Call
Sustainable living environments

Blue-green infrastructure, public spaces
and transport systems for all

Application deadline: 28 May 2019 (2 pm)
Date of decision (preliminary): 20 November 2019

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Blue-green infrastructure, public spaces, and transport systems for all

Call opens: 2019-04-08

Application deadline: 2019-05-28 (2 pm)

Date of decision (preliminary): 2019-11-20

Formas – Forskningsrådet för miljö, areella näringar och samhällsbyggande

| Organisationsnummer: | Drottninggatan 89 | Telefon: | registrator@formas.se |
| 202100-5232 | Box 1206 111 82 Stockholm | 08 775 40 00 | formas.se |

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Description of the call

Introduction

All communities, both urban and rural, face significant challenges to be able to make the transition towards social and environmental sustainability. The challenges include widening gaps between social groups and environmental problems like climate change, ever-increasing natural resource extraction and particulate emissions, as well as deteriorating living conditions for animals and plants.

Against this background, this call aims to promote the development of knowledge for sustainable and attractive living environments, which we define here as spaces and areas in the urban and peri-urban built environment. These spaces are not always the main focus of design processes, even though they might provide answers and solutions to the social and environmental problems of both cities and rural communities.

Although economic sustainability in many respects lays the groundwork for implementing projects and plans related to these environments, this call focuses primarily on the social and environmental sustainability aspects of their design and use. In addition, transport is also a focus of the call's scope , since citizens must be able to move around in and between public environments in a sustainable way.

Researchers from all disciplines at Swedish universities, research institutes and government agencies with research assignments are welcome to apply for grants in this call together with public-sector stakeholders such as municipalities, county administrative boards, regional/county councils and government authorities. The call is guided by three themes: blue-green infrastructure (1), meeting places and public spaces (2), and transport systems for all (3). Applicants can apply for funding for up to four years and a maximum of 2 million SEK per year and project. Formas has allocated 120 million SEK to the call for the period 2019–2022. Decision is planned to be taken in November.

Background

The way we plan, build and develop communities brings a number of challenges that must be addressed if we want to succeed in transitioning to a more sustainable world. Examples include the degradation of air and water quality, growing volumes of traffic, increased emissions of particulates and greenhouse gases, and deterioration of the natural habitats of humans, plants and animals. In addition, communities are becoming more and more segregated in relation to citizens' health, income, background and age. This counteracts many of the positive qualities that are often associated with life in the country or in the city.

The point of departure for this call is that the design and use of living environments as well as people's movements in and between them, are important for addressing the above-mentioned challenges and can be a part of the transition to an environmentally and socially sustainable society. This can include analyses of how environmental and social values can interact and reinforce each other, and how natural and cultural environments can be designed so that they can contribute to social cohesion while being attractive, safe and accessible. Citizens must also be able to move around

in and between public environments in a sustainable way, which is why transport is also a relevant topic in the call. Formas encourages creative project proposals that address both social and environmental sustainability considerations in both the design and use of different kinds of living environments.

Purpose and aim

The purpose of the call is to increase knowledge of how different living environments – spaces and areas in urban and peri-urban built environments – can contribute to the transition to socially and environmentally sustainable cities and rural communities. Researchers from all disciplines are welcome to apply for funding in the call, which aims to gather a wide range of topics for achieving a thorough analysis of this area.

The call has three guiding themes: blue-green infrastructure (1), meeting places and public spaces (2) and transport systems for all (3). We especially encourage approaches that examine the interaction of two or three of these themes or other thematic areas in one coherent research proposal. For example, a research proposal that addresses more than one theme can be achieved by using interdisciplinary perspectives and methods, or research groups that combine natural science and social science approaches.

The call encourages research projects that investigate good examples as well as those that focus on mal-functioning environments and how these could be designed differently. Important analyses are those that focus on groups of people who, for reasons of physical or mental impairment, have limited access to public spaces and patterns of movement, and what can be done to enable them to participate more in society.

Blue-green infrastructure (1)

Within this theme, we welcome applications that address how to integrate blue-green infrastructure into the design of living environments in and around communities of varying size, density and location. Projects in this theme can, but are not limited to, address how a careful use of ecosystem services and nature-oriented solutions involving shrubs, trees, alleys, etc. can counteract the presence of urban heat islands, floods, air pollution and noise. They can also explore how greenery and access to water can promote biodiversity, public health and security, as well as offer solutions for stormwater treatment and runoff. Projects can also concern the positive effects of people's access to and use of urban and peri-urban greenery and water, as well as analyses of whether access and use differ between different groups of people and, if so, why. Examples of spaces that could be explored in such research projects are park and recreation areas, urban gardens, allotment areas, plant nurseries, ponds, creeks, and various urban and natural areas such as wetlands, woodlands and surface water reservoirs.

