Advancing Scientific Excellence: Funding Programmes and Forthcoming Calls

Swedish Research Council

Julie Oommen

Division of Research Funding/Monitoring Unit

Vetenskapsrådet

The Swedish Research Council

- An agency within the Ministry of Education and Research

- Largest government funder of research - annual funding budget approx. 8 billion SEK (2023)

- We provide funding for researcher-initiated basic research across all scientific disciplines

- We initiate and support strategic initiatives in research

- We work for an efficient research system

- We work to ensure that researchers gain access to advanced research infrastructure

- We analyze the conditions of the research, evaluate research and give the government advice on future research policy

- We coordinate and develop communication about the significance, results and conditions of research

- We promote international collaborative research

Funding research of the highest scientific quality

- Open competition where the best research ideas are rewarded

- Efficient, clearly-defined processes

- Peer review for highest research quality

- Researchers on subject advisory boards, councils and committees

Call for application, assessment, decision

- Around 50 different calls each year

- About 6 000 applications

- Multiple parallel reviewing processes (>20) every year

- 90 review panels

- Approx. 1 000 reviewers

APPLICATION

ASSESSMENT

DECISION

JAN   FEB   MAR   APR   MAY   JUNE   JULY   AUG   SEP   OCT   NOV   DEC

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Our types of research funding & grants

Research project support

- Project grant
- Project grant with focus
- Proof of Concept

> Support to one or more researchers to carry out a specific research project

Career support

- International postdoc
- Starting grant
- Consolidator grant
- Grant for research time

> Support for individual researchers to improve their academic career opportunities

Research environment and Research collaboration support

- Distinguished professors
- Research environment grant

> Support to a research objective or a research area in a long-term perspective

- Network grants
- Conference grants
- Exploratory workshops
- Doctoral programmes/graduate schools
- Guest researchers grant

- **Research infrastructure funding** – support for construction, operation and decommissioning of national or international research infrastructures

- **Science communication support** - support for planning, execution and evaluation of communication activities about science
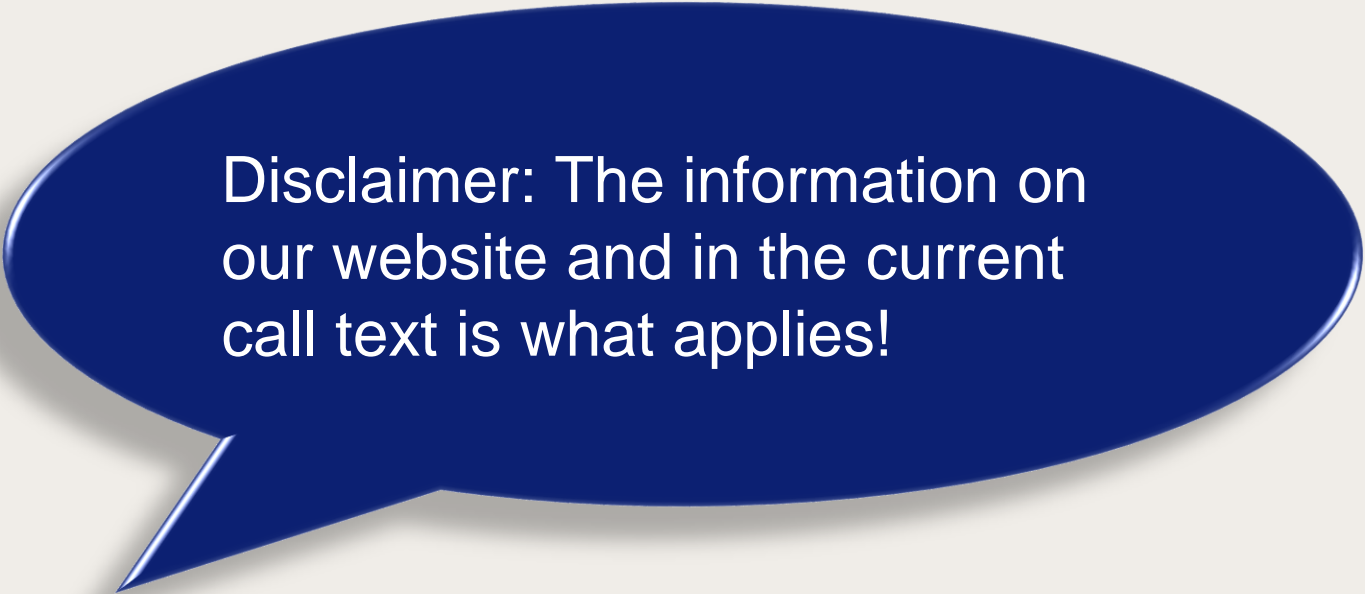
Distribution of forms of grants 2023

