

My ideas for a sustainable society:

1. All new vehicles should be made without an exhaust!
2. Oxygen-generating deep-sea fish!
3. A solar cell-powered solarium!
4. A recycling method for politicians' environmental pledges!
5. Energy recovery from bad ideas!
6. Carbon dioxide-eating gases!
7. ~~A~~ A chemical chemical-remover!
- 8.

Idea Support Grants

MISTRA

Do you have bold ideas?

Do you think new thoughts that no one else has ever thought?

Or do you have ideas that go against the flow, or cut across the usual way of thinking?

Do those ideas have something to do with the environment, or with ways of achieving sustainable development?

Then a Mistra Idea Support Grant might be for you!

I've been all over the world and seen odder things than people who walk backwards, said Pippi.

From Pippi Longstocking

WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN IDEA SUPPORT GRANT?

Mistra's Idea Support Grants are intended to help realize innovative research projects with considerable potential to bring about a better environment. A project funded under the scheme must involve significant elements of boldness, originality and creativity. The research should have a focus on discovery, innovative thinking and/or reappraisal. It can also be of a kind that expressly challenges or questions established ways of thinking.

Research ideas of innovative value are associated with great uncertainty and a larger element of risk than normal on the part of the funder. Mistra accepts a high degree of uncertainty, provided that the proposed research is judged to be capable of producing major environmental benefits in the long term. Innovative research often goes against the flow; it steps aside from the beaten track, or beats a completely new track of its own. Through its Idea Support Grants scheme, Mistra wishes to create funding opportunities for research of this kind.

With their bolder profile and smaller scale, Idea Support Grant projects are intended as a complement to the larger-scale programmes funded by Mistra. You can read more about these programmes on Mistra's web site, www.mistra.org.

What are the basic parameters?

Mistra does not single out particular fields of research for support through this scheme. The only requirements are that the research must be innovative and have considerable potential to achieve a better environment, and that it must be compatible with Mistra's purpose, as set out in its Statutes.

Under its Statutes, Mistra is to fund research that is of significance in finding solutions to important environmental problems and promoting the sustainable development of society. It is to encourage the development of strong research environments of the highest international class and of importance for Sweden's future competitiveness. Full use is to be made of opportunities to achieve industrial applications.

The knowledge generated by a project may be in an established field of research, or in completely new fields. It may also arise out of a combination of experience gained in related or quite separate areas of research. Research may be undertaken in any academic discipline, or across disciplinary boundaries.

Idea Support Grants are awarded for one-, two-, three- or at most four-year projects. The largest sum that can be applied for under the scheme is a total of SEK 6 million and the smallest a total of SEK 1 million.

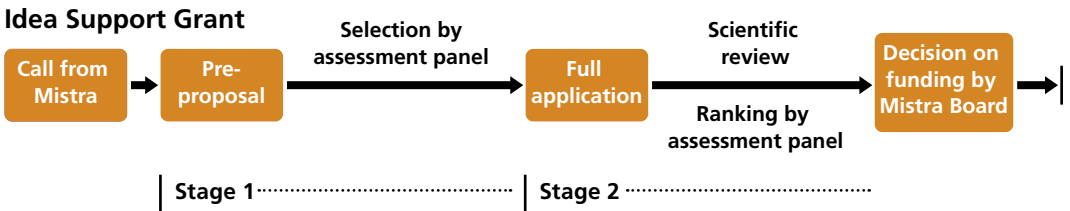
Who can apply?

The Idea Support Grants scheme is open to anyone who is able to present a research idea that meets Mistra's criteria of innovativeness. Proposals from all areas of research are welcome, and researchers in any academic field or discipline may apply. Companies can apply for grants in collaboration with researchers working in an established research environment. We are happy to see participants from other countries involved in projects, but an established research environment in Sweden must provide the focal point for the project.

How do I apply?

Mistra issues a call for pre-proposals for Idea Support Grants once a year, in June. The call gives details of the information to be provided in the application. See Mistra's web site, www.mistra.org.

Applications for Idea Support Grants are submitted in two stages. All applications must be written in English.



In Stage 1, an outline of the proposed project, running to no more than four pages, is submitted to Mistra in the early autumn, together with personal data and a brief CV.

Stage 2 is confined to projects shortlisted in Stage 1. Applicants who are invited to proceed to the second stage will be sent detailed instructions together with the letter informing them of Mistra's decision. A Stage 2 application, not exceeding 10 pages in length, is to be sent to Mistra in the late autumn/early winter. These applications are then subjected to an international scientific peer review. In the light of the responses received, an international Assessment Panel ranks the applications and makes a recommendation to the Mistra Board. The Board reaches its decision on the award of Idea Support Grants in the early spring.