Meeting places and public spaces (2)

Within this theme, we welcome applications that address how meeting places and public spaces can enhance the quality of social life and help increase social and environmental sustainability. Projects can, for example, be about how these environments can offer an inclusive design that helps to bridge segregation and counteract insecurity and uncertainty. They can address how these environments' can both contribute to environmental sustainability efforts and provide improved conditions for accessibility, civic participation or grassroots initiatives for sustainable transitions. Examples of spaces that could be explored here are different meeting places and recreational areas such as squares, street

environments, playgrounds and bathing areas, attractions, commons, and other public outdoor environments in and around cities and rural communities.

Transport systems for all (3)

The last theme of the call concerns how movements and flows between living environments should take place in an environmentally sustainable manner, and how to make spaces and modes of transport accessible so that different social groups can, want to and dare to get out and about. Projects can, for example, be about how sustainable mobility solutions can be designed to include different user groups such as children, people with various disabilities and the elderly. The projects can, but are not limited to, focus on specific modes of transport and flows. They can also involve specific locations, such as station and terminal environments, junctions and interchanges, repair and maintenance depots, and parking areas, rest areas and bus stops. The modes of transport in focus are pedestrian, bicycle and public transport and solutions based on combinations of these. But the theme also includes transportation aids for people with functional impairments as well as ride-sharing alternatives to individually owned cars.

Who can apply

Researchers at Swedish universities, colleges or research institutes are welcome to apply for grants together with public-sector stakeholders such as municipalities, county administrative boards, regional/county councils and government authorities. Applications together with public-sector stakeholders are optional. To apply for a grant, the main applicant must have obtained a doctoral degree by the close of the call at the latest. The proposed grant recipient must be stated as a project manager on the application. Participating researchers must also have obtained a doctoral degree (by the close of the call) to be able to attach their CV in the Prisma application system. Research practitioners and public-sector organisations can apply for funding under this call as co-participants in the project. Applicants from the public sector or other staff participating in the project do not need to have a doctoral degree.

Grants for research projects may only be administered by a Swedish university, college or other Swedish public organisation that meets Formas' criteria for administrating organisations.

There is no age limit for the principal applicant and participating researchers. However, researchers who are full-time pensioners are not eligible to receive funding towards salaries.

Your application

What you can apply for

- Project grants can include salary funding, funding to cover operating costs (consumables, equipment, travel, conferences, publication in journals and open-access databases), depreciation costs for equipment, and premises costs. The maximum amount allowed for equipment and depreciation costs is a total of 500,000 SEK.
- The grants may be used towards Swedish co-funding of international projects, such as those within the EU.
- Project grants can be used to cover salaries for researchers, participants from public-sector organisations, PhD students and technical staff. Salaries for PhD students can be granted for up to four years.
- International collaboration. Grants from Formas can be used to fund research outside Sweden, although the research must be initiated and managed from Sweden. The administrating organisation must be located in Sweden and approved by Formas, and is responsible for hiring any foreign staff or paying for activities or services outside Sweden in accordance with the administrating organisation's guidelines.

Grant amount and project duration

- Project grants can cover a maximum of 2 million SEK per year, on average, over the years the application is valid for. So, applicants can apply for more than 2 million during one year as long as the amount applied for during another year of the project period is less than 2 million. Applicants may not apply for 8 million SEK in total for a period shorter than 48 months.
- If the total amount applied for exceeds the average annual amount of 2 million SEK, the application will be rejected.
- Note that the total salary amount for a single researcher, PhD student or other staff must not exceed 100 percent of full-time employment. This means that additional salary funding cannot be granted to researchers, PhD students or other staff who already receive grants or contributions with full salary funding. Formas does not grant funding for annual salary increases.
- Funding can be requested for a maximum of four years (48 months). The projects are expected to start in 2019.

How to apply

Applying in Prisma

To apply for a grant from Formas, the project manager should submit an application online in the Prisma application system. To create an application in Prisma, you need a user account. We recommend that you create an account and an application as early as possible and contact Formas with any questions in good time.

Link to Prisma

In order to submit an application, the organisation where the project manager works must be an approved administrating organisation. If the organisation is not already an approved administrating organisation, the organisation must apply to become one in good time before the call closes, as it can take a few weeks to become approved as an administrating organisation.

Information your application must contain

We recommend that the application be written in English because the call's review panel members come from different parts of the world. Applications written entirely in Swedish will be translated into English by Formas before they are submitted to Formas' review panel for assessment. In such cases, it will not be possible for applicants to view or make linguistic adjustments to the application after it is translated. The popular science description must be written in Swedish, while the abstract should be in both Swedish and English. Please note that you should always write the budget specification in English; any Swedish budget specification will not be translated but will instead be reviewed as is by the international review panel.