- The Swedish Research Council finances just over a tenth of the research at higher education institutes.

- **Distributed research funding 2023:** SEK 8,1 billion

Operational support 2%
Unclassified support 1%
Career support 10%
Project support 37%
Research environment and collaboration support 15%
Infrastructure support 35%
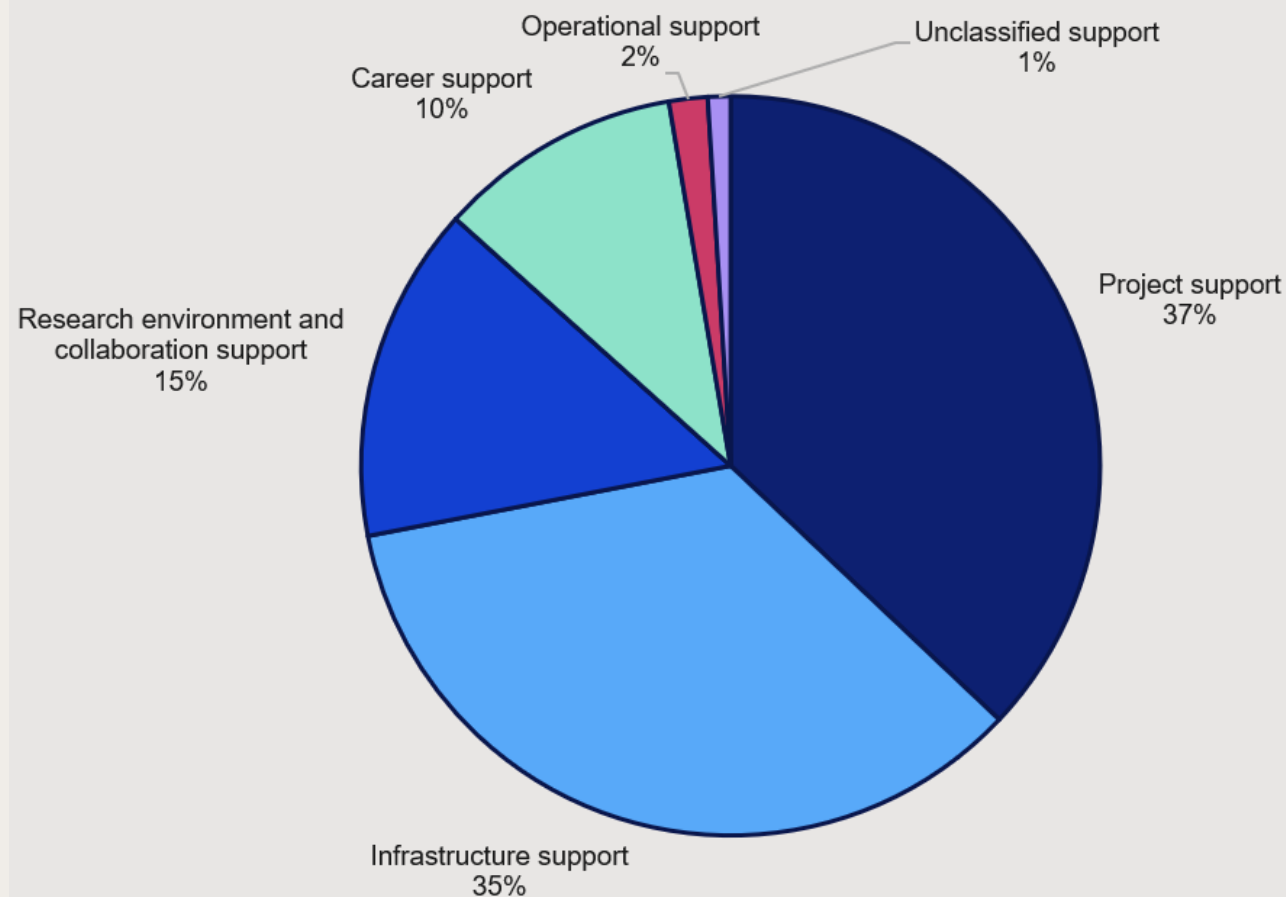
Calls (an overview)