'Little squiggle, you are clever, I do not want to grow up ever.'
'You mean "grow", don't you?' said Tommy.
'I said "grew", and I mean "grew",' said Pippi.

From Pippi in the South Seas



How will my idea be assessed?

In **Stage 1**, the focus is on the research idea as such. Applications are assessed on the basis of how innovative the proposed research is, how clearly formulated the research question is, and how clearly stated the purpose of the research is. Some ten to fifteen applications are selected by the international Assessment Panel to go on to Stage 2.

ASSESSMENT PANEL'S CRITERIA FOR STAGE 1

How innovative is the project?

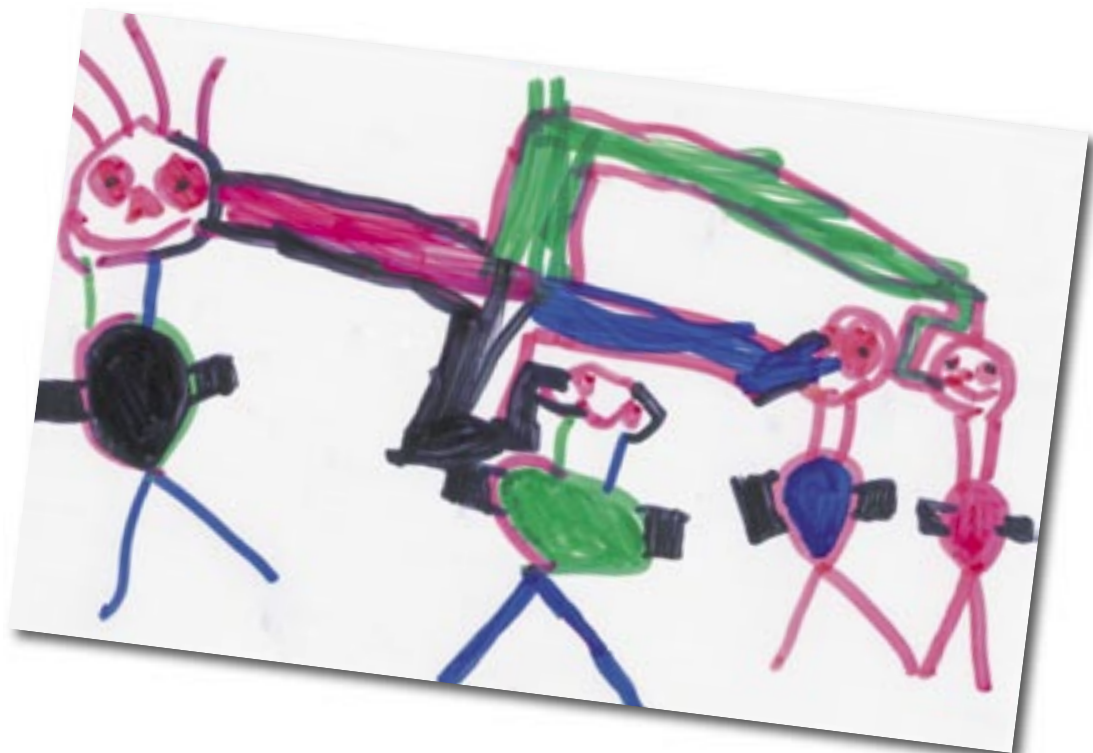
Projects which have a strong focus on discovery, innovative thinking or reappraisal, with considerable potential to bring about a better environment, are to be given a high rating. The research must at the same time involve significant elements of boldness, originality and creativity. Projects which expressly challenge or question established ways of thinking are also to be favourably assessed, whereas those with a high degree of predictability – research which is primarily a matter of verifying, repeating or in some other way confirming earlier work – should receive a low score.

How clearly formulated is the research question?

The research idea must be formulated as a reasonably clearly demarcated question (or hypothesis or the equivalent) and must be handled consistently throughout the presentation made in the application. The question to be addressed must be comprehensible in broad terms to a lay person. Also relevant here is the applicant's own assessment of the difficulties and degree of uncertainty involved in the project. The most important reasons why, up to now, no one else has carried out the proposed research should also be indicated.

How clearly stated is the purpose?

The strongest reasons for carrying out the project should emerge clearly from the application. Why is the proposed research important to the environment? What could it result in, in the short and the long term?



My idea for a better world: The idea is based on senders and receivers exchanging all information via different channels at different metaphysical levels in space. In this way, a sustainable structure for communicating recyclable messages can be created.

In Stage 2, the actual research idea remains central. Applications are subjected to an international scientific peer review. In the light of this review and its own judgement the international Assessment Panel ranks the different applications and makes a recommendation to the Mistra Board.