All limits for the maximum number of characters refer to characters including spaces. We recommend that you choose the Arial font in font size 12 for the information you enter in all text boxes.

Basic information

- Number of years for which the application applies
- Project title in Swedish and English (200 characters including spaces)
- Popular science description in Swedish (4,500 characters including spaces)
- Abstract in Swedish and English (1,500 characters each including spaces)

Research programme

- Goals and objectives of the project, and a background description containing an overview of the research area (7,000 characters including spaces).
- Project description, including structure, theory, methodology and implementation as well as a plan for publication in scientific journals (15,000 characters including spaces). Include the following points if you consider them relevant to the project: (i) a short description of existing and future needs for basic equipment, (ii) a brief description of national and international collaboration, (iii) confirmation of compliance with international agreements and rules, (iv) gender perspectives in the content of the research, (v) principal supervisor if funding is sought for a PhD student, (vi) brief description of expertise of the participating staff and/or public-sector stakeholders who do not hold a doctoral degree and thus cannot upload a CV in Prisma, as well as a motivation of how they will contribute to the project's implementation.
- Description of the potential societal relevance of the project and a plan for communicating the research and its results to stakeholders and end users (8,000 characters including spaces). Formas recommends having a communicator participate in the project. In this call, Formas also wants to encourage the linkage between research and higher education and the different ways that the projects can relate to teaching and student groups. A clear description of the research project's connection to education can therefore be included as part of the project's overall communication efforts. The connection to education can be through knowledge transfer of research results to different forms of course content and thesis papers but can also

consist of participatory activities that involve students in the research process. This does not mean that the research should be carried out by people without a PhD degree, it should rather be read as a stimulating encouragement to improve the linkage between research and education.

- References. List the in-line references pertaining to the above sections in a separate field (5,000 characters including spaces).

Budget

- **Salaries including social security contributions.** For any current employment positions, the salary in effect at the time of the application (including social contributions) must be used for all subsequent years. For new employment positions, the starting salary at the administrating organisation must be used for all subsequent years. Note that Formas does not grant funding for annual salary increases.
- **Activity level in the project**. Specify the level of activity for all project participants, including participants that provide in-kind services for their time or have other funding sources for completing the project.
- **Running costs**. Specify operating costs in accordance with practices at the administrating organisation.
- **Equipment depreciation.** Specify equipment depreciation costs if relevant to the application.
- **Premises.** Specify the costs for premises (if not part of overhead costs) in accordance with practices at the administrating organisation.
- **Total budget.** This heading refers to a budget summary.
- **Specified costs:** Data already completed in previous budget tables will be automatically transferred to this table.
- Specify the indirect costs in the project budget in accordance with the practices at the administrating organisation. Indirect costs relate to overhead costs. Formas does not allow overhead for equipment depreciation costs or costs of premises.
- **Other funds:** "Other funds" refers to funds that are not sought but that are relevant for completing the project. An example is co-funding from collaborative partners. Also specify whether the project receives funding from another source.
- **Budget specification.** Provide a brief justification for all salaries and other expenses. A description of the total project budget, including funding from other sources, should also be included. All other costs must be clearly justified, such as costs for participating in conferences, publication fees for open access to publications and data, etc. The budget specification is part of the application assessment.

In Prisma, write out the total amount you are applying for in kronor using digits. For example, 1 million SEK should be written as: 1 000 000 SEK.

Ethical considerations

You should specify whether there are specific ethical concerns in your project. If so, you must describe the relevant ethical considerations and how they will be managed. Examples include research that uses personal data, or experiments on humans or animals. [Read more about how to report ethical concerns](#).

Classifications

- Select a minimum of one and a maximum of three subject areas.
- Select a minimum of one and a maximum of three SCB codes.
- Select a minimum of one and a maximum of three global goals for sustainable development that best fit your project. When selecting more than one goal, specify the goals in priority order. The goal that is most relevant to the project should be stated in the first box. Read an explanation of these goals on the UN Development Programme website. As the meaning of the goals is sometimes narrower than what the title indicates, we encourage you to follow the link and read in more detail about the goals you intend to specify to ensure that the intended research contributes towards achieving that particular goal.
- Select a minimum of one and a maximum of five key words that describe the project.

Appendices

The following appendix can be uploaded if relevant for the application:

- Appendix J. Illustrations. If you need figures, tables or images to describe the project, you can upload them as attachments here. A maximum of one PDF attachment of 4 MB can be uploaded.

Administrating organisations

- Select your administrating organisation and add your project's department or institution. Read more about who can become an administrating organisation.
- Prisma contains a default list of approved administrating organisations. Contact your organisation if it is missing from the list. In that case, your organisation will need to create an organisation account in Prisma.
- After the call is closed, a registered application will be sent automatically to the administrating organisation, which will have seven business days to digitally sign the application.

