

Guidance for reviewers of the Swedish EPA research calls

Welcome to the review procedure for applications submitted to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Swedish EPA).

This guidance document is intended to give you a basic support in the review process. We hope to achieve the best results in allocating the Swedish EPA's research funds with your support.

The task of the review committee

Swedish EPA relies on two panels in its review procedure: The panel for the scientific review and the panel for the relevance review. The scientific panel evaluates the grade of scientific quality and the relevance panel reviews the relevance to the Swedish EPA and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) work for achieving Sweden's Environmental Quality Objectives.

The review process

In general, the following steps are included in the review process:

- 1- Submission of proposals and all required documents to Swedish EPA. Swedish EPA will remove the ineligible applications which did not follow the Swedish EPA guidelines.
- 2- Declaration of potential conflict of interest situations (See section Conflict of interest).
- 3- Individual evaluation by reviewers (both science and relevance) based on the Swedish EPA criteria.
- 4- Review committee meeting hosted by the Swedish EPA in Stockholm. This meeting aims to discuss the applications, propose a priority order, and reach consensus on approval and rejection lists. A draft evaluation report will be provided at this meeting.

The review committee reviews the scientific quality and relevance of the applications based on a five-grade scale (See section Scoring of proposals).

Scientific and relevance reviewers provide a ranking list of the applications.

- 5- Final decision will be made by the Swedish EPA on which applications will be funded.

Main criteria for review of scientific quality:

1. Research questions and methods
 - 1.1. Purpose and questions raised
 - 1.2. Theories and hypothesis
 - 1.3. Methodology
 - 1.4. Knowledge of the research area
 - 1.5. Scientific competence of the applicants
2. Management
 - 2.1. Organization and management of the project
 - 2.2. Justified budget
3. Feasibility
 - 3.1. Feasibility of the methods
 - 3.2. Feasibility of the work plan
4. Communication
 - 4.1. Planned communication and dissemination activities are relevant and sufficient

Main criteria for review of practical relevance:

1. Relevance
 - 1.1. Purpose and questions raised
 - 1.2. Relevance to Swedish EPA/SwAM
 - 1.4. Relevance to the environmental quality objectives
2. Management:
 - 2.1. Organisation and management
 - 2.2. Justified budget
3. Feasibility
 - 3.1. Feasibility of the methods
 - 3.2. Feasibility of the work plan
4. Communication:
 - 4.1. Relevant target groups are identified
 - 4.2. Involvement of Swedish EPA and SwAM is clarified
 - 4.3. Planned communication activities are relevant and sufficient
 - 4.4. Disseminating activities are satisfactory

Scoring of proposals:

Each criterion is scored 0-5 based on the following interpretation:

5- Very high: the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

4- High: the proposal addresses the criterion very well although certain improvements are still possible.

3- Acceptable: the proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.

2- Low: while the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.

1- Poor: the criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

0-The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

The scoring procedure:

- First develop your comments on each criterion
- Then select scores accordingly: Each criterion is given a score out of five, corresponding to the explanatory comments
- The overall score is your final judgment on the application, not a sum of the individual scores. In the evaluation meeting, a joint score for each proposal will be agreed upon by the panel.

Conflict of interest:

You must immediately inform the Swedish EPA Research Secretariat if you become aware of a conflict of interest including the following conditions:

- Been involved in preparation of proposal
- Benefiting directly from the project
- Have close research collaboration with the applicants
- Are superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant
- Applying for the same post as the applicant
- Been director or governing board member of the organization applying
- Have close family relationship
- Any other situation that compromises impartiality

You cannot review or be present in the review process in case of conflict of interest for a certain proposal.