Disclaimer: The information on our website and in the current call text is what applies!

Project grants

Annual calls
- Artistic research
- Humanities & social sciences
- Medicine & health
- Educational sciences
- Natural & engineering sciences

Project support **open to all researchers/career ages**.

- General grant period is *1-5 years* (refer to specific call for details)
- General funding level *400 000 - 2 500 000 SEK per year* (refer to specific call for details)
- Funding for *any project-related costs*
- Undirected project grants – *open in all disciplines*
- Also specific *calls with thematic focus*, where relevance is a requirement

International postdoc 2025

International postdoc:

- Medicine & health
- Natural & engineering sciences
- Humanities & social sciences
- Educational sciences
- Artistic research

16 September

Career support **for researchers up to 2 years after PhD.**

- ***PhD must be awarded when grant period*** starts, i e possible to apply before PhD
- Grant period **18-36 months**
- At least **2/3 time must be spent abroad**
- Funding for salary and research expenses, **1 300 000 SEK per year**
- Optional funding for family member, **50 000 SEK per year**

Starting grants

Starting grant:

- Medicine & health

- Natural & engineering sciences

- Educational sciences

Career support **for researchers 2-7 years after PhD.**

- Grant period is *4 years*

- Funding level approx *1 500 000 SEK per year*

- Funding for *any project-related costs*

- *50% activity level & employment* during grant period is required

- Mandatory *support letter from university* (not letter of recommendation!)

- *Not eligible to apply for project grant* in parallell

Distinguished professor grant and Consolidator grant

Distinguished professor grant

- Research environment and collaboration support to individual researchers 12 years after PhD

- Standard grant of SEK 4 million per year for 8 years.

- Can be applied for at the same time as a project grant, but both are not granted

Consolidator grant

- Career support to researchers 7-12 years after PhD

- Standard grant of SEK 2 million per year for 5 years.

- Can be applied for at the same time as a project grant, but both are not granted

Research environment grants

- Natural & engineering sciences
- Humanities & social sciences

*The purpose of the research environment grant is to **create added value from collaboration in larger groupings** than in a normal project, and to create a long-term perspective. The applicant shall represent a constellation of **several researchers from different higher education institutions (HEI) and/or different subjects,** nationally or internationally, who are working towards a common research goal in the long term.*

Doctoral programme grant within mining and mineral research

- Natural and Engineering Sciences
- Humanities & social sciences

30 September

The purpose of the graduate schools is to build and strengthen scientific expertise and the long-term need for competence in the mining and mineral sector.

Doctoral programme grant within mining and mineral research

- **Upcoming call: 27 August - 30 September 2025** *(Specific instructions and details are subject to change pending the government's decision)*

- **Strengthen basic research in mining and minerals** (Research and Innovation Bill 2024)

- The **purpose** of the graduate schools is to build up and **strengthen scientific expertise and the long-term need for competence** within the mining and minerals research.

- Should cover **at least one, but preferably several, parts of the raw materials value chain**. Should contribute to increased sustainability in the mining and minerals sector and may include sustainability research.

- **Research programme:** Objective, Description of research environment/s, Planned educational activities, recruitment basis, Organization and administration, Significance, National coordination, national and international collaboration, Relevance

Doctoral programme grant within mining and mineral research

Upcoming call

27 August - 30 September 2025

(*Specific instructions and details are subject to change pending the government's decision*)

Applicant: Organisation. A coordinator of the graduate school at the host organisation shall be invited to be the project leader for the application.

