywords. These are mandatory.

- **Global sustainable development goals**

Select a minimum of one and a maximum of three UN sustainable development goals that best fit your project: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>.

Ethical considerations

Fill in only if relevant for completing the project. You must describe the relevant ethical issues and how they should be managed. Examples include research that uses personal data, or experiments on humans or animals. Read more in [Formas' general instructions](#) under the section on ethical considerations.

CV for project manager

Please note that the project manager's CV attachment is a mandatory part of the application and should be uploaded as a PDF, maximum two A4 pages.

List of references for project manager

The project manager's list of references is mandatory and can contain published articles and reports (10 maximum), examples of relevant projects, or other types of work relevant to the project's implementation. This list of references must demonstrate the project manager's qualifications for implementing the project. Upload as a PDF file, maximum two A4 pages.

CVs for co-applicants

If the project has several project participants, the CV for at least one and a maximum of four project participants should be uploaded as PDF attachments that are a maximum of two A4 pages.

List of references for co-applicants

If there are multiple project participants, their lists of references can be uploaded. The list of references can contain published articles and reports (10 maximum), examples of relevant projects, or other types of work relevant to the project's implementation. This list of references must demonstrate the project participant's qualifications for implementing the project. Between one and four reference lists can be uploaded, maximum two A4 pages per list. These appendices are not mandatory.

Assessment of applications

All applications are assessed based on their contents. It is therefore important to write the application as clearly as possible and include all important and relevant information.

Any applications containing technical errors will be rejected. For example, a technical error can be a budget that exceeds a maximum of SEK 1 million per year or exceeds the total amount applied for over two years corresponding to a maximum of SEK 2 million. Another example would be a budget that falls below SEK 500,000. An application that does not fall within the scope of the call will also be rejected (refer to the focus area from the research agenda).

The applications are assessed based on the following criteria:

Relevance

- Justify the relevance of the project to the circular economy and the societal benefit aspect of the case study.
- Describe how the scientific quality of the project will be secured.
- Describe the target groups of the project's topic.
- Explain the project from a systems perspective. Which parties are affected by the project and the case study that the project will analyse?
- Clearly describe the field: Describe how project relates to other, similar or competing/alternative trends, questions, technologies, challenges, etc.

Potential

- Describe how the project proposal can help to increase the societal benefits of a circular economy.
- Describe which areas are relevant for the expected impact. Explain why the stakeholders you chose are important for the impact in each area.
- Describe the potential of the proposal to contribute to greater gender equality, diversity or democratic participation in society.

Implementation

- Describe how the project will be implemented. What activities are you planning in order to achieve the project's purpose and objectives?

- Describe the activities you are planning in order to achieve the project's results.
- Describe how the needs of different stakeholders and users are taken into account in the design of the project, how they are represented in the project and their roles.
- Explain how the timetable and budget are appropriate in relation to the project's purpose.

Organisation/Stakeholders

- Describe how resources, skills and experience correspond to the requirements of the project's organisational structure in order to implement the project in the best way possible. Special focus should be placed on ensuring a systems perspective so that the context of the project in society informs the work. Also describe how you have taken into account gender equality in the project organisation.
- Explain the consortium's composition based on the project topic.
- Describe how the project organisation will enable the benefit of your project results. Are there any stakeholders in the project who can contribute to the practical application of the results? How will this happen?

How does the assessment process work?

Applications are assessed by a review panel consisting of researchers and users. Each application will be read and assessed by several people on the panel – by both the researchers and the users.

Grant award decisions

Formas' Scientific Council is expected to reach a decision on 20 November 2019 concerning which projects are granted funding. Decisions will be announced the following day at the latest on Formas' website and later sent via email from Prisma. Grant award decisions cannot be appealed.

Reporting for granted projects

Each project that is awarded funding must submit a report to Formas containing a financial statement after 12 months and, when the project is completed, a scientific report in accordance with the decision. Read more about the reporting requirements on the Formas website: [Formas reporting](#).

Formas may impose requirements on how projects must be reported in terms of content and results to enable distribution and application. In such cases, the award decision will contain more information about this. Formas may also require you to participate in conferences and similar events in order to create synergies and platforms for learning and knowledge sharing.

Who can read the application?

Applications submitted to Formas become publicly available documents after the decision is announced. However, Formas does not disclose information about an individual's business relationships or operating conditions, inventions or research results if the disclosure would be

assumed to cause the individual suffering. If applications are requested, Formas conducts a confidentiality assessment.

Support and shortcuts

- [Prisma](#)
- [Prisma's user support](#)
- [Ethics policy](#)

Contact information

Louise Staffas, Senior Research Officer

For questions about the content of the call

Phone: +46 (0)76 101 49 69

Email: louise.staffas@formas.se

Kerstin Röver, Research Administrator

For administrative questions and questions about Prisma

Phone: +46 (0)73 033 41 08

Email: kerstin.rover@formas.se