Call for funding of Thematic Collaboration Initiatives 2021–2023

One of the tasks of Lund University is to contribute to the solution of societal challenges. In order to address such problems broad, multi-disciplinary collaboration is needed, within academia, as well as with partner organizations outside the university. Not least in recent research bills, this has been emphasized.

Lund University already works in a multi-disciplinary, collaborative way with societal challenges. This is an important point in the Strategic Plan 2017–2026 at Lund University. To facilitate collaboration within and outside the university, with focus on future societal challenges, new initiatives are needed. During the years 2017 to 2019, 16 collaboration initiatives were established to make this possible.

The External Engagement Council is now announcing, on behalf of Lund University, funding for four new thematic collaboration initiatives starting in March 2021, of a maximum of SEK 1,000,000 per year for 3 years, with the possibility of extension for another 2 years.

Decision on granted initiatives is taken by Lund University Vice Chancellor, based on the recommendation from the External Engagement Council. This is the fourth call announcement for Thematic Collaboration Initiatives.
Lund University has many research groups that conduct research and collaboration of the highest quality and relevance for both the ongoing pandemic and the societal changes that it may lead to. These actors could, to a greater extent than today, contribute to 1) increasing knowledge about the effects of the ongoing pandemic and/or 2) finding new ways, in the work against the spread of the pandemic, that significantly contributes to building preparedness for future pandemic outbreaks. The challenges must be addressed together with external actors and create conditions for an accelerated opportunity for action in the area.

Therefore, one to two of the now vacant collaboration initiatives are earmarked to address these challenges with the aim of accelerating research and collaboration with relevant actors to contribute to societal development.

Aim
The aims of Thematic Collaboration Initiatives are:

- To contribute to solutions of societal challenges within areas where Lund University has well established research which may contribute to future breakthroughs
- To create platforms which provide good conditions for collaboration between researchers at Lund University and identified external partners
- To stimulate collaboration across faculty borders and demonstrate good examples of collaboration projects.

The idea is that a Thematic Collaboration Initiative should create a meeting place for knowledge and development within a specified problem area. Acquired grants should be used for activities which support collaboration. The goal is that the work in the initiative should result in new projects and common applications, as well as development in working with external partners. The initiative should function as a place for physical meetings and have a web portal which makes the research and activities visible to both Lund University and to society. Further,
the impact of the work within the initiative should be collected and communicated.

**Instructions for the application**
A Thematic Collaboration Initiative should be multi-disciplinary and include at least three faculties, as well as at least one external partner. The application may be written in Swedish or in English.

The initiative shall have a coordinator, who is employed by Lund University, and a core group of researchers at Lund University, as well as external partners.

The application should include:

- A project description, maximum 6 pages, including which external partners and researchers participate in the initiative, which goals the initiative has, and a description of the planned activities
- A budget for the planned activities, covering both direct and indirect costs
- An attachment of CVs (max 2 pages per person) for the main applicant(s). Main applicant may be more than one person.
- A letter of intent including the contribution of each external partner to the initiative.

The evaluation process of the applications includes two steps. Step 1 is an evaluation based on the written application. In step 2 those applications with the highest ranking are invited for an interview, which forms the base for the final evaluation. The evaluation is performed by the assigned working group from the External Engagement Council at Lund University.

The evaluation of the applications, and the interviews, follow these criteria:
• *Choice of societal challenge*: timeliness and relevance (community benefits), research anchoring, depth and breadth

• *Co-workers’ competence*: choice of composition of the group, coordinator competence and leadership skills, other skills for main applicants /co-applicants and partners

• *How the initiative can respond to its goals*: choice of activities and planning, expected results and expected effects, implementation of the initiative

**Assessment of expected results**

When the initiatives are assessed, after 1,5 and after 3 years, questions like the below will be asked:

- Have applications, made within the thematic initiative, resulted in research projects?
- Has the initiative created external visibility, where the theme has been profiled as a strong area for Lund University?
- How has the initiative advanced the field?
- Can the impact of the initiative's knowledge transfer and communication be demonstrated? For example, through public sector or company impacts, through referral issues, innovations, new businesses, etc.

The call opens on Tuesday 3 November 2020 and the deadline for sending in an application is 28 January 2021. Payment of granted funding takes place during the spring semester 2021. For questions, contact Carin Nilsson, Carin.nilsson@fsi.lu.se.

Application documents should be sent to samverkan@lu.se.