Participating researchers: At least one further HEI shall join the application. One contact person per participating HEI shall be invited as a participating researcher.

Grant period: *4-5 years*

Funding level: *7 000 000 SEK per year* (refer to specific call for details)

Funding for *costs of implementing a national doctoral programme, including salaries to doctoral students. Grants must not be used for scholarships.*

Other open and upcoming calls (a selection)

- Grant for recruiting international visiting researchers to Sweden — 01 December

- Network grant for planning future excellence clusters for cutting-edge technologies — 19 August

Finding information

- Upcoming calls 2025!
- Call texts are found when call opens
- "Pre-information" available in some cases

Choose your interest

Filter by year and/or area

Follow the guide for applicants

Vetenskapsrådet

Vetenskapsrådet

Good to know

- The most common question from applicants concerns what you can apply for at the same time or what applies if you already have a grant

- The table and our requirements always apply only to the main applicant and NOT to the participating researchers (if any, such requirements can be found in the call text)

- For example, it is fine to combine undirected project grants and research projects with focus, for different project ideas/purposes

- You can not have funding for the same research idea from another funding organization.

Vetenskapsrådet

Several grants simultaneously

If you intend to apply for several grants from the Swedish Research Council in the same year, there are certain restrictions. The same applies if you are receiving a grant from us and want to apply for a new grant.

Grants you can apply for simultaneously

Do you want to apply for several grants from us in the same year? This is possible for certain grants. The basic rule is that you can only submit one application for each research project. But in certain cases, you may submit several applications, for example if they relate to different types of grants or different research ideas. You should always report this in your applications to us.

The table in the link below provides information about what you can apply for simultaneously. In some cases you also need to read more in the call texts to find out the applicable conditions.

What grants may I apply for simultaneously from the Swedish Research

Which grants can I apply for simultaneously *if I do not have an ongoing grant during the applied grant period* and fulfil all other eligibility criteria?

Please observe that the information in this schedule only applies to the project leader, not participating researchers

Support form	Project Support			Career Support				Research environment and collab	
May also apply / Applying	Project Grant (undirected within ES, HS, MH, NE)	Project grant with focus	Proof of Concept	International postdoc	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Grant for Research Time	Grants for distinguished professor	Research Environment Grant
Project Grant (undirected within ES, HS, MH, NE)	No	Yes, if...	Yes	Yes, but...	No	Yes, but...	Yes, but...	Yes, but...	Read call...
Project grant with focus	Yes, if...	Yes, for...	Yes	Yes, but...	Yes, for...	Yes, for...	Yes, if...	Yes, for...	Read call...
Proof of Concept	Yes	Yes	Yes, if...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
International postdoc	Yes, but...	Yes, but...	Yes	Read call...	No	No	Yes, but...	No	Read call...
Starting Grant	No	Yes, for...	Yes	No	No	No	Yes, but...	No	Read call...
Consolidator Grant	Yes, but...	Yes, for...	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Read call...
Grant for Research Time	Yes, but...	Yes, if...	Yes	Yes, but...	Yes, but...	No	No	No	Read call...
Grants for distinguished professor	Yes, but...	Yes, for...	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, but...
Research Environment Grant	Read call...	Read call...	Yes	Read call...	Read call...	Read call...	Read call...	Yes, but...	No
Network Grant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exploratory Workshop	Yes, if...	Yes, if...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, if...

Yes, if two different research concepts	Yes, but if funded you must choose one of them	Yes, for other focus and research concept	Read the c

Undirected project grant within: ES = Educational Sciences, HS = Humanities and Social Sciences, MH= Medicine and Health, NE = Natural and Engineering Sciences
Clinical Therapy Research, Artistic Resarch and project grants in international calls are examples of grants with a focus

Information on peer review

- General information on our review process

- VRs principles for peer review and peer review handbooks

- Information on review panels

The peer-review process

Evaluation panels comprising active researchers

- 90 panels, 900 researchers
- 5 to 12 members in each panel
- Academic and geographical spread
- International panel members (40%) contribute with an international perspective