ASSESSMENT PANEL'S CRITERIA FOR STAGE 2

1. Potential to bring about a better environment.
2. How innovative is the project?
3. How does the suggested solution compare to other suggested solutions to the problem?
4. Feasibility of the project and the chances of success.
5. Capabilities of the principal investigators and organizations.

The final decision on which projects are to be awarded Idea Support Grants is taken by the Mistra Board, on the basis of the Assessment Panel's ranking of the applications. In reaching its decision, the Board also has to ensure that Mistra's overall investments in research are in line with the requirements of its Statutes.

What happens next?

If the Mistra Board decides to award an Idea Support Grant for your project, Mistra will sign a contract with the main applicant or applicants for the project. This contract sets out the sum awarded, the duration of the project, and conditions regarding the disbursement of funds and reporting on the project.

The majority of the research funding provided by Mistra is invested in large-scale, long-term programmes. Mistra organizes meetings and workshops for participants in these programmes. We also produce an internal newsletter, which serves as a complement to the information on our web site and in our general newsletter. If you and your colleagues involved in an Idea Support Grant project are interested in receiving regular updates on planned events etc., please get in touch with the contact person at Mistra identified in your contract.

If you have any questions regarding your project, you are welcome to contact the Mistra Secretariat. Contact details can be found on Mistra's web site, www.mistra.org.



'I happen to be a turnupstuffer,' said Pippi, 'so of course I never have a free moment.'

From Pippi Longstocking



Frequently asked questions

Can I apply for an Idea Support Grant for any type of research project?

No. Idea Support Grants are intended to help realize innovative research projects with considerable potential to bring about a better environment. A project funded under the scheme must involve significant elements of boldness, originality and creativity.

Can researchers in the social sciences or humanities apply for an Idea Support Grant?

Yes. Environmentally sustainable development calls for an in-depth understanding of decision making, socio-economic structures, political institutions and human behaviour. What is more, the complexity of many environmental problems tends to require a concerted effort by natural scientists/engineers and social scientists/economists/humanities researchers.

Can a Swedish company apply for an Idea Support Grant?

Yes. The business community has a key part to play in achieving progress towards sustainable development. Companies can apply for Idea Support Grants in collaboration with researchers working in an established research environment.

Can foreign researchers and practitioners participate in Mistra projects?

Yes. Researchers and practitioners from countries other than Sweden can participate alongside their Swedish counterparts. However, projects always have their centre of gravity in Sweden.

Does Mistra's aim of promoting a better environment mean that we needn't worry too much about scientific quality?

No. All research funded by Mistra must be of the highest scientific quality by international standards. Every project is subjected to scientific peer review by Swedish and foreign researchers before a funding decision is taken.

'But, Pippi,' said the teacher impatiently, 'why don't you draw on the paper?'

'I used that up long ago. There isn't room enough for my whole horse on that silly little scrap of paper,' said Pippi.

From Pippi Longstocking



Original ways of thinking are sometimes required. Here are a few examples: A wheeled milk racecar, an animal-friendly fly-swatter, the screw-helper, and coffee filters with level marks.

What is Mistra?

Many of us dream of a better world. Many have an idea about how it could be brought about. But very few people act on those dreams and ideas. If more of us were to do so, then our dreams could in time become a reality. One way might be to apply for funding from Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research.

As a foundation, Mistra has a specific purpose, which is set out in its Statutes. The funds at its disposal are required to be used for this purpose.

‘The purpose of the Foundation, whose name shall be the Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, is to fund research of strategic importance for a good living environment. The Foundation shall promote the development of strong research environments of the highest international class with importance for Sweden’s future competitiveness. The research shall be of importance for finding solutions to important environmental problems and for a sustainable development of society. Opportunities for achieving industrial applications shall be taken advantage of.’ (Article 1 of Mistra’s Statutes)

Mistra invests some SEK 200 million in research every year. Most of this funding goes to large-scale programmes, in which researchers from different academic disciplines – along with practitioners from companies, public agencies and non-governmental organizations, legislators and international negotiators – work together to promote sustainable development. A small proportion of the total, roughly ten per cent, is awarded in the form of Idea Support Grants. With their bolder profile and smaller scale, Idea Support Grant projects are intended as a complement to the larger-scale Mistra programmes.

You can read more about Mistra and the forms of funding it provides on the Foundation’s web site, www.mistra.org.

‘If you should happen to go home now,’ said Pippi, ‘you’ll be able to come again tomorrow. Because if you don’t go home, you can’t very well come back, and that would be a shame.’

From Pippi Longstocking



MISTRA

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