Participants

- Main applicants invite participating researchers (doctoral researchers who are considered co-applicants for the project) and participating administrators (people not involved in the project but who help you fill in the application form) to apply in Prisma.
- Participants who want to be able to edit the application in Prisma must have created their own user account in Prisma.
- Main applicants invite people to participate in the application process by searching for their given name, surname and email address in Prisma (note that exact spelling of names and email addresses is required).

CVs

Applicants who do not have a doctoral degree cannot attach their CV in Prisma. A brief description of the qualifications of non-doctoral participants can instead be entered in the application's research programme under the heading Project Description.

Applicants with a doctoral degree retrieve the data from their personal profile that are relevant for their application. Participating researchers add their CV details from their profile to the application

themselves. They should review their CV in Prisma in good time to ensure that it is complete and up to date. The CV information must include:

- **Education:** postgraduate, undergraduate and graduate level.
- **Professional experience**: Current employment and major relevant prior positions, postdoctoral stays, postgraduate exchanges that are relevant for the research, and any significant gaps in the research (such as parental leave, illness, military service or political duties).
- **Merits and awards:**
  - **Associate professorships**
  - **Supervision engagements:** Doctoral students, postdocs, graduate theses; specify the total number for each category and name the most relevant ones (max. 10).
  - **Grants received in competition:** Specify the most relevant ones (max. 10).
  - **Prices and awards:** Specify the most relevant ones (max. 10).
  - **Additional merits, including bibliometric indicators:** Here, the principal applicant and participating researchers should state their number of publications during the past five years, and the total number of publications if the applicant's active research period exceeds five years (max. 800 characters including spaces). This bibliometric summary should include: (i) the number of publications of various types, such as articles in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, books and other monographs, conference papers and popular science contributions, and (ii) any other publication or citation specifications relevant to the applicant's field of research. Under "Other qualifications," you can list other qualifications that are relevant to the application, such as any popular science publications or proven experience of collaboration and research communication (max. 10).

  - • **Intellectual property:** For example, patents and open source software that you have developed (max. 10).

List of publications

The principal applicant and participating researchers should list up to ten of their most relevant publications. Note that the publications should be linked from the applicants' personal profiles.

How applications are evaluated

Submitted applications are assessed by a review panel consisting of international researchers, as well as beneficiaries with relevant subject-matter expertise and users of the research results who are qualified to assess the potential societal benefit. The majority of the panel members are researchers. The panel members have the expertise required to assess applications within the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, health sciences and engineering sciences within Formas' areas of responsibility, and can also review multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

Applications are assessed with respect to scientific quality and societal relevance. This includes the following five criteria.

Criteria for scientific quality:

- Research question
- Methods and performance
- Scientific competence

Criteria for societal relevance:

- Potential societal value of the research topic
- Communication with stakeholders and users

All the criteria must be addressed in the application, and we advise applicants to clearly relate their application to these criteria. We also strongly advise applicants to clearly and accurately structure and write the application, as the review is based solely on the information contained in the application. Gender perspectives should be considered in project proposals where applicable.

In-depth information about [Formas' assessment criteria and review process](#)

Funding decisions

Formas' Scientific Council is expected to reach a decision on 20 November 2019 concerning which projects will be 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.

For granted projects

Reporting for granted projects

Financial statements must be submitted each year for projects longer than 18 months. The final financial and scientific reports must be created as agreed and are usually submitted within three months after the end of the availability period. [Learn more about how to report expenses and results](#).

A summary of the project's communication activities is expected at the end of the second year of the project.

Open access to publications and research data

Results from research funded by Formas must be published with open access. [Read more about our requirements for open access to research results and data](#).

Funded projects must develop a data management plan for the data produced in the project. By signing our grant terms and conditions, you certify that a data management plan will be available before the research begins and that it will be maintained.

SweCRIS

Formas shares information about awarded grants to SweCRIS, a national database of grant-funded research that was instituted by request of the government.

Support and shortcuts

- [How it works](#)
- [Ethics policy](#)
- [Criteria for administrating organisations](#)
- [Formas' review process](#)
- [Global sustainable development goals](#)
- [Prisma](#)
- [Prisma online user support](#)

Timetable

The call closes on 28 May 2019 at 14.00 Central European Time.

Formas' Scientific Council is expected to decide on the grant award on 20 November 2019.

Contact information

For more specific questions regarding the call, please contact:

Jon Loit, Research Officer
Telephone: +46 (0)73-325 40 61
Email: jon.loit@formas.se

Ann Rodenstedt, Research Officer
Telephone: +46 (0)72-554 94 77
Email: ann.rodenstedt@formas.se

Administrative support:

Kenneth Nilsson, Research Administrator
Telephone: +46 (0)8-775 40 40
Email: kenneth.nilsson@formas.se

For Prisma technical support

Visit https://prismasupport.research.se/user-manual.html