Constant turnover of reviewers

- 1 year term, can be extended up to 6 years

Strict guidelines on conflicts of interests, unconscious bias and gender equality to achieve an impartial process

Review panels

- Panel name and responsibility available at call opening

- Ambition to publish the majority of reviewers' names during the call - however, it is affected by the recruitment and decision-making process

- The applicant will suggest review panel, VR will decide the final panel

Evaluation criteria

- The scientific quality of the application is assessed using four basic criteria:

  - Scientific quality of the project (1-7)

  - Novelty and originality (1-7)

 - Merits of the applicant(s) (1-7)

  - Feasibility (1-3)

Can be supplemented with special additional criteria, e.g. Relevance, Internationalisation, Research Environment or something else that is relevant to that particular call

- Based on the assessment of these criteria, the review panel then gives the application an overall grade

- For each criterion, there are **guiding questions** to support the panel members' assessment of your application. These can also function as guidance for you when you write your application!

- In the call text you can find "**How your application is assessed**" describing the evaluation process for that specific call.

# "What constitutes a successful application?"

- Read the instructions carefully (including info on how the application will be evaluated) **and follow them**
  - *Guide for applicants*
  - *Call text*
  - *Prisma user manual*

- Allow for sufficient time for preparing the application
  - *Our calls close at 2.00 pm*
  - *"Check and register" well before deadline*

- Ask a colleague to read your application and give advise before submitting it
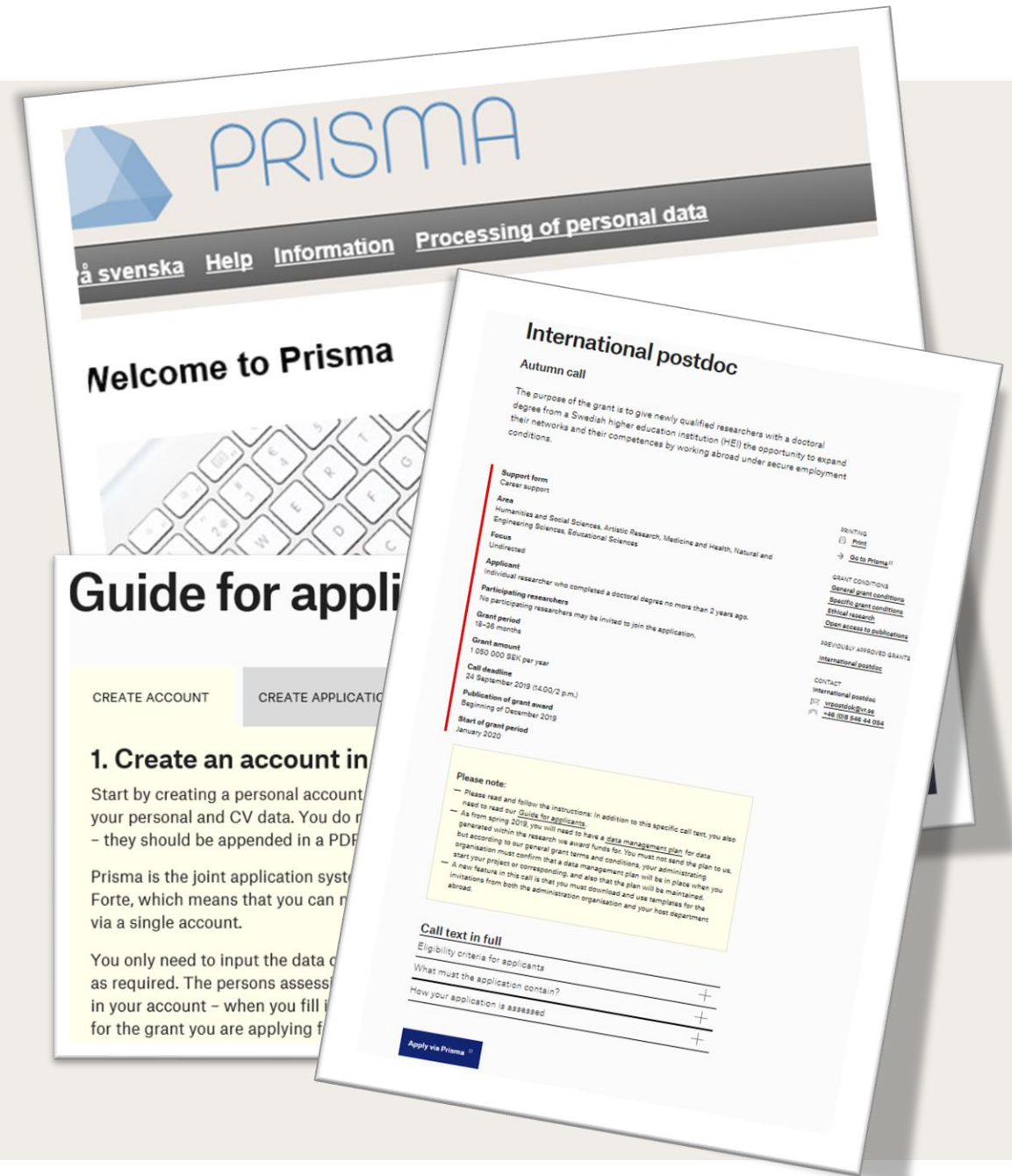
Contact & more info

