A Sustainable Blue Economy for Sweden

Call for outline proposals

This call will be carried out in two stages and aims at establishing a new research programme.

Stage 1. You must submit a short ‘outline proposal’ to participate in the first stage of this call.

Stage 2. If you pass the first-stage evaluation, you will be invited to submit your ‘full proposal’ for the second stage. Planning grants of up to SEK 150,000 will then be available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected programme budget</th>
<th>A total of SEK 60 million over four years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistra’s financial contribution</td>
<td>A maximum of SEK 50 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-funding</td>
<td>An additional 20%, from non-academic partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of outline proposal</td>
<td>A maximum of four pages plus cover page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline proposals to reach Mistra no later than</td>
<td>10 January 2022 at 4:00 pm. The outline proposals must be sent to <a href="mailto:mail@mistra.org">mail@mistra.org</a> as a single pdf file.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendices to the call</td>
<td>1. Background paper: “Ecosystem approach to enhance resilience in Swedish offshore marine areas and contribute to a sustainable blue economy”</td>
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Call for outline proposals

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (Mistra) invites research groups jointly with relevant stakeholders, to share their vision for a new research programme. The aim of the intended programme is to support the transition to a sustainable blue economy that will improve the environmental conditions and enhance resilience in marine areas of relevance for Sweden. This can be achieved by applying science-based ecosystem governance and management in cooperation with stakeholders. Research funded by Mistra must contribute to solving key environmental problems, tackling the present climate crisis, and promoting progress towards a sustainable society.

Background

UN has declared 2021 – 2031 as the Decade of the Oceans. The vision for the Ocean Decade is The Science We Need for The Ocean We Want. The Ocean Decade will build scientific capacity and generate knowledge that will directly contribute to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant global legal and policy frameworks.

The concept of the blue economy, or growth, emerged in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012. Sustainability is on the one hand embedded in the concept, but it has on the other hand turned out to be a challenge to achieve a truly sustainable blue economy. The blue economy includes a wide range of economic sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, renewable energy, and seabed mining. The European Commission has recently proposed a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU. The new agenda for the blue economy will according to the Commission play a major role to achieve the European Green Deal’s objectives. A key message is that we need to shift the focus from blue growth to sustainable blue economy.

The North Sea and the Baltic Sea that surround Sweden are important from an economic perspective, but they also face serious environmental impact and challenges due to human activities. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

1 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU – Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future. COM(2021) 240 final.
(SWAM) has delivered draft marine spatial plans for Sweden’s territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone. These plans show that many sectors and activities operate concurrently in certain marine areas. These areas are often environmentally sensitive, for example the offshore banks in the Baltic Sea and the Kattegat.

The current call for outline proposals is based on two documents: a background paper prepared by an expert group (Appendix 1) and a scoping study (Appendix 2). These documents are intended to serve as a backdrop and inspiration for proposals, but this call text will be the basis for the evaluation.

Focus

Sustainable blue economy and governance should be at the heart of the research programme. The ecosystem approach should form the basis and be an essential part of the understanding, management and governance of existing and potential future human activities, mainly beyond the coastal zone. Methods and instruments that can minimise conflicts and identify synergies are of special importance in this respect, e.g. maritime spatial planning. Human industrial activities at sea have the potential to play important roles in developing a sustainable blue economy, if they are planned and performed in a sustainable way. Not the least new innovative businesses could play a role in this transformation.

The research programme should address climate change and biodiversity loss, in particular related to long-term effects on marine ecosystems. As the problems and solutions for effective ocean governance and management are context specific, local or regional case-studies may be useful (see Appendix 1 for further information), although such studies are not mandatory.

While the focus of the research programme is a sustainable blue economy for Sweden, offshore marine areas within and around the country’s borders are of interest to many international stakeholders. There are also many international commitments to consider. An international outlook, and when appropriate international collaboration for instance within the framework of the Ocean Decade for Sustainable Development or as part of European initiatives, is encouraged. This means that comparative studies and collaboration with researchers working in non-Swedish marine areas may be included in the research programme.

Transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as a cross-sectoral perspective, is expected. It is important to include key stakeholders in the programme right from the start.

The contract period for the intended programme will be four years. Mistra will contribute with up to SEK 50 million for the whole period. Co-funding, that may be partly in-kind, is expected with an additional 20 %. Mistra intends to award research funding for one (1) of the full proposals submitted. It is not possible to apply for funding of individual projects. It is advisable to read the section on ‘Managing Mistra programmes’ (www.mistra.org/en/managing-mistra-programmes/).
Who can submit proposals?

The call addresses research groups in all academic disciplines working at higher education institutions and research institutes, as well as stakeholders such as industry, the public sector, regional/international organisations, and non-governmental organisations. Researchers and organisations active outside Sweden may participate, but the principal applicant and planned programme host must be a Swedish institution. Only legal entities can apply for funding.

The host institution and other organisations taking part are expected to submit a joint proposal.

Preparation and review of proposals

The outline proposal may not exceed four pages plus a cover page and must be written in English. The cover page must clearly state: (a) preliminary programme title, (b) planned programme host, and (c) contact person for the proposal, with full contact details.

The outline proposal is expected to include the following sections:

1. The idea behind the proposal (what is the problem to be solved? how will your proposal contribute to the solution?)
2. Anticipated societal impact
3. Scientific approach
4. Programme host and key partners (NB all partners do not need to be confirmed)

The evaluation criteria will be in accordance with the four sections listed above. The idea and the innovativeness of the proposal will be pivotal. The proposals will be evaluated by an independent panel.

Please observe that Mistra is subject to the principle of public access to official records. This means that all documents received by Mistra, including proposals and applications, are public. On certain conditions, information may be treated as confidential.

Personal particulars received are managed in accordance with current legislation on data protection. For more information, see Mistra’s data privacy policy (https://www.mistra.org/en/data-privacy-policy).

The outline proposal should be sent as a single pdf file by email to mail@mistra.org, to reach Mistra no later than 10 January 2022 at 4:00 pm.

Timeline

2021

25 October Call opens

2022
10 January  Call closes
January - February  Evaluation of outline proposals
March  Invitation to those who have been selected to submit full proposals
July  Deadline for submission of full proposals
September-November  Evaluation of full proposals
December  Funding awarded to the top-ranked proposal

2023
First half of the year  Start of the programme