- Before the call opens:
  - vr.se: List + pre-information for some calls
  - Previous call text on vr.se
  - Newsletter + web (subscribe!)
  - LinkedIn
  - E-mail: utlysningar@vr.se (only general questions about the call or grant)

- When the call opens:
  - Name of a contact person is available!
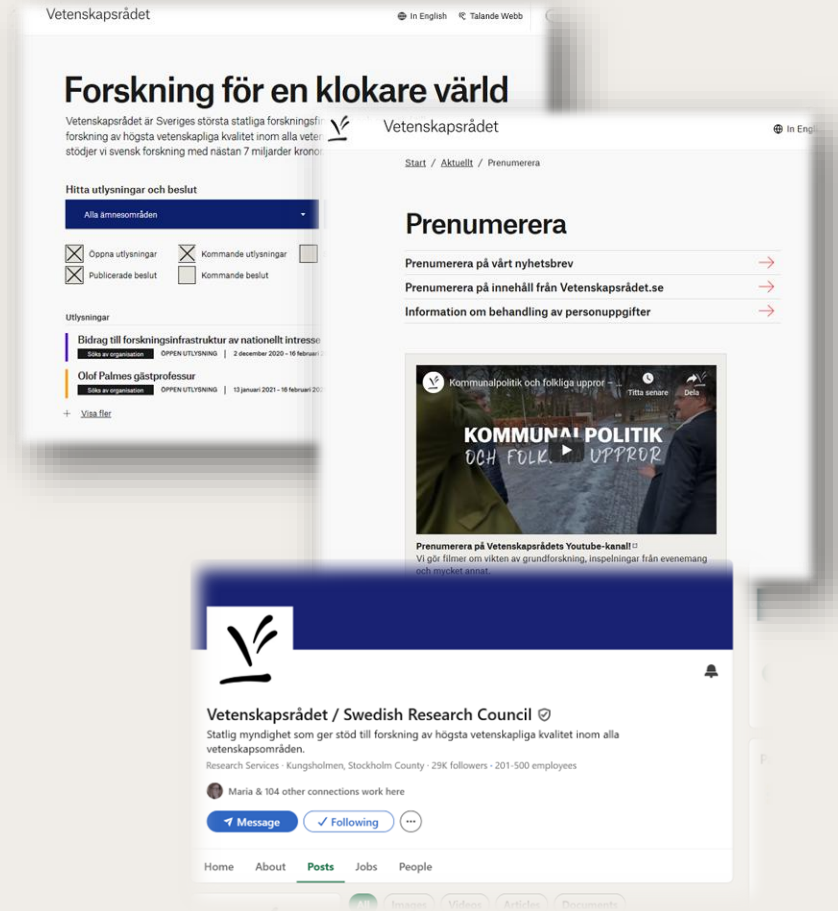
Thank you for your attention! Contact:

julie.oommen@vr.se
gabriella.spiik